

Bible Passage – Genesis 22 (Isaac and the Ram)



The *shofar* (ram's horn) was used in biblical times to call all the Israelites together for holidays such as **Rosh Hashanah**. When a shofar is blown, the sound is very loud—it is meant to be heard and obeyed! There is a very important story in Genesis about a ram and its horns, found in Genesis 22. This passage is always read at Rosh Hashanah because of its connection to the ram's horn and its lesson about faith in God to provide redemption. The New Testament also tells us about the shofar being blown in the future to gather believers to Jesus Himself (Matt. 24:29–31, 1 Thess. 4:16).

Abraham and his wife Sarah couldn't have children for many years, and finally the Lord gave them a miracle son, Isaac, who was to be the father of many generations of Israelites. God needed to test Abraham's faith, and asked Abraham to take his son, whom he loved, and kill him. Abraham loved God so much that he obeyed, trusting God to provide another way. Isaac was tied up and Abraham raised the knife to kill him, but suddenly an angel stopped Abraham's hand and showed him a ram caught in the brush by his horns. The ram was sacrificed instead of Isaac, and God knew that Abraham (as well as Isaac) loved and trusted Him.

Sometimes we have to do hard things in order to obey God. Sometimes we have to understand that God is in control, even when things get scary or confusing. Imagine what Abraham thought when he heard what God wanted him to do to Isaac. He still obeyed, even though it hurt tremendously, and the outcome was blessing, faithfulness and redemption.

As believers in Messiah Jesus, we have the greatest redemption in Him, who was innocent and yet died on a cross, giving up His life for us. This is why John the Baptist said in John 1:29 as he saw Messiah Jesus walking towards him, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus took our punishment for sin. Just like the ram was the substitute for Isaac, Jesus was the substitute for all humanity.

Rosh Hashanah is a great time to reflect on God's faithfulness in providing a substitute—we don't need to die because of our sin; we have been saved! Because of this, we should always ask for forgiveness from the Lord and from others we have wronged. We want our hearts to be clean and pure, so we can celebrate a New Year rejoicing in our sweet redemption.

The Main Points

- **Rosh Hashanah**, the Jewish New Year, is a time to celebrate the sweetness of life and redemption.