Genesis

## **Trust the Promise (21:22-22:19)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible*

## **When the Fear of the Lord Strikes (21:22-34)**

* Abimelech is back in the picture
  + Abimelech and Phicol see that the Lord kept His promise to Abraham and Sarah with the miraculous birth of a son.
    - If the Lord kept this promise…
    - What other promise will be fulfilled??
      * They are fearful that they will lose their land to Abraham!
      * Instead of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise and blessings…
        + They are concerned about what they may lose!

(Sound familiar?)

* + Luther tends to thing Phicol is behind this request
* Abraham swears
  + Matthew 5:34-37
  + Yet is done in respect to the government
    - Hebrews 6:16
    - Second Commandment
    - Therefore our answer to the question is as follows: “The oath of those who swear thoughtlessly and do not defend the truth is beyond what is required and evil; but where the oath serves the truth and is useful for preserving goodwill and concord, there proper swearing does not abuse God’s name but gives it honor, namely, that God may be feared and peace and quiet may remain.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
* So how do they handle things when there is a problem?
  + The Problem:
    - Abimelech’s servants seized one of Abraham’s wells
      * A problem that will continue (26:15)
  + How does Abraham address it?
    - Guns blazing
  + How does Abimelech respond?
    - Ignorance
  + Who is at fault?
    - Both!
      * Abraham should have let Abimelech know sooner
      * Abimelech should have known what his servants were doing.
  + So who takes responsibility?
    - Abraham
      * Part One: sheep and oxen for the covenant/treaty between the two
      * Part Two: seven ewe lambs
        + The lambs surprise Abimelech

Bribe/Gift?

Exodus 23:8

Deuteronomy 16:19

* + - * + A gift of good faith as to whom the well belongs
  + Abraham calls the place, Beersheba
    - Means well of seven/well of the oath
    - Reminder of what was given.
    - Dedicates a place of worship
    - Moves around freely

## **Did you study for the test? (22:1-19)**

* After these things
  + Luther contends Isaac is 20 years old
    - Ready for a wife and the continuation of the Promise
      * Lineage
      * Seed
* God calls
  + Isaiah 6:8
* “Go to Moriah”
  + 2 Chronicles 3:1
* “Offer Isaac as a burnt offering”
  + God tests Abraham
    - James 1:12-13!?
    - 1 Peter 1:6-7
    - 1 Corinthians 10:13
  + Is God contradicting Himself or flat-out lying?
    - 21:12
    - “Sacrifice your only son, whom you love”
      * Done by Abraham’s own hand
      * Is God Abraham’s friend or enemy?
  + Is God rescinding His promise?
    - Did Abraham do something wrong?
  + So what is the test?
    - Remember and trust the promise (21:12)
    - Same goes for us!!
      * The Lord’s Supper?
      * A Christian funeral
    - What is Abraham to believe in all of this?
      * That the Lord will somehow and at sometime raise Isaac back to life in order that descendants will come from him and fulfill the Lord’s promise.
* Abraham does not wait
  + Early morning
    - Get ‘er done.
      * An act of perfect obedience.
      * Elsewhere we read that some cast aside their gold, silver, and wealth, and that others cast aside wife and children and risked their lives because of their confession; but there never was an apostle, a patriarch, or a martyr who could have shown this obedience so unwaveringly.[[2]](#footnote-2)
      * When we are sure about God’s will and believe that He has commanded what we have under consideration, the matter must be undertaken, not with trepidation or hesitation but with the utmost eagerness, even if one had to expose oneself to a thousand dangers or to death itself. For the Word of God cannot be without effect. But when we obey God’s command, the outcome determined in advance surely follows, even though the very gates of hell fight against it. Thus David says in Ps. 119:50: “Thy Word is my comfort in my affliction”; that is, because I had Thy Word, my heart was ready and eager to endure all dangers, and Thy Word gave me life.[[3]](#footnote-3)
      * And this is the meaning of the words “Abraham rose early in the morning.” He did not argue about the outcome, but these were his thoughts: “I am sure that something better will happen than I am now seeing—not through my strength or that of my people but through the power of the command of God. Therefore I shall obey the Lord, who is giving me the command and is calling me.”… Such people are ready for every good work; all the rest are reprobate, because even a slow obedience is no obedience at all.[[4]](#footnote-4)
    - Does Sarah know?
  + Abraham saddles the donkey and cuts the wood
    - Not a servant
* A three-day journey
  + Consider the torture!
  + Hosea 6:2
  + Matthew 17:23
* Servants commanded to stay
  + Would they have allowed this to happen?
* The wood is placed on Isaac
  + John 19:17
* Abraham carries the knife and fire
* Isaac calls
  + An echo of 22:1
  + “Where is the lamb?”
    - Then his father should have answered him: “You will be the lamb.” But he does not say this. Then he adds: “God will provide it”; and in this statement he at the same time included God’s command. Abraham does not want to torment his son with a long torture and trial[[5]](#footnote-5)
  + Abraham responds, “God will provide for Himself”
    - John 1:29
    - Revelation 5:12
* Everything is ready
  + Luther wishes for the conversation that took place at this time
  + Thus it was the father’s address to his son which reconciled these two contradictory propositions: Isaac will be the seed and father of kings and of peoples; Isaac will die and will not be the father of peoples. Those contradictory statements cannot be reconciled by any human reason or philosophy. But the Word reconciles these two, namely, that he who is dead lives, and he who lives dies. Thus we live, and yet we die; for even though we are now living, we are reckoned as dead because of sin, and though we have died, we are reckoned as living. On this occasion these statements were treated and discussed between the father and the son, and they were believed not only by Abraham but also by Isaac. For Isaac dies in faith in the promise that he will be a father. Therefore Isaac dies and lives; he becomes ashes and the father of peoples.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Isaac is bound, laid upon the altar, and Abraham is ready.
  + Psalm 118:27
    - Did Abraham think Isaac would run away?
  + Matthew 27:2
  + If on that occasion there had been no faith, or if God had slept for a single moment, the life of the son would have been done for, because the knife is ready, the son is bound and placed upon the heap of wood, and the thrust is aimed at his throat. These are works of God by which He shows that He takes care of us in the greatest dangers and in the midst of death.[[7]](#footnote-7)
  + Death is at hand.
    - Natural death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, is simple death. But to feel death, that is, the terror and fear of death—this indeed is real death. Without fear death is not death; it is a sleep, as Christ says (John 11:26): “He who believes in Me will not see death.” For when fear has been removed, the death of the soul has been removed.[[8]](#footnote-8)
    - But the victory of Abraham, Isaac, and all the saints is faith. He who has faith overcomes the fear of death and conquers and triumphs eternally. About this 2 Cor. 1:9 says: “We have set our hope on the living God who raises the dead.” Indeed, we have scarcely a single trace of this faith. For we believe so long as we do not feel death; but when death makes its appearance, fear and horror follow at once.[[9]](#footnote-9)
    - Let us, too, learn this, in order that we may be able to say in the midst of death: “Farewell, leaves and grass! I shall not die; but I shall live, just as Isaac thought when the knife was being aimed at his throat.” But if we still fear and tremble at the thought and sight of death, let us acknowledge our ignorance, and let us not boast that we are theologians. All people can see death, and the heathen and the ungodly realize that death is death. But this is the wisdom of Christians and the unique teaching of the church—the teaching to which Abraham holds fast: “Though I am killing my son, I have him alive.” And Isaac: “Though I die, I shall not die when you cut my throat and reduce me to ashes. To be sure, I shall be turned to ashes. Nevertheless, I shall live, and I shall beget heirs of the entire world.”[[10]](#footnote-10)
    - But all this has its source in the First Commandment; for in it is contained the doctrine of faith and of the resurrection of the dead. “I, the almighty Creator of heaven and earth, am your God; that is, you must live the life I am living.” If He were speaking these words to oxen, they would live forever. But they are said to us—to us, I say.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* The third call of Abraham
  + An angel messenger
    - Luke 24:1-7
    - Why not the Lord Himself?
      * This is an angel FROM heaven who wants God to be feared.
      * The Word of God must come before the fear
  + A test?
    - These are not the words of an angry judge, but they are fatherly words which say: “I have given you My Word, that you may accept it with a tranquil heart, etc.; but I shall send false apostles and test you, whether you are willing to love Me and My Word in earnest.” Thus a father takes an apple away from his boy under some pretense not because he wants to deprive him of it but merely to make a test whether his son loves him and believes that his father will give it back. If the son gladly gives up the apple, the father is pleased with his son’s obedience and love. Thus God’s testing is a fatherly one, for James says in his letter (1:13): “God is not a tempter for evil”; that is, He does not test in order that we may fear and hate Him like a tyrant but to the end that He may exercise and stir up faith and love in us. Satan, however, tempts for evil, in order to draw you away from God and to make you distrust and blaspheme God.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* A ram caught in a thicket
  + A sacrifice provided
    - It is as though he meant to say: “Even if we do not know, He knows where we shall get the sheep for the burnt offering. Let Him see to it.”[[13]](#footnote-13)
* The angel (messenger) of the Lord speaks again
  + The Lord swears on Himself
    - Hebrews 6:13
    - God adds something else—something of far greater moment, far more sacred: “I, who am God and have the power to destroy or to create heaven and earth, swear and give as a pledge, not a creature, not heaven and earth, but Myself, the Creator of all things.” This sacred oath will condemn all those who do not believe, just as it stirred up and increased the faith of the holy fathers in a marvelous manner. For they thought: “God has promised life and deliverance from death and the devil, and He has sworn by Himself… Therefore if we do not believe, we shall be condemned.”[[14]](#footnote-14)
  + The promise does not change
    - 15:5
    - 13:16
    - 12:3
  + “in your offspring/seed”
    - [r;z< a sowing, seed, offspring
    - Promise is attached to the Seed!
* Therefore what this passage teaches is that in matters of religion the question above all others must be “Who has given the command?” Seneca says: “Do not consider who is speaking, but consider what is being said.” This rule has a place in the household and in the state; but in the church and in matters of religion it must be turned around, and one must ask who, not what. In man there is some wisdom as a result of the light of reason, which was implanted by God. [[15]](#footnote-15)

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge21.24&off=2492&ctx=heart%E2%80%9D+(Ps.+95%3a10).%0a~Therefore+our+answer), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.3&off=1388&ctx=rsaking+everything.+~Elsewhere+we+read+th), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.3&off=2175&ctx=d+did+not+hesitate.+~When+we+are+sure+abo), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.3&off=11471&ctx=y+the+plans+of+men.%0a~And+this+is+the+mean), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.7-8&off=1053&ctx=he+burnt+offering%3f%E2%80%9D+~Then+his+father+shou), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 111–112. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.9&off=2184&ctx=ted+above+(ch.+15).%0a~Thus+it+was+the+fath), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.10&off=370&ctx=ger+of+their+lives.+~If+on+that+occasion+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.11&off=493&ctx=d+death+of+his+son.%0a~Natural+death%2c+which), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.11&off=1392), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 115–116. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.11&off=8621&ctx=ere+is+your+sting%3f%E2%80%9D%0a~Let+us%2c+too%2c+learn+t), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.11&off=10169&ctx=to+the+future+life!%0a~But+all+this+has+its), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.12&off=8772), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 131–132. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.14&off=1045&ctx=+%E2%80%9CHe+will+provide.%E2%80%9D+~It+is+as+though+he+m), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.16&off=2416&ctx=less+marvelous.%0aBut+~God+adds+something+e), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 4: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw04?ref=Bible.Ge22.19&off=5528&ctx=ever+God+calls+him.%0a~Therefore+what+this+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 4 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)