

Responding to the New Atheists' attacks on the God of the Old Testament-18: "Child Abuse"(God's faithfulness; Jehovahjireh)

There are at least four aspects of God's character embedded in Genesis 22. In the last DDR, we noted the first two: 1) that God was only testing (נִסָּה) Abraham; He had no intention of Abraham sacrificing Isaac (22:1); and 2) God's tenderness as reflected in the particle of entreaty (נִדְּבַר) "please, I beg of you," (22:2).

A third quality of God's character that is highlighted in this text is God's faithfulness. God reminded Abraham of "your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac" (v. 2). God's covenant acknowledgment is apparent: the divine promise to Abraham can not be fulfilled without Isaac. Abraham is struggling to keep two things in mind: his deep love for Isaac is good and right, and the circumstances surrounding Isaac's birth clearly showed that God was fulfilling his covenant promise to Abraham. While this is the most fearful and dreadful thing Abraham would ever have to do, he is trying to come to terms with just how God would fulfill his promise through Isaac. Abraham knew that God's faithful character meant that God wouldn't break His promises. This doctrine was emphasized to Abraham by God passing through the pieces of the animals in the sacrifice in Genesis 15:17. In the ancient world when a covenant was made with the sacrifice of an animal, a person would walk between the pieces to indicate a self-curse if he did not fulfill the promises in the covenant: e.g., May I be like this cut-up animal if I do not fulfill my promise. What is interesting is that it was God *alone*, in the form of fire and smoke, who went between the pieces. Not only did God indicate a divine curse on Himself if He did not keep His promises to Abraham, it was a unilateral covenant—only God passed through the pieces. The Abrahamic covenant was unilateral, unconditional, and guaranteed by the faithfulness of God. God's faithfulness is one of the most encouraging doctrines for believers. Regardless of our past, God is faithful. We should never dwell on our past sins and failures. Regardless of our failures, God's unconditional love and faithfulness are immutable.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A *faithful God* who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Isaiah 49:7 This is what the LORD says -- the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel -- to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of *the LORD, who is faithful*, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And *God is faithful*; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 The one who calls you is *faithful* and he will do it.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But *the Lord is faithful*, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, *he is faithful* and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

A fourth characteristic of God in our text that is associated with His faithfulness is God as Provider. God sent Abraham to a mountain in the region of *Moriah*—derived from the Hebrew word *ra'ah*, “provide, see, show.” Hence, the very word *Moriah* (“provision”) speaks of provision, deliverance, and salvation:

Genesis 22:14 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 (KJV)

Genesis 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place *The LORD Will Provide*, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." (NAS)

Jehovahjireh (“The Lord Will Provide”) not only speaks of God’s provision for Abraham, it contains a treasure-trove of Christology. Jesus Christ is the Second Isaac, except that Jesus Christ was sacrificed as a sin offering as the “one and only Son” of God the Father:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

In Him,

Pastor Don

Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,