

## Genesis Chapters 22-23 Summary - John Karmelich

If you really want to understand our bible, we must realize God often work in patterns. Those patterns also can show how God works in our life! Genesis Chapter 22 is considered one of the most important bible chapters for that reason! It is a model of His salvation plan! At this time, I'm struggling with stuff I can't fix or control. When we go through such times, we must realize God never gives us anything we can't handle! In Chapter 22, the main character Abraham deals with a difficult thing God orders him to do! He accepts that God's in charge and goes forward! When we believe God's leading us to do a thing (assuming it's biblically permitted) all we can do is make the best decisions we can in a situation! I get that most decisions are not "biblical". Just saying in any situation, pray for guidance then make the best decision we can with what's in front of us. That leads me back to "patterns". In life, God often works in patterns. Those patterns give us clues on how to deal with our problems! With that speech out stated, I want to explain Abraham's situation: I hope it helps us see how Biblical these patterns guide our lives!

In one thought, Chapter 22 deals with the fact God told Abraham to sacrifice his son. No God does not condone murdering children, and Abraham lived in a world where other priests to other gods demand a child sacrifice to show loyalty to their god. Abraham realized God had a problem because He promised Abraham, he will have lots of descendants through his son Isaac. If God ordered Abraham to kill Isaac, that means God must resurrect Isaac to keep His word. Abraham knew enough about God to date as to realize he has to trust God and do as told! God stopped Abraham right before he killed his son, and He provided an animal for a sacrifice so Abraham could demonstrate his total commitment to God.

If all of that isn't hard enough to deal with, in Chapter 23, his wife of probably over 100 years dies. So, he needed to figure out where to bury her. The chapter involves buying a plot of land that serves as the burial place for him, his wife, his son and grandson. (There's a mosque built over this spot today, and it can be visited if one tours Israel!) Remember, that God promised Abraham his descendants would one day inherit this land but still this chapter makes a big deal about Abraham making the only purchase of land recorded in the bible. The pattern involves making the best decisions one can do given the fact of God promising the land to his descendants and only buying what's necessary until the promise happens roughly 400 years later! The pattern for us here is again making the best decisions we can trusting God is guiding our lives!

Obviously, there's much more to these stories. I'm going to share some of my favorite details and hope it helps us grow closer to God and appreciate all that He's done for us. With that said, let me begin: As most of you know there were no chapter breaks in the original text. The last part of Chapter 21 was the story of Abraham making a treaty with the Philistines, in effect saying here's the border between what's your territory and what's mine. Just saying Chapter 22 is a good spot for a break as it changes stories!

There is obviously a time gap between Chapter 21 and Chapter 23. Sarah was about 90 when she gave birth to Isaac. In Chapter 23 we'll read that Sarah died at the age of 127. We don't know how old Isaac was in Chapter 22, but the text refers to him as a boy, so that is that! In Chapter 22, God told Abraham who was living (if memory is correct) about 50 miles southwest Jerusalem. God tells Abraham to go to that city (it had a different name then) and offer Isaac as a sacrifice! Abraham messed up enough times to not doubt God anymore. Abraham believed God's word he'd have lots of descendants through Isaac, so Abraham thought God **MUST** resurrect him!

It was a three-day journey for Abraham to travel to Jerusalem. The specific mountain he was told to go to (a big hill by most mountain standards) was called Mount Moriah. That is the same mountain where Solomon built his temple! (It's also the same hill where Jesus was crucified!) In fact, I'm positive that Abraham knew he was acting out prophecy because he names that place, "On the Mount of the Lord It Shall (as in future) be Seen!" Anyway, Abraham, his son and two servants journey there so he can kill his son as God commanded. As I mentioned, many false deity rituals (back then) required killing one's child to prove loyalty! He was in effect asking Abraham, "Do you love me as much as other people do love their false gods?" Jewish scholars say God picked that mountain as it's the Temple site. Christians of course, point to this mountain as THE cross site!

Right before Abraham was about to put the knife to his son, God called him and said in effect, "I know you trust Me completely, so there's a ram stuck in the bushes close by, kill it instead!" We then read of God reminding Abraham of His promise of lots of descendants. The last paragraph of the chapter talks about Abraham's relatives. It shows there was still communication between them. The short version is we learn the granddaughter of Abraham's brother was Rebecca, who'll become Isaac's wife! That's that!

In chapter 23 we read of the death of Sarah. It's the only female death in the scripture that mentions the age and burial location details of a woman! In short, the chapter is about the negotiations to buy a cave that not only became the burial site of Sarah, but also Abraham, his son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob!

There's a Jewish tradition that Abraham and Sarah were either divorced or separated. We read of Sarah as she traveled with Abraham in earlier chapters and agreed to be in a foreign king's harem to spare the life of Abraham, but she didn't go along with the "kill our son" command, and thus the speculation that she lived her final years away from Abraham. (It's all speculation!) The point is they were married for decades and obviously he still loved her, so we get a whole chapter of "haggling" over purchasing what is in essence a cave that became her burial site. God promised the land of Israel would one day belong to Abraham's descendants. Yet the only land purchase by Abraham of in Israel land was here. Realize the deal was honored generations later when he died, his son and grandson were buried in that cave!

OK John, most of us know this story. It's a pattern that the same spot God led them to is one that David used to be the temple site and the same hill where Jesus was crucified at, so we can see how the bible's working in patterns. We get that Abraham knew he was acting out prophecy! The lesson isn't just that God works in patterns for Abraham, but those same patterns apply for us as well! I'm not saying we've got to kill our own children to show our loyalty to God! (Most parents do consider it, but of course do not act on it!) Just saying as we study our Bible, we see patterns and often those patterns teach us stuff about how God wants to work through us to make a difference for Him! As we watch the patterns that are set up in Genesis (including providing for our future as Abraham provided a place to bury him and his children) realize that God can and does work in patterns in our lives as well!

Speaking of patterns, let me sneak one more in before I call it quits! When you read this text, we don't see Isaac mentioned coming off the mountain or being around for his mom's burial negotiation. Yes, I believe he was around. The next time he's even mentioned is when a wife (Rebecca) is being arranged for him to marry! Since technically Rebecca is not Jewish, think of the pattern of Jesus dying and then in effect He "splits the scene" till a bride's arranged for Him (We as the church are the bride of Christ!) Just saying the lack of mention of Isaac is another pattern that ties to what Jesus did for us!

On the same page as this study is a more detailed study I wrote many years back. You are welcome to email me if you want or join my list to the get the latest lesson. Thanks for reading. John