

Jehovah-Jireh

¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."— Genesis 22:13-14 ESV

Genesis 22 contains the familiar and somewhat unsettling story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac. Moses records every excruciating detail surrounding this God-sanctioned event that required a loving father to offer up the life of his one-and-only son as a sacrifice. Abraham had received clear and non-negotiable instructions from 'ēlōhîm.

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." – Genesis 22:2 ESV

Amazingly, the text contains no pushback from Abraham. There is no record of him arguing with or questioning God's command. It simply states, "So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac" (Genesis 22:3 ESV).

Three days into their journey to the region of Moriah, Abraham saw their final destination in the distance and decided to leave his servants behind. He and Isaac would travel alone to the place of sacrifice. Abraham, perhaps hoping to hide his true intentions from his unwitting son, told his servants, "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back" (Genesis 22:5 NLT). Some have determined this to be a statement of faith on Abraham's part, suggesting that he was confident that God would spare his son. But it seems more likely that Abraham was waiting until the last minute to let Isaac in on the true nature of their journey. His son had no way of knowing the fate that lay in store for him.

Moses describes how Abraham took all the elements he would need for the sacrifice, including a knife, a blazing torch, and wood. Then he adds the heart wrenching notation: "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son" (Genesis 22:6 ESV). Isaac was carrying the very wood upon which his young life would be consumed.

For those of us living on this side of the crucifixion, it should be easy to recognize the similarities between Isaac and Jesus. Both entered the world through miraculous, God-ordained births. Isaac was born to an elderly and barren woman. Jesus was born to a young virgin girl. Each of them was deeply adored by their respective fathers. And just as Abraham was facing the prospect of sacrificing his son, centuries later, God would offer up His one and only Son as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). There is even a striking similarity between Isaac bearing the wood for his own sacrifice and Jesus carrying the cross upon which He would be crucified.

But for the Jews for whom Moses recorded this story, none of these links to the future death of the Messiah would have been apparent. For them, this story would have had significance because it involved Isaac, who would later become the father of Jacob, the man whom God later renamed, Israel. And it was from this one man that they owed their very existence. To hear the story of how Jacob's father was almost put to death by order of Yahweh must have left them appalled and confused. How could their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, order such a thing? And, of course, they would have been viewing this entire scene through the lens of the Mosaic Law. They had been given clear instructions to avoid the religious rituals and customs of their pagan neighbors.

You must not worship the Lord your God the way the other nations worship their gods, for they perform for their gods every detestable act that the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices to their gods. – Leviticus 12:31 NLT

And yet, Abraham had no written law to guide his actions. He was operating according to the spoken word of God Almighty, and His instructions had been clear.

“Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.” – Genesis 22:2 NLT

The disconcerting nature of this divine command must have left Abraham filled with questions. Why would God require the sacrifice of the very son whom He had miraculously provided? What possible good could come from something so seemingly wicked? But the key is found in three words found in the opening verse of this chapter: God tested Abraham.

The people of Israel were very familiar with the concept of divine testing. In fact, their ancestors had spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness, enduring ongoing tests from Yahweh that were designed to increase their dependence upon Him. The Book of Deuteronomy records Moses' powerful words spoken to the people of Israel as they prepared to enter the land of Canaan for the first time.

“Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you for your own good.” – Deuteronomy 8:2-5 NLT

So, it seems highly likely that the original readers of this book would have understood the nature of the test that Abraham was having to face. They knew that Yahweh expected obedience from His people because obedience was a sign of dependence and faith. They knew

what disobedience looked like because they had grumbled and whined about their dislike for manna. During their years wandering in the wilderness, they spent more time complaining to Moses than they spent worshiping and expressing gratitude to God.

As Abraham and Isaac made their way to the site of the sacrifice, Isaac couldn't help but notice that something was missing.

He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" – Genesis 22:7 ESV

To the young Isaac, this was a glaring oversight. Why had his father failed to select an unblemished lamb before they left home? How were they going to find a suitable animal out in the wilderness? But Abraham calmly answered, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:8 ESV). Once again, some believe this was an expression of Abraham's faith. They suggest that Abraham somehow knew that God would provide a substitute. But, according to the author of Hebrews, Abraham was declaring his belief that Isaac was the lamb that God had provided. The sacrifice would take place. But Abraham still believed that God would fulfill His covenant promise, even if it meant raising Isaac from the dead.

It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, even though God had told him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted." Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead. – Hebrews 11:17-19 NLT

Abraham fully intended to go through with God's command. He did not delay, hoping for a last-minute reprieve. He did not scan the horizon, hoping for a lamb to miraculously appear. No, Moses records that "Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice" (Genesis 22:0-10 NLT).

One can only imagine the turmoil going on in Abraham's mind and heart. Every fiber of his being must have been conflicted as his fatherly instincts waged war against his desire to walk before God and be blameless (Genesis 17:1). Interestingly enough, Moses provides no insight into Isaac's reactions. The young boy appears to have remained eerily silent throughout this ordeal. He asked no further questions. He refused to put up a struggle. But just as Abraham prepared to shed the blood of his own innocent son, God intervened.

"Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." – Genesis 22:21 ESV

Abraham clearly loved Isaac. But he revered God. The Hebrew word for “fear” is *יָרֵא* (*yārē’*) and, in this context, it refers to reverent awe for God that is expressed through obedience. Abraham did not do what he did out of fear of God’s wrath, but out of reverence for God’s holiness and power. His obedience was an expression of his faith in an all-powerful and perfectly righteous God.

As the author of Hebrews suggests, “Abraham did receive his son back from the dead” (Hebrews 11:17 NLT). In Abraham’s mind, Isaac’s death was a foregone conclusion. But, at the very last second, his son’s life was spared. God provided a substitute.

Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. – Genesis 22:17 ESV

This verse foreshadows another sacrifice that would take place centuries later. It too would involve a loving Father and His precious Son. But this time, there would be no last-minute reprieve. There would be no substitute. In fact, the Son would serve as the substitute for sinful mankind. The apostle Paul reminds us of the tremendous cost that our Heavenly Father paid so that we might live to see another day.

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? – Romans 8:32 ESV

Abraham had his son returned to him, and out of gratitude and a growing reverence for this gracious and compassionate God, he named the place Jehovah-Jireh (*YHWH-Yireh*), which is most commonly translated as “the Lord will provide.” Isaac had been spared, not because he deserved it, but because God had plans to offer a far more significant and superior sacrifice. The apostle Paul declares the glory of this future gift the Lamb who would take away the sins of the world.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. – Romans 3:23-26 NLT

There seems to be far more going on in this story than simply God’s provision of a substitute sacrifice. As important as that was, it paints an incomplete picture of *’ēlōhîm*’s actions. Moses named the location *YHWH yir’e*. The second half of that name is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *rā’â* which means “to see,” “look,” or “foresee.”

The *Amplified Bible* translates verse 14 as follows:

So Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. And it is said to this day, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be seen and provided."

The *Aramaic Bible in Plain English* also weaves in the idea of seeing, adding the aspect of appearance.

And Abraham called the name of that place "LORD JEHOVAH will appear" of which it is said today, "In this mountain LORD JEHOVAH will appear."

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, gives the meaning of the name as "The LORD hath seen."

The 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation renders verse 14 this way:

And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-jireh; as it is said to this day: "In the mount where the LORD is seen."

There seems to be far more going on here than the provision of a ram to take the place of Isaac. God saw Abraham's faith and responded by providing a substitute. In that gracious act of mercy, Abraham saw the hand of God. And in the entire sequence of events, we can see God's plan to send His Son as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). The same Hebrew word that is transliterated as *jireh* is used in verse 13 where it states, "Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So, he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son."

Throughout this entire scenario, sight plays a significant role. God was watching. Abraham was waiting to see what God would do. As Hebrews makes clear, he was counting on the fact that God could raise his son back to life. But then he saw the ram and experienced the grace of God. For modern-day Christians reading this account of Abraham and Isaac, we get to see that Mount Moriah was the eventual site of the Temple built by Solomon. It would also be the same area in which the sinless Son of God sacrificed His life on behalf of sinful humanity. Jehovah-Jireh sees *and* provides, not only a ram for the son of Abraham but His own Son for the sins of the world. He saw the need for His Son to be a Savior long before the world was made, Adam and Eve were created, or the fall took place. And we are the beneficiaries of God's foresight and faithfulness, just as Isaac was.

Jehovah-Kanna

¹⁰ The Lord replied, “Listen, I am making a covenant with you in the presence of all your people. I will perform miracles that have never been performed anywhere in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people around you will see the power of the Lord—the awesome power I will display for you. ¹¹ But listen carefully to everything I command you today....¹² Be very careful never to make a treaty with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you do, you will follow their evil ways and be trapped. ¹³ Instead, you must break down their pagan altars, smash their sacred pillars, and cut down their Asherah poles. ¹⁴ You must worship no other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you.”— Exodus 34:10-14 ESV

In Genesis 22, the story is recorded of Abraham preparing to offer up his own son as a sacrifice on a hastily constructed altar. This disconcerting tale makes for difficult reading, especially when you realize that Abraham was following the commands of Elohim, the God who had miraculously enabled his barren wife Sarah to give birth to Isaac years earlier. Yet, in obeying the command of God and trusting the future of his only son to the faithfulness of God, Abraham was given the privilege of seeing God work a miracle of redemption, delivering his son from certain death. Rather than requiring Abraham to go through with the sacrifice, God provided a ram to serve as Isaac’s substitute. This led Abraham to call the place upon which he built the altar, Jehovah-Jireh, which means something to the effect of “God sees and provides.”

Abraham had experienced this aspect of God’s character for the very first time and it led him to memorialize his newfound awareness of God’s foresight and gracious provision with an appellation worthy of God’s glory. In the Genesis account, Moses adds the note, “To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided” (Genesis 22:14 NLT). This indicates that Abraham shared this story and it was passed down from one generation to another. But, even more importantly, Moses’ aside also serves a prophetic role, foreshadowing another day when God the Father would offer up His sinless Son as the substitutionary atonement for the sins of mankind. That fateful event would take place on the very same mountain. God saw the helpless and hopeless state of humanity, enslaved and condemned by sin, and facing divine judgment, and He responded by providing a Savior. He sent His Son to serve as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:9).

But how did humanity end up in such a sad and desperate state? It was the result of their own disobedience to God; their refusal to recognize Him as the one true God and worship Him alone. The apostle Paul describes humanity’s downward trajectory and its consequences.

...they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! – Romans 1:21-25 NLT

In today's passage, we have another name of God that describes an aspect of His character that gets often overlooked. It may even come across as an ungodly and unacceptable way to refer to God; yet, the Exodus 34 passage reveals that this is God's self-revelation; His way of describing His divine nature to fallen mankind.

He is "the LORD, whose name is Jealous..." (Exodus 34:14 ESV). He is *YHWH-qannā'*. But this is more than just a name; it expresses His character. This self-designation is an extension of the commandment God gave that prohibits the worship of anyone or anything other than Himself.

"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods." – Exodus 20:4-5 NLT

Yahweh is a jealous God. This thought may sound strange to us and leave us feeling uncomfortable. In part, this is a result of our own love-hate relationship with jealousy. We tend to view jealousy in a negative light, associating it with sin. Even the apostle Paul lumped jealousy in with a list of other egregious behaviors that are the byproducts of man's sinful nature.

*When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, **jealousy**, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. – Galatians 5:19-21 NLT*

It's difficult to associate such an unflattering character quality with our Holy God. Yet, God refers to Himself as being jealous and even designates it as one of His names. It is not a reaction or a temporary trait; it is an expression of His very nature.

We tend to associate jealousy with envy and covetousness. When we read God's command, "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 17 NLT), we substitute jealousy for coveting. But jealousy and covetousness are two different things. To covet is to wrongly desire that which belongs to someone else. It doesn't belong to you and you have no right to possess it. It is closely associated with stealing. When King David saw Bathsheba bathing on a nearby rooftop, he lusted after her. When he was informed that she was a married woman, his lust turned to covetousness. He knew she was off-limits, but it did not stop him from sending for her so that he might commit adultery with her.

The Hebrew word, *qannā'*, which is translated as “jealous” is only used of God in the Bible, and it almost always associated with His judgment against the worship of false gods.

*“Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the Lord your God has forbidden you. For **the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.**” – Deuteronomy 4:23-24
ESV*

*“You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— for **the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God**—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and **he destroy you from off the face of the earth.**” – Deuteronomy 6:14-15
ESV*

These passages are not inferring that God is jealous of us. This does not describe the jealousy of a husband whose wife shows affection to another man. God’s jealousy is not about His **need** for our affection or adoration; it is about the integrity of His name. The people of Israel were His chosen possession. He had created them, and they bore the responsibility of living as the children of God. Their actions and behavior were to reflect their position as His earthly representatives.

When Joshua was nearing the end of his life, he pleaded with the people of Israel to swear allegiance to Yahweh, stating, “as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15 NLT). The Israelites, eager to complete their conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan, declared their willingness to serve Yahweh only.

*“We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. For the Lord our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God.” – Joshua 24:16-18
NLT*

But Joshua wasn’t buying what they were selling. He knew them all too well and voiced doubt in their sincerity. After having served as their leader for years, he was convinced they would continue to rebel against God and face future judgment as a result

*“You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you abandon the Lord and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.” – Joshua 24:19-20
NLT*

When the people assured Joshua of their sincerity, he demanded proof, instructing them to, “destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel” (Joshua 24:23 NLT). He was not suggesting that God **needed** their undivided attention and affection. Yahweh

is not desperate for our attention. He isn't jealous that we share our affection with other gods. He is jealous and protective of the holiness of His name.

“Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord...” – Ezekiel 36:22-23 NLT

Our spiritual infidelity is not about unrequited love but about the unacceptable dishonoring of God's name and character. In the Exodus 34 passage, Moses reminds the Israelites that Yahweh is “a God who is jealous about his relationship with you” (Exodus 34:14 ESV). That relationship was to reflect their awareness of His glory, holiness, and worthiness of their undivided worship and attention. When they devoted their time and attention to false gods, it did nothing to diminish God's self-esteem or worthiness; it dishonored His name among the nations.

He had set His name upon the people of Israel. In the Book of Isaiah, He refers to them as His children and promises to “bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, **everyone who is called by my name**, whom I created” (Isaiah 43:6-7 ESV). Their identity was based on their identification as children of God who bore the name of God. When they showered their affections on false gods, it was not their lack of love that brought down God's anger and judgment; it was their lack of respect for His name. That's why God demands that their affection be accompanied by allegiance to His glory and greatness.

*“...if my people **who are called by my name** will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.”* – 2 Chronicles 7:14 NLT

As the bearers of God's name, the Israelites bore the responsibility of loving and living in keeping with their status as the sons and daughters of God. And God makes it clear that their obedience and obeisance would demonstrate to the world that they belonged to Him.

“The Lord will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord...” – Deuteronomy 28:9-10 ESV

God is *YHWH-qannā'* – Jehovah-Kanna. He is jealous and protective of His name and, as His name-bearers, we have a non-negotiable responsibility to preserve the integrity of His name as we dedicate the entirety of our lives to His glory alone.

Jehovah-Sabaoth

³³ *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah with them. All who took them captive have held them fast; they refuse to let them go. ³⁴ Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name. He will surely plead their cause, that he may give rest to the earth, but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon. – Jeremiah 50:33-34 ESV*

YHWH-Tsabaoth – the LORD of Hosts. This name occurs 71 times in the Book of Jeremiah. The book’s author repeatedly refers to Yahweh by this distinctive designation to remind his audience of God’s sovereign power and authority. The people of Judah were guilty of turning their backs on God by violating their covenant commitment to Him. Rather than worship Him as the one true God, they had committed spiritual adultery with the false gods of the surrounding nations. As a result, God gave Jeremiah a commission to deliver His message of pending judgment to the disobedient nation of Judah.

“Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands.” – Jeremiah 1:14-16 ESV

God warned Jeremiah that his job would not be easy because his audience would not be receptive to his message.

“They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.” – Jeremiah 1:19 ESV

Jeremiah would deliver God’s message of repentance but would have few takers. Despite his warnings of pending judgment, the stubborn people of Judah would refuse to change their ways. Hundreds of years earlier, the northern kingdom of Israel had received the same message and failed to take God’s warning seriously. The result was their destruction at the hands of the Assyrians. Now, it was Judah’s turn to heed God’s call or face similar consequences. Jeremiah attempted to use Israel’s fall to motivate the reluctant people of Judah. He delivered God’s stinging indictment on Judah’s refusal to learn from the demise of their northern neighbor.

“I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. Israel treated it all so lightly—she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been polluted. But despite all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry. I, the

Lord, have spoken!" – Jeremiah 3:8-10 NLT

Just as God used the Assyrians to mete out punishment on the disobedient nation of Israel, He would call on the Babylonians to serve as His agents of judgment against Judah.

*Therefore thus says **the Lord, the God of hosts...***

*"Behold, I am bringing against you
a nation from afar, O house of Israel,
declares the Lord.*

It is an enduring nation;

it is an ancient nation,

a nation whose language you do not know,

nor can you understand what they say.

Their quiver is like an open tomb;

they are all mighty warriors.

They shall eat up your harvest and your food;

they shall eat up your sons and your daughters;

they shall eat up your flocks and your herds;

they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees;

your fortified cities in which you trust

they shall beat down with the sword." – Jeremiah 5:14, 15-17 ESV

It is important to note that God refers to Himself as *YHWH-Tsabaoth*, the Lord of Hosts. The second part of His name is *ts^ebâ'âh* in Hebrew and carries various meanings, including "that which goes forth, army, war, warfare, host." In some modern translations, it is rendered "the Lord of Armies." *The New Living Translation* adds a further distinction by rendering it "the Lord of Heaven's Armies."

However, within the context of the Book of Jeremiah, it makes more sense to view this name as a reminder of God's sovereign control over all the armies of the earth. He has the power and authority to command kings and nations to do His bidding. As the Lord of Armies, God can orchestrate the actions of foreign powers and utilize their vast resources to accomplish His divine will. Once again, using the name *YHWH-Tsabaoth*, Jeremiah delivers a power message regarding God's sovereign power.

But the God of Israel is no idol!

*He is the Creator of everything that exists,
including his people, his own special possession.*

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name!

"You are my battle-ax and sword,"

says the Lord.

"With you I will shatter nations

and destroy many kingdoms.

*With you I will shatter armies—
destroying the horse and rider,
the chariot and charioteer.
With you I will shatter men and women,
old people and children,
young men and young women.
With you I will shatter shepherds and flocks,
farmers and oxen,
captains and officers.” – Jeremiah 51:19-21 NLT*

God would use the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment against His own chosen people. The forces of King Nebuchadnezzar would operate under God’s command, carrying out His will and accomplishing His divine plan for Judah’s destruction. But, as the Lord of Armies, God would also carry out His vengeance against the Babylonians for their role in the fall of Judah.

*“I will repay Babylon
and the people of Babylonia
for all the wrong they have done
to my people in Jerusalem,” says the Lord. – Jeremiah 51:24 NLT*

Neither Nebuchadnezzar nor his people did what they did out of coercion or against their will. God simply used their desire for global conquest to carry out His judgment against the nation of Judah. But they would pay dearly for their will destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the deportation of God’s people.

*This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says:
“The thick walls of Babylon will be leveled to the ground,
and her massive gates will be burned.
The builders from many lands have worked in vain,
for their work will be destroyed by fire!” – Jeremiah 51:58 NLT*

Jeremiah was one of the few prophets who lived to see the fall of Judah and the deportation of the people. He had to watch as the city of Jerusalem was ransacked and the Temple destroyed. He witnessed the captives being led in chains as they made their way to Babylon. Through it all, he continued to serve as God’s spokesman. When the captives were led away, he gave them a scroll containing all of the judgments *YHWH-Tsabaoth* would bring against the Babylonians. The Lord of Armies was not done.

Jeremiah had recorded on a scroll all the terrible disasters that would soon come upon Babylon—all the words written here. He said to Seraiah, “When you get to Babylon, read aloud everything on this scroll. Then say, ‘Lord, you have said that you will destroy Babylon so that neither people nor animals will remain here. She will lie empty and abandoned forever.’ When you have finished reading the scroll, tie it to a stone and throw it into the Euphrates River. Then say, ‘In this same way Babylon and her people

will sink, never again to rise, because of the disasters I will bring upon her.” – Jeremiah 51:60-64 NLT

God would repay the Babylonians for their role in Judah’s destruction. He would muster other earthly armies against them, bringing the once mighty nation of Babylon to its knees. But more importantly, *YHWH-Tsabaoth* would restore His people. The prophet Isaiah records God’s message of Babylon’s destruction and Judah’s deliverance.

*“Come down, virgin daughter of Babylon, and sit in the dust.
For your days of sitting on a throne have ended.
O daughter of Babylonia, never again will you be
the lovely princess, tender and delicate.
Take heavy millstones and grind flour.
Remove your veil, and strip off your robe.
Expose yourself to public view.
You will be naked and burdened with shame.
I will take vengeance against you without pity.” – Isaiah 47:1-3 NLT*

Then Isaiah adds these comforting words:

*Our Redeemer, whose name is the Lord of Heaven’s Armies,
is the Holy One of Israel. – Isaiah 47:104 NLT*

God is powerful and sovereign over all. He controls kings and nations. He orchestrates the affairs of the world and uses earthly powers to accomplish His divine will. As Isaiah puts it, “The nations of the world are worth nothing to him. In his eyes they count for less than nothing—mere emptiness and froth” (Isaiah 40:17 NLT). Interestingly enough, it was Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who made the following insightful disclosure concerning God’s power and sovereignty as *YHWH-Tsabaoth*.

*“His rule is everlasting,
and his kingdom is eternal.
All the people of the earth
are nothing compared to him.
He does as he pleases
among the angels of heaven
and among the people of the earth.
No one can stop him or say to him,
‘What do you mean by doing these things?’” – Daniel 4:34-35 NLT*

Jehovah-Sabaoth is, as Nebuchadnezzar concluded, “the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud” (Daniel 4:37 NLT). He rules and reigns over all, including the armies of heaven and the armies of this world. He has the power to rebuke and redeem, destroy and restore, and to judge and justify. He is sovereign, all-powerful, all-

knowing, and always in complete control of all things at all times. He is the Lord of Armies and He can always be trusted to use His power to accomplish His purposes for the glory of His name and the good of His people.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord of hosts,

he is the King of glory! – Psalm 24:10 ESV

