

The Lord Provided a Sacrifice for Abraham

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to teach about the death and resurrection of Christ from many different passages in the Old Testament. The prophecy by Abraham certainly provides one of those Old Testament illustrations of what Christ did. In this topic, we will learn more about the fact that God provided a sacrifice for Abraham.

Abraham was being obedient to all that God had told him to do. He was preparing to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. Genesis 22:9-11 says, “Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’” Abraham and Isaac walked together to Mount Moriah, the place where God had told Abraham to offer his son as a burnt sacrifice. The two servants saw this place from a great distance, but they did not see what happened on the mountain.

Abraham and Isaac arrived at the place where God had told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice. Then, Abraham and Isaac built the altar where the sacrifice would be offered. We have no idea what Isaac was thinking during this time. However, once the altar was prepared, we see that Isaac was obedient to his father, even though it looked like that obedience meant certain death. We said that Isaac was probably between twenty and thirty years old. Abraham was between a hundred and twenty and a hundred and thirty years old. As a result, it would have been impossible for Abraham to bind Isaac and place him on the altar, unless Isaac chose to be obedient to his father. In that way, he provided an example of the obedience of Christ. David prophesied of Christ when he wrote, in Psalm 40:6-8, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law *is* within my heart.’” In Hebrews 10:5-7, we see that Christ quoted these verses as He carried out the will of the Father.

Isaac showed his submission to his father by letting his father bind him and place him on the altar on top of the wood. Then, Abraham took his knife and prepared to kill his son. At that very moment, the Angel of the Lord (Christ) called to him from heaven. Abraham immediately responded by saying, “Here I am.” Genesis 22:12-14 tells us, “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, ‘In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.’” Christ told Abraham not to hurt his son or do anything to him.

Christ said that Abraham had shown that he feared God and was willing to be obedient to him, even to the point of being willing to kill his son. Christ showed that same attitude when He said, in John 6:38, “‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’” Abraham had shown that same desire by offering his son as a sacrifice. At the same time, Isaac had shown his own willingness to do the will of God by being submissive and allowing his father to bind him and place him on the altar. According to Ephesians 1:4-5, God had planned for Christ to be our sacrifice before the foundation of the world. In the same way,

God had also prepared a sacrifice, in advance, for Abraham. God told Abraham to turn around and look behind him. As he looked, he suddenly realized that there was a ram (a male sheep) caught by its horns in some thick brush. God had provided for this sacrifice to be there when it was needed.

Abraham then set Isaac free and took the ram out of the thick brush. Abraham and Isaac together offered up that ram on the altar, instead of Abraham offering his son. Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovahjireh*, (KJV) which means, *The-Lord-Will-Provide*. That place was still called by that name when Moses wrote the book of Genesis nearly 600 years later. That place became the site the Lord appeared to David in 2 Samuel 24:16, where we read, “And when the Angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the Angel who was destroying the people, ‘It is enough; now restrain your hand.’ And the Angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah (Ornan) the Jebusite.” That was the place where Solomon later built the temple as 2 Chronicles 3:1 says, “Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where *the Lord* had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” As a result, this is still an important location to the Jews and will be the location of the future temple in Jerusalem.

We go on to read, in Genesis 22:15-19, “Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwell at Beersheba.” Here, we see that Christ spoke again to Abraham from heaven. This time, Christ reminded Abraham of the promise He had given him many years earlier.

Christ said that He had sworn by Himself. This verse is quoted in Hebrews 6:13-18, where we read, “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.” Here, we see that the Lord explains this verse in much more detail. God confirmed His word to Abraham by swearing by Himself. As a result, Abraham was assured that the promise the Lord had made would be fulfilled.

Romans 4:20-21 also spoke of Abraham when those verses say, “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” The promises in Romans 4 point to the fact that Abraham is the father of all who have faith. Later, when Abraham sent a servant to get a wife for Isaac, the mother and brother said, in Genesis 24:60, “And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: ‘Our sister, *may you become the mother of* thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.’” These verses also show that the promise made to Abraham would be carried on through the family of Isaac and Rebekah. The Seed (Christ) that would come from them would bring blessing to all of the nations of the earth. The Lord said that this promise would be fulfilled because of the fact that Abraham had obeyed the voice of the Lord. That obedience was shown most completely when he offered Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah.

Abraham and Isaac returned together to the place where the two servants were waiting with the donkey. Abraham had told the servants that he and Isaac would go to the mountain and worship and then they would return. As they came back, the servants had no idea what had happened on that mountain while the two were gone. They did not realize that Isaac had been placed on the altar. However, they may have realized that Abraham and Isaac had something happen as they worshiped on that mountain, because they had both grown in their understanding of the way that God works in our lives. Then, the four traveled together back to Beersheba. We see that Abraham continued to live in the area of Beersheba for a period of time.

Sometime after they returned to Beersheba, Abraham received some news about his family. Genesis 22:20-24 says, “Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, ‘Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buzhis brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.’ And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.” Here, we see that Abraham learned that Nahor now had both children and grandchildren. We will see that this news became very important to Abraham after the death of Sarah, because it meant that there were quite a number of family members related to Abraham living in the city of Haran.

In this topic, we see that God tests all those who trust in Him, because He wants to help us in our spiritual growth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the purpose of testing in their own lives, so they can help others learn to understand testing when it comes to the life of any follower of the Lord. Acts 14:22 tells us that Paul and Barnabas were, “strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” All followers of the Lord need to be prepared for the fact that tribulations will come, and that the Lord will help us grow through those tribulations. May the Lord richly bless you as you prepare your children to understand the testing of the Lord.