

In the Mount of the Lord, it shall be Provided!

Presented by Murray McLellan, an unworthy sinner upon whom the kindest of Kings has poured grace unimaginable. May it please God to use the following manuscript to advance the faith and joy of his people. My foremost desire is to magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Unto him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

It is my sincere desire that the presentation of these truths will advance your faith and joy in the glorious God of heaven and earth, and in his amazing salvation rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ. All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

I can think of no more delightful subject upon which to meditate than the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why such joy floods my soul in the study of God's Word. The very heart of the Bible is the unfolding theme of God's gracious work to glorify himself in bringing about our salvation in and through the Lord Jesus. Our glorious God reigns supreme. To bring glory to his name, God purposed and planned a creation and a history in which he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace throughout the ages to come. This redemptive history flows throughout the Scriptures. God, therefore, was not merely a spectator in the creation and the fall, the onward march of time, and the history of humankind, but the designer and the administrator of it all.

Throughout history, God was showing that the promised blessings of his favor come upon a sinner only through the grace and wisdom of God. In fact, everything in redemptive history was working toward the glorious fulfillment of God's promise in Christ. Everything was moving toward that "*fullness of time*" when "*God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*" (Gal. 4:4-5). In particular, events were moving toward the day of the cross, when man manifested what he was and God manifested what he was. The day of crucifixion was the day that the Lord had made. God made the day of salvation when he established the chief cornerstone from the stone that the builders rejected (see Psalm 118:22-24).

At Pentecost, Peter made it very clear that the event of the cross was the eternal purpose of God. "*Him, [Jesus of Nazareth] being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it*" (Acts 2:23-24). God purposes and no one can thwart his plans or stay his hand. In fact, God providentially directs and uses even the evil plans of his enemies to work out his good pleasure – to their condemnation and his glory. The early church recognized this and rejoiced in it. We hear them pray in Acts 4:27-28, "*For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.*" They had meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

The Lamb of God, purposed to be slain from the foundation of the world, set his face like a flint and offered himself as an atonement for sin. In this, he magnified the God of incredible grace and wonder through the salvation of a people who would know and experience the wonder of that grace, and who forever would exist to the praise of the glory of that grace.

God reveals himself throughout his Word as both the one who established the plan and the one who sees it to its fulfillment.

But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. (Ps. 115:3)

' ... My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure' ... Indeed I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it, I will also do it. (Isa. 46:10-11)

... [God] works all things according to the counsel of His will. (Eph. 1:11)

Somebody is in charge of the universe! God rules all that is going on. Though there are millions of billions of seemingly isolated circumstances, they do not function randomly. There is a design and a Designer, a purpose and a goal, and an intention in all of it.

How God takes the infinite number of circumstances, attitudes, and events that exist in both the natural and demonic world and pulls them all together to work out his will is beyond our comprehension. The limits of our own imaginations and the words of God himself confirm that God is beyond us:

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isa. 55:9)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is UNSEARCHABLE.” (Isa. 40:28, emphasis added)

Job tells us that the sum of what we are able to comprehend of God is but *“the mere edges of His ways”* (Job 26:14).

I love a God I cannot comprehend – who is far above me. That is a God worthy of my praise, my worship, and my trust. A god who is entirely understandable by human beings is intrinsically no bigger than those human beings are. Why should we worship someone who is just like us?

We can identify the ways that God accomplishes his plan by sorting how he rules in the world into two categories: visible and invisible. Miracles are visual evidence of God at work, and providence is an invisible means through which God fulfills his purposes.

Miracles amaze us by drawing our attention to God and away from the everyday world. God has designed nature so that it runs along observable and predictable lines, but nature does not make its own laws. It is always subject to God’s control. To accomplish his purposes, there are times when God interrupts the observable natural course of events. Several well-known biblical miracles occur in Genesis and Exodus:

- the flood
- the plagues in Egypt
- the parting of the Red Sea
- manna in the wilderness
- water from the rock

Providence lies behind miracles and is not observable, although the results of it often are discernable. Because it is an invisible means through which God works, many people do not think about it. God, in an unseen way, controls all things that happen in the universe. God oversees all, invisibly orchestrating all the seemingly natural occurrences. To me, it is even more amazing than miracles.

When I ponder God, providentially working out his purposes, I am amazed. When I think of billions of people, all pursuing their own agendas, and God over-ruling them all, I am awestruck. He restrains. He lets go. He oversees and controls it all.

Jesus reigns and will continue to do so until all his enemies are brought under his feet to serve as his footstool (1 Cor. 15:25 cf. Ps. 110:1). (*Not all believe he is Lord, but one day all will know the truth ... and every knee will bow and every tongue confess the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord.*) He is a king over molecules and mountains. He does all his good pleasure and no one thwarts his hand.

The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord. (Prov. 16:33)

Not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from the Father’s will. (Matt. 10:29)

We have a limited understanding of control; we can comprehend it only from a creature’s perspective. For us, absolute control means that those on the receiving end would be like puppets on a string or programmed computerized robots. This is the only way we can control. God, however, is not like a man. He can control all and, at the same time, allow people to make decisions and choices for which they are completely responsible. The consequences of those choices will not prevent God from accomplishing his glorious purposes. Thus, men do what they want to do – and all the while, they are over-ruled and are fitting into a grander scheme that is being worked out by an infinitely wise, holy and powerful God. The supreme biblical example of this is the crucifixion.

As the Scripture unfolds from Genesis to Revelation, we discover that Jesus’ work on the cross in particular is central to the Bible and to all of human history — a work first promised and then fulfilled in time. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden did not take God by surprise, nor did it cause him to alter his

original plan. God always intended to send the Son to earth to rescue sinners, and his promises reflect that intention. In the rest of this article, we will trace the biblical development of that promise.

When God makes a promise, nothing can change it. *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Num. 23:19). The Lord stated in Isaiah 46:11b, *“Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I also will do it.”* What was God’s expressed purpose? God made a promise to a man named Abram that through him, a Seed would come – a Redeemer – to conquer sin, Satan, death, and hell. The Seed would come to gather a people who forever would be a testimony to the incredible grace of God.

Some time after the original promise, God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means ‘father of a multitude,’ as a testimony to the promise. God had come to Abram when Abram was still an idolater in the land of the Chaldeans, in Ur. This promise was one of pure grace from beginning to end. God set apart this pagan from Ur, and told him that he was going to bless him. God was going to bless Abraham in the promised Seed, in whom Abraham the sinner would be justified in the sight of God. Abraham would not be alone in this blessing. God also promised to make a great nation who would be God’s special blessed people. It was God’s own good pleasure to do so, for his own glory – to display his grace and goodness.

Throughout his life, Abraham repeatedly experienced the reality that God is true to his Word, no matter how strange that word seemed. Though his wife, Sarah, had been barren and well past her childbearing years, had she not, at the age of ninety, given miraculous birth to the promised son, Isaac? God manifested his glory as a promise-keeping God of awe-inspiring power. In Genesis 22, God repeats and clarifies his amazing promise. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise would involve another Son whose birth would come about in a miraculous way – a Seed in whom were bound all the promises — a Seed in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

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.” (Gen. 22:1-2)

It is important to notice that God does not ask Abraham to murder his son, but to offer him – to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. God is not commanding Abraham to commit a crime, but rather to execute due judgment. The wages of sin is death and God can justly require the death of any sinner at any time. The fact that God does not execute all of us, but suffers long with sinners, is because of his great mercy. God’s request is a great test of Abraham’s faith. Isaac is the son of promise; he is the miraculous gift of God, given to Abraham in his old age. Isaac was Abraham and Sarah’s only son and the one through whom the promised Messiah would come. The promise of God and this commandment of God seem to be at odds, yet Abraham obeys.

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. (Gen. 22:3-4)

Though Abraham did not understand, he trusted the God who had given him this son in a miraculous way. He trusted God’s goodness, and thus, he obeyed the word of the Lord. Abraham knew that God deserves total trust. He did not try to figure out all that God was doing. Neither Abraham nor we who come after him have the ability to comprehend all of God’s actions. However, like Abraham, we too are called to rest in God, even when we cannot see or understand what he is doing. Obedient faith reveals a genuine work of God.

Abraham’s obedience took him to *the place* of which God had told him. When he was almost there, he lifted his eyes and saw *the place* in the distance. Before moving on to verse 5, I would like you to take note of the fact that along with faith and obedience, God makes a pointed reference to a particular spot. Why is it so important to God for Abraham to go to this particular mountain? I will comment on this shortly. For now, hold this question in your “memory bank.”

In verse 5, we encounter more evidence of Abraham's faith in a supremely powerful and trustworthy God.

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 to you." (Gen. 22:5, emphasis added)

In light of Hebrews 11:17-19, this is not a statement of deception; rather, it is evidence of faith. Abraham knows that whatever happens on the mountain, God is going to have to do something to get that son back. He is convinced that the promise of God cannot fail.

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. 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. (Gen. 22:6-8)

Abraham believes that the Lord will provide. He may have no clue as to how, but he knows God. He has confidence in God. As we shall see, Abraham's confidence is well founded. God does indeed provide.

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. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." (Gen. 22:9-11)

I am sure that Abraham was very glad to respond, "Here I am!"

The biblical account emphasizes the location as significant to God.

And He said, "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."

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." (Gen. 22:12-14)

In verse 18, God reaffirms the promise he made to Abraham when he called him from Ur, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (Gen. 22:18a cf. Gen. 12:3).

On one level, this is a grand story of faith. Abraham demonstrates the kind of faith and trusting obedience we all are to have. Sometimes we must go through difficult circumstances where we cannot see what is ahead and we cannot understand what is happening. Are we willing to give up everything to God? Is he truly our first love? The kind of faith exhibited by Abraham gives glory to God (Rom. 4:16-21). We might not know until we reach heaven why things were the way they were, but we can trust God's wisdom and goodness.

I believe, however, that God calls us to see something beyond simply an illustration of great faith. As we begin to reflect upon this story with New Testament eyes, we find that this passage leads us to Calvary. God cannot compromise his character. Our sin is so horrendous that it deserves the judgment and wrath of God. There will be a final judgment and in that day, even this offering of Isaac will not be enough. Isaac is a sinner. He cannot die for another. He must die for his own sin. We must all die for our own sins. Oh, if only there could be a substitute that God could accept!

If God is to bless, he must provide an acceptable atoning sacrifice. Another must stand in the place of judgment and pay the price of redemption. The ram can be a substitute for Isaac in this offering only, but nothing beyond that. It is of a temporary nature. The blood of rams or bulls or goats can take away neither sin, nor the death and judgement that result from sin. Knowledge of the complete teaching of the Bible makes it clear that the substituted ram that stayed the knife in this event points forward to the one who is to come and who will be sacrificed as the great and ultimate Lamb of God. Indeed, God's only begotten Son will provide and pay the redemptive price.

The future tense of the verbs in verse 14 establishes the idea of looking beyond the ram. Though God has already spared Isaac, and Abraham has sacrificed the ram, Abraham calls the place “The-Lord-Will-Provide,” not “The-Lord-Has-Provided” or “The-Lord-Did-Provide.” Abraham looked for another day and another provision in the future. Thus, Jesus could say in John 8:56, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*”

After he chronicles Abraham’s naming of the mountain, the narrator breaks into the account with an editorial comment that clearly links the location of Abraham’s experience to God’s promise, “*In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided*” (Gen. 22:14). God had directed Abraham to go to a particular mountain. Why had God sent him on a three-day journey to this specific mount, when there were many other closer and more secluded mountains?

God, who is faithful to all his promises, stated that he would provide a lamb as a substitute in the Mount of the Lord. Now we begin to see why God commanded Abraham to go to this particular mountain in the land of Moriah. The Scripture unfolds for us the reason for Abraham to make a three-day journey to a particular spot. Why did God direct Abraham to a specific mountain in Moriah? It is in this mount that the Lord would provide.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read that God has plans for Mount Moriah. Many years later, in response to a rash and unbelieving action of King David, God sends an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. *And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.* (1 Chron. 21:15)

Notice that when the angel reaches a particular place, God says, “Stop!” In fact, when we read the next verse, the indication is that the angel stopped his sword in mid-swing.

Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. (1 Chron. 21:16)

As we continue to read the event in 1 Chronicles 21, we see that in verses 18-19, the Lord commands David to purchase this particular plot of land from Ornan the Jebusite, and to build an altar to the Lord on that threshing floor. David purchases this spot, builds an altar, and offers burnt offerings and peace offerings there, and only then does the angel of judgment return his sword to its sheath (1 Chron. 21:25-27).

Where was the location of this threshing floor? Second Chronicles 3:1 provides us with the answer. *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.* (2 Chron. 3:1)

The threshing floor was located on Mount Moriah – that mountain ridge that runs through Jerusalem. Mount Moriah is not a single peak, but an elongated ridge that commences to rise at its southern end at the junction of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, at the original City of David — Jerusalem (elevation approximately 600 meters, or 1,968 feet). The ridge then climbs in elevation to a maximum of 777 meters (2,549 feet) just northeast of the present Damascus Gate of the Old City. God had directed Abraham to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering somewhere along this mountain ridge. It was upon this ridge that God provided a ram to substitute for Isaac.

Here, upon Mount Moriah, Solomon built the temple where the continual sacrifices that foreshadowed our Lord and his once-for-all sacrifice took place. The wall of the city of Jerusalem cut through this mountain ridge of Moriah. Viewed from outside the city, with the cut for the wall and the road, the mountain looks somewhat like a skull. That particular section of Mount Moriah is known as Golgotha.

“In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided!” Throughout the centuries, God’s promise rang forth: from the day when that first son of promise bore the burden of the wood for the offering and climbed that mount, until the day of fulfillment, when the ultimate Son of promise bore the cross and ascended that mount.

We see the light shine ever brighter: it glimmered on that dawning day when Abraham, holding the knife of judgment, stretched out his hand, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, “Stop!” It gleamed again on that day during David’s reign when the angel of the Lord, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against Jerusalem, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, “Stop!” Finally, it burst into full radiance when history reached that anticipated day: the day when God, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against his own Son. This time, there was no cry of “Stop!”

In the day of the Lord, on the day of the crucifixion, God did not stay the knife. The sword of judgment was plunged into the bosom of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), willingly bore his cross to Calvary and became the ultimate peace offering for all the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7-9, 29). God made his Son an offering for sin on the mount of Moriah, according to his determined purpose and foreknowledge. The full atonement of Christ causes the angel of death and judgment to sheath his sword forever.

This is the day that the Lord has made! We now herald that in the Mount, the Lord HAS provided! There is a Savior for sinners.

On this same Mount Moriah, where the promised seed of David would build God a house, Solomon built the temple that foreshadowed the reality. On that same mountain ridge of Moriah, but outside the gate, the ultimate Seed of David, through the redemption of the cross, would build his Father a spiritual house of living stones (Read 1 Chron. 17:10b-14, 2 Sam. 7:12-13; compare with Acts 2:29-36, Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Pet. 2:4-10). Jesus Christ himself has become the chief cornerstone of God’s spiritual house. Is not our sovereign God most glorious in working out his promise? *“In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”*

“I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:21-24)



Are you glad that Jesus reigns? I am glad that God has left nothing to chance. I am glad that Christ is Lord.

Comfort yourselves in this truth, saints. Things may appear out of control at times. I feel out of control at times. However, even though we may be muddled in our thoughts and dark clouds may come over us, the Christ who loves us lives forever and is on the job every day and every night — even when we have forgotten what the job is!

He is even now at the right hand of God — he is the chosen, glorious deliverer who shall not fail.

He upholds all things by the Word of his power, and he works all things together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

When you cannot explain the trouble you are experiencing, you need to understand the providential power of a Sovereign Lord who takes every bit of the diverse data in the entire universe and controls it all for your good and his glory and eternal purpose. And has he not demonstrated his ability to do it? This fact comforts our souls when nothing else can.

I tell you, the Christ of God is Lord! He is enthroned and he is the royal King of all kings. He is the Lord of all lords, and he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to him in repentance and faith. This is the Christ of the Bible!

But be warned, you who do not want this man to reign over you — you who want to be your own lord – there is a day when Christ will be revealed in truth for who he is, and you are no match for the Sovereign Lord. I say to you,

- Go and do battle against the lightning and hold it triumphant in your hand.
- Go and hush the hurricane and flatten the tidal wave.
- Hold the wind in the hollow of your hand.

When you have done this, then lift up your puny hand against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

There is a day appointed in which you will feel his power – though he suffers long with you — you are storing up wrath for the day of judgment – the day of his unveiling. Why would you perish when there is such a great Savior for sinners, and such a good Lord to reign over you?

Praise God, he has not left me to myself! Oh, how I need an advocate like Jesus, the Righteous – who substituted in my place at Mount Moriah — on Calvary — and provided all I needed, that I not only might be forgiven, but also might be received as a son!