



Mankind became so violent and corrupt, Yahweh regretted that he made the earth. He decided to destroy creation in a flood (Gen 6:5-7). One man named Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh (Gen 6:8). Yahweh told Noah how to build a large wooden boat called an ark (Gen 6:14-21). Noah trusted Yahweh and obeyed him by building the ark (Gen 6:22). After completing the ark, Yahweh shut Noah, his family, and every kind of animal inside of the ark. (Gen 6:5-7:16)

"All the fountains of the great deep burst forth" and "rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen 7:11-12). Water covered the whole earth, lifted up the ark, and killed every living thing that "moved on the earth." Yahweh's wrath destroyed creation outside, but the ark protected and saved Noah, his family, and the animals inside (Gen 7:21-23)! After 150 days, the waters began to recede and the ark rested on one of the mountains of Ararat (Gen 8:1-4). Yahweh dried the earth and made a place where Noah, his family, and the animals would start filling creation once again. (Gen 7:17-8:19)

When Noah and his family went out from the ark, Noah built an altar on the mountain. He took some of every clean animal and clean bird, and sacrificed them as burnt offerings to Yahweh, as a priest would. It pleased Yahweh to smell the sacrifice. Noah's offering turned away Yahweh's wrath against humanity's sin for a time, and Yahweh said he would never again destroy the earth in a flood. (Gen 8:20-22) ★

After Noah made a sacrifice, Yahweh blessed him and his sons with a restored creation. Yahweh established a covenant with them and gave them a rainbow as the sign of his promise to never again destroy the earth with a flood (Gen 9:8-17). Just as Yahweh did for Adam in the first creation, Yahweh blessed Noah and commanded him to rule over creation and fill the earth with offspring (Gen 9:7). The wooden ark Noah built set him in a place where he could make a mountaintop sacrifice, resulting in Yahweh's blessing! (Gen 1:28 and Gen 9:1-17)

Noah's story repeats many years later when Yahweh chose to bring his blessing through one of Noah's offspring, a man named Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). Abraham was childless but trusted Yahweh (Gen 15:1-6). After waiting many years, Yahweh blessed Abraham with a son named Isaac (Gen 21:1-5). Yahweh then tested Abraham's faith. He told Abraham to take his only beloved son to the top of a mountain called Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice there. Abraham obeyed God and prepared wood for the offering. (Gen 22:1-3)

Abraham and Isaac traveled to the mountain that Yahweh led them to. Abraham carried the knife and the fire, while Isaac carried the wood to the top of the mountain. When Isaac asked where the lamb was for the sacrifice, Abraham responded in faith, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:8). They both continued up the mountain together. (Gen 22:3-8)

When Abraham and Isaac came to the mountain, Abraham built the altar, bound his only son, and placed him on top of the wood (Gen 22:9). As he lifted the knife to sacrifice Isaac, a voice from heaven called out and stopped him. Abraham looked up and saw a ram with its head caught in thorns and offered it as a sacrifice instead of Isaac (Gen 22:13). The ram was a substitute for Isaac provided by Yahweh himself! Because Yahweh provided a sacrifice on the mountain, Isaac received salvation. Abraham knew Yahweh providing the ram pointed to a greater sacrifice and salvation (Gen 22:14). (Gen 22:9-18) ★

After Abraham made the sacrifice, the angel of Yahweh called out to him a second time (Gen 22:15). Yahweh swore an oath and blessed Abraham saying that he would multiply one of Abraham's offspring with as many descendants as the stars in the sky. These many descendants would bring the one offspring's blessing to the nations by ruling over his enemies and filling the earth with worship of Yahweh! Because Abraham trusted and obeyed Yahweh by being willing to offer his son as a mountain top sacrifice, Yahweh blessed him and his promised offspring. (Gen 22:15-18)

Jesus was Noah and Isaac's offspring who replayed their stories and brought blessing through a final sacrifice. Jesus pleased God by living according to God's law and obeying God's will perfectly. Although tempted to disobey, Jesus trusted God (Luke 22:42). Soon, people arrested, beat, and condemned Jesus to die by crucifixion. This crucifixion happened on top of a mountain called Golgotha. Like Isaac, people placed the wooden beam of the cross on Jesus's back. With great suffering, Jesus carried the cross to the top of the mountain. (John 19:17)

After Jesus had carried the beam to the top of the mountain (John 19:17), his hands and feet were bound to the cross with nails (Matt 27:35). The cross was set in place and Jesus hanged there and died. Like Noah, Jesus is a priest who made atonement for sin, and his sacrifice pleased God (Eph 5:2, Heb 9:12). Like Isaac, Jesus is Abraham's true offspring (Gal 3:29) and God's only Son (John 3:16). Jesus lived a perfect life according to God's Law, so God accepted his sacrifice which brought salvation to the world. (John 19:18-37; Heb 10:1-18) ★

After Jesus died, God gave him salvation by raising him from death. Jesus broke the curse of sin and death and brought new life to God's people. Before ascending into heaven, Jesus blessed his disciples to show that his sacrifice had removed their sins. Jesus also commanded them to bring this blessing of the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). Jesus trusted and obeyed God by carrying a wooden cross up the mountain and offered himself as a mountain top sacrifice. Now God's blessing comes to anyone who believes in Jesus and confesses his name (Rom 10:9)! (John 20:1-10; Luke 24:50-54)

★ Overall theme: Yahweh provides blessing through sacrifice.

Yahweh will bless all nations through the promised offspring — but blessing only comes through sacrifice. In all three stories, when a mountaintop sacrifice was made in obedience to Yahweh, it resulted in Yahweh's blessing for many people.

