



Advent Day 6 (written by Deb Bakken)

Ram

Genesis 22:9-13

When they reached the place God has told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said.

"Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by his horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. (NIV 1984)

Most of the time, we like surprises. Surprise birthday parties, presents in colorful wrapping paper, a favorite meal—all are surprises we love to have. Abraham's son Isaac was in for a different kind of surprise. While walking with his father one day, he had to ask, "Father, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" He did not know at the time that his father was going to offer him as the sacrifice to God.

Abraham was in for a surprise himself. He planned on doing just as God had said. He would kill his only son Isaac as an offering to God. But God had a surprise plan. At the last possible minute, God provided a substitute, a ram caught in the bushes. Both Abraham and Isaac were relieved—and overjoyed and thankful to God.

God's plans for us can be big surprises. Often we have questions. We wonder how things will work out. God's plans for us are always good. The ram symbol reminds us that God provides what we need. He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all also graciously gives us all things.

Prayer: Lord, forgive us when we forget to trust you. Thank you for giving us all things. Amen.