

Lesson: The Lord will Provide (Gen 22)

The two images of God given in chapters 20-21 showed God as both protector and promise keeper. It only makes sense that we see God next as a provider. This chapter is one of the most controversial in all of Christian Scripture. God’s command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac has no precedent and God would never tell any other human to do this again. But it provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the lengths God will go to provide for his people an abundance beyond anything we could ever dream.

Biblical Takeaways

1. *God tested Abraham (22:1-2)*

- a. The first verse indicates that God “tested” Abraham. The tests of God are not for failure but for edification. God does not test to make us fall. God tests build us up. God tests because we are unproven and flawed and he desires to make us better and more faithful to him.
- b. God challenged Abraham with this controversial command. He told him to take “your only son Isaac” to a place in the land of Moriah and offer him on one of the mountains I will show you. (1) It should be observed that there are no other commandments to do child sacrifice, in fact, it is completely condemned throughout the Bible. (2) God called Isaac Abraham’s only son. Ishmael was still considered Abraham’s son (see Gen 25:9, 12). But he was not Abraham’s heir. As such, the Lord calls Isaac Abraham’s only son. This statement pertains to the promise more than anything. (3) Abraham was to go to a place the Lord would show him, the same directive God gave in the very beginning in regard to the land of Canaan. In other words, this is a pivotal moment in the furtherance of God’s will not just for Abraham but for the world.

2. *God shows Abraham worship (22:3-8)*

- a. Abraham obeyed God. He rose early to go to wherever the Lord would show him. The very fact that he walked out without knowing where he was going showed faith and trust in the hand of God. There is no hint of dissent, though we do not know what Abraham was thinking. Even if he had doubts, his actions did not show it. He gathered his servants and his son and began the journey collecting wood to make Isaac a burnt offering along the way. On the third day, meaning Abraham walked for two days without knowing where he was going, God finally showed Abraham the place.
- b. Abraham had no idea of what God would do but he spoke with confidence. When speaking to his helpers, Abraham explained (v. 5) **we** will go over there, **we** will worship, and **we** will come back to you. If Isaac was supposed to be a burnt offering, why did Abraham say, “we.” He believed God would do something (see Heb 11:17-19).
- c. Isaac also asked about what was going to happen. He saw the wood and the fire for the burnt offering but no burnt offering. This means that Abraham at no point told him what he was about to do to him. But Abraham’s confidence in God showed through again. He explained, God will provide an offering himself. Abraham had no idea of the future implications of this statement. The statement is true in general. God always provides his own sacrifice. He made everything we give back to him. But then, it is also true of our salvation. We are saved because God provided the lamb.

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3. ***The Lord will Provide (22:9-14)***

- a. When Abraham finally arrived at the place, he bound Isaac and prepared him to be sacrificed. While he prepared to kill his son, the angel of the Lord spoke to him and told him to stop. He had passed the test. He did not withhold his son, his promise, from God. We can learn from this that whatever promise God gives can become an idol. We should never allow our promise to be more important than the promise giver. We should always be willing to give what we have back to God. God gave it to us in the first place. The test proved that Abraham feared God or that he loved God more than Isaac. We can never love anything more than God. And no one will ever love us more than God does.
- b. While Abraham was obeying God, the ram was caught in the thicket. He did not have to go look for it. All he had to do was look and see the ram was always there. When we focus on doing God’s will, we will not always see God’s provision at first, but it will always be there.
- c. Abraham called the place, “the Lord will provide.” We say Jehovah Jireh. But this is not the proper rendering of the original Hebrew. But the idea is the same: The Lord always provides for his people. No matter what it is, God will make sure we have what we need. In the Hebrew, the word for “provide” is *raah*. It means “to see.” That is, God always sees what we need. In this case, it is not just seeing visually but seeing to it. When God sees an empty place, God fills it. The worst thing for us is for God to turn his face from us.

4. ***God’s promise of Provision is beyond imagination (22:15-19)***

- a. God followed up to confirm the promises he had already made. God swore on himself (see Heb 6:13-20). No one else is greater. He promised to take this one boy and multiply for a seed more numerous than the stars and the sand. Here, God has reminded Abraham of previous promises.
- b. V. 18 shows why this last test was so pivotal. All of the nations will be blessed because of Abraham’s obedience. The seed of Abraham would be the means through which God blesses the entire world. That seed was only Isaac as symbol but Jesus in actuality.

5. ***Abraham’s Family Explored (22:20-24)***: The chapter concludes with Abraham’s family to tell us the origin of Rebekah, the future wife of Isaac.