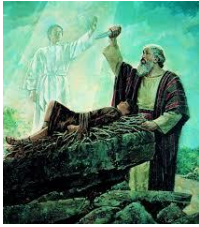


Names of God III: Jehovah Jireh
Desert Light Church, March 24, 2019



Rev. John Odhner of Bryn Athyn Church said, “I think that God is loving, so some stories in the Bible make me do a double-take—“God said what?!” God’s name, “Jehovah Jireh” is translated, “The LORD provides” from Genesis 22:1-19 from when God called, tested, and told Abraham to travel on a 45 mile mission- “Take your son to a mountain, to kill him with a knife, and burn his corpse as offering to God”. Yet God promised in Exodus 21:12, **“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”** How, if he was dead and burnt? From Hebrews 11:18, **“He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead”** (Hebrews 11:18). Abraham trusted God would keep his word. Right before he was about to do it, God told him, “Don’t kill him!” and provided a ram caught in bushes and said to Abraham, **“Now I know you fear God.”** This raises serious questions: If God knew Abraham’s faith, why did He have to test Him? If God says now I know, does it mean He didn’t know before? Why didn’t Isaac resist? Is this a cruel joke? What kind of God would do this? Wouldn’t a person who did that have mental health issues? What is the point of this story?

God called Abraham, not the other way around. Often God calls a person to what seems bizarre, impossible, unthinkable or unbelievable. He calls everyone to follow Jesus, from the world’s point of view all of the above, but in Jesus, He provides what we need to do His will when we do what God wants from us.

Here is the text and commentary of Genesis 22:1-19,

22:1 After these things God tested Abraham God tests us not to discover our progress, but to reveal it. **and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” 2 He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,** God at times calls us to surrender what we love. **and go to the land of Moriah,** In Genesis, names of people and places matter. Abraham means, “Father of a multitude,” Isaac means laughter, ” Moriah means most likely, more likely, “myrrh from YHWH.” Myrrh points to the cross. This is a very prophetic text. **offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”** 2 Chronicles 3:1 says the temple was built on Mt. Moriah. A burnt offering required slitting the neck and burning the corpse.

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

God had already promised that Isaac would bear his descendants. Abraham believed God so whatever would happen, He trusted that God would do it. At 7 years old, my niece Jessica had rings on every finger. I asked if she loved Jesus so much she’d give up anything for Him. She said, “Yes.” I asked her, “What if...what if He told you to give up your rings? She said, “*We’d have to negotiate.*” Her 5 year old sister Andrea said, I’d give them up because He’ll give better ones.”

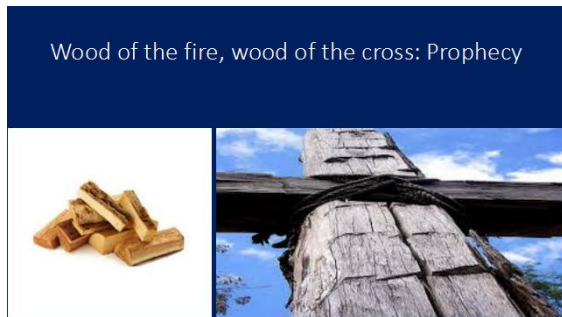
4 On the third day Add 3rd day to a father giving up his beloved son to die and this is bold faced prophecy of the cross and resurrection. **Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw**

the place from afar. He had time to think and turn back. God wants us to serve Him by determined choice, not emotional impulse.

5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.”

God calls and tests people who worship Him. He seeks out worshipers according to John 4:23, **“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.”...**

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” It appears Isaac is clueless. **8 Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.**



Wood of the fire points to the wood of the cross. Isaac was placed upon the wood as a preview that the Son of God, not the son of Abraham was the acceptable sacrifice. The word translated, “provide,” is *Jireh*, which literally means, “to see,” but only in this chapter takes on the meaning of, “provide.” This is a prophecy of Jesus The Lamb of God, provided as the sacrifice that was slain only once for everyone, everywhere,

for all time, for everything wrong ever thought, said, or done.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

Why didn't Isaac resist? At this time he was a young man. Like Abraham trusted God, did he also trust his dad and his dad's God? My daughter was a fearless 10 year old gymnast. We lived on a third floor apartment in Romania and from the ground, looking up at my daughter in the window, just kidding I said, “Jump down to daddy! She yelled back, “OK!” and stepped back and started to run to the window. I screamed “Nooooooooo-I was kidding!” Fortunately she stopped. But she trusted me with even the bizarre. I must say that when she became a teenager, things changed quite a bit!

10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” 12 He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

Does that mean God doesn't know what we will choose? Of course not. The word "know" or *yada* in Hebrew also means, "have intimacy," or "experience." Genesis 4:1, "**Now Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived.**" That is, "knowing in the biblical sense." God who knew Abraham's faith from eternity past, experienced it in close intimacy in time. Pastor Antonio from a coastal town in Brazil could neither read nor write, but memorized the entire bible from His dad reading it to him. Skeptics challenged him. One priest asked, "Did God know Abraham's faith?" He answered, "Of course." "Then why did God have to test him if He knew his faith?" Antonio replied, "If God didn't test him, how would you and I know his faith?"

It says that the one who intervened was, "The angel of YHWH." This is a title, and in the OT it is *often* possible to apply it to Jesus before He was born as a human. The words, *malakh YHWH* appear 65 times in the Old Testament. Malakh means "messenger," or "angel." YHWH is God's covenant name, referred to as Yahweh, or Jehovah. English translations render it as LORD in capital letters. The "**angel of the LORD**" that appeared to Abraham and Isaac in this text could be Jesus Himself. The literal meaning of the word, "angel" means messenger, *usually* refers to created spiritual beings. But Jesus appeared before He became a man. Those events are known as His pre-incarnate appearances the theological term is *Christophany*. Several times He showed up briefly for a special moment to call someone to a special purpose. In those events, the Old Testament refers to, "The Angel of Yahweh." Though He arrived in those situations with a message, He was no ordinary messenger, or angel. At Moses' burning bush the Angel of Yahweh said, "**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**" (Exodus 3:6). "**My angel**" which God says, "*My name is in Him*" (Exodus 23:20-23) is truly different than an ordinary angel. The angel appearing to Samson's parents' name was "**Wonderful**" (Judges 13:18) a name used for Jesus in a prophecy (Isaiah 9:6). He accepted worship from Moses (Exodus 3:1-5) and Joshua (Joshua 5:14-15), and told both to remove their sandals, "**standing on holy ground.**" Joseph called God, "**the angel who has redeemed me from all evil**" (Genesis 48:15-16). Sometimes, God Himself was the messenger and didn't use created spirits. Jacob wrestled with an angel according to Hosea 12:4, but according to Genesis 32:22-32, it was God. By the way, this is God who understands everyone and understands all who told Abraham to offer up his son, do not try this at home!

The famous God hater, atheist Richard Dawkins uses this text to ridicule God as a child abuser, "God ordered Abraham to make a burnt offering of his longed-for son. Abraham built an altar, put firewood upon it, and trussed Isaac up on top of the wood. His murdering knife was already in his hand when an angel dramatically intervened with the news of a last-minute change of plan: God was only joking after all, 'tempting' Abraham, and testing his faith. A modern moralist cannot help but wonder how a child could ever recover from such a psychological trauma. By the standards of modern morality, this disgraceful story is an example simultaneously of child abuse, bullying in two asymmetrical power relationships, and the first recorded use of the Nuremberg defence: 'I was only obeying orders.' Yet the legend is one of the great foundational myths of all three monotheistic religions." His point is, "See how stupid it is to believe in this God."

Dawkins is wrong on 4 counts, **1-** it's no legend or myth, **2-** God wasn't joking, He was preparing to bless a man with a nation descended after him, **3-** When God is

involved, modern moralists step aside, it is no trauma to meet the living God on His own terms but a blessing to encounter the creator. However, the greatest trauma ever is to die without sins forgiven and face God's judgment 4- This wasn't trauma it was a great historical event in time and eternity.

God never allowed the murder, but let Abraham obey because he trusted that God would give Him Isaac back. Instead of trauma, Abraham experienced that Isaac's miracle birth to a 100 year-old dad and a mom in her 90's was the real thing and God meant everything He said. It was affirmation not trauma. If a human did this, it'd be manipulation, but in God's case it is a historical event for the ages, and eternity, and a demonstration of what lengths God would go to to save our souls from the greater horror of sin. For God, unlike Abraham would deliver His only Son, the one He loves, to death.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 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."

In the Old King James bible it says, "**And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.**" The King James translators in second appearance of *jireh* used the literal, "shall be seen." *Jireh*, literally, "see" is translated "provide" in modern translations because it means that for one who obeys God and worships Him, He will "see to everything" that person needs. In this case it was the very presence of Jesus!

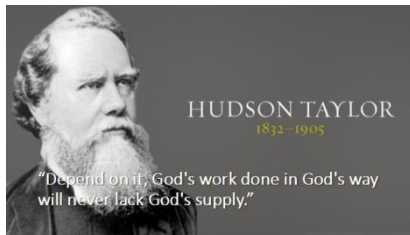
15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.



John Odhner said that, "On a literal level, the Bible shows Abraham believing that God really wanted him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Yet elsewhere the Bible states that God did not desire nor command that kind of sacrifice. "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire...burnt offering and sin offering You have not required" (Psalm 40:6). On a deeper level this story is telling us symbolically what love is like. Genuine love is sacrificial. We should never sacrifice our children though we may sacrifice for our children and help them learn to sacrifice compassionately for others. A mother may go hungry herself to give food to her starving child. A soldier may give his life to protect his country and a fireman may give his life to rescue people from a burning building. A person in love may overlook and

forgive a thousand little injuries and failings, because love is compassionate and is willing to suffer in order to protect and provide for loved ones. “Greater love has no one than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). Well said.

God made Abraham an intimate friend and let him share what God would feel when He’d send His Son to walk the streets of Jerusalem dripping blood, and finally be lifted up on a cross to die as the ultimate sacrifice. A fool who would judge God by human terms makes light of greatness in a man like Abraham and the God who created the universe and knows each of us to our deepest core and how to bring out of us the obedience that changes history, so that others will know the great sacrificing love of God. God seeks true worshipers who will trust Him completely. God never takes from us without blessing us in ways we can’t even imagine. For those who will choose to serve Him, He provided the ram, sin sacrifice, Jesus. He offers Himself in intimacy and blessing and will provide what is necessary to fulfill what He called us to.



The great missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, “Our heavenly Father is a very experienced One. He knows very well that His children wake up with a good appetite every morning... He sustained 3 million Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. We do not expect He will send 3 million missionaries to China; but if He did, He would have ample means to sustain

them all... Depend on it, God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.”

Moses got this story direct from God to give the Jewish people this story of their history and roots to inform them that they are a nation born from faith, obedience, and prophecy of a Messiah. Though Moses was the leader of Israel, a nation of 12 tribes, they all were descended of the same blood, Father Abraham and his son, Isaac.

Rabbi Robbie Harris shared an old Jewish poem, “*There is a land where God is seen They worshiped him with fire. They also taught the Torah there. And they called the land ... Moriah (OY!)*” On the mount of Moriah, they built the temple, sacrificed lakes of blood, and taught the word of God. On the mount of Calvary, in Hebrew Golgotha, the word of God was a person named Jesus, He called His body the temple where real purification from sin takes place, “***Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up***” (John 2:19), His blood soaked the cross and the ground, but only once and on the 3rd day, He rose from the dead. Jehovah Jireh has provided all we need to live for eternity. Jesus is the ram that God provided.