

**GENESIS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 22 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. Then we saw the separation or departure of Hagar and Ishmael because the son of promise and the son of the flesh cannot live together. Law and Grace cannot co-exist together. From there we saw Abraham and Abimelech make a covenant regarding a well in the land. That is where we will pick up our study this evening, several years down the road, as we begin reading in Genesis chapter 22, starting in verse 1.

**GENESIS 22****VERSES 1-2**

1. Life is good for Abraham and Sarah. God blessed them with a son named Isaac and everything was beautiful for years and then we are told that God tested Abraham. When I was in school I hated those surprise tests but this one far exceeds anything I had to do. And keep in mind this was not a test for God but for Abraham, to show Abraham where he was at in trusting the Lord. It was not really a test to produce faith or grow faith but more of a test to reveal how the faith of Abraham has grown over the years.

2. We too face tests like that in our lives. Things are going well then all of a sudden, here comes something out of the blue and you wonder what is going on. You see, God does continue to stretch us and He does show us where our faith has grown, He reveals to us our faith and that should be an encouragement to us!

3. Here God tells Abraham to take his only son to Moriah, a specific mountain that He has picked out. Now I thought Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael? He did, but keep in mind that Ishmael was a son of the flesh. Thus, God does not even acknowledge his sin; God does not even mention Ishmael, only Isaac, the son of promise! The Lord does the same in our lives. He does not acknowledge our sin or boast about our sin. He does not use our sin for His glory just as He showed here with Abraham.

4. God instructs Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a burnt sacrifice and the Lord will specifically guide him to the spot on Mount Moriah where this will take place. Can you imagine God instructing you to do something like that! Several years back there was a columnist for the L.A. Times who was discussing this incident in the Bible with his readers and he said that if God told him to do something like that he would have told God to mind His own business! That is the response of the world but as Christians, it should not be our response.

God may and He probably will tell us to do something that may be difficult for us to do and we may respond by telling Him, “Mind Your own business!” Now we may not use those words, but our actions are speaking loudly about how we feel. Now, obviously God is not going to instruct us to do something like this today, God was using this for a specific purpose. But what if God speaks to your son or daughter and tells them that they are to be missionaries in Africa or Iran, would you let them go? That is a difficult question for many to answer but the reality is, if God has called them, can we trust that the Lord will see them through? We need to because wherever the Lord calls, it is the safest place to be, in obedience to His direction!

5. Also, in this verse is the first mention of the word “**love**” in the Scriptures and it is associated with a father’s love for his son and the sacrificial offering of that son. Does that sound familiar? It should, because in John 3:16-17 Jesus said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**” Abraham and Isaac are acting out what God the Father and God the Son would do some 2,000 years down the road at that very spot on Mount Moriah – we call it Calvary! We will cover this in more detail on Sunday but just keep that idea in mind as we are going through this story.

6. Now that is a pretty big request of Abraham. He waited over 25 years to have a son with Sarah and now God is asking him to sacrifice Isaac! How do you think he will respond? Let's read on and see!

### VERSE 3

1. Did you notice that there was not the slightest bit of hesitation on the part of Abraham. The next morning he gets up, gets the wood for the sacrifice, gets two of his men and the sacrifice – Isaac and they journey out to Moriah. From Beersheba to Moriah is about 50 miles and it will take them 3 days to get there. Now do you think Abraham understood all that was going on here? Not at all but he trusted in the Lord and His promises to him and thus he was able to walk by faith. It is as the Lord said in Isaiah 55:8-9, “**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’**” When we can trust in the Lord we then can trust in His promises to us! We may not understand the details of what God is doing, but we are to trust Him!

VERSES 4-8

1. Here we see the first use of the word “**worship**” in the Scriptures or SHACHAH, (shaw-khaw’) in Hebrew and it is associated with sacrifice. When we think of worship we may think of joyful praise, but that is not what is going on here and that is not always the case. The word means to bow down or prostrate oneself. Paul, in Romans 12:1 tells us, “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [spiritual worship].**” You see, worshiping the Lord speaks of giving our life to Him, to be placed on the altar of sacrifice for His use. That is what we are seeing here in Genesis, sacrifice is a form of worship, the sacrifice of our lives!

2. Also note that Abraham and Isaac will go up the mountain and Abraham tells these two men who accompanied them that they both will come back down. That is faith. Abraham didn’t know how God would do it, but if Isaac was sacrificed then God would have to raise him from the dead to fulfill His promise to Abraham and his descendants as we were told in Genesis 21:12, “**But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.’**” Thus, this was God’s problem and Abraham believed that what God had promised him He was more than able to bring to pass!

Now some of you may be thinking that I am stretching this idea that Abraham believed that God would have to raise Isaac from the dead, but I am not. Listen to what Paul said in Hebrews 11:17-19, **“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”** God could do it; God was able even though no one was ever raised from the dead at this point in the Bible!

3. From our Sunday School pictures we think that Isaac was a young boy, maybe 10 years old or so, but that is not true. The word used for **“lad”** can speak of someone who is thirty-years old and I believe he was 33 years old at this point in his life and I will explain why in a minute! When Isaac asks his dad where the sacrifice is, Abraham says that, “God will provide Himself” as a sacrifice. In other words, God will be that sacrifice and 2,000 years later, as John the Baptist sees Jesus coming, he says, “. . . **‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’**” John 1:29. What a coincidence! Not at all! God was allowing Abraham to act out what would take place, kind of a sneak preview of what another Father would do in the sacrifice of His only begotten Son! You might say the coming attractions! Thus, I believe that Isaac was the same age as Jesus to fit the type, to fit the picture, 33 years old when these events took place on Mount Moriah!

VERSE 9

1. Keep in mind the age difference between the two of them. Isaac could have overpowered his dad, ran away, but no, he laid down his life willingly as a sacrifice! He laid down on that wood just as Jesus would do as He freely gave His life and laid down upon that wooden cross!

VERSES 10-14

1. Abraham was willing to go through with this because he trusted in the Lord and His promises to Him. He knew that God would have to raise Isaac from the dead if he was sacrificed as I have said. And the Angel of the LORD now steps in and I believe this is the pre-incarnate Jesus. And He speaks to Abraham and tells him to stop, not to go through with it. You see, he has passed the test! This was the ultimate demonstration of love that we see here, love and obedience to the Lord or faith in action we might say! This is how much the faith of Abraham has grown over the years!

2. Now why was a ram offered as a sacrifice here instead of a lamb? I believe that God is showing us that the promise will not be fulfilled until Jesus fulfills it. It is as Peter said, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** Acts 4:12.

3. Notice that Abraham did not call the place, “Hey, I passed the test!” Or “Agony hill!” Not even, “I did it!” But he called the place Jehovah Jireh or The LORD will provide. You see, Jehovah or Yahweh is speaking of the all-sufficient One. He is the great “I AM” not “I was” or “I will be” but He is to us what we need Him to be in our life – He is our all sufficient One, he is Jehovah Elohim! Thus, in the mountain of the Lord He provided a sacrifice for Abraham and He will provide Himself as a sacrifice some 2,000 years down the road. In fact, Moses tells us here that this Mount Moriah is still called Jehovah Jireh in his day and as I have said, it is here that the Lord has provided atonement for our sins, on this very mountain and Abraham and Isaac are acting this out for us.

4. Now listen to some of the Old Testament names of God and how He meets us where we are:

- El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty)
- El Elyon (The Most High God)
- Jehovah Nissi (The Lord My Banner)
- Jehovah Raah (The Lord My Shepherd)
- Jehovah Rapha (The Lord That Heals)
- Jehovah Shammah (The Lord is There)
- Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness)
- Jehovah Mekoddishkem (The Lord Who Sanctifies You)
- Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Will Provide)
- Jehovah Shalom (The Lord is Peace)
- Jehovah Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts)

VERSES 15-19

1. God is not only going to bless Abraham and his descendants, but all the nations of the earth will be blessed. How can that be? Because, as we have read this evening, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

John 3:16-17. You see, from the seed of the woman, from the descendants of Abraham, from the nation of Israel, from the tribe of Judah, the Messiah would come and has come and all the nations of the world can be blessed if they receive Him!

2. Now we are told that Abraham came down from this mountain, but we are not told that Isaac came down, how come? Did Isaac come down with Abraham? I believe he did but the Holy Spirit is editing this out for a specific reason and we will deal with that more on Sunday. But if you read ahead to Genesis chapter 25 you will see why this was done, what the Holy Spirit is showing us and keep in mind it is a picture of Jesus!

VERSES 20-24

1. Why is this lineage even mentioned here? Why do we need to know the family of Nahor, what role do they play in this story? There is one reason this is listed for us and that is because of a girl named Rebekah who will become the wife of Isaac!

**GENESIS 23****VERSE 1**

1. Over and over again we read of death and how tragic it is. Folk's, death is a result of sin that has infected this world, the human race! Paul tells us this in Romans 5:12, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man, and death as the result of sin, so death spread to all men, [no one being able to stop it or to escape its power] because all men sinned.”** And this is very important for many try to deny this concept, but again, listen to how The Living Bible puts this verse, **“When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned.”** That is what sin has done, brought death and destruction into the world and it is only through Jesus that we can have hope, that one day He will restore this world to the way it was when He created it!
2. Now keep in mind that Isaac is now 37 years old at this point, so Sarah's death could have taken place only some 4 years after the events in Genesis chapter 22!

3. Sarah was a godly woman, not perfect but one the Scriptures tell us that women should look to as an example. In Isaiah 51:1-2 we are told, **“Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.”** And in I Peter 3:3-6 we are told, **“Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”** She truly is an example of what a godly woman is to be like!

#### VERSE 2

1. Years ago there was a saying that went like this, “Real men don’t cry!” Well folk’s, Abraham was a real man and he cried over the death of his wife Sarah. It wasn’t that he lost hope but he would miss her because he loved her. Today there are some Christians who feel that showing emotion like that is a lack of faith. You have to be kidding me! God did not make us stoics, but we have emotions, we have feelings.

In fact, in John 11:35 we are told, “**Jesus wept.**” Why was Jesus weeping over the death of Lazarus, His friend? Did Jesus lack faith? Absolutely not! Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead in a few minutes, so it was not a lack of faith on His part. Then why did He weep? Because He saw the devastating affects of sin and death in this world and He wept over that!

God made us with feelings, like I said. We are emotional people. I remember the first funeral I had to do in Chicago as an assistant pastor, it was for a friend of mine who came to our home Bible studies. And I loved this guy, he sang off key as bad as me so we had this kindred spirit you might say. And it was hard to do the service for him and I did weep, but not for Ken. You see, I knew where Ken was. He was with the Lord. It was not that I lost my faith, I knew where he was at but the reason I wept was because I was going to miss him, his family was going to miss him and so too were his brothers and sisters in the Lord. Yes, we will see him again one day but there is still that loss and that is what Abraham felt, a loss for the woman he loved!

It is as Boice tells us, “To weep for a loved one is to show that we have been close, that the loss is keenly felt, that death is an enemy, and that sin has brought this sad punishment upon the human race.”

And if we are not to weep, if we are not to shed tears then why did David say these words in Psalm 56:8, “**You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?**” You see, God knows each tear we shed, that is how much He loves us and cares for us. And those tears are a result of how devastating sin is in this world. Abraham wept over the death of Sarah his wife!

VERSES 3-4

1. Keep in mind that Abraham didn't own any land in Canaan and thus, he had no place to bury his wife Sarah. Now why did he feel like a "**foreigner**" a "**visitor**" in this land, the land that God had promised him, the Promise Land? I think Abraham recognized that this was not his home, that he was just passing through this land and now with the death of his wife Sarah that point was driven home even more.

Moses even recognized this fact as he told the children of Israel in Leviticus 25:23, "**The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.**" And Paul, in Philippians 3:20-21 tells us, "**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**" The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, "**But we are citizens of the state (commonwealth, homeland) which is in heaven, and from it also we earnestly and patiently await [the coming of] the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [as] Savior, Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself.**"

And lastly, in I Peter 2:11-12 Peter tells us, **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”** In other words, this is not our home, we are pilgrims and strangers just passing through for our citizenship is in heaven with our Lord!

#### VERSES 5-11

1. Abraham came from the Ur of the Chaldeans, he had family still there, he could have found a burial place for Sarah there, but he didn't go back. You see, the Lord told Abraham to separate from his family, to separate from that land and he did. He wants to bury Sarah in the land of Canaan, the land of promise!
2. Now please understand that they were not going to give Abraham the land for nothing, for free. You may come to that conclusion as you read this but that is not the way they did business back then. You see, this was a common practice of negotiating or bargaining with each other. Ephron is doing that with Abraham here.

VERSES 12-16

1. Abraham tells Ephron that he wants to pay so now the bartering begins. He tells Abraham that the land is worth four hundred shekels, which it really wasn't. That was a very high price and it was the starting point for Ephron, he was bartering with Abraham, expecting Abraham to come with a lower price and they would go back and forth till they settled on a price. But Abraham doesn't barter, he was told 400 shekels and that is what he was willing to pay for this piece of land!

2. As Christians, when we do business with people, we should be fair, we should be courteous, we should be respectful. Abraham is a good example of how we should act. Clarke makes this point in regards to how some Christians behave. He wrote, "They who, under the sanction of religion, trample under foot the decent [honest] forms of civil respect, supposing that because they are religious, they have a right to be rude, totally mistake the spirit of Christianity." Obviously that was not Abraham and I think the Lord is showing us how we are to do business, follow Abraham's example!

VERSES 17-20

1. So here in the cave of Machpelah Sarah was buried, the only parcel of land Abraham owned and yet by faith, he believed that God would give the land to his descendants one day. Also, we will see as we go through Genesis that not only is Sarah buried in the cave of Machpelah, but so is Abraham, his son Isaac and wife Rebekah. Jacob will bury his wife Leah there and Joseph will bury his father, Jacob there.

2. As I close tonight let me leave you with this to think about regarding the cave of Machpelah. The word “**Machpelah**” means double-doors, or a way in and a way out, you can think of it like that. In other words, Sarah entered the cave of Machpelah physically dead but she left the cave of Machpelah spiritually alive! You see, we walk through the valley of the shadow of death to get to the other side. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:8, “**We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**” And in John 11:25-26 we are told, “**Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’**”

That is a great question that we need to ponder and understand!

And here is the point, the sting of death was removed by Jesus and thus, death has no power over those who believe! It is just a doorway we are passing through to enter into eternal life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Let me leave you with these words from Paul as he wrote in I Corinthians 15:12-22, **“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”** That is our Hope! Our Machpelah is Jesus Christ, He is the door to eternal life that we enter through, don't lose sight of that hope!