

Yahweh Yireh: The Lord will Provide

Genesis 22:1–19

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Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

The name Elohim is the creator of all things. The name Yahweh or Jehovah is found in Genesis chapter two when Adam and Eve were created. Yahweh or Jehovah is often translated in the Old Testament as Lord and Elohim as God. The Hebrew people had such great reverence for Elohim that they used the name Yahweh. Jehovah is the Latin translation.

Yahweh is the only God, not to be mistaken for any idol. Devotion to Yahweh is singular and absolute. Yahweh will not share His title and will not tolerate being second. Yahweh, to bring about great devotion and commitment, will provide us with a test. He knows how we will respond, He wants us to choose Him in the face of challenges and hardships.

This message today is meant to help us trust Jesus regardless of how we view the challenges. Let me tell you a shocking story. One day the Lord said to Abraham, sacrifice your son. Sounds barbaric to us, right? Sounds sadistic and evil, right? The people would often sacrifice an animal as demonstration of their commitment and adoration. When Noah left the ark he offered a sacrifice. Abraham on previous occasions offered sacrifices.

Yahweh had already promised to Abraham, an old man, that he would be the father of a great nation. Abraham had already been asked to leave his homeland and go to a new land. Abraham had failed to honor Yahweh when he traveled to Egypt. Abraham had called out to Yahweh to save his nephew. In every situation Yahweh provided for Abraham. Yahweh gave Abraham direction in where to go, the resources to prosper, and victories over the opposition.

I'm sharing this because we need to be faithful to God regardless of what the Lord says. This request is a test many of us might have failed. The Lord was about to prove to Abraham that he actually had faith.

Abraham gathered the wood, the fire, his son, and two helpers. They traveled by foot for two days and on the third day Abraham and son made the last of the trip. While they were traveling the son said to Abraham, "We have wood and fire, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" Abraham replied to his only son, "The Lord will provide the lamb my son."

They traveled further until they came to the place the Lord designated for the sacrifice. The son was bound and laid upon the wood. Abraham raised the knife to sacrifice the son. The Lord called to Abraham, "Stop! You have been faithful to sacrifice your son. Your faith has been proven. You will be Abraham of a great nation, whose descendants outnumber the sands on the shore, they will drive out your enemies."

Abraham looked and there was a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. Abraham sacrificed the ram. ***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." Genesis 22:14 (ESV)***

This is the account of Abraham is when he was counted as being in a right relationship with the Lord. This is the account of the Lord proving to Abraham that he had faith in the Lord.

The Lord created us to be in a relationship with Him: a relationship of trust. Yahweh is the Lord of relationships who created not only the world but the people who live on it. It is easy to be faithful when all is going well.

James 1:13 (CSB)

No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God,” since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn’t tempt anyone.

The Lord is not a tempter to sin, but the God who proves to us that we have faith. So often the account of Abraham, Isaac, and the Lord is miss understood. Sacrificing another person is incomprehensible, as it should be. Even the word test used in this passage to proclaim what Yahweh Yireh was demanding of Abraham is confusing. The Lord Provider knew the outcome. Abraham and Isaac didn’t know the outcome. They had to trust Yahweh Yireh or Jehovah Jireh. Abraham had to believe Yahweh would be Yireh or the Lord would Provide.

Abraham lived his life like you and me, up and down faith. To demonstrate to Abraham that Yahweh was Yireh, and that he trusted Yahweh, this test took place. There is a difference between tempting someone to sin: the work of the devil; and testing someone to prove to them that they have faith.

Faith is easy when nothing is at risk. Faith is genuine when anything and everything are at risk. Therefore, when the devil tempts us we can trust the Lord to provide all that we need to overcome. When the Lord puts a test in our path we can trust the Lord to provide all that we need to overcome. You might think I’m splitting hairs, and I am, but this hair is very important to how we operate in life, and how we trust the Lord to provide.

To see beyond the sacrifice and trust the Lord is to be righteous, to be in a right relationship. Now, don’t get overwhelmed by the idea of a human sacrifice, we’ve already discussed it. This is important that we recognize that the sacrifice of an animal, or a possession is the act of faith and trust. Every sacrifice is an action that proclaims our loyalty and commitment.

We make sacrifices even today. We don’t put them on an altar and burn them. We make the choice to surrender something to demonstrate our faith in the Lord. We sacrifice our time to read scripture, meditate, and pray. We sacrifice our time to gather with other believers to sing praise and to learn about Jesus. We sacrifice our time to serve and meet the needs of others. We sacrifice our money to support the work of Jesus. We sacrifice our human desires and wants to remain loyal to Jesus. We do all these things because the sacrifice is not as important as Jesus. We have a new desire that compels us to let go of something so that we can hold onto Jesus.

Our experience is no different than Abraham’s. God’s request is no different than Abraham’s.

Matthew 10:28–31 (CSB) Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

We think we know the end, but the Lord sees all before it happens. These words from Jesus demonstrate the ultimate power and authority of the Lord. The power to destroy soul and body in hell belongs to the Lord alone. These words certainly sound strange to our ears. Consider this: Jesus is

talking about the same God who asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. The Lord had no intention for Isaac to be destroyed in hell. The Lord had no intention of Isaac dying at the hands of his father. Abraham without ever hearing these words had faith that this same God would provide. Yahweh Yireh can take life as well as give life. Yahweh Yireh can destroy a life in hell. Yahweh is the one who can provide all of these things. Abraham trusted Yahweh as Yireh: the Lord who provides.

These words aren't from an angry god, but from the saving, loving, all knowing Lord of life. What starts out as a strange expression is expanded to demonstrate the Lord as knowing even when a sparrow dies. Let's look at this for a minute or two. Jesus was certainly using this illustration because people ignore sparrows. They are just another creature moving among us. We simply share space with them. Jesus proclaims that the Lord, Yahweh, who created us for a relationship has a relationship even with sparrows. Abraham unaware of Yahweh's love for sparrows trusted Yahweh with his own son. Abraham had faith that the Lord was watching and would provide.

Yahweh Yireh knows what He is going to provide for us each day. The crisis that we don't see coming, He has already seen and positioned for us the resources we will need. If the Lord Provider can put a ram in thicket, then imagine what He can do in your life. It is no wonder that Jesus tells us not to be afraid. We can trust the Lord to provide what we can't see. We can trust the Lord to know what we will need. We can trust the Lord to save us from our sins.

No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 (CSB)

Even Abraham without knowing what we know believed the Lord would provide. Since we know that the testing of the Lord proves our faith, we need to pay attention to where the Lord is working and join Him there. We get caught up in the temptation, and not the power and guidance of the Lord. We worry about the impact of our sins. We don't see that the Lord has provided. He has given us a way out of the sin. As our life is easy or hard the question isn't "why" or "what do you want me to learn". The response is, Jesus I trust you and help me to trust you more.

Abraham could have heard the Lord's command as a temptation. Honestly, that's what I might have done. Furthermore, I might have ignored the words of the Lord. I've got some history to prove that I try to ignore the Lord. Do you try to ignore the Lord? Jonah when commanded by the Lord decided to run away instead of trusting the Lord. Peter when commanded by the Lord decided to deny he knew the Lord. We couldn't fault with Abraham if he had made either one of those choices. The reason we call Abraham the father of our faith is because he trusted the Lord. He believed the Lord would provide. His statement to his son that the Lord would provide was a proclamation and a request. He trusted Yahweh Yireh and he stated that he needed to trust Yahweh more.

Yahweh was at work, Abraham had to join Him in His work. It was never about the sacrifice, it was always about trust. Abraham needed to be connected, united with the Lord so that he could see his own faith. Regardless of the things that are happening if we aren't connected to the Lord, we won't see the way out, we won't trust the Lord, and will fall to the temptation: disobeying the Lord. It wasn't about the sacrifice, it wasn't about Abraham taking Isaac's life. Yahweh was providing a ram, Yahweh was holding back Abraham's arm. It was about Abraham believing in the Lord who provides.

There are ministry opportunities right in front of us if we take a step of faith. When we face the temptation, the test, the challenge remember the Lord will provide. Yahweh Yireh has seen the outcome, provided the outcome, and is waiting on us to take the step of faith.

Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, 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. James 2:21–23 (CSB)

Hear the Lord's command, then go trusting the Lord will provide the words and actions. I hope I've helped you to understand that the Lord has something for us to do and to become. At home with your family, be like Jesus. At work, when out in the world, be like Jesus. This is the first and foremost thing the Lord wants you to do, be like Jesus. Your life in Christ, redeemed from the power of sin by the blood of Jesus is to be like Jesus. Jesus entered our world to save us from sin, not tempt us to sin. He became our sin on the cross, died as our sin, and rose from the dead to overcome sin. His entire life in heaven and on earth is lived to overcome sin through His power and authority as the Son of God. As He walked this earth, as He rules from heaven, and lives in our hearts is to share mercy, grace, and love. To live like Jesus at home, at work, at leisure is share the mercy, grace, and love of Jesus. The Lord is proving to us that we have the faith to be faithful to this mission.

Abraham had something the Lord wanted him to do, or should I say become. The Lord wanted Abraham to live as the Father of a great nation that would bless all people in every generation. Abraham had to know that he had the faith to be like Jesus, even though Abraham didn't know Jesus.

Jesus has something He wants you to do or for you to become. Each of us as individuals have something we need to do or to become. Trust the Lord to provide. Trust the Lord to show what He wants you to do or become.

Right now I am facing a test. Do I step out in faith, trusting the Lord to provide, or do I lack the faith and shrink back? This past week the Lord created two opportunities, or tests concerning the homeless population in Coshocton. This isn't old news, is it? I took this step of faith a few years ago. Now the Lord, Jesus Christ has put the opportunity in front of me again. Is the Lord testing me? I believe He is. I'm listening to how He wants me to proceed.

Right now I believe we are facing a test. We might be pushed to do what we believe is impossible, incomprehensible, out of our comfort zone. I believe the test will be revealed to us very soon. When the test is revealed we can take a step of faith. We can trust the Lord to provide. He is the provider: Yahweh Yireh, Jehovah Jireh.

The Lord is the God who proves to us that we have faith. The Lord sees all of it before it happens. The Lord will provide. Hear the Lord's command, then go trusting the Lord will provide.