

The background of the entire image is a dramatic, low-key photograph. It shows the silhouettes of a man and a young child standing on the peak of a mountain. The man is on the left, with his right arm raised towards the sky. The child is on the right, holding the man's hand. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds, illuminated from below, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is one of awe and spiritual significance.

MURRAY McLELLAN

**ON THE MOUNT
OF THE LORD
IT SHALL BE
PROVIDED**

**A LOOK AT AN AMAZING
PROPHECY IN GENESIS 22**

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GENESIS 22

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PRESENTATION

Presented by Murray McLellan (an unworthy sinner upon whom the glorious sovereign of the universe has bestowed his mighty grace– “*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’*” 1 Cor. 1:30-31)

I do not claim to be, nor seek to be original in the preceding content. I seek to magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Unto Him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

“Because it is written, ‘Be holy for I am holy.’”

(1 Peter 1:16)

All Scripture quotations in this booklet are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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PREFACE

Presented by Murray McLellan, an unworthy sinner upon whom the kindest of Kings has poured grace unimaginable. May it please God to use the following manuscript to advance the faith and joy of his people. My foremost desire is to magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Unto him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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INTRODUCTION

Every now and again, as I read the Bible, I am completely blown away. The study that follows is the result of one of those times.

I have come to realize that better than any apologetic to try and prove that the Bible is indeed not merely the words of men but a word from God, is to let the Scriptures speak for themselves. When you actually study what is written in the pages of this book, you soon realize that no human alone could have written this book, and no human alone would have written the things revealed in this book.

I did not grow up in a Christian home or in the Christian church. I did not believe the Bible was God's Word. I presumed it to be full of contradictions. I judged it as simply the thoughts and ideas of men from past generations that had no relevance for me. I had rejected the Bible without giving it any meaningful examination at all.

I used to think that the Bible was just a bunch of archaic rules and examples for us to follow in hopes of getting God to accept us or bless us. I had no idea how the Bible was put together and that it is first and

foremost a story – the story of Jesus – because God wants to be known for who he is in truth.

The Bible unfolds the story of the amazing God as seen in the person and work of Jesus. It is not simply a group of poems or a collection of wise sayings. It is not simply a system of rules or a way to live. It includes those things, but it functions as something much more important: It is the revelation of a person—Jesus.

“In the volume of the book it is written of Me.”

(Hebrews 10:7)

Jesus said: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me, that you may have life.”

(John 5:39-40)

The Bible provides more than information about Jesus. It intends for us to actually meet Jesus and to come into a relationship with the Father through the Spirit. The Bible serves as a means to an end beyond itself. In it, God shows us who He is and invites us to learn from Him. He invites us to enter into true and eternal life with the One who created us and who sustains us each day.

If we were to capture the message of the Bible in just one word, it would be Jesus. Jesus Himself tells us this same thing:

Then He [Jesus] said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

(Luke 24:44-45)

The more I gaze into the revelation of this Book, the more my confidence and faith in God and his Word are strengthened. My wonder and amazement in God have grown.

It is my sincere desire that the presentation of these truths will advance your faith and joy in the glorious God of heaven and earth, and in his amazing salvation rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SOVEREIGN GOD OF PROVIDENCE

I can think of no more delightful subject upon which to meditate than the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why such joy floods my soul in the study of God's Word. The very heart of the Bible is the unfolding theme of God's gracious work to glorify himself in bringing about our salvation in and through the Lord Jesus. Our glorious God reigns supreme. To bring glory to his name, God purposed and planned a creation and a history in which he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace throughout the ages to come. This redemptive history flows throughout the Scriptures. God, therefore, was not merely a spectator in the creation and the fall, the onward march of time, and the history of humankind, but the designer and the administrator of it all.

Throughout history, God was showing that the promised blessings of his favor come upon a sinner only through the grace and wisdom of God. In fact, everything in redemptive history was working toward the

glorious fulfillment of God's promise in Jesus. Everything was moving toward that "*fullness of time*" when "*God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*" (Galatians 4:4-5).

In particular, events were moving toward the day of the cross, when man manifested what he was and God manifested what he was. The day of crucifixion was the day that the Lord had made. God made the day of salvation when he established the chief cornerstone from the stone that the builders rejected (see Psalm 118:22-24).

At Pentecost, Peter made it very clear that the event of the cross was the eternal purpose of God.

"Him, [Jesus of Nazareth] being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it"

(Acts 2:23-24)

God purposes, and no one can thwart his plans or stay his hand. In fact, God providentially directs and uses even the evil plans of his enemies to work out his good pleasure – to their condemnation and his glory. The early church recognized this and rejoiced in it.

We hear them pray in Acts 4:27-28, "*For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever*

Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.” They had meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

The Lamb of God, purposed to be slain from the foundation of the world, set his face like a flint and offered himself as an atonement for sin. In this, he magnified the God of incredible grace and wonder through the salvation of a people who would know and experience the wonder of that grace, and who forever would exist to the praise of the glory of that grace.

God reveals himself throughout his Word as both the one who established the plan and the one who sees it to its fulfillment.

But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.

(Psalm 115:3)

‘ ... My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’ ... Indeed I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it, I will also do it.

(Isaiah 46:10-11)

... [God] works all things according to the counsel of His will.

(Ephesians 1:11)

Somebody is in charge of the universe! God rules all that is going on. Though there are millions of billions of seemingly isolated circumstances, they do not function randomly. There is a design and a Designer, a purpose and a goal, and an intention in all of it.

How God takes the infinite number of circumstances, attitudes, and events that exist in both the natural and demonic world and pulls them all together to work out his will is beyond our comprehension. The limits of our own imaginations and the words of God himself confirm that God is beyond us:

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

(Isaiah 55:9)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is **UNSEARCHABLE.**”

(Isaiah 40:28, emphasis added)

Job tells us that the sum of what we are able to comprehend of God is but “*the mere edges of His ways*” (Job 26:14).

I love a God I cannot comprehend – who is far above me. That is a God worthy of my praise, my worship, and my trust. A god who is entirely understandable by human beings is intrinsically no bigger

than those human beings are. Why should we worship someone who is just like us?

We can identify the ways that God accomplishes his plan by sorting how he rules in the world into two categories: visible and invisible. Miracles are visual evidence of God at work, and providence is an invisible means through which God fulfills his purposes.

Miracles amaze us by drawing our attention to God and away from the everyday world. God has designed nature so that it runs along observable and predictable lines, but nature does not make its own laws. It is always subject to God's control. To accomplish his purposes, there are times when God interrupts the observable natural course of events. Several well-known biblical miracles occur in Genesis and Exodus:

- the flood
- the plagues in Egypt
- the parting of the Red Sea
- manna in the wilderness
- water from the rock

Providence lies behind miracles and is not observable, although the results of it often are discernable. Because it is an invisible means through which God works, many people do not think about it. God, in an unseen way, controls all things that happen in the universe. God oversees all, invisibly orchestrating all the seemingly natural occur-

rences. To me, it is even more amazing than miracles. I have a friend who loves to call the sovereign Lord, the great God of coincidence!

When I ponder God, providentially working out his purposes, I am amazed. When I think of billions of people, all pursuing their own agendas, and God over-ruling them all, I am awestruck. He restrains. He lets go. He oversees and controls it all.

Jesus reigns and will continue to do so until all his enemies are brought under his feet to serve as his footstool (1 Corinthians 15:25 cf. Psalm 110:1). (*Not all believe he is Lord, but one day all will know the truth ... and every knee will bow and every tongue confess the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord.*) He is a king over molecules and mountains. He does all his good pleasure and no one thwarts his hand.

The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord.

(Proverbs 16:33)

Not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from the Father's will.

(Matthew 10:29)

We have a limited understanding of control; we can comprehend it only from a creature's perspective. For us, absolute control means that those on the receiving end would be like puppets on a string or programmed computerized robots. This is the only way we can control.

God, however, is not like a man. He can control all and, at the same time, allow people to make decisions and choices for which they are completely responsible. The consequences of those choices will not prevent God from accomplishing his glorious purposes. Thus, men do what they want to do – and all the while, they are over-ruled and are fitting into a grander scheme that is being worked out by an infinitely wise, holy and powerful God. The supreme biblical example of this is the crucifixion.

The early church recognized this and rejoiced in it. We hear them pray in Acts 4:27-28, *[27] for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.* (Acts 4:27-28 ESV)

The only thing that would satisfy the mob that day was the blood of Jesus. They cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify Him!" And the only thing that would satisfy God was the blood of Jesus. They meant it for evil and are responsible and God meant it for good – for the saving of many individuals. And so it was, that - Jesus the Lamb of God, offered Himself as an atonement for sin in incredible grace for a people who would otherwise have been in hell.

As the Scripture unfolds from Genesis to Revelation, we discover that Jesus' work on the cross in particular is central to the Bible and to all of human history - a work first promised and then fulfilled in time. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden did not take God by surprise, nor did it cause him to alter his original plan. God always intended to send the Son to earth to rescue sinners, and his promises reflect

that intention. In the rest of this booklet, we will trace the biblical development of that promise.

THE PROMISE AND THE TEST

When God makes a promise, nothing can change it. “*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*” (Numbers 23:19).

The Lord stated in Isaiah 46:11b, “*Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I also will do it.*” What was God’s expressed purpose?

God made a promise to a man named Abram that through him, a Seed would come – a Redeemer – to conquer sin, Satan, death, and hell (Genesis 12:1-9; Galatians 3:6-14). The promised Seed would come to deliver and gather a people who forever would be a testimony to the incredible grace of God.

Sometime after the original promise, God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means ‘father of a multitude,’ as a testimony to the promise. God had come to Abram when Abram was still an idolater in the land of the Chaldeans, in Ur. This promise was one of pure grace

from beginning to end. God set apart this pagan from Ur, and told him that he was going to bless him. God was going to bless Abraham in the promised Seed, in whom Abraham the sinner would be justified in the sight of God. Abraham would not be alone in this blessing. God also promised to make a great nation who would be God's special blessed people. It was God's own good pleasure to do so, for his own glory – to display his grace and goodness.

Throughout his life, Abraham repeatedly experienced the reality that God is true to his Word, no matter how strange that word seemed. Though his wife, Sarah, had been barren and well past her childbearing years, had she not, at the age of ninety, given miraculous birth to the promised son, Isaac? God manifested his glory as a promise-keeping God of awe-inspiring power.

In Genesis 22, God repeats and clarifies his amazing promise. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise would involve another Son whose birth would come about in a miraculous way – a Seed in whom were bound all the promises - a Seed in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This promised deliverer would free a people from the curse of sin and death, and bring them back to a restored relationship with God.

Let's pick up the story in Genesis 22.

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer

him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

(Genesis 22:1-2)

I cannot imagine a more difficult test than this.

It is important to notice that God does not ask Abraham to murder his son. If that was the case, Abraham could have just stabbed him in the tent. This call is to offer him – to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. God is not commanding Abraham to commit a crime, but rather to execute due judgment.

The wages of sin is death and God can justly require the death of any sinner at any time. The fact that God does not execute all of us, but suffers long with sinners, is because of his great mercy. It is God’s mercy that I got up this morning. It is a gift of God’s grace. I am not entitled to, nor do I have any right to today or tomorrow. God’s mercies are new every morning – a gift from the Creator I have sinned against.

And God doesn’t just say, “*Take your son.*” No, he says in v.2, to “*Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,*”

God’s request is a great test of Abraham’s faith. Isaac is the son of promise; he is the miraculous gift of God, given to Abraham in his old age. Not only was Abraham’s future at stake, for in those days there was no old age security or pension. Your son would take over the farm and provide for you and your spouse in your old age. But far more than that, in this promised offspring, was the future of all the people of faith.

Isaac was Abraham and Sarah’s only son and the one through whom the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world, would come. With a

burnt offering it meant you gave it all – nothing left over. You gave completely.

The promise of God and this commandment of God seem to be at odds, yet Abraham obeys. Though this test would have been incredibly stressful for Abraham, he trusts the heart of God. He is convinced that God has purposes and designs in everything he does, that both abound to his glory, and work out for the ultimate good and joy of those who love and trust him. The first 21 chapters of Genesis have already shown what happens when people do not trust the heart and character of God.

We must also take note, in these first 2 verses, that Abraham is directed to a particular mountain – a mountain of Moriah. We will note more of this later.

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

(Genesis 22:3-4)

Though Abraham would not understand, he trusted the God who had given him this son in a miraculous way. God has already tested Abraham a number of times, and for the most part Abraham was coming away with 50's at best. He definitely failed a number of tests along the way and had to have a few re-writes. He failed some of those

too. This test for Abraham is clearly the biggest, most intense one yet. We see that he has learned that God is trustworthy. So now in this test, he trusted God's goodness, and thus, he obeyed the word of the Lord. Abraham has learned that God deserves total trust. He no longer tried to figure out all that God was doing. Neither Abraham nor we who come after him have the ability to comprehend all of God's actions. However, like Abraham, we too are called to rest in the character of God, even when we cannot see or understand what he is doing. Obedient faith reveals a genuine work of God.

In Hebrews 11:19, it says that Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking he did. It does not say Abraham reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead, but that he could. There are some today that think faith means you have to believe God will do something. However, that is not faith as revealed in the Scriptures. Hebrews 11:19 says, "*He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead.*" It does not say, he believed that God would raise him from the dead. Faith lets God be God, because we trust his heart! Faith says: Not my will but yours be done.

Abraham considers the big picture and what he knows about who God is and what he has already done in the past. That big picture helps him to see that there is nothing more reasonable than to obey God. This was not Abraham's first test. He had been told to leave his family and home and go to a place he would receive as an inheritance. He was told to settle down there. He was told God would provide a son to him through Sarah.

In all those previous tests, Abraham did not fully trust and obey. He did step into the pool of faith, but it was like he always kept one foot

on the bottom and one hand on the side. When Abraham was called to leave and cleave – to leave his home and family and cleave to God alone in faith dependence, he only went as far as Haran. He only went a short distance when he first left Ur, so he could stay with his father and family. He didn't fully obey and leave his father and kindred and depend on God. It wasn't until 11 years later, when he was forced to go. Only when his dad had died did he finally set out for the land where God had told him to go.

Then, when Abraham had hardly settled there, a drought hit, and he ended up fleeing to Egypt for refuge. But the Egyptians did not prove to be as good or trustworthy as God, so Abraham lied about his wife being his sister. This is because he does not fully trust God to protect him and provide for him. His lack of trust in the heart of God, prevents him from being real with others about his faith in God.

In the years of waiting for the promised son, Abraham's patience runs thin and he tries to make it happen in the flesh by sleeping with the slave woman, Hagar. He ends up having a son by her, which led to a lot of problems.

So this time, in this greatest of tests, as Abraham walks for 3 days to where God is leading him, he is able to reason, "In the past, every time you told me to do something, God, I thought I was wiser than you. And every time I veered from completely following you, I made a mess of things. This time I will trust you completely and obey your word. I will not be fooled again. You're capable of raising Isaac from the dead. Maybe it will be a literal resurrection, maybe not. I am not going to try to figure out everything in advance. I have learned that even though it does not seem like a desirable thing, but a painful and costly thing, if

I trust you and obey fully – I know you always have a purpose and a plan. I trust you will somehow bring glory and redemption out of this, because you are a redeeming God who can be trusted.

Abraham reasons that it is always good to trust and obey God fully – even if he can't see or reason how it can turn out for good.

Abraham's obedience took him to the place of which God had told him. When he was almost there, he lifted his eyes and saw the place in the distance. Before moving on to verse 5, I would like you to take note of the fact that along with faith and obedience, God makes a pointed reference to a particular spot. Why is it so important to God for Abraham to go to this particular mountain? Why was Abraham sent on a three-day journey to this specific mount when there would have been many other closer and secluded mountains near where he lived at that time? I will comment on this shortly. For now, hold this question in your "memory bank."

In verse 5, we encounter more evidence of Abraham's faith in a supremely powerful and trustworthy God.

And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and *we* will come back to you."

(Genesis 22:5, emphasis added)

In light of Hebrews 11:17-19, this is not a statement of deception; rather, it is evidence of faith. Abraham knows that whatever happens on the mountain, God is going to have to do something to get that son back. He is convinced that the promise of God cannot fail. That is

why he states “*we*” will be coming back together. He knew God had a promise to fulfill.

So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

(Genesis 22:6-8)

The word “*together*” is the Hebrew word “*Yachad*” which literally means: united as one. That lets us know that Isaac is a willing offering.

Abraham believes that the Lord will provide. He may have no clue as to how, but he knows God. He has confidence in God. As we shall see, Abraham’s confidence is well founded. God does indeed provide.

I think this helps us see what Abraham has been doing during the 3 days journey. He’s been considering and reminding himself of the character and promises of God.

He was probably thinking back to the encounter in Genesis 15, where God took responsibility for both sides of the covenant.

The only thing that can drive you onward through difficult times, is not the strength of your character but an unwavering conviction in the goodness and promises of God. In particular, it is seeing God’s

commitment to the covenant he has made with us – to the point of his own death where he bore the ultimate curse for our disobedience and failure.

The second thing that helped Abraham pass the test, was to look to the lamb.

Father and son reach the top of that mountain together. The son of promise himself carrying the wood up that hill. Abraham tells his beloved son that God would show them the lamb that he would provide. Abraham, by faith, reasoned, based on what God had already revealed to him, that some kind of redemptive payment must be possible. He believed God would make a way where he could be both just and the justifier of those who have sinned against him.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him.

Once again, the Scriptures emphasize the location as significant to God.

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. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.”

(Genesis 22:9-11)

I am sure that Abraham was very glad to respond, “Here I am!” In all the previous tests, Abraham had partial obedience only. Now he has

learned to trust God with no holding back. Here we see unconditional surrender.

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.”

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.

(Genesis 22:12-13)

God, the redeeming God, provides a substitute. There in a thicket, was a ram caught by its horns. It would have had these thorny branches above his head like a crown. Here on Mount Moriah, Abraham was shown a picture of the ultimate Lamb of God to come.

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.”

(Genesis 22:14)

In verse 18, God reaffirms the promise he made to Abraham when he called him from Ur, “*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...*” (Genesis 22:18a cf. Genesis 12:3).

On one level, this is a grand story of faith. Abraham demonstrates the kind of faith and trusting obedience we all are to have. Sometimes we must go through difficult circumstances where we cannot see what is ahead and we cannot understand what is happening. Are we willing to give up everything to God? Is he truly our first love? The kind of faith exhibited by Abraham gives glory to God (Romans 4:16-21). We might not know until we reach heaven why things were the way they were, but we can trust God's wisdom and goodness.

I believe, however, that God calls us to see something beyond simply an illustration of great faith. As we begin to reflect upon this story with New Testament eyes, we find that this passage leads us to Calvary and the cross of Jesus.

God cannot compromise his character. Our sin is so horrendous that it deserves the judgment and wrath of God. There will be a final judgment and, in that day, even this offering of Isaac will not be enough. Isaac is a sinner. He cannot die for another. He must die for his own sin. We must all die for our own sins. Oh, if only there could be a substitute that God could accept!

If God is to bless, he must provide an acceptable atoning sacrifice. Another must stand in the place of judgment and pay the price of redemption. The ram can be a substitute for Isaac in this offering only, but nothing beyond that. It is of a temporary nature. The blood of rams or bulls or goats can take away neither sin, nor the death and judgement that result from sin. Knowledge of the complete teaching of the Bible makes it clear that the substituted ram that stayed the knife in this event points forward to the one who is to come and who will be

sacrificed as the great and ultimate Lamb of God. Indeed, God's only begotten Son will provide and pay the redemptive price.

Abraham's response in naming this location is key. He calls this place, "The Lord will provide." It is not called, "See how Abraham obeyed." This makes it clear that this is not testifying to Abraham's or our commitment to God, but God's commitment to us.

And secondly, the future tense of the verbs in verse 14 establishes the idea of looking beyond the ram. Though God has already spared Isaac, and Abraham has sacrificed the ram, Abraham calls the place "The-Lord-Will-Provide," not "The-Lord-Has-Provided" or "The-Lord-Did-Provide." Abraham is clearly looking for another day and another provision in the future. Thus, 2000 years later, Jesus could say in John 8:56, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*"

MORIAH: THE MOUNTAIN OF PROMISE

After he chronicles Abraham's naming of the mountain, the narrator breaks into the account with an editorial comment that clearly links the location of Abraham's experience to God's promise, "*In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided*" (Genesis 22:14) – future tense. God had directed Abraham to go to a particular mountain. Why had God sent him on a three-day journey to this specific mount, when there were many other closer and more secluded mountains?

God, who is faithful to all his promises, stated that he would provide a lamb as a substitute in the Mount of the Lord. Now we begin to see why God commanded Abraham to go to this particular mountain in the land of Moriah. The Scripture unfolds for us the reason for Abraham to make a three-day journey to a particular spot. Why did God direct Abraham to a specific mountain in Moriah? It is in a sacrifice on this mount that the Lord would provide.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read that God has plans for Mount Moriah. Many years later, after this episode of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, this location becomes central in another test of faith. In response to a rash and unbelieving action of King David, God sends an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it.

In 1 Chronicles 21 we read:

And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:15)

Notice that when the angel reaches a particular place, God says, "Stop!" In fact, when we read the next verse, the indication is that the angel stopped his sword in mid-swing.

Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces.

(1 Chronicles 21:16)

If you continue to read the event in 1 Chronicles 21, you will see that in verses 18-19, the Lord commands David to purchase this particular plot of land from Ornan the Jebusite, and to build an altar to the Lord on that threshing floor. David purchases this spot, builds an altar, and offers burnt offerings and peace offerings there, and only then does the angel of judgment return his sword to its sheath (See 1 Chronicles 21:25-27).

Where was the location of this threshing floor? Second Chronicles 3:1 provides us with the answer.

Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(2 Chronicles 3:1)

The threshing floor was located on Mount Moriah – that mountain ridge that runs through Jerusalem. Mount Moriah is not a single peak, but an elongated ridge that commences to rise at its southern end at the junction of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, at the original City of David --- Jerusalem (elevation approximately 600 meters, or 1,968 feet). The ridge then climbs in elevation to a maximum of 777 meters (2,549 feet) just northeast of the present Damascus Gate of the Old City. God had directed Abraham to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering somewhere along this mountain ridge. It was upon this ridge that God provided a ram to substitute for Isaac.

Here, upon Mount Moriah, Solomon built the temple where the continual sacrifices that foreshadowed our Lord and his once-for-all sacrifice took place. The wall of the city of Jerusalem cut through this mountain ridge of Moriah. Viewed from outside the city, with the cut for the wall and the road, the mountain looks somewhat like a skull. That particular section of Mount Moriah is known as Golgotha.

“In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided!”

Throughout the centuries, God’s promise rang forth: from the day when that first son of promise bore the burden of the wood for the offering and climbed that mount, until the day of fulfillment, when the ultimate Son of promise bore the cross and ascended that mount.

We see the light shine ever brighter: it glimmered on that dawning day when Abraham, holding the knife of judgment, stretched out his hand, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, “Stop!” It gleamed again on that day during David’s reign when the angel of the Lord, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against Jerusalem, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, “Stop!” Finally, it burst into full radiance when history reached that anticipated day: the day when God, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against his own Son. This time, there was no cry of “Stop!”

In the day of the Lord, on the day of the crucifixion, God did not stay the knife. The sword of judgment was plunged into the bosom of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16), willingly bore his cross up Mount Moriah and became the ultimate peace offering for all the sons of Abraham – all those who have placed their faith in Jesus – the promised Seed (Gal. 3:7-9, 29). God made his Son an offering for sin on the mount

at Moriah, according to his determined purpose and foreknowledge. The full atonement of Christ causes the angel of death and judgment to sheath his sword forever.

This is the day that the Lord has made! We now herald that in the Mount, the Lord HAS provided! There is a Savior for sinners.

On this same Mount Moriah, where the promised seed of David would build God a house, Solomon built the temple that foreshadowed the greater spiritual reality. On that same mountain ridge of Moriah, but outside the gate, the ultimate Seed of David, through the redemption of the cross, would build his Father a spiritual house of living stones (Read 1 Chronicles 17:10b-14, 2 Samuel 7:12-13; compare with Acts 2:29-36, Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:4-10).

THE LAMB PROVIDED: CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT

Jesus Christ himself has become the chief cornerstone of God's spiritual house. Is not our sovereign God most glorious in working out his promise? "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

Psalm 118 also looks ahead prophetically to that ultimate day on the Mount of the Lord where Jesus laid down his life as the true and better Lamb of God in place of sinners deserving of death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter.

(Psalm 118:19-20)

There is a way to enter the presence of the God, and it is through the gate or door, who is God himself – Jesus. And it is he alone who imputes his own righteousness to those who enter by this way so they can be counted righteous.

“I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation.

Psalm 118:21

And then the Psalmist goes on to tell how it happened that Lord has become our salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected [and crucified] has become the chief cornerstone [in his resurrection as Lord of all]. This was the Lord’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

(Psalm 118:22-24)

In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided was God’s promise. In the rejection of Jesus – in his death in our place – God has raised him and set him up as the chief cornerstone. We rest on him who has done everything we need for God to accept us and receive us into his family.

This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it! **This day** – today – is a day of salvation, because of **that day** – that day on Mount Moriah when God provided for himself a lamb – a

sacrifice for a peace offering! He has won for us entrance into the love and presence of God. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes!

And we have much reason to be thankful for that day. That day was the day that the Lord has made. On that day, he purchased our forgiveness and salvation, that has won for us entrance into the love and presence of God.

Is not our sovereign God most glorious in working out his promise?

In the end, the cost to Abraham was nothing, but to trust God; to put all his hope and reliance in God and his Word. The cost to God was everything!

Let's celebrate the day that the Lord has made!

Abraham made a prophecy that, on this same Mount Moriah, God would provide for himself the Lamb – the Lamb named Jesus. That name “Jesus” means God is my salvation. Now we shout, “On the Mount of the Lord, it has been provided! Past tense! There is a Savior for sinners!

We look back 2000 years to the event that Abraham looked forward 2000 years to. Both he and we find in that Lamb of God, our salvation!

So when we read in Genesis 22:18, “*and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 22:18a ESV), we look to that day – the day that the Lord has made. That day when another one and only Son, whom his Father loved, would walk up this same mountain. And again, that Son would willingly crawl up on the wood.

It was on that same mountain ridge – Moriah – upon which the Old Covenant temple was built, where all the sacrifices and priestly pictures, where so much blood was spilt but could not provide. They

could only point to the One who on that same Mount, where it looked like a skull, when another Son, descended from Isaac, carrying the wood for the sacrifice, willingly walked up that mount. And this time no substitute would be provided because he was himself the unblemished lamb.

That ultimate unblemished, spotless Lamb would be seen under a thorny crown. He would willingly lay himself on the wood and he would stay on the altar, in the form of a cross, as the Father plunged the knife of justice for our guilt into his heart. There was no ram to substitute for this Son – for he was the sacrifice. He was the Lamb of God – his life for mine. He cried out, “My God, my god, why have you forsaken me?” No angel interceded or stepped in saying, “Stop. Stay your hand.”

There a Father – the Father – offered up his only Son whom he loves. This as his firstborn Son in whom are bound up all the promises – all the blessings. This is the Heir. The Father did for Abraham, what he had asked of Abraham – so Abraham didn’t have to.

After this test in Genesis 22, the Lord God says to Abraham, “Because you have done this; you have not withheld your only son whom you love, I know you love me. (See Genesis 22:15-18). And God blessed Abraham and told him that all the nations of the world would be blessed through a coming offspring of Abraham.

And when we behold that offspring, that seed, Jesus on the cross, we declare, “And **now we know that God loves us**, because he did not withhold his Son, his only Son, whom he loves, from us.”

OUR COMFORT AND OUR KING

So as you face that struggle; that test where you are called to obey, behold him go up the mountain. See how he loves us. If he is willing to give up his Son for me, anything he calls me to is nothing compared to what he's already done for me.

What shall we say to these things? God is clearly for us.

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

(Romans 8:32 ESV)

Jesus was tested throughout his entire life on earth. If he had had a nice smooth life, it would be harder for us to trust him. However, as we see his life, from a messy beginning, to fleeing the country and living as a refugee in a foreign land, to losing his dad, Jesus was a man of sorrows. He was misunderstood, and mocked by his brothers. His

cousin, whom he loved was murdered. He was rejected, and betrayed by a close friend he had loved and poured into. He was tempted by the devil himself. He was falsely accused and lied about. He was hated, though he only loved. Jesus was physically and mentally abused, and ultimately crucified in the most humiliating and torturous death. There he was publicly shamed and crucified naked on a filthy Roman cross. And Jesus passes every test, not with 50's or B's and C's, but perfectly loving God, his Father, and loving his people to the end.

The tests reveal what is beneath the surface. They reveal what is real. Jesus shows who he is – his heart and character in every situation. May our tests purify our faith, so that we keep trusting the One who stands strong and loves us to the end.

CONCLUSION

Are you glad that Jesus reigns? I am glad that God has left nothing to chance. I am glad that Christ is Lord.

Comfort yourselves in this truth, saints. Things may appear out of control at times. I feel out of control at times. However, even though we may be muddled in our thoughts and dark clouds may come over us, the Christ who loves us lives forever and is on the job every day and every night - even when we have forgotten what the job is!

He is even now at the right hand of God - he is the chosen, glorious deliverer who shall not fail.

He upholds all things by the Word of his power, and he works all things together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

When you cannot explain the trouble you are experiencing, you need to understand the providential power of a Sovereign Lord who takes every bit of the diverse data in the entire universe and controls it all for your good and his glory and eternal purpose. And has he not

demonstrated his ability to do it? This fact comforts our souls when nothing else can.

I tell you, the Christ of God is Lord! He is enthroned and he is the royal King of all kings. He is the Lord of all lords, and he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to him in repentance and faith. This is the Christ of the Bible!

But be warned, you who do not want this man to reign over you - you who want to be your own lord - there is a day when Christ will be revealed in truth for who he is, and you are no match for the Sovereign Lord. I say to you,

- Go and do battle against the lightning and hold it triumphant in your hand.
- Go and hush the hurricane and flatten the tidal wave.
- Hold the wind in the hollow of your hand.

When you have done this, then lift up your puny hand against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

There is a day appointed in which you will feel his power - though he suffers long with you --- you are storing up wrath for the day of judgment - the day of his unveiling. Why would you perish when there is such a great Savior for sinners, and such a good Lord to reign over you?

Praise God, he has not left me to myself! Oh, how I need an advocate like Jesus, the Righteous, who substituted in my place at Mount Moriah - on Calvary - and provided all I needed, that I not only might be forgiven, but also might be received as a son!

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