

JEHOVAH JIREH (The LORD our provider)

I. *Introduction*

- A. Typically in scripture, when God reveals Himself to someone, He ties the name Jehovah to another name that reveals something deeper about Him
 - 1. God uses these names to unveil Himself personally
 - Also in order to give people a greater revelation of his character than even the personal name Jehovah suggests.
 - Often times God does this when people are going through difficult times or situations and He wants to reveal Himself as their source of help
 - 2. The first compound name of God that we will look into is JEHOVAH JIREH
 - This name means- The LORD will provide
 - The book of Genesis provides the background for the revelation of this name
 - Genesis 22:1-2 “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’”
 - This passage specifically tells us that God tested Abraham in the most devastating way.
 - He Asked Abraham to give Him the one thing Abraham loved the most - his son.
 - Isaac was Abraham’s dream come true. Isaac was the promised child, the long awaited child from God. And, God was asking for him back
 - Let’s also keep in mind that Abraham not only loved Isaac, he needed him. God promised to make Abraham a “great nation” and the fulfillment of that promise rested on this one and only son of Abraham and Sarah.
 - To understand this we must comprehend that if Isaac dies/is sacrificed without having any children of his own, then Abraham— already advanced in years— no longer has a line of descendants in which God’s promise of a future nation can come.
 - So here we have one of those situations where it appears that God isn’t making any sense. He makes a great promise to Abraham, then delivers on that promise, but now it seems like he wants it back! His request of Abraham appears to contradict His promise.

3. Abraham has now found himself in a mess of contradictions.
 - He is in a theological contradiction because God's instruction goes against the promise of a future nation and the mandate not to kill.
 - He is in an emotional contradiction because his faith now collides with his affections
 - He is in a social contradiction because he will never be able to become "A great name" like promised within his community if he kills his son.
 - He is in a relational contradiction because sacrificing Isaac would create great conflict within his marriage.
- Abraham is in a trial and we must come to understand this
 - Trials are adverse circumstances that God introduces or allows to happen in order to identify where we are spiritually, but also to prepare us for where He wants us to go.
 - If you are alive today, you cannot escape life's trials
 - You are either in a trial currently, just coming out of one, or getting ready to go through one— trials are unavoidable realities of life.
- Even though we all experience trials and tribulations, we should take comfort in knowing that trials must first pass through God's hands before reaching us. Nothing comes our way without first having received His divine approval.
 - If God approves it, we must then believe that there is a divine purpose for it.
- In the case of Abraham, his trial was actually a test. God wanted to know where Abraham's heart and faith actually stood.

II. God works in unusual ways

- A. We must yield in trials and press into God to find the purpose of the circumstance, trial, or test. We often mistake purpose because we become so fixated on the circumstances or the present stress.
 1. Abraham was in the midst of a terrible test. He faced a choice between the blessing (Isaac) and the Blessor (God). God wanted to see which he would choose.
 - Isaac had been the blessing of God to Abraham. But, God needed to know who owned Abraham's heart. The giver of the blessing or the blessing itself?
 - Many people fall more in love with the blessings of God than the nature and the person of God. Some may fall more in love with the prophecy or destiny of their life, than the one who authored it all.
 2. For millions of people, Christmas Day is the pinnacle of celebration and gift giving
 - At the heart of it all should be the reminder that Jesus came to earth as God's ultimate gift — our Redeemer and Savior.

- We have the opportunity to have a relationship with a perfect, loving Father who call us his children
 - James 1:17 reminds us “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”
 - We must remember something about God— a characteristic that he shares with every parent.
 - He doesn’t want us to love Him only for His gifts.
 - God didn’t want Abraham to only love him because he received Isaac.
 - As a parent you give to your children because you love them not in order for them to love you.
 - God is the same way. He loves us, therefore, He gives us good gifts. But, He wants us to love Him apart from His gifts. God is not a genie or cosmic bellhop.
 - This is what he wanted to know about Abraham: He wanted to know if Abraham would let go of his most valued possession and simply worship God even when it hurt. This is what Abraham did:
 - Genesis 22:3-4 “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 wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.”
 - The passage tells us that he didn’t even hesitate, v.3
 - Notice all the verbs “rose,” “saddled” “took,” “split,” “arose;” and “went.”
 - They all indicate an immediate response.
 - We must also notice what it doesn’t say. It doesn’t say, “Abraham asked God why.” It doesn’t say “Abraham snuck a lamb in his backpack just in case.” It doesn’t give us a synopsis of a debate between Abraham and God. It just says Abraham got up, got going, and got to doing what God had asked him to do.
3. Where does Abraham find the faith and strength to follow God so quickly on such a seemingly absurd request?
- We find the answer to that question in the next verse and again in Hebrews 11
 - Genesis 22:5 “Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.”
 - Take notice, that he expects that both he and Isaac will return. Hebrews 11 reveals more about his thinking.
 - Hebrews 11:17-19 “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

it was he to whom it was said ‘in Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

- Abraham knew that the request to kill Isaac seemed ridiculous and that everything was against him from a human perspective. He also knew that others might think God didn’t know what He was talking about . Yet in the midst of confusion and pain, he went to worship. He trusted that even if he went through what God had asked of him to sacrifice Isaac, God - who had produced life through two aged and worn out bodies- could no doubt resurrect Isaac from the dead.
- Sometimes God will allow you to experience larger problems in life because He wants to unveil a larger portion of Himself to you. Trials and tribulations aren’t a time to run from God but rather press in.

III. Isaac on the Altar

A. God put Abraham in a situation that only God could fix. Abraham couldn’t deduce his way out of this one. He couldn’t strategize his way out.

1. Sometimes God allows you to be in a situation that only He can solve so you can recognize that He is the one who solved it.
 - Read Genesis 22:6-12
 - Think about what Isaac must of felt while his father tied him up and laid him on top of the wood; or Abraham as he was going through the motions of sacrificing his son.
2. Now we have come upon yet another apparent contradiction
 - God almighty, the omniscient one who knows the end from the beginning, the Creator of the universe, says, “Now I know that you fear God.”
 - Didn’t God already know ? Before Abraham lifted a knife or even before Abraham woke up three days earlier and started out his journey? Didn’t God know?
 - The answer is Yes, He did. But in the passage we get a glimpse into God that’s rarely shown elsewhere. God knows all information that can be known.
 - In other words God knows what was, what is, and what will be. No one can bring up a topic anywhere that God doesn’t already fully know about.
 - No data or knowledge of things past, present, or future will catch God unaware. Yet God hasn’t necessarily experienced all that He knows.
 - R.C Sproul put it this way “In His omniscience God knew exactly what Abraham would do, since He knows all things, however, what God knows by cognition, and what is known by demonstration or experience are different.”

- For example, if I were to say “God, tell me what it feels to commit a sin,” He couldn’t answer that question, because he has never committed a sin Himself. Yes, He bore our sin, but He Himself has never committed one.
 - David reflected about God’s omniscience
 - Psalm 139:1-4 “O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold O LORD, you know it all.”
 - The Psalm goes on to talk about God’s omniscience but also His omnipresence.

B. In the New Testament, we find Jesus saying this in Matthew

1. Matthew 11:21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”
 - In those words, Jesus was letting them know what could have been, had the cities repented.
 - Yet while God knows everything actual and potential, God doesn’t necessarily know everything experientially.
 - So when the angel of the Lord says to Abraham, “Now I know...” He is not talking about informational knowledge.
 - The word “know” in its Hebrew translation is yada -(yaw-dah) which, when found more than 800 times in the Bible, means to know relationally or experientially
 - So what he is truly saying to Abraham is “Now I have experienced that you fear Me.”
2. God isn’t only a God of knowledge - He is also a God of experience. He enters into our emotions.
 - Why does He seat Himself on the praises of His people, as we read in the book of Psalm? Why doesn’t he just sit back, relax, and say “I know what praise is. All of the information on praise is available to Me. In fact, I know who is going to praise Me, who is praising Me now, and who has praised Me in the past, and what’s more, I know who means it. I don’t need anyone to praise me because I already know everything about praise”?
 - Yet the Bible says God is enthroned on the praises offered to Him.
 - Psalm 22:3 “Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”

- To be enthroned on something, is to be in the midst of it, participate in.
 - Something about us praising God brings Him great pleasure.
 - He purposefully and willingly participates in the experience
3. Why did God become a man ?
- Not only to redeem us from suffering eternal punishment and separation from Him, but also to participate in the human experience.
 - He is now able to sympathize with us because God incarnated into man. Jesus Christ, God incarnate.
 - Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”
 - Jesus can sympathize with us because He has gone through everything a person can go through, except sin.
- C. So when the angel of the Lord says “Now I know that you fear God,” it’s not because He lacked any intellectual information, but because He has now experienced the event. He has participated in it.
1. God enters into that moment of time, where He experiences, and when He does, He unveils His Character at a deeper level and reveals His name.
 - Genesis 22:13-14 “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. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to his day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”
 - Abraham didn’t hear the ram trying to get out of the thicket until he finished obeying.
 - In fact, while Abraham was going through his trial and climbing up the mountain on one side, God had Abrahams solution (the ram) coming up the mountain on the other side.
- D. Often the answer to the trial we’re facing is sitting right next to us, but we will never know until God is ready to reveal it.
1. As a result of God’s providential provision, Abraham named the place Jehovah Jireh - The Lord Will Provide.
 - He was revealed something about Jehovah that day that would change his life forever .
 2. We can easily miss the key to Abrahams provision. Scripture tells us, “Abraham raised his eyes.”
 - Jesus tells us in the New Testament:

- John 8:56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”
- Abraham was able to keep going until he saw the provision, because He saw Jesus’s day.
- He was able to look spiritually at the Lord in spite of the physical trial he was going through.
- Because of what Abraham saw, he was able to continue with radical obedience.

E. The root word for “Jireh” means “to see”

1. Yet when put together as a compound name, the connection means to provide.
2. Knowing that what he saw in the spiritual realm affected his actions in the physical realm, Abraham recognized the power of sight in calling this place Jehovah Jireh. Somewhere between the name is a relationship between God seeing and God providing.
 - When we look at another form of the word “provide” – “provision” we can see this link more clearly.
 - To have vision is to see
 - “Provision” means that something was seen beforehand thus provided for.
 - The root “vision” ties the provision to what was seen.
 - God’s provision for Abraham was based on His vision of what Abraham did.
 - God’s vision led to His provision.
 - So the question is, what must God see?
 - He needs to see the same thing He saw in Abraham, which is found in the words we looked at earlier : rose, saddled, took, split, arose, and went
 - Abraham didn’t delay his obedience. He did what God asked him to do, even though he didn’t know how God was going to work it out.
 - Delayed obedience is disobedience
 - Partial obedience is complete disobedience
 - In other words, if Abraham had only gone halfway on the trip, he wouldn’t have finished the journey. He never would have experienced and known Jehovah Jireh.

IV. We all have our own Isaac. It is that thing you want more than life itself

A. Your Isaac is that thing you least want to release. That which you hold onto the tightest

1. Loving God means acting on what God says , it is not just about singing songs, praying prayers, or hearing sermons.
2. Many of us have yet to experience Jehovah Jireh, because we have yet to act on what God has said even though we might not understand how it is all going to play out .

3. We must do that which God has instructed us to do, even if it doesn't make sense, simply because we must trust his intentions and his nature.
4. His promise and his nature is to provide, we must have Him as first and primary in our lives
 - In fact, when Abraham received Isaac back, he received even more.
 - Genesis 22:15-18
5. God longs to be Jehovah Jireh in your life . He wants us to be willing to obey him, to seek Him, and not to place anything above Him as more important in our lives. When He sees you honor Him the way Abraham did, you will discover the power of Jehovah Jireh in your life.

V. Conclusion

A. Other verses about God's nature to provide

1. Philippians 4:19
2. Luke 12:22-24