

## Themes and Plot in Genesis 12-24

### THEME: OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S CALL TO LEAVE BEHIND THE FAMILIAR (LAND, FAMILY, HOME) TO GO WHERE AND TO WHAT GOD CALLS

#### **Plot expressions of theme:**

YHWH's call to Abram to leave Ur/Haran to "the land that I will show you" (12:1ff)

The "covenant between the pieces" calling Abram to trust in YHWH's blessing despite the lack of children (15:1-21)

The angels' call to Lot and his family to leave Sodom (19:1-30)

God's call to Abraham to obey Sarah's word regarding Hagar and Ishmael (21:9-14)

God's call to Abraham to offer Isaac as an offering (22:1-19)

### THEME: YHWH'S PROMISES OF BLESSING AND ABUNDANCE ARE TRUSTWORTHY

**Plot expressions of theme:** (see *Invitations, Promises and Responses in Genesis 12-25* chart)

### THEME: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVINE AND HUMAN INITIATIVES

#### **Plot expressions of theme:**

Struggle over finding food amidst famine: where one is, or in "empire"?

12:10-20 "sister-wife" in Egypt

20:1-18 sister/wife in Gerar

Struggle over food and water in the parched land

13:5-18 split between Abram and Lot over survival on the land

21:22-34 argument over a well between Abraham and Abimelech

Struggle over having a son

16:1-6 Sarah sends Abram to Hagar

19:30-38 Lot's daughters get pregnant by their drunk father

Struggle over fulfillment of the promise of land

23:1-20 Abraham negotiates the purchase of the Cave of Machpelah as a burial ground

Struggle over the inheritance of God's promises

11:30: Sarai's barrenness

12:10-20 attempt to "get rid" of Sarai?

13:5-18 Lot leaves the land of Canaan and is separated from the possibility of inheritance

15:1-4 Abram expects a foreigner to inherit in the absence of children

16:1-6 Sarai offers Hagar to Abram, then sends her away

21:10-21 Sarah orders Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael

22:1-19 Abraham goes to offer up Isaac

24:1-67 Abraham sends his servant to Paddan-aram in Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac

### THEME: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE/COVENANT AND OTHER PEOPLES

#### **Plot expressions of theme:**

Abram and Sarai in Egypt (12:10-20)

Lot settles in the cities of the Plain while Abram stays in his tent (13:10-18)

Abram forms military alliance with Amorites to rescue Lot (14:12-24)

Eliezer of Damascus is not to be Abram's heir (15:2-4)

Abram's seed shall be aliens in a foreign land for 400 years (15:13-16)

Abram's seed will receive the land of the various peoples already there (15:18-21)

Lot and his family called out of Sodom because of Abram (19:12-22)

Abraham and Sarah in Gerar (20:1-18)

Isaac "being played with" by "the son of Hagar the Egyptian" (21:9-14)

Abraham negotiates a purchase of land from the Hittites (23:1-20)

Abraham orders his servant not to get Isaac a wife from the Canaanites nor to take Isaac back to Mesopotamia (24:1-9)