

Divine Intentions (Genesis 12-24)

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^[a]

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^[b] of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, “To your offspring^[c] I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance; ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account.” ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ When the officials of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her, and be gone.” ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

² Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ He journeyed on by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram called on the name

of the LORD. ⁵ Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions were so great that they could not live together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herders of Abram's livestock and the herders of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites lived in the land.

⁸ Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." ¹⁰ Lot looked about him, and saw that the plain of the Jordan was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar; this was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward; thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring^[d] forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷ Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." ¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks^[e] of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Lot's Captivity and Rescue

¹⁴ In the days of King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim, ² these kings made war with King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ All these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea).^[f] ⁴ Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and subdued the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in the hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the edge of the wilderness; ⁷ then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and subdued all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way; ¹² they also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks^[g] of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house,

three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.¹⁵ He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus.¹⁶ Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his nephew Lot with his goods, and the women and the people.

Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).¹⁸ And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.^[h]¹⁹ He blessed him and said,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,^[i]
maker of heaven and earth;
²⁰ and blessed be God Most High,^[i]
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.²¹ Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.”²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the LORD, God Most High,^[k] maker of heaven and earth,²³ that I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours, so that you might not say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their share.”

God's Covenant with Abram

¹⁵ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”² But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”^[l]³ And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.”⁴ But the word of the LORD came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.”⁵ He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”⁶ And he believed the LORD; and the LORD^[m] reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷ Then he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.”⁸ But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.¹³ Then the LORD^[n] said to Abram, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years;¹⁴ but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and

afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, ² and Sarai said to Abram, “You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. ⁴ He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!” ⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, “Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” She said, “I am running away from my mistress Sarai.” ⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, “I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude.” ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Now you have conceived and shall bear a son;
you shall call him Ishmael,^[o]
for the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild ass of a man,
with his hand against everyone,
and everyone’s hand against him;
and he shall live at odds with all his kin.”

¹³ So she named the LORD who spoke to her, “You are El-roi”;^[p] for she said, “Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?”^[q] ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;^[r] it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him^[s] Ishmael.

The Sign of the Covenant

¹⁷ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty;^[u] walk before me, and be blameless. ² And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” ³ Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be Abram,^[u] but your name shall be Abraham;^[v] for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring^[w] after you. ⁸ And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.”

⁹ God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. ¹³ Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in your sight!” ¹⁹ God said, “No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac.^[x] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.” ²² And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

²³ Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael

were circumcised; ²⁷ and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham^[y] by the oaks^[z] of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures^[aa] of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹ They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

Judgment Pronounced on Sodom

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?^[ab] ¹⁹ No, for I have chosen^[ac] him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰ Then the LORD said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹ I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.”

²² So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD.^[ad] ²³ Then Abraham came near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” ²⁶ And the LORD said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”

²⁷ Abraham answered, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.” ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹ Again he spoke to him, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” ³⁰ Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” ³¹ He said, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” ³² Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” ³³ And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

The Depravity of Sodom

¹⁹ The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. ² He said, “Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way.” They said, “No; we will spend the night in the square.” ³ But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; ⁵ and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.” ⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ But they replied, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down. ¹⁰ But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

¹² Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place.” ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” ¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up, get out of this place; for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

¹⁵ When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ But he lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. ¹⁷ When they had brought them outside, they^[ac] said, “Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the

Plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed.”¹⁸ And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords;¹⁹ your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die.²⁰ Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!”²¹ He said to him, “Very well, I grant you this favor too, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.²² Hurry, escape there, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.” Therefore the city was called Zoar.^[af]²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven;²⁵ and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.²⁶ But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD;²⁸ and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled.

The Shameful Origin of Moab and Ammon

³⁰ Now Lot went up out of Zoar and settled in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; so he lived in a cave with his two daughters.³¹ And the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world.³² Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.”³³ So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.³⁴ On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.”³⁵ So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger rose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.³⁶ Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.³⁷ The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab; he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day.³⁸ The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day.

Abraham and Sarah at Gerar

20 From there Abraham journeyed toward the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While residing in Gerar as an alien,² Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” And King Abimelech of Gerar sent and took Sarah.³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a married woman.”⁴ Now Abimelech had not approached her; so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent people?⁵ Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands.”⁶ Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of

your heart; furthermore it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now then, return 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 that are yours."

⁸ So Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants and told them all these things; and the men were very much afraid. ⁹ Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you, that you have brought such great guilt on me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that ought not to be done." ¹⁰ And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?" ¹¹ Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. ¹² Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'" ¹⁴ Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. ¹⁵ Abimelech said, "My land is before you; settle where it pleases you." ¹⁶ To Sarah he said, "Look, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your exoneration before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated." ¹⁷ Then Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸ For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

The Birth of Isaac

²¹ The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ² Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." ⁷ And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁸ The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." ¹¹ The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. ¹³ As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring." ¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, “Do not let me look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰ God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Abraham and Abimelech Make a Covenant

²² At that time Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do; ²³ now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but as I have dealt loyally with you, you will deal with me and with the land where you have resided as an alien.” ²⁴ And Abraham said, “I swear it.”

²⁵ When Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech’s servants had seized, ²⁶ Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today.” ²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. ²⁸ Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs of the flock. ²⁹ And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?” ³⁰ He said, “These seven ewe lambs you shall accept from my hand, in order that you may be a witness for me that I dug this well.” ³¹ Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba;^[ah] because there both of them swore an oath. ³² When they had made a covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines. ³³ Abraham^[ai] planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.^[aj] ³⁴ And Abraham resided as an alien many days in the land of the Philistines.

The Command to Sacrifice Isaac

²² After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ² He said, “Take 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 that I shall show you.” ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here

I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”⁸ Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill^[ak] his son.¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.¹⁴ So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”,^[al] as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”^[am]

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,¹⁶ and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son,¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies,¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

The Children of Nahor

²⁰ Now after these things it was told Abraham, “Milcah also has borne children, to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram,²² Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.”²³ Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.²⁴ Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah’s Death and Burial

²³ Sarah lived one hundred twenty-seven years; this was the length of Sarah’s life.² And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.³ Abraham rose up from beside his dead, and said to the Hittites,⁴ “I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”⁵ The Hittites answered Abraham,⁶ “Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead.”⁷ Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land.⁸ He said to them, “If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron son of Zohar,⁹ so that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place.”¹⁰ Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city,¹¹ “No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it; in the presence of my people I give it to you; bury your

dead.”¹² Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.¹³ He said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “If you only will listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there.”¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham,¹⁵ “My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.”¹⁶ Abraham agreed with Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, passed¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, in the presence of all who went in at the gate of his city.¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.²⁰ The field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham’s possession as a burying place.

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.² Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his house, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh³ and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live,⁴ but will go to my country and to my kindred and get a wife for my son Isaac.”⁵ The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”⁶ Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.⁷ The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.⁸ But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.”⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all kinds of choice gifts from his master; and he set out and went to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor.¹¹ He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water; it was toward evening, the time when women go out to draw water.¹² And he said, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham.¹³ I am standing here by the spring of water, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.¹⁴ Let the girl to whom I shall say, ‘Please offer your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

¹⁵ Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, coming out with her water jar on her shoulder.¹⁶ The girl was very fair to look upon, a virgin, whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up.¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please let me sip a little water from your jar.”¹⁸ “Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered her jar upon her hand

and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹ The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, ²³ and said, “Tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?” ²⁴ She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” ²⁵ She added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder and a place to spend the night.” ²⁶ The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD ²⁷ and said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the way to the house of my master’s kin.”

²⁸ Then the girl ran and told her mother’s household about these things. ²⁹ Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. ³⁰ As soon as he had seen the nose-ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, “Thus the man spoke to me,” he went to the man; and there he was, standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹ He said, “Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside when I have prepared the house and a place for the camels?” ³² So the man came into the house; and Laban unloaded the camels, and gave him straw and fodder for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ Then food was set before him to eat; but he said, “I will not eat until I have told my errand.” He said, “Speak on.”

³⁴ So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. ³⁵ The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. ³⁶ And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. ³⁷ My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father’s house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.’ ³⁹ I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ ⁴⁰ But he said to me, ‘The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your way successful. You shall get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father’s house. ⁴¹ Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my kindred; even if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’

⁴² “I came today to the spring, and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! ⁴³ I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,” ⁴⁴ and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also”—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’

⁴⁵ “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ ⁴⁶ She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the

ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms.⁴⁸ Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.⁴⁹ Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you anything bad or good. ⁵¹ Look, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD. ⁵³ And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. ⁵⁴ Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they rose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master." ⁵⁵ Her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." ⁵⁶ But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has made my journey successful; let me go that I may go to my master." ⁵⁷ They said, "We will call the girl, and ask her." ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will." ⁵⁹ So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"May you, our sister, become
thousands of myriads;
may your offspring gain possession
of the gates of their foes."

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from^[an] Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. ⁶³ Isaac went out in the evening to walk^[ao] in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.