

A Matter of Life and Death

Genesis 22:1–18

(black Bibles page 16; Children's Bibles page 38)

Will the Lord save my life from death? Consider the diverse stories of these famous men of faith:

- Elijah: spared from death, ascends directly to heaven in glory (2 Kings 2)
- Daniel: saved from certain death in the lions' den. (Daniel 6)
- Abel: murdered! God allows this man of faith to be martyred. (Genesis 4)
- Moses: dies before entering the Promised Land!? The great Moses can't get in due to his sin. (Deuteronomy 34)
- David: protected from death multiple times, but on his death bed there is a crisis of who will succeed him. (1 Kings 1)
 - Everything he worked for could have been destroyed in bloody civil war – or an incompetent son.
- Isaac: shockingly, Abraham is told to kill him. But he is spared at the last moment! (Genesis 22)
 - A ram becomes the substitute sacrifice

These stories are so diverse! But they all, amazingly, point to Jesus and what happened to him on Good Friday, Easter, and beyond:

- Like Abel, Jesus would be a shocking example of martyrdom that God allows. (Luke 13:33; Hebrews 12:24)
- Yet like Daniel, Jesus actually *is* saved from death by God the Father – on Easter! (Acts 2:31-32)
- Why? Moses' death shows us how God's holy law leaves us all in trouble, as sinners who can't get into the Promised Land (2 Corinthians 3:6-11). Jesus' death is necessary for our forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22, 10:4).

- Elijah shows the possibility of living with God the Father in heaven, which foreshadows Jesus' ascension. (Acts 1:6-11)
- David's succession crisis shows the importance of Jesus' now indestructible life. He will live forever as king! (Hebrews 7:16; Acts 13:34)

And Abraham sacrificing Isaac:

- "Take your son, your only son, whom you love..." (22:2; compare with John 3:16, Matt 3:17) "On the third day..." (22:4; see 1 Corinthians 15:4) "The Lord will provide for himself a lamb..." (22:8; compare John 1:29)

So the famous Old Testament death and near-death stories of men of faith were meant to point us to Jesus? Yes, and this is in line with what Jesus taught us to expect, see Luke 24:45-47.

Finally, back to our original question: **will the Lord save my life from death?**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

Questions for further study and discussion:

- (1) How would you answer someone who doesn't know much about the Christian faith and says to you, "What is the meaning of your holy week?"
- (2) Is it correct to say that our faith is about "life and death"? If so, why is this important to remember?
- (3) Look up all the Bible verses in these notes, and meditate and pray upon them during this holy week. What verse encouraged your heart and mind?
- (4) "And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. *Do you believe this?*" Do you believe this? Do you think a loved one who knows you best could 'verify' your faith?