

ABSTRACT

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Genesis 12-20: A Translation with Commentary
(Under the Direction of Dr. David Williams)

A translation of the Septuagint text of Genesis 12-20 is presented, with reference to the Hebrew. Commentary on the text then proceeds in three stages: textual notes, general notes, and general commentary. Special attention is paid to the relationship between the Hebrew and its Greek translation as presented in the Septuagint.

INDEX WORDS: Genesis, Hebrew Bible, Translation, Commentary

GENESIS 12-20:
A TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

by

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Anne and Kevin Poe. Without their support none of this would have been possible.

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CHAPTER ONE GENESIS TWELVE

Introduction

The text presented is a translation of the Septuagint text.¹ Commentary on the text will be divided into three sections: textual notes, notes, and commentary. Textual notes will focus especially on the relationship between the Hebrew text and the Greek translation as presented in the Septuagint.² Notes and comment will focus on confusing aspects of the passage, overarching themes, and contextual examination of the passage.

Translation

^{12:1} Then YHWH said to Abram, “Go from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.” ² “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and it will be a blessing.” ³ “I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I will curse. All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.” ⁴ Abram went, just as YHWH told him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he left from Haran. ⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son and all their property they

¹ Specifically, the eclectic text presented in Susan Brayford, *Genesis* (Boston: Brill, 2007).

² This thesis is not intended to be an exhaustive work on textual criticism. The analysis presented is relatively shallow, and limited to interesting or notable textual features, rather than a thorough examination of textual history and transmission.

had acquired, and the people that they had gotten in Haran. They left to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan.

⁶ Abram crossed over the land until the place of Shechem, until the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanites were then in the land. ⁷ YHWH saw Abram, and he said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” There he built an altar to YHWH who appeared to him.

⁸ He proceeded from there to the mountain land east of Beth-El, and he pitched his tent with Beth-El to the west and Ai to the east, and he built there an altar to YHWH and called on the name of YHWH. ⁹ Then Abram left, traveling toward the Negeb.

¹⁰ There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt, to sojourn there because the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ It happened that when he drew near to come into Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, “I know that you are a beautiful woman.

¹² It will be that when the Egyptians see you, they will say ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me and let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister so that it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be spared on account of you.” ¹⁴ When Abram came into Egypt and the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful, ¹⁵ and Pharaoh’s officers saw her and praised her before Pharaoh, the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶ And he dealt well with Abram because of her; he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ Then YHWH afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues on account of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸ Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say ‘She is my sister’, so that I took her as a wife? Now here is your wife. Take her and go!” ²⁰ Pharaoh gave orders to his men about him, and they sent him out, with his wife and all that was his.

Textual Notes

12:2. *And it will be a blessing.* The Masoretic pointing of *wehyeh* would make it an imperative. A more likely reading would be *wehayah*, “and it will be...”

12:3. *All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.* The Hebrew here is ambiguous, as the Niphal verb may be read as either passive or reflexive. The ambiguity is eliminated in the LXX however, as the verb is placed in the passive tense.

12:6. *Until the oak of Moreh.* The Hebrew has “oak of Moreh”, whereas the Greek has “high oak tree.” The Greek also refers to “Shechem” as “Suchem”, which is presumably the same place.

12:8. *With Beth-el to the west.* The text actually reads, “with Beth-el towards the sea.” The sea in question, however, is the Mediterranean and the translation “to the west” more accurately preserves the dichotomy between east and west.

12:19 *Take her and go!* The brevity of the final clause, “Take her and go!” (literally “taking, go!”) indicates Pharaoh’s anger at having been deceived and afflicted on account of Abram and Sarai.

Notes

12:1. *Go from your land.* Although some translators attempt to accurately render the Hebrew *lekh lekha* as “Get yourself...” or something along those lines (cf. KJV “Get thee”) there is no need to translate the second word in the phrase.

12:6. *Were then in the land.* The concluding clause, “And the Canaanites were then in the land,” was one of the earliest phrases to be recognized as evidence of the

Documentary Hypothesis. There is no reason why Moses, were he to have personally composed the Torah, would have included this phrase.

12:10 *To sojourn there.* To sojourn in the land means to become a resident, but for an impermanent length of time. A sojourner is different from a nomad, who merely travels through the land.

12:16 *Male and female slaves.* Presumably, Hagar was included with the maidservants given to Abram and Sarai as compensation.

Comment

12:2-4. This section does meet the necessary criteria for biblical poetry, and therefore it may be read as following:

² *“I will make you a great nation,*

And I will bless you,

And I will make your name great,

And it will be a blessing.

³ *“I will bless those who bless you,*

And those who curse you I will curse.

All the peoples of the earth

Will be blessed through you.”

12:1-20. This passage is the reason why Abram is so often described as the most faithful man in the Bible. A more thorough examination of this passage, however, seems to suggest that the characteristic in question is obedience, not faith. From a religious perspective, faith is belief in something without concrete proof. But in the passage, God

is actively speaking to Abram. God is right there, speaking to him. There is no reason for Abram to disbelieve God's existence. Further, there is no reason to believe that Abraham trusts that God will not allow him to kill his son. God tells Abram to sacrifice his son, so Abram must certainly believe that his errand will culminate in the death of his only son. Nevertheless, Abram *obeys* God's command. The characteristic of obedience is much more in question than the characteristic of faith.

CHAPTER TWO GENESIS THIRTEEN

Translation

^{13:1} And Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that was his, and Lot with him, to the Negeb. ² And Abram had a great deal of cattle and silver and gold. ³ He continued his journey from the Negeb until Beth-El, the place where his tent was at the beginning, between Beth-El and Ai, ⁴ the place where the altar he made before was, and there Abram called upon the name of YHWH. ⁵ Also Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ But the land could not support both of them living together, for their possessions were great and they were not able to live together. ⁷ There was strife between the shepherds of Abram's flocks and the shepherds of Lot's flocks. (Now the Canaanites and Perizzites were then living in the land.) ⁸ Abram said to Lot, "Let there not be strife between me and you, or between my herders and your herders, for we are kindred." ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Turn away from me, if you turn left, I will go right, if you turn right, I will go left." ¹⁰ Lot lifted his eyes and saw all of the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered (before YHWH destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of YHWH, like Egypt until Zoar. ¹¹ Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself, and Lot journeyed towards the East. Thus each separated from his brother. ¹² Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the plain, his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the people of Sodom were exceedingly wicked

and sinful against YHWH. ¹⁴ Then YHWH spoke to Abram, after Lot separated from him, “Lift your eyes and see from the place where you are, north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ For all the land you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶ And I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth – if a man is able to number the dust of the earth, your offspring could also be numbered. ¹⁷ Get up, traverse the land, its length and breadth, for I give it to you.” ¹⁸ Then Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and he built there an altar to YHWH.

Textual Notes

13:1. *Abram went up from Egypt.* One always travels *to* Egypt by “going down” and *from* Egypt by “going up” (Wevers 1993, 175).

13:2. *Abram had a great deal.* Literally: Abram was *heavy* with cattle and silver and gold.

13:6. *But the land could not support.* Literally: The land did not carry both of them living together. The English word “support” is an excellent translation because of its multiple connotations.

13:8. *For we are kindred.* Literally “...for we are men brothers.”

13:10. *Plain of the Jordan.* The Hebrew word for “plain” also signifies that something is round (see Brown Driver Briggs). Nevertheless in this context the word must signify “plain.” Nothing else would make sense in this situation.

Notes

13:3. *He continued his journey.* Abram is retracing his steps back to the land of Canaan.

13:10. *Like the garden of YHWH.* This must be a reference to the Garden of Eden. The plain of the Jordan is watered by many streams and rivers, and therefore appeared to be like the primeval Garden of Eden.

Comment

13:6. It is slightly ironic that Abram and Lot are no longer able to live together due to their many flocks and herds, a large majority of which must have been gifted to them after the Egyptian debacle.

13:10. Egypt is periodically flooded by the Nile, providing extremely fertile land for grazing and farming. Lot chooses the territory most similar to the land around the Nile.

13:14. God's covenant with Abram described here is a reiteration of the covenant described in 12:7.

13:17. Abram's traversing of the land promised to him by YHWH may have legal connotations. He is specifically commanded to walk the length and breadth of the land, which recalls an image of the measuring and marking of the boundaries of a purchased territory.

13:18. *By the oaks of Mamre.* The Hebrew word is often translated "terebinths" (see JPS). A terebinth is a small European tree of the cashew family. The Hebrew word has come under some debate, as many English translations have moved to the word "oak" (see NRSV, King James, among others). It is clear that the word in question is a mighty tree, and the oak and terebinth are similar in appearance. The remarkable physical appearance

of these trees often led to their use as geographical landmarks (see Genesis 12:6). Oaks and terebinths were often the sites of religious practice (Hosea 4:13) and theophanies (Genesis 12:6).

CHAPTER THREE GENESIS FOURTEEN

Translation

^{14:1} And it happened that in the reign of Amarphal, king of Senaar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Xodollogomor, king of Ailam, and Thalga king of nations, ² made war against Balla king of Sodom and against Basra king of Gomorrah and Senaar king of Adama and Sumobor king of Seboeim and against king Balak, that is Segor. ³ All these spoke together in the valley of salt, that is, the sea of salt. ⁴ For twelve years they were slaves to Xodollogomor, in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ And in the fourteenth year, Xodollogomor and the kings with him came, and they smote the giants in Astaroth Karnain, and together with strong nations, the Somites in the city of Saue, ⁶ and the Xorrites in the mountains of Seir, until the terebinth of Pharan, which is in the desert. ⁷ And returning, they came to the well of trial, which is in Kades, and they smote all the rulers of Amalek and the Amorites living in Asasan Thamar. ⁸ And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Adama, and the king of Seboeim, and king Balak, which is Segor, came out, and they drew up for battle in the valley of salt, ⁹ against Xodollogomor king of Ailam, and Thalga king of nations, and Amarphal king of Senaar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, the four of these kings against the five. ¹⁰ The valley of salt was filled with asphalt pits. And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah fled and fell in there. And the ones remaining fled into the hill area. ¹¹ They took every horse of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and they left. ¹² They also took Lot, Abram's

brother's son, and his possessions, and they left (he was dwelling in Sodom). ¹³ And coming, one of the escapees told Abram the Hebrew, the one Amoris, Eschol's brother and Aunan's brother, he was dwelling by the oak of Mambre, they were confederates of Abram. ¹⁴ Abram, hearing that his brother Lot was taken captive, counted his own homegrown servants, three hundred eighteen, and he went after them until Dan. ¹⁵ He fell upon them at night, he and his servants with him, and he struck them, and he chased them until Chobal, left of Damascus. ¹⁶ And he returned every horse of Sodom, and Lot his brother he returned, and all his possessions and the women and people. ¹⁷ The king of Sodom came out to meet him, after he returned from the slaughter of Xodollogomor and the kings who were with him, in the Saue valley, the open field of the king. ¹⁸ And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out loaves and wine, and he was a priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed Abram and said, "Blessed is Abram by God Most High, who created heaven and earth," ²⁰ and blessed is God Most High, who gave your enemies into your hands." He gave him a tithe of everything. ²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the men, take the horses for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I will stretch my hand out to God Most High, who created heaven and earth, ²³ I will in no way take anything from a shoestring to a sandal thong from all that is yours, so you will not say, 'I made Abram wealthy.'" ²⁴ Other than what the young men ate and the portion of the men who went with me, Eschol, Aunan, Mambre, these will take a portion."

Textual Notes

14:1. *Amraphel*. This king was originally identified with Hammurabi, but that identification has since been disregarded (Sarna 1989, 103).

Thalga, kings of nations. The Hebrew is “king of Goiim,” but this is more likely the term for “nations,” and not a place name.

14:3. *The sea of salt*. Also known as the Dead Sea, so named because it is nearly nine times as salty as the ocean, which prevents any macroscopic aquatic organisms from living in it.

Valley of Salt. This area was later submerged as the Dead Sea expanded.

14:10. *Asphalt pits*. Often translated as “pits of bitumen.” There are a number of naturally occurring pits of asphalt surrounding the southern portion of the Dead Sea.

14:14. *Homegrown servants*. As opposed to purchased servants, these servants were born into Abram’s household.

Notes

14:5. *The giants*. In Hebrew the *Rephaim*, a race of giants that inhabited the land of Canaan before the Israelites settled in the territory (Genesis 15:20).

14:7. *Rulers of Amalek*. The Amalekites eventually become the archenemies of the Hebrew people (Genesis 17:1).

14:13. *Abram the Hebrew*. Typically, the term “Hebrew” is only used by an Israelite when he is identifying himself to a non-Israelite (See Jonah 1:9). Here, the term is used by the narrator, which is unusual (Friedman 1987, 55).

14:14. *Until Dan*. The northernmost city in Israel.

14:22. *Stretch out my hand.* A symbolic gesture signifying the swearing of an oath.

14:23. *Shoestring to a sandal thong.* A small piece of leather or a large piece of leather.

Comment

14:18. *Melchizedek.* The name Melchizedek likely means “king of righteousness.” He is described as the king of Salem, which is probably a reference to Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2).

Melchizedek is both a king and a priest, which would not have been possible in ancient Israel, where the roles of priest and king were separate. He offers Abram bread and wine, and then blesses him in the name of “God Most High.” It has been suggested that this story is an attempt to connect the ancient Israelites with the original inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, which would eventually become the site of the high temple (Hiebert 1996, 31). In the Christian tradition, Melchizedek is a Christ figure, offering gifts of bread and wine (Luke 22) and blessing in the name of God Most High (Kugel 2007, 356).

14:1-24. This entire passage is unparalleled with both Genesis and the Pentateuch as a whole. Its connections to the surrounding narrative are difficult to see, and it appears that this passage comes from a source apart from the traditional four: J, E, P, and D.

CHAPTER FOUR GENESIS FIFTEEN

Translation

^{15:1} And after these things, the word of the Lord was to Abram in a vision saying, “Do not fear Abram, I am your shield. Your reward will be exceedingly great.” ² And Abram said, “Master Lord, what will you give me?” Now I am left childless. The son of Masek, my homegrown maidservant: Damaskos Eliezer, he will inherit from me.” ³ And Abram said, “Since you did not give seed to me, now my servant will inherit from me.” ⁴ And immediately the voice of the Lord was to him saying, “This one will not inherit from you, but one who comes from you, he will inherit from you.” ⁵ Then he led him outside and he said to him, lift up your eyes to the skies and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And he said, “Thus will your seed be.” ⁶ And Abram trusted God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. ⁷ Then he said to him, “I am the God who led you from the country of the Chaldeans, so as to give to you this land to inherit.” ⁸ And he said, “Master Lord, how will I know that I will inherit it?” ⁹ And he said to him, “Get for me a three year old heifer, a three year old goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove and a pigeon.” ¹⁰ He got all these for him, and he divided them in the middle, and he placed each opposite the other, but the birds he did not divide. ¹¹ And then the birds descended on the bodies, the divided ones, and Abram sat down with them. ¹² And near the sun’s setting a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and dark fear falls on him. ¹³ And it was said to Abram: “I certainly know that your offspring will be sojourners in a land not theirs, and

they will abuse them and enslave them and abase them for four hundred years. ¹⁴ And the nation to which they were enslaved I will judge, and after these things they will leave from here with much property. ¹⁵ But you will depart to your fathers in peace; you will be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they will return here, because the sins of the Amorites have not been satisfied until now. ¹⁷ When the sun was already set, there was a fire, and an earthen pot smoking and torches of fire, and they passed between the divided bodies. ¹⁸ In that day the Lord God erected a covenant with Abram saying, “I will give your offspring this land, from the river of Egypt until the great river, the river Euphrates. ¹⁹ The Keinites and the Kainaites and the Kelmonites, ²⁰ and the Chettites and the Pherezites and the Raphain ²¹ and the Amorites and the Chananites and the Heubaites and the Gergesites and the Jebusites.”

Textual Notes

15:6. *It was reckoned to him as righteousness.* This peculiar phrase is one of the main foundations for the common portrayal of Abram as the most exemplary “man of faith.”

15:7. *Country of the Chaldeans.* The Hebrew has “land” of the Chaldeans.

15:11. *Abram sat down with them.* The Greek has Abram sitting down with the animals, most likely a misreading of the Hebrew נשב, “to drive away” for the Hebrew ישב, meaning “to sit, to dwell.”

15:13. *I certainly know.* “I will certainly know” is literally “Knowing I will know”, the Greek translator’s attempt to render the Hebrew infinitive absolute, a construction used to convey emphasis.

15:18. *Erected a covenant.* The Greek term “to erect a covenant” does not convey the sense of the Hebrew “to cut a covenant,” presumably originating either in the cutting seen during this ceremony, or possibly to the cutting involved in the process of circumcision.

Notes

15:2. *Do not fear.* Apparently a divine manifestation, even if it is only a voice and not an appearance, is a terrifying experience. This fear can be seen time and again in the ancient Israelites’ encounters with their God.

15:3. *My servant will inherit.* This statement foreshadows Sara’s giving of her maidservant Hagar to Abram in order that he might have a son of his own to inherit his possessions, as opposed to a “homegrown servant.”

15:9. *Three year old heifer.* A three year old animal was fully grown, and a child of that age would also be considered fully weaned (see 1 Samuel 1:24).

15:12. *A deep sleep fell on Abram.* The vision occurs while Abram is in an altered state of consciousness.

15:15. *In peace.* There is likely a pun here. Abram will die and depart to his fathers “in peace,” i.e. in a ripe old age and not in the time of conflict. The Hebrew word “shalom,” can also signify wholeness, meaning that Abram will die without being cut into pieces, which would have been his fate had he broken the treaty he made with God (see the comment on 15:10).

15:16. *Sins of the Amorites.* This verse is best understood in light of Exodus 6:16-20 (Wever 1997, 213).

15:17. *Earthen pot smoking*. This covenantal imagery is not as odd as it seems. Such imagery is widely attested in comparative ancient Near Eastern literature. Akkadian texts in particular evince such imagery (Speiser 1964 113).

15:18. *River of Egypt*. There is some debate regarding the meaning of “river of Egypt.” The majority view is that it refers to the Wadi El-Arish, at the border of Egypt, and not the Nile River. It is plausible, however, that the author was indeed referring to a kingdom stretching from the Nile all the way to the Euphrates.

Comment

15:2. Abram’s negotiation with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah has apparently emboldened him. When God tells him that his reward will be abundant, he bluntly replies that he has no children, meaning that his reward is worthless, since he has no heirs to inherit it.

15:5. This is the third time Abram is promised many descendants. Abram has been told that his offspring will be as numerous as sand, now they will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. As we have seen earlier in the passage (15:2), nothing is worth as much as true inheritants. All the goods in the world are worthless without a child to inherit them after Abram’s death.

15:10. The ritual is God’s response to Abram’s request for a sign to confirm the covenant. There are a wide variety of interpretations of the sacrificial ritual, none of which provides a definitive interpretation. The most likely explanation, however, is that when a covenant is being made, the weaker of the two parties separates sacrificial animals and then walks through them, signifying that the same fate will await him if he

breaks the treaty (Speiser 1964, 112). The Hebrew phrase, “to cut a covenant,” refers to this covenantal ceremony, and not to the ceremony of circumcision.

CHAPTER FIVE GENESIS SIXTEEN

Translation

^{16:1} Sara, Abram's wife was not bearing him children, but she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. ² And Sara said to Abram, "Look, the Lord has closed me off from bearing children. Therefore, go into my maidservant, perhaps you will have children from her. Abram heeded her voice. ³ And Sara, Abram's wife, taking Hagar her own Egyptian maidservant (after Abram dwelt in Canaan for ten years) gave her to Abram her husband as a wife for him. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived, and she saw that she had conceived, and her mistress was dishonored before her. ⁵ And Sara said to Abram, "I am being treated unjustly by you; I have given my maidservant into your breast, and look, having seen that she has conceived, I am dishonored before her. May God judge between you and me." ⁶ But Abram said to Sara, "Look, your maidservant is before you, do to her as seems fit to you. And Sara abused her, and she fled from before her face. ⁷ Then an angel of the Lord found her by the spring of water in the desert, near the spring on the road to Shour. ⁸ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Hagar, maidservant of Sara, where do you come from? And where are you going? And she said, "From before the face of my mistress Sara I am fleeing. ⁹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and accept the abuse from her hands." ¹⁰ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will certainly increase your offspring, and it cannot be counted because of its abundance." ¹¹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Look, you

are pregnant, and you will bear a son, and you will call his name Ishmael, because the Lord heeded your abuse. ¹² This one will be a wild man, his hands against all and the hands of all against him, and against the face of his brothers he will dwell.” ¹³ And Hagar called on the name of the Lord who was speaking to her, “You are the God who sees me,” because she said, “for I saw in person the one who appeared to me.” ¹⁴ Because of this, she called the well, “the well of the one I personally saw.” Look, it is between Kades and Barad. ¹⁵ And Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram called the name of his son, the one Hagar bore to him, Ishmael. ¹⁶ And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

Textual Notes

16:2. In the Greek, Sara gives Abram Hagar so that “...perhaps you will have children from her.” This is very different from the Hebrew, in which Sara gives Hagar to Abram so that she may “...perhaps be built up through her.”

16:3. *Bear a son.* There is a pun in the Hebrew on the word for son, *ben*. Sara will be built up, *banah*, through her son, *ben*.

16:4. “...that she had conceived” is literally “that she had in the womb”.

16:10. *I will certainly multiply.* The translation from the Septuagint of “I will certainly multiply” is literally, “multiplying I will multiply”. This is another case of how the Greek translator is attempting to convey the emphatic element of the Hebrew infinitive absolute.

Notes

16:4. *Dishonored before her.* The bearing of children was extremely important in this society. Once Hagar had borne children for Abram she thought less of Abram's wife, who had not yet borne children for her husband.

16:5. There are ancient Near Eastern legal precedents for Sara's actions to provide her husband with an heir. Comparative legal texts show that the wife, if unable to produce an heir, was obligated to provide a concubine to supply an heir, and that the concubine should not forget her place within the household hierarchy (Speiser 1964, 120).

Treated unjustly. Sara's words here to Abram are interesting. She herself gave Hagar to her husband, and when her plan is successful, she claims that Abram has treated her unjustly and asks for God to judge between her and Abram. Perhaps Abram showed too much favor to Hagar after she bore him a son.

16:7. *Road to Shour.* Hagar flees south towards Egypt, her homeland (Sarna 1989, 120).

16:15. It is interesting to note that Abram himself names both Ishmael and Isaac, despite the fact that the designated names were given to Hagar and Sara, respectively. This seems to be reflective of the family dynamic within ancient Israelite society.

Comment

16:2. We have already read of God's covenant with Abram, and of God's promises to give him innumerable heirs. It must be an extreme disappointment to learn that those heirs may come from his wife's maidservant Hagar, rather than from his wife Sara.

16:3. There is no good explanation for why the length of Abram's stay in Canaan is stated here. What appears to be merely a brief aside, however, later became the basis for

Jewish *halakhah* regarding divorce. If a man's wife does not bear him children for ten years after the marriage, he may divorce her.

16:7. This is the first time in the biblical text we read of an angel. This divine messenger takes care of Hagar while she founders in the wilderness.

16:10-11. This annunciation scene is echoed in the later annunciation of Isaac, and still later in the annunciation found in Isaiah.

CHAPTER SIX GENESIS SEVENTEEN

Translation

^{17:1} And it happened that Abram was ninety-nine years old, and the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am your God; be pleasing before me, and be perfect. ² And I will erect my covenant between me and you, and I will increase you exceedingly. ³ And Abram fell on his face, and he spoke to God saying, ⁴“And I, look, my covenant is with you, and you will be the father of many nations. ⁵ And your name will not be called Abram, but Abraham will be your name, because I will make you the father of many nations. ⁶ And I will increase you exceedingly, and I will make you into a nation, and kings will come out from you. ⁸ And I will give you and your offspring after you the land in which you dwell, all the land of Canaan as an eternal possession and I will be their God.” ⁹ And God said to Abraham, “And you will obey my covenant, you and your offspring after you until their generations. ¹⁰ And this is the covenant that you will obey between me and you, and between your offspring after you until their generations, every male among you will be circumcised. ¹¹ And you will circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² And an eight-year old child will be circumcised among you, every male of your generations, also the servant born in your home and the one bought with silver. And my covenant will be on your flesh as an eternal covenant. ¹⁴ And an uncircumcised male, who is not circumcised with regard to the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul will be destroyed from

among his family, for he broke my covenant!”¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, “Sara, your wife, her name will not be called Sara, but Sarah will be her name. And I will bless her, and I will give you a child through her. And I will bless him, and he will become a nation, and kings of nations will come from him.”¹⁷ And Abraham fell on his face and he laughed and he said in his mind, “Will a son really be born to a hundred year old man, as Sarah, ninety years old, will bear.”¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Ishmael, may this one live before you.”¹⁹ And God said to Abraham, “Certainly, look, your wife Sarah will bear a son to you, and you will call his name Isaac, and I will erect my covenant with him as an eternal covenant, and with his offspring after him.”²⁰ But with regard to Ishmael, look, I heard you, and I blessed him, and I will increase him and make him numerous, twelve nations he will bear, and I will make him into a great nation.”²¹ And I will erect my covenant with Isaac, who Sarah bore to you, at this time next year.”²² And he finished speaking to him, and God went up from Abraham.²³ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all his bought servants, and every male of the men in Abraham’s house, and he circumcised their foreskins in the designated time of that year, just as God spoke to him.²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin,²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old, when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.²⁶ In the time of that day Abraham and Ishmael his son were circumcised,²⁷ and all the men of his house and the bought servants and the servants of foreign countries – he circumcised them.

Textual Notes

17:1. *El Shaddai*. In the Hebrew, it is El Shaddai who appears to Abraham. This divine designation is most often translated “Almighty,” a translation that dates back to rabbinic times. Comparative linguistics would suggest that the word is related to the word “mountain,” however (Speiser 1964, 124).

17:5. *Abraham*. The name is a pun on his designation as the “father of many nations.”

17:10. This covenant story is a doublet, with the first story of the Abrahamic covenant occurring in Gen 15. In both instances, the Hebrew phrase is “to cut” a covenant. The first possibility for “to cut” is with the cutting of the animals, and the second is with the cutting of the foreskin.

17:17. *He laughed*. There is a pun in the Hebrew, with “to laugh” and “Isaac.”

17:20. *Ishmael*. There is also a pun in the Hebrew with “Ishmael” and “I heard.”

Notes

17:5. This is the first of many name changes in the Hebrew Bible resulting from significant events. Sarai becomes Sarah, Jacob becomes Israel, among others.

17:12. *And the one bought with silver*. All males in an Israelite household, even the slaves, must be circumcised.

17:17. *He laughed*. Even though life spans at this time were significantly longer according to the biblical text, 100 years old must have been considerably past child-bearing age.

17:20. *I will make him into a great nation.* Ishmael becomes the father of the Ishmaelites.

17:24. *Ninety-nine years old.* Ouch.

Comment

17:5. The act of changing one's name at a significant juncture in one's life has a number of biblical precedents. Jacob becomes Israel. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah become Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Even God himself changes names, revealing His divine name to Moses at the burning bush. There is a great deal of power in a name, a fact that was recognized by the biblical authors.

17:27. It is known that in many ancient societies, circumcision was performed on an adult, often immediately prior to the wedding. This custom is recognized here in the circumcision of adults, but the story also provides the etiology for infant circumcision in verse 14.

CHAPTER SEVEN GENESIS EIGHTEEN

Translation

^{18:1} God appeared to him by the oak of Mamre, he was sitting by the door of his tent at midday. ² And looking up with his eyes he saw, and look, three men were standing above him. And having seen, he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and he bowed down on the ground. ³ And he said, “O Lord, if I have found favor before you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let water be brought, and let him wash your feet, and rest underneath the tree. ⁵ And I will bring food, and you eat, and after this you will go on your way, when you have turned aside to your servant.” And he said, “Do what you have said.” ⁶ And Abram hurried to the tent, to Sara, and he said to her, “Hurry and knead three measures of choice flour and make cakes.” ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd, and he took a tender young calf, and he gave it to the servant, and he hastened to prepare it. ⁸ He took butter and milk and the young calf that he prepared and he served them, and they ate; he stood by them under the tree. ⁹ Then he said to him, “Where is your wife Sara?” And he replied and said, “Look, in the tent.” ¹⁰ And he said “When I return and come to you at this designated time next year, your wife Sara will have a son.” But Sara listened at the door of the tent, being behind it. ¹¹ Both Abraham and Sara were old, having advanced in days, and Sara had left off having the way of women. ¹² And Sara laughed to herself, saying, “It has not yet happened to me now, and my lord is old.” ¹³ And the Lord said to Abram, “Why did Sara laugh to herself, saying, ‘Will I really bear?’ But I have

grown old. ¹⁴ Is the matter impossible for God? At this designated time next year I will return to you, and Sara will have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sara denied, saying, “I did not laugh, for I was afraid.” And he said, “But you did indeed laugh.”

¹⁶ Then, getting up from there, the men looked down on the face of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was traveling with them, escorting them. ¹⁷ Then the lord said, “Should I hide from Abraham, my servant, the thing I am doing?” ¹⁸ Abraham will become a great and expansive nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ Because I know that he will command his sons and his house after him, and he will keep the ways of the Lord, to deal with justice and righteousness, so that the Lord will bring to Abraham all that he has said to him.” ²⁰ Then the Lord said, “The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has increased, and their sins are exceedingly great. ²¹ So I will go down to see if their cry coming to me is being stopped, and if not, I will know.”

²² And turning away from there, the men came to Sodom. Abraham was standing in front of the Lord. ²³ And having drawn near, Abraham said, “You surely would not destroy the righteous with the ungodly, so the righteous will be just like the ungodly. ²⁴ If there are fifty righteous in the city, will you destroy them? You will not let the place go unpunished, for the fifty righteous, if they are in it. ²⁵ You will certainly not do this thing, to kill the righteous with the ungodly, so that the righteous are just like the ungodly. Of course not. The judge of all the earth, will you do justice?” ²⁶ And the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will let the entire place go unpunished because of them.” ²⁷ And Abraham replied, he said, “Now I began to speak to the master, and I am earth and dirt.

²⁸ If the fifty righteous are lessened by five, will you then destroy the entire city on account of those five?” And he said, “I will certainly not destroy it if I find forty five there.” ²⁹ And he continued to speak to him and he said, “And I there are found there forty?” And he said, “I will certainly not destroy it then on account of forty.” ³⁰ And he said, “Let it not be, oh lord, if I may speak, if there are found there thirty?” And he said, “I will certainly not destroy it if there are thirty found there.” ³¹ And he said, “Since I have to speak to the master, what is there are found there twenty?” And he said, “I will certainly not then destroy it on account of twenty.” ³² And he said, “Let it not be, oh lord, if I speak just once more. If there are found there ten? And he said, “I will certainly not then destroy it on account of ten.” ³³ The Lord left as he stopped speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Textual Notes

18:1. *At midday.* In the Hebrew, Abraham is sitting at his tent “as the day was growing hot.” The Greek eliminates the ambiguity by specifying that it is at midday.

18:3. *My Lord.* There is a pun here on the Hebrew word *adonai*. The word can identify a human person of importance as well as the divine. We have not yet been told that the three visitors are divine beings, so this may be a foreshadowing of later developments.

18:6. *Three measures.* In Hebrew, three *seahs*. One *seah* is one third of an *ephah*.

18:10. *At the designated time.* When her pregnancy has come to completion.

18:17-19. It is unclear to whom God is speaking. There are three men, presumably angels, with whom he may perhaps be speaking. It is also possible that he is speaking to himself, and that here we are being given access to the internal divine monologue.

18:30. The wording here is clipped and confusing, reflecting Abraham's desire to be appear humble before God. The wording sounds as if Abraham were stuttering in fear, "...let it not be...oh Lord...if I may speak..."

Notes

18:2-3. *He ran.* Abraham is running to meet his guests, even though it is at the hottest point of the day. This serves to reinforce the importance of hospitality within ancient Israelite culture. The strangers are warmly welcomed into his household.

18:7. *Tender young calf.* Meat was reserved for special occasions. Abraham is rolling out the red carpet for his mysterious guests.

18:12. At this point life spans were much longer than they are now. It appears safe to say, however, that after one hundred years women would have gone through menopause, and men would be unlikely to have children.

18:14. *Is the matter impossible for God?* The speaker obviously feels that indeed nothing is impossible for the Lord.

18:23. Again, Abraham is very bold when speaking to God.

18:24. *If there are fifty?* This sequence is reflective of the cultural method of negotiation. An outlandish offer is made, and then whittled down to an acceptable compromise. Abraham begins the bargaining at fifty men, but the number is eventually brought down to ten.

Comment

18:5. Hospitality was extremely important within ancient Near Eastern society. It was so important, in fact, that many believe that the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is really a tale of poor hospitality and what results from it.

18:22. The ambiguity in the Hebrew is preserved in the Greek. The reader does not know exactly who is going into Sodom and Gomorrah, and who is staying. Are there three men along with God, or only two? Are they angels? The ambiguity seems purposeful, as it would be very easy to clarify. A better understanding of the ancient Near Eastern concept of “angel” would be helpful.

18:28. God seems very good-natured about the whole negotiating process. After he states that he will not destroy the city if there are fifty righteous people, Abraham asks if he would destroy it if there are five less than fifty. What is God’s response? “No, I will not destroy the city if there are forty-five.” He most certainly sees through Abraham’s rhetoric. Nevertheless, God is a compassionate God, who cares for the people and shows forgiveness in the face of sin.

18:32. After a lengthy, roundabout negotiation, Abraham finally gets the minimum number of righteous people down to ten. Unfortunately, however, there are not ten righteous to be found in the city.

CHAPTER EIGHT GENESIS NINETEEN

Translation

^{19:1} Then the two angels came into Sodom during the evening, and Lot was sitting by the gate of Sodom. Lot saw and stood to meet them, and he bowed with his face on the ground. ² And he said, “Look, lords, turn aside to the house of your servant and rest, and wash your feet, and arising you will go on your way.” And they said, “No, but in the street we will rest.” ³ And he was pressuring them, and they turned aside to him. They went into his house, and he prepared drink for them and he baked bread for them, and they ate before they slept. ⁴ And the men of the city, the Sodomites, surrounded the house from young to old, all the people together. ⁵ And they were shouting to Lot, and they said to him, “Where are the men who came to you in the night? Lead them out to us, so that we might be with them. ⁶ Then Lot went out to them, and he shut the door behind him.

⁷ And he said to them, “Do not, brothers, act wickedly.” ⁸ I have two daughters, who have not known a man. I will lead them out to you, and you will do to them as you see fit, only do not do anything unjust whatsoever to these men, for they come under the shelter of my tent.” ⁹ They said “Stand back from there. You came to sojourn, you will not surely pass judgment? So now we will abuse you more than them. And the men were harassing Lot, and they drew near to break down the door. ¹⁰ But the men, stretching out their hands, drew themselves into the house, and they shut the door of the

house. ¹¹ And the men who were at the door of the house were struck blind, from small to large, and they were struggling, seeking for the door. ¹² Then the men said to Lot, “Is there anyone related to you here, sons-in-law, or sons, or daughters, or if there is a relative of yours in the city, lead them from this place. ¹³ For we are destroying this place, for their cry has been lifted up before the Lord, and the Lord sent us to destroy it. ¹⁴ Then Lot went out, and he spoke to his sons-in-law, those who took his daughters, and he said, “Get up and leave this place, for the Lord is destroying the city,” but to his sons-in-law he appeared to be joking. ¹⁵ When it was dawn, the angels were hurrying to Lot, saying, “Stand up, take your wife and your two daughters that you have, and leave, so that you will not be destroyed with the sinful ones in the city.” ¹⁶ And they were disturbed, and the angels grabbed his hand and his wife’s hands and his two daughter’s hands, and the Lord spared him. ¹⁷ And it happened that when they led them outside they said, “Be sure to save your life; do not look at the things behind you or stay in the surrounding area, keep safe in the mountains, lest you be taken away with the others.” ¹⁸ Then Lot said to them, “I pray, oh lord, ¹⁹ since your servant found mercy before you, and you made your righteousness great, which you are doing to keep my soul alive, but I will not be able to stay safe in the mountains, lest bad things overtake me and I die. ²⁰ Look, this city, which is small, is near for me to escape and take refuge there. I will be safe there, isn’t it small? And my soul will live on account of you.” ²¹ And he said to him, “Look, I wondered at your face and concerning this thing: that you did not destroy the city of which you spoke. ²² Therefore hurry to be safe there, for I will not be able to do anything until you go there.” Because of this he named the city Segor. ²³ The sun came out over the land, and Lot went into Segor, ²⁴ and the Lord rained down on Sodom

and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of the heavens. ²⁵ And he destroyed these cities in which Lot was settled, and every neighboring one and all those living in the cities and everything arising from the earth. ²⁶ And his wife looked at the things behind her, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ Abraham arose early in the morning in the place where he had stood before the Lord, ²⁸ and he looked upon the face of Sodom and Gomorrah and on the face of the surrounding land, and he saw, and the flame of the land was going up like steam from a furnace. ²⁹ And it happened that while the Lord destroyed all the cities of the surrounding area, God remembered Abraham and sent away Lot from the middle of the catastrophe, when the Lord destroyed those cities in which Lot dwelled.

³⁰ And Lot went out from Segor, and he was living in the mountains with his two daughters, because he was afraid to dwell in Segor, and he lived in the cave, he and his two daughters with him. ³¹ The older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no one in the land who will come in to us, as is fitting in all the land. ³² So here let us give our father wine to drink, and let us lie with him, and let us bring up offspring from our father.” ³³ That night they gave wine to their father to drink, and the older went in and lay with her father that night, and he did not know when she laid down and when she arose. ³⁴ And it happened that the next day the older said to the younger, “Look, yesterday I lay with our father, let us give him wine to drink again tonight, and you will go in and lie with him, and let us bring up offspring from our father.” ³⁵ And that night they gave wine to their father to drink, and the younger went in and laid with her father. And he did not know her lying down or her getting up. ³⁶ And Lot’s two daughters conceived from their father. ³⁷ And the older bore a son, and she called his

name Moab, saying, “From my father” – this one is the father of the Moabites until this day. ³⁸ And the younger bore a son, and she called his name Amman, the son of my family – that one is the father of the Ammonites until this day.

Textual Notes

19:1. *The two angels.* Now there are two angels at Sodom and Gomorrah. God stayed behind with Abraham, while the two divine messengers journeyed on to see to the destruction or redemption of the wicked cities.

19:2. *Turn aside to the house.* Pastoral nomads like Abraham dwell in tents, while city-dwellers like Lot live in houses.

19:5. *Be with them.* A euphemism for sexual relations.

19:11. *They were struggling.* Even after being blinded the men continued trying to break into the house.

19:14. *Who took his daughters.* The men who married his daughters.

19:24. *Brimstone and fire.* The traditional brimstone and fire translation may be outdated, but its familiarity and intimidating nature make it the best choice for rendering this phrase.

19:28. *Flame of the land.* The city was still burning the next morning.

Note

19:1. *Sitting at the gate.* It was customary to sit at the gate, especially if one was wealthy or important. This is also where much of the community's business is transacted, as well as the main location for the announcing of special events, as in Ruth 4.

19:2. *Turn aside to the house of your servant.* Lot is as hospitable as Abraham, inviting the strangers to rest at his house and wash their feet.

19:3. *He was pressuring them.* Perhaps Lot was too hospitable, forcing the guests to accept his invitation.

19:8. *I have two daughters.* It is certainly true that women were not as valued as men in ancient Israelite society. This verse, however, may reflect the extreme emphasis placed on hospitality, and not the lack of emphasis placed on the value of women within the culture.

19:9. *You came here to sojourn.* Lot was an alien in their land, not a permanent resident. Apparently this precluded him from some of the rights and privileges shared by permanent residents.

19:20. *Isn't it small?* Again, humans are able to negotiate with God. This time, Lot persuades God to allow him to travel to the village of Segor, rather than into the mountains.

19:24. *The Lord rained down.* Earlier, the two men, presumably angels, claim that they will themselves destroy the city. Yet now it is God who is raining down fire and brimstone to destroy the city.

19:26. *She became a pillar of salt.* This is the etiology of a number of peculiar salt formations found around the Dead Sea.

19:28. *Like steam from a furnace.* The smoke rising like steam from a furnace is reminiscent of the covenant ceremony of Genesis 15.

Comment

19:22. It is fascinating that God claims that He will be unable to do anything until Lot has safely escaped from the city. Human actions are constraining divine ones, perhaps illustrating the power of a covenantal promise, because he has pledged to Abraham that he will spare the righteous of the city.

19:24. This story explains the barren landscape surrounding the Dead Sea. At present, Bedouin guides will lead tourists to two sizable salt deposits around the Dead Sea, presumably the locations of the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This narrative tells why this area is a desolate wasteland peppered with asphalt pits and salt deposits, when it was at one time (supposedly) a fertile area replete with vegetation.

19:37. The Moabites and Ammonites lived near the ancient Israelites. Their languages were similar, and they also possibly shared a common ancestor. Despite this, there was a great deal of strife between the groups. This story pays lip service to the similarities between them, making the ancestors of the Moabites and Ammonites relatives of the ancestors of the ancient Israelites. Nevertheless, the stories are extremely caustic. There are few things as insulting as suggesting that a nation's ancestors conceived in incest.

CHAPTER NINE GENESIS TWENTY

Translation

^{20:1} And Abraham journeyed from there into a land towards the south, and he dwelled between Kades and Shour, and he sojourned in Gerara. ² Abraham said concerning his wife Sarah “She is my sister,” because he feared to say, “She is my wife,” lest the men of the city kill him on account of her. Then Abimelech the king of Gerara sent for and took Sarah. ³ God went in to Abimelech in his sleep in the night, and he said to him, “Look, you will die on account of the woman whom you took, for she has been living with a man. ⁴ Abimelech had not touched her, and he said, “Lord, will you destroy and ignorant and righteous nation? ⁵ Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she said to me, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this with a pure heart and righteous hands.” ⁶ God said to him in his sleep, “I know that you did this with a pure heart, and I kept you from sinning against me, because of this I did not allow you to touch her. ⁷ Now give the woman to the husband, for he is a prophet and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give her back, know that you will die, you and all that is yours.” ⁸ And Abimelech arose early in the morning and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke about all these matters to them, and all the men were very frightened. ⁹ And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? Did we sin against you, for you to bring a great sin upon me and my kingdom? A deed, which no one should do, you have done to me.” ¹⁰ Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you see, that you did

this?” ¹¹ And Abraham said, “Because I said, certainly there is no fear of God in this place, they will kill me on account of my wife. ¹² Because she is truly my sister through my father, but not from my mother, and then she became my wife. ¹³ And it happened that when God led me out from my father’s house and I said to her, ‘Do this righteous deed for me, in each place we enter, say of me that ‘He is my brother.’” ¹⁴ Abimelech took a thousand drachma, sheep, calves, male servants, and maidservants, and he gave them to Abraham, and he returned to him his wife Sarah. ¹⁵ And Abimelech said to Abraham, “Look, my land is in front of you, settle wherever pleases you.” ¹⁶ And he said to Sarah, “Look, I gave a thousand drachmas to your brother, this is for you, for your honor, and for those with you – be truthful in everything.” ¹⁷ Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maidservants, and they bore children, ¹⁸ because the Lord closed up all the wombs in Abimelech’s household on account of Abraham’s wife Sarah.

Textual Notes

20:1. *Kadesh and Shour*. Abraham travels south.

20:2. *Abimelech*. In Hebrew, the name is “My father is king,” a common designation for royalty.

20:3. *In his sleep*. God appears to him in a dream.

20:4. *Had not touched her*. He had not had sexual intercourse with her.

20:7. *Prophet*. This is the first time the word “prophet” is mentioned in the text. The only obvious role Abraham has here is to intercede for the people, as he did for the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah.

20:12. *She is truly my sister.* She has the same father as Abraham, but not the same mother. She is his half-sister.

Notes

20:2. *She is my sister.* This is the second time Abraham has passed off his wife as his sister. The first time he tried it, he met with a great deal of success, as Pharaoh gifted him cattle and goods to smooth over the wife-sister fiasco.

20:3. *In the night.* Here, God appears to a person through a dream, rather than as a figure like a human being, as we saw in the previous chapter. This may point to a shift in narrative source, from J to E.

Sent for and took Sarah. Apparently she has lost none of her famous beauty.

20:14. *He gave them to Abraham.* The second occasion of Abraham's trickery also meets with success, as Abimelech gifts him money and cattle.

20:16. *For your honor.* The primary person at fault is Abraham, who orchestrated the whole scheme. Sarah was not at liberty to disobey her husband's wishes.

20:17. *They bore children.* Again we are reminded of the importance of childbearing within that society.

Comment

20:1-17. This is the second time Abraham has used deception to secure his own life. As he did prior to the encounter with Pharaoh, Abraham instructs Sarah to claim that he is her brother, so that people will not kill him in order to take her. Again, the king finds out that Sarah is truly Abraham's wife, and he is given riches and cattle in compensation for

his emotional distress. It is interesting that two similar stories, both of which are unfavorable to Abraham, are included in the narrative of the Israelite people's greatest patriarch.

20:7. *He is a prophet.* Although Abraham is the perpetrator of the crime and Abimelech is the victim, it is Abimelech who is instructed to pray to Abraham in order to save his own life. According to the text, Abraham is a prophet who can command divine intercession. It is interesting to note that the author would connect an ancient Patriarch with an institution that during the author's time was an organized position entwined with the Israelite monarchy.

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