

YAHWEH YIREH: THE LORD THE PROVIDER

Genesis 22: 1- 19; text Genesis 22: 14

November 7, 2021

I. Understanding a Fuller Meaning of God as Our Provider

A. Yahweh Yireh is the Hebrew name for God which, in general, means, "The LORD will provide."

B. He is the ruler who provides blessings in our lives

1. There is a beautiful verse in Old Testament that speaks of the Lord's providence and his provision for us: *You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.*
2. In our call to worship from Psalm 147 we were reminded of how God not only provides food for his creature, but also how he especially provides for his people.

C. He is the ruler who provides challenges and tragedies in our lives

1. That beautiful verse about God's providence that we cited earlier is Job 10:12.

Job 10:12 (NIV) You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

a. In that chapter Job was struggling with the tragedies that God had allowed in his life.

Job 10:8-9 (NIV) "Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?"

b. The same God who gave him life and cared was also the God who allowed his crops to fail, his body to be filled with boils, and his children to all be killed.

2. God's providence doesn't just bring us good things, but also tragedy.

3. Let us remember the definition of God's providence that we find in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 27: What do you understand by the providence of God? Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty-- all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand.

4. Rain and drought; health and sickness, prosperity and poverty all come from God's rule—his providence.

Questions:

- 1) What are some blessings God has provided me for which I am especially thankful?
- 2) What are some difficult situations that God has provided for me?
- 3) Does it frustrate and perhaps even anger me that God has brought such difficult challenges and terrible times into my life? How have I responded to this?

II. Understanding How God, the Provider Tested Abraham

A. Our scripture begins with the words, "sometime later God tested Abraham."

1. The Lord who provides is also the Lord who tests us.
2. We may think that the bad things in our lives are simply the result of our living in a fallen, sin-cursed world.
3. But let us also remember that our lives are always in God's hands.
4. In our story God not only allowed such tragedy to happen, he commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

B. Think about Abraham as a father.

1. God commanded him to kill and sacrifice his beloved whom son he waited for so long.
2. He had no other sons left, because in Genesis 21 God commanded him send Hagar and his other son Ishmael into the desert.
3. This certainly reminds us of parents whose children die at young ages.
4. Or, perhaps it reminds of children who stopped trusting in Jesus, putting their eternal future in serious jeopardy.

C. The other grief Abraham faced was that Isaac was the son through whom God would fulfill all his promises to him.

1. Isaac was the son whom God would especially bless.
2. It was to Isaac's children that God would give the land of Canaan.
3. It was through Isaac's descendants that all the nations of earth would be blessed.
4. Now at God's command Abraham must sacrifice Isaac and seemingly with him all the blessings God had promised.

D. When God gave Abraham this devastating command, he had a choice to make.

1. That was to trust God or not.
2. That is also our choice when the LORD, our provider, tests us.

Questions:

- 1) When has God tested me by bringing me into difficult and tragic situations, or by giving me commands that caused difficulties for me after I obeyed him?
- 2) What tests am I receiving that involve my children, parents, other family members, or dear friends? What tests has God brought me through that seemingly robbed me of hopes for my future?
- 3) How have these tests caused me to struggle with my faith? Have I ever been tempted to stop believing? How did I continue to trust God?

III. Understanding Abraham's Choice to Trust the Lord His Provider

A. As Hebrews 11: 17 tells us Abraham chose to trust him.

Hebrews 11:17 (NIV) By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son.

B. Abraham's faith was motivated by his love for God.

Genesis 22:12 (NIV) "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."

1. Fearing God, in this sense, doesn't mean being afraid of him.
2. It means to love him above all, even more than we love our spouses and children.
3. Because Abraham loved God that much, he trusted him that much.
4. Abraham's for God was the result of God's love for him.

C. Abraham's loving fear also meant obedience.

1. The next morning, he started the three-day journey to the mountain to sacrifice Isaac.
2. By his obedience he proved his faith.

James 2:21-22 (NIV) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

D. Abraham also showed his faith by hoping in the LORD.

1. In verse 8 Isaac asks "where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"
2. Abraham replies, "God himself will provide the lamb."
3. Abraham was not sure of what God would do, but he continued to hope in his promises.
4. According to Hebrews 11:19, Abraham trusted that God could even raise Isaac from the dead.
5. Abraham believed that God was true to his promises, and he would provide.

Hebrews 11:19 (NIV) Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Questions:

- 1) Do I truly fear God by loving him above all? When has my love for God been tested? In that test, how did I show I loved him above all? How does my loving God above all actually help me love others more? Why is my love for God only the result of his love for me? How does my love relationship with God help me to trust him during those times he tests my faith?
- 2) When have I recently been challenged not to obey God's commands? How did I respond? How does my obedience show that I trust God, and my disobedience that I don't trust him?
- 3) Even if I cannot see how God will help me through a tragedy that tests my faith, how does my continued hope that he will keep his promises enable me to keep believing?

IV. Understanding the LORD's Provision to Abraham and Us

A. And just as Abraham hoped God, who loved him, provided.

1. After God sent the angel to stop him from killing his son, Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns.
2. He took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

B. It was that provision that moved Abraham to prophetically name that place Yahweh Yireh, which verse 14 translates as "the Lord will provide."

1. Yahweh means that I am that I am.
 - a. God is the holy God who never changes.
 - b. He is the faithful one we can always count on.
2. Yireh, is translated is here translated "to provide."
 - a. God provided another sacrifice, a ram instead of Isaac.
 - b. Sometimes in the midst of our struggles we witness God's clear provision for us.
 - c. And strangely that provision would never have been evident without the struggle.

C. But what about the times when after we've trusted him God doesn't seem to provide?

1. What about all those tragedies and losses in our lives that Lord doesn't seem to fix?
2. How can we still trust Yahweh Yireh?
3. In verses 15- 19 we read that after this struggle God said the he would indeed bless Abraham, who feared him.
4. We too should remember God's promise of paradise after our earthly struggles are over.

D. Yet as we seek God's provision today, let us note this mountain Abraham was on was called Moriah.

1. According to 2 Chronicles 3: 1, this was the mountain upon which Solomon built the temple.
 - a. It was here that Israelites sacrificed their animals to the LORD.
 - b. One sacrifice they gave was to redeem their oldest son, who was their son of promise.
2. But as we think of those sacrifices, we look to another Moriah outside Jerusalem, a mountain called Golgotha or Calvary.
 - a. It was there that God provided for us by sacrificing his Son for our sins.
 - b. God who spared Abraham's son, sacrificed his own.
 - c. As we struggle to trust God for his provision, let us look to cross on Golgotha, remembering Romans 8:32.

Romans 8:32 (NIV) 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?

E. Also remember God's sacrificed Son is God.

1. Not all Hebrew scholars agree that verse 14 should be translated as it is in most English translations.
 - a. Some say that a better translation would be, "So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD he shall be seen.'"
 - b. And they can site some linguistic reasons why they are correct.
 - c. Doesn't that translation really describe God's provision on Golgotha.
 - d. God provided himself as the sacrifice.
2. As we wonder whether the one who rules over all really cares for us and will really provide for us, let us remember who he is.
 - a. Proclaiming his vision of heaven's throne, the Apostle John writes,
 - b. The one who rules is the Lamb who sacrificed himself for us.
 - c. Let us trust him and his providence.

Revelation 5:6 (NIV) Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Questions:

- 1) When has God, after testing me, provided solutions that I never could have predicted? What affect did this have on my continued faith?
- 2) When has God seemingly not brought solutions and blessings after he tested me?
- 3) Why does knowing that God sacrificed his how Son to save me help me to continue to trust him when I haven't experienced any solution to my test of faith?
- 4) How does knowing that the God who sacrificed himself for me is also ruling and providing for me help me to continue to trust him?