

## Chapter 1 : A Ram In The Thicket

*The Ram in a Thicket is one of a pair of figures excavated in Ur, in southern Iraq, and which date from about BC.*

My initial thought was, well God had to have the ram held in place by something. But as I thought about this, I recalled reading about an archeological discovery made back the thirties in Southern Iraq in the area that was known as Ur. This was a graveyard site for kings and nobility from the land of Ur. He found an object guarding the tomb that he called the Ram in the Thicket because it resembled the story in Genesis. The image is not so much that of a ram, goat or young bull that appears to be caught in a thicket, but is actually more a picture of a horned animal standing on its hind legs eating something at the top of a bush. This is dated at about BC. The picture of a horned animal reaching for a high branch would bear out this date as this is when there was a year draught in the land of Ur and goats or similar horned animals would have been reaching high on bushes to eat because such feeding in the wild was scarce due to the draught. Abraham lived or was born about BC so he would have been born during this draught and more significantly when this symbol of a horned animal reaching high on a branch to feed was a known symbol. No one really knows what the symbol represents. It is speculated, however, that this somehow represented the gods of that era taking a soul up to heaven. Another idea, which I think is more logical, is that the horned animal reaching up a thicket trying to get the last morsel of food was a picture of the struggle to survive during this year draught. It was a common practice to offer a human sacrifice i. The word thicket in the Hebrew is savek which means to entwine, or an entwining vine, tree or brush. It is not really a bushy type plant as we would imagine. In fact a fairly good picture of a savek can be found on the internet if you google up Ram in a Thicket. The word ram is derived for a sort of an all-purpose root word aval which is a word for any animal with horns. It could be a goat, deer, ram or horned bull. Considering the words for ram and thicket and looking at the picture of the Mesopotamian god guarding the Death Pit I would not be surprised that when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God told him to look behind him where he saw an image similar to one he may have seen as a child growing up in the land of Ur to which many children were similarly sacrificed. He saw the image of Marduk or as it is known in the Akkadian language Amar-utu which means the calf of Utu the sun god or the young bull of the sun. Amar-utu would fit the Hebrew word aval which translators render as a ram but could also be rendered as a young horned bull. The god Utu is often pictured with horns. As indicated earlier, many children were sacrificed to this god during this time of draught and famine in hopes that the young bull of Utu would provide rain. So when Abraham took the ram or young bull and sacrificed it instead of his son he was putting to death, so to speak, the pagan god Amar-utu, the god of his youth and declaring his complete loyalty to the God Jehovah that revealed Himself to him. God was declaring that He was a God that demanded no human sacrifice of a child to obtain life and life eternal but instead He would offer His own son as a sacrifice to bring life and life eternal to him and to us. When times get rough, as they are now for many believers, we tend to get desperate and turn to many things to survive or find security. In making these sacrifices of our time and finances we may expect to God think: In accepting this gift, we will find life and life eternal.

Chapter 2 : "Ram In the Thicket" - Near East Section Highlights - Penn Museum

*British Museum collection data is also available in the W3C open data standard, RDF, allowing it to join and relate to a growing body of linked data published by organisations around the world. [View this object.](#)*

This one sure has an especially large pumpkin! Mike Martin is a friend of ours who has an interesting ministry. Though the event had been scheduled for months some of the key leaders he was counting on cancelled last minute. He and Nicole were scurrying to fill some needed positions, in particular the BBQ Caterer, practically a necessity for any event of this type here in Lancaster County. He was available to meet their need, even on the spur of the moment. Abraham passed the test. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. God providentially ordains this in His design that we be interdependent on one another. This is the only time in Scripture that the title Jehovah Jireh appears. We may consider this in regard to general provision regarding our everyday needs but foundationally the phrase is referring to something else. This was just moments after the great provision of the ram was provided as a replacement for Isaac. Moses lived some years after Abraham. With sweat drops of blood He pleaded with the Father to allow the cup to pass from Him. In that moment of the grand passion of Christ, the Father said no. The Father would not spare His Son. Hallelujah, What a Savior! He became a living sacrifice that we might receive forgiveness of sins; His death in exchange for our forgiveness, and thereby inheriting eternal life. We greatly rejoice in the fact that You did not spare Your own Son but delivered Him over for us all, that we might receive salvation, and that we might take up residence in the Kingdom of God. Sorry for the poor lighting but I took this from an open window looking in at the rather dimly lit meeting house prior to the start of the hymn sing. Tightly placed rows of benches faced forward and there were also two sections on each side facing the center. The pews are arranged for women sitting on one side and men on the other as was the practice in this type of church, though last night families sat together. The hymnals were copyrighted over years ago. Though Brooksyne and I were unfamiliar with many of the selected hymns, we joined in wholehearted worship, as the exuberant congregation joined their voices to sing great hymns of the church. We were blessed as we were introduced to old hymns yet new to us that were filled with great theological truths.

### Chapter 3 : THE RAM IN THE THICKET

*Ram in the Thicket* Sir Leonard Woolley dubbed this statuette the "ram caught in a thicket" as an allusion to the biblical story of Abraham sacrificing a ram. It actually depicts a markhor goat eating the leaves of a tree.

It actually depicts a markhor goat eating the leaves of a tree. Little of the original Ram survived when Woolley excavated it, which he did by pouring wax on it and using waxed muslin strips to stabilize it. The Ram underwent some additional conservation around This object is on display The Royal Tombs of Ur I have found the greatest death-pit of all yet discovered Sir Leonard Woolley, Telegram to British Museum, December 22, In the s, the Royal Cemetery of Ur excavations became one of the great technical achievements of Middle Eastern archaeology and now represents one of the most spectacular discoveries in ancient Mesopotamia modern-day Iraq. Deep within the site lay the tombs of the mid-3rd millennium BCE kings and queens of the city of Ur, famed in the Bible as the home of Biblical patriarch, Abraham. The renowned excavator of the cemetery was British archaeologist C. Leonard Woolley, later Sir Leonard Woolley. In all, Woolley uncovered some 1, burials. He classified 16 as royal based on their distinctive form, their wealth, and the fact that they contained the burials of household servants, male and female, along with clearly high-ranking personages. They more likely represent goats, which could often be seen standing on their hind legs, to reach leaves in the trees, as seen here. Ur featured prominently in political, religious, and economic activity on the Mesopotamian floodplain. According to the King List, southern Mesopotamia was divided into 20 to 30 competing city-states. Ur was among the most important of these, establishing a dynasty that dominated other city-states during three periods. The First Dynasty of Ur ruled during the mid-3rd millennium BCE, ruled by the immediate successors of the kings and queens whose tombs Woolley discovered in the Royal Cemetery: Little is known about the Second Dynasty of Ur. The Third Dynasty of Ur, at the end of the 3rd millennium, unified the cities of the southern floodplain. Urnamma and Shulgi, in particular, created a highly centralized bureaucratic state through their building activities, military exploits, and political achievements. Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. The Ram in the Thicket pre restoration. The Ram in the Thicket in its current configuration. Featured Publication Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur This stunning catalogue includes color photographs of more than objects, excavated in the s by renowned British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley, from the third-millennium-B. Sumerian city of Ur. Learn the fascinating story of the excavation and preservation of these magnificent artifacts.

**Chapter 4 : WORD STUDY “ RAM IN THE THICKET ” Chaim Bentorah**

*A Ram in the Thicket is a blog by Ryan A. MacDonald (RAM), a writer, Catholic convert, and advocate for the Church as a mirror of justice in the public square. Too often in the current climate the Church's own sons - our priests - are sacrificed to satisfy the demands of contingency lawyers, insurance companies, and a scandal-hungry news media.*

He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But there is one point that is often missed. Abraham was obedient to God in giving up what God had promised him—even when he had no thought that God would stop him. The son whom God had promised Abraham would be the fulfillment of the promise to make a great nation was to be sacrificed to the One who had made the promise. There was no avoidance. This son was Isaac, his own flesh and blood, his beloved son. He was his only son, and could not be replaced, as it had taken a miracle from God to produce him in the first place. This was not God asking for just something. This was God asking for everything. Everything that Abraham held dear. Everything he lived for. This was the sacrifice of all Abraham cared about. This was the ultimate sacrifice, the cross, the death to self. This was death to even the good things Abraham thought he would get out of his obedience to God. This was awful, ugly death, in a remote spot, with nobody to share his grief, or know his pain. This was to be done without the blessing or approval of others, for what would Sarah have done if she knew what God had asked of Abraham? Would not a mother do everything in her power to protect her child from the knife, even to dying herself? Would she not have tried to kill Abraham, her husband, rather than let him kill her only son, the only child she ever bore in her life? This drama has a happy ending. God provides a ram caught in the thicket of bushes near the altar, and lets Abraham use the ram instead of Isaac as the sacrifice. But what is the lesson here? Is it that God will always provide a ram in the thicket when He asks of us everything we hold dear? No, otherwise there would not be thousands upon thousands of martyrs in the roll call of heaven. Jesus would not have demanded everything of his disciples, even unto death. The Lord would not have required that a man lose his own life to save it, nor would He have asked the rich young ruler to give all he had to the poor before he could follow Jesus. There would have been no talk of counting the cost, of carrying the cross daily, of hating even our own lives to live for Jesus. So false, and so pretentious. So contrary to even the basic understanding God meant us to have here. Brethren, if you would follow Christ, you must put everything—“all your hopes, aspirations, dreams, goals, agendas, plans”—on the altar of sacrifice to Him. You must raise the knife and plunge it downward, into the heart of all your own thoughts and desires, your own schemes for life. You must actually give up, not just be willing to give up, your life for Christ. There is no ram in the thicket for us. God gave up His only Son for us, and we are required to give up everything for Him. The story of Abraham is a story of God testing one man and his willingness to give it all up. This was no object lesson. This, to Abraham, was the end of his hopes and his dreams, his plans and aspirations, his agendas and his own life. He was asked to give up the very thing that he thought would make his own life worthwhile. There is no ram in the thicket. God asks us to sell all we have, to lay it on the altar of sacrifice, to give it all up, for Jesus. To seek first and with all our beings the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. To lay down our lives for Christ and His brothers and sisters, without thought of being relieved of the command by a substitute in the bushes. This is the lesson of total obedience, without thought of rescue. He demands our lives in return. And this is our love for Him. Today, it is our test. We must also offer up all we value, all we hold dear, and take up the knife. But like Jesus said: Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead. Those who would follow Him must die to themselves and their own plans and goals and dreams. Then, we can experience the resurrection power of Christ, giving us the strength and love to walk the narrow road with Him. The whole world may pass us by, but God will do what He wants to do in us. Follow Abraham, who is an example of saving faith. This is the true lesson of the ram in the thicket.

**Chapter 5 : There's a Ram in the Thicket " Rocky Creek**

*Genesis "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." I never really considered the significance of the ram being caught in the thicket. My initial thought was, well God had to.*

Oldest Stone Age Art: Summary An icon of Mesopotamian sculpture , dating to the late era of Neolithic art , the "Ram in a Thicket" also known as "Ram Caught in a Thicket" is actually one of an identical pair of figures, excavated from the city of Ur in ancient Iraq in , by the renowned British archeologist Sir Leonard Woolley. The statuettes - each of which consists of a goat standing on its hind legs, framed by gold branches of a flowering plant - were crafted from a wooden core applied with gold and silver, lapis lazuli, copper, shell and red limestone, and exemplify the tradition of early Mesopotamian-Sumerian sculpture , with its rich mixture of precious materials and luscious colouring. For more chronological details concerning Mesopotamian art , or earlier Paleolithic cultures, please see: Prehistoric Art Timeline from 2. Discovery and Reconstruction The pair of "rams" - more correctly referred to as male goats - were unearthed close together in the "Great Death Pit" - an area near the grave of Queen Pu-Abi - one of the Royal Tombs of Ur, excavated jointly by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology and the British Museum in Chryselephantine Sculpture , the technique of gold and silver metalwork perfected by Greek sculptors. For a general guide to their work, see: In fact, when discovered, the figures had been crushed by the weight of the soil above them, requiring Woolley to use wax to keep all the fragments together during their extrication. Later, when reconstructed, the figures were carefully pressed back into their original shapes, although some small differences remained between the original statues and the reconstructed versions. Characteristics of Ram in a Thicket Rams or male goats were an everyday feature of life during the late Neolithic and are regularly represented by sculptors in a variety of media. The "Ram in a Thicket" has been identified from its large corkscrew-shaped horns as a markhor *Capra falconeri* , a wild species of goat native to the mountains of Central Asia. Its ears are made of copper which is now green with verdigris. The underside of the body is layered with silver leaf. The fleece on its body is made of shell and its genitals are gold. The stem and foliage of the flowering plant are covered in gold, and the entire assemblage is set on a rectangular wooden base, whose sides are decorated with silver and whose top is inlaid with lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone. Archeologists believe that the two "rams" were not freestanding statues but connected supports for a small tray or bowl. The exact meaning of the statue is not known but archeologists believe it was one of several symbols associated with the fertility of the land. The goat was seen as sacred to Dumuzid, the shepherd god, whose marriage to Inanna was an important mythological event associated with agricultural abundance. It retained this status until as late as the 4th century BCE, when the Euphrates river changed course, and the city was abandoned. During the mids, the excavation of Ur a collaborative project between the Penn Museum and the British Museum led by Leonard Woolley , centred on the cemetery, where Woolley focused on a group of sixteen "royal tombs", all of which dated to the Early Dynastic III period c. It was in one of the largest of these mass burial chambers, known as the "Great Death Pit at Ur", that the two "Ram in a Thicket" figurines were discovered. For other ancient statues, see: Venus Figurines from 30, BCE. Sir Leonard Woolley Sir Leonard Woolley was a renowned British archeologist and scholar in the ancient art of Mesopotamia, whose most important archeological work was done in , at the Sumerian site of Ur, where - as well as the "Ram in a Thicket" - he also discovered the famous Copper Bull , British Museum. He also excavated sites at the Hittite city of Carchemish with T. Lawrence and the Bronze Age city of Atchana, both in Syria. He is regarded as one of the first "modern" archeologists, and was given a knighthood in for his contribution to archeology.

**Chapter 6 : A Ram In The Thicket: 09/21/11**

*A Ram in the Thicket Upon this remarkable resolution to the trial of Abraham's faith, he looked up and saw a ram caught by his horns in a thicket. Abraham saw the hand of God supplying the need for the occasion, and he offered that ram as a burnt offering to God.*

Audio MP3 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. The account in Genesis chapter 22 is replete with details that enhance the picture. The test was severe. After waiting twenty-five years from the time they entered the land of Canaan, Abraham and Sarah had the child promised by God. Now it stood firm in this most difficult of tests. The Land of Moriah The location where Abraham was to offer his son was specific: There many typical sacrifices would be offered representing the ransom to be given by our Lord Jesus at Jerusalem. Nearly a thousand years after that, Jesus himself would die for our sins on the hill of Golgotha, which is a geographic extension of the same prominence on which the temple of Solomon was constructed. This means that Abraham was living in the third thousand-year day from Adam. As Isaac bore the wood, so the cross of wood was laid upon Jesus on his way to Golgotha: The coals of fire were in the hand of Abraham, just as the trials that would accompany the sacrifice of Jesus were under the control of our heavenly Father. The knife, which on occasion represents the word of God Hebrews 4: When Isaac innocently asked where was the lamb for a burnt offering, Abraham answered: So it is with us. When they reached the summit, Abraham erected an altar, bound Isaac, and laid him upon the wood upon the altar, as was customary for burnt offerings Genesis Abraham lifted his knife, but at the critical moment the angel intervened. Isaac was delivered, but God knew that Abraham in his heart had fulfilled the command and proven his loyalty. Jesus would not be spared. However, Jesus would triumphantly rise from the dead on the third day. When Abraham received his dearly beloved son from the altar, this was a picture of our heavenly Father receiving his dearly beloved son from death itself Hebrews Abraham saw the hand of God supplying the need for the occasion, and he offered that ram as a burnt offering to God. Similarly, only God could supply a sacrifice for our sins, namely his son, Jesus. Divine justice appropriately condemned our first parents, and thus all of us, their progeny. Divine love had already planned, even before creation, to provide a release from condemnation for mankind. Divine wisdom saw that allowing mankind an experience with sin, and then a recovery from sin, was the best way to educate the human race. Thus, the consequences of both sin and righteousness could be deeply learned. This would be the best arrangement for the highest welfare of all of us. Divine power is adequate to the task of seeing this plan to a successful conclusion. But when the Law Covenant was established with Israel generations later, other types of offerings were identified as well. These are described in Leviticus chapters 1 through 7, together with the regulations specific to each. The first one listed is the burnt offering, then the meal offering chapter 2 , peace offering chapter 3 , sin offering chapter 4 , and trespass offering beginning at 5: Depending on the circumstances, either male or female animals could be used in most cases. But for a burnt offering, the law was specific: The burnt offering by Abraham on Mount Moriah is clearly a picture of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus as a ransom for Adam and all of us. As animals are ranked, males are more valuable than females. This is implicit in the laws respecting the offerings compare Leviticus 4 verses 22,23 with verses 27, Jesus as our ransom sacrifice is depicted as the more valuable offering. The offerer could bring a bullock or a ram, depending on his ability, but it must be male, and it must be without blemish. The poor could even bring birds. The same requirementsâ€”male, and without blemishâ€”were also stipulated for the passover lamb, which also represented the ransom Exodus These also pictured Jesus as our ransom. Jesus was put on the cross in the morning, and he died in the afternoon Numbers This same expression is applied to the sacrifice of Jesus: On this occasion the description of the seed of Abraham is given in the broadest terms. It is described not merely as stars heavenly , or sand earthly , but both parts are included, for both the heavenly and earthly seed of Abraham spring from the one sacrifice of Christ. Return to Beersheba Genesis This meaning is given in Genesis Beer means well, and sheba means oath. This blessing is assured by the oath-bound covenant given to Abraham. The oath-bound covenant, in turn, is established upon the foundation sacrifice of Christ, represented in the offering of Isaac. Some time later, Abraham heard a

report about the rest of his family. His brother Nahor had stayed in Mesopotamia after their father, Terah, died. Abraham had left Mesopotamia at the calling of God to come into the land of promise, just as those of faith among the natural seed of Abraham had left their old promises to receive the greater favor of the heavenly calling following the first advent of Messiah. But not all of Israel responded. Most remained with their old hopes, just as Nahor remained in Mesopotamia. For these, there would be a blessing at the end of the Gospel age. Even now they are being regathered to their land; they are an independent nation again after two thousand years, and during the blessed Millennium Israel will have a place of honor among the nations Zechariah 8: Abraham had been separated from that part of the family for many years. But the news was good. His brother had prospered: Then follows a list of twelve children, eight born to Milcah and four to Reumah, a concubine of Nahor. The twelve sons of Jacob through his wives and concubines formed the nation of Israel. The twelve sons of Nahor, through his wife and concubine, evidently symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. Ishmael had twelve sons, which evidently represent the twelve tribes of Israel Genesis Thus to see the twelve sons of Nahor representing the twelve tribes of Israel is a compatible picture. So at the end of the Gospel age, after many years, Israel comes back into prominence again. This happens soon before the passing of the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic Covenant which bore Christ and also bears the church.

**Chapter 7 : A Ram in the Thicket by Frank C Robertson**

*This ancient Mesopotamian sculpture known as the 'ram in the thicket' is actually a 'goat in a tree'. The goat is rendered in impressive detail, as it reaches up to eat leaves on high branches - a common sight along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The sculpture was made of.*

Click to print [Opens in new window](#) What is it? The goat is rendered in impressive detail, as it reaches up to eat leaves on high branches – a common sight along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The sculpture was made of wood with hammered sheet gold used to embellish its surface. The goat was then covered in intricately carved shell and lapis lazuli to form its fleece, and the expressive face was highlighted with lapis eyes, beard, and horns. The result is a spectacular display of the sculpting, lapidary, and goldsmithing arts. Where was it found, and when? One woman Body 61 found near the goat sculptures was more highly adorned than the others and may have been the primary burial, for whom all the rest were sent to the afterlife in a symbolic banquet. After 4, years deep in the soil, the wooden sculpture had decayed and the decorated outer shell had been crushed flat. At first, it was consolidated as found but then, after much conservation, stabilised and displayed in its original glory. Why does it matter? Southern Mesopotamia lacked resources such as stone, metal, and building timber. Successful kings and queens organised trade to bring in these much-needed goods. Luxuries, later made into fantastic objects for the royals, also came in along these networks. The materials for the splendid goat furnishings were exotic, but the subject was local. It probably represents the fertility of the land. The eight-pointed flowers on the trunk are the sign of Inanna; the goat is the sign of her consort Dumuzi. These two deities are associated with the changing seasons and the cycle of life and death, making this an appropriate funerary offering. A cylinder seal from the grave suggests that the woman found lying near the goat sculptures, who may have been the primary burial, was a high priestess of the moon god, Nanna. This position, better evidenced in later periods, was held by the daughter of the reigning king. Her name and dynasty, however, remain unknown.

**Chapter 8 : Robert M Chapple, Archaeologist: A Ram in a Thicket**

*It was named the 'Ram in a Thicket' by the excavator Leonard Woolley, who liked biblical allusions. In Genesis , God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, but at the last moment "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him.*

Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw. The thought and mental view from the Divine is concerning all and each of the things that will take place to eternity, with the Divine Providence. And behold a ram. That this signifies the spiritual from the human race, is evident from the signification of a "ram," as explained in what follows. In general they signified the Divine celestial, Divine spiritual, and Divine natural things which belong to the Lord; and hence they signified the celestial, spiritual, and natural things which are from Him in His kingdom, consequently in every one who is a kingdom of the Lord; which may also be seen from the Holy Supper, which succeeded the burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Hence it is manifest that the burnt-offerings and sacrifices involved celestial worship from love to the Lord, and spiritual worship from charity toward the neighbor and the derivative faith in the Lord n. That all these rites were holy is evident; but they were holy from their representing and signifying holy things. But what each particular represented can be evident to no one except from the internal sense. Inaugurations into the priesthood were made by spiritual things, for by spiritual things a man is introduced into celestial things; or what is the same, by the truths of faith into the good of love. In like manner when Aaron entered into the holy place, he was to offer a bullock for sin, and a ram for a burnt-offering Lev. The celestial man is such that he is in celestial love, that is, in love to the Lord, and thence in celestial truth n. At the festivals, bullocks, rams, and lambs were sacrificed-as on the first day of the feast of the unleavened bread, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, with their meat-offering, for a burnt-offering Num. On the day of the firstfruits also, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, with their meat-offering, for a burnt-offering Num. On the new moons, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, with their meat-offering, for a burnt-offering Num. In the seventh month, on the first of the month, one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs, with their meat-offering. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, thirteen bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs. The "bullocks" and the "rams" signified spiritual things, but the "lambs" celestial things; for at the feasts they had to be sanctified and introduced by spiritual things. It is not therefore said, "better than the fat of oxen," or of "lambs," but "better than the fat of rams. The sea saw it, and fled, and the Jordan turned back; the mountains leaped like rams, the hills like the sons of the flock. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest? Thou travailest, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob who turned the rock into a pool of waters, and the flint into a fountain of waters Ps. Every one may know that in these, as in the rest of the words of David, there are holy things, but in the internal sense; and that something is signified by the mountains skipping like rams, and the hills like the sons of the flock, and by the earth travailing at the presence of the Lord; which things, without the internal sense, are words of no meaning. What celestial spiritual things are, see n. Behind, caught in a thicket. That this signifies entangled in natural knowledge, is evident from the signification of being "caught," as here being entangled; and from the signification of a "thicket" or "tangle," as being memory-knowledge - explained in what follows. That the spiritual are held entangled in natural knowledge in regard to the truths of faith, is as follows. The spiritual have not perception of good and truth, as the celestial have, but instead of it conscience formed from the goods and truths of faith which they have imbibed from infancy from their parents and masters, and afterwards from the doctrine of faith into which they were born. They who have no perception of good and truth have to be confirmed by knowledges. Every one forms for himself some idea respecting the things he has learned, and also respecting the goods and truths of faith; for without an idea, nothing remains in the memory otherwise than as an empty thing. Confirmatory things are added thereto, and fill up the idea of the thing, from other knowledges, even from memory-knowledges. The confirmation of the idea itself by many things causes not only that it sticks in the memory, so that it can be called forth into the thought, but also that faith can be insinuated into it. There is perception of what is good and true in celestial and spiritual things; there is perception of what is just and equitable in civil life; and there is perception of what is honorable in moral life. As regards the perception of

what is good and true in celestial and spiritual things, the interior angels have this perception from the Lord, the men of the Most Ancient Church had it, and the celestial, who are in love to the Lord, have it. These know at once, from a kind of internal observation, whether a thing is good and whether it is true; for this is insinuated by the Lord, because they are conjoined with Him by love. Spiritual men however have no such perception of good and truth in celestial and spiritual things, but instead of it have conscience which dictates but as before said, this conscience is formed from the knowledges of good and truth which they have imbibed from their parents and masters, and afterwards from their own study in doctrine and in the Word; and in these, even though not entirely good and true, they put their faith. Hence it is that men can have conscience from any doctrine whatever; even the Gentiles have something not unlike conscience from their religion. Let every one explore himself and see if he is able to perceive from any other source whether a thing is true; and if when a thing most true is made manifest to him he still does not fail to acknowledge it. As for example, one who makes faith the essential of salvation, and not love: It is otherwise with those who are in celestial and spiritual perception. These two perceptions distinguish one man from another, but by no means do such men for this reason have the perception of the good and truth of faith, because this perception is higher or more internal, and flows in from the Lord through the inmost of the rational. Hence it is that the spiritual cannot arrive at the first degree of the light in which the celestial are n. That the spiritual are entangled in natural memory-knowledge in respect to the truths of faith, follows from this. That they are made altogether blind, see n. To reason from memory-knowledges is to "set the branch among the tangled boughs. That "oaks" are apperceptions from memory-knowledges, see n. The like is found elsewhere in the same Prophet: That worship was performed in groves, and was significative according to the qualities of the trees, see n. Celestial and spiritual love is that which disposes into order the knowledges which are of the exterior memory; and the love of self and of the world is that which perverts the order, and disturbs all things in it. These things the man does not take notice of, because he places order in perverted order, good in evil, and truth in falsity. On this account these things are in entanglement; and also on this, that the things of the exterior memory, where these knowledges are, compared with those in the interior memory, where rational things are, are as in a thicket, or as in a dark forest. How shady, opaque, and dark it is there in comparison, a man cannot know so long as he is living in the body; for he then supposes that all wisdom and intelligence are from this source; but he will know in the other life, when he comes into the things of his interior memory. That in the exterior memory, which is proper to man while he is living in the world, nothing is less to be found than the light of intelligence and wisdom; but that all is relatively dark, disorderly, and entangled there, may be seen above n. That this signifies with all power in regard to the truths of faith, is evident from the signification of "horns. For the more anyone consults natural memory-knowledges, and sticks fast in them in his animus and mind in regard to the things which are truths of faith, the more does he lose the light of truth, and with the light, the life of truth. Every one may know this from experience, if he attends and reflects, from those who say that they can believe nothing unless they comprehend that it is so by means of the things of sense, or of memory-knowledge. If you explore their quality, you will find that they believe nothing; and moreover that nothing seems to them more wise than to ascribe everything to nature. There are many also who say that they believe although they do not comprehend; when nevertheless, in secret with themselves, they reason equally as others do from the things of sense and memory-knowledge concerning the truths of faith, as to whether a thing is so. These either have a kind of persuasion breathed in from the love of self and the world, or they do not believe at all. Their quality is manifest from their life. They who are of the church are in a life of good, and have faith in truths; but the spiritual have faith in other truths besides those which have been impressed on them from infancy, and which they have afterwards confirmed to themselves from doctrine or from some other source. Such is the state of the spiritual, which state is here described by the "ram caught in the thicket by his horns" n. My truth and My mercy shall be with him, and in My name shall his horn be exalted I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers Ps. That the "hand" and the "right hand" denote strength, see n. Jehovah will give strength unto His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed 1 Sam. And in the same: That what is internal is represented by what is high, see n. That "seven" means holy, see n. The "seven spirits sent forth into all the earth," are the holy preachings of the same truths. Of these it is said in Moses: So too upon the altar of incense,

out of which were to be horns Exod. That the altar was a principal representative of the Lord and of His worship, see n. The altar was a representative of His Divine Good; the horns were the representatives of His Divine Truth; that truth was from good was represented by the horns being out of it, or out of the altar. That there is no other truth than that which is from good, see n. It is manifest from this that "horns" in the genuine sense signify the power of truth which is from good. That the "horns of the altar" signified truths which are from good, may also be seen in John: That "gold" is good, see n. The kings being "anointed with oil from a horn" 1 Sam. The "oil" was good, n. And he said to me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah; Israel, and Jerusalem. And Jehovah showed me four smiths and I said, What come these to do? All the horns of the wicked will I cut off, the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up Ps. I considered the horns, and behold another little horn came up among them, and three of the first horns were rooted up before it; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake I desired certitude concerning the fourth beast, and concerning the ten horns that were on his head, and concerning the other which came up, and three fell before it; and concerning the same horn that had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things; I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints. And he said, As for the fourth beast, it shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise, and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the former ones, and he shall humble three kings; he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints; afterwards the judgment shall sit Daniel 7: Here in the internal sense the perverted state of the church is treated of. The things which were here seen by Daniel, as the beast, the teeth of iron, the horn in which were eyes, and the horns that spoke, and those which made war with the saints, and that which spoke against the Most High, signify the state of falsity and of heresies within the church. That "horns" signify falsity powerful and prevailing, is evident from the mere fact that eyes are attributed to them, that is, understanding n. By the "kingdoms" and "kings" are not signified kingdoms and kings, but doctrinal things O, falsity; as may be seen from their signification in the Word as being doctrinal things of truth, and in the opposite sense of falsity n. I saw the ram pushing with his horn westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts could stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and magnified himself. As I was considering, behold a he-goat of the goats came from the west over the face of the whole earth; this he-goat had a horn between his two eyes; he came to the ram the lord of the horns, and ran upon him In the fury of his power, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him. Afterwards the he-goat of the goats magnified himself exceedingly and when he was strong, his great horn was broken, and there came up four horns in place of it. Soon out of one of them went forth a little horn, and grew exceedingly toward the south, and toward the east, and toward beauty and it grew even to the army of the heavens, and some of the army and of the stars it cast down to the earth, and trampled upon them. The ram with the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia; the he-goat is the king of Greece; the four horns in place of one are four kingdoms out of the nation Daniel 8: Here in the spiritual sense the state of the spiritual church is treated of, which is the "ram" n. The "he-goat of the goats" denotes those who are in faith separate from charity, or in truth separate from good, who begin to uplift themselves against good, and at length against the Lord. It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb Rev. Again in the same: The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth and they are seven kings; the ten horns are ten kings Rev.

**Chapter 9 : Ram in a Thicket, Statue: Great Death Pit, Ur, Mesopotamia**

*And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.*

It is the familiar story of the faith of Abraham and the test which he endured. That test showed the depth of the faith of this man called our father in faith in the Canon of the Holy Mass. However, for me, when I hear of the ram in the thicket, I am drawn back to a woman I met many years ago. Her name was Wanda. She was a simple woman, a Christian, and a dedicated mother. I would come to discover that she was much more. She was a mystic. She contacted me because she needed legal help and, at the time I was engaged in the private practice of law. That old thing had held up pretty well. However, the transmission was shot and she had to take it in for repair. Wanda left her car at the repair shop and waited for the bad news. It was worse than she had expected! The cost of repair was beyond anything she had even braced for. What followed was worse. After the repairs were done, the serviceman had parked the car out in front of the shop located in the inner city with the keys in the ignition. His excuse was that the garage was full! Not only was the insurance company offering less than what she owed Wanda had been the victim of a loan company that committed usurytaking advantage of her disadvantage but the repair shop was insisting on being paid for the repairs! A friend told Wanda that I might be able to help even though she could not afford a lawyer. She also heard that I was a man of faith. By the time it was all over, it was Wanda who had helped me. She changed my life. I did the dance I had learned to do after all those years of law practice. I negotiated, first from a position of what was just, and only then, when it became clear that the parties were not altruistic, by shifting the risk. What usurious loan company that took advantage of the disadvantaged would not be expected to write off part of ill gotten gains rather than run the risk of public exposure for charging exorbitant rates and questionable business practices? At each step of the dance I kept Wanda informed. She was without a car, taking a bus daily to work, and had increased her hours in order to pay for the added expenses occasioned by the loss of her means of transportation. Rather, she always responded with an extraordinary confidence that God would provide and take care of her family. Her response to difficulty was not anger, blame or the naive kind of starry-eyed faith of a new convert. She was strong and resolute. It was a deep kind of conviction birthed in the furnace of failure, disappointment and perseverance. When it was all over and Wanda was able to walk away with no financial obligations, I felt good. I enjoyed hearing her sincere "God bless you" on the other end of the telephone line. We both went on with our lives. Four weeks later, I was facing a severe crisis in my own life and career. I had long ago learned that living by faith simply does not mean that everything will go smoothly. Anyone who says otherwise is , simply wrong. But this crisis was not bearing the fruits that redemptive suffering, joined to the cross, had done in my life in the past. In short, I was in serious funk, depressed, despondent and hopeless. I received a card in the mail from Wanda. Inside she expressed her gratitude for my legal assistance and wrote these words: I searched the scriptures and found them in the first Book of the Bible, Genesis: He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. He is championed, among other New Testament passages, in the hall of heroes of the faith detailed in the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews for good reason. Real faith is often tried, and in the trial, it is purified and made stronger. That is why his faith is presented as a model throughout the Christian tradition. Abraham was a man who lived complete abandonment to -and trust in-God. Wanda was truly his daughter. I had much to learn and she was one of teachers who the Lord had sent to me. She was the angel who would show me that there is always a ram in the thicket. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours one morning, I read these words from the great mystic priest John of the Cross: The soul that longs for divine wisdom chooses first, and in truth, to enter the thicket of the cross. However, I began to have new eyes with which to see the "ram in the thicket. Like John of the Cross-and all the sons and daughters of Abraham throughout the ages, she had uncovered the hidden treasures mined only at the foot of the Cross. It was there that Love Himself became the offering. It is there where suffering and sorrow are bathed in Blood. She, like the women at the foot of the Cross, understood. I believe Wanda is a mystic. After all, she had no theological education, no clerical office, and little notoriety.

All the more reason for me to believe, she was a gift, and an angel from God. The same Epistle that teaches us about Abraham tells us that angels the word means messenger can show up when you least expect them. The writer reminds us: Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. When we accept the invitation we always find the ram in the thicket. That priests, who experience fatigue and loneliness in their pastoral work, may find help and comfort in their intimacy with the Lord and in their friendship with their brother priests.