

genesis

God's Book of Beginnings

Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 20)

20:1-3 Abraham left Hebron ^{Genesis 13:18}, and went southwest through the Negev to Gerar.

Being fearful of what might happen, Abraham told the king of Gerar (Abimelech) that Sarah was his sister, not his wife (once again ^{Genesis 12:10-20}). The king took Sarah into his harem, but God intervened by telling Abimelech in a dream that Sarah was a "married woman".

The Negev (Desert of Beersheba) is a large desert in southern Judea (southwest of the Dead Sea). Gerar: a Philistine city on the SW edge of the region of Philistia (close to the Egypt/Israel border).

The same compromise was later made by Abraham's son Isaac and his wife, Rebekah ^{Genesis 26:6-11}. Abimelech was either a tribal title or an ancestor of the King Abimelech that Isaac & Rebekah faced.

20:4-13 Abimelech responded to the LORD with "a clear conscience", and God confirmed it.

The king and his officials were afraid and confronted Abraham as to why he did that to them. Abraham replied by describing his fear and telling the king Sarah was his real (half) sister ^{v.12}.

Abimelech petitioned the LORD for mercy ^{v.4}, much the same way Abraham had earlier ^{Genesis 18:22-32}.

Abel was the first prophet ^{Luke: 11:47-51}, but the first Biblical mention of the word "prophet" is here ^{v.7}.

God considered Abraham a prophet, making him qualified to speak to Him on behalf of Abimelech.

Abraham offered three reasons for lying: (1) he assumed that all cities had no fear of God, because of the wickedness in Sodom, (2) his fear of death and (3) his wife actually also his half-sister.

Here, God indicated (even before the Mosaic Law) adultery was a capital offense ^{v.7, Leviticus 20:10-12}.

20:14-18 King Abimelech returned Sarah and gave Abraham sheep, cattle, slaves and silver.

Then Abraham "prayed to God", and He restored the health of Abimelech, his wife and slaves.

Isaac's Birth and Subsequent Events (Genesis 21)

The Birth of Isaac

21:1-7 The LORD fulfilled His promise to Abraham & Sarah ^{Genesis 17:16} by Sarah becoming pregnant and giving birth to Isaac ("he laughs"). The 100 year-old Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had decreed ^{Genesis 17:9-12}. God "brought laughter"

Genesis 20-22

to Sarah, and she knew others would laugh with her at the unbelievable events. In addition to her giving birth at an old age (90 or 91), God also gave Sarah the ability to nurse Isaac.

God changed Sarah's earlier laughter of unbelief ^{Genesis 18:12} into to a laughter of rejoicing ^{Psalms 126:2}.

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

21:8-10 Abraham held a "great feast" for Isaac's passage from infancy to childhood (weaning). At the celebration, Sarah observed Ishmael display a laughter of ridicule, and not wanting him to share in Isaac's inheritance, she demanded that Abraham make Ishmael and Hagar leave.

Earlier Sarah had mistreated Hagar ^{Genesis 16:6}, but now Hagar's son was mistreating Sarah's son.

Previously Sarah caused pregnant Hagar to flee ^{Genesis 16:6}; now she caused Hagar and son to flee.

Weaning and the celebration of the occasion usually happened when the child's age was 2 or 3.

21:11-14 Abraham was deeply grieved at Sarah's request, because Ishmael was also his son. However, God encouraged him to do as Sarah had asked, reassuring Abraham that Ishmael would also become a nation. So, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael off with food and water.

There are parallels between these events and principles in the NT: Ishmael was the offspring of Abraham "born in the ordinary way", while Isaac was "born...of a [divine] promise" ^{Galatians 4:22-31}.

When Isaac (son of promise) was born, Ishmael (son of flesh) mocked him ^{v.9} in an attempt to lessen Isaac's importance, but there was no more need for Ishmael, so he was sent away ^{v.14}, even though it grieved Abraham ^{v.11}. All of mankind are "born under the law" ^{Galatians 4:4}, but Jesus Christ brought "the law of the Spirit" to "set [man] free from the law of sin & death" ^{Romans 8:1-2}. And when He went to the cross, the people of the flesh mocked Him ^{Mark 10:32-34, 15:16-20,31} and will mock believers in the End Times ^{2 Peter 3:3-4}. However, once a person accepts the promise from Jesus, they are called to send the effects of the flesh away ^{Ephesians 4:22-24}, even though they may grieve for a while ^{Galatians 5:16-18}.

21:15-21 Hagar knew her teenage son would die without water, but God heard the crying of Ishmael ^{Genesis 16:11}. Then the "angel of God" (a Christophany) called to Hagar ^{Genesis 16:7-8}, and told her to "lift the boy up ... for I will make him into a great nation". At that time, God showed Hagar a water well ^{Genesis 16:14}. Moses then gave a preview of the rest of Ishmael's life: he grew to be an archer, lived in the Desert of Paran (Arabia) and married an Egyptian.

God explained to both Abraham ^{v.13} and Hagar ^{v.18} that He would make Ishmael "into a great nation".

The LORD blessed both Isaac and Ishmael, but they represent two very different paths ^{Galatians 4:22-31}.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

The Treaty at Beersheba

21:22-24 Abimelech recognized God’s abundant blessing on Abraham, and so he asked for and received from Abraham assurance (“I swear it”) to treat the king and family with kindness.

The blessings on Abraham (affirmed by Abimelech) were proof of God’s earlier promise ^{Genesis 12:2}.

Phicol (“great”) is noted 3 times ^{v.22,32, Genesis 26:26} only because Abimelech trusted in him, not God.

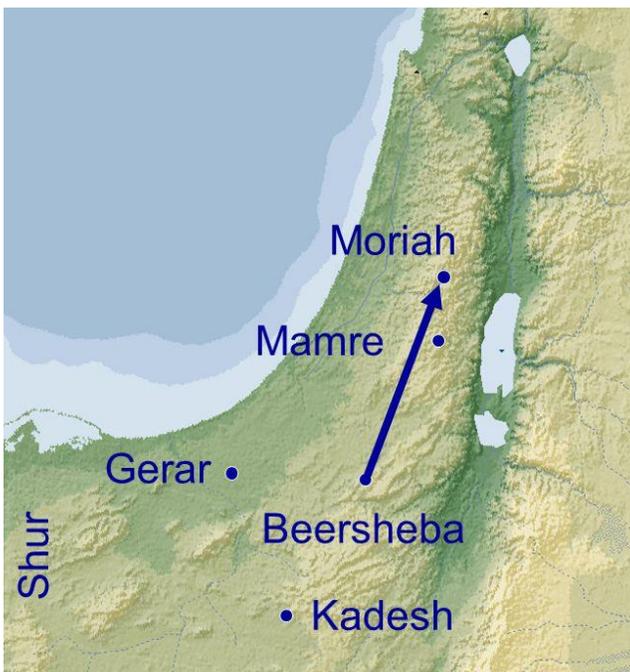
21:25-34 There was a dispute over desert water rights between Abraham and some of Abimelech’s servants. However, Abraham communicated the problem to Abimelech and offered a peace token of seven ewe lambs. In line with their prior peace talks ^{v.22-24}, they made a treaty ^{Joshua 9:15}, agreeing on the equitable use of the water from the Beersheba well.

The Hebrew word Beer-sheba means ‘well of seven’ ^{v.30}, while Beer-shaba means ‘well of the oath’ ^{v.31}.

Abraham’s Prophetic Act of Faith with Isaac (Genesis 22)

22:1-2 God called out to Abraham in order to ‘test’ him, and Abraham responded immediately. In a shocking instruction, God told Abraham to “take your ... only son, Isaac, whom you love” to the region of Moriah and sacrifice him as an offering on a mountain He would guide him to.

Isaac is said to be Abraham’s “only son” ^{v.2}, because Isaac was the ‘son of promise’ ^{Galatians 4:22-23, 28}.



God tested (*nāsâ*: put to the proof) Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his “only” son ^{John 3:16}. Abraham must have thought that if he obeyed God, fulfilling God’s promises would seem to be impossible. However, the Biblical text indicates Abraham did not hesitate ^{Exodus 3:11}, but was quickly obedient ^{v.3}.

God ‘tests’ people in order to confirm and strengthen faith ^{Exodus 16:4, 20:20, Deuteronomy 8:2, James 1:2-4,12, 1 Peter 1:6-9}. However, God “cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone” ^{James 1:13}. Satan is the tempter ^{Matthew 4:1-3}, who tempts ^{1 Corinthians 7:5, James 1:14-15} people into sinning.

Moses’ first use of the Hebrew word ‘*ahab* (love) describes how much Abraham cared for Isaac ^{v.2}.

22:3-8 Early the next day, Abraham started out with Isaac and two servants to go to Moriah. The 45 mile trip took them 3 days ^{v.4}. As they approached Mount Moriah, Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 20-22

went on alone. Abraham told the servants: "We will worship and then we will come back". Abraham and Isaac proceeded with the offering wood (carried by Isaac), the fire and a knife. Along the way, Isaac commented that they had everything except for the sacrificial lamb. Abraham calmly assured Isaac that God would provide the offering lamb ^{John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7}. Being convicted to take Isaac's life, Abraham considered him dead for the 3-days ^{Jonah 1:17, John 2:19-22}. Abraham's statement: "we will come back to you" was left unexplained until much later ^{Hebrews 11:17-19}. He also used another curious phrase: "God himself will provide the lamb for the offering" ^{John 1:29,36}. How old was Isaac at this time? Most orthodox scholars believe he was no younger than a teenager. The only indisputable Biblical indication of his age is captured in the word translated "boy" ^{v.5,12}. The Hebrew word (*na'ar*) translated as "boy" has a meaning ranging "from infancy to young adult". When Hagar and Ishmael left Abraham ^{Genesis 21:14}, the ~sixteen-year-old Ishmael was called "boy", using the same Hebrew word (*na'ar*). Accordingly, at this time, Isaac was a young adult, while Abraham was over 100; therefore, Isaac could have easily escaped Abraham if he had wanted to. Also, as a 'type' or 'model' of Jesus (see note below), Isaac had to be older than the age of consent (old enough to decide for himself) in order to give his life freely in response to his father's request. Abraham submitted to his heavenly father; Isaac freely submitted to his earthly father ^{John 10:14-18}.

22:9-12 When they arrived at Moriah (the place God guided them to), Abraham built the altar and arranged the wood. Abraham then tied up Isaac, placed him on the wood, and prepared to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, with the knife. At the last moment, the angel of the LORD (Jesus) called from heaven to stop Abraham, and told him the sacrifice was not necessary, because Abraham had shown himself to be completely submitted to God's will ^{James 2:21-24}. All of Abraham's actions here indicated he had learned his lesson about trusting God completely. He passed the test (proved his faith) by his actions ^{James 2:21} (he had 'a faith that led to obedience'). Every OT mention of the "angel of the LORD" is a Christophany (pre-incarnate appearance of Christ). Isaac was a 'type' of Jesus: they both had a supernatural birth ^{Genesis 21:7, Matthew 1:23}, named before birth ^{Genesis 17:19, Luke 1:31}, only son/Father loved ^{v.2, John 3:16}, carried sacrificial wood ^{v.6, John 19:17}, Father willing to sacrifice son ^{v.10, Romans 8:32}, "dead" for 3 days ^{v.4}, then rose ^{v.12, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4}, etc. God honored Abraham's attitude, saying "you have not withheld from me ... your only son" ^{v.12b}, because it was the same as His. As Paul stated it as: "[God] did not spare his own Son" ^{Romans 8:32a}.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

Genesis 20-22

Mount Moriah is a ridge system that has been the location of four key Biblical events/structures:

(1) After David sinned by taking a “census” of his “fighting men”. He repented by purchasing the threshing floor of Araunah and building “the altar of burnt offering” to the LORD ^{1 Chronicles 21:18-30}.

(2) Later, that very spot on Mount Moriah was the location where Solomon was told to build the “temple of the LORD” ^{1 Chronicles 22:1, 2 Chronicles 3:1}.

(3) In our story here, God directed Abraham to a site less than a half mile north of the eventual temple mount along the ridge of Mount Moriah, where Abraham prepared and was willing to sacrifice his only son in obedience to the LORD.

(4) Two millennium later, God offered His only son ^{John 3:16, 1 John 4:9-10} on this exact location, “the place called Golgotha” ^{Mark 15:22}.

(For a detailed discussion, see the Appendix.)



22:13-14 Abraham saw a ram entangled in a bush, so he offered it up as the burnt offering. Recognizing all God did, Abraham named the mountain of the LORD: “The LORD Will Provide”.

The phrase “He...sacrificed it...instead of his son.” ^{v.13} introduced the concept of substitutionary atonement, which was ultimately fulfilled in the death of Jesus ^{Isaiah 53:4-6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 7:26-27}.

The Hebrew for “The LORD Will Provide” is *Y^ehōvâh yireh* (*Jehovah-jireh*: the LORD will see to it).

22:15-19 The “angel of the LORD” reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant (promises of land, seed, blessing) by swearing an oath “by myself” ^{Hebrews 6:13-14}. Abraham and servants went home.

Another unexplained curiosity is evident in this section of Scripture ^{v.19}: where is Isaac? Perhaps this is one more foreshadowing of Jesus. Following his being “sacrificed”, Isaac was not seen until “Rebekah (Isaac’s bride) looked up and saw Isaac” ^{Genesis 24:64}. Soon after Jesus was crucified, He left ^{John 14:2-3} and will not be seen again until He returns ^{Acts 1:9-11} for His bride ^{1 Thessalonians 4:13-18}.

The Ancestry of Rebekah

22:20-24 Isaac’s wife was the granddaughter of Abraham’s brother, Nahor ^{Genesis 11:27}.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.