

A Ram as Substitute Sacrifice

Genesis 22:9-14

Genesis 22:9-14 - *“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. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.”*

¹² 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.”

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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.”

Background Notes

Most of us are aware that the Bible teaches truth in several different ways. The “Big Three” are: **by Precept**, **by Principle**, and **by Picture**.

Precept - or command. In Luke 10:27: *“So he answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.”* Those are precepts - those are commands!

Principle. In Genesis 22 one principle is that **“God will test our faith”** as he tested Abraham’s faith, and another principle is that **“We can pass the test of faith”** as Abraham passed the test. A third principle is that **“God will provide for us”** as He did for Abraham (v14). So the Bible teaches us by precept and by principle.

Picture - *spiritual* picture. This is especially true in the Old Testament. Old Testament spiritual pictures are called “types.” A *type*, by definition, is “an Old Testament person, place, event, or other item which illustrates New Testament truth.” That is probably the simplest definition for a *type*.

In Genesis 22 there is an outstanding Old Testament picture of the death and the resurrection of Christ. Notice, for example, that the phrase “your only son” (v2 & 12) is used in reference to Isaac. This anticipates the phrase of the New Testament, God gave His “only begotten Son.” John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* The same phrase is used in Hebrews

11:17: *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son...”* So in Genesis 22 there is an outstanding type of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Doctrinal Points

1. The sacrifice of Isaac is a type of the death of Christ.

Abraham provides a picture of God the Father. As Abraham loved His son Isaac, so God loved His Son, our Lord Jesus. John 3:35 says, *“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.”* And John 5:20 says: *“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”*

Both of those verses are pictured in Genesis 22. As they walked together to the place of sacrifice with the wood and the fire, Abraham shared his thoughts with his beloved son Isaac, the promised heir into whose hand “all was given.”

As Abraham did not spare his own son, so God did not spare His own Son. Romans 8:32: *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* God did not spare His Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

In Isaac there is a picture of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, who went willingly to the place of sacrifice. *“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”* (v9). Isaac was at least a teenager, and he could easily have resisted being bound and placed on that altar. But he went willingly; he went voluntarily.

In John 10:17-18, the Lord Jesus said: *“My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”* That voluntary laying down of His life is pictured here in Genesis 22. Isaac willingly carrying the wood for the sacrifice and the Lord Jesus willingly carrying His cross may also be part of the picture.

In Genesis 22, of course, Isaac was not actually sacrificed. “The Angel of the Lord” stopped Abraham by calling out to him: “Abraham, Abraham.” Who was the “Angel of the Lord”? In the Old Testament, the Angel of the Lord is none other than the pre-incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Himself. The Angel of the Lord is never mentioned in the New Testament because the Son of God had then taken on flesh and become Man.

The Angel of the Lord stopped the knife in Abraham’s hand. However, in the case of our Lord Jesus the “knife was not stopped.” The Lord Jesus died as the sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifice of Isaac is a *type* of the death of Christ.

2. The “receiving back” of Isaac is a *type* of the resurrection of Christ.

If we only had the Genesis account, we might conclude that seeing the resurrection of Christ in this spiritual picture might be forcing the *type* too far - but we don't just have the Genesis account! We have the inspired commentary on this event in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 11:17-19: *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”* (Some translations actually say “as a type” rather than “in a figurative sense.” The meaning is the same.)

So the sacrifice of Isaac is not only a picture of the **death** of Christ, but it is also a picture of the **resurrection** of Christ. Thus Isaac can be seen as a *type* of the resurrected Christ in some of the following chapters. In Genesis 24, when Abraham sent his servant out to find a bride for Isaac, we may see a *type* of the Holy Spirit calling out the Church as a bride for Christ, following His resurrection. What a wonderful picture! The “receiving back” of Isaac is a *type* of the resurrection of Christ!

Practical Application

Have you come to know God as Jehovah-Jireh?

Verse 14: *“And Abraham called the name of the place, “Jehovah-Jireh”- The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”*

God has revealed Himself in Scripture by a number of different names. These names reveal God's character. Some of the names by which God reveals Himself are compound names, such as here: “Jehovah-Jireh.”

Jehovah means LORD and is thus written in capital letters in many Bibles: “LORD.” It's distinguished from another Hebrew word meaning “Lord” by using all capitals. The correct pronunciation of this Hebrew name for LORD is probably “Yahweh” rather than “Jehovah,” but we'll use Jehovah because it is the better-known name.

Jehovah is the name by which God reveals Himself as the LORD who cares for His people – who keeps His covenants with His people. Combined with “Jireh,” this compound name means, “The LORD will see to it” or “**The LORD will provide.**” God provides for his people! Have you come to know God as “Jehovah-Jireh” - the God who provides for His people? As God provided for Abraham, God will provide for you.

The Lord let Abraham go right to the brink in this test of his faith, but He “provided” in the nick of time! God may do that with us. He may test our faith, even taking us right to the brink - but He will provide! He is Jehovah-Jireh! Whatever your

needs may be, God will provide. Do you have physical needs? Do you have emotional needs? Do you have family needs? God is Jehovah-Jireh for you. The Lord will provide.

Here's an illustration from my own life. Back in 1971 I left my job as a research scientist to serve the Lord full time. Our unwritten agreement with the Lord at that time was that as long as the Lord met our family's basic needs, we would assume that He wanted us to stay in full time ministry. Well, some years ago the Lord put us through a time of testing, and we got down to our last fifty dollars. All our bills were paid, but I really thought I might soon have to return to secular employment to provide for our family. Margie had a bit more faith than I had at that point, and she said, "Wait a minute! We kind of agreed with the Lord that if we got down to *nothing* we'd start job-hunting!" So we prayed about this and left the matter in the Lord's hands, but we didn't tell anyone.

That very weekend I was the speaker at an out-of-town conference, and I will never forget what happened. Nothing like that had ever happened before, and it has never happened that way since - but as people were shaking my hand at the end of the conference, there were folded bills and checks in their palms as we shook hands. People tucked money into my pockets as I was leaving the church. As I flew home I kept finding checks and cash in my pockets! It was unbelievable. We had not shared our needs with anyone but the Lord - and God proved Himself to us as Jehovah-Jireh: The Lord who provides for us.

The Lord did see, and He did care, and He did provide for us. And that's just one example in the area of the need of finances. Whatever your needs may be, bring them to God our Father, who is the God who Provides! Come to know God as Jehovah-Jireh!