

# God Evidence: *The Sacrifice of Isaac:*

---

*"God will provide a sacrifice..."*



One of the questions which naturally comes up when speaking about the Bible has to do with how we "know" that God is the primary author of the Bible? The question usually goes something like this: "There are other religions in the world which claim also claim their scriptures are divinely revealed. Why should we think that *ours* is the real deal?"

The point is not to denigrate other faiths, but we can certainly attest to the truth of our own. There are certain passages and events in the Bible which are startling because they show an understanding which goes far beyond what anyone might expect. It is as if God has left his signature in these places - unmistakable signs that He is the ultimate author.

The story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 is one of them.

Human sacrifice was all too common in the ancient world. It was so much a part of Abraham's world that he would not have thought it unusual for this "god" to have asked it of him. But we still have to wonder about WHY God would ask it of him. God didn't need to "test" Abraham's faith, because God

knows the human heart even before we act. So why did God, some Twenty or so centuries before Jesus' birth, ask Abraham, "Take your only son Isaac, whom you love" ... and offer him up as a sacrifice?" Abraham is directed to do this on Mt. Moriah. (Note the parallel name in *Lord of the Rings*)

Why would God require Abram to go through the motions, when He *knows* that Abraham will do it, AND He knows that He will have to send an angel to stop it? Why put everyone through this emotionally draining scene?

When Abraham is going up the mountain, his son Isaac notices that something is missing. Isaac is carrying the wood for the sacrifice and he sees his father carrying the knife and torch, but asks, "Abba, where is the victim?" Abraham's diplomatic response to Isaac is written: "God will provide a sacrifice." This question and response is the key to unlocking the profound meaning of this passage for Christians.

For centuries this story of Isaac's near death experience was told in synagogues throughout the world, but its true meaning and the answer to WHY God asked this would only be realized with the coming of Jesus.

Many centuries after this event and its writing, this scene will be repeated by history - a history only God could have known - a God who is truly outside of time and space, for whom the beginning and the end are just as clear. Was God "cloning" a scene from the future to give us a startling picture of the past?

The question posed by Isaac, and Abraham's answer leave one wondering,

the obvious, "Where is the sacrifice God will provide?" For Abraham and Isaac, it was a ram, caught in a thicket - but that was only a very temporary answer - a Band-Aid over a much bigger problem. How can humanity make up to God in such a way that every life will be redeemed from death? The scene poses both the question and the answer.

Let's review the elements of the story: First, we have a "father" watching a son carry the wood for his own sacrifice up a mount. Secondly, the "beloved son" will be laid out in sacrifice over the very wood he has carried. Finally, death will not have the final say. The condemned son will return home alive.

Sound familiar? It should. Like Isaac, Jesus will carry the wood up a hill for his own sacrifice, and he will be doing it in obedience to his Father. Then, He will be stretched out upon the sacrificial wood he carried. And, finally, life, not death, will have the final victory.

God will be in the position of Abraham watching "the only son whom He loves" be put through this torturous journey. The mount will be called Golgotha, "place of the skull." and will be at the same location. Coincidence?

It is as if God was saying, I will begin revelation with a man who would be willing to do for me what I will do for the world. "Take your only son whom you love and offer him up in sacrifice..." Thus, the beginning of the Covenant, foreshadows its completion. - A mount, a father, a son, wood and a sacrifice which will lead to the victory of life over death.