

# Did YHWH (Yahweh) really tell Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

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**Gen 22: 1** *And it came to pass after these things, that god (alueim) did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (ASV)*

Most people are told from reading the English translation found in most Bibles that it was "God" who told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar at a location that was to be revealed to him. Was that true? Well yes and.....no. Yes it is true that in many English translations it does read that "God" told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, however, it is not true that the Almighty Sovereign Creator of all that exists told Abraham to offer Isaac to Him as a "burnt offering."

## Some Definition basics:

The word "God" as used in many English translations is a word not found in either the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek writings. It is instead a pagan word that has unfortunately become associated as a title referring to the Almighty Sovereign Creator Power, the Sovereign of Israel. The word "God" is used in Gen. 22:1 to translate the Hebrew word "alueim" (AL-HYM) which has the English meaning of power(s) or mighty one(s). The definition is: The "powers or might" of those who rule or teach (i.e. one who yokes with another). This word is often applied to rulers or *a god*. (a god –using the indefinite article).

## Correctly translated, the passage reads:

**Gen 22:1**, *"And coming after these things – and **the mighty one**, he is testing Abraham and he is saying to him: "Abraham!" and he [Abraham] is saying "it's me!" 2 and he [the mighty one] is saying, "take your son, your only one, whom you love – Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and send him up there upon one of the mountains that I [mighty on] will tell you."*

## Background Explanation:

The offering of humans or of animals or of some other physical thing such as food grains by way of fire "as a whole burnt offering" on an altar (a pile of rocks) was a common practice in Abraham's pagan culture. But this type of "offering" (a thing going up) done to please the True Almighty Sovereign Yahweh was a practice never authorized or approved by Yahweh. Although Human sacrifice was practiced by pagan cultures, (contrary to popular belief) it was a practice that would be forbidden by the Almighty Sovereign Yahweh.

In fact, Yahweh calls Human sacrifice something that He hates, and a pagan practice that was an abomination to Him. Read how Yahweh warns His people Israel NOT to follow those nations that practiced these abominable sacrifices:

**Deut. 12:30-31**, *"for every abomination to Yahweh, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt (sacrificed) in the fire to their gods."*

Yahweh tells us in no uncertain terms that Human sacrifice is such a horrible concept to Him, that it did not even come into "His mind" and He never demanded it from His creation. See how Yahweh condemns Yahudah when they practiced this vile act against His will –

**Jer. 19:4-6**, *"They have built also the high places of Baalm (heathen god), to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal-gawd, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."*

Now read in the next verse, what Yahweh's penalty against Yahudah was for doing such wicked acts against His commandments?

**Jer. 19: 7**, *"I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead body's will I give to be food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth."*

The truth is, **Yahweh never changes**, and what was not authorized by Him in one age and labeled as an abomination by Him, would not have been approved by Him in a previous age.

Abraham attempted to offer Isaac to Yahweh as a burnt offering, because he was still subjected to his ancient "pagan/heathen" culture, and was prompted to do this thing by a local power, a mighty one, an authority in the attempt to challenge or test him. In his devout and faithful mind still influenced by his pagan culture, Abraham thought that the offering, of the "thing going up" into the sky by way of fire and smoke from such a great gift as one's only son, as a "burnt offering" would ultimately result in even greater blessings. But, even though the intent of Abraham may have been honorable, and his action notable, we have seen that according to the Hebrew Bible this ancient heathen/pagan practice was not founded or ever required by Yahweh.

**Gen 22:11**, *"And the Messenger of Yahweh called to him [Abraham] from the skies and he [the messenger] is saying, Abraham! And he [Abraham] is saying "it's me!" 12 And he [the messenger] is saying, do not lay your hand to the boy, and he [the messenger] is saying, do not do anything, because now I [the messenger] know that you [Abraham] are fearer of one mighty-one, and have not kept back your son, your only one, from me [the messenger]."*

According to Gen. 22:11, The **Messenger of Yahweh** (one sent by Yahweh) called to Abraham from the sky, and prevented him from killing his son. It was this same Messenger that also said to Abraham, *"now I know that you are a fearer of powers (mighty-ones), and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."* The test was a confirmation for the **Messenger of Yahweh** that Abraham was willing to go all the way in offering up his son. The test was not intended to make a point to Yahweh the Almighty Sovereign Creator, who already knew the heart of Abraham since he had earlier instructed Abraham through "another messenger" to leave the city of Ur, (Gen. 12:1).

The test was never done in order for the Almighty Sovereign Creator Yahweh to discover what Abraham would be willing to do, since the Almighty Sovereign Creator knows all things, declaring the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:10: Prov. 19:21).

**Yahweh corrected Abraham, by having His celestial Messenger** calls out to him from the sky, thereby preventing him from offering his son Isaac as a "burnt offering." In Isaac's place a ram was provided as a substitute offering.

**Gen 22:15**, *And the Messenger of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time from the skies, 16 "By myself I have sworn says Yahweh, that because of this thing you have done, and have not withheld your son, your only one, 17 that blessing I will bless you! And causing you to be many – I will cause to be many your seed as the stars of the skies, and as sand that is on the lip of the sea. And your Seed will possess the gate of His enemies."*

In Gen. 22:15, we have the account of the Messenger of Yahweh calling Abraham from the skies a second time. This time the messenger is presenting a message to Abraham direct from Yahweh Himself, by quoting Yahweh, as is evident by the statement, "*By myself I have sworn says Yahweh.*" Notice that the words "*from me*" are absent from the quote made by the messenger of Yahweh, indicating that the original test was not requested from Abraham by Yahweh.

Although it is clear that Yahweh blessed Abraham for his attempt to offer Isaac to Him by way of a "burnt offering" (as a thing going up), it is also clear that the original request was NOT Yahweh's doing, but instead, **Yahweh sent His Messenger specifically to prevent this intended offering.** It is also clear, that Yahweh Himself never spoke directly to Abraham in this entire passage, but directed the message of communication to come only through His appointed messenger (the Alueim) acting as His spokesman.

So, did Yahweh tell Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? **Absolutely not,** in fact Yahweh only spoke to Abraham through His messenger, but never directly, and then only to "prevent Him from sacrificing his son Isaac. **In this entire passage Yahweh never spoke to Abraham directly, but only through His messenger.**

The contrast found in the Greek book of James (actually "James" is the book of *Ya'acob*), is a lesson in faithfulness, not in faith. Abraham was willing to "gift" his son Isaac, as was a pagan/heathen custom in his day. Yet the Messenger of Yahweh was instructed to prevent him from doing so. Although Abraham never completed his willingness to do the act it was still accounted to him as honorable, since he did have the "willingness" to gift back to Yahweh the most loved and precious possession he had been given, his only son Isaac.

**Gen. 22** becomes quite clear when read in Hebrew, and critically studied to understand truth.

The Questions that are answered:

1. Is Yahweh not all knowing? In other words, would Yahweh not know Abraham's willingness to "gift" Isaac as a sacrifice? **Answer** – of course Yahweh knows all.
2. Who really asked Abraham to offer Isaac? Was it Yahweh (who knows all), or was it an "al-o-ah" (see vs 1) a local "mighty one, a power"?
3. Who was this "al-o-ah" that tested Abraham to see if he would offer Isaac?
4. Who was it that prevented Abraham from "gifting" Isaac by way of a burnt offering (see vs 11)?
5. Was this messenger (angel) the same "al-o-ah" that enticed Abraham, or was it some other?
6. If another, then who enticed Abraham in the first place to offer up Isaac?
7. According to vs 12, who is really talking to Abraham?
8. Who did Abraham "fear" by intending to "gift" Isaac? Was it Yahweh, or was it really the messenger?
8. Who was it that now knows that Abraham was willing to "gift" Isaac, Yahweh or the messenger of Yahweh?

9. Who is the "me" in vs 12; is it the messenger, or was it Yahweh?

**Conclusion:**

**Yahweh does not entice, test, or require any "gifting" to Him by way of a "burnt offerings" animal, human, or any food offered on an altar, and never has, and does not need to.**

**Gen 22**, is an example where an honorable man still under his pagan/heathen culture, by custom and local influence was willing to do an act, which in his mind was a show and display of thankfulness to the Almighty Sovereign for his blessings, although his understanding was miss-placed. It was his willingness to do this act that became a blessing to him.

It is unfortunate, that this truth is hidden in most English Bible translations by use of the pagan derived words like "God" as a substitute for its true Hebrew meaning here of "powers, mighty-one(s)." Furthermore, the Almighty Sovereign Creator has given to us His proper name of Yahweh, to be spoken as a "*memorial for all generations.*" (Exodus. 3:15). When we fail this simple request we disgrace our Almighty Sovereign Creator and violate His Commandment to us found in Deut 5:2-22,

When the proper names are used in translation, and the proper meanings of the Hebrew words are translated into English, many of the Bible passages that first appear to be confusing become clear and errors will be displaced by the truth.

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