

Genesis Chapter 22 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 22 Overview:

Chapter 22 contains one of the great examples of faith and obedience in the bible. Abraham in obedience to God offers up his long awaited and promised son Isaac as a sacrifice to God. This sacrificial offering paints a picture of God the Father and Jesus Christ is with the future sacrifice of Jesus that would come. Also, the Abrahamic covenant is confirmed once again. This chapter is basically divided into two sections: (1) the offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah in verses 1-14 and (2) the reconfirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant in verses 15-24.

Genesis 22 : 1 - And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

- The **after these things** obviously is after the events of the preceding chapter.
- How much time has passed is not clear.
- Some have speculated Isaac was as young as 5 years old.
- Others speculate that he was as old as 36.
- The best estimate is that Isaac was at least a teenage boy or possibly twenty years old.
- The word translated as **tempt** (hon *nacah*) has the sense to ‘test.’
- God in his infinite wisdom decided to test Abraham.
- This was going to be a severe test.
- Abraham had waited twenty-five years for his son of promise Isaac.
- Now as Isaac was growing into a young adult, God tested Abraham by ordering him to sacrifice him.
- Can you imagine God ordering you to sacrifice your child for Him?
- How would you respond?
- How much faith and obedience do we really have to God?

Genesis 22 : 2 - And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

- God commanded Abraham that even though he loved his son very much he was to “***take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering.***”
- God not only asked Abraham to give his son, he told him he wanted him as a *burnt-offering*.
- The word *Moriah* is transliterated and literally means ‘**chosen by Jehovah.**’
- It is generally thought that the “**land of Moriah**” is the place which later would be Jerusalem and the actual place of sacrifice would be where the altar of the future temple would be built.
- ***2 Chronicles 3 : 1 - Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.***
- Jerusalem was indeed the city which Jehovah would choose.

Genesis 22 : 3 - *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.*

- Abraham rose up early in the morning and got on with what God had commanded him.
- There was no procrastination.
- There was no arguing or seeking clarification.
- There was only total obedience.
- He got up *early* the next day, “*saddled his ass*,” took Isaac along with two servants, split the wood which would be necessary for a burnt-offering, “*rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.*”
- There was no delay.
- He got on with doing what God had instructed him, immediately!

Genesis 22 : 4 - *Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.*

- The similarity of this event with Jesus and the Cross starts to become clear
- Abraham goes through 3 days of anguish knowing his son is going to be killed as a sacrifice.
- Can you imagine the thoughts which must have went through his mind as they traveled from Beersheba to Moriah?
- As Abraham laid down his head each of those nights as they traveled, he must have remembered the covenant which God had repeatedly affirmed to him.
- Yet, he as a man and as a father must have dreaded what lay ahead.
- The parallel is very similar to the ordeal God the Father must have endured as Jesus headed to Calvary and His three days and nights in the grave.

Genesis 22 : 5 - *And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*

- Abraham even through his anxiety the he must have felt, still had faith that God’s would intervene or take care of his son in some manner.
- He instructed his men to wait while he and Isaac *go yonder to worship, and come again to you.*
- Abraham did not know what God would do or how He would do it, but he knew God would do something.
- He may have thought God would provide a substitute as He did.
- Or he may have believed God would resurrect him as noted in **Hebrews 11:19**.
- **Hebrews 11 : 19** - *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*
- It is clear that he had faith in the promises which God had repeatedly made that Isaac was going to be great.
- He took God at His word and obeyed.

Hebrews 11 : 17–19 – *17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

- Hebrews makes clear that *“by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”*
- Based on God’s promise to him, by faith, Abraham obeyed.
- He simply took God at His word.

Genesis 22 : 6-7 - 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

- The picture or type of Christ in Isaac comes into focus.
- Think about it, throughout the ordeal of Abraham’s testing, Isaac willingly cooperated with his father.
- Isaac willingly bore the burden of the wood upon him even as Jesus would bear the burden of our sin upon him.
- Abraham took the fire and knife and they both went together.
- Then Isaac asked the fateful question. *“My father . . . behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt- offering?”*

Genesis 22 : 8 - And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

- Abraham, probably not knowing how prophetic he was about to be, replied, *“My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.”*
- The picture of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice comes into clear focus.
- Jesus came and presented Himself as *“the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1 : 29).*
- **Isaiah 53 : 10** - *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
- Isaiah makes clear that Christ’s soul would become an offering for sin.
- Indeed, Jesus became the great substitutionary Lamb which God provided on our behalf to take away our sins.
- In **Revelation 13 : 8**, as God’s substitutionary Lamb, He was *“slain from the foundation of the world.”*
- In both cases of Isaac and of Us, God provided a substitutionary lamb.
- The faith of Abraham in God’s promise is evident in his talk.

Genesis 22 : 9-10 - 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

- Abraham and Isaac came to the place that God had told them to go to.
- There Abraham built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

- It is clear that Isaac as a picture or type of Christ was obedient unto death.
- He willingly submitted to the will of his father.
- Abraham then stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.
- Like the Father in heaven would later do, Abraham “*spared not his own son, but delivered him up*” (Romans 8 : 32).

Genesis 22 : 11-12 - *11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

- The test was over.
- Abraham had passed with flying colors.
- An angel of the LORD called unto him from heaven.
- The identity of the angel (messenger) is clarified in verse 12.
- It is God in one of His forms.
- The final *me* in verse 12, referring to the angel, is equated with God.
- Note that God informed Abraham, “*now I know that thou fearest God.*”
- We would think that God would say, ‘**now I know that you believe God,**’ or ‘**obey God.**’
- But He chose to use the word *fear*.
- The fear of the Lord on Abraham’s part prompted him to obey God.
- As Abraham withhold his son, it completed the picture of God the Father in not withholding His Son someday.

Genesis 22 : 13 - *And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.*

- The picture of a substitutionary Lamb being offered on our behalf is completed.
- Abraham’s prophetic words to Isaac was already being fulfilled.
- God indeed did provide Himself a Lamb even as He would later provide the greatest Lamb of all.
- The ram was offered “*in the stead of his son*”

Genesis 22 : 14 - *And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*

- Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah-jireh*.
- That name literally means ‘**Jehovah- sees.**’
- God saw the substitutionary death of the lamb there even as He clearly saw the substitutionary death of Jesus on that same general area many years later.

Genesis 22 : 15 - *And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time.*

- The angel of the Lord spoke from heaven again and once more it is clear from what He said that it was God speaking.

Genesis 22 : 16 - *And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.*

- What a great blessing from God.
- God made clear the greatness of the occasion in noting how “*by myself have I sworn.*”
- **Hebrews 6 : 13** - would later write, “*he could swear by no greater*”
- God swore to himself that He would make Abraham and in particular Isaac a very blessed man!!

Genesis 22 : 17 - *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.*

- The seeming redundancy “**in blessing I will bless thee**” was a Hebrew way to emphasize what was being said.
- It means that God would bless on top of blessing.
- Abraham’s faith which prompted such obedience became the basis for God’s blessing.
- God again reiterated His covenant promise to Abraham that “*in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.*”
- This is the fifth time, God has reiterated His covenant promise to Abraham.
- Just like in each of the previous times, God added more detail of the covenant promise.
- God noted that Abraham’s seed would possess the gate of his enemies.
- In other words, not only would they become numberless, they also would prevail over their enemies.
- The ultimate fulfillment of that promise is yet to come when Christ returns.

Genesis 22 : 18 - *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

- As in His initial promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:1**, God again reminded Abraham that in his seed all nations would someday be blessed.
- This is the last time God would reiterate His covenant to Abraham.
- Though Hebrews 11 portrays Abraham as a man of great faith which indeed he was, the actual focal point of God’s blessing was Abraham’s obedience.
- **Hebrews 11 : 8** - *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went*
- And indeed, “*by faith . . . he obeyed*”
- If you and I want God’s blessing then it is clear that we need more than just faith, we need to live a life in obedience to Him and His Word.
- Obedience may be prompted by the fear of the Lord as well as faith.
- One thing is clear through the Word of God, obedience is the most basic avenue through which God blesses His people.

Genesis 22 : 19 - *So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.*

- Abraham then returned to Beersheba and dwelt there.

Genesis 22 : 20 - *And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor.*

- Abraham received word that his sister- in-law Milcah had born eight children with Abraham's brother Nahor.

Genesis 22 : 21 - *Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram. 22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. 23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.*

- Little is known of most of those named here in this verse.
- However, **Bethuel** (a nephew of Abraham) had a daughter named **Rebekah**.
- She of course would go on later to become Isaac's wife.