

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

TITLE: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF *WENIŠTAHĀWEH* IN GENESIS 22:5

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The test of Abraham has generated much debate among scholars with some espousing that Abraham was lying to his servants when he talked about worshipping and coming back with Isaac instead of telling the truth that he was going to sacrifice the child. Some have seen this as a parable. They do not see how God could require such a thing. Some have considered Abraham as a murderer and a worshiper of idols like the Canaanites since this was practised by idolaters. God intended to see through the reactions of Abraham if he honoured and loved God more than Isaac, his only son. His near sacrifice of Isaac demonstrated his honour and loyalty to God. He was a true worshiper of God.

After a careful study of Gen 22, has shown that the clause *וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה* (*weništahāweh*) generally means ‘and we will bow down,’ before God it means we will worship. But in the context of Gen 22, it could mean honouring or worshipping God through the offering of burnt sacrifice. As the smoke ascends it symbolises the

ascent of the souls of worshipers toward God. Therefore, Abraham's use of וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* is in agreement with the instruction of God as shown in Micah 6:7-8.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

by

Cremmar Mpofu

April 2019

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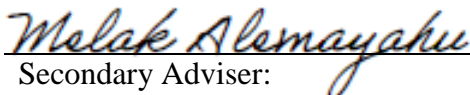
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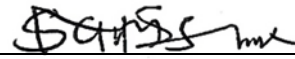
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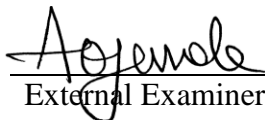
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This is an exegetical study of the use of clause וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* in Gen 22:5 where Abraham responds to the call to sacrifice Isaac his son. Some people today consider this act as that of a monster yet this was a command from God. God wanted to test Abraham. To some, this response to the command can hardly make sense.¹ Abraham calls his response to God's command וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* which has attracted different interpretations. It is therefore imperative for us to establish what this could have meant to him and what it would mean to us today.

¹Simpson and Bowie say, "This is a chapter in the Old Testament which shows the need of reading with discretion and discrimination. In this story is embedded that once men practised human sacrifice, but did it at what was thought was the divine command. Human sacrifice was an actual custom practised among some tribes in Canaan. It was practised for centuries. In the time of Elisha in a crisis of battles for his capital the king of Moab took his eldest son and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall in 2 Kings 3:27." Cuthbert A. Simpson and Walter Russel Bowie, "The Book of Genesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1996), 642.

The three monotheistic religions which claim Abraham as their father (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) have interpreted this passage in their theology. They claim its significance to their beliefs although they vary in interpretations.²

The Statement of the Problem

There is a difference between what God told Abraham to go and do and what he tells his young men he is going to do. Why did Abraham use וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in (Gen 22:5) instead of עָלָה the word used by God in (Gen 22:2)? How is וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה related to what God commanded Abraham to do in verse 2?

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyse exegetically the clause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in Genesis 22:5. The study also sought to discover why Abraham used וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in (Gen 22:5) instead of עָלָה the word used by God in (Gen 22:2)?

The Significance of the Study

As a result of this study, readers may easily discover why the clause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה was used in Gen 22:5 and how it is linked to the issue of sacrifice in Gen 22. They will probably be able to use the word appropriately and render a proper meaning to the text. The readers would understand the significance of the text and make proper

² According to Davidson, “the Islamic sacred Koran includes this narrative. However the intended victim of Abraham’s knife is unnamed. By the end of the third Islamic century, however Ishmael has become the intended sacrifice (see R. Firestone, “Abraham’s Son as the Intended Sacrifice: Issues in Quranic Exegesis,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34 (1989): 117); Reference to the Akedah (the nomenclature, given to the Gen 22:9 narrative in the most Jewish writings derived from the verb in v.9, when Abraham “bound “ Isaac)also appear in the earliest extra biblical Jewish sources. Modern Jewish scholars continue probing Genesis 22 for discussions of their “martyrdom” in the holocaust and other historical pogroms against their people. They frequently interpret the Gen 22 narrative to mean that Isaac the Jewish people were thus prophesied and “destined” by God to be “sacrificed” for the world. However since Isaac there has been no halting of the knife from heaven. For example see Elie Wiesel, *Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends* (New York, NY: Random House, 1976), 97; Jo Ann Davidson, ed., “Abraham, Akedah and Atonement,” *Creation, Life, and Hope: Essays in Honor of Jacques B. Doukhan* (Berrien Springs, MI: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2000), 51. 50-71.

spiritual application of it to their own lives and to others. It will be an answer to the dilemma that scholars have over the use of this word by Abraham.

Methodology

The study is an exegetical analysis. It will follow the exegetical steps given by Douglass Stuart model that may be more fitting to assist in the interpretation of Gen 22:5.³ Since Genesis is a historical book, guidelines for interpreting historical narratives given by Greg A. King are essential for this study. These are:

1. Reading the text closely. In historical narratives, it is important to pay attention to small and bigger issues of the story.
2. Studying literary features. Literary features of a narrative include a. the plot which answers what and how questions and the setting which deals with when and where questions; b. Characters: these are people involved in the story; c. Narrator's viewpoint. This is the theological perspective of the narrator.
3. Taking note of repetitions of words and clauses which are commonly used in narratives.
4. Looking for a divine perspective. Historical narratives help us see how God worked with people in ancient times.
5. Recognise the exemplary nature of the narratives. Historical narratives may imply a commandment or a doctrine.
6. Evaluate the actions of the characters. Historical narratives state what exactly happened.⁴

³ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis; A Hand Book for Pastors and Students* (London, UK: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 4.

⁴ Greg A. King says, "The message of the Old Testament historical narratives operates on three levels. The top level is God's plan and purpose for the human race, including God's perfect creation, the fall, Christ incarnation, sacrifice, and the offer of salvation. The middle level focuses on Israel, including God's call of Abraham, deliverance of his decedents from bondage in Egypt, their apostate and exile, and their restoration. The lower level is composed of events and incidents in all the individual narratives that make up the larger story, for example, the narrative of Ruth not only demonstrate God's love for two individuals widows and their friendship with one another (lower level), it also shows Ruth's important role in the nation of Israel as she became an ancestress of the great king David (middle level). In Mathew's genealogy, Ruth has a place in the family tree of the Messiah (top level). Greg A. King, "Guidelines for the Interpretation Old Testament Historical Narrative," in *Understanding Scripture, an Adventist Approach*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2005), 153–160.

The research will be carried out through library sources. Electronic sources and other relevant sources will be consulted as well. Scholarly sources relevant to the discussion will be consulted, read, cited or quoted. Information gathered from different relevant sources will be reviewed, analysed, compared and synthesised. Data gathered will be documented in sections or chapters. The meaning will be established and the eschatological application will be ascertained. Summary and conclusion will be drawn

The Research Procedure

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature. It introduces the research, gives a short background to the problem of the research and states the problem that needs to be investigated. It also states the reasons for carrying out the research. It also gives the scope of the study by presenting the area of the study and trimming it to a limited focus where the study is to concentrate. This chapter also covers the significance of the study and its limitations.

The second chapter deals with the review of the literature. This chapter presents what others have written in books, journals and other sources about the topic under study. The literature reviewed is organised according to inclination, persuasion, and time or period.⁵

The third chapter deals with the exegesis of the text. It shows a personal translation of the text from Hebrew to English.⁶ These words and clauses are

⁵ Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Paper for Students of Religion and Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 209.

⁶ Muller says, "The person who is able to read the Biblical language –Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – should translate the passage under investigation and put it down in writing .There are different translation of the Bible. Real translation can be distinguished as formal or dynamic translations. Formal translations seek to stay as close to the original language as possible. Dynamic translations try to create a relationship between reader and translation similar to that which existed between the original reader

grammatically and lexically analysed in this same chapter.⁷ It is investigating the context of the passage under study. It looks at the historical and literary contexts. It contains according to Ekkehardt Muller, the authorship of the book of Genesis, the period when the book was written and the audience to which the book was written. It gives the historical setting, geographical setting, the cultural setting and the religious practice of the people of that period and place. The chapter then presents the settings surrounding the text, the literary structure of the text.⁸

This chapter also gives the theology and message of the text. It tries to answer the questions like; what was the meaning of the message to the original audience of the author? What could be the meaning and application of the message today?⁹

and the original text. They are less literary than formal translations. They not only analyse the text but try to restructure it.” Ibid., 115.

⁷ Muller says, “Grammar and syntax investigating phrases means to ask: What is going on here? What is peculiar? What is the message that is disclosed? We try to participate on what the text describes. Normally the meaning of the phrase is more than the sum of words. We examine tenses and actions in verbs, peculiar expressions and look for the syntax of phrases and sentences. The question has to be asked about how the different parts of a given sentence relate to one another and which message they thereby convey. Ibid., 124–125.

⁸ Ekkehardt Muller, writes “The historical Context – the historical cultural context provides answers to such questions as: When was the biblical book written? To whom was the book originally addressed? What was the author’s purpose? Who was the human author? At which time and in which geographical location did the events described in this book happen? What was the political, economic and social situation at that time? What do we know about the religious background and situation? Which customs were prevailing? How did people live, work and support themselves? What did they eat?. The Bible archaeology, geography and history throw light on the historical context. The historical context is very helpful and very much needed to gain a better understanding of the text that is to be explored. The Literary Context – the literary context consists of the verses, the paragraphs, chapters and books that precede and follow the text to be studied. Mostly the literary context is more available than the historical context.” Ekkehardt Muller, “Guidelines for the Interpretation of the Scriptures,” in *Understanding Scripture, an Adventist Approach*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2005), 111–134.

⁹ Ibid., 126 writes, “This is where the principle of comparing scripture with scripture is so important. The theology of a particular passage must be in harmony with the theology of the scripture as a whole. The Scripture shows that the New Testament message presuppose, build upon the Old Testament theological themes. Only after the text is properly understood in its original situation can we move to its application. The application is extremely important. if omitted the audience may think that we dealing with history. If the text is applied too quickly, however the passage is easily misinterpreted and the exposition remains shallow. The process of applying shows that the text is relevant to us today.”

The fourth chapter brings together the findings of the study, analysing, synthesising and drawing out a conclusion on the factors found in the study of וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (Gen 22:5) under the background of offering Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord. This will help to determine the reason why it was used in the text by Abraham.

The researcher will explore the Hebrew language to try and bring out the proper exegetical meaning of words and clauses under study. Relevant Hebrew sources of various categories shall be studied.

Delimitation of the Study

While the use of the word וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה can be traced throughout the Old Testament. This study is confined to the exegetical analysis of the וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in Gen 22:5. However, the statement is contained in verses 1-5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will present what others have said regarding the use of *וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה* *weništaháweh* in Gen 22:5. Literature is reviewed according to the three different views that scholars have employed as a premise when writing regarding this topic from the Reformation period to current. These three views are; the Contextual View, the Concealment View, and the Moriah View.

The Contextual View seems to uphold that *ḥăwâh* in the context of Genesis 22 is associated with making Isaac a burnt offering. The Concealment view accepts that *ḥăwâh* was used by Abraham to conceal the truth of offering Isaac as a burnt offering from both his son Isaac and his servants. Moriah View supposes that Abraham used *ḥăwâh* because he already knew Moriah as the place of worship from his forefathers.

The Contextual View

When Abraham left his servants behind, he spoke to them about worship which only he and Isaac would attend. He was not willing to have them witness the impending sacrifice of Isaac, which Abraham rightly designates as worship. “When he went he knew that he was to sacrifice Isaac”¹

Reyburn explains that the Hebrew word *חָוָה* *ḥăwâh* (Gen 22:5) means to bow down. It is a verb denoting literally bowing down before the superior. “However, when God is the object whether this is stated or not, the sense is to ‘praise,’ ‘pray to,’

¹ Biblical Studies Press, ed., “Genesis 22:5,” *The New English Translation Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Biblical Studies Press, 2006).

‘worship.’ In this context, it is to make a sacrifice, and we may translate it as ‘and offer a sacrifice to God.’”²

Gorge Coats observes that the “Abraham’s speech in verse 5 foreshadows the good news of the story’s climax,” for in the first person plural verb, *נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה* the coming act of sacrifice is pronounced.³

Laurent Kant correctly observes that when Abraham talked of himself and Isaac ascending the mountain for worship, or bow down, this was somehow going to be in “association with the sacrifice of an animal which later is identified as a ram.”⁴ Yet Douglass sees God in Genesis 22, directing Abraham to his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This was a test from God. However, Abraham considered this action as an act of worship.⁵

Briscoe and Ogilvie comment that “Only Abraham knew the significance of what he was saying. The question of Isaac based on the father’s intent in verse 7, gets a response full of confidence. The father’s response suggests the kind of worship the pair was advancing to perform. Abraham was sure he was going to sacrifice though they had no animal for the burnt offering (Gen. 22:8).

To Abraham worship was making Isaac a burnt offering and coming back with him. It was an expression of faith based on the promise that “out of Isaac shall thy seed be called” (21: 12). He believed that God was going to resurrect Isaac from

² William David Reyburn and Euan M. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1997), 490.

³ George Coats W., “Abraham Sacrifice of Faith,” *Interpretation* 27, no. 4 (1973): 395.

⁴ Laurence H. Kant, “Some Restorative Thoughts on an Agonizing Text: Abraham’s Binding of Isaac and the Horror on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22): Part 2,” *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 38 (2003): 169.

⁵ Mark McCrary, “Genesis 22: How to Go Yonder and Worship,” *Douglass Hills Church of Christ*, last modified 2017, accessed May 13, 2018, <http://www.douglasshillschurch.org>.

death.⁶ He was confident that both of them were going to come back alive after this worship. He fully obeyed the commandment of God to sacrifice Isaac though he did not comprehend how God was going to do it. He simply trusted God (Heb 11:17-19).⁷

Hamilton acknowledges that this worship (Gen 22:5) was unusual to Isaac. It involved what he was not familiar with, to worship without a lamb, hence the questions, ‘where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ (Gen 22:7).⁸ It seems what Abraham calls to worship in v5, to Isaac it involves burnt offering in v7.

He further says “Although the text has not expressly told us that Isaac was informed that they were going to offer a burnt offering, the burnt offering was not only the oldest offering but the only mentioned in the Patriarchal age (Gen 8:20, Job 1:5).”⁹

This could mean that Isaac was aware of the fact that worship consisted of sacrificing a lamb (Gen 8:20). He did not ask until his father had revealed that they were going to worship (Gen 22:5). Isaac could not understand how worship could be possible without the lamb for the sacrifice (v7).

Thomas observes that,

Israelite law provided a certain context for the test. The idea of offering the first-born son to God was not strange. In principle, it was well established (Exod. 22:29: “You will give me your first-born sons). But in practice people were not asked to do so; they had to sacrifice an animal instead (Exod. 34:40: “You will save/redeem [with an animal sacrifice] all your first-born sons”).

⁶ Stephen R. Schrader, “Genesis,” in *King James Version Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 60.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, “Genesis,” in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 103.

⁹ Hamilton “Isaac is curious and he does not hesitate to raise a logical question: where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Isaac’s question indicate that he knew what was involved in the act of worship (v5) in which he and his father were about to engage. Although the text has not expressly told us that Isaac was informed that they were going to offer a burnt offering, the burnt offering was not only the oldest offering but the only mentioned in the patriarchal age Gen 8:20, job 1:5.” Ibid.

These two laws balanced one another, serving both to establish the sovereignty of God and to safeguard human life. In Abraham's case it seemed as if he might actually sacrifice his son, but then, in accordance with usual practice, he offered a ram instead (22:13).¹⁰

Laurent Kant discusses that the worship or bow down that Abraham spoke about to his servants as he left them behind involved the sacrifice of an animal yet he did not know. He only knew God's command to offer Isaac his son, which the omniscient God knew would not be completed.¹¹

Jean Louis Ska adds that Abraham only knew of God's order to offer his son as a burnt offering. Isaac and the servants were not aware of the actual aim of the journey. Abraham knew more than Isaac and the servants.¹² But God knew more all of them.

Alan Carr acknowledges that worship is a matter of faith to Abraham (Rom. 10:17). He humbly responded to the revealed will of God by doing exactly what God required. The act of bowing down before Him in reverence and adoration is what *הִתְחַנַּף* *hăwâh* is all about. He saw the experience of offering his son to God as the act of worship.¹³

¹⁰ Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 268.

¹¹ Kant, "Some Restorative Thoughts on an Agonizing Text: Abraham's Binding of Isaac and the Horror on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22): Part 2," 161–194.

¹² Jean Louis Ska, "Genesis 22: What Question Should We Ask the Text," *Biblica* 94, no. 2 (2013).

¹³ Carr, Real worship is always costly! David knew this, for he said, "...neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing," 2 Sam. 24:24. Mary of Bethany knew this, John 12:1-8. She sacrificed her pride, her glory and her treasure for the opportunity to worship the Lord Jesus. The wise men knew this, Matt. 2:1-12. These rich, wise, powerful men humbled themselves before a child and worshiped Him. They sacrificed their pride, their glory and their treasure to honor the Lord. Through the ages many millions have given the all, even their lives, as sacrifices of worship for His glory. Alan Carr, "Genesis 22:1-14: The Setting of Biblical Worship," *The Sermon Notebook*, last modified 2003, accessed February 26, 2018, https://www.sermonnotebook.org/worship/Worship%20-%20-%20Genesis%2022_1-18.htm.

He further says, “When Abraham told his young men that he was going up to worship, he knew that it meant the sacrifice of his son. This was nothing less than absolute self-denial on Abraham’s part.”¹⁴

Abraham’s purpose as he left his servants was to worship. This was going to involve the painful exercise of offering his son as a burnt offering. But he trusted the Lord would raise him back to life again. He believed God and spoke in faith to the servants. God had promised that Isaac would be his heir (Gen 21:12).¹⁵

Leupold adds that the servants were left behind far enough where they could not witness the offering of the sacrifice. Abraham designated this act as worship. His language presents a voluntary act full of determination. His promise of returning with the boy was based on faith (Heb 11:19). He based his conclusion on the promises that God had given before.¹⁶

Luther declares that they walked together Abraham and his son in the desert to the place designated for worship. The son was not aware of his impending sacrificial death as a burnt offering. He was willing and ready to comply. The father was probably agonizing in his heart since he knew he soon would offer Isaac in the consuming fire of the burnt sacrifice on the altar in Moriah. He was determined to reduce the beloved son to ashes in accordance with God’s command.¹⁷

Abraham went fully determined to offer Isaac. Hence he said “we will go yonder and worship meaning to perform a solemn act of devotion which God

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Sacrifice of Isaac,” *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978), 350.

¹⁶ H. C. Leupold, “Genesis 22:4,” *Exposition of Genesis* (Cheltenham, UK: DeWard, 2007).

¹⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, and H. T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Seminary, 1964), 111.

requires”¹⁸ Keil agrees that “Abraham could not have understood the solemn act in any other way than requiring an outward burnt offering, because there was no any other way in which Abraham could accomplish a complete surrendering of Isaac than an actual preparation of the really offering, the desired sacrifice.”¹⁹

John Gills comments that “Abraham made the remaining young men understand that they were going to one of the mountains which were in sight, and while there, they will worship God by offering sacrifice to him.”²⁰ Adam Clark adds that when he said this “he knew he was going to make his son a burnt offering. He went fully purposed to offer his son, and yet confidently expecting to have him restored to life again. Hence the words “We will go yonder and worship - perform a solemn act of devotion which God requires, and come again to you.”²¹

Maclaren observes that on a moral sense it should be remembered that child sacrifice was practised by surrounding people of different religious orientations and regarded not as a crime but as worship. The issue of offering Isaac as a burnt offering did not present itself to him as anything else but worship demanded by God.²²

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, “Worship (Gen 22:5),” *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

¹⁹ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1891), 191.

²⁰ John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible* (Paris, France: Standard Bearer, 1999), 396.

²¹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible* (Concord, NC: Wesleyan Heritage, 1998), 171.

²² Alexander MacLaren, “Genesis 22:1,” *Expositions of Holy Scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers* (Lahore, Pakistan: Heritage Educational Systems, 2008).

MacArthur adds that without wavering or questioning the morality of human sacrifice or the purposes of God, Abraham confidently assured his servants of his and Isaac's worship and return and went ahead with arrangements for the sacrifice.²³

Since the worship involved the sacrifice of Isaac, he was confident that God would resurrect him back to life to fulfil his role as a child of promise (Gen 21:12).²⁴

Reyburn posits that, after travelling with the servants part of the way, Abraham and his son were to go another part of the journey by themselves to worship, which meant that he will go the other part of the way with Isaac to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. At some point, Abraham instructs his helpers to remain, and he and Isaac go part of the way to carry out the sacrifice (verses 22.5).²⁵

Stanley suggests that if Abraham was convinced that Isaac would be resurrected by God from death (Heb 11:17-19) then what he calls to worship in v5 must be something to do with ending the life his son.²⁶

Edward Dobson insists that the words of Abraham to his young men were not just a mere empty phrase, it was his full conviction based on "in Isaac shall thy seed be called (21:12)." Hebrews 11:17-19 reveals he was expecting Isaac to be resurrected, thus he would regard him as given back from the dead.²⁷ Abraham was

²³ John MacArthur, "Genesis 22:5," *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Reyburn and Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*, 485.

²⁶ Charles F. Stanley, "Genesis 22:5," *The Charles F. Stanley Life Principles Daily Bible, New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005).

²⁷ Edward G. Dobson et al., *King James Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 60.

confident that both he and Isaac would worship and return to his servants even though he intended to obey God's commands to offer Isaac his son as a burnt offering.²⁸

When Abraham disclosed his intention to worship (v5), it was apparent to Isaac and the servants that the sacrificial beast is absent (v7), the servants, however, did not ask him about the sacrificial lamb, only Isaac dared to pose a question about the lamb for the burnt offering.²⁹

Sailhamer acknowledges the fact that Abraham was familiar with the idea that the most exalted form of religious worship was the sacrifice of the first-born. He felt, in common with godly men in every age, that to offer to God cheap sacrifices while we retain for ourselves what is truly precious, is a kind of worship that displays our low estimate of God rather than expresses true devotion.³⁰

Knox puts it right when he says, "Abraham dwelt among idolaters. To them, human sacrifice was a common act of worship. The greatest evidence of their religious devotion to their idols was the sacrifice of human life to appease them. The highest sacrifice of all was shown when a father sacrificed his son."³¹

Zoltan Fischer argues correctly that, it was not unusual in those days for nobility to sacrifice offspring to their various gods. Abraham's willingness would not be particularly outstanding in terms of devotion by his contemporaries. God's request,

²⁸ Stanley, "Genesis 22:5."

²⁹ K. A. Mathews, "Genesis," *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1- 11:26* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 292.

³⁰ John Sailhamer, "Genesis," ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).

³¹ Ellen Mary Knox, *Bible Lessons for Schools: The Acts of the Apostles* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1907), 69.

taken in a straightforward way, would not differentiate Abraham from his contemporaries or his God from those that the nearby peoples were worshipping.³²

Marcus insists that Abraham was familiar with the idea that the most exalted form of religious worship was the sacrifice of the first-born. He felt, in common with godly men in every age, that to offer to God cheap a sacrifice while we retain for ourselves what is truly precious is showing a poor consideration of who God is. While heathens valued their gods so high that they sacrificed their children, Abraham was to express a kind of worship that esteems God high.³³ Abraham had previously built altars. He built an altar in Shechem, in Hebron and in Moriah (Gen 12: 7, 8, 13:18; 22:2, 9).

JoAnn Davidson observes that “we will worship” even if this is the “first use of this word in the Pentateuch, Abrahams faith apparently has not wavered throughout the three-day journey. Even with pain surely stabbing his heart, he can still affirm his intent to worship God.”³⁴ Straut Pratico comments that the first time the word worship appears in the Bible is in Gen 22:5 when God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering.

Early that morning he went out to offer Isaac his son as God had commanded him. As far as Abraham is concerned this whole episode is about worship. “The narrative of Abraham proceeding to offer Isaac reveals that true worship goes beyond the literal definition of the word.”³⁵

³² Zoltan Fischer, “Sacrificing Isaac: A New Interpretation,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2007): 173.

³³ Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis* (New York, NY: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1889), 200.

³⁴ JoAnn Davidson, “Eschatology and Genesis 22,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11, no. 1–2 (2000): 237.

³⁵ Stuart Pratico, *Praying with Power* (Jacksonville, FL: Sunesis, 2012), 149.

When Abraham said we will worship he was foreshadowing the coming of the act of offering Isaac as a burnt offering. “This foreshadowing device suggests that the scope of the story encompasses the near-sacrifice of Isaac and his return with him.”³⁶

Accordingly, Mark McCray adds that God commanded Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering. Abraham considered it as worship.³⁷ Dean Kurtz posits that Abraham was called by God to offer Isaac as a burnt offering in an act of worship. His worship was according to the self-revelation of God. He was committed to worshipping God according to God’s terms. He understood that worship was about giving his all. He was willing to offer exactly what God instructed him to offer.³⁸

David Harris suggests that when Abraham spoke of worship he fully intended to sacrifice his son. The young man realized that all that was necessary for a sacrifice was there except the sacrifice itself.³⁹

Ellis Worth Kallas propose that Abraham explained to his servants about worship which he knew would involve the death of Isaac his son. He proceeded believing God was going to raise Isaac back to life for the fulfilment of the promises previously made by God.⁴⁰ George Campbell Morgan adds that his words to his servants reveal that he believed that Isaac would be raised to life after he had been offered.⁴¹

³⁶ Coats, “Abraham Sacrifice of Faith,” 393, 389–400.

³⁷ McCrary, “Genesis 22: How to Go Yonder and Worship.”

³⁸ Dean Kurtz, *God’s Word the Final Word on Worship and Music* (Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press, 2008), 48.

³⁹ David L. Harris, *Alive At 5*, vol. 1 (Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press, 2004), 57.

⁴⁰ J. Ellsworth Kalas, *Faith from the Back Side: A Different Take On What It Means To Believe* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), chap. 7.

⁴¹ George Campbell Morgan, *The Patriarchs, Kings and Prophets of Israel: Expository Notes* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2014), 7.

It was only Abraham who knew the purpose of this trip. Isaac and the servants may have thought that he was going for the purpose of making a sacrifice. Isaac would, later on, speak to his father about the missing object of sacrifice to which the father responded positively.⁴²

Davidson says “the perceptive reader notices the first use of this word for “worship” in the Pentateuch. Abraham’s faith apparently has not wavered throughout the three-day journey. Even with pain surely stabbing his heart, he can still affirm his intent to worship God.”⁴³

Robert Sutio acknowledges that “the Targum reads v. 14 differently from the Masoretic Text, ‘and Abraham worshipped and prayed there, in that place, and he said, ‘Here, before the Lord, shall future generations worship’ therefore, it is said on this day: on this mountain did Abraham worship before the Lord.”⁴⁴

The Concealment View

Skinner observes the use the word worship here “is a pretext whose hollowness the reader knows.” This seems to suggest that by use of the word worship Abraham was justifying his course of action with an unreal reason.⁴⁵

Murphy regards the use of worship as “mere concealment of purpose to the servants.”⁴⁶ He concealed it from his servants the true end of his journey for they

⁴² Gordon Talbot, *A Study of the Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary on All 50 Chapters of Genesis* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian, 1981), 145.

⁴³ Davidson, “Eschatology and Genesis 22,” 236.

⁴⁴ Robert Sutio, “Reading the Akedah Narrative (Genesis 22:1-19) in the Context of Modern Hermeneutics” (Ph. D Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 1993), 32.

⁴⁵ John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1910), 329.

⁴⁶ James Gracey Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis: With a New Translation* (Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 340.

would not understand it.⁴⁷ Radmacher and others believe that possibilities that prompted the use of worship by Abraham include that; (1) he was lying to the servants to buy time; (2) he was suffering from delusion, and no longer speaking rationally.⁴⁸

Hughes observes that “worship” was, of course, intentionally vague because “offer a burnt offering” could have raised further questions. Yet Abraham was himself totally sincere and convinced that he was going to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.⁴⁹

When he left his servants behind under the guise of worship, he was contemplating the sacrifice. He thought it was too solemn for an eye to see.⁵⁰

Wenham notes that,

Abraham only says “worship” rather than “offer a burnt offering.” “Worship” (השתחוה) is a vaguer term than “offer”; it may simply mean “bow down” (Gen 18:2; 19:1). Does this indicate a weakening of resolve or a desire to hide what was to happen from his servants, or is the term chosen simply for brevity? Confusion about Abraham’s real meaning is worsened by his final enigmatic “We may return to you,” for he might have been expected to say “so that *I* may return to you.”⁵¹

Brant Clements suggests that “Abraham may be concealing the truth from his servants (lest they prevent him from carrying out God’s will), from Isaac (lest he

⁴⁷ Marcus Moritz Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament, with a New Translation: Exodus* (London, UK: Longman, 1858), 290.

⁴⁸ E. D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds., “Genesis 22:5,” *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

⁴⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 302.

⁵⁰ W.F Adeney, “Genesis,” ed. Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, *Pulpit Commentary: Genesis-Exodus* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2004), 283.

⁵¹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*, vol. 2 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 2002), 107.

flees) and from himself (lest the frank acknowledgement of his real intention causes his resolve to break.”⁵²

He further asserts that Abraham lied to his servants. “After all, he had a track record as a liar. In Genesis 12, Abraham (then known as Abram) tells the King of Egypt that his wife Sarah (called Sarai at this point) is actually his sister. In chapter 20, Abraham tries the same stunt with King Abimelech of Gerar.”⁵³

Ibn Ezra suggests that Abraham dared not reveal to his son the commandments of God. So he had to explain to him that he wanted to go with him to the place to bow down there, in seclusion before God and return.⁵⁴ Bach notes that this may suggest that Abraham intended to hide from his son and his servants the exact purpose of their journey.⁵⁵ Murphy adds that it is worth it to consider the whole transaction “as mere concealment of his purpose from his servants,⁵⁶

Dennis Ross posits that,

It was as if he was going to climb up a mountain and pray and come down, isn't it that Abraham is going to sacrifice Isaac and come back alone? Is this a lie or a prophecy? Does Abraham lie by failing to tell his servants and his son that sacrifice is on the agenda? What would they have done if Abraham told them the truth? The text does not address that. . . . It is easy to rationalise lying to a child thinking it's for her own good. After all who has the time of

⁵² Brant Clements, “Did Abraham Lie?,” *Both Saint and Cynic*, 2011, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://saintandcynic.blogspot.com/2011/06/did-abraham-lie.html>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Ibn Ezra, “Genesis in Targum Literature,” accessed 10 May 2018 <http://mg.alhatorah.org/Full/Bereshit/22.4#e0n7>.

⁵⁵ Admin, “In Genesis 22:5 Why Did Abraham Say ‘We Shall Return’ before Sacrificing Isaac?,” *Biblical Hermeneutics Stack Exchange*, 5, last modified 2018, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/32402/in-genesis-225-why-did-abraham-say-we-shall-return-before-sacrificing-isaac?rq=1>.

⁵⁶ James Gracey Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis: With a New Translation*, vol. 1 (London, UK: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 329.

explaining every dangerous situation to a kid who is not going to listen or won't understand? ⁵⁷

Ibn Ezra insists that Abraham concealed the secret from Isaac. Perhaps if he had told him that he was going to be the burnt offering he may have ran away.⁵⁸ According to Schultz, the servants were left behind on the third day without the knowledge of the purpose of the journey. They were left in the dark as to what was exactly going to happen. The secret was known only to God and Abraham. "Had the servants known, they would probably have prevented Abraham from carrying out what he intended to do. After all, you do not just let an old man go when you know he is going to kill his son."⁵⁹

Roop sees ambiguity in 'we will worship.' He says the whole act of danger is hidden away in these words. Abraham is seemingly using words that detach him from the situation.⁶⁰ Maclaren wonders if that was not "a pious fraud" with some glimpse of hope "like a pale ray of light from a shrouded sun shone for him?"⁶¹ Abraham was not by any means diverted or distracted from his journey. He made ready his worship implements and advanced towards the appointed by God. He did not reveal his

⁵⁷ Rabbi Dennis S. Ross, *When a Lie Is Not a Sin: The Hebrew Bible's Framework for Deciding* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1953), 54.

⁵⁸ Admin, "Ibn Ezra on Genesis 22:5:1," Sefaria, last modified 2018, accessed May 10, 2018, //www.sefaria.org/Ibn_Ezra_on_Genesis.22.5.1.

⁵⁹ John Schultz, *Commentary to the Book of Genesis* (Eau Claire, WI: Bible-Commentaries, 2000).

⁶⁰ Roop "Abraham's instruction to the two lads have the same ambiguity found in his later words to Isaac. He tells them that *the lad* and I go there and "we" will worship and "we" will return (v. 5, NIV). That may be correct, but it hides the danger and drama to come and involves information which Abraham cannot know at this point in the story. One further unusual element: while God, Abraham, and the narrator conspicuously refer to Isaac as *son*, here Abraham uses the term *lad* or "young man," seemingly emphasizing relational distance. Perhaps Abraham needs words which detach him from the situation when speaking publicly. There will be no spectators from here on, just Abraham and Isaac, *his son*. Eugene F. Roop, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Genesis* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987), 147.

⁶¹ Alexander MacLaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers* (Lahore, Pakistan: Heritage Educational Systems, 2008), 151.

intention to anyone even Sarah his wife was not informed about the purpose of the errand. This he knew would dissuade him from accomplishing his purpose. Although the issue lingered in his mind clear as he beheld his son yet he managed to keep it to himself until on the mount. He never flinched from executing the divine command.⁶²

Barnes observes the use the worship as mere concealment of his purpose from his servants.⁶³ Hughes insists that Abraham's mind had been numbed by the sorrow of killing his son. He was disoriented hence his vague utterance "will worship," instead of offering a burnt offering.⁶⁴

Victor Hamilton observes that "some read Abrahams words to his servants (we will worship and return to you) as an attempt by Abraham to conceal from the servants and even from Isaac what is about to happen. He is trying to be diplomatic and sanguine as possible and in the process resorts to ambiguity and deception."⁶⁵

Jean-Louis Ska sees Abraham facing the challenge of being precise with the purpose of the journey. He overcame the challenge by remaining vague enough to everyone, the reader, himself, Isaac, and the two servants, to give the word an acceptable meaning.⁶⁶

Hemchand Gossai submits that by telling the servants that he and Isaac will go and worship and come back, Abraham was not telling the truth. He was deceiving

⁶² Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae: Genesis to Leviticus* (London, UK: Holdsworth and Ball, 1832), 176.

⁶³ James Gracey Murphy, ed., "Genesis," *Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).

⁶⁴ Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 302.

⁶⁵ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 108.

⁶⁶ Jean Louis Ska, *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch: Exegetical Studies and Basic Questions* (Tübingen, Germany: Gulde-Druck, 2009), 102.

both the servants and Isaac. Abraham goes beyond what God has told him and he decides to weave a tale of deception. He “engages in a degree of deception to execute the plan without too many raised suspicions.”⁶⁷

Landy quoted by Hamilton accuses Abraham, saying “the most dignified patriarch resorted to a crude and clumsy lie. We sense the desperateness of the improvisation.”⁶⁸ Cranshaw quoted also by Hamilton anchors his argument that Abraham evaded the truth on reasons; “1, he wanted to protect Isaac from atrocious truth, 2, a humanistic abhorrence of taking human life, 3, if he does not speak about it, it may never happen”⁶⁹

In the concealment view, Abraham is perceived as lying or concealing something to the servants by using the word worship. Proponents of this view incorrectly see in Abraham a deceitful Patriarch, who conceals his intention in vague words to subvert his young men. This may not be correct with regards to the character of Abraham. He was a man of faith. He believed in God.

Lawlor says "we will worship" and "we will return to you" raise questions, Was this a hollow, evasive comment on Abraham's part, or was it an expression of an honest faith which he genuinely possessed?⁷⁰ This question is suggestive of some potential deception in the statement of Abraham.

Tucker rides on this potential deception and insists that “On the third day of his travel to the sacrificial site, Mount Moriah, Abraham lies to his companions (and

⁶⁷ Hemchand Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 113.

⁶⁸ F. Landy, “Narrative Techniques and Symbolic Transition in the Akedah,” in *Signs and Wonders: Biblical Texts in Literary Focus*, ed. J. C. Exum (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 14.

⁶⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 108.

⁷⁰ John Lawlor, “The Test of Abraham Genesis 22:1-19,” *Grace Theological Journal* 1, no. 1 (1980): 22.

his son), telling them that he is going now with his son to bow, and they will return shortly. Abraham's lie is an explicit recognition of the immoral nature of the sacrifice."⁷¹ However, the concept of potential deception as articulated by Tucker above is inconsistent with the text itself.

The Moriah View

Reformers somehow connected the use of *weništaháweh* in v. 5 to the meaning of the word Moriah in v. 2. They believed that Moriah was derived from the Hebrew word “*yarah*” to teach or *yarai* meaning fear.⁷² The wide accepted opinion was that Moriah was “the land of divine worship either because God had appointed it for the offering of the sacrifice or because the place for the temple was already fixed there.”⁷³

There God required worship because He had already determined in His secret counsel that this place is fixed for worship. Properly it received its name from the word that signifies fear to show that it is a place of the Lord's reverence and worship. This is the very place where the temple of Solomon was later built.⁷⁴

According to Luther, Jerome's view of Moriah as the land of vision has been rejectable as it is too far from grammar. Another opinion suggests that it got its name from *myrrh* meaning his worship. “For *myrrh* and frankincense, with which offerings of incense were made, used to grow there.” Luther discarded this etymology on the

⁷¹ Aviezer Tucker, “Sins of Our Fathers: A Short History of Religious Child Sacrifice,” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 51, no. 1 (1999): 35.

⁷² John Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” *Commentary on Genesis* (Cambridge, UK: Ravenio Books, 2002), 21–25; Luther, *Luther's Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:99.

⁷³ John Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” *Commentary on Genesis* (Cambridge, UK: Ravenio Books, 2002), 21–25; Luther, *Luther's Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:99.

⁷⁴ Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” 438.

reason that “the Jews, as was their habit, understood only the outward form of worship with incense; they neither understood nor performed the true inner forms of worship.”⁷⁵ He however like Calvin agrees with the opinion that מֹרְיָה Moriah is derived from the verb יָרָא, to fear. Holy Scripture testifies that the fear of God is the worship of God (Jer 7:22-23). “Accordingly, reverence and fear constitute the true and God-pleasing worship.”⁷⁶

He further notes that,

What the Jews maintain seems to be true, namely, that in that very place Adam, Abel, and Noah brought sacrifices. Certainly, Shem had his abode there. By him, the true worship of God has spread abroad in the world. Here, too, applies what we stated above, that before the Flood Paradise was near that land, and that Adam dwelt in the neighbourhood of Mt. Moriah after he had been driven from Paradise. Consequently, even before the Flood, it was a famous place because of the worship of God, and it remained famous up to the time of Christ. But after the Holy Spirit was bestowed, the Gospel was spread from there into the entire world; and no longer was either the worship of God or the church confined to that small corner of the Jewish land.⁷⁷

Luther accepts that Moriah got its name from the Hebrew word that denotes “to fear, worship, and revere God.” This place has been acknowledged as the “sanctuary of God from the beginning by the Patriarchs, Adam and Noah. Shem dwelt there. The adverb “there” in the clause offer him there in 22:2, reminds us that it was not permitted to offer sacrifices or worship God anywhere.”⁷⁸

Calvin prefers to maintain the general opinion that identified the place as ‘the land of divine worship.’ God there “required present worship from Abraham because already in his secret counsel God had determined in that place to fix His ordinary

⁷⁵ Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” 438.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Luther, *Luther's Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:99.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

worship.” He suggests that sacrifices received their name from the word that signifies fear (worship) because they give evidence of worship. This is the same place on which the temple was later built.⁷⁹

Like Luther, Calvin accepts that Moriah’s name is probably derived from, “the word ירה (*yarah*,) which signifies to teach or from ירא (*yarai*,) which signifies to *fear*.” But to suggest that it came from the *myrrh* of God is not satisfactory.⁸⁰

Reformers seem to suggest that Moriah was known to be a place of worship since the time of the early patriarchs. If so, then Abraham knew Moriah as a place of worship even as God mentioned it to him in verse 2, hence his use of the word worship in verse 5.

This worship required participants to be well prepared and ready. It needs all important elements to be available. The presence of other people would disturb worship progress.⁸¹ Wesley states that Abraham needed to have all things ready for the worship service. “When we are going to worship God, we should seriously consider whether we have everything ready, especially the lamb for a burnt-offering.” All that they had were elements of worship that should enable their hearts to be lifted up to the Lord yet the lamb was missing.⁸²

This strange oblation caused the servant to be left behind otherwise they would interfere and cause disturbances as it demanded the life of the beloved one of the family. “It is our wisdom and duty, when we are going to worship God, to lay

⁷⁹ Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” 438.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Luther, *Luther’s Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:102.

⁸² John Wesley, *Wesley’s Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2006).

aside all those thoughts and cares which may divert us from the service,” leave them at the bottom of the hill that we may attend on the Lord without distraction. They were not privileged to get to the designated place of worship.⁸³

The servants were left behind to avoid disruption of the worship exercise intended by the father and his son. Abraham foresaw that this ‘worship’ was not fit for the servants to attend. Otherwise, they would affect the process of this new worship procedure. He believed God would have a way of fulfilling the promise of making him a great nation out of Isaac. He entrusted his future to his God and walked to the place of sacrifice without hesitating as to the place of worship.⁸⁴

Henry Matthew posits that this was an exclusive kind of worship it was done not according to the will of the worshiper but to the command of God. The worshipers were distinguished.⁸⁵ This analysis views the worship referred to by Abraham as equivalent or the same as the offering of Isaac as a burnt sacrifice to the Lord.

As Abraham and Isaac moved together to Moriah carrying the fire to the place of worship, the wood and the knife, Isaac presupposed that the lamb had been omitted for some reason but is not sure he asked his father a question with long-lasting effects “where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”⁸⁶

⁸³ Matthew Henry, “Genesis 22:3,” *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Kiev, Ukraine: Osnova, 1996).

⁸⁴ Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” 348.

⁸⁵ Henry says, “‘We will go yonder, where you see the light, and worship.’ He left his servants at some distance off (v. 5), lest they should interpose, and create him some disturbance in his strange oblation; for Isaac was, no doubt, the darling of the whole family. Thus, when Christ was entering upon his agony in the garden, he took only three of his disciples with him, and left the rest at the garden door. Note, It is our wisdom and duty, when we are going to worship God, to lay aside all those thoughts and cares which may divert us from the service, leave them at the bottom of the hill, that we may attend on the Lord without distraction.” Henry, “Genesis 22:3.”

⁸⁶ Calvin, “Genesis 22:1,” 348.

Charles Stanley suggests that it should be noted that, “it was not permitted to sacrifice or to set up the worship of God everywhere. God designated the place, the sacrifice, and the sacrificer. God gave him the specifics and He expected him to perform. Abraham was not at liberty to do according to his own understanding but exactly as God commanded him.”⁸⁷

Jewish and Christian religions put the event on the temple mount at Jerusalem 2 Chron 3:1. The Targum uses פולחנא meaning worship in place of Moriah. Skinner admits that “the Targum records that ‘And Abraham worshipped and prayed there, in that place, saying before the Lord, here shall generations worship. So it is said at this day, in this mountain Abraham worshipped before the Lord.’” It is rendered in the Masoretic text as “in the mount of Yahweh, He is seen, in the mount of Yahweh men appear for worship.”⁸⁸ Although these may be conjectures they suggest why Abraham told his servants he was going for worship in v5.

When they came to a point where he saw the mount Moriah he instructed his servants to remain behind while he and his son proceeded to worship at the appointed place. The reason why he left them behind is assumed to be their inability to withstand the kind of worship their master and his son would be involved in. The servants would interfere and prevent the intended worship.⁸⁹ If it was seeing the place that made him let the servants remain behind as he proceeded with the boy. Then it could be that the place had something to do with the intended purpose.

In the case of Abraham, only God אֱלֹהִים *élôhîm* (Gen 22:1) is mentioned throughout the first ten verses. Beginning from verse eleven יהוה *Yahweh* (Gen 22:11)

⁸⁷ Stanley, “Genesis 22:5.”

⁸⁸ Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 328.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

appears. There is a particle of persuasion נָּנָּ (Gen 22:2) is used by God pleading with Abraham to take his son to the land of Moriah for a burnt offering. Abraham had used the same particle in 12:11, 13 speaking to Sarah his wife and Sarah used it speaking to Abraham her husband. In some way, the Lord's demands must be heard, trusted and accepted as appropriate under whatever circumstance. It has been the Lord's desire since Gen 12 to call Abraham to a life of trusting God and surrendering life issues to Him. Abraham must probably respond with complete obedience all the way through.⁹⁰

He should respond to the command by offering Isaac as a burnt offering in the land of Moriah. The Hebrew word used here for a burnt offering is *ālā*, literally, *lift him up*, and signifies the offering of the victim as a whole burnt offering in complete dedication. This solemn service would not be done anywhere anyhow to defy the practice of heathens all around.⁹¹

The servants were instructed to remain behind with an understanding that the proposed worship would be at some distance and they should not be part of it. Isaac proceeded with the father to Mount Moriah, and there he was informed of God's command to offer him as a burnt sacrifice. At Moriah Abraham repeated to Isaac God's promises that through him he would become a great nation.⁹² It was on the

⁹⁰ J. Gerald Janzen, *Abraham and All the Families of the Earth: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 12-50* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Handsel Press, 1993), 78.

⁹¹ Charles F. Pfeiffer, ed., "Lift Him up (Genesis 22:2)," *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2007).

⁹² Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1999), 325.

mount Moriah where Abraham took his son to do the command of God. There was later located the temple of Solomon (2 Chron 3:1).⁹³

According to Scheetz, the Targumic literature is very explicit in showing Moriah as the place of Temple service, priestly service and worship. Both early and medieval Jewish interpretations seem to be fairly unified.⁹⁴ If Moriah was known as the place of worship, it could be possible that Abraham used the word worship in verse 5 from that background.

Levi observes that although the first altar on Mount Moriah is described in the Torah Rambam and Chazal teach that Adam and Cain and Abel and Noah all offered their sacrifices at this site. This tradition emphasizes the fact that this place was chosen for sacrifices.⁹⁵ He further asserts that Abraham already knew that this was the place for Divine worship for all generations.⁹⁶

He further asserts that when Adam left the Garden of Eden he returned to the holy mount Moriah which is also where he was created. He is also presented as a repentant sinner who serves as a shining example for his progeny and from him, all

⁹³ Charles H. Dyer, Eugene H. Merrill, and Gene Merrill, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey: Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 26.

⁹⁴ The place that Abraham is to take Isaac to, “אֶל-אֲרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה / the land of Moriah,” has only one parallel in the MT in 2Chr 3:1. In this parallel “הַמֹּרְיָה / Moriah” is identified as the place where Solomon built the temple which was also the place that was revealed to David, in particular “אֶרֶץ אֲרָן בְּגֵרְךָ הַיְזְבִיבִי on the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” The obvious intertextual connection in reading these texts is that the land to which Abraham was to take and offer up Isaac is also the place where the later temple of Solomon was to be built. Although the MT does not make an explicit connection between these passages beyond the use of the same proper noun “הַמֹּרְיָה / Moriah,” TO introduces a curious connection by its translation of “הַמֹּרְיָה / Moriah” with “אֲנַחְלָה / service” in an otherwise word for word parallel with the MT. The use of “אֲנַחְלָה / service” is significant in that this is the normal word used especially for “priestly service, Temple service, worship” in targumic literature. What is only implicit from an intertextual standpoint in the MT is made explicit in TO. Jordan M. Scheetz, “Canon-Conscious Interpretation: Genesis 22, the Masoretic Text, and Targum Onkelos,” *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 1 (2014): 263–284.

⁹⁵ Rav Yitzchak Levy, “Mount Moriah and the Akeida Part 1” (Lessons presented at the Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash, Yeshivat Har Etzion, Israel, 1997), pt. Shiur 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the generations will learn that there is repentance. Levi accepts Rabbi Pirkei de Eliezer maps that show the Garden of Eden, Mount Moriah and Hebron all in proximity to each other.⁹⁷

A study of events which ends with Adams burial reveals that they all occurred in the vicinity of Mount Moriah. When Adam went out of Eden he dwelleth on Mount Moriah for the gate of the Garden of Eden is near Mount Moriah⁹⁸Smith sees Abraham leaving behind his servants as he and his son Isaac advance to Mount Moriah to worship. He (Abraham) expresses his confidence that he will return with Isaac. He was convinced that Isaac was going to survive the ordeal (22: 4, 5).⁹⁹

Israel and Wagner point out that Onkelos and other Aramaic translations also render אֶל-אֲרֶץ הַמִּוֶּשֶׁה as to the “land of worship.”¹⁰⁰ Although that rendition does not find a place in Skinner's classic commentary on Genesis, it is suggestive to the use of the word “worship” in the text.

Derek Walker, propose that Abraham was shown this Mount by Divine Revelation as a Holy Place which God had uniquely ordained for sacrifice. Later God through David set aside this same Mount as the place where the Temple had to be built. Solomon would build the temple on the same Mount Moriah where the glory of God would be seen. On this temple Mount, all the sacrifices symbolising Christ would

⁹⁷ Adiel Kadari, “Interreligious Aspects in the Narrative of the Burial of Adam in Pirkei DE-Rabbi Eliezer,” in *Religious Stories in Transformation: Conflict, Revision and Reception* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 95–96.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 96.

⁹⁹ James E. Smith, “Test of Abraham (Gen 22:1-10),” *The Pentateuch* (New York, NY: College Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁰ Israel Drazin and Stanley Wagner M., *Onkelos on the Toarh: Bereshit* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen Books, 2006), 134.

be offered. Abraham's offering of Isaac his beloved son prefigured Christ's sacrifice that would later be most likely on the same place.¹⁰¹

David Pratte suggests that for three days Abraham travelled to the appointed place of worship. He took all necessary provisions together with Isaac and they proceeded to the appointed place of worship. At the appointed place Abraham was diligent in worship even when that worship was painful to offer.¹⁰²

When Abraham saw the divine glory appearing on the Mountain he left his servants and went there to worship God. This according to Tailor confirmed what had been said by Eliefier a Jew that,

When God bade him go to the place he would tell him of v2 and offer there his son, he asked how he should know? And the answer was, 'Wheresoever thou seest my glory there I will stay and wait for thee.' And accordingly, now he beheld the Pillar of fire reaching from Heaven to the Earth and thereby knew this was the place.¹⁰³

Davidson acknowledges Moriah as a divinely ordained place. God was going to show to Abraham the location for a whole burnt offering. Abraham is in a mission to go for three days and sacrifice to God in a designated place. He would need to travel about seventy kilometres from Beersheba to Moriah. It is a long distance but yet the location must be reached for the sacrifice to be done.¹⁰⁴ In Jewish tradition, the very word, "place," suggests 'sacrality' and the presence of God.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Derek Walker, "Genesis 22 - God's Revelation to Abraham - Part 1," *Oxford Bible Church*, last modified 2018, accessed July 13, 2018, <https://www.oxfordbiblechurch.co.uk/index.php/bible-commentary/old-testament/genesis/2087-genesis-22-god-s-revelation-to-abraham-part-1>.

¹⁰² David E. Pratte, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Bible Study Notes and Comments* (Washington, DC: CreateSpace Independent, 2013), 200.

¹⁰³ Edward Tailor, *A Commentary on Genesis* (London, UK: Rose and Crown, 1694), 342–343.

¹⁰⁴ Davidson, "Eschatology and Genesis 22," 236, 232–247.

¹⁰⁵ Kant, "Some Restorative Thoughts on an Agonizing Text: Abraham's Binding of Isaac and the Horror on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22): Part 2," 164.

This view assumes that Abraham's use of the term worship in verse 5 is based on the mention of Moriah in verse 2. Moriah was already known as the place of worship from the earlier time. When he saw the place after travelling for three days, he knew it as the place where God is worshipped, hence his speech to his young men in verse 5.

CHAPTER 3

EXEGESIS

This section deals with the exegetical analysis of the text. The third chapter deals with investigating the context of the passage under study. It looks at the historical and literary contexts. It contains the authorship of the book of Genesis, the period when the book was written and the audience to which the book was written. It gives the historical setting, geographical setting, the cultural setting and the religious practice of the people of that period and place.

The chapter then presents the settings surrounding the text, and the literary structure of the text. It also looks at the translation of text in order to establish its original meaning. It contains the grammatical analysis of the text and lexical data which includes the analysis of words and clauses. It also looks at the theological meaning of the text and its application.

Hebrew Text

1 ויהי, אחר הדברים האלה, והאלהים, נסה את-אברהם; ויאמר אליו, אברהם ויאמר הנני

ויאמר קח-נא את-בגדך את-יחידך אשר-אהבת, את-יצחק, ולך-לך, אל-ארץ המדינה; והעלהו שם,
2 לעלה,

על אחד ההרים, אשר אמר אליך

וישכם אברהם בבקר, ויחבש את-תמרו, ויקח את-שני נעריו אתו, ואת יצחק בנו; ויבקע, עצי
3 עלה,

ויקם וילך, אל-המקום אשר-אמר-לו האלהים

4 ביום השלישי, וישא אברהם את-עיניו וירא את-המקום—מרחק

ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו, שבו-לכם פה עם-התמור, ואני והנער, נלכה עד-פה; ונשתחוה, ונשובה

5 אליכם

The Masoretic text has the word המריה (Gen 22:2) which was popularly connected with root stem הַמְרָא as used in Genesis 22:14. This derivation from that root is impossible.¹

The Targum Jonathan which is the Syriac version (Peshitta) has ואיזל לך לארע פולחנא (Gen 22:2) which can be translated as and go to ‘the land of worship or service,’ where the Masoretic Text has וְלָךְ לְאֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה (Gen 22:2) which is translated as “and go to ‘the land of Moriah.’” The Septuagint translates the phrase ארץ המריה_ the land of Moriah” with τὴν γῆν τὴν ὑψηλὴν (Gen 22:2) the high land. Targum Samaritanium Pentateuch has המוראה. The Vulgate uses τῆς ὀπτασίας which is compared to המְרָא meaning visions.

The Targum’s use of “פולחנא service” is based on the view that this is the normal word used especially for “priestly service, Temple service, worship” in Targumic Literature.² However, this view is doubted on the bases that the ministry of the priest and the Temple services were far later than Abraham’s episode.

Our view is that the Masoretic rendition of מְרִיָּה is more appropriate. In support of that Luther says, “Therefore it is my opinion that this word מְרִיָּה properly denotes *υεοσέβεια* or reverence and fear of God.”³

Translation of the Text

1 And it came to pass that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham and he said behold I am. 2 And he said Take now your son, your only son, who you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. And offer him there to a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I shall tell you. 3 And Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass and took two of his youths and Isaac his son, and cut to pieces wood for the burnt offering and he rose and

¹ Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 330.

² Scheetz, “Canon-Conscious Interpretation: Genesis 22, the Masoretic Text, and Targum Onkelos,” 268, 263–284.

³ Luther, *Luther’s Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:100.

went to the place which God had said to him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 And Abraham said unto his young men, remain you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come back to you. And Abraham said to his youths, for your stay here with the ass, I and the youth will go as far as here and we will worship and we will return to you.

There are various translations upon this text. Some translations insert some words while some skip translating some words. Because of that, we have decided to establish a personal translation. In this translation, we have tried to stay close to the meaning of each word. We have also tried to avoid insertions and addition of borrowed words where possible. The translation has avoided skipping the translation of words in the Hebrew text which when translated enhance the meaning of the text.

Syntactical and Lexical Data

The clause וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה has ו a *waw* particle conjunction, נ prefix for first person common plural imperfect, the שְׁ prefix for verbal stem *hishtaphel* and verb root חוה *ḥăwâh*. The verb means to bow down, prostrate in homage to royalty or God, humbly beseech, do obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.⁴

The meaning of this clause is and we will bow down.⁵ The imperfect implies that the action is not yet done. The cohortative volition form of the clause indicated by suffix expresses the will or strong desire of the speaker.⁶

⁴ James Strong, “וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה,” *Strong’s Dictionary of the Bible: Greek and Hebrew* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981); Robert L. Thomas, “וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה,” *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 1989).

⁵ William L. Holladay, “וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה,” *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

⁶ Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 573.

This expresses Abraham's strong desire to bow down or prostrate his willingness to go and bow down. It has the element of determination and commitment on the part of the speaker. It expresses Abraham is determined and committed to what God has told him. It was by obedience that Abraham went out with his son to prostrate before God. He was strongly willing to offer his son to God. The cohortative shows that Abraham has the ability to carry out the exercise of offering his son, hence his resolve "we will go."⁷

The clause *וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה* has a verb whose root in earlier times was *שָׁחַ* *sh'μâ* which appears 172 times in the Old Testament meaning to depress, that is to prostrate, especially in homage to the royalty or God, worship.⁸ Tregelles puts *h̄xv*, as the root word, in *hithpael* form as used in Gen 22:5, it means "worshipping a deity, hence to honour God with prayers, to do homage, to submit oneself."⁹

⁷ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*.

⁸ Strongs, *Shachah* bow (31 times), bow down (18 times), obeisance (9 times), reverence (5 times), fall down 3 times, themselves (2 times) stoop (1 time), crouch (1 time). *Shachah* portrays the act of bowing down in homage by an inferior before a ruler (1Sam 24:8) or before a social or economic superior to whom one bows (Ruth 2:10). It is the common term for coming before God in worship (1Sam 15:25, Jer 7:2). Other gods and idols are also the objects of such worship by one's prostrating oneself before them (Isaiah 2:20, 44:15). James Strong, "Shachah," *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 842.

⁹ Tregelles says "*h̄xv*, to bow oneself down, to sink down, to be depressed. *Hith pael*; **1.** to prostrate oneself before anyone *proskunein*. Those who used this mode of salutation touched the ground with the forehead and this honor was not shown only to superiors but to equals (Gen 23:7, 37:7, 9, 10 but especially - **2.** in worshiping a deity; hence to honor God with prayers, even without prostration of body (Gen 47:31, 1 Kings 1:7), **3.** to do homage, to submit oneself. Ps 45:12, this King is Christ who is to be worshiped, Wilhelm Gesenius, "Shachah," *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; Translated, with Additions, and Corrections from the Author's Thesaurus and Other Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949).

Fretheim notes a different root, הָוָה *ḥāwâh* which would mean worship when in *hishtaphel* form which is not common in Hebrew. This change of root is “upon the discovery of the Ugaritic root *hwy*. ”¹⁰ Yamuchi agrees that “the commonly occurring form *hishtahăwâh*, meaning to prostrate, to worship, which was analysed as *hithpael* of *shaha* is now regarded on Ugaritic evidence as an *Eshataphal* stem of *ḥāwâh*. ”¹¹

The verb in its original sense meant to prostrate oneself on the ground as in Neh 8:6, ‘worshipped,’ but more correct to ‘prostrate themselves to the ground. Prostration was quite a common act of submission before a superior. Vassals at the feet of Kings fell seven times forward and seven times backwards.’¹²

Baker explains that,

A verb meaning to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The primary meaning of the word is to bow down. This verb is used to indicate bowing before a monarch or a superior and paying homage to him or her (Gen. 43:28). In contexts such as Genesis 24:26, *šāhāh* is used to indicate bowing down in worship to Yahweh. The psalmists used this word to describe all the earth bowing down in worship to God as a response to His great power (Ps. 66:4); or bowing down in worship and kneeling before the Lord (Ps. 95:6). This act of worship is given to God because He deserves it and because those that are speaking are people of His pasture.¹³

It is used in Exodus 4 to express the response of the people as they had that the Lord had heard their cry, seen their affliction and had come down to deliver them.

¹⁰ Fretheim says “traditionally the form *histahawa* (*hwxtvh*) was understood to be a *hithpael* form of *hxy*. But now upon the discovery of a root *hwy* in Ugaritic (with a form meaning prostrate oneself), it is agreed that a Hebrew root *hwh* once existed of which only this form (the t-reflexive of the ancient causative *shaphel*) remains. Terence E. Fretheim, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 42.

¹¹ Edwin Yamuchi, “Shaha,” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 915.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, eds., “Šāhāh,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel, 2003).

The clause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ is a verb in *hishthaphael* stem, imperfect tense with a *vav* consecutive, third person masculine plural, meaning: they bowed down, themselves.¹⁴

The clause וַיָּשׁוּבָה in Gen 22:5 has a *waw* particle conjunction, a prefix for first person common plural imperfect, its root word as *shûb* means to return back, it is a verb meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder. The verb is used over one thousand times in the Bible and has various shades of meaning in various forms.¹⁵

Thompson concurs that “*shûb*, basically this is a verb of motion with the meaning return, turn back, go back, and come back, often in reference to the physical motion of returning to a point of departure. Walking and journeying are often the contexts for *shûb*.”¹⁶ In this text (Gen 22:5) *shûb* is in the first person, common plural cohortative in form but not in meaning. Therefore the meaning of the clause is *and we will return*, noting that the conjunction is not a *vav* consecutive, the meaning remains imperfect, implying an uncompleted action. Abraham and Isaac have not returned but they will return back from their journey to the servants.

Davidson explains, “we will return to you” as an “electrifying statement in light of what Abraham faces. The verbs are cohortative and thus reveal emphatic determination. The plural “we” should be shocking. This profound statement of faith

¹⁴ Todd S. Beall and William A. Banks, *Old Testament Parsing Guide* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 51.

¹⁵ Warren says, “In the simple stem, it is used to describe divine and human reactions, attitudes, and feelings. The verb describes the possibility that Israel might change (turn) their minds and return to Egypt (Exod 13:17). Josiah the king turned back to the Lord with all his heart. Baker, Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, eds., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel, 2003), 1108.

¹⁶ J. A. Thompson and Elmer A. Martens, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 56.

perhaps gives a glimpse of Abraham's mental wrestling during the long 3-day journey."¹⁷

He sees the author of Hebrews alluding to this when he said

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' Abraham reasoned that God could even raise him from the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. (Heb 11:17-19)¹⁸

While Davidson marvels at the nature of Abraham's faith on the mountain of sacrifice and describes it as astounding when one recalls that he had no precedent of any resurrection on which to base his faith,¹⁹ Luther according to Melissa describes it as God-given faith. It allows him to hold on the promises of God and to have an understanding of resurrection that would not be fully realized until the resurrection of Jesus.²⁰

Luther as Melissa states believes that "It is Abraham's advanced understanding that allows this contradiction of reason to be solved. Abraham understood the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and through it alone he resolved this contradiction which otherwise cannot be resolved without this faith."²¹

This contradiction of reason emanates from the question, how he will return with Isaac after offering him as a burnt offering? Word study shows he spoke by faith expressing his desire based on the promises. Rabbis understood that Abraham trusted that God somehow would save Isaac and fulfil His promises. Perhaps the thought was

¹⁷ Davidson, "Abraham, Akedah and Atonement," 238.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Melissa Buck, "God as Tempter: Luther on Genesis 22," *Logia* 24, no. 1 (2015): 24.

²¹ Ibid.

similar to that of the one expressed in the Scriptures (Hebrews 11:17-19, Gen 21:12, Jam 2: 21).²²

The verbal phrase וְהֵעֲלֵהוּ in Gen 22:2 is built upon a verb, in *hiphil* stem imperative mode masculine singular with a third person masculine singular suffix. Its root is הֵעַל. Its meaning in *hiphil* stem is ‘and bring him up or and offer him.’²³

Abraham has to cause Isaac to be a burnt offering. Some translations use the word ‘sacrifice’ which seems not to be the right translation.²⁴

Baker, explains that,

הֵעַל, *ālāh*: A verb meaning to go up, to ascend, to take away, to lift, to offer. This Hebrew word carries with it the connotation of upward motion. It is used generically to denote an ascension to a higher place (Num. 13:17); a departure in a northerly direction (Gen. 45:25); the flight of a bird (Isa. 40:31); the springing up of plants (Isa. 34:13); the preference of one thing above another (Ps. 137:6); and the offering of a sacrifice (Judg. 6:28; 2 Kgs. 3:20). Theologically significant is the fact that this verb is used in relation to a person’s appearance before God. One must go up to stand before the Lord (Ex. 34:24; Gen. 35:1).²⁵

Abraham understood perhaps from this verbal phrase that he was supposed to appear before God. Hence his use of the הָוָה *hāwāh* which may be explaining how he will appear.

The word הֵעֲלָה, *ōlāh*, in Genesis 22:2, 6 is a noun, feminine, singular, meaning a whole burnt offering that goes up to heaven. It is entirely consumed and goes up in

²² Isaac Kalimi, “The Binding of Isaac in Rabbanic Literature and Thought,” *Review of Rabbanic Judaism* 13, no. 1 (2010): 13–14.

²³ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “Alah,” *A Hebrew English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic, Based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon College, 1952).

²⁴ Richard E. Averbeck, “Olah,” ed. Willem VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 407.

²⁵ Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, eds., “Ālāh,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel, 2003).

the flames of the altar to God expressing the ascent of the soul in worship.²⁶ Averbeck says it means burnt offering. It refers to the ascending of the offering up to the Lord in smoke by means of its incineration on the altar.²⁷ Baker agrees that *ōlāh* is a feminine noun meaning a whole burnt offering, that which goes up. The primary discussion of this offering is found in Leviticus 1; 6: 9, 10.²⁸ The total burning of the sacrifice indicates the total consecration of the presenter to the Lord. The animals that could be offered were bulls, sheep, rams, or male birds (Lev. 1:3, 10, 14).²⁹ This means here that as Isaac would be burnt as an offering on the altar, the offering would ascend to God as smoke.

The word *עֹלָה* *ōlāh* in Genesis 22 as a noun refers to the whole burnt offering. As a verb in *qal* form, it is *עָלָה* and it means to go up, to ascend, to climb. In Gen 22:2 it is in *hiphil* form *וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ* which means to bring up, offer. Abraham is to offer Isaac as a burnt offering fully consumed by fire. As the smoke ascends up from the altar it probably should symbolise the spiritual connection of the worshiper upward to God (Isaiah 66:2-3, Rev 5:8, 8:4).

In this context, *הַוָּאֵה* *hāwāh* could be pointing to the spiritual upward connection of the soul to God expressed or symbolised through the ascent of the smoke of the

²⁶ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “Olah,” *A Hebrew English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic, Based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon College, 1952).

²⁷ According to Averbeck, “It has been suggested that the original term for the burnt offering was Heb. *Kalil* (entire whole complete) which would more naturally be translated “whole offering.” The term *olah* may have been introduced when it became the practise to exclude the skin from the offering. The two words are sometimes used together (1Sam 7:9). It is probably the best to treat the ‘*olah* and *kalil* as complementary terms the former referring to the manner of the offering and the later to the extent of it. The term first occurs in Gen 8:20 when Noah built an altar in a solitary place and sacrificed burnt offerings on it, (cf. Gen 22:2, 3,6,7,8, 13, for the intended offering of Isaac) Averbeck, “Olah,” 407.

²⁸ Baker and Carpenter, “Ālāh.”

²⁹ Ibid.

burnt offering as the worshiper prostrates. In Isaiah 1: 10- 20 and I Samuel 15:22 it is confirmed that God is interested in souls that obey Him more than rituals, sacrifices, feasts and the burnt offering.

Grammatical Analysis

The clause וְהִעָלָהוּ שָׁם, לְעֹלָה *wəhəʾelahu šām lə ʿōlāh* (Gen 22:2), can be translated as; and offer him there for a burnt offering. The word וְהִעָלָהוּ *həʾelahu* meaning offer him, is a verb in *hiphil* form, imperative mode, third person masculine singular, in its *hiphil* form in this clause it means to cause him there to be a whole burnt offering. Abraham is to cause Isaac to become a whole burnt offering, “entirely consumed and goes up in the flames of the altar to God expressing the ascent of the soul in worship”³⁰

Keil notes that “Abraham could not have understood it in any other way than requiring an outward burnt offering, because there was no any other way in which Abraham accomplishes a complete surrendering of Isaac than an actual preparation of the really offering the desired sacrifice.”³¹ Hamilton marvels at the intensity of the test that meant that Isaac was to be fully consumed by fire as a whole burnt offering. “The real test for Abraham is whether he can sacrifice one who can perpetuate the promise of God and through whom his posterity should thrive.”³² Matthew understands that offer him for a burnt offering, involved not only killing the son devoutly but also

³⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “Olah.”

³¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 191.

³² Hamilton notes that “The intensity of the divine test is further demonstrated by the fact that Abraham is instructed to offer Isaac as a whole burnt offering *ʿolah*. Later, Levitical ritual (Lev1) designated this particular offering as the only one to be completely consumed (except for the hide) on the altar and hence the appropriate and normal Geek translation for Heb *ʿolah* is *holokautoma*, holocaust. In all instances of *ʿolah* in Gen 22 (vv3, 6, 7, 8, 13) however the LXX uses *holokarposin*, a rare word in the LXX, appearing again only in Gen 8:20; Lev 9:3; Isa 40:16; 43:23.” Hamilton, “Genesis,” 103.

doing it according to the rules of offering the burnt offerings with all pomp and ceremony.³³

The clause **וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁבַּח אֵלֵיכֶם**, *nelikah ve nishtahaveh venishubah e'laykem* in Gen 22:5 would be translated as, 'we will go and we will worship and we will return back to you.' The word study shows that **נִלְכָה** is a verb in the imperfect tense in the cohortative function,³⁴ first-person plural, so are the other verbs **וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה** and **וְנִשְׁבַּח**. With these grammatical insights, **וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁבַּח אֵלֵיכֶם** as a clause expressing a desire or a wish which is not yet done.³⁵ The speaker seems to be expressing his desire, his intention, his future will, and his feelings. He is expressing his will based on what he has been commanded.

The Meaning of **וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in the Context of Genesis 22:5**

John Adams says "in Hebrew, it is the connection of the whole discourse and not the form of the verb that determines the precise point at issue"³⁶ The Hebrew word **חָוָה** *hāwāh* means to prostrate. The verb is sometimes used in the literal sense of bowing down before a superior; as is in Genesis 43:28. However, when God is the object (whether this is stated or not) the sense is to "praise," "pray to," "worship." In the context of Genesis 22, it denotes the act of prostrating before God coupled with

³³ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 110.

³⁴ Page H. Kelley, *A Handbook to Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 131.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ John Adams, *Sermons in Syntax or Studies in the Hebrew Text: A Book for Preachers and Students* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1908), 37.

offering the burnt offering as expressed in Leviticus 9:24, 2Chronicles 7:1-3, and 2Chronicles 29:27-28.³⁷

While *ḥăwâh* in Gen 22:5 refers to worship, many Hebraic ideas define the activity of worship in the Old Testament. The corresponding verb is *ʿabāḏ* means “serve;” the corresponding noun means “service, adoration.” *Ḥăwâh* is another verb in the liturgical vocabulary that means “prostrate oneself.” The Hebrew terms that are used synonymously for the word worship are verbs that indicate some type of activity. In light of the above insights, it would be prudent to see *ḥăwâh* in Gen 22:5 in the connection with the call to offer Isaac as a burnt offering which is the intended activity.

Peterson asserts that “worship is not defined anywhere in the Bible but key terms are explained in different contexts that clearly indicate that the central concepts are homage, service, and reverence. The Hebrew term translated worship (*ḥăwâh*) literally means more than to bend oneself at the waist or knees. It means prostration. It is regularly translated *proskynein* in the Greek Bible. It later became associated with sacrifice, (Gen 8:20, Job 1:5).”³⁸ It may be from this background that Abraham used it in Gen 22:5.

It has already been noted that Abraham considered this worship to mean making Isaac a burnt offering. He would come back with him after God had resurrected him.³⁹

³⁷ William David Reyburn and Euan McG Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1998), 489.

³⁸ D.G. Peterson, “Worship,” ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 855–856, 855–863.

³⁹ See footnote 60.

The question of Isaac in verse 7 seeks the availability of the lamb for this worship service mentioned by the father in verse 5. The question was provoked by the clarification of the travel by the father. Preus explains that the verb means to “prostrate oneself, to make obeisance. Before Yahweh or in the context of prayer or sacrifice, it simply stands for worship. It involved falling to the ground.”⁴⁰

The Historical and Geographical Background

The book of Genesis traces earth’s history from Creation to the death of Joseph in about 1805 B.C. Genesis has two main parts, both of which are foundational to everything else in the Bible. Its record of Creation and the early history of humanity (1–11) establish the existence, power, and goodness of God. Its record of God’s special dealings with the nation of Israel (12–50) shows his intention to establish and develop a relationship with humanity.⁴¹

Genesis 12: 1-3 places Abraham’s call within a particular geographical area and gives the bases for their movement to the land of Canaan where a nation known as Israel would eventually belong.⁴² Gen 14 gives us the involvement of Abraham in a political rescue of Lot his relative against the 4 kings who invaded the region around Sodom and Gomorrah.⁴³

⁴⁰ H. D. Preus, “Chavah,” ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 249.

⁴¹ Harold L. Willmington, *Willmington’s Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1997).

⁴² Victor Harold Matthews, *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002), 5.

⁴³ Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1991), 135.

When Abraham heard that Eliezer his servant would not be his heir (Gen 15:1-4), he followed a Near East custom and tried to produce the heir through a slave girl Hagar (Gen 16). God was not pleased with this and ordered Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away from him forever (Gen 21: 11-13).⁴⁴ God made a covenant with Abraham through which Abraham's descendants would be a special nation to be used by God to be a blessing to other nations (Gen 15, 17).

Abraham had his dwelling place in Beersheba. He made a covenant there with Abimelech king of the Philistines. Abimelech moved to Beersheba to the home of the patriarch for this purpose (Gen 21: 27, 32). Beersheba means 'well of seven' or well of the oath. It was thirty miles southwest of Hebron, about twenty-five miles away from Gerar. It was the southernmost city of Judah, about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. Although living in Beersheba Abraham used to spend some of his time in Gerar doing business.⁴⁵ He went to Moriah for three days, a distance, which covers twenty, and half hours from Beersheba to Jerusalem. "On the third day, Abraham saw at a distance the place mentioned by God, the land of Moriah which is the mountainous country around Jerusalem."⁴⁶

Wolf adds that Abraham took Isaac to the "region of Moriah" (Gen 22:2). The book of 2 Chronicles 3:1 shows that Mount Moriah was the area of the Temple of Solomon. The people of Israel knew it as the temple mount.

⁴⁴ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 138.

⁴⁵ G. Henton Davies, "Genesis," *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1969), 194–196.

⁴⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 159.

Cultural and Religious Setting

When Abraham came from Egypt, he settled in Canaan where he was in close contact with the people of the land. Sarah his wife could not bear him a child so she gave him Hagar her maid as a concubine. This practice was in harmony with the cultural laws of those days, which accepted that if a man takes a wife and she is not capable of bearing children, and the man takes a concubine, she shall not rank the same with the wife before the man. When Hagar looked with contempt upon Sarah in the prospect of being with a child she acted against the cultural laws (Gen 16: 3-4). Sarah's attitude toward her was in accordance with their social custom.⁴⁷

Wolf observes that

When Abraham learned that his servant Eliezer would not be his heir but that he would have a son of his own (15:4), he followed another Near Eastern custom to produce that heir. Sarah had a slave girl named Hagar and she became a surrogate mother for her mistress. This practised is paralleled by particular sections in the Hammurapi law code as well as by a text from Nuzi. In such instances, the child belonged legally to the main wife and not to the slave girl, and normally neither the child nor the natural mother was sold or sent away. This helps explain why Abraham was upset when God told him to send away Hagar and Ishmael permanently. (Gen 21:11-13)⁴⁸

He further notes that although Ishmael was the oldest son he did not get the inheritance because he was the son of a concubine. The sons of concubines would not have an equal share with the sons of a man's wife (or wives). "Isaac was the only son of Sarah and inherited everything Abraham owned (Gen 25:5). However before Abraham died he "gave gifts to sons of concubines" (Gen 25:6), most likely Ishmael was involved.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ira Maurice Price, Ovid R. Sellers, and Leslie Carlson, *Monuments and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson press, 1958), 157.

⁴⁸ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 139.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Josephus describes Abraham as a worshiper of God and as one who persuaded the people of his time both in Mesopotamia and in Canaan to the knowledge of the true God. All other gods which were worshipped were subservient to Him. He taught his people that there was one God, the One who created the world. He was the first to propagate the knowledge of God. At the command of God, he came from Mesopotamia and lived in Canaan. When he was there he raised an altar and gave sacrifices to his God.⁵⁰

Schrader explains that archaeology has found that child sacrifice was regularly practised in ancient Mesopotamia. Abraham grew up in this culture and could have had it assimilated within him that “this practice is indeed an appropriate way to demonstrate devotion to one's god, whether one of the pagan gods or Abraham's own God of monotheism.”⁵¹

The practice of substituting an animal sacrifice for a required human offering was well known in history. It was well known and carried out among the Babylonians, the Egyptians, Greeks, and the Romans.⁵² Abraham was familiar with the idea that the most exalted form of religious worship was the sacrifice of the first-born. He felt, in common with godly men in every age, that to offer to God cheap sacrifices while we retain for ourselves what is truly precious, is a kind of worship that displays our low estimate of God rather than expresses true devotion.⁵³

⁵⁰ Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus: The Celebrated Jewish Historian* (Philadelphia, PA: John E. Potter, 1895), 56.

⁵¹ E. Malcolm Schrader, “The Akedah Test: What Passes and What Fails,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2004): 255–256.

⁵² Price, Sellers, and Carlson, *Monuments and the Old Testament*, 158.

⁵³ Sailhamer, “Genesis.”

Although Abraham might have known about such a religious practice carried out by his contemporary community, he himself had never been required to do it. Genesis 22 is his first encounter.

Marcus correctly insists that Abraham was familiar with the idea that the most exalted form of religious worship was the sacrifice of the first-born. He felt, in common with godly men in every age, that to offer to God cheap a sacrifice while we retain for ourselves what is truly precious is showing a poor consideration of who God is. While heathens valued their gods so high that they sacrificed their children, Abraham was to express a kind of worship that esteems God high.⁵⁴

Abraham was a worshiper of God amid people of other beliefs. He was aware of sacrifices as a way of honouring God. This was evidenced by altars that he raised in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:18). He had never been required by God to offer a human sacrifice although the practice was done by the people of other nations around him as a way of worshipping their gods.

Knox explains “Abraham dwelt among idolaters. To them, human sacrifice was a common act of worship. The greatest evidence of their religious devotion to their idols was the sacrifice of human life to appease them. The highest sacrifice of all was shown when a father sacrificed his son.”⁵⁵

The Audience

After a long period in captivity, the Israelites needed to be reminded of their beginning as a nation. “They needed an accurate account of the promises which God had made to their fathers. Hence the immediate purpose of the author is to remind the

⁵⁴ Dods, *The Book of Genesis*, 200.

⁵⁵ Knox, *Bible Lessons for Schools: The Acts of the Apostles*, 69.

Israelites that God had promised to deliver them from bondage in Egypt (Gen 15:16; 46:4).”⁵⁶

When reading the book of Genesis and other books of the Torah one has to take note of the historical audience it address. One must distinguish between the “audience *in* the Torah and audience *of* the Torah.” The interpreter should concentrate on the audience of the Torah and give an interpretation based on that context.⁵⁷

Sailhamer points out that the book of Genesis together with the other books of the Torah was not given to the people of Israel. It was written to Israel to tell the story of “primaeval history (Gen 1-11) and the story of the patriarchs (Gen 12-50).”⁵⁸

Wolf acknowledges that Moses wrote the book of Genesis to Israelites because it was important for them to know how they came to Egypt and why they have been there for such a long time (Gen 15:13-14). Genesis also tells Israel about the land of Canaan, which she was about to enter, and the origins of surrounding nations (Gen 12, 19:36-38, 36:1, 12; 25:12).⁵⁹

White notes that the Bible was written by men 1600 years before Christ, beginning with Moses and finishing with John.⁶⁰ Christ and the gospel writers

⁵⁶ James E. Smith, “Test of Abraham (Gen 22:1-10),” *The Pentateuch* (New York, NY: College Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 25.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁹ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 98.

⁶⁰ White, “During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations. The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.,Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), v.

accepted that the law was written by Moses (Mark 10:3; Luke 24:27; John 1:17).⁶¹ Moses wrote it while the Israelites were still in captivity in Egypt. The book of Genesis was written over a thousand years before Christ while the Hebrews were in bondage in Egypt.⁶²

The Literary Structure

The book of Genesis as the first book of the Torah stands as an introduction to the entire Bible. The opening of the first verse of Genesis, “In the beginning, God created,” אֶרֶב מִיְהִיָּא attests to this. “Genesis is a transliteration of the Greek word *geneseos*, the Greek word that translates the Hebrew *toledot*. This Hebrew word is the keyword in identifying the structure of Genesis, and translators have usually rendered it as ‘account’ or ‘generations’ (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2).”⁶³

The historical narratives in Genesis are put in ten divisions; all with the heading ‘these are the generations.’ These divisions consist of *toledoth*, which refers to generations. The book of Genesis is, therefore, the book of generations.⁶⁴ The unifying element in the book of Genesis is the expression, ‘*eleh toledoth* translated as ‘these are the generations of.’ This expression is often followed by the name of a male ancestor and his descendants.⁶⁵

⁶¹ J. Vernon McGee, “Authorship,” *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991).

⁶² Francis D. Nichol, “Historical Setting [Genesis],” *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978), 203.

⁶³ Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, The Promised Offspring, and The Toledot Structure of Genesis,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 2 (2013): 219–247; Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 94.

⁶⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 20.

⁶⁵ Reyburn and Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*.

As opposed to the Graf-Wellhausen contention that writing was unknown during the time of Moses, numerous archaeological discoveries have demonstrated that several literary means of communication were available in the Mosaic age.⁶⁶

Wolf well puts the structure of Genesis in two parts as follows,

1. Part 1: The origin of all things;
 - a. Introduction and creation 1:1- 2:3,
 - b. The account of the Heaven and the Earth 2: 4- 426,
 - c. The account of Adam 5:1-6:8,
 - d. The account of Noah 6:9-9:28,
 - e. The account of Shem, Ham and Japhet 10:1-11:9,
 - f. The account of Shem (chosen) 11:10-26.
2. Part 2: The history of the people;
 - a. The account of Terah (Abraham) 11:27-25:11,
 - b. The account of Ishmael (not chosen) 25:12-18,
 - c. The account of Isaac (chosen) 25:19-3529,
 - d. The account Esau (not chosen) 36: 1-43,
 - e. The account of Jacob (chosen) 37: 2-50: 26.⁶⁷

The first section (chapters 1-11) deals with the beginnings of the heaven and the Earth, the creation of man, the fall of Adam and the fast growth of sin. After which comes the destruction of the earth by the flood, the repopulation of the earth by the sons of Noah and their descendants. The second section (chapters 12-50) deals

⁶⁶ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Genesis," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 437–438.

⁶⁷ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 95.

with Abraham and his descendants. Abraham was called by God out of his country to the land of Canaan for a new beginning.⁶⁸

God promises to make a nation through Abraham by which all the people of the Earth will be blessed (Gen 12:3). This becomes bases of the covenant God that forms with Abraham (Gen 15, 17, and 22: 11-18), confirmed to Isaac (26:4) and Jacob (28:3, 14 and 35:11). Although Egypt (12:10-20; 41:41, 57; 46:3, and Mesopotamia (28-31) plays an important role to their history they have Canaan the promised land (Gen 17:8, 46:3) as their home.⁶⁹

Longman and Dillard comment that the book of Genesis beginning from chapter 12 to chapter 50 is in what is “called patriarchal narrative.” The author’s style of writing intends to show to the reader that he is dealing with the events of history. The narrative conveys information about the past.⁷⁰

Longman 111 insists that the patriarchal narrative changes style in (Genesis 11:36-50) from a fast moving pace to a slow down narrative. It now focuses on God creating a family that will be obedient to Him, and be used to bless the world.⁷¹ He

⁶⁸ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 95.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Longman, we must emphasis that we are describing the intent of the book as far as it can be discerned from the text itself. It is possible that a book intends to be historical but fails to do so successfully. Never the less a long tradition of scholarship in both Jewish and Christian circles supports the view that the narrative intends to impart information about the events and characters of the past. Of course Genesis like any biblical history writing may be described as theological history. Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 54.

⁷¹ Longman, “The middle section of the book of (Genesis 11: 27- 36:43) turns its attention to the patriarchs so called because they are the fathers of the nation of Israel. The style of the boo the changes at this point so that rather than flowing the story of all the world and moving at a fast pace the narrative slows down and focus on creating a people to obey him and to bring those blessings to the whole world(12:1-3). God now determines to restore the blessing lost at Eden by reaching the world through the descendants of one individual, Abraham. That blessing requires Abraham and Sarah to have children and this sets up much drama of his story. Isaac is not highly developed character in the book of Genesis although he near sacrifice in Gen 22 is certainly a matter of great interest.” Tremper Longman III, ed., “Genesis,” *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Genesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 651.

further notes that the book was written in Hebrew prose of high literary style. Words are carefully chosen not only to bring out the message of the book but to capture the reader's interest and attention.⁷²

This could be rightly ascribed to the passage under discussion because its style really draws the attention of the reader and raises curiosity. It compels the reader to ask questions. Though Genesis 22:1-10, is a highly narrative passage it contains some dialogue and some commands. Wenham posits that "The account of the sacrifice of Isaac constitutes the aesthetic and theological summit of the whole story of Abraham. It has long been admired for the brilliance of its narrative technique and for the profundity of its theology, which has inspired so much reflection by Jews and Christian."⁷³

The language of command to sacrifice Isaac in chapter 22 is similar to the command to come out of his people in chapter 12. These similarities show that the stories of Abraham were not drama but real-life situations. The narratives of Genesis especially those of Abraham have a combination of promises and commands between God and the Patriarch. A careful reading shows these talks not as a casual repetition but as statements of promises increasing in their scope and validity. The last statement of promise to Abraham comes after he demonstrated his obedience to the command of God in chapter 22.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., 652.

⁷³ Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*, 2:99.

⁷⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 39–40.

Biblical Context

In trying to discover why Abraham used the word worship in his speech in Gen 22:5 we are in this section going to study Old and New Testament passages in which burnt offering *ōlāh* and worship *ḥāwâh* are collocated. This section will, however, look also at what the Extra-Biblical Literature has to say on the same issue.

The Collocation of *Ōlāh* and *Ḥāwâh* in the Old Testament

The collocation of *ōlāh* and *ḥāwâh* in the book of Job is noted in chapter 1 verse 5 where *ōlāh* is the word used to show what kind of an offering Job would often offer on behalf of his children. By this act, Reuben suggests that Job sanctified his children “by offering up as many expiatory burnt offerings as he had sons (Lev 1:4).” The burnt offering, in the patriarchal period, “was offered (literally, “caused to ascend,” referring to the smoke ascending to heaven) by each father of a family officiating as a priest in behalf of his household.”⁷⁵

The idea that by burnt offerings Job was doing ritual cleansing is explained by Reyburn, with the reason that his children would not be prevented from taking part in worship after this ceremonial act.⁷⁶ Driver views Job as one who lived in the times of the Patriarchs was the head of the family. He acted in the manner of the Patriarchs when he offered burnt offerings (Gen. 8:20, 22:2, 7, 13, 31:54) in accordance with early custom for an expiatory purpose.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary On the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Delmarva, DE: Zondervan, 2013).

⁷⁶ William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1992), 35.

⁷⁷ Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, “Job 1:8,” *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1997).

The word *ḥăwâh* appears later in verse 20 expressing an act of reverential obeisance or worship. Job is confessing in the presence of the messengers his entire dependence on God, and his acquiescence in His dealings with Him.⁷⁸

The second collocation of *ôlâh* and *ḥăwâh* considered is in 2 Chronicles 7:1,

3. Jameson proposes that every act of worship was accompanied by a sacrifice.

The supernatural fire that consumed the burnt offering was a sign of divine acceptance of the dedication prayer of Solomon. The cloud was a symbol of the presence of God. When Israel saw the fire coming down from heaven upon the burnt offering and the indication of the divine presence they responded to this phenomenon by bowing in worship.⁷⁹

Jameson further explains that,

This form of prostration (that of lying on one's knees with the forehead touching the earth), is the manner in which the Hebrews, and Orientals in general, express the most profound sentiments of reverence and humility. The courts of the temple were densely crowded on the occasion, and the immense multitude threw themselves on the ground. What led the Israelites suddenly to assume that prostrate attitude on the occasion referred to, was the spectacle of the symbolical cloud slowly and majestically descending upon the temple, and then entering it.⁸⁰

Keil and Delitzsch add that at the end of the dedicatory prayer of Solomon the congregation bowed themselves with their faces down in worship when they saw the fire from heaven devouring the burnt-offering and the glory of God descending and filling the house.⁸¹

Thompson agrees to the fact that the reason, why the people worshiped in prostration, is that they saw the fire coming down from heaven consuming the burnt

⁷⁸ Driver and Gray, "Job 1:8."

⁷⁹ Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, "2 Chronicles 7:1-3," *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Scranton, PA: S.S. Scranton, 1997).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "2 Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1891), 595.

offering and the glory of the Lord above the temple. This assured the whole congregation that God had consecrated the temple as a place of sacrifice and prayer.⁸²

McGee suggests that it is the presentation of His sacrifice that actually made the dedication of the Temple acceptable. Fire comes down from heaven and consumes the offering. The glory of God fills the house.⁸³ Willington sees the coming down of the fire as a sign of Gods acceptance of the Temple. The people responded with worship and a sense of awe.⁸⁴

We can here conclude that the offering of the burnt offering and the worship experience are two distinct acts. Bowing down with faces on the ground and offering whole burnt offerings were both acts of worship. Offering burnt offering was an act of worship that preceded the coming of the glory of God upon the house and the bowing down of the people in worship. In the case of Abraham in Gen 22, this would mean that while the fire consumed the burnt offering Abraham would have bowed himself down in worship. This fits well if this Temple of Solomon was built on Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham was commanded to make the burnt offering (2 Chr 3:1).

The other Old Testament text considered in the use of *ōlāh* and *ḥāwāh* is Ezekiel 46: 2. Describing the offerings given by the prince, Zimmerli posits that they consisted of עולה (“burnt offerings”) and שלמים (“final offerings”).⁸⁵ Allen asserts that these weekly and monthly rites are presented as an ever-flowing stream of

⁸² J. A. Thompson, “2 Chronicles” (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1994), 234.

⁸³ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Genesis-Deuteronomy*, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1981), 417–418.

⁸⁴ Willington, *Willington’s Bible Handbook*, 252.

⁸⁵ W. Zimmerli, F. M. Cross, and K. Baltzer, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, ed. Paul D. Hanson and Leonard Jay Greenspoon, trans. James D. Martin (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 490.

worship that consisted of sacrifice, body language (46:3, 9) and sacrificial meals (44:3; cf. 46:23, 24).⁸⁶ The prince was to enter this inner east gate and to stand there and worship upon the threshold while his sacrifice was being prepared and offered by the priest.

Besides the burnt offering the prince was to offer a peace offering. The prince's peace offering is an extraordinary sacrifice, which he offered spontaneously. It had long been the custom for an individual worshipper to make an offering of this kind, (Am. 4:5), and it is regulated by the later codes, Dt. 12:6, 17.⁸⁷ Michael Coogan's translation of Deut 12: 4, 6 has "you shall not worship the Lord your God in such ways. But you shall go there, bringing there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations."⁸⁸

Jamieson explains that,

The prince is to go through the east gate without (open on the Sabbath only, to mark its peculiar sanctity) to the entrance of the gate of the inner court; he is to go no further, but "stand by the post" (compare 1 Kgs 8:14, 22, Solomon standing before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the congregation; also 2 Kgs 11:14; 23:3, "by a pillar": the customary place), the court within belonging exclusively to the priests. There, as representative of the people, in a peculiarly near relation to God, he is to present his offerings to Jehovah, while at a greater distance, the people are to stand worshipping at the outer gate of the same entrance. The offerings on Sabbaths are larger than those of the Mosaic law, to imply that the worship of God is to be conducted by the prince and people in a more munificent spirit of self-sacrificing liberality than formerly.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Leslie C. Allen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ezekiel 20-48* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 2002), 269.

⁸⁷ George Albert Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 510.

⁸⁸ Michael Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1962), 270.

⁸⁹ Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, "Ezekiel 46:2," *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Scranton, PA: S.S. Scranton, 1997).

The Prince was the worship leader on these occasions. On Sabbath days the Prince offered seven animals as burnt offerings accompanied by appropriate cereal offerings. These offerings expressed thanksgiving for the past week and its blessings. Similarly, on the new moon, the Prince provided a series of burnt, cereal, and oil offerings.⁹⁰ The prince stood there worshipping by the posts of the gate, while his burnt offerings and his peace offerings were being prepared by the priests, who, rather than the prince, were the proper ministers for conducting the sacrificial ceremony.⁹¹

Commenting on verse 3, Spence shows that as the prince, the people of the land were to worship at the door of the inner gate but standing at a different place from the prince. This was to happen on the same occasion in the Sabbath or the new moon.⁹² They were to worship at the entrance of the gate. “They could not enter the gate structure as could the prince but were obliged to stay at the entrance.

This was probably the post at the inner or western end of the gate structure. From his point, the prince could watch the priests prepare the offering, but he was not allowed to enter the inner court or to assist in offering the sacrifices.”⁹³ The entrance is the site of worship to the prince, as the priest presents his burnt offering symbolising his personal dedication. After worship that he would depart from that gate which should remain open until evening.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ James E. Smith, “Eze 46:1-18,” *The Major Prophets* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1992).

⁹¹ J. F. Montgomery et al., “Ezekiel,” ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2004), 429.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Burnt Offering and Worship [Ezek 46: 2],” *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2001).

⁹⁴ Thomas Constable, “Burnt Offerings (Ezekiel 46:2),” *Thomas Constable’s Notes on the Bible: Isaiah-Daniel* (Toronto, Canada: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2003).

Pfeiffer suggests that while the people and the prince were worshipping at a different position, they both were to see the process of burnt offerings conducted by the priests. The prince would provide a burnt offering to the priest who was obligated to prepare it as he worshipped at the gate.⁹⁵ Considering Ezekiel 46 MacArthur comments that the testimony of the Old Testament is that to remove the burnt offering is to abolish public worship (Dan 8:11).⁹⁶

The collocation of *ōlāh* and *ḥāwāh* in 2 Chronicles 29:27-29 has relevance to the issue under study. In this text king, Hezekiah commanded the offering of burnt offerings, which resulted in both the congregation and the king bowing in worship.

According to Keil and Delitzsch, it is acceptable that during the offering of the burnt offering until it was ended, the whole congregation was worshipping.⁹⁷ Curtis and Madsen's elaboration shows that the worship that happened concurrently with the offering of the burnt offering included the songs of the Levites and blowing of trumpets and use of stringed musical instruments.⁹⁸ The occasion was solemn and grand. Hezekiah had fulfilled his covenant, and worship of the true God in the manner he had prescribed resumed.⁹⁹

Carson comments that "the worshippers' praises took place simultaneously with the burnt offering (27). After that, the whole assembly brought its offering vv30-

⁹⁵ Charles F. Pfeiffer, ed., "Ezekiel 46:1," *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1962).

⁹⁶ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 943.

⁹⁷ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 3 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1891), 682.

⁹⁸ Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 468.

⁹⁹ J. A. Thompson, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Chronicles*, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 348.

31.”¹⁰⁰ Tom Constable acknowledges correctly that the king, “first offered a sin offering to atone for the guilt of Judah (v. 21). Then he sacrificed burnt offerings of worship (v. 27) and led the people in worship (v. 29), joyful singing (v. 30), and willing sacrificial giving (v. 31). All the people of Judah who revered Yahweh rejoiced over the king’s re-establishment of the temple services (vv. 35–36).”¹⁰¹

Barton and Muddiman agree correctly that after the temple was made worth for worship through sacrifice, Hezekiah commanded the offering of burnt offerings from the congregation and they responded well. When these offering began the songs began and the assembly and the king worshipped God until the burnt offering was finished.¹⁰²

Spence Jones describes this worship which happened while the whole burnt offering was burning on the Altar as the worship that involved the body posture and the consecration of the mind, elevating the spiritual level of the people to a high degree. This worship rendered profound respect, reverence, adoration, allegiance to God who is God over all, blessed for evermore.¹⁰³ This kind of worship which involved prayers, music and sacrifice was anciently carried out in the Temple court. The divine presence was thought to abide inside the Temple.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ D. A. Carson, “Burnt Offering and Worship (2Chronicles 29: 27-31),” *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

¹⁰¹ J. A. Thompson, “2 Chronicles 29:1” (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1994).

¹⁰² John Barton and John Muddiman, eds., “Burnt Offering (2 Chronicles 29:27-31),” *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁰³ W Clarkson and T. Whitelaw, “Exposition of 2 Chronicles,” ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2004), 347.

¹⁰⁴ V. H. Matthews, M. W. Chavalas, and J. H. Walton, “2 Chronicles 29: 30,” *The InterVarsity Press Bible Background Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000).

The relationship of the burnt offering and worship revealed here is that burnt offerings were the first part of worship service. In agreement with that Keil et al note that at the end of the sacrificial act “the king and all who were with him knelt down and worshipped.”¹⁰⁵ It could be then concluded that worship began at the beginning of offering of burnt offering and ended at the completion of the burnt offering. Priests were handling the ritual and Levites were assisting them in the service.¹⁰⁶

This helps to see that burnt offerings have been often regarded as a major part of the worship of God. From the above texts, it could be concluded that burnt offerings preceded all other ceremonies involved in worship. This could be the reason why Abraham spoke of going to worship when called to offer Isaac (Gen 22:2-5).

In the Old Testament times, the centre of worship was on offering sacrifices. It changed to become less on sacrifices and more on preaching after the Babylonian captivity. Early in the Old Testament times when people went to worship before God they often had gifts and offerings. They were not supposed to appear before God empty (Deut 16: 16, 17).

The Collocation of *λατρεύω latreúō* and *όλοκαύτωμα Holokaútōma* in the New Testament

The Greek New Testament text collocate *λατρεύω latreúō* and *όλοκαύτωμα holokaútōma* in Hebrews 10: 2 and 6.¹⁰⁷ *λατρεύω* in Hebrews 10: 2 is a verb, participle, present tense, active mood, whose root is *λατρεύω latreúō* and it means the

¹⁰⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 3:682.

¹⁰⁶ James E. Smith, “Burnt Offering (2 Chronicles 29:20-36),” *The Books of History: Old Testament Survey* (New York, NY: College Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁷ Maurice A. Robinson, Fenton John Anthony Hort, and Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Greek New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1994).

ones worshipping. “It means more precisely to serve or worship cultically, especially by sacrifice.”¹⁰⁸

Spiros Zodhiates, suggests that,

It refers particularly to the performing of the Levitical service (Heb. 8:5; 9:9; 10:2; 13:10); of the celestial temple (Rev. 7:15). Generally to offer sacrifice, to worship (Heb. 9:9; 10:2 [cf. Septuagint: Ex. 3:12; 7:16]). Allied to *láttris*, a hired servant as opposed to *doúlos* (1401), a bond slave. Therefore, to serve or worship but not out of compulsion. *Latreúō* originally meant to work for reward, to serve. The meanings of service and worship are intertwined. It occurs some 90 times in the Septuagint and 21 times in the New Testament, 8 of which are in Luke and Acts with its syn. *douleúō* (1398), to work, serve.¹⁰⁹

The Greek word *όλοκαυτώματα* in Hebrews 10:6 is a noun, plural whose root is *όλοκαύτωμα holokaútōma* meaning to burn the whole. A whole burnt offering indicating that the whole victim was burned. Generally, in the New Testament, it means a burnt offering (Mark 12:33; Heb. 10:6, 8). The occasions of this sacrifice were primarily connected with collective worship since the sacrifice constituted the chief element in worship (Lev 1).¹¹⁰

Zodhiates further explains that,

The purpose of the burnt offering may be understood from its use as the constant element in the organized worship of the community. It was not connected with any particular form of transgression but was appropriate as the means of approach to God by the people, collectively or individually, who was sensitive to God’s majesty and holiness and their standing in His sight. The effects are described from three points of view—that it is a “savour” or acceptable to God (Lev. 1:9), that it surrounds the worshiper with a “covering” (Lev. 1:4), and that it cleanses from ceremonial impurity (Lev. 14:20).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ronald Pitkin, “Λατρεύω,” ed. G. Kittel and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 60.

¹⁰⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., “Λατρεύω,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel, 1992); George W. Reid, “Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship” (Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999), 7.

¹¹⁰ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., “Όλοκαύτωμα,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel, 1992).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Wiersbe observes that Hebrews 10:2, 6 shows that in as much as the animal sacrifices were offered they were not able to purge the worshipers from the consciousness of sins. Hence they needed to continuously offer burnt offerings in which God had no pleasure in (10:6).¹¹² If worshipers needed to offer a burnt offering as a way purging themselves, then burnt offerings were a major part of their worship services. This presupposes a relationship between worship and burnt offerings which the worshipers were aware of.

H.W. Attridge and Koester add that such burnt offerings served only to remind the worshiper about sin all the time. The complete purification of the worshiper would be in the death of Christ typified by these burnt offerings and sacrifices. In verse 10, the triumph of the worshiper is not in the blood of animals but in the offering of the body of Christ as a sacrifice.¹¹³

He further adds that,

As in that context, those affected by the burnt offerings are the “worshipers” (τοὺς λατρεύοντας), not simply the priests, but all those who, in the words of the previous verse, “draw near.” These worshipers would not have had a bad conscience if they had been truly “cleansed” (κεκαθαρισμένους). But the purity that their multiple burnt offerings effected was only skin-deep (9:13). Hence, they really were not cleansed “once” (ἅπαξ). The adverb no doubt has a pregnant sense, recalling the emphatic contrast of one and many in the previous paragraph (9:25–28), and contrasting the situation of the old worshipers with the new. It is for them who were “once” enlightened (6:4) and cleansed in conscience (10:22) that the unique, “once-for-all” sacrifice of the new covenant is effective (10:10).¹¹⁴

The burnt offerings were of temporary, instructional value, and were never designed to perfect the worshiper. They needed to be repeated until the time that the

¹¹² Warren W. Wiersbe, “Burnt Offering (Hebrews 10: 1),” *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1996).

¹¹³ Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews: Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 269.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 272.

reality arrived in the one sacrifice of Christ once for all.¹¹⁵ Burnt offerings were always associated with worship. They were an important part of the worshipping exercise as they presupposed the purging of the worshipper's conscience.

The Collocation of Burnt Offering and Worship in Extra-Biblical Literature

In this section, we discuss the collocation of the burnt offerings and worship in the Extra-Biblical sources. We compare it with Bible passages to check if there is a variance.

The book of Jubilee 18: 4, 5 says,

And he came to a well of water, and he said to his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad shall go (yonder), and when we have worshipped we shall come again to you. 5 And he took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife, and they went both of them together to that place.¹¹⁶

The book of Jubilees like Biblical passages locates worship and burnt offering in companion implying the important role played by burnt offerings in the whole worship exercise. The actual activities may be interrelated as well.

Judith 16:18 says, “now as soon as they entered into Jerusalem, they worshipped the Lord and as soon as the people were purified they offered their burnt offerings and their free offerings and their gifts.”¹¹⁷

Commenting on Judith 16:18 Bullard and Hutton correctly observe that the early worshipers worshipped God by presenting their burnt offerings, their freewill offerings, and their gifts: Lev 22.18 is a convenient reference to ensure consistency in

¹¹⁵ Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Continual [Heb 10:1],” *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2001), 459.

¹¹⁶ R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament: Apocrypha* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1913), 40.

¹¹⁷ Derek Shaver, ed., *Apocrypha: King James Version* (Los Angeles, CA: Enhanced Media, 2017), 137.

the terms assigned to burnt offerings and freewill offerings. Burnt offerings refer to the offerings of animals that were burned completely on the altar as a fulfilment of a promise. Freewill offerings were offered to God voluntarily, so one may render this “offerings given to God voluntarily” or “animals offered to God voluntarily [or, from the heart].”¹¹⁸

1 Maccabees 4:44, this text according to Barton and Muddiman describe the altar of burnt offerings as the most sacred object in Temple. This description of the altar could mean that the Jews during this period had a high regard for burnt offerings. They would guard against the pollution of this useful object for worship. Once polluted it would be replaced or purified.¹¹⁹

In 1 Maccabees 4: 54, 55, 56 we read,

And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. 54: Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals. 55: Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success. 56: And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise.¹²⁰

The text seems to show that burnt offering was part of their worship as they celebrated the dedication and purification of the altar and the Temple in appreciation for the deliverance granted to them by God.

The purification and dedication of the temple required the renewal of burnt offering given as daily sacrifices as was done in the dedication of the temple of

¹¹⁸ Roger A. Bullard and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Tobit and Judith* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 2001), 513.

¹¹⁹ John Barton and John Muddiman, eds., “Burnt Offering (1 Maccabees),” *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹²⁰ R. H. Charles, “1Maccabees,” *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament: Apocrypha* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1913), 81.

Solomon (1 Kgs 8:65); as was Hezekiah's sanctification of the Temple (2 Chr 7:9). In these worship services, songs and music had an integral part.¹²¹

Herny Morisada on his work on the origins of the book of Enoch and Qumran source explains that the Qumran community only allowed the burnt offering of the Sabbath to be performed on that day because the times of worship have been commanded by God. Failure to worship at God's appointed times violates God's Torah.¹²²

In Azariah 1:10, 15 we read, "And now we cannot open our mouths, we are become a shame and reproach to thy servants; and to them that worship thee reads, 15: Neither is there at this time prince or prophet, or leader, or burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before thee, and to find mercy."¹²³

The narrator brings out the impact caused by the lawless nations upon their worship. It is revealed that the lawless nations have brought shame and reproach upon the servants of God and those that worship Him. There was not even burnt offering for them to offer before God and find mercy. They seek to be accepted before the Lord as they come without burnt offerings but with contrite hearts.¹²⁴

The Extra-Biblical Literature texts somehow bring out burnt offering juxtaposed to worship. This offering was often part of the worship service practice by

¹²¹ Barton and Muddiman, "Burnt Offering (1 Maccabees)."

¹²² W. Henry and Morisada Rietz, *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 113.

¹²³ Shaver, *Apocrypha: King James Version*.

¹²⁴ Charles, "1 Maccabees," 81.

believers in earlier times. This is shown in about five texts of the Extra Bible Literature.

Theological Context

This passage carries issues of the old covenant, which were figures of things to come. The antitypical burnt offering of the new covenant is Christ our saviour. The words worship both in the Old and New Testaments is sometimes used in association with burnt offerings, more so in the Old Testament.

Mount Moriah is where Abraham took Isaac (v.2). the record of 2 Chronicles 3:1 shows Mount Moriah as the site of the temple of Solomon and was known throughout the kingdom as the temple mount. It was at this same place where Solomon and other later generations offered countless sacrifices. After the Babylonian captivity, the temple was built at this same place. Abraham had met with Melchizedek, at this very area if Salem and Jerusalem are to be identified together (Gen 14: 18).¹²⁵

Sullivan declares that “in Abraham's son Isaac a figure of the Son of God. Carrying the wood for the sacrifice, Isaac obeyed his father and was restored to life. Like Jesus, Isaac was ‘obedient even unto death,’ and so he was able to triumph over death.”¹²⁶

After looking at in the above section, (Gen 22: 5, 2 Chr, 7: 27-30, 2 Chr 29:2-3, Ezek 46), one can agree with Bruce Satterfield that “worship often includes actions, but true worship always involves a particular attitude of mind. The attitude of worship

¹²⁵ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 141.

¹²⁶ Kathryn Sullivan, “The Book of Genesis,” *Worship* 30, no. 2 (1956): 132, 127–136.

evokes the deepest feelings of allegiance, adoration, and awe. Worship combines love and reverence in a state of devotion that draws our spirits closer to God.”¹²⁷

Worship and offerings are inherently connected. The practical service of offering burnt offerings is a visual expression of the inward attitude of worship displayed outwardly in physical worship.

Nakari agrees that “The origin of worship in the Old Testament may be fear of God, love of God, or service to God, or all three of them; and worship was often accompanied by sacrifice,”¹²⁸ Reid observes that, “with Ezra’s reorganization following the exile, the centre of worship became less on sacrifice and more the study of the Scriptures, particularly Torah.”¹²⁹

Biblical worship has often been accompanied with some offering whose acceptance is based on the merits of Christ. Geig Price correctly agrees that,

True worship is only and ever acceptable before God on the basis of the finished work of Christ. Even when we come to the Lord bringing to Him what He has authorized in His Word with hearts filled with thankful praise and passionate faith, our offerings are yet contaminated with the remnants of sin. We can never offer to God a perfect act of worship that He would receive on the merits of our own righteousness. Our obedient worship, offered with sincere faith is only acceptable unto God for the sake of a perfect Redeemer who makes intercession for us without ceasing. You are acceptable before God only because you are in Christ, and all your lawful worship is acceptable before God only because you are in Christ.¹³⁰

In describing Christ as the Lamb of God offered once for the redemption of all people Saya Lee says,

The meaning of burnt offering frequently appears in relation to ministry with Jesus Christ. We were given the redemption by the precious blood of Christ,

¹²⁷ Bruce Satterfield, “The Law of Worship and the Law of Sacrifice,” *Department of Religious Education, Brigham Young University* 14, no. 2 (1997): 14–16.

¹²⁸ Toyozo W. Nakarai, “Worship in the Old Testament,” *The Encounter* 34 (1973): 286.

¹²⁹ Reid, “Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship,” 6.

¹³⁰ Greg L. Price, *Foundation for Reformation: The Regulative Principle of Worship* (Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1995).

the spotless and spotless lamb (1 Pet 1:18-19). Christ gave himself to God as a fragrant offering and sacrifice for us (Eph 5:2) and, on behalf of the burnt offering, gave eternal sacrifice and sits at the right hand of God (Heb 10:11-12). The authors of the New Testament interpret the burnt offering of the Old Testament Christological. Jesus Christ is a better-burnt offering than the burnt offering of the Old Testament. We do not need to repeat it like the burnt offerings of the Old Testament because Jesus Christ once offered his body at once so that the Son of God might sacrifice himself, the more honourable sacrifice of animals.¹³¹

In Leviticus 1 God draws close to his people in a cloud. His people should know how to draw near him in worship. The burnt offering appears to be the first offering describe with its detail by God. Jeffrey Brett says this is because “burnt offering is the basis of all the other offerings. It is a picture of the greatness of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as being able to carry out the will of God perfectly, that God may be glorified and the man brought into a blessing as a worshipper.”¹³²

The burnt offering was the most representative ceremony of the Old Testament. It conveyed some important ideas to the modern church. It was a popular and more personal way of worship in the Old Testament. The worshiper’s full devotion to God was expressed through burnt offerings. Through burnt offerings, the worshiper surrendered his life and future to God. The worshiper’s entire life represented by the burnt offering was entirely dedicated to God.¹³³

The worshiper brings the burnt offering as a symbol of acceptance before God. It was based on the completeness of the Life and sacrifice of Lord Jesus our Saviour. God starts with the burnt offering, as it is the basis of all the other offerings. It is a shadow of the body of Christ (Col 2:17). Christ is able to carry out the will of God on

¹³¹ Saya Lee, “A Reconsideration of the Theological Significance and Application of the Burnt Offering,” *International Journal of Information Research and Review* 5, no. 4 (2018): 5420–5422.

¹³² Jeffrey Brett, “The Burnt Offerings Accepted in Christ,” *Voluntary Offering: An introduction to the voluntary offerings of Leviticus 1,2 and 3 and their typical teaching* (2007): 4.

¹³³ Ibid.

behalf of a man perfectly “that God may be glorified and the man brought into a blessing as a worshipper.”¹³⁴ This makes the worshiper appreciate the doctrine of salvation through Christ.

In Romans 8: 32 Paul gives an allusion of the Gen 22 experience, showing that God like Abraham did not spare his Son he delivered Him up for all of us. Worship has to do with the man approaching God. Abraham seems to have understood this as he advanced with his son to the place of burnt offerings by faith (Heb 11:17-19). In John 8:36 Christ testifies that Abraham saw his day and was glad.

In the same manner, Stuart and Loyld suggest without being conclusive that typologically, “we may see in Isaac a type of the suffering Son of God who willingly submitted Himself unreservedly to the Father’s will. In Abraham, we have a poignant picture of the Father who ‘did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all’” (Rom. 8:32).¹³⁵

Wolf agrees that there is a clear parallel between Isaac and Jesus. In the story of Abraham offering his only son, the plan of salvation is demonstrated. Godlike Abraham did not spare His Son but he gave him for us (Rom 8:32). As Abraham experience pain as he ascended mount Moriah, we somehow get a glimpse of what went in the heart of God as Christ ascended Mount Calvary.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Brett, “The Burnt Offerings Accepted in Christ.”

¹³⁵ Stuart,” While it is clear that typology is part of revelation and therefore that the interpretation of types is a valid means of communicating the truth, we should be careful not to be too exuberant in our perceptions of types or too creative in our interpretations thereof. With that in mind we may see in Isaac a type of the Suffering Son who willingly submitted Himself unreservedly to the Father’s will. In Abraham we have a poignant picture of the Father who “did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32) and in the ram a type of the Lamb who died as a substitute for the sins of the world.” Stuart Briscoe and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The The Preacher’s Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 187.

¹³⁶ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 140.

White acknowledges that Abraham's faith was manifested by his works, citing James 2:21, 22 which agrees to the fact. In Genesis 26:5 Abraham is portrayed as a man who obeyed God's voice. True faith will manifest itself in obedience.¹³⁷

He probably was aware that burnt offering was figurative means of drawing closer to God in worship (John 14:6). When the worshiper has a full comprehension of whom God is, obedience becomes easy. It does not become difficult to honour, revere, worship, and give to Him. The God who gave Abraham Isaac must be worshipped even if it means through the offering of the same Isaac as a burnt offering.

In Matthew 2:11 seems to show that even during the times of Christ offerings were still considered as part of worship. White acknowledges that,

The magi had been among the first to welcome the Redeemer. Their gift was the first that was laid at His feet. And through that gift, what privilege of ministry was theirs! The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it the highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.¹³⁸

Similarly, Romans 12:1, portrays a picture where a giving offering can be an act of worshipping God. However, there are some acceptable and unacceptable offering Malachi 1:6-8. It pleases God to give offerings according to his command as Abraham did (Gen 22:2).

¹³⁷ Ellen G. White, *From Eternity Past* (Washington, DC: Pacific Press, 1987), 95–96.

¹³⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1999), 21.

Richards considers the command of God to Abraham as an examination of his faith. The one who had been given the promises was about to sacrifice his only son, hoping that God will bring him back to life again.¹³⁹

Brueggemann agrees that this was an exercise of faith when he says “Faith says ‘yes’ to the promise, which is no small matter. It also says ‘yes’ to the command which makes the promise only a promise.”¹⁴⁰

The sacrifice of Isaac prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The near-sacrifice of Isaac helps us to understand the substitutionary principle, how the animal was accepted on behalf of the offender. In the same manner, we think of Christ the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Isaac was a sinful human being but Jesus was the only sacrifice that could atone for the sin of humanity.¹⁴¹

The description of Christ as a slain Lamb in Rev 4-5 and his work of the purchase of humanity to a kingdom of priests are attributed to him as works of love.

¹³⁹ Richard says, “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.” Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher’s Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 52.

¹⁴⁰ God is shown to be freely sovereign just as he is graciously faithful. That God provides shows his gracious faithfulness. That God tests is a disclosure of his free sovereignty. Abraham comes to an awareness that the two marks of God are always encountered together. The problem of this narrative is to hold together and embrace both the *dark command* of God and his *high promise*. This strange contradiction in the heart of God is another glimpse of the same reality we have seen in the flood narrative (6:6–7; 8:20–22). Luther is correct to say that no human reason or philosophy comprehends these two marks of God. Faith is the readiness to answer to this strange contradiction in God. Faith says “yes” to the promise, which is no small matter. It also says “yes” to the command which makes the promise only a promise. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 189.

¹⁴¹ Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 140.

According to Revelation 4-5, love and holiness are major characteristics of God that make worship *proskuneo* exclusively due to Him only.¹⁴²

Mueller says, in Rev 5:14, the angelic hosts and those who dwell in heaven begin to sing the perfect praise of the Lamb. All beings in all creation respond by prostrating and worshipping as they glorify God and the Lamb. In this worship, the entire creation finally participates.

He further adds that the scenes of Rev 4 and 5 focus on the worship of God. Worship is only due to God. “When John twice mistakenly tried to worship an angel, this heavenly messenger exclaimed, do not do it! Worship God!” (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). Especially in chapter 12 -14 the great conflict centres around the issue of worship.”¹⁴³

Reid agrees that Satan initiated the war in heaven when he demanded the honour “due legitimately to God alone (Rev 12:7-9). His demand for worship from heavenly beings precipitated the war in heaven. Expelled to earth, he continued his efforts, deceiving our first parents and initiating a series of events in which most humans became diverted into false worship.”¹⁴⁴ Mueller, says, “in the wilderness encounter between Satan and Christ, Satan demanded that the weakened Jesus worship him (Matt 4:8-10). At the crux of the cosmic conflict stands the question of worship.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ekkehardt Mueller, “Reflections on Worship in Revelation 4 and 5,” *Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 7* (2012): 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Reid, “Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship,” 1.

¹⁴⁵ Mueller, “Reflections on Worship in Revelation 4 and 5,” 1.

Interaction with Chapter Two

This section intends to compare the exegetical findings of this study with the three views discussed in chapter two. An attempt will be to evaluate the views and get one which agrees with the findings of this study.

At this point, we look at the Contextual view. Interpreters of this view uphold that the use of *hawah* in the context of Genesis 22:5 implies worship, an act that often involved sacrifice. Reyburn explains that the Hebrew word הָוָה *hăwâh* (Gen 22:5) means to bow down. It is a verb denoting literally bowing down before the superior. “However, when God is the object whether this is stated or not, the sense is to ‘praise,’ ‘pray to,’ ‘worship.’ In this context, it is to make a sacrifice, and we may translate it as ‘and offer a sacrifice to God.’”¹⁴⁶

The contextual view correctly acknowledges that worship is a matter of faith to Abraham (Rom. 10:17). He humbly responded to the revealed will of God by doing exactly what God required. The act of bowing down before Him in reverence and adoration is what הָוָה *hăwâh* is all about. He saw the experience of offering his son to God as the act of worship.¹⁴⁷

The contextual view rightly accepts that Abraham was a worshiper of God amid people of other beliefs. He was aware of sacrifices as a way of honouring God. This was evidenced by altars that he raised in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:18). He had

¹⁴⁶ Reyburn and Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*, 490.

¹⁴⁷ Carr, Real worship is always costly! David knew this, for he said, “...neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing,” 2 Sam. 24:24. Mary of Bethany knew this, John 12:1-8. She sacrificed her pride, her glory and her treasure for the opportunity to worship the Lord Jesus. The wise men knew this, Matt. 2:1-12. These rich, wise, powerful men humbled themselves before a child and worshiped Him. They sacrificed their pride, their glory and their treasure to honour the Lord. Through the ages many millions have given the all, even their lives, as sacrifices of worship for His glory. Alan Carr “Genesis 22:1-14: The setting of Biblical worship,” Accessed 26 February 2018, http://www.sermonnotebook.org/worship/Worship%20%20-%20Genesis%2022_1-18.htm. Alan Carr, “Genesis 22:1-14: The Setting of Biblical Worship.”

never been required by God to offer a human sacrifice although the practice was done by the people of other nations around him as a way of worshipping their gods.

The contextual view acknowledges correctly that when Abraham told his young men that he was going up to worship, he knew that it meant the sacrifice of his son. This was nothing less than absolute self-denial on Abraham's part."¹⁴⁸

This study has established that worship which happened while the whole burnt offering was burning on the Altar is the worship that involved the body posture and the consecration of the mind, elevating the spiritual level of the people to a high degree. This worship rendered profound respect, reverence, adoration, allegiance to God who is God over all, blessed for evermore.¹⁴⁹

Interpreters who uphold the view that by the use of the hawah Abraham was deceiving¹⁵⁰ and concealing something to his servants is not consistent with the grammar. The clause וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁיָבָה is in corhatative form signifying his wish or his desire to worship and come back with Isaac alive. This is Abraham's wish upon what God has commanded him to do. He wishes to have Isaac come back to life after worship that involved making him a burnt offering. Paul in Hebrews 11: 17-19 amplifies to show that Abraham actually believed that God will resurrect Isaac back to life, after worship.

The imperfect tense expresses an action not yet completed. Abraham should be judged after the action has been done not when it's just a promise. He spoke by faith.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Clarkson and Whitelaw, "Exposition of 2 Chronicles," 347.

¹⁵⁰ Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 113.

¹⁵¹ Davidson, "Abraham, Akedah and Atonement," 238.

They fail to notice that the dialogue in Genesis 22:7, 8 associates worship with burnt offerings. Hamilton has shown that Isaac was familiar with worship that involved a lamb for burnt offerings hence his question (v7). His question suggests that he is familiar with burnt offerings as part of worship.¹⁵²

The concealment views wrongly perceive Abraham as deceiving his servants. They miss the fact that Abraham was a worshiper of God amid people of other beliefs. He was aware of sacrifices as a way of honouring and worshipping God. This was evidenced by altars that he raised in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:18). He had never been required by God to offer a human sacrifice although the practice was done by the people of other nations around him as a way of worshipping their gods.

The concealment view incorrectly sees ambiguity¹⁵³ in the use of *hawah* by Abraham. This because interpreters fail to see the collocation of burnt offering and worship which this study has discovered as shown in some of the old testament (Job 1: 5, 20; 2 Chr 7:1-3; Ezek 46:2; 2 Chr 29:27-29.), in the new testament (Heb 10:2, 6) and in the Extra-Biblical literature. This collocation explains the interrelation of these two activities.

The interpreters who wrongly accuse Abraham of concealing the truth and lying to the servants by using *hawah* do not recognise that in the Old Testament times the centre of worship was on offering sacrifices. It changed to become less on sacrifices and more on preaching after the Babylonian captivity. Early in the Old Testament times when people went to worship before God they always had gifts and offerings. They were not supposed to appear before God empty (Deut 16: 16, 17).

¹⁵² Hamilton, "Genesis," 103.

¹⁵³ Roop, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Genesis*, 138.

Those who incorrectly accuse Abraham of being vague¹⁵⁴ by the use of *hawah* fail to understand that the word עֹלָה *ōlāh* in Genesis 22 as a noun refers to the whole burnt offering. As a verb in *qal* form, it is עָלָה and it means to go up, to ascend, to climb. In Gen 22:2 it is in *hiphil* form וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ which means to bring up, offer. Abraham is to offer Isaac as a burnt offering fully consumed by fire. As the smoke ascends up from the altar it probably should symbolise the spiritual connection of the worshiper upward to God (Isaiah 66:2-3, Rev 5:8, 8:4).

In this context הַוָּאֵה *hăwâh* could be pointing to the spiritual upward connection of the soul to God expressed or symbolised through the ascent of the smoke of the burnt offering as the worshiper prostrates. In Isaiah 1: 10-20 and I Samuel 15:22 it is confirmed that God is interested in souls that obey Him more than rituals, sacrifices, feasts and the burnt offering.

The Moriah view suggests that Moriah was known to be a place of worship since the time of the early patriarchs¹⁵⁵ hence the use of the word *hawah* by Abraham. Although the study has found the mention of Moriah in Genesis 22:2 being the place of Abraham's burnt offering and 2 Chronicles 3:1 the place where the Temple of Solomon was built much later on Mount Moriah. The study has recommended this view for further investigation.

This study examined three views, the Contextual View, the concealment view and the Moriah view. The exegetical study has found that out of the three views the view that establishes well the use of *hawah* by Abraham in Genesis 22:5 is the

¹⁵⁴ Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 302; Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*, 2:107.

¹⁵⁵ Luther, *Luther's Works (Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25)*, 4:102; Kadari, "Interreligious Aspects in the Narrative of the Burial of Adam in PirkeiDE- Rabbi Eliezer," 95–96.

contextual view. The concealment view seems to be offline may be because of its proponents subscribing to historical-critical methods and documentary hypothesis.

Application

The passage presents an intimate connection between worship and sacrifice. Abraham's worship involves offering his son upon mount Moriah. This passage paints a picture of God giving his only son who would die in the same place 2000 years to come. Abraham knew that true worship of God was accompanied by sacrifice because it was the blood of the offering that would clean the sinner and reconcile him with the holy God.¹⁵⁶

Our worship today is not different from that of Abraham. It has to be accompanied by sacrifice as did that of Abraham. The difference is that while in his worship he looked forward to the coming of Christ to die as the lamb, we in our worship look back at the death of Christ as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). He looked forward to a substitute we look back to an antitypical Lamb. Isaac was a type, Christ is the antitype. The base of Abraham's worship was the sacrifice of Isaac his son. The base of Christian worship is God's provision of Lamb.¹⁵⁷

Abraham was to offer Isaac in anticipation of Lamb of God, we give offerings (2 Cor 8:1-5) in appreciation of the Lamb of GOD who was given for us. He died for us. We offer ourselves first to Him, and our offerings.

¹⁵⁶ Jon Courson, "The Sacrifice of Worship – Genesis 22:1-14," *Www.Calvaryoxnard.Org*, last modified 2018, <https://www.calvaryoxnard.org/studies/ot/Genesis/The%20Sacrifice%20of%20Worship.htm>.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

We ought to avoid world influences that can dilute worship and “turn it into a little flashy concert that sounds really good but carries not an ounce of the Spirit or Truth.” We can do this by keeping Jesus in the centre of worship and exalting and appreciating his sacrifice. We worship God when we obey him, doing what he has commanded us to do.¹⁵⁸

Israel while still in Egypt was to know God as the only One to be worshipped. This worship would involve the ritual of burnt offerings, pointing to the promised Deliverer (Gen 3:15) they were to learn that God would not accept human sacrifice from them which was practised by other nation (Lev 18:21, Deut 18:10). Israel must learn to obey God and surrender his life to Him by faith.¹⁵⁹

We need the faith of Abraham in these last days, Faith that can worship God according to his command when secularism, materialism and the spirit of compromise are destroying our spiritual lives. We need the spirit of sacrifice for us to be appropriate worshipers of God. Where are those who will make a complete surrender to the Lord when he calls as the patriarchs of old? Where are they who are ready to surrender not only what they have but even their lives for the cause of Christ because of their faith in God? For us to win in this spiritual race, indeed we need the faith of our fathers.

Worship as Mueller declares should not be subject to feelings and benefits of worshipers. “Whether they are blessed with a memorable experience or are entertained; worship takes place for God’s sake and must be directed to God only.

¹⁵⁸ Courson, “The Sacrifice of Worship – Genesis 22:1-14.”

¹⁵⁹ Davies, “Genesis,” 197.

Otherwise, it becomes some sort of idolatry.”¹⁶⁰ It must be according to God’s will, which worshipers must obey.

According to Wilfong Abraham, did not withhold Isaac from God. He did not act to rescue Isaac from danger and death, from God. He did not attempt to keep for himself the gift, the promise of God. Moreover, he did not withhold his trust in God. He did not keep for himself control over the unfolding life of God's promise.

¹⁶¹Worshipers today must not withhold what God has desired from them. They must be willing to obey God without a doubt. They must be ready to humble themselves inwardly before God sacrificially surrendering their will to God’s will in worship.

Without this inward surrender, how can worship be possible?

Wilfong persists that,

It is in this context that God reiterates the promise of blessing and descendants (22:16-18). Abraham's act of obedience does not *earn* him the reward of the promise, but his wholehearted trust allows the promise to remain in God's hands and so to be fulfilled by the only One who has the grace and power to bring about its fulfilment. If through the test, God has discovered Abraham's wholehearted trust in God, Abraham has discovered the utter trustworthiness of God. God will indeed provide *whatever is* necessary for the fulfilment of God's promises: a ram for the sacrifice, or a test for the faithful. This is Abraham's witness and the witness of the narrative: that even when God *appears* to act in contradiction to divine promises, God will provide the means of their fulfilment.¹⁶²

Genesis 22:5 underscores Abraham’s faith in God. He trusts God that he advances to worship Him through offering Isaac in full determination hoping, and believing that he will come come back with him after reducing him to ashes. Faith

¹⁶⁰ Ekkehardt Mueller, “Reflections on Worship in Rev 4 and 5” *Biblical research Institution, General Conference 7*(2012): Mueller, “Reflections on Worship in Revelation 4 and 5,” 2..

¹⁶¹ Marsha M. Wilfong, “Genesis 22:1–18,” *Union Seminary Review* 45, no. 4 (1991): 395.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

according to the author of Hebrews 11:1 is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.¹⁶³

The hope that Abraham had destroyed all odds, all doubts, so much that as he was advancing to sacrifice Isaac his son it was like he already had received Isaac from the ashes through God. “This is emphasized in Hebrews 11:17—19, James 2:21 points to the “justification” of Abraham by the specific ‘work’ of offering up Isaac, thus perfecting or fulfilling faith. James asserts that this was why Abraham was called ‘the friend of God.’¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Wilfong, “Genesis 22:1–18.”

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter was the introduction of the study. It introduced the study by stating the statement of the problem and its background. It stated the purpose, the significance and the delimitations of the study. It also revealed the methodology that will be used in carrying out the study.

The second chapter dealt with what others have said concerning וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* in Genesis 22:5. It analyses other people's opinion under three views which are the Contextual View, the Concealment View and the Moriah view.

The third chapter was the main chapter. It dealt with the exegesis of Gen 22:1-5 the main text. It also looked at the translation, the meaning of the clause וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh*, the syntactical and lexical data, meaning of the clause in the context of the passage, the use of the word חַוָּה *ḥăwâh* in the Torah, the Biblical context and presented the theological analysis of the passage and its application to people today. It looked at the historical aspects of the book of Genesis. It looked also at the audience of the book, its author, the period when it was written, its literary context and the religious and cultural settings of the people of the time of Abraham

The purpose of this study was to establish, why Abraham used וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* instead of עָלָה in Genesis 22:5. The fourth chapter is the summary and conclusion.

Concerning the Contextual View, the study discovered that this view analysis the word *ḥāwāh* contextually. In the Genesis 22 context, the word implies worship an act that would involve offering burnt offering before God. Abraham's purpose as he left his servants was to worship. However, this worship was going to involve the painful exercise of offering his son as a burnt offering. To Abraham worship was making Isaac a burnt offering if it is the will of God. Abraham was called by God to offer Isaac as a burnt offering in an act of worship.

Concerning the Concealment View, the study discovered that this view expounds that the use of *ḥāwāh* worship was intentionally deceptive. It is a vague word. Abraham used this clause to intentionally hide to his servants what he intended to do. He used this word to deceive his servants. He was concealing the truth from his servants. He concealed the end of his true journey from his servants for they would not have understood it.

Concerning the Moriah View, the study discovered that this view proposes that the use of the word *ḥāwāh* is in line with the widely accepted opinion that Moriah was the land of divine worship either because God had appointed it for the offering of the sacrifice or because the place for the temple was already fixed there.

This view believes that in that very place Adam, Abel, and Noah brought sacrifices. Certainly, Shem had his abode there. By him the true worship of God has spread abroad in the world, and that Adam dwelt in the neighbourhood of Mt. Moriah after he had been driven from Paradise. Consequently, even before the Flood, it was a famous place because of the worship of God, and it remained famous up to the time of Christ.

Concerning the Exegetical Examination of the meaning of the clause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in the context of Gen 22, the study has discovered that those who accuse Abraham of lying to his servants in verse 5 when he used וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *weništaháweh* fail to realise that:

The context in which וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *wenishtahăwâh* is used in Gen 22 is of the offering of the burnt offering. Since this prostration is to be done before God it implies worship. Through the burnt offering of Isaac, Abraham is examined by God to prove if he loves God more than his only son Isaac.

The verbal clause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה is in *hishtaphel* form, with *vav* conjunction, imperfect tense first person plural, the root is הָוָה *hăwâh*, meaning and we will prostrate. Prostrating implies worship when one is before God. It is used 172 times in the Old Testament. This word is in the cohortative function of the imperfect which expresses one's desire, intention, and determination. Abraham is expressing his own wish, intention and determination. He is not forced.

The word עֹלָה *olāh* in Genesis 22 as a noun refers to the whole burnt offering. As a verb in *qal* form, it is עָלָה and it means to go up, to ascend, to climb. In Gen 22:2 it is in *hiphil* form וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ which means to bring up, offer. Abraham is to offer Isaac as a burnt offering fully consumed by fire. As the smoke ascends up from the altar it probably should symbolise the spiritual connection of the worshiper upward to God (Isaiah 66:2-3, Rev 5:8, 8:4). In this context, הָוָה *hăwâh* could be pointing to the spiritual upward connection of the soul to God expressed or symbolised through the ascent of the smoke of the burnt offering as the worshiper prostrates. In Isaiah 1: 10-20 and I Samuel 15:22 it is confirmed that God is interested in souls that obey Him more than rituals, sacrifices, feasts and the burnt offering.

The repetition of the phrase burnt offering which appears 5 times in this passage seems to show the authors point of emphasis. He wants the reader to note that

the issue here is the burnt offering. The use of the word הָאֵלֹהִים *hăwâh* does not replace the point of emphasis but it elaborates it because *hăwâh* embraces the idea of worship embedded in עֲלֹת *ôlâh* in this context. The then audience understood the relationship between these words.

Israel as the intended audience was in captivity in Egypt when Moses wrote to them the book of Genesis. They remained steadfast to the worship of the God of their fathers although they were surrounded daily by idolaters.

Genesis spoke to them about the power of the God of their fathers and the promises given to them. They looked forward to the fulfilment of the promises of deliverance that God gave to their fathers.

Genesis generally shows a highly narrative literary context. The historical narratives in Genesis are put in ten divisions; all with the heading ‘these are the generations.’ These divisions consist of *toledoleth*, which refers to *generations*. The book of Genesis is, therefore, the book of generations.¹

The Old Testament texts indicate that burnt offerings were often a greater part of Old Testament worship. Worship often involved sacrifices and burnt offerings. However, the New Testament text shows that burnt offerings were types pointing to Christ the antitype. Burnt offerings could not purge the worshiper from sin. Only Christ the Lamb of God is able to redeem the worshiper.

In the Extra-Biblical Literature, texts collate worship and the burnt offering. Jews highly regarded burnt offerings as part worship during the time of Maccabees

¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 3:20.

Theologically the passage teaches that it is only God who is worthy to be worshipped. Worship should often involve some sacrifices, gifts and offerings. True worship happens when we obey what God has commanded.

The old covenant practices of burnt offerings pointed to the coming Saviour while in the new covenant offerings are an appreciation of Christ as our only Saviour given for the salvation of mankind by the God.

The immediate audience intended by the author of Genesis was Israel who typified spiritual Israel the Christian church. They had maintained their religious customs in Egypt and remained steadfast to the worship of the LORD. They called upon him for deliverance. They understood the connection between *הָאֱלֹהִים* *hăwâh* and *הָאֱלֹהִים* *ôlāh* from the practice of their ancestors.

Conclusion

This study has discussed three different views on the use of *hăwâh* by Abraham in Genesis 22:5. While others think that the use of the word *הָאֱלֹהִים* *hăwâh* in Genesis 22:5 was deceptive, vague and intended sway the servants. The exegetical approach employed in this study has established that during the Old Testament period worship often involved offering burnt offerings. The question of why Abraham used the word *הָאֱלֹהִים* *hăwâh* instead of *הָאֱלֹהִים* *ôlāh* in Genesis 22:5 is answered in that burnt offerings were offered during worship, and burnt offerings were the centre of worship. The act of worship included offering a burnt offering.

In the Old Testament times, the centre of worship was on offering sacrifices. It changed to become less on sacrifices and more on preaching after the Babylonian captivity. Early in the Old Testament times when people went to worship before God they often had gifts and offerings. They were not supposed to appear before God empty (Deut 16: 16, 17).

Abraham's use of *הָנַחַח* *ḥāwāh* was probably based on the fact that it somehow embraces or incorporates the practice of offering the burnt offering. While it meant prostrating before God, a sign of showing honour and reverence to God, burnt offering was offered as part of honouring God or worshipping Him. This partnership makes both rituals relate to each other. Burnt offerings were an important segment in the whole processes of honouring God, hence the use of this inclusive word worship *הָנַחַח* *ḥāwāh* by Abraham. This shows how *הָנַחַח* *ḥāwāh* is related to *עָלָה* *ōlāh*.

The question of how *הָנַחַח* *ḥāwāh* is related to *עָלָה* *ōlāh* may be answered by that *עָלָה* *ōlāh* was usually part of *הָנַחַח* *ḥāwāh* and *ḥāwāh* often involves *ōlāh*. Burnt offerings were often part of worship, and worship often included offering burnt offerings. These two elements were regular companions from the times of the Patriarchs.

Abraham was a worshiper of God amid people of other beliefs. He was aware of sacrifices as a way of honouring God. This was evidenced by altars that he raised in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:18). He had never been required by God to offer a human sacrifice although the practice was done by the people of other nations around him as a way of worshipping their gods. However, when he was commanded to it, he immediately regarded it as worship. He used the word worship (Gen 22:5) which is more elaborate and broad. He was pointing to a bigger picture of what he intended to do.

Since Moses was the author of the book of Genesis and since he wrote it probably before the Exodus, then it is possible that in Genesis 22:5 Moses wanted to show the Israelites his immediate audience that Abraham their great ancestor was a worshiper of God although he lived among the heathens. This would encourage them

to trust God in a foreign land. They would learn to give to God whatever he asked from them. They would learn to obey the commandments of God.

Since burnt offerings were the centre and greater part of worship, Abraham perhaps understood that a command to offer burnt offering was a command for him to worship God through offering that burnt offering. Burnt offering pointed to Christ the antitypical centre of all true worship.

Recommendation

The Moriah view and the issue of worship in the context of the great controversy need to be studied much further. Satan has not only diverted people from worshipping God but he has diverted people from the proper way worship of God. It is, therefore, the desire of this study to call for an ancient attitude of worship where hearts were lifted up to heaven honouring God as the smoke of the burnt offering ascended up upwards.

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