

ing 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 bow-shot; 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.

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;^a 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^b planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.^c³⁴ And Abraham resided as an alien many days in the land of the Philistines.

22 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”² He said, “Take your

^a That is *Well of seven* or *Well of the oath*

^b Heb *He*

^c Or *the LORD, El Olam*

name; see 18.12n. **14–17:** In these verses Ishmael is a little boy, a stark contrast to the presentation of him as a teenager in the preceding Priestly traditions (16.16; 17.25; 21.5). This is just one sign that stories like this one about Hagar and Ishmael were not originally written with the Priestly tradition in view. **17:** See 16.7n.

21.22–34: Abraham’s dispute with Abimelech. This text continues the story about Abraham and Abimelech that was begun in ch 20. Together, the narratives of Abraham’s sojourn in Gerar in ch 20 and 21.22–34 resemble that of Isaac’s sojourn in Gerar in 26.6–33, and they may have a common oral background. This story combines a tradition that explains the name *Beer-sheba* as meaning “well of seven” (see 22.28–30) with an explanation (parallel to 26.31–33) that it means “well of oath.” **33:** On the tamarisk tree, see 12.6–8n. *Everlasting God* (“*El Olam*”) may be an ancient divine name once associated with the sanctuary at Beer-sheba.

22.1–19: The testing of Abraham. Although in later tradition this is one of the most significant chapters in the ancestral narratives, nothing in the text marks it as such. **1a:** The narrative begins by informing the reader of something that Abraham does not know, that *God tested Abraham*. Abraham’s “fear” of God is not proven (v. 12) until he has reached out his hand to slaughter his son (v. 10). **1b–2:** After giving up Ishmael earlier (see

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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 Abra-
 ham 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.

⁹When 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^a his son.
¹¹But 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.
¹⁴So Abraham called that place "The LORD
 will provide";^b as it is said to this day, "On the
 mount of the LORD it shall be provided."^c

¹⁵The 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.

²⁰Now after these things it was told Abra-
 ham, "Milcah also has borne children, to your
 brother Nahor:²¹ Uz the firstborn, Buz his
 brother, Kemuel the father of Aram,²² Che-

^a Or to slaughter

^b Or will see; Heb traditionally transliterated *Jehovah*
Jireh

^c Or he shall be seen

21.8–21n.), Abraham must prepare to give up Isaac, his promised heir, as well. The story echoes the opening of
 the Abraham story. Just as he was once asked to go (Heb "lek leka") from his family of origin and travel to a land
 God would show him (12.1), so now he must go ("lek leka") and sacrifice his future family on a mountain that
 God will show him (v. 2). The way the command is stated (*your only son . . . whom you love*), which parallels the
 syntax of 12.1, presupposes that what is being asked of Abraham is extraordinary and extremely difficult. The
 narrative is not a polemic against child sacrifice: while it does not presuppose a general practice of sacrifice of
 the firstborn, it does suggest that such a practice could be performed under extraordinary circumstances (see
 2 Kings 3.27). 3: As in 12.4–6 Abraham obeys the command immediately. 5: Abraham's promise that he and Isaac
 will return may suggest a faith that God will work out an alternative sacrifice (see v. 8). 9–13: The narration
 slows down here, showing how close Abraham came to fulfilling the command. Some later Jewish traditions
 understood Abraham to have actually sacrificed (an obedient) Isaac, making both men models for later genera-
 tions of Jewish martyrs. A similar image stands behind the Christian understanding of Isaac as a prefiguration
 of Jesus. 12: See 22.1a n. 14: Like other characters in Genesis (e.g., Jacob in 28.19 and 32.2,30), Abraham names
 the place in response to his encounter with God (see 22.8; cf. 28.19; 32.30). The name *The LORD will provide* is not
 attested elsewhere as a place name. The mention of *Moriah* in v. 2 and of *the mount of the LORD* in v. 14 may be
 allusions to Jerusalem (see 1 Chr 3.1). 15–18: This second divine call stands out as an additional divine response
 to his obedience (cf. vv. 11–12), this time providing a reward for Abraham's passing of the "test." 18: See 12.3n.

22.20–24: The descendants of Abraham's brother Nahor. See 11.27–29; 24.15.