

God Will Provide 6-3-07

Genesis 22:5-24

(Please read Genesis 22) Last week we covered the first four verses and considered the tests God brings into our lives to help us put Him first and foremost. Abraham didn't hesitate to obey the call of God. It was a call that was amazingly similar to the first call to leave and go to a place God would show him. Both were a call of separation from family. Both were a call to put God first in His life. Both could be called 'the family test'. He compromised in obeying that first test, and outright failed in some of the tests that followed. Nevertheless, he learned from those tests. His faith was growing, and he was becoming a man of faith. It's the same kind of a journey that all those who are Abraham's children experience. If you are on that journey of faith, then you are his children. (Romans 9:8) We compromise at times and often fail, but we are moving forward in faith.

Commented [notes1]: 8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

Now Abraham has come to this final test, the test of full surrender. We journeyed with them those three days and felt the anguish in Abraham's soul. We felt the struggle of faith and heard the confident conclusion. Even if Isaac would be burned to ash as a sacrifice, God would keep his word and raise him up. God promise that Isaac was to be the one through whom Abraham would become the father of many people. God's word could not fail. God was faithful even when Abraham was faithless, and Abraham reasoned that not even death could change the faithfulness of God's word.

Then he expressed those words of faith in out text for today. ⁵ *He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."* WE will come back to you. He didn't say, "I", he said, "we" will come back. He believed, and he voiced that belief. If God could preserve his life from Pharaoh and Abimelech, rescue him from the four kings of the north, level the wicked cities of the plain, cause his 90-year-old wife to have a child, then nothing is too hard for Him. He can raise Isaac from ashes. He said with great confidence, "We will come back to you." (Hebrews 11:19)

Commented [notes2]: 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

⁶ *Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,* The donkey had been carrying the load of wood, and now it went on the back of the stronger of the two men. That means Isaac must have at been in his teens. The same term is used for him that was used for Ishmael at the age of 16.

We've seen so many parallel accounts in Genesis and here is another. Both sons were teens when God called for a separation. Both drew close to death. Both were spared by Divine intervention.

The verse ends with the phrase, "*the two of them went on together*". We will see the phrase again. The expression in Hebrew implies a unity of purpose. It is the opposite of being double minded. That is important for us to keep in mind.

Abraham carried the knife and the fire (or fire stone). The glaring absence was the sacrificial lamb. No one had asked on the whole journey. Perhaps they sensed by Abraham's silence that it was a question that should not be asked. But now, as they climbed Moriah, to the place the Temple would one day be built by Solomon, Isaac could wait no longer. ⁷ *Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"* Isaac dared to bring it up. All through the passage we can see the terms of endearment. This is the son Abraham loves. They walked together. Isaac asked, "Father?" and Abraham responded literally, "Here I am." Notice in verse one, Abraham responded to God with the same expression. We'll see this expression again. Then the question they had been avoiding finally came. *"Where is the lamb?"*

⁸ *Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.* Isaac was the lamb. The son Abraham loved was the lamb. The one who carried the wood and the lamb were the same. God provided Isaac. His was a miracle birth. (Genesis 21:1) The tears must have been flowing down Abraham's face as they moved on up the mountain. Then there is the phrase again, *the two of them went on together.* Isaac trusted his father. He knew how much he loved him. They went on up the mountain with one mind. If his father said it, then Isaac believed it.

⁹ *When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.* Just as God had led Abraham to the Promised Land, He now led him to a spiritual promised land, a place of full surrender. He built an altar. That probably meant that he arranged some stones to elevate the sacrifice off the ground. He placed the wood and prepared it for the igniting spark.

The Jewish people refer to this chapter as "the binding". The tension had risen to a crescendo. The Scripture is silent on how this took place, but we suspect it was with Isaac's submission that Abraham bound him and placed him on top of the wood. Did he explain to his son his faith that God would keep His word and raise him from the dead? Did Isaac have a like faith in his father and his father's God? We can only guess. There is never a hint in Scripture that this traumatized Isaac. We do know that this aged man somehow put his son on the wood upon the altar.

¹⁰ *Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.* This is often pictured as lifting his hand high in the air holding the knife, ready to thrust it into Isaac's heart, but that is not the Jewish way of sacrifice. Instead, picture the knife lying near Isaac's head and Abraham reaches out to take it and put it to the jugular of his son. He is ready to make the cut quickly, the almost painless shallow cut of his flint knife that would cause the lifeblood to drain from his son. Ready? "God has promised!" Set! "He WILL raise him..."

We relate to Abraham and try to imagine ourselves in his place, but what about Isaac. He must have just been told. He didn't have time to work through it. He allowed himself to be bound, but his mind must have been racing. "Should I plead for

Commented [notes3]: 1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.

mercy? Should I try to roll off the altar? Will God really raise me from the ashes? Will I ever see my mother again?" And before the muscles could contract in Abraham's arm to slide the knife across his beloved son's throat, he heard his name called out, not once but twice.

¹¹ *But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.* The angel called his name. Remember that his name means father of many nations. "Father of many nations! Father of many nations!" the angel called to him as he held the knife to the promised son's throat. Abraham responded now for the third time in the text. "Here I am." The first was when God gave him the test. The second in response was to his son, and now when the angel called out. It is the response of a slave to his master. "Here I am. What is my instruction?" But it is also a term of availability to those he loves.

¹² *"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."* Order rescinded. It was not that God did not know Abraham's heart. Again, God is speaking as a man for Abraham's and our sake, so that we can relate. It was Abraham that now realized that he had finally come to the place of putting God first. All his life he had longed for this son. Now that he had come, his heart was so attached to him. But his spirit longed for something more, and now he knew he had attained it.

Jesus said that if anyone loves father or mother or anything more than Him, they are not worthy of Him. (Matthew 10:37) To set our love on a creation to a greater extent than the love we have for our Creator is to make the person or thing into an idol. It is to have more love for a thing of less worth, than for the One of ultimate worth. Abraham had come to the place of finally putting God above even that which was dearest to him. This was what his heart really longed for, even if he did not fully understand the desire. That desire is a gift of God that I pray each of us is beginning to realize has been given to us. It's not to love others less, but to love God more. (Matthew 22:37)

¹³ *Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.* Just as Hagar was caused to see the well of water that would save their lives (Genesis 21:19), so Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the immediate provision of God. Abraham had spoken the words, "God himself will provide..." or as the KJV says, "God will provide Himself a lamb..." (KJV)

¹⁴ *So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."* I think Abraham was in awe of how the LORD brought his words to pass in a way he didn't consider. When He said God would provide the lamb, I believe he meant Isaac. But God took his words and did something completely different. (1Samuel 3:19) We need to understand that God could have raised Isaac from the ashes, but God was sparing Abraham the trauma of it. He had settled the matter in his heart, and that was what mattered. (1Kings 8:61) Then God took Abraham's words and brought them about in His own way, a ram

Commented [notes4]: 37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

Commented [notes5]: 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Commented [notes6]: 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

Commented [notes7]: 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Commented [notes8]: 19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.

Commented [notes9]: 61 But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."

caught in a thicket. I imagine its horns stuck hopelessly ensnared in the branches. God provided. Then why is the name in the future tense?

Abraham and Isaac worshipped. The boy and his father had seen divine intervention along with divine provision. Talk about a mountaintop experience! Their emotions had run the gamut of fear and sorrow, to heart pounding urgency, to relief and surprise, and finally to worship and wonder. But they only had a limited perspective of what God had done.

Looking back we can see that God had so much more than Abraham and Isaac could possibly see. God, too, would have an only beloved Son. (John 3:16) He would also be born miraculously but instead of to an aging couple, His mother would be a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14) Both cases didn't prove to be too hard for God. He has way in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. He speaks and it comes to pass. (Psalm 115:3)

God's son carried the wood upon which He would be laid up the very same mountain, Mount Moriah. Even a Jewish exegete before the time of Christ the parallel of the wood being like the cross a criminal carried. As painful as that climb was to Abraham, it was to God and more when his only Son carried His cross. (Romans 8:32) All throughout the Old Covenant, God had pictured the redemption of our sins coming by way of a sacrificial lamb (Leviticus 4:35), and there on Moriah He gave one for Abraham and his son and one for the sins of the world. God did provide. Did Abraham say God will provide even after receiving the ram because he had a revelation that his sins would be atoned for on that very place by the perfect Lamb of God? Why didn't he call the place The Lord Provided?

Their names were equally as ironic as they each lay upon their wood, separated in time by 2 millennia. One was named "Laughter" but nothing could have looked sadder. The other "Salvation of JAH" and he couldn't have looked less like salvation. But laughter did come, and so did salvation.

Here is where the stories differ. When God intervened in Abraham's story, it was because He knew He would not intervene in the execution of His own Son. When God stopped Abraham's hand, He already knew the pain of a father who had seen His own Son dying, only to stand back in painful sorrow as He heard His Son cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1)

God took the words Abraham uttered and made them come to pass in a way that is more painful and yet more glorious than Abraham could have ever imagined. God did provide Himself, the Lamb. God gave Himself as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. On the mountain of the Lord, redemption was provided for us all, just as Abraham predicted. (Galatians 3:13-14)

The parallels don't end there. The two servants represent the same two that Jesus met on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 17:4) They wait for the return of the Father and Son. The three-day journey pictures the three days in the grave, for to Abraham, Isaac was dead from the time they started the

Commented [notes10]: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Commented [notes11]: 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Commented [notes12]: 3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Commented [notes13]: 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Commented [notes14]: 35 He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

Commented [notes15]: 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from the words of my groaning?

Commented [notes16]: 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Commented [notes17]: 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

journey. (Hebrews 11:19) We will not see Isaac again until we see him receiving his bride. (Genesis 24:62-64) And so with Jesus, when He comes for His bride, the long wait will be over. The closing portion of the chapter is to introduce the future bride of Isaac, Rebecca, just as Jesus' death and resurrection began introducing the bride of Christ, the church. (Revelation 21:2) How many of you thought it was just another tacked on genealogy? The word of God is so much more than we see at first.

Are all these things just coincidence, beloved son, Mount Moriah, carried his own wood, sacrifice, God provided, three days, and seen again when he receives his bride? Redemption has been in the heart of God from before the creation of the world. Standing outside of time He painted picture after picture for you and me to realize that He doesn't want to live without us. If He would not intervene in the death of His own Son, so that we could come into a relationship with Him, then how much does our relationship mean to Him? More than you can imagine! God loves you! How much does that mean to you? (1John 4:19)

Then the angel of the LORD reiterated the promises to Abraham. The promises were based solely on grace, but now the promises are said to be because of Abraham's obedience. Enabling grace was expressed in obedience. ¹⁸ *and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.* The really amazing thing is that promise was fulfilled in the parallel I just spoke of. The world was blessed when God did not withhold His Son, the *offspring*, from dying in our place. The destiny found in both names did come to pass. When hell was cheering the death of Jesus, God was laughing as He brought about His salvation; the powers of hell and death itself were doomed. (Psalm 2:4)

It is also because of the obedience of Jesus to be a sacrifice that God has granted Him a name above every name, and promised that every knee will one day bow to Him. (Philippians 2:8-10) Obedience brings great blessing. Think of the road that Abraham took to get to this place of surrender. Now he knows that God is the priority of his life. Now he knows that he has passed the ultimate test. His belief has now translated into his decisions and actions. That is where God is taking us.

We may be on the road to full surrender as Abraham was before this test. We may be passing some tests and failing some temptations, but God is working in us so that our faith will be consistently manifested in our thoughts, words, and actions. (Philippians 2:13) Faith must be expressed in life. James explained this to us and used this very story as an illustration. 2:²¹ *Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?*²² *You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.*²³ *And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.*

God wants your friendship, and He is working in you to bring your belief to a place of manifesting itself in your daily life. He is building your faith to a place of putting your Isaacs on the altar. Scary? Not when you see the extent He went to redeem you, the love that motivated it, and the destiny He has planned for you.

Commented [notes18]: 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Commented [notes19]: 62 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63 He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel

Commented [notes20]: 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Commented [notes21]: 19 We love because he first loved us.

Commented [notes22]: 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Commented [notes23]: 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Commented [notes24]: 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.