

Day 8 :: Feb. 10

The story of the sacrifice of Isaac is a deeply compelling story. Abraham has been blessed by God with a son when Abraham was 100 years old. That's headline news already. He names his son Isaac, which means, "laughter" because both he and Sarah laughed derisively when they heard the promise that they would have a son at their \*ahem\* "advanced age". But soon the derision is wiped from their laughter and it turns to joy as sure enough they bear a child.

Isaac will be their only child, both due to their age and God's promise, and so the whole of their family line rests on him. But beyond that, Abraham has constantly been promised that he will be the father of a multitude, and this has to come through Isaac as well. But wait, there's more. God has regularly told Abraham that their relationship is based on the Covenant God makes with Abraham, and that this covenant will pass down from generation to generation. So Isaac is a thrice-important son to Abraham.

And now God asks Abraham to kill him. "Sacrifice" may be a slightly nicer word, but the effect will be the same. No family line – Abraham's family dies with him. No multitudinous offspring – God's promise dies with him. No covenant relationship – God's friendship dies with him. Everything He's been promised, worked for, and expected out of life dies with Isaac.

And still he obeys. Seemingly without hesitation.

Did Abraham know? Had he dealt with God enough to see through God's test? After all, what set this God apart from all the many other gods of the land was that this God didn't do child sacrifice. So did Abraham know, or at least suspect, that God was just testing him? We will never know.

What we will know is that he obeyed, and God blessed him yet again. Land, progeny, reputation, power, wealth, relationship with God – this God is the God who Provides blessing after blessing. The God who Provides. Jehovah Jireh, my Provider.