

CONFESSING CHRIST WITH THE AQEDAH

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“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Colossians 1:19–20

Perhaps no story in the Old Testament foreshadows the cross as vividly as the offering of Isaac (Gn 22:1–19). The passage is commonly referred to as the *Aqedah*, which means “binding” in Hebrew. This title reminds us that Abraham brought Isaac to the altar and bound him, but that was as far as the offering of Isaac went. An angel intervened and stopped Abraham from completing his son’s sacrifice. But centuries later, the Heavenly Father did follow through on such a sacrifice. God “did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us” on the cross (Rm 8:32).²

Parallels between the *Aqedah* and the cross have received considerable attention over the centuries.³ In this essay, I want to explore ritual dimensions of Abraham’s sacrifice that suggest a more explicit expectation of Christ’s sacrifice than previously recognized. The *Aqedah* not only foreshadows the cross but anticipates it expressly.

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² On allusions to the *Aqedah* in Ro 8:32, see Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 220–23. On the comparison of the *Aqedah* to the crucifixion more generally, see Abraham Kuruvilla, “The *Aqedah* (Genesis 22): What is the Author *Doing* with what he is *Saying*?” *JETS* 55, no. 3 (2012), 492–95.

³ E.g., Monika Pesthy-Simon, *Isaac, Iphigeneia, Ignatius: Martyrdom and Human Sacrifice* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017). Leroy A. Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*. James Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac: A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in Light of the Aqedah* (Analecta Biblica, Investigationes Scientifcae in Res Biblicas 94; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981).

I. PURPOSE OF THE AQEDAH

The *Aqedah* holds a place of importance within the Abraham narratives (Gn 12–25).⁴ It occurs at the climax of Abraham's story, just before Sarah's death (Gn 23), Isaac's marriage (Gn 24), and Abraham's own death (Gn 25). The passage is introduced as God's "test" (v. 1) of Abraham—the "final exam" which Abraham passed ("now I know that you fear God"; v. 12). It is also the last record of God speaking to Abraham, and the heavenly voice ended that conversation by confirming the blessing Abram heard when first called by God (cf., Gn 12:1–3 and 22:16–17).⁵ The *Aqedah* represents "the climactic event in the life of Abraham."⁶ It is hard to overstate the importance of this passage as a window into the faith of Abraham, and of all Israel. Exploring the message of the *Aqedah* is, therefore, a vital priority of Old Testament theology.

It used to be common to read this narrative as a repudiation of human sacrifice in Israel.⁷ It is certainly true that Abraham was stopped from sacrificing his son. However, scholars now recognize that "the core of the narrative actually seems to assume the possibility that God could demand human sacrifice. It contains no categorical divine repudiation of the practice as such."⁸ Elsewhere, the Pentateuch strictly prohibits human sacrifice (Ex 13:15; Lv 18:21; 20:2–3; Dt 12:31; 18:10), but the *Aqedah* contains no actual proscription of the practice. Denouncing human sacrifice can hardly be its primary message.

More recently, scholars have come to regard the narrative as the origin story for a particular holy site.⁹ The main body of the narrative ends with a place naming: "So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided'" (v. 15). This has led to the current consensus that the account is an etiology for a particular holy site. Other passages in Genesis serve a similar

⁴ For a survey of the *Aqedah's* interpretation, see Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial: On The Legends And Love Of The Command To Abraham To Offer Isaac As A Sacrifice; The Akedah*, trans. Judah Golding (Woodstock, Vt.: Jewish Lights, 1993); A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 193–224; Kuruvilla, "The *Aqedah*," 489–95; Robert J. Daly, "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac," *CBQ* 39 (1977), 45–75; Jon Balsarak, "Luther, Calvin and Musculus on Abraham's Trial: Exegetical History and the Transformation of Genesis 22," *RRR* 6.3 (2004), 361–73.

⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 160–61.

⁶ Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 160.

⁷ Nahum M. Sarna, "Excursus 17: The Meaning of the Akedah," in *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), 392–93; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 239–40; Joseph H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs: Hebrew Text English Translation and Commentary* (London: Soncino Press, 1997), 201; Paul G. Mosca, "Child Sacrifice in Canaanite and Israelite Religion: A Study of *Mulk* and *mlk*," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1975), 237; cf., Ronald M. Green, "Abraham, Isaac, and the Jewish Tradition: An Ethical Reappraisal," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 10, no. 1 (1982): 14.

⁸ Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 157.

⁹ Gunkel, *Genesis*, 237–38.

purpose, such as narratives introducing Beer-lahai-roi (Gn 16:13–14), Zoar (Gn 19:20–22), and Beersheba (Gn 21:31). But the *Aqedah* authorizes the most important sacrificial site in the Abraham narratives, often identified as the place where the temple was later built.¹⁰

This interpretation is probably closer to the heart of the text's purpose. But there is more detail contained in the narrative than necessary to introduce a place. Indeed, if the purpose of the text is to identify a certain location, it is burdened with numerous extra details "none of [which] prove relevant to the narrative in the end."¹¹ In fact, the *Aqedah* contains "the longest account of any sacrifice in Genesis,"¹² which seems extravagant if the text's purpose is to mark out the importance of the place.

But there is reason for the extensive sacrificial details in the text. The account appoints both Israel's most holy site and the sacrificial rites to be observed there. In an essay aptly named, "The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice," Gordon Wenham observes, "It is therefore highly likely that the narrator of Genesis 22 intends to say something about the theology of sacrifice" in this narrative.¹³ Adding to Wenham's basic insight, I would note that there are at least ten features of Abraham's sacrifice liturgy that are also found in the Zion liturgies, further substantiating the *Aqedah's* function as the fundamental narrative guide to sacrifice theology for Israel.¹⁴

This narrative in Genesis presents the foundational pattern for sacrifice and its meaning, as embodied in the example of Israel's founding patriarch. Scholars traditionally open the book of Leviticus to study the nature and meaning of Israel's sacrifices, but the *Aqedah* is even more basic than Leviticus. The *Aqedah* preserves, in narrative form, Israel's earliest sacrifice instruction. The theological lessons presented in Abraham's model are therefore foundational to our understanding of all the later sacrifices of Mosaic tabernacle or the Solomonic temple. Naturally, Abraham's procedures are simpler than the institutionalized rites of the temple. However, parallels in basic forms suggest the correlation is deliberate.

¹⁰ This identification with Mount Zion will be discussed further, below.

¹¹ So Sailhamer, "Genesis," 168; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, WBC 2 (Dallas: Work Books, 2015), 109.

¹² Gordon J. Wenham, "The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P. Wright, et al (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 95.

¹³ Wenham, "The Akedah," 95.

¹⁴ Wenham, "The Akedah." Moberly noticed some of these hints of the temple liturgy, but did not fully develop them: R. W. L. Moberly, "The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah," *VT* 38, no. 3 (1988): 306–07. According to Michelle Levine, Nahmanides also recognized the prefiguring of temple rites in the *Aqedah*: Michelle J. Levine, *Nahmanides on Genesis: The Art of Biblical Portraiture* (Brown Judaic Studies; Providence, R.I.: 2009), 407–09. Levenson regards the *Aqedah* as an etiology for Passover: Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 11–24.

II. LITURGY OF THE AQEDAH

A. LOCATION

The first ritual detail to note, observed by Abraham and repeated in later Israel's worship, is the appointed location. Abraham was sent to offer his sacrifice "on one of the mountains" located in "the land of Moriah" (v. 2). There is no other reference to this region in the Pentateuch, and there have been various proposals regarding the location of Moriah. Abraham names the place "y^hw^h yir'eb" ("The LORD will provide"; v. 14), leading some to suggest Jeruel (y^ĕr^u'ēl; 2 Ch 20:16), a site thirteen miles south of Jerusalem.¹⁵ However, the traditional identification of the place with Mount Zion remains the most likely solution.¹⁶

This interpretation (Moriah = Zion) appears as early as the Chronicler, who identified Moriah with the site of the temple's founding. "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah" (2 Ch 3:1). The Chronicler seems keen to ensure we know Solomon's temple was built on the site of Abraham's sacrifice.¹⁷ The same identification also appears in the Book of Jubilees (18:13), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.8.2.226), and the Talmud (*Ta'an.* 16a).¹⁸

"Moriah" was likely a pre-Israelite name for Mount Zion and its surrounding region.¹⁹ The book of Genesis frequently identifies important geographic sites by their archaic names. For instance, some scholars believe "Eden" (Gn 2:8, 10–14) was an archaic title for what later became known as Canaan.²⁰ Genesis refers to the land of Babylon by its archaic name "Shinar" (Gn 11:2; cf., Dn 1:2). Genesis identifies the territory that later became Philistia by its archaic name "Gerar" (Gn 10:19; 20:1; 26:1). The use of Moriah for Mount Zion fits this pattern, and its identity would likely have been recognized by its original audience as its use in 2 Chronicles 3:1 shows.

The location's secondary description in the account further identifies it with Zion. God directed Abraham to the mountain "of which I shall tell you" (v. 2). This reference is more than a promise of traveling guidance. It marks the mountain as a sacred site of divine appointment.²¹ The phrase is comparable to Deuteronomy's term of reference: "the place that the LORD your God will choose" (Dt 12:5, 11, 18, 21; 14:23; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15,

¹⁵ Gunkel, *Genesis*, 239; Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 116–18.

¹⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, "Excursus 16: The Land of Moriah," in *Genesis*, 391–92; Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 116–22.

¹⁷ Isaac Kalimi, "The Land of Moriah, Mount Moriah, and the Site of Solomon's Temple in Biblical Historiography," *HTR* 83, no. 4 (1990): 345–62.

¹⁸ Sarna, *Genesis*, 392.

¹⁹ "As the example of 'Sinai' shows (e.g., Ex 19:2, 11), the same term can designate a region and the most important mountain within it." Hence "land of Moriah" in Gn 22:1 corresponds with "Mount Moriah" in 2 Ch 3:1. Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 119.

²⁰ See discussion and references in, Michael LeFebvre, "Adam Reigns in Eden: Genesis and the Origins of Kingship," *BET* 5, no. 2 (2018): 35–42.

²¹ Wenham, "The Akedah," 101.

16; 17:8; 26:2; 31:11). This designation served to legitimate the site as the place chosen by God. Furthermore, the place is called “the mount of the LORD” (v. 14), a designation used once for Mount Sinai (Num 10:33) and otherwise only for Mount Zion (Ps 24:3; Is 2:3; 30:29; Mc 4:2; Zc 8:3).²² Finally, the altar Abraham builds in verse 9 is identified as “*the* altar” using a definite article.²³ This adds to the sense that Abraham’s sacrifice took place at the known altar site of the attending audience.

The location of Abraham’s offering is an important part of the narrative’s etiological function. By drawing this identification in the story, later generations who gathered at Mount Zion learned that they were participating in the same faith as Abraham as they continued to worship at the same altar where Abraham worshiped.

B. PILGRIMAGE

A second liturgical detail in the text is its call to pilgrimage. God called Abraham to leave his homestead and journey to the place of sacrifice. “So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey...and arose and went to the place of which God had told him” (v. 3).

This is not typical of the Abraham narratives. Every other time Abraham offered sacrifices, he built an altar wherever he was living at the time. When the Lord appeared to Abram in Shechem, he “built there an altar to the LORD who had appeared to him” (Gen 12:7). Then Abram moved near Bethel, and again “he built an altar to the LORD” after settling near Bethel (Gn 12:8). When he later moved to Hebron, Abram “built an altar to the LORD” after settling there (Gn 13:18). The patriarch’s pattern was to settle in a place and to build an altar where he settled. But the *Aqedah* required something different.

This time, Abraham was called to undertake a pilgrimage. He was to leave his settlement and travel a three-day journey (v. 4) to worship at a holy site appointed by God for that purpose. This unusual feature fits with the thesis that the narrative provides liturgical guidance for later Israel. Later generations would relate to Abraham’s pilgrimage as they followed the Lord’s command for their own annual pilgrimages to Mount Zion.

C. BURNT OFFERING

Abraham’s offering introduces a third liturgical detail. The Lord told Abraham to bring a “burnt offering” (‘*ôlâ*; v. 2). Of all the sacrifices offered by Abraham in Genesis, this is the only time a specific kind of sacrifice is named. Furthermore, the passage names the specific kind of sacrifice offered by Abraham no less than six times (vv. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13).²⁴ The narrative is keen to show that Abraham offered a burnt offering on this altar.

²² Moberly, “Earliest Commentary,” 307.

²³ Sarna. *Genesis*, 392.

²⁴ The only other place in Genesis where whole burnt offerings are specified is at Noah’s altar (Gn 8:20).

There were five different kinds of sacrifices used in Israel's worship at the temple (Lv 1:1–5:7), of which the burnt offering was one. The other four offerings (grain offering, peace meal offering, sin offering, and guilt offering) had portions distributed to the attending priest or to the worshiper to eat. The burnt offering was the only sacrifice wholly consumed by God on the altar.

As the one sacrifice wholly burned on the altar, the burnt offering was also the foundation of Israel's sacrificial system. During the daily sacrifices at the temple, a burnt offering was placed first (and last) upon the altar each day (Ex 29:38–42; Nm 28:1–8). It was the offering that inaugurated the day and that marked the altar as, so to speak, "open for business." Other sacrifices would be added on top of the morning burnt offering (e.g., Nm 28:10, 15, 23, 31; 29:6, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38; 2 Ki 16:15). The burnt offering served as a "carrier" for the rest.

The identification of this specific offering by Abraham adds another point of connection for later Israel. Later worshipers brought their own sacrifices of various types to the temple to lay them on top of the burnt offering laid on the altar by the temple priests at the beginning of each day. Identifying the first ever sacrifice on the altar at Mount Zion as a burnt offering presented by Abraham fits the liturgy of Israel's sacrifices there.

D. WORSHIP

A fourth liturgical detail of note is the purpose Abraham gives for his pilgrimage. "On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said...I and the boy will go over there and worship" (vv. 4–5). The purpose of this pilgrimage was to "worship" (*histāḥāwā*). The term denotes an act of prostration, bowing to present oneself before an authority. It is a technical term used for an encounter with the Lord.

Strictly speaking, later Israelites could only worship at the temple, and they could only do so at the altar of atonement. They could pray from anywhere at any time (1 Ki 8:22–53). But to encounter God's presence (to "worship"), one had to go to the temple where his name dwelt and approach the altar. Abraham's pilgrimage to the sacred mountain for the purpose of meeting the Lord (worship) set the pattern which later generations would emulate.

E. PROVISION OF SACRIFICE ELEMENTS

A fifth liturgical note is the source of the sacrifice "animal" and the sacrifice wood. Abraham took his sacrificial "animal" (i.e., Isaac) along with wood from his home (vv. 2–3). Later worshipers were also responsible to bring their sacrifices with them from home (Lv 1:2). It is not clear whether wood was typically brought from home, although it may have been so (cf., Ne 10:34).

F. THE ALTAR

Once at the sacrifice site, several more steps in the liturgy followed in quick succession. “When they came to the place which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood” (v. 9). This order of steps at Abraham’s altar approximates those later Hebrews would observe at the temple altar. Abraham constructed “the altar (*hamizbēah*).” The passage uses the definite article (*ha-*), suggesting either an altar was already there and Abraham restored it, or his altar is “the same” as the one known to later worshipers on that spot.²⁵ The latter is the most likely intention if we are correct to identify the passage as a Zion etiology. Identifying Abraham’s altar with that of later Israel—indeed, regarding Abraham as the original builder of that altar—and preparing it with the wood arranged in order is a sixth liturgical detail that links Abraham’s sacrificial pattern with Israel’s liturgy.²⁶

G. PRESENTING THE SACRIFICE

Once the altar was prepared, a seventh detail follows. The sacrifice was bound and presented for slaughter. The term for Isaac’s binding (*‘āqad*) is not the usual word for tying something together (*‘āsar*). It is “a technical term for the tying together of the forefoot and the hindfoot of an animal or of the two forefeet or two hindfeet” in preparation for sacrifice.²⁷

There is a peculiarity in Abraham’s procedure at this point which might initially seem to break with the practice of later Israel. Abraham bound Isaac and placed him upon the altar before completing the slaughter.²⁸ The instructions preserved in Leviticus call for a sacrifice to be slaughtered “before the LORD,” that is, “[at] the entrance of the tent of meeting” (Lv 1:3), and afterward placed on the altar (Lv 1:6–8). However, this variation is likely due to the fact that there was no tent of meeting at Abraham’s worship site. The altar was the only platform for presenting his sacrifice “before the LORD” (cf., Ex 17:15–16). Even though Abraham placed his offering on the altar sooner than was typical in Israel’s liturgy, his placement was the ritual equivalent of a later worshiper’s presentation at the entrance of the tent. Thus, even in this variation in physical practice, Abraham’s ritual performance matches that of Israel at the temple.

H. SLAUGHTER

After the offering was presented before the Lord, the next step was to “slaughter (*sāḥat*)” the sacrifice (v. 10). Here we find an eighth detail that corresponds between Abraham’s narrative and the Zion liturgies. The

²⁵ Samra, *Genesis*, 392.

²⁶ This identification is comparable to Islam’s attribution of the Kaaba as originally built by Abraham.

²⁷ Samra, *Genesis*, 153; cf., *m. Tamid* 4:1.

²⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 109.

Aqedah uses the technical term for the ritual killing of a sacrifice animal.²⁹ In later Israel, an attending priest performed many of the actions related to the sacrifice, but the offerer always killed the sacrifice animal him or herself (Lv 1:5). Hearing the story of Abraham raising the knife, later Hebrews would identify in their performance of the same weighty action.

I. SUBSTITUTIONARY LAMB

At this stage in Abraham's offering, the angel stopped him, and Abraham was provided with a male "lamb" (v. 8), that is a "ram" (v. 13), as his offering. This substitutionary animal introduces a ninth match between Abraham's practice and that of Israel. The male sheep was typical of Israel's offerings and the burnt offering in particular. There were some sacrifices that allowed a female lamb (Lv 4:32; 5:6) or other domestic livestock. But the burnt offering required a male sacrifice, typically a lamb (Lv 1:3, 10).

J. BENEDICTION

A tenth liturgical detail of note is the benediction at the conclusion of the service. Abraham's liturgy ended with the Lord's announcement of blessings upon him. This is comparable to the priest's benediction at the end of Israel's services. After the Lord received Abraham's sacrifice, "[The] angel of the LORD called to Abraham...and said, 'By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this...I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'" (vv. 16–18). The wording of this benediction reflects the blessing God had announced at Abram's initial call (Gn 12:1–3). It is therefore different in its wording than the Aaronic benediction (Nu 6:22–27) presumably typical of the temple services. But the presence of a benediction at the conclusion of Abraham's worship mirrors the same after each temple service (Lv 9:22–24).

In each of these ten points, Abraham's ritual acts anticipate the altar liturgy of later Israel. By presenting the narrative in this manner, later worshipers were able to identify with Abraham and with his faith as they brought sacrifices to the Zion altar. But in each of the ten parallels noted so far, the connection is implicit. There is one more point in Abraham's liturgy (an eleventh ritual detail) where the patriarch's connection to later Israel's worship and the anticipatory character of his sacrifice is made explicit. But first, we need to take a closer look at the concept of human sacrifice around which the *Aqedah* is developed.

III. FIRSTBORN SACRIFICE AND THE AQEDAH

The singular distinctive of the *Aqedah* is the Lord's remarkable call upon Abraham to sacrifice his son, something Israel was elsewhere commanded not even to consider (Ex 13:15; Lv 18:21; 20:2–3; Dt 12:31;

²⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 109.

18:10). Commentators have often claimed that the *Aqedah* shows the Lord's rejection of human sacrifice. However, a more nuanced reading is in order.

The narrative ascribes these words to the lips of Yahweh: "Abraham!... Take you son, your only son Isaac, whom you love...and offer him there as a burnt offering" (vv. 1–2). It is a startling instruction from the mouth of God. And the propriety of that instruction is never questioned nor repudiated in the account. It is true (thankfully!) that the Lord's angel stopped Abraham from completing Isaac's slaughter. But that interruption was not marked by any repudiation of the morality of the Lord's initial command.

It has been popular among commentators to suggest the *Aqedah's* introduction as a "test" (v. 1) neutralizes its calling to firstborn sacrifice. Nahum Sarna proposes, "The narrative as it now stands is almost impatiently insistent upon removing any possibility of misunderstanding that God had really intended Abraham to sacrifice his son. To make sure that the reader has advance knowledge of God's purposes, the story begins with a declaration that 'God put Abraham to the test' (22:1)."³⁰ However, this interpretation creates a potentially more troubling moral dilemma. It suggests that God was tempting Abraham to do evil (contra Ja 1:13) in the hopes that Abraham would disobey his instruction!³¹ It is better to recognize God's test as a supreme challenge to make a sacrifice of great cost, rather than a test (i.e., temptation) to see whether Abraham would do something evil. Indeed, if the latter was the case, then Abraham failed the test by his willingness to do as God tempted him!

R. W. L. Moberly notes, "The meaning of this [test] is illuminated when it is appreciated that the two key words, test (*nissâ*) and fear (*yārē'*) occur in conjunction in one other context...[when God gave] the ten commandments, to test (*nissâ*) them and so that the fear (*yir'â*) of God should be before them...The likely significance [of Abraham's test], I propose, is

³⁰ Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 161; *Genesis*, 151. Cf., Miguel A. De La Torre, *Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 215; John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 167–68.

³¹ As admitted by Martin Luther, who wrote, "Here Scripture states plainly that Abraham was actually tempted by God Himself." Quoted and discussed by Melissa Buck, "God as Tempter: Luther on Genesis 22," *Logia* 24, no. 1 (2015): 23–27. Some early rabbinic interpreters have suggested that Satan incited God to tempt Abraham in a manner analogous to the testing of Job. Kuruvilla, "The *Aqedah*," 491. Miguel De La Torre notes the failure of efforts to avoid this tension, "Although the New Testament maintains that God does not tempt anyone (Ja 1:13), in the Isaac story God is obviously tempting Abraham. Although scholars assert a difference in nuance between tempting (an enticement to deliberately sin against God and/or neighbor) and testing (an enticement to ascertain the depths of one's commitment to God), for the one going through the trial such differences seem to be more aligned with an academic debate based on semantics. If it comes from God, we call it a test; but if it comes from anywhere else (i.e., Satan, demons, other humans, society), we call it temptation. Regardless of the term we choose, for the one going through the anguish of having to decide whether to kill one's child, the command from God must seem capricious and sadistic. Nevertheless, the reader knows, from the start of the story, that God is testing (tempting?) Abraham." De La Torre, *Genesis*, 215.

that Abraham supremely exemplifies the meaning of living by Torah.”³² The introduction of God’s command as a test does not indicate the firstborn sacrifice was morally improper, only that it would be a costly sacrifice for Abraham to make as one “living by Torah.”

Furthermore, even Abraham did not balk at the command when he received it. On the contrary, he “rose early in the morning” (v. 3) showing his promptness to obey.³³ The narrator even informs us that Abraham fully intended to sacrifice his son as instructed. “Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son” (v. 10). His intention is made explicit: he raised the knife “to slaughter his son.” The father of faith expected that the heir had to be sacrificed for the atonement of the kingdom, and he never expressed any moral qualms about it being so.³⁴ The Apostle James even calls Abraham’s willingness a mark of his righteousness: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?” (Ja 2:21).

Also important to note: Isaac plays a cooperative role in the story, modeling a willing sacrifice rather than one who finds the notion of surrendering to be sacrificed unthinkable.³⁵ In English narratives, silence is typically interpreted neutrally. In Hebrew narratives, however, silence is frequently intended to communicate consent (cf., Dt 22:24; Ne 5:8). Isaac’s silence as his father bound him is an important part of the story, indicating the heir consented to be sacrificed. Isaiah’s Song of the Suffering Servant (Is 53) likely draws from the *Aqedah*,³⁶ and makes this point of the heir’s consent explicit. In that Song, Isaiah interprets the silence of the heir as willingness: “He opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth” (Is 53:7).³⁷

The faith of Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice on behalf of his household, and the willingness of the heir to be that sacrifice, are central to the theology of this foundational sacrifice narrative for Israel. To quote

³² Moberly, “Earliest Commentary,” 304–05. For a survey of God’s “tests” in Scripture, see Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 103–04.

³³ Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 338–40.

³⁴ For a survey of various efforts to explain Abraham’s lack of hesitation, see David W. Cotter, *Genesis (Berit Olam; Colleagueville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003)*, 155–58. Matthew Rowley argues that Abraham’s lack of hesitation potentially sets a dangerous precedent for the worst kind of “blind faith.” Matthew Rowley, “Irrational Violence? Reconsidering the Logic of Obedience in Genesis 22,” *Themelios* 40, no. 1 (2015), 78–89.

³⁵ Das, *Stories of Israel*, 106–07; Green, “Abraham, Isaac, and the Jewish Tradition”; Moberly, “Earliest Commentary,” 314; Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 158–59.

³⁶ Geza Vermes. *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*. Studia Post-Biblica, 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 203; Roy A. Rosenberg, “Jesus, Isaac, and the ‘Suffering Servant’,” *JBL* 84, no. 4 (1965): 381–88.

³⁷ 4 Maccabees 13:12 also interprets Isaac’s silence as willingness: “he offered himself to be a sacrifice for the sake of righteousness.”

Nahum Sarna, “For all these reasons, the claim that the Akedah is a protest against human sacrifice cannot be sustained.”³⁸

Within the ancient Near Eastern context—and within the Old Testament itself—the giving of a father’s firstborn son (or a king’s firstborn son) was regarded as the ultimate sacrifice to propitiate heaven on behalf of a household (or a kingdom).³⁹ The ancient literature is filled with examples of kings who offered a firstborn to placate heaven and secure blessings on the kingdom.⁴⁰ Archaeologists have identified evidence of regular human sacrifices in Canaan, both of households and communities.⁴¹ In the Bible, 2 Kings 3:27 reports the horrible effectiveness of the practice, when a Moabite king sacrificed his heir in order to ward off Israel’s attack. “Then [the king of Moab] took his oldest son who was to reign in his place and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall. And there came great wrath against Israel. And they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.” The nature of this “great wrath” that fell upon Israel and blocked their attack is not clear, but the sacrifice of the king’s heir is here presented as a horrible rite with great power.⁴²

Human sacrifice was widely practiced outside of Israel. Within Israel, God strictly prohibited human sacrifice. The households of Israel were never, ever to present their children as human sacrifices. God’s Law strictly prohibited human sacrifice. But this was not because the concept was rejected in every respect. On the contrary, the *Aqedah* shows that the entire Hebrew sacrificial system was founded on the premise that Israel offered animals in expectation of one human heir who would, alone, be the true sacrifice for the nation. Other human sacrifices were prohibited because no other sacrifice could accomplish what that true heir would.

Among God’s people, any time an innocent person is *unwillingly* put to death, it is immoral (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17). But the *willing* offer of one’s life as a sacrifice on behalf of others, *when there is just cause*, can be a supreme act of moral good (Jn 15:13). The nobility of martyrdom (Ph 2:17; Rv 12:11) and of the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11, 15, 17) is rooted in the propriety of humans willingly sacrificing their lives *in certain, carefully defined circumstances*. The Old Testament restricted Israel from providing firstborn atonement, not because the principle was

³⁸ Sarna, “Meaning of the Akedah,” 393.

³⁹ Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 3–17.

⁴⁰ Gunkel, *Genesis*, 239–40; Moberly, “Earliest Commentary,” 305; Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 18–24.

⁴¹ William C. Graham and Herbert G. May, *Culture and Conscience: An Archaeological Study of the New Religious Past in Ancient Palestine*, University of Chicago Publications in Religious Education, Handbooks of Ethics and Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 77–79; Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past: The Archeological Background of The Hebrew-Christian Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), 148; Emmanuel Anati, *Palestine Before the Hebrews: A History, From the Earliest Arrival of Man to the Conquest of Canaan* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), 427.

⁴² Pesthy-Simon, *Isaac, Iphigenia, Ignatius*, 18–19.

universally invalid but because the Lord himself would provide the one, right firstborn sacrifice in due time.

The foundation for the expectation was laid in the duties of every household in Israel. In Exodus 22:29–30, God required that the firstborn son of every household be offered to him in “the same [way]” as firstborn livestock were offered. “The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. You shall do the same (*kēn*) with your oxen and with your sheep.” Some scholars believe that this law, which has no qualifications attached to it, indicates Israel actually practiced firstborn sacrifice at one time.⁴³ There is no evidence to support this assertion; nevertheless, the equivalent duty of sacrifice for firstborn sons and livestock is here stated. Other passages affirm the payment of a redemption price in lieu of actual slaughter in the case of human firstborn (Ex 13:15). Thus, Israel never practiced the firstborn sacrifice as their neighbors did (Je 19:5–6); nevertheless, the fundamental principle remained in place. An innocent and willing firstborn must ultimately die for the propitiation of the people.

The following citation from the Prophet Micah illustrates the continuing recognition of this principle even late in Israel’s history. Micah lists a series of sacrifices from least valuable to most valuable, with the firstborn son’s sacrifice as the greatest appeal to heaven: “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” (Mi 6:6–7). The answer to Micah’s question is that the Lord wants his people to avoid sin in the first place, rather than sinning and giving sacrifices (Mi 6:8). But in making this point, Micah affirms that the sacrifice of the firstborn remains (in principle) the highest form of appeal to heaven.⁴⁴

A survey of the topic of human sacrifice in the Bible reveals this remarkable discovery. The reason God forbade the practice in Israel was not because of its absolute impropriety. It is true that nearly every form of human sacrifice is immoral. But under some circumstances, self-sacrifice is morally commendable. Indeed, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13). The reason God forbade human sacrifice in Israel was to wait for the right sacrificial heir who, in the words of the *Aqedah*, would secure heaven’s blessings for “all the nations of the earth” (v. 18).

IV. THE CONFESSION OF THE AQEDAH

When Abraham raised his knife to offer his firstborn heir on behalf of his house, the Angel of the Lord stopped him. The Lord provided a

⁴³ Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 3–5. Pethsy-Simon, *Isaac, Iphigeneia, Ignatius*, 13–29. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Mark E. Biddle, trans.; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 239. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 157–59.

⁴⁴ Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 10–11.

ram in the son's stead.⁴⁵ "And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead (*taḥat*) of his son" (v. 13). By that term "instead" (*taḥat*), the sheep is identified as a stand-in, filling the place rightly appointed for Abraham's heir. The sheep was never intended as the true sacrifice (Heb 10:4), but as a placeholder for the real human heir actually required.

After introducing the sheep sacrifice on the mount of the Lord as a substitute for the real sacrifice needed, the narrator breaks the fourth wall to give a word of ritual instruction to the listening audience. "So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD, it [or, he] shall be provided'" (v. 14). Commentators have generally focused attention on the first half of that verse, where Abraham gave a name to that holy place. But the most important phrase in this verse is its second half, where a widely known saying ("the everyday expression")⁴⁶ of the narrator's time is said to be interpreted by the story just finished: "On the mount of the LORD, it [or, he] shall be provided." The story of the *Aqedah* was rehearsed to explain the meaning of that expectation which the author's audience still knew and recited regularly.

There are two possible readings of the saying defined by the *Aqedah*: "In the mountain of Yahweh it (or, he) is (or, shall be) seen";⁴⁷ "In the mountain of Yahweh it (or, he) is (or, shall be) provided." The first reading leads to the conclusion that Yahweh himself is what will be "seen" at this worship site. Bill Arnold explains this interpretation, "Abraham's name for the place... added new depth to the everyday expression, 'On Yahweh's mount, He is revealed,' in that it personalized the revelation of God as provision for one's profoundest needs."⁴⁸ This reading is based on comparison to passages like Leviticus 9:3–4 which links the offering of sacrifices with the appearance of the Lord to his people, "Say to the people of Israel, '...Sacrifice before the LORD...for today the LORD will appear to you'" (cf., Ex 43–46).⁴⁹

Indeed, Yahweh revealed himself to his people at the place of worship. However, the whole purpose of worship is to encounter God. There was no need to present such an elaborate narrative—much less a narrative complicated by themes of human sacrifice—in order to teach that lesson.⁵⁰ The passage actually seems to require a different reading of what the offerer

⁴⁵ Marvin Pope argues from the word *ābar* (v. 13) that "Abraham raised his eyes and saw the ram the instant it was snagged," thus indicating its divine provision as Isaac's substitute. Marvin H. Pope, "Enigmatic Bible Passages: The Timing of the Snagging of the Ram, Genesis 22:13," *Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 2 (1986): 114–17.

⁴⁶ Arnold, *Genesis*, 208.

⁴⁷ Or, "the place where Yahweh always 'sees' and so provides for his people." Moberly, "Earliest Commentary," 307.

⁴⁸ Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208. Also, Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 114. This is also the rendering given in the LXX: "In the mountain the Lord is seen."

⁴⁹ Sailhamer, "Genesis," 169; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 111.

⁵⁰ Gunkel, *Genesis*, 236.

is to expect at this place of worship. The saying at the end of the story points to the hope of a greater Isaac who will one day be provided in that place, fulfilling the sacrifice for which the lamb is a temporary placeholder.

There is another liturgical detail at the heart of the narrative which I previously bypassed. During the pilgrimage to Moriah, Abraham engaged in a catechetical conversation with his son. The focus of that conversation was on the sacrifice they were going to Moriah to perform. The son asked his father a question, "My father!...Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" To this, Abraham provided the right theological answer, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (vv. 7–8).⁵¹

Once we appreciate the liturgical shape of the passage as a whole, we realize that this conversation is part of that liturgical pattern. The question and answer discussion of father and son on the way to the sacrificial mount guides the kind of conversation which later Israelites were to undertake in preparation for their sacrifices. Consider, as a comparison, the scripted conversation in Exodus 13:8–16.

In that Exodus passage, Moses instructed fathers to engage their families in conversation about the meaning of the Passover around its celebration. "You shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt'...And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt...'." Moses was concerned that each generation train the next in the meaning of the rituals they observed. Such catechetical conversations were an important means for conveying the faith. Brevard Childs writes, "Because this rite [of the Passover] is to become a permanent institution within Israel, later generations must need to know its significance. How does Israel transmit its faith to the next generation? The writer poses the questions in terms of a child's query...This response is not simply a report, but above all a confession to the ongoing participation of Israel in the decisive act of redemption from Egypt."⁵²

The Pentateuch contains other examples of ritual sayings and acts incorporated into its narratives.⁵³ The conversation of Abraham and Isaac on their way to Moriah belongs to that category. Abraham models the worshiper's instruction that the Lord will one day provide the real lamb that the people require. It is that line of instruction in the midst of the narrative which the final saying in verse 14 expands upon at the end of the sacrifice narrative. "As it is said to this day"—that is, as fathers continue to recite to their households even in the narrator's present time—"On the mount of Yahweh, he (that is, the true firstborn sacrifice) will be provided."

⁵¹ Several commentators identify this conversation (vv. 7–8) as the organizational center point of the story. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 100, 109, 114–15; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 186; Terence E. Fretheim, "Genesis," *The New Interpreter's Bible: Volume 1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 496.

⁵² Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 200.

⁵³ E.g., Gn 32:23–33; Ex 4:25; Dt 10:8.

Many commentators recognize the connection between Abraham's statement in verse 8, "God will provide (*yir'eh*) for himself the lamb," and the narrator's conclusion in verse 14, "The LORD will provide (*yir'eh*); as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided (*yērā'eh*).'"⁵⁴ But it is only when we recognize the liturgical character of the entire narrative that the significance of that expectation emerges. In the saying at the end of the story, the narrator urges his audience to continue catechizing each generation as Abraham did his son. And one day, the Lord will provide that true sacrifice the people waited for. Every animal sacrifice offered on the altar at Mount Zion was to serve as a stand-in for that true sacrifice until he came, and each generation was to use the story of the *Aqedah* to instruct the next in that hope.

The author of Genesis affirms that this expectation was, indeed, being taught up to his day. Whether "this day" means the day of Moses (and thus reflecting the continuance of that saying to the time of the tabernacle in the wilderness), or the day of Ezra (and thus reflecting its use to the opposite end of Old Testament history),⁵⁵ or some point of time in between,⁵⁶ the narrator attests that the lesson of the *Aqedah* continued to be professed centuries after Abraham. To quote the words of a nineteenth century commentator, "He who provided the ram caught in the thicket will provide the really atoning victim of which the ram was a type. In this event we can imagine Abraham seeing the day of that preëminent seed who should in the fulness of time actually take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. *In the mount of the Lord he will be seen*. This proverb remained as a monument of this transaction in the time of the sacred writer."⁵⁷

If this reading of the *Aqedah* confession is correct, the Old Testament saints possessed a much clearer expectation of a suffering messiah who would atone for the world than generally recognized.

V. CONFIRMING THE CONFESSION

This interpretation comports with various possible allusions to the *Aqedah* elsewhere in Scripture. The author of Genesis had already prepared

⁵⁴ Sarna, *Genesis*, 154; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 400–01; Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 346; Sailhamer, "Genesis," 168.

⁵⁵ Ezra 7:6, 10, 25.

⁵⁶ Source critics generally identify the core of the *Aqedah* narrative to E, dated to the period of the northern kingdom of Israel.

⁵⁷ James G. Murphy, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis with a New Translation* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1873), 341. Wenham further notes, "In post-biblical Judaism, it was sometimes affirmed that the temple sacrifices were accepted because of the merits of Isaac. His obedience was recalled each time an animal was sacrificed, so that the atoning value of sacrifice really depended on Isaac's willingness to suffer, not the death of the animal." Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 117. However, late Judaism's treatment of Isaac's near-sacrifice as the actual source of atonement behind animal sacrifices was probably a response to other religions (including Christianity). Sarna, "Excursus 18: The Akedah in Jewish Tradition," *Genesis*, 394.

for the suffering of the promised offspring in the opening chapters of the book. In Genesis 3:15, commonly called the “protoevangelium,” God promised that “the seed” of the woman would one day suffer for his people. Addressing the serpent, God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gn 3:15). This early promise of a suffering offspring is consistent with Abraham’s expectation in the *Aqedah* as developed in this essay.⁵⁸

Further support for this interpretation of the *Aqedah* can be found in Psalm 40:6–8. This Psalm is ascribed as “a psalm of David.” In verses 6–8, David states, “In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’” In the New Testament, Hebrews 10:5–7 places these words on Jesus’ lips as Israel’s true sacrifice. Commentators often treat that New Testament interpretation of the Psalm as a retrojection of the cross into the Psalm contrary to its original meaning.⁵⁹ However, if my interpretation of the *Aqedah* is correct, perhaps David really did understand from “the scroll of the book” that someone in the kingly line would personally become the sacrifice required.⁶⁰ Perhaps the Old Testament worshipers knew all along that “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb 10:4) and that the firstborn heir was the one expected in those offerings.

Another Old Testament passage that is consistent with this reading of the *Aqedah* is the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the suffering servant (Is 53:1–12).⁶¹ Isaiah somehow understood that the sheep slain at the altar served as a stand-in for a human “lamb” who would actually atone for the transgressions of his people. This insight may not have been new for Isaiah, but may have been the received understanding of the *Aqedah* in his day. Notably, the result of the Suffering Servant’s sacrifice echoes the blessing promised in the *Aqedah*. Abraham’s blessing was expressly tied to the offering of the firstborn: “Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring...” (Gn 22:16–17). Isaiah’s song ponders a similar blessing with a multiplication of the righteous due to the Suffering Servant’s sacrifice. “When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days... Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see... many to be accounted righteous” (Is 53:10–11). It is possible that Isaiah’s vision derives from the ongoing recitation of the *Aqedah* confession in his day.

⁵⁸ On the theological and literary links between Gn 3:15 and Gn 22:17–18, see Jared M. August, “The Messianic Hope of Genesis: The *Protoevangelium* and Patriarchal Promises,” *Themelios* 42, no. 1 (2017): 46–62.

⁵⁹ E.g., Karen H. Jobes, “The Function of Paronomasia in Hebrews 10:5-7,” *TrinJ* 13NS (1992): 181–91.

⁶⁰ Cf., Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46.

⁶¹ Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 117.

In the New Testament there are numerous allusions to the *Aqedah*.⁶² When Jesus first appeared in the wilderness of Judea, John the Baptist cried out, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). This declaration seems to draw from the promise rehearsed in the *Aqedah* confession. Israel was there taught that "the LORD will provide" the sacrifice to fulfill the animal stand-in and bring blessing "[to] all nations of the earth" (Gn 22:18). John recognized Jesus as being "the Lamb (*provided*) of God, who takes away the sin of the world," just as promised in the *Aqedah*. John the Baptist's cry may indicate his understanding of the *Aqedah* confession as fulfilled in Jesus.

Clearly, not everyone in New Testament times retained this expectation of a suffering messiah. Somehow in the generations before Jesus, the Jewish authorities generally lost interest in a messiah who would die for the nation.⁶³ But the Apostles came to recognize that it was "necessary" according to the Scriptures "that the Christ should suffer" (Lk 24:26). The New Testament writers found the necessity of a suffering messiah somewhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. In this essay, I have asserted that the *Aqedah* might be one of those explicit announcements of this necessity. And it is an announcement provided in one of the most critical texts for the theology of Old Testament sacrifice: the narrative etiology of Mount Zion and its sacrifice liturgy.

Critical scholars have generally viewed the Apostles' "discovery" of the cross in the Hebrew Scriptures as apologetic assertions rather than serious interpretations. J. Gordon McConville sums up the skeptical consensus, "Modern Old Testament scholarship has been largely informed by the belief that traditional Christian messianic interpretations of Old Testament passages have been exegetically indefensible."⁶⁴ In this essay, I would like to argue the reverse. Genesis 22:14 preserves a ritual confession that was likely recited with every animal sacrifice on Mount Zion through much if not all of Old Testament history. That confession, passed from generation to generation, drew every Israelite into solidarity with the faith of Abraham, sharing in his expectation of a suffering Christ. God would one day provide a firstborn heir whose willing sacrifice would secure the blessings which the Zion sacrifices foreshadowed.

⁶² Daly, "Significance of the Sacrifice," 65–74; James L. Mays, "Now I Know': An Exposition of Genesis 22:1–19 and Matthew 26:36–46," *Theology Today* 58, no. 4 (2002): 519–25; Scott W. Hahn, "Covenant, Oath, and the Aqedah: Diaqh/kh in Galatians 3:15–18," *CBQ* 67 (2005), 79–100. In fact, Hans Joachim Schoeps has argued, "The Binding of Isaac...served as Paul's model when he undertook to develop...his doctrine of salvation through Christ's death on the cross." Hans Joachim Schoeps, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Paul's Theology," *JBL* 65, no. 4 (1946): 386–7. For pre-Christian treatment of the Aqedah, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature," *Biblica* 83, no. 2 (2002): 211–29.

⁶³ For inter-testamental expectations of atonement through a human sacrifice, see Jarvis J. Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul's Theology of Atonement: Did Martyr Theology Shape Paul's Conception of Jesus' Death?* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

⁶⁴ J. Gordon McConville, "Messianic Interpretation of the Old Testament in Modern Context," in Phillip F. Satterthwaite, et al, eds., *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 2.

“Therefore it is said to this day,
‘On the mount of Yahweh, he shall be provided.’”