

God Will Provide for Himself a Lamb

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

We all know the story of Abraham and how he took his only son Isaac to Jerusalem and was prepared to offer him as a burnt offering to the Lord on Mount Moriah. They traveled for three days until Abraham saw the place in the distance. As he and his son carried the wood and fire for the sacrifice, Isaac asked his father a question:

"My Father? Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham responded: *"My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering"* (Genesis 22:7-8, NKJV).ⁱ

Soon enough, Abraham looked up, and there in a thicket, he saw a ram caught by its horns. So, Abraham called that place, *"The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided' (Genesis 22:13-14).*

The explanation is evident to most Christian theologians: God provided His lamb for the atonement, this being Christ, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.ⁱⁱ There is one problem with the translation. It does not say that God will "provide" a lamb. In the Hebrew, it says God will "see" for Himself a Lamb (*yireh lo*, יִרְאֶה-לוֹ). The scripture goes on to say: *And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, 'On the mount of the LORD there is vision' (Sefaria).*

Why is this distinction important to understand? We will find out.

Let us move forward about four hundred years in time to the Exodus from Egypt. The Israelites were encamped at the base of Mount Sinai, preparing for the Lord to descend from heaven. And they saw with their own eyes what the LORD did to the Egyptians.ⁱⁱⁱ

And God spoke the words of the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. We read that When He finished speaking, *"All the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off" (Exodus 20:18).*

Here once again, there is a problem with the translation. In the Hebrew, it reads: *"And all the people saw (ro'im, רֹאִים) the voices (kolot, קוֹלוֹת) and the torches (Le'pidim, לִפְיִדִים), the sound of the shofar (שׁוֹפָר), and the smoking mountain, and the people saw (Yareh, יָרָא) and trembled; so they stood from afar."*

Wait a minute. It says they saw voices and torches, not thunder and lighting. And they saw the sound of the shofar. How can one hear sounds?

Rabbi Akiva insists that the verse must be read literally. In other words, they saw the voices. He says: *"They saw that which is usually heard, and they heard that which is usually seen."*^{iv} He continues with his explanation:

"The experience at Sinai was much more than just receiving ten moral instructions for life. Sinai was a spiritual revelation that changed the way the Jews perceived the meaning of existence. They heard that which is usually seen. In other words, the physical matter, which is usually perceived as absolute reality, became an abstract idea, while spirituality, that which is usually heard, became real and obvious."

Going back to the story of Abraham, we can see the similarity between these two encounters. God, who is spirit,^v appeared to humanity in a visible and tangible form; as it is written, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld (have seen) His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*

Later, we also read, *"The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:22).* Once again, in the words of the rabbi, *"The physical matter, which is usually perceived as absolute reality, became an abstract idea, while spirituality, that which is usually heard, became real and obvious."*

But there is a deeper meaning to the Hebrew word *Yireh*. It is a combination of three words—seeing, fear, and awe. There is no single word in the English dictionary that conveys the same depth. In English, the translators have attempted to recreate it through the word "trembling."

However, I believe the meaning is much deeper, for it is written, *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).* On the day Yeshua was crucified, we read, *"So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'" (Matthew 27:54).*

And when Christ returns, we will see a picture of Mount Sinai once again. This time, however, all humanity will see the throne of God, as it is written, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet (shofar) of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). "Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail" (Revelation 11:19).*

Like the Israelites at Mount Sinai, all humanity will see that which is usually heard and hear that which is usually seen. And they will *Yireh*, tremble with awe and fear at the presence of the LORD, for it is written, *"I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath" (Isaiah 45:23).* And Paul said, *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth" (Philippians 2:10).*

The Lord had not only commanded that the priests of Israel come near to Him, but also to come up (*la'alot*, לַעֲלוֹת) to Him on the mountain.^{vi} But their hearts were hardened and uncircumcised.^{vii} Therefore, it is written, *"God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day" (Romans 11:8).*

However, the Lord has promised a tremendous outpouring of His Spirit, as it is written, *"It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).*^{viii} Before the return of Christ, we shall also see that which is usually heard and hear that which is usually seen.

Therefore, *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).* For, *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him" (Revelation 1:7).*^{ix}

Amen!

ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ Revelation 13:8.

ⁱⁱⁱ Joshua 24:7.

^{iv} Menachem, Feldman. *Seeing the Sounds*. Chabad.org.

^v John 4:23-24. 1 John 4:12.

^{vi} Exodus 19:22.

^{vii} Deuteronomy 10:16.

^{viii} Joel 2:28.

^{ix} Daniel 7:13.