

Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-18)

Grace Chapel September 2, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

REVIEW

12:1–9 After Terah died in Haran, God told Abram to leave his father's house & household; God would make him a great nation & bless him so that he would bless others, so Abram went to Canaan & He revealed Himself again & gave the land to Abram, who then built altars to the Lord & worshipped Him thruout the land that the Lord gave him (claiming it for the Lord)

12:10–20 A severe famine caused Abram to sojourn in Egypt; he told Sarai to say that she was his sister, so that he would be blessed & live; Pharaoh took her & bestowed a great dowry on Abram, but Pharaoh's whole household (other than Sarai) became quite sick; Pharaoh rebuked Abram for the evil resulting from saying that she is his sister, because it created the possibility that intimacy could have occurred; Pharaoh gave Sarai back & deported Abram, w/ Sarai, & all that belonged to Abram

13:1–18 Abram left Egypt w/ Sarai, Lot & wealth; returned to Bethel & called on the Lord; Abram & Lot's herds overtaxed the land, so strife arose between their herdsmen while Canaanites looked on; Abram ended the strife because he & Lot were relatives (letting Lot choose land); Lot chose the Jordan valley w/ much water; so they separated; Abram dwelt in (the uplands of) Canaan, but Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain (even wicked Sodom); God reaffirmed the promise of innumerable seed; God invited Abram to investigate the land; Abram settled near Hebron and built an altar (to worship the Lord)

14:1–24 Eastern kings fought the western kings who stopped paying tribute in the 13th year; the next year, the eastern kings attacked the Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim, the Horites, the Amalekites, the Amorites; then they attacked 5 kings near the Dead Sea; some western kings fell into tar pits around the Dead Sea; others escaped to the mountains; the eastern kings pillaged Sodom & Gomorrah, taking Lot captive before going northward; an escapee told Abram in Hebron (dwelling w/ his Amorite allies); Abram armed his 318 men & went to Dan; after dividing forces, Abram attacked, pursuing [survivors of the initial attack] to Hobah; thus, Abram rescued all of the booty, Lot, & other captives; after Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer, Sodom's king met Abram near Jerusalem; then Melchizedek (king of Jerusalem) brought Abram bread & wine & blessed both Abram & God Most High, the creator, who granted Abram victory; then Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of [Abram's] whole portion; Sodom's king had offered Abram all Sodom's booty if Abram returned the people to him; Abram said that his loyalty is to God Most High, the creator, so he will not be enriched by the king of Sodom (lest he claim to have enriched Abram), but Abram does not speak for his allies nor for the food eaten by his own men

15:1–21 In a vision the Lord told Abram not to fear, because He is his guardian & benefactor; Abram feared that God had not fulfilled the promise, so his servant (Eliezer of Damascus) might be his heir, but the Lord assured him that his own son (not a servant) would be his heir & his seed would be innumerable (Abram had already believed in the Lord, so He accounted it to him for righteousness); the God who promises is the same One who led Abram to give him this land; Abram requested tangible evidence of God's guarantee, so God told him to prepare animals for a covenant ceremony, which he did; Abram saw himself going into deep sleep as the sun was setting; God said that his seed would be afflicted strangers & servants in a foreign land for 400 years, but would leave that land with many possessions; Abram would die peacefully at an old age; the fourth generation will return to Canaan, when the iniquity of the Amorites is complete [when they are ready for judgment]; the Lord unilaterally ratified the covenant, guaranteeing the fulfillment of the promises; the Lord specified the boundaries of the land and the peoples who would be displaced.

16:1–16 Sarai who was barren (had an Egyptian handmaid) & blamed God for her barrenness; she told Abram that Hagar could produce a child for her, giving him Hagar as wife 10 years after reaching Canaan; Hagar then treated Sarai w/ insolence, so Sarai blamed Abram & asked the Lord to judge; Abram gave Sarai a free hand, so she was harsh w/ Hagar (who fled). the LORD found her by a water spring by the road to Shur; Hagar said she was fleeing Sarai; the LORD said to return to Sarai & to submit to her, promising a significant lineage thru the son she was to name Ishmael, because He heard her affliction; Ishmael (and his lineage) would be as a wildman (fighting w/ brethren) as they dwell near his brethren; she called on the LORD who spoke (You are a God who sees me) so the well (between Kadesh and Bered) is called *Be'er lahay rō'i* & she exclaimed that she still lives after seeing the LORD; Abram named Ishmael her son when he was 86

17:1–27 The Lord appeared as El Shaddai when Abram was 99, commanding him to walk blamelessly before Him as He entered into covenant w/ him; Abram fell on his face; God changed his name from exalted father to father of a multitude as a pledge that he would become the father of many nations; reiterated the promises of fruitfulness of seed & all of the land of Canaan under the everlasting (Abrahamic) covenant to Abraham & to his seed forever; commanded Abraham and his seed to circumcise each male child (+ Abraham) as a sign of the covenant; male children at 8 days, free & slave (even Gentiles) were to be circumcised at 8 days; those not circumcised would be regarded as Gentiles (cut off from the nation); God changed Sarai's name to Sarah as a pledge that she would have a son and would have nations and kings as progeny; Abe laughed; Abe interceded for Ishmael, but God said that Sarah's son, Isaac (and his seed), would be the one with whom He would establish His everlasting covenant, but God has heard the petition for Ishmael and will bless him; then the Lord departed; every male of the household (including servants) were circumcised that day

18:1–33 The Lord appeared to Abraham on a hot afternoon; Abe ran to meet them & bowed to the ground; he asked them to join him, gave water to wash feet, a shaded place, an appetizer; asked them to stay (which they did); he told Sarah to bake something & arranged slaughter of a choice calf, serving it w/ curds & milk (they ate); they asked *Where is Sarah?*, Abe said *In the tent*; the LORD promised to return in a year & Sarah would have a son; the aged Sarah heard the LORD's promise & laughed that they would become elderly parents; the LORD asked why Sarah laughed, saying *Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?*; the LORD asked *Is anything too wonderful Him?* & promised to return in a year, at which time Sarah would have a son; fear made Sarah deny laughing, but the LORD said that she laughed

19:1–38: Lot welcomed 2 angels at Sodom's gate & offered hospitality to them, but they initially refused; Lot pressed them, so he fed them; while still evening Sodomites surrounded Lot's home, asking about his visitors; Lot negotiated, finally offering them his daughters; they called him a judgmental outsider & almost broke down the door; the angels pulled Lot inside, blinded the mob, & told Lot to get all of his people & leave Sodom, because God sent them to destroy it; Lot's sons-in-law scoffed; at dawn, the angels urged Lot to hurry w/ his family to escape; the angels grabbed dawdling Lot & his family (God being merciful) & took them out; then an angel commanded them to hurry to the mountains w/o looking back or lingering; Lot negotiated to stay in Zoar, thanking them for grace & *hesed*, but claiming inability to reach the mountains; the angel promised to spare Zoar, but said to hurry, because destruction would start when he was safe; he arrived in ate morning, then the LORD rained fire & brimstone on the cities of the plain, killing people & plants; Lot's wife looked back (as they left Sodom & became a salt pillar; Abraham returned to where he met the LORD, then looked east & saw a smoke-filled sky; God remembered Abraham when He destroyed the cities; Lot & his daughters went to the mountains & dwelt in a cave; the elder daughter said that Lot was their only hope for children, so they should give him wine & become pregnant w/ his seed; they did so on successive nights; both became pregnant by Lot; the elder named her son Moab (*from Father*)—the progenitor of the Moabites—& the younger named her son Ben-Ammi (Son of my kinsman)—the progenitor of the Ammonites).

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Those who do not learn from history repeat it
Genesis 12

Genesis 20

Genesis 26

CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

Genesis 17:17 and 24; Genesis 18:10; Genesis 21:1–2 and 5

NEW EXPOSITION

(20:1) Abraham travelled in the Negev and other southern locations within the land, finally sojourning in Gerar

(20:2) Abraham (and Sarah) said that she was his sister, so the king of Gerar took her

(20:3) God warned Abimelech in a dream that he was under a death sentence for taking another man's wife

- . Abimelech is a title, not a name. Likewise, Pharaoh is a title as is Mr. President
 It means My father is king

(20:4–5) (Though Sarah was in his harem) Abimelech had not violated her, so he protested that God should not slay a righteous nation, because both Abraham & Sarah said she was his sister; Abimelech had acted innocently w/ integrity in this matter

Abraham needs to be reminded of something that he already knows about God

(20:6) God acknowledged that Abimelech had acted with integrity, which is why He prevented him from having relations with her

(20:7) God commanded Abimelech to restore Sarah to Abraham, who (as a prophet) would pray for Abimelech and (so) he would live, unless he refused to restore Sarah

(20:8) Abimelech gathered all of his servants early in the morning and told them what the Lord said, so they became fearful

(20:9) Abimelech asked Abraham what offence on his own part provoked Abraham to do such an evil deed against Abimelech and his kingdom

(20:10) Abimelech rebuked Abraham for (the evil) that Abraham did to Abimelech and his kingdom

(20:11) Abraham said that he rationalized that there were no God-fearers in Gerar

(20:12–13) Abraham explained that (though being his wife) Sarah was (in fact) his half-sister, so it had been his standing request for Sarah to say that she was his sister anywhere that they traveled

Note that Abraham knew that he did wrong

(20:14) Abimelech gave Abraham sheep, oxen, servants and restored Sarah to him

(20:15) Abimelech gave Abraham permission to live anywhere in Gerar

(20:16) Abimelech explained that the giving of a thousand pieces of silver closed everyone's eyes on the matter; thus she was vindicated before everyone (but Abraham was rebuked before everyone)

(20:17–18) Abraham prayed for Abimelech, his wife, and his harem, so (Abimelech lived) and the women bore children (no pregnancies occurred while Sarah was in the harem)

CONCLUSION