

12. Isaac Genesis 18-21



1. Abraham at Mamre Genesis 18:1-8

YHWH appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 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. He said, “My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 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.” Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 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.





Genesis 18:9-15

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





Genesis 18:16

Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom;
and Abraham went with them to set them on their way.



Genesis 18:17-21

YHWH said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of YHWH by doing righteousness and justice; so that YHWH may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” Then YHWH said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! 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.”

2. Abraham intercedes Genesis 18:22-26

‘So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before YHWH.

Then Abraham came near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 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? 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?”

And YHWH said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”

Genesis 18:27-33

Abraham answered, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 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.” Again he spoke to him, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

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.” 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.”

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.” YHWH went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Hosea 11:8-9

‘How can I give you up, Ephraim?

How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah?

Near Sodom and Gomorrah

How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

(Genesis 10:19)

My heart recoils within me;

my compassion grows warm and tender.

I will not execute my fierce anger;

I will not again destroy Ephraim;

for I am God and no mortal,

the Holy One in your midst,

and I will not come in wrath.’

3. The destruction of Sodom Genesis 19:1-29

Lot welcomes the divine messengers



3. The destruction of Sodom Genesis 19:1-29

A mob come demanding Lot hand them over. Lot refuses



The men are blinded



3. The destruction of Sodom Genesis 19:1-29

The messengers warn Lot to escape from Sodom.



3. The destruction of Sodom Genesis 19:1-29

‘YHWH rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from YHWH out of heaven’ (19:24).





C. Dore

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4. Lot's wife

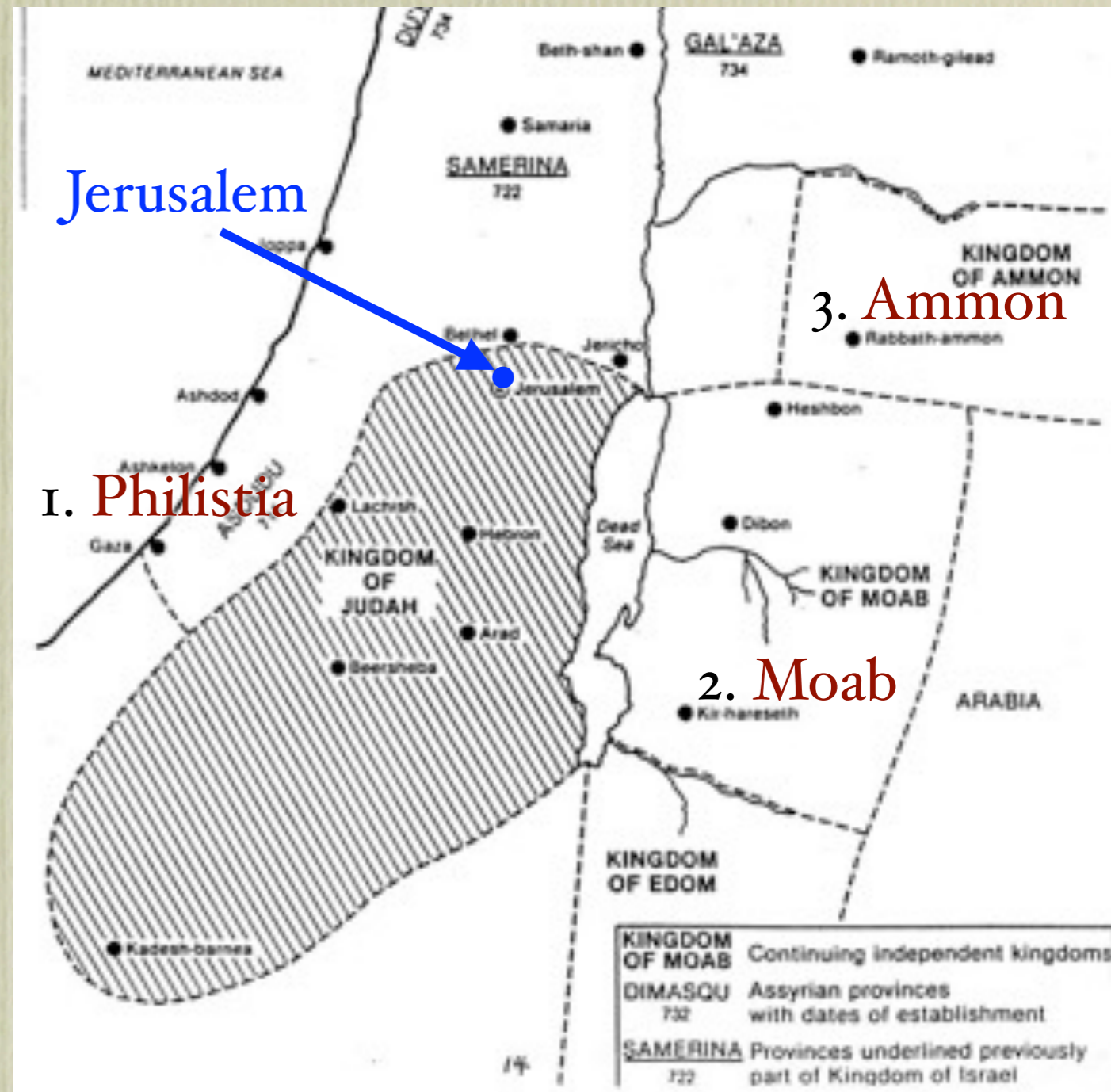
Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt (19:26).



5. The origin of the Maobites and Ammonites Genesis 19:30-38

Lot's two daughters get him drunk and lie with him

'The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab; he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day,'



6. Abraham at Gerar Genesis 20

In a story paralleling what happened in Egypt. Abraham passes his wife Sarah off as his sister. King Abimelech of Gerar takes Sarah, whom Abraham had said was his 'sister', but he did not touch her, and on God's orders returns her safely to Abraham.

7. Birth of Isaac Genesis 21:1-7

YHWH dealt with Sarah as he had said, and YHWH did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.



Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” 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.”

Hebrews 11:11-12

By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old – and Sarah herself was barren – because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

Psalm 126:1-3

¹When GOD restored the fortunes of Zion,
it seemed like a dream.

²Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.

It was said among the nations,

‘What marvels GOD worked for them.’

³Indeed, GOD has done great things for us.

We celebrate with joy.

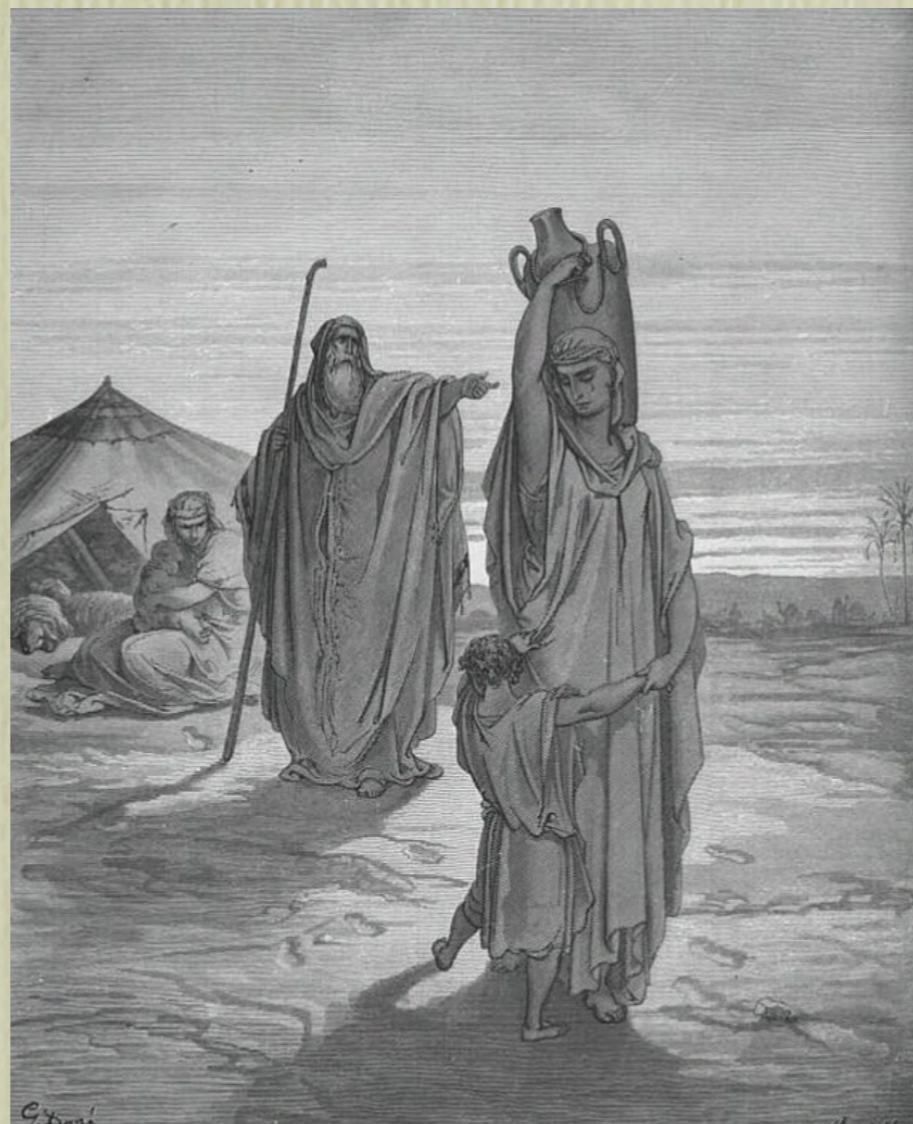
7. Dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael Genesis 21:8-13

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. 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.”

‘The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. 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. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.”

Genesis 21:14

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.





Genesis 21:15-21

‘When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. 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.



And as Hagar sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.



Genesis 21:15-21

‘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. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.”’



Genesis 21:15-21

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



As the story unfolds our sympathy is with Hagar, not Sarah. While God has chosen Isaac for a special purpose, God's love of Ishmael is clear, as is Abraham's.

What we have in this narrative is a subversion of myth.

We are not dealing with 'Fate'.

'Nature' (the way things are) does not have the last word.

God chooses those who are not able, of themselves, to carry out the mission entrusted to them.

Genesis 21:22-34 : A covenant between Abraham and Abimelech