

Abraham Cycle

II. The Structure of the Patriarchal Narratives²

A. THE ABRAHAM CYCLE:

A Genealogy of Terah (11.27-32)

B Start of Abram's spiritual odyssey (12.1-9)

C Sarai in foreign place; ordeal end in peace and success;
Abram and Lot part (12.10-13.18)

D Abram comes to rescue of Sodom and Lot (14.1-24)

E Covenant with Abram
Annunciation of Ishmael (15.1-16.16)

X Abram's name changed to Abraham
Elohim appears for first time in the story

E' Covenant with Abraham
Annunciation of Isaac (17.1-18.15)

D' Abraham comes to rescue of Sodom and Lot (18.16-19.38)

C' Sarah in foreign place; ordeal ends in peace and success;
Abraham and Ishmael part (20.1-21.34)

B' Climax of Abraham's spiritual odyssey (22.1-19)

A' Genealogy of Nahor (22.20-24)

- I. Review
 - A. Connection of 11 & 12
 - B. Abraham/Lot Well scene continues narrative from 1-11.
- II. Helps for Reading
 - A. Narrative Arc
 - B. Family and Friend observation game
- III. Genesis 15
 - A. Posterity: Part I: Came to Abram in a vision:
 1. V2-what will you give me seeing I go childless.
 2. Embedded emphasis
 - a) Nagging question: how can I get this righteousness: By believing me! (v6). How can I be saved like Noah? Story about, why God saved Noah.
 - b) Paul is not just proof texting. This is the peak in Genesis.

(1) If I want to be saved, I must believe in the promises as well.
[how do we know if we believe? Well, we head west and not east!]

(2) A peak in Genesis. If another flood Abraham would be saved.

B. Land: Part II: v7; second concern

1. World filled with Canaanites and another fear arises. Surrounded by enemies.
2. Act: v.9
3. Deep sleep Abraham (Adam)
4. It's going to be bad, but...
5. Posterity and land

C. How does Lord describe himself in v.7

1. YHWH- The God who brought you out of the land of bondage.
2. V.13-14 Exodus posterity
3. Exodus lens for the animal pieces [major emphasis]
 - a) Smoke and torch
 - b) Visual token of the Exodus
 - c) He leads them through death
 - (1) Waters are like Sheol
 - d) Exodus 15
 - (1) First half=waters
 - (2) second=nations at bay just as water
 - (3) Vouchsafing

IV. Genesis 22

A. 22:1-19

B. Verse 19 Isaac is absent

C. 20-24; Not only is Isaac safe, but family is fruitful. Notice the emphasis of Rebekah. This brings the story right in front of us.

D. Context, context, context

1. Layer One: Genesis 1-11: Link through Shem or name;
 - a) Genesis 22 must be placed in this context. Salvation of the nations from the Edenic exile.
 - b) Genesis 12:1-3: Blessing 3 times counters the 5 curses in 1-11.
 - c) Genesis 22 resolution in v.18. God has not forgotten about Genesis 11.
 - d) Even the cross: Seed of Abraham died for the salvation of the nations.
2. Layer Two: Genesis 12-22:
 - a) Cycle of stories: Beginning is 12 the end is 22.
 - b) Cycle in 12:1-3 helps to understand cycle 22
 - c) Key themes in parallel
 - (1) Go get yourself out (twice in Abraham's life) [12;22]
 - (2) The journey is to an unknown place [12;22]
 - (3) Both occasions must give up family [12;22]
 - (a) Hemmed in and comprehensive (past and future). God must be Abraham's sole focus.

- (b) Not murder Isaac; Sacrifice;
- (c) His life was lived sacrificially [shema]

(4) Motif of children

- (a) Begins with Lot tagging along
 - (i) ANE the function that Lot serves is a threat to Abraham's inheritance. As soon as tension is released it starts again. (cat and violin)
 - (ii) Eliazar becomes new threat
 - (iii) Ishmael new threat (ch.21)
 - (iv) Sacrifice new threat (ch22)

(5) Resolution of obedience

- (a) Ur
- (b) Sacrifice

3. Layer 3:

a) "After these things" Genesis 21:8-21

(1) Similarities b/t 21 and 22

- (a) Boy in danger
- (b) Angel of God from heaven
- (c) Journey to unknown place
- (d) Deliverance is spotted by parent
- (e) Each account ends with future blessing

b) Significance

- (1) Poetic justice to demonstrate weight of actions (like David and his children)
- (2) Blessing to the nations (Ishmael is blessed) 21:12-13; spilling over of a blessing.
- (3) *God's provision for Ishmael confirms the blessing for Isaac (ch.25). Greater to Lesser.

E. Genesis 22 strictly considered

1. 22:1 is a heading to the story. (see Genesis 1)
2. "After these things" remember Ishmael, but the focus is Abraham's testing.
3. This story recounts a test.
 - a) Emergency: This is only a test
 - b) Serves to relieve audience so as to keep focused on Abraham. Must go where the text takes you.
 - c) Within the text notice how the focus moves to God: v.8;v.14—continues for generations to interpret the story as such.

F. OT Context

1. Genesis – Chronicles
 - a) 2 Chronicles 3:1/ builds on Mt. Moriah.
 - (1) Moriah is only mentioned twice in OT. Must have been thinking of Genesis 22.
 - (2) Foundational lens for temple system

(a) Substitutionary system of atonement provided by God.

b) 2 Samuel 24

G. NT Context

1. John 3:16—Focus is on God the Father.
 - a) “World” equivalent to sinners or Gentiles.
 - b) Everlasting life is the blessing pronounced to the world.
2. Behold the Lamb of God
 - a) Daily lamb of offering?
 - b) Passover?
 - c) Genesis 22 is historically tied to Passover
3. Romans 8:32
 - a) Ch. 8 is focused on assurance
 - b) The cross is the great demonstration of God’s love for you. [Focus on Father again]
4. Re-read Genesis 22 back through lens of NT
5. God has provided His Son. Through faith in Him sinners (the world) may have eternal life.