

God Will Provide the Lamb

Genesis 22:1-14

Main Idea: Through a difficult test God both refined the faith of Abraham and pointed toward the coming sacrifice of his only begotten Son for the salvation of his people.

1. God's Terrifying Command

The Bible tells God's story. He is the hero of the stories of the Bible. Specifically, as Jesus teaches us in Luke 24, the Old Testament points us to God's redemptive mission in the person and work of Jesus.

- Vv. 1-2 – “After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’”
- For generations men and women have been confounded by God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. On one hand the command seems to violate God's promise to Abraham to give him a vast number of descendants. Perhaps even more significantly the command seems to violate the nature of God who is holy and good and just.
- However, in verse 1 the narrator tells us that things are not what they may seem to be to Abraham. We are told what Abraham was not yet aware of – that God was going to test him.
- God testing his people is entirely different from a temptation to sin. **James 1:13** assures us that God never tempts his people to sin. So, God is neither being capricious nor cruel. In order for us to understand this we must never abstract God's love for his people from his testing of his people.



• Two Takeaways:

- a) *God has the divine right to test his people.*

Isaiah 48:10 – “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.”

Jeremiah 18:6 – “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”

- b) *God tests his people for the purpose of giving them something priceless.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 – “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:3-4 – “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope...”

2. Abraham's Obedient Faith

While it is true that God is the hero of the accounts recorded in the Bible it is nevertheless true that we are often encouraged by the examples of godly men and women. In this case we are meant to be sharpened by the example of Abraham's obedient faith.

- In response to God's terrifying command Abraham acts with deliberate obedience. Notice the details in **verse 3** as the writer describes each step Abraham must take to prepare for his obedient response.
- Abraham's assuring words in verse 5 are neither deceptive nor naïve. He has already been fully persuaded that God will not forsake his promise. One way or another, Abraham believes that both he and Isaac will be returning from the mountain.

Romans 4:20-21 – “No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.”

Hebrews 11:17-19 – “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.”

3. God's Timely Substitute

Notice the repeated references to seeing in Verses 4, 7, and 13. It is also important to note that the Hebrews verb *YiReH* (vs. 14), in addition to being translated as “provide,” is often translated as “to see”. These are two related activities in God. He sees our lowly estate. He sees our struggles and our sins. And in seeing everything about us God determines to provide for us just exactly what it is we need above all else.

a) See *what* is happening.

- Vs. 13 – “And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering **instead of his son.**”
- Substitution

b) See *where* it is happening.

- Vs. 14 – “So Abraham called the name of that place, ‘The LORD will provide’; as it is said to this day, ‘On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.’”
- On a hill called Golgotha just outside the city walls of Jerusalem the Lord provided His chosen substitute for the sins of his people. Whereas God stopped the knife thrust that would have killed young Isaac, our heavenly Father did not stay the hand of execution from his own dearly loved Son.
- **Romans 8:32** – “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”