

Genesis

Chapter 22:1-2

✠ **Gen 22:1** *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*

"Now it came to pass after these things" After what things, you may be thinking.

Well, it would be all the things that we have read about concerning Abraham. Let's take a look at what Abraham went through up until this point in Genesis.

First off when he was 75, Abram was told by God to leave his country and family.

✠ **Gen 12:1-2** ¹ *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.*

Next Abram left with Sarai his wife and his nephew Lot and went to Canaan.

✠ **Gen 12:4-5** ⁴ *So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.*

Then Abram went to Egypt and told his first half-truth about his wife Sarai.

✠ **Gen 12:10-13** ¹⁰ *Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. ¹² "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."*

But the Lord protected Abram in Egypt.

✠ **Gen 12:17** *But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.*

Then Abram returned to his starting place and started to become wealthy.

✠ **Gen 13:1-4** ¹ *Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. ² Abram was very rich in livestock, in*

silver, and in gold. ³ And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Then Abram and his nephew Lot separated.

† **Gen 13:8-9** ⁸ *So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹ "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."*

Then God spoke to Abram again and promised to bless him and his descendants.

† **Gen 13:14-18** ¹⁴ *And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; ¹⁵ "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶ "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. ¹⁷ "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." ¹⁸ Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.*

Next Lot was captured and Abram took 318 of his servants and rescued Lot.

† **Gen 14:14-16** ¹⁴ *Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶ So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

Then Abram met Melchizedek and Abram gave Him a tithe of ten percent of all he had.

† **Gen 14:18-20** ¹⁸ *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.*

Next Abram and Sarai were promised to have children with the promise of blessings from the Lord "again".

† **Gen 15:4-6** ⁴ *And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."* ⁵ *Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."* ⁶ *And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

Then Abram made a sacrifice to the Lord and watched over it chasing the vultures away. Then when Abram fell asleep the Lord spoke to him in a dream, telling him that his descendants would be strangers in another land for 400 years, but God would have them return to the land. Speaking of what we know now as the children of Israel taken out of Egypt with God using Moses. Talk about a heavy dream.

† **Gen 15:13-16** ¹³ *Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."*

After this Sarai gave Hagar to Abram to bare children through her, and through this came Ishmael. Now with strife or conflict between Sarai and Hagar, so severe that Hagar fled for her life and was comforted by the Angel of the Lord.

† **Gen 16:3-4** ³ *Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. ⁴ So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.*

† **Gen 16:15-16** ¹⁵ *So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.*

And all of this in a 16 year time frame, but we are not done yet. In chapter 17 God appeared to Abram again and spoke His promise to Abram about his descendants, which would be from Sarai, not Hagar. God also changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. God also instituted circumcision. This is where Sarah laughed at God because she was old and did not believe in God's promise.

Then the three angels appeared to Abraham with the news that Sarah would have a child in a year.

† **Gen 18:10** *And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)*

The rest of chapter 18 is where the Lord tells Abraham that He will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with the surrounding cities. With chapter 19 showing how Lot and his family were rescued by the angels.

† **Gen 19:27-28** ²⁷ *And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸ Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.*

Then in chapter 20 we read of Abraham's second time of a half-truth concerning his wife Sarah, with God once again protecting Abraham and Sarah by speaking to Abimelech in a dream.

† **Gen 20:6-7** ⁶ *And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

Finally in chapter 21 we read of Isaac being born to Abraham and Sarah, Ishmael making fun of Isaac. Sarah driving out Hagar and Ishmael from the family. And Abraham and Abimelech making peace with one another.

And that takes us up to where we are today in chapter 22. Abraham is now around 110-120 years old. So all of this took place in a period of 35–40 years.

So why did we spend so much time going over all of this since we read about it all in past teachings? We need to see how God has been preparing Abraham for this point in time. Because the next thing God asks of Abraham is:

✠ **Gen 22:2** *Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

God will not allow us to go through something we are not prepared for. There is a process we all go through. It's like the process gold or silver goes through to get rid of its impurities.

† **Zech 13:9** *I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'*

And with each process the heat is turned up a little higher. It has to be done this way or the gold or silver would be destroyed being unable to take all that heat at once.

So it is with the cleansing and preparing which happens in us. It's a slow process, like a crock-pot. If you cook a roast at high heat it becomes like beef jerky, hard and tough. But with a low heat and slow process, it becomes tender and enjoyable, easy to chew on. All Abraham went through was the slow cooking process in Abraham's life. Just as we all have in our lives.

Think about what you have gone through in the past, versus what things you have gone through recently or even may be going through even now.

Five years ago you wouldn't have been able to handle what you have or are going through recently. If you look back on your life, you will see God's hand of protection in everything, with each trial or temptation getting a little more severe each time. But it's been something you have been able to handle, if you couldn't handle it, you wouldn't be reading this right now.

"But why does God allow me to go through such things, I love Him and I want to always serve Him. Is He proving my love to Him?" This is a very common question we ask when we are going through trials or troubles.

Once again it is a refining process. God knows how much you love Him.

Think of it as one of your favorite shirts or pieces of clothing. You just can't get rid of it because it is so comfortable and it's been broken in by you. But even though it's your favorite, you still wash it. What if this piece of clothing asked every week, "How come you put me in this washing machine, which always tosses me around, and that spin cycle just makes me sick. Then you throw me in the dryer, with all that heat and tossing me around again? What makes it even worse is, you put me in there with other pieces of clothing and we run into each other and get tangled up together. I thought you cared about me?"

We are just like that, being cleansed by the Lord, and the more dirt we get on us, the more washing that has to be done. You may not enjoy the cleansing process, but we all have to go through it. But then it's not as bad, because Jesus took all of our pain of that cleansing process on the cross for us.

The washing and drying process with others what's that all about?

First off when you dry a piece of clothing the manufacturer of the dryer says to fill the dryer with clothes and the clothes will dry better and faster. We also need others to encourage one another and support each other. There is nothing worse than going through a trial by yourself, with no one to be there to comfort and encourage you. That's why we have churches and home groups, to be there for one another.

Even Abraham was not alone through his trials. He always had his wife, who was always there for him, and most important, he had the Lord with him and so do you!

One false thing that is always told to non-believers is that when you accept Jesus everything will be better, all your problems will go away. This is not true, we as Christians still go through tough times, but we do have a hope and that is in Jesus Christ.

- † **Matt 5:45** *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
- † **Eccl 9:2** *All things come alike to all: One event happens to the righteous and the wicked; To the good, the clean, and the unclean; To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good, so is the sinner; He who takes an oath as he who fears an oath.*
- † **Romans 5:5** *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
- † **Eph 2:12-13 (NLT)** ¹² *In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God's people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.* ¹³ *But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.*
- † **Romans 12:12** *rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

Prayer, don't just pray when you are going through tough times or when you want something. The bible says to pray without ceasing, that means to pray even when things are going good, not just when they are bad or tough.

I pray that through the study this week, you understand a little more why you are going through what you are, or that you're about to go through. May the previous verses renew or strengthen your hope and trust in the Lord, knowing He is always with you, in time of trouble and need as well as time of rejoicing.

- † **Romans 15:13** *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Next week we will start looking at Abraham and Isaac with God's request to Abraham of the sacrifice of the son of promise, Isaac to God.

This is a very exciting chapter, through it we will see God's provision of a Lamb, not just for Isaac, but for the whole world.