

7. The phrase “offered him up” is the Hiph‘il imperfect of **עָלַח** (*‘alah*): “offering a sacrifice.” The Hiph‘il is the causative, active voice, and with the imperfect tense, indicating that the action is continuous. “Abraham was caused to produce the continuous action of offering up the ram as a burnt offering.”
8. Abraham’s faith in the plan of God is certified. His faith in divine integrity is confirmed with his response to Isaac in Genesis 22:7–8.

Genesis 22:7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

v. 8 Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them continued to walk on together.
(NASB)

9. Abraham’s response is a summary statement on his complete confidence in the working object of the Abrahamic Covenant by responding, “God will provide for Himself.”
10. The words, “will provide,” are the Qal imperfect of the verb **רָאֵה** (*ra’ah*): “to see.” The divine name, *Elohim*, is exchanged for the tetragrammaton, “Jehovah,” plus the phrase, “will provide”: “*Jireh*,” translated, “Jehovah sees.”

The meaning plainly is that the Lord sees and provides for the necessities of His servants. There is an allusion to verse 8 where Abraham says, “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” The verse goes on to connect the incident with the popular proverb, “In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided (v. 14).”¹

11. Isaac is pointing out that he does not see a lamb. Abraham is assuring him that God sees a lamb for the burnt offering. However, that lamb’s identity is undetermined at the moment. It is all up to Abraham’s Law of Freedom to determine if the lamb will be Isaac or, eventually, “a ram caught in a thicket.”
12. In the very next verse, Abraham remains convinced that he is to literally sacrifice his son and therefore does not hesitate in going through the process of doing so:

¹ W. Ewing, “Jehovah-Jireh,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 3:1583–84.

Genesis 22:9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. (NASB)

13. The first order of business is to build an altar, the masculine noun: **מִזְבֵּחַ** (*mizbeach*):

The place of sacrifice. It is a noun formed from the verb *zavach*, which means to slaughter an animal, usually for sacrifice. God commanded that the altar for burnt offerings be made of earth or undressed stones because human working of the stones would defile it.²

14. Having built the altar of dirt and undressed stones, Abraham then arranged the wood on its top. At that point, it suddenly became evident that the lamb was Isaac. Without opposition, struggle, or complaint, Abraham “bound his son, Isaac, laid him on the altar, on top of the wood” and then:

Genesis 22:10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. (NASB)

1. The Qal imperfect of **שָׁלַח** (*shalach*): “reaching out one’s hand.” It indicates an ongoing process until the act is completed. It specifies a volitional decision by Abraham for the purpose of carrying out an act.
2. The next verb is a second Qal imperfect of **לֹקֶחֶת** (*laqach*): “to grasp or seize.” These two verbs are the first two steps in a process to carry out an objective which is stated next with the Qal infinitive construct of **שָׁחַט** (*shachat*): “to slaughter, kill, slay.”

This verb is used to describe the process of human sacrifice to Yahweh (i.e., the process used to test Abraham with his son Isaac [Genesis 22:10]). Since He does not desire human sacrifices, God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac.³

3. “The Hebrew infinitive absolute can be used with other verbs to express two verbal actions occurring at the same time, that is, contemporaneous action.”⁴ Abraham was engaged in a process that when completed would result in him slicing the carotid artery of his son Isaac.
4. This is exactly what Abraham was primed to do next when he was interrupted by the Lord:

² Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, “מִזְבֵּחַ,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 589.

³ Ibid., “שָׁחַט,” 1121.

⁴ Gary D. Pratico and Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 131.

Genesis 22:11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”
And he said, “Here I am.”

5. The Theophany in Genesis 22 occurs at the culmination of Abraham's successful use of the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant. As he unsheathes the knife to “slay his son,” the Lord intervenes with the vocatives, “Abraham, Abraham!”
6. Although primed to slit Isaac's neck, when the Lord shouted those two vocatives it caused Abraham pause as the Lord continued His directives:

Genesis 22:12 He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” (NASB)

7. This is the context that occurs just prior to the events of the next verse:

Genesis 22:13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. (NASB)

8. Keep in mind that Abraham is 120-years old. Yet seeing the trapped ram he immediately remembered his comment in verse 8, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”
9. The word, lamb” is the nominative masculine singular of the noun **תָּעַל** (*seh*): a male sheep; a ram.

Ram. The provision of the ram as a substitutionary offering in place of Isaac reflects a wider biblical understanding of sacrificial offerings. Animal sacrifice was commonly viewed as being substitutionary, i.e., the animal dies in the place of the worshiper. Jesus Christ is the ultimate, divinely provided substitute (Mark 10:45; John 1:29; Hebrews 7:27; 10:14; 1 Peter 3:18).⁵

10. Note the sequence of events revealed in the passage. He had built an altar, arranged the wood, bound his son, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood (v. 9).
11. After unsheathing the knife, the Theophany of Jesus Christ stayed Abraham's hand from slitting Isaac's carotid.

⁵ Richard S. Hess, “Ram,” in *Biblical Theology Study Bible: NIV*, gen. ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 58n22:13.

12. With this reprieve, Abraham looked and saw the ram “caught in a thicket.” Let’s take a look at verse 13 again:

Genesis 22:13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

13. There are two sentences in verse 13 the second of which informs us that Abraham, “took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering.”
14. There is no mention of Abraham having first removed Isaac from the wood. However, the semicolon does indicate this. Here’s why:

The semicolon marks a grammatical separation in the relations of a thought to a degree greater than that expressed by a comma. Between clauses, it especially shows coordination.⁶

15. The grammatical separation indicated by the semicolon allows us to conclude that Abraham first observed the ram caught in the thicket and safely trapped. He then unbound Isaac and removed him from the wood. He then executed the second sentence of verse 13:

Genesis 22:13b ... and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

16. This is further indicated by the concluding prepositional phrase, “in the place of his son.” “In the place of” is the preposition **תְּחִזָּה** (*tachath*): “instead of his son.”
17. With these points in mind we can enlarge verse 13 with the addition of a parenthetical clause based on Genesis 22:9c (see p. 422):

Genesis 22:13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; (and after having removed Isaac from the wood and untied him) Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

18. This divine deliverance of his son, Isaac, motivated Abraham to assign a divine name to the mountain. This is the subject of the next verse”

⁶ Bryan A. Garner, *The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Pronunciation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 357.

Genesis 22:14 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 will be provided.”
(NASB)

1. The word “provide” is the translation of the verb, **הִירְאֶה** (*yir’eh*): “to see, to come to know, to discern.” This word is translated by the King James Version, “it shall be seen.”
2. This is a literal translation, but its real meaning is discovered in:

Genesis 22:2 With your son, your only legitimately born son, whom you have always loved, namely Isaac, and promptly go to the land of Moriah where Jehovah will provide, and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will indicate to you. (EXT)

3. The destination for Abraham is the “land of Moriah,” a compound of the verb **הִירְאֶה** (*yir’eh*): “to see,” and the noun, **יְהוָה** (*Yehowah*), translated, Jehovah, *YHWH*, or *Athonai*, “sees.” Together they form the proper noun, *Moriyyah*: “Jehovah sees,” or better, “Jehovah provides.” This proper name is a hapax legomenon, appearing only in Genesis 22:14 and is translated into English with the phrase, Jehovah Jir’eh.
4. The translation of Jehovah Jir’eh varies according to the commentator. Here are a few examples:

In view of the latter part of Genesis 22:14, some have suggested that a better pointing of the Hebrew text would read: “Yahweh will be seen” (the passive force) or “Yahweh will reveal Himself (the reflexive force). Actually, a supposed inconsistency does not exist between the renderings “Yahweh will provide” and “Yahweh will appear (or, be seen),” for there is an evident play on the Hebrew word that can convey both significations, depending on the stem in which it occurs.⁷

5. Abraham communicates this principle as one of the working objects of his faith that led to him carrying out the process required to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering.
6. This passage has nothing to do with the Levitical offerings among which some animals were to be burned. This event on Mount Moriah occurred long before the Levitical Priesthood and the sacrificial calendar were established in Leviticus.

⁷ C. L. Feinberg, “Jehovah-Jireh,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 3:427.

7. This is not only independent of them, but unique to this occasion. Here is a brief synopsis of the sacrifice that was commanded to Abraham:

Abraham lived at a time when sacrifices and religion were virtually identical. On his arrival at Shechem he erected an altar (Genesis 12:7). At Bethel also (v. 8), and on his return from Egypt he worshipped there (Genesis 13:4). Such sacrifices expressed adoration and prayer. They constituted worship. At Hebron he built an altar (v. 8), officiating always as his own priest. In Genesis 15:4ff he offers a “covenant” sacrifice, when the animals were slain, divided, the parts set opposite each other, and prepared for the other party to the covenant. In chapter 22 Abraham attempts to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, as was probably the custom of his neighbors. That he attempted it shows that the practice was not shocking to his ethical nature.

It tested the strength of his devotion to God, shows the right spirit in sacrifices, and teaches for all time that God does not desire human sacrifice—a beast will do. What God does want is the obedient heart.⁸

רָאַה. To provide is another meaning of the verb. When Abraham was tested, (it) was used to assure Isaac that God himself would provide the lamb for the burnt offering (Genesis 22:8, 14). The passive, to be provided, is expressed by the Niph'al. The place of testing was called, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided” (Genesis 22:14).⁹

יְהֹוָה יִרְאֵה. Jehovah Jireh, a name given to designate the Lord by Abraham for providing a sacrifice in the place of Isaac (Genesis 22:14). It means the Lord will see to it literally but also means “the Lord will provide.”¹⁰

8. In verse 14, the verb, **רָאַה** (*ra'ah*) is the Niph'al imperfect and should be translated, “It shall be provided.”

Genesis 22:14 Abraham called the name of the place Moriah, The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the Lord [**יְהֹוָה יִרְאֵה** (*Jehovah Jir'eh*)] it will be provided continuously [**רָאַה** (*ra'ah*)].” (EXT)

1. Verse 15 introduces a quote by the Lord which follows in verses 16 through 18:

⁸ J. J. Reeve, “Sacrifice,” in the Old Testament,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 4:2641–42.

⁹ Jackie A. Naudé, “**הָרָאֵה**,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, gen. ed. Willem A. VanGeneren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:1009.

¹⁰ Baker and Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 427.

Genesis 22:15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

- 1, The first time the Lord called to Abraham was in verses 11 and 12 where the patriarch was primed to slit Isaac's carotid artery and then present him as a burnt offering on the altar.
2. It was at this point that Abraham was applying the Abrahamic Covenant as the working object of being justified by the application of doctrine, a process described in James 2:21 by the phrase "justified by works."
3. The Lord's declaration to Abraham is recorded in Genesis 22:16–18. Verses 16–17 are one sentence.

Genesis 22:16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,

1. Verse 16 opens with an oath from the theophany of Jesus Christ. It begins with His declaration of an oath, "I have sworn," the Niph'al reflexive perfect of the verb **שָׁבַע** (*shava'*): "By Myself I have made at this moment a solemn oath."
2. The motivation for the Lord's oath is stated next, "... because you have done this thing." The verb "have done" is the Qal perfect of **עָשָׂה** ('*asah*): "to accomplish, to complete; to perform an activity with a distinct purpose, moral obligation, or a goal in view."¹¹
3. This oath by the Lord acknowledges that Abraham went through the process of sacrificing his son in order to accomplish an objective with a view toward completing a process assigned to him by the Lord.
4. The Qal perfect indicates the successful completion of that process. Abraham went through the details of that process with a distinct purpose in mind.
5. The beginning of that process did not begin suddenly, without warning, in Genesis 22:1–2 as if nothing was previously communicated to Abraham before then.
6. The Lord had for over 45 years been making declarative statements to Abraham. Five of the most important to Abraham, with regard to the events on Mount Moriah, referred to the Lord's development of the Abrahamic Covenant. It is essential that we review those five here.

¹¹ Ibid., "עָשָׂה," 876.

The Five Paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant:

- Par. 1:** **National Entity:** “I will make you a great nation [Israel]” (Genesis 12:2); **Historical Impact:** “And in you all the families [racial groups] of the earth will be blessed” (v. 3).
- Par. 2:** **Real Estate; Observation:** “All the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants [chart pedigree] forever” (Genesis 13:15); **Innumerable Descendants; Dust:** “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth” (v. 16).
- Par. 3:** **Adulterine Rejected; Heir Predicted:** “This man [Ishmael] will not be your heir; “but one who will come forth from your body [Isaac]; he shall be your heir” (Genesis 15:4). **Innumerable Descendants; Stars:** “Count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be” (v. 5).
- Par. 4:** **Real Estate; Boundaries:** “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18).
- Par. 5:** **Palestinian Covenant:** “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8). **Heir Identified:** “Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac [v. 19a]; **Covenant with Isaac & his Progeny:** “and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him” (v.19b).

7. These five paragraphs constructed by the Lord were inculcated in Abraham's soul and gradually facilitated into paths of least resistance. He had them memorized. He believed them. In Genesis 22, he applied them to the circumstances assigned to him by the Lord.
8. On Mount Moriah, Abraham was guided by this inventory of divine promises to sacrifice Isaac. All five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant contained direct references to the necessity of Isaac being alive in order for them to be fulfilled.
9. Therefore, Abraham believed that if Isaac was to be the progenitor of “all the families of the earth,” “your descendants forever,” “(Isaac) shall be your heir,” “I will established my covenant with him (Isaac) for an everlasting covenant,” then he must be alive to accomplish these things.

10. From this sequence of events that transpired over the course of almost half a century, Abraham was so confident in the immutability of divine integrity that he was able to use the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant to get up that morning in Beersheba, saddle his donkey, select two servants, split wood, and head out on a three-day ride to Mount Moriah.
11. Within the context of Genesis 22:1–7, Abraham does not speak a word until three days later when he ascends Mount Moriah along with Isaac. He did not question the order given by the Lord in verse 2 to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. He efficiently went through the process of building an altar, arranging the wood, binding Isaac, laying him on the altar, and unsheathing his knife.
12. This is when the Lord called a halt, “By Myself I have made at this moment a solemn oath.”
13. This statement continues with two reasons He halted the sacrifice:

Genesis 22:16b “... because you have done this thing [laid Isaac on the altar to be slain and then sacrificed as a burnt offering] and have not withheld your son, your only son [Isaac].”

14. Everything the Lord required of Abraham in Genesis 22:2, Abraham accomplished on Mount Moriah until the Lord intervened and acknowledged his unwavering devotion to duty.
15. A question now has to be addressed. Are we to believe that for almost 50 years, Abraham, an unbeliever, had been the subject of numerous encounters with the Lord Who repeatedly promised him of a future heir that would be the father of many nations, whose populations are innumerable, and will exist both in time and eternity?
16. There are those who contend this to be true, that Abraham was an unbeliever but was never saved until the conclusion of the events on Mount Moriah. The verse many of them use for confirmation of this idea is:

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

1. This verse clearly refers to the specific works Abraham produced, “when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar.”
2. The events on Mount Moriah in Genesis 22 were the culmination of around 50 years of detailed events in the life of Abraham, from Ur to Beersheba.

3. We have established from Passages in Genesis 11–15, that Abraham believed in Jesus Christ—Messiah—for salvation through faith alone in Him alone.
4. This documentation is confirmed in:

Genesis 15:6 And he [Abraham] already had been caused to believe [Hiph‘el causative perfect of **עָמַן** ('aman) to believe in the past with results that continue forever] in God. And He [God] kept on crediting [בָּשַׁחַת (chashav):] it [faith alone in Messiah alone] to his account for the imputation of divine righteousness [**הַקְרָאת** (sethaqah): due to his faith in Messiah], (EXT)

5. For around 50 years, Abraham was growing in grace. He was tested, he was disciplined, he was instructed, he was promised things that were to occur in both time and eternity.
6. During that time, his faith in the immutability and veracity of God’s Word developed absolute confidence in the integrity of God.
7. When he was ordered to go to Mount Moriah for the expressed purpose of sacrificing Isaac on an altar, he did so based on the working objects of those five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant.
8. He has long since responded to the divine formula for salvation when he placed his personal faith in the working object of Messiah, noted in Genesis 15:6.
9. The rest of the sentence continues in:

Genesis 22:17 ... indeed I will greatly bless [**בָּרָךְ** (barak): “bless with unalloyed happiness”] you, and I will greatly multiply [**רָבָה** (rabah): “to increase exponentially”] your seed [**זָרָע** (zara‘): “offspring”] as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess [**יָרַשׁ** (yarash): “to inherit”] the gate of their enemies. (NASB)

1. All three of the verbs indicated above—*barak*, *rabah*, and *yarash*—are imperfect which means the fulfillment of each is an ongoing process. God will continuously bless you and continuously multiply your offspring who will continuously inherit the cities of the Promised Land.

(End JAS2-43. See JAS2-44 for continuation of study at p. 431.)