

Names of God, Pt 5 – Jehovah Jireh

Names of God Series

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This evening we continue our study in the names of God. The purpose for our study in the names of God on Wednesday evenings is not to learn more about God, but to come to truly know God as he revealed himself to us in the use of his many names.

For those of you that have been here over the course of the summer, you will remember how that we studied to date, אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'), אֵל שָׁרִי (ale shad-dah'- ee) and רֵעַרְנָסִי (ad-o-noy').

Somebody help me remember how we have defined and described אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') as our eternal, triune Creator from Genesis chapter number one, the creation account.

Somebody remind me our definition description of יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'), the self existing one from Exodus chapter three, Moses at the burning bush.

Next, אֵל שָׁרִי (ale shad-dah'- ee) meaning God almighty or almighty God from Genesis 17, God's covenant with Abraham. Nothing is impossible for God and he can even superintend and govern nature so that an old man and an old woman would give birth to a child, the promised child Isaac.

And then רֵעַרְנָסִי (ad-o-noy') meaning Lord or master. Normally when we think of a Lord or a master we think of a servant or a slave. And normally when we think of the relationship between a Lord and a master and a servant and a slave we think of the oppression and the abuse that Lords and master have caused their servants or slaves throughout history. However, with God, he is the Lord or master, the one to whom we can turn when we have a need. We reflected on Psalm 123 verses one and two.

Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes look to the LORD[יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw')] our God [אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem')], Until He has mercy on us.¹

¹ Psalm 123:1-2.

And certainly we go to our רַעֲנוּי (ad-o-noy'), our Lord or master when we have needs.

The name we are going to consider this evening is the name יְהוָה יִרְאַה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh'). And perhaps יְהוָה יִרְאַה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh') is the most familiar of the compound names of יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'). It means... does anybody know? It means the Lord who provides or God our provider. And beyond simply defining these names, really an important part of our study is discovering the occasions when God was first introduced by each of these names.

The place where we find the name יְהוָה יִרְאַה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh') is Genesis chapter 22 and I advise you to take your Bibles and join me in Genesis 22.

At 11:30 AM on May 29th, 1953 Sir Edmund Hilary achieved fame. He hoisted the British flag atop Mount Everest and became the first human being ever to climb to the top of the world. It was the climax to many long months of planning. The right men had to be chosen to help, the proper equipment bought. Long hours had to be spent in training. There had to be rehearsals in Nepal and a period of acclimatization to the height and cold. There had to be early reconnaissance of the ice fall. Then came the build up, the stock piling of supplies and the initial climbs.

Not until then were the climbers ready for the final ascent. Heavily burdened, they clawed their way upward through the cold. Every step was fraught with danger and discouragement. Disaster and death lurked in every crevasse. They kept on forcing their way toward the summit. In places they hacked their way up sheer walls of ice to find fatigue, raging elements, lack of oxygen and the bitter cold. Up and up the intrepid mountaineer went clawing his way between the cornice and the rock and then up on the ridge. Steps had to be cut into the snow. Time and strength were both running out when at last a few more whacks and the summit was gained. Sir Edmund Hilary and his partners stood where no man before had ever stood, 29,002 feet above the level of the sea. No man on earth can ever climb higher than that, the summit of Mount Everest.

In Genesis chapter 22 there is another mountain. Oh, it is not Mount Everest. It is Moriah. And for Abraham and Isaac the climb up Mount Moriah was greater than Sir Edmund Hilary's climb of Mouth Everest for the sacrifice that Abraham made in the surrender of Isaac was greater than Sir Edmund's. Few men have endured the climb up Mount Everest, but fewer still could endure the climb that we read of here in Genesis chapter 22. And you are familiar with the story.

Genesis chapter 22 the occasion when Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac in obedience to God's instruction. I might give you a brief outline of Genesis 22.

It begins with the revelation, Abraham's test, verses one and two.

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."²

The revelation, Abraham's test.

God ordered Abraham here to give Isaac back to him as a burnt offering sacrifice. And it wasn't like Abraham had 12 sons. He only had one son. It wasn't like Abraham could have more sons. Abraham and Sarah were old and Isaac was a miracle child. It wasn't like Isaac was just any son. Isaac was the son of promise. Isaac was God's provision of all the covenant promises that God made to Abraham.

And yet God testes Abraham by giving him instructions to sacrifice his son.

Folks, many times God's revelation to us does not make sense. And yet what God has revealed to us is a matter of divine testing. How many times in Scripture can you recall when God gave instructions or ordered someone to do something that was contrary to their logic and reason? Can you think of one? Give me one. God gave instructions to man or woman to do something that was contrary to their logic or reason.

Noah building the ark and God instructed Noah to build an ark. It was going to rain. And put all these animals in the ark.

Another one. Gideon. God told Gideon that 32,000 men were too many men to fight the Midianites that 300 will do.

Another one. Crossing the Red Sea.

Hosea.

How about Joshua as well. God told him to march around the walls of Jericho silently.

And there is many, many others where God's instructions or God's revelation was counter intuitive. But it is a test. Will we obey?

Look at verse three.

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. 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

² Genesis 22:1-2.

to you." 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.³

I would call this, number two, the preparation, Abraham's trust.

Have you ever had to do something you didn't want to do, but you had to do it anyway? Perhaps you had to take some medicine that looked and smelled and tasted awful.

The secret to that, as we teach our children, is to take it quickly and then rinse it down with some water or some milk and it will be over before you know it. Or perhaps getting a shot at the doctor's office.

The best way to handle that is to walk in, sit down and get it over with. But what normally happens, you sit there in the chair and you have to watch the doctor or the nurse sort out the needles, right? And then they have to fill the syringe, right? And then they tap the syringe. Have you been there? And you are sitting there watching all of this preparation in agony knowing what is coming.

And I would rather face a bear than a needle. In fact, my last remembrance of getting a shot is no remembrance at all because I fainted at the sight of that large harpoon that they would be putting in my arm.

Folks, Abraham didn't have the luxury of getting it over quickly, of rinsing it down with some milk or water or sitting down and enduring the pain quickly. He had to think about it. And he had to prepare for it and Abraham's obedience had to be very deliberate. He even had to chop the wood for the altar.

Can you imagine the struggle in each swing of the axe?

Verse number four, if you are looking at the text here, explains it. It was three days before they arrived at the dreaded destination. Three days of agony. And yet with each task of preparation, each moment of progression Abraham had to trust God.

I think of Noah. For decades Noah built an ark and had to trust God through it all. Everyone thought he was a lunatic, At times he might have even asked his wife, "Honey, have I lost my mind?"

And the next day he was building the ark again. And I call this the preparation, Abraham's trust.

Number three, the proclamation, Abraham's testimony.

³ Genesis 22:3-6.

My children ask a lot of question, silly questions, easy questions sometimes, nonsense questions, curiosity questions. But my children have never asked a question as difficult as the one we find in verses seven and eight.

Look at the text.

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.⁴

That is the proclamation, Abraham's testimony.

And we don't know Isaac's age, but we can reason a bit here. He was old enough to carry the wood for the burnt offering in verse six. This occurred before Sarah's death at 127 years old according to chapter 23 verse one. So if Isaac was born to Sarah when she was 90, Isaac would have been 37 when his mother died. So at this point Isaac was older than one year old and younger than 37 years old. Isaac is now referred to as Abraham's only son, the son whom he loved according to chapter 22 verse two. So enough time had evidently passed since sending away Ishmael for Abraham's affections to be exclusively toward Isaac.

I would guess that Isaac was in his teens or his 20s. So at this point Isaac is old enough to understand what is going on. And Isaac's questioning here was not the question of a little boy, but the educated inquiry of a grown man and the father Abraham here prophetically answered in verse eight, "God will provide for Himself the lamb."⁵

That was Abraham's proclamation, his testimony.

And if only we could be so sure as Abraham, if only we could boldly declare and testify God is in control. He has got it covered.

Fourth, the dedication, Abraham's torment.

Verses nine and 10.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. 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.⁶

The dedication, Abraham's torment.

⁴ Genesis 22:7-8.

⁵ Genesis 22:8.

⁶ Genesis 22:9-10.

Can you not feel what Abraham felt here? Can you not enter into the anguish that rent his soul and understanding how he must have shrank away from the deed ahead and see how leaded his feet were as he dragged them toward the brow of the hill and can we not catch the secret glance he stole at his son, his only son, his beloved, his Isaac? And can we not hear the inward groan as he sobbed in his soul.

“Oh, my son, my only son Isaac, my son Isaac. Would to God that I could die for you in your place. Isaac, my son, my son, my son.”

And from building the altar to bringing the wood, to binding his son, to bearing his knife, each act is recorded here.

Number five, the preservation, Abraham’s thought.

In verses nine through 11, of course, we read that God intervened. Verse 11, specifically.

“But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’”⁷

And God prevented Abraham from harming his son and preserved Isaac from death.

Verse 12.

“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.”⁸

I am convinced that Abraham was caught off guard here. This... though his hand might have trembled a bit in pause for a moment, I am convinced that Abraham fully intended to plunge the knife into Isaac, for according to Hebrews 11 verse 19 Abraham thought that God, evidently would raise Isaac from the dead.

Hebrews 11 says:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.⁹

The only thought that Abraham could cling to was the resurrection of Isaac, for if God was going to fulfill his covenant promises with Abraham, it had to be through Isaac, thought the promised seed, the promise son. But, in fact, God preserved Isaac by preventing any harm coming to him.

⁷ Genesis 22:11.

⁸ Genesis 22:12.

⁹ Hebrews 11:17-19.

And then, finally, we come to the climax of our story, I believe, and that is in verse 14. Of course you know that in verse 13 Abraham lifted his eyes. He saw a ram caught in the thicket. And that ram became the substitute for Isaac.

But then in verse 14:

“And Abraham called the name of the place, [יְהוָה יִרְאֶה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’) or] The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided.’”¹⁰

And that is the designation Abraham’s title.

יְהוָה יִרְאֶה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’) is what Abraham named the place, the Lord will provide. But what does this mean?

We know יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw’) to be from the Hebrew verb “to live” or “to be.” And from this understand we understand יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw’) as being the self existing God. But the word יִרְאֶה (yir-eh’) is from the Hebrew word “to see.” And for that reason the King James version translates verse 14:

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”¹¹

And here before you on the screen is the Hebrew word or רָאָה (raw-aw’) and it can be translated, “it shall be seen” in the King James or “it shall be provided” in the New Kings James or the ESV as I read the New King James here or “it will be provided” in the New American Standard or the NIV.

What is the connection there that can be found between the English word “see” or “provide.”

Both of these English words are translated from the same Hebrew word רָאָה (raw-aw’) or יִרְאֶה (yir-eh’) since most of the time in the Hebrew Bible it is translated “see” or “appear,” why then would we translate it “provide” in Genesis 22 verse 14?

Now I am by no means a Hebrew scholar. So allow me to borrow from a gentleman named Nathan Stone in a small book he has on the names of God. And let me say this. God sees everything. God foresees everything and when Abraham and Isaac could only see the fire and the wood, not the lamb. Remember in verse number seven here is Isaac saying to Abraham, “Look, look. I see the fire. I see the wood, but I don’t see the lamb.”

¹⁰ Genesis 22:14.

¹¹ Ibid.

Abraham says in verse eight, “God or אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem’) אַרְאֶה (raw-aw’) or sees.”

It is probably translated “provides” there in your English Bibles. Perhaps this will help, a quotation from Nathan Stone from his book on the names of God.

“As the one who possesses eternal wisdom and knowledge, God knows the end from the beginning.” From eternity to eternity he foresees everything. Another words for ‘seeing’ is vision from the Latin video, to see. Thus with God, foreseeing is prevision. Jehovah having prevision of man’s sin and fall and need, he makes provision for that need. Continuing, for provision, after all, is merely a compound of two Latin words meaning to see beforehand. And we may learn from a dictionary that provide is simply the verb and prevision the noun of seeing beforehand. Thus, to God, prevision is necessarily followed by provision for he can certainly will and provide for that need which he foreseeing shows him to exist.”

Now I may have lost some of you there. I have nearly lost myself at this point, but hang on with me.

Linguistically in both Hebrew and Latin—and this is an illustration here from Latin because we understand Latin more that we understand Hebrew—prevision and provision are the same thing with God and so it is legitimate for יְהוָה יִרְאֶה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’) to be translated Jehovah sees or Jehovah provides. And so we might even propose this. Jehovah sees or Jehovah provides.

Now allow me to get a bit of mileage here out of the notion that God sees and provides. God sees our needs and God knows our needs and meets our needs before we have the need.

I want to take it even a step further. I want you to notice that Abraham did not call the name of the place, “God did see or God did provide.”

Look at verse 14.

It doesn’t matter what English Bible translation you have with you this evening.

“And Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah will or Jehovah shall אַרְאֶה (raw-aw’) or יִרְאֶה (yir-eh’) provide or see.”

Why? Because that mount of the Lord in verse 14, you see it there, mount of Jehovah, God, was Mount Moriah, verse number two.

Ok, what is the big deal about that mount being Mount Moriah? Mount Moriah is the place in Jerusalem where the Dome of the Rock is today, ok? What is the big deal about that being the place in Jerusalem where Dome of the Rock is today? It is the temple mount where the temple used to stand, where the holy of holies used to be.

Ok, what is so important about the temple mount where the temple used to stand where the holy of holies used to be?

2 Chronicles 3:1 here says... I will put it for you there on the screen.

“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.”¹²

You see the very place, Mount Moriah is the place where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac. It became the place of the residence of God in the holy of holies in the temple on the temple mount and the place of centuries of sacrifice for Israel.

But, alas, we know that it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. And so here we have God seeing and providing on that very place the solution for man’s sin. And where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac, the place where God’s people met with God for centuries, offering sacrifices is, in fact, a reminder to us that God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

Isaac said, “I don’t see the lamb. I see the fire. I see the wood, but I don’t see the lamb.”

Abraham answers, “God sees and therefore God will provide.”

What was it that John the Baptizer declared as Jesus began his earthly ministry? What did he say?

“Behold the Lamb of God.”¹³

Look, see. Here is the Lamb. God has provided.

When you think of Jehovah Jireh don’t think about God’s provision of your mortgage payment, your car payment or the bills that are mounting. It is fair to do that, יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’), the Lord provides. It is better than Jehovah Visa.

יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’), God provides. But it is so much greater than the material provision that he offers us. It is that God saw our need and God made provision for our need in the person of Jesus Christ.

Father God, we thank you for seeing and for providing. God, thank you for being our יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’), the God who sees and provides. Thank you for your provision of Jesus Christ, your only Son. Thank you of the pictures of Christ that we even find in the Old Testament. I pray, God, that we might always be mindful of the things we have heard this evening in Jesus’ name. Amen.

¹² 2 Chronicles 3:1.

¹³ John 1:29; 36.