CHAPTER 3

THE INTRA(INNER-)TEXTUAL RELATEDNESS OF THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVE

3.1. Introduction: Methodological Indications

Methodologically, like the works of other synchronic scholars, this chapter seeks to examine the Abraham narrative through careful attention to literary and rhetorical features such as narrative structure, recurring themes and motifs, allusions (or foreshadowing), wordplays, points of view, plot, and characterization. For it is believed that these are the most common literary tools used by the author/the final composer to establish continuity and link various constituent parts together in a unified literary composition. Thus, it should be noted that the various sources that constituted the Abraham narrative must have been of a kind which, when gathered together, were suitable for composition into the unity of narrative. In this sense, the primary goal of the present chapter is to explore the narrative as an integrated whole and to interpret individual episodes, which form the narrative in light of the larger context can indeed be justified.[206]

To accomplish this goal, this chapter will focus on exploring whether significant rhetorical links (or similarities[207]) exist between the Abraham narrative and the rest

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[206] As Breck, "Biblical Chiasmus," 70, pointed out, critics have recognized "the intimate connection that exists between rhetorical form and thematic content, between the structure of a literary unit and its theological meaning." See, J. Breck, "Biblical Chiasmus: Exploring Structure for Meaning," *BTB* 17 (1987): 70-74.

[207] The basic presumption of such an approach to text(s) is that a crucial aspect in the interpretation of text(s) is that they should be studied and interpreted within a specific context for no text exists in a vacuum. Each text has links to a specific context and different sets of relations. The letters relate to one

sections of Genesis on the basis of language and plot parallels.[208] The source narratives themselves may have contained parallel episodes that could become components of parallelism.[209] The underlying assumption is that if such links indeed exist through which episodes from different sections of the book of Genesis interact to reinforce the same basic points of view and contribute towards the unfolding of the same continuous plot and the progressive development of the same themes and motifs, then such a display of unity of design will constitute a strong argument that a single creative mind stood behind the present form of the book, and that each constituent narrative is to be read as an integral part of the larger whole.

But still, given the larger number of individual episodes that make up the Abraham narrative, how does one go about exploring possible rhetorical links among them? In this matter, the task is actually made easier by some of the literary analysis of the composition of the narrative in the previous chapter. As is clear from the survey of the composition of the narrative in the chapter 2, it is apparent that the narrative in its current form is divisible into three narrative sections. The central section of the narrative (i.e., the main cycle, Gen 12:1-22:19) is chiastically arranged, with the

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another to form words, words are connected to form sentences, sentences are combined to form paragraphs (or periscope), paragraphs (or pericopes) that have a connection form an episode, et cetera. Each text stands in relationship to other text within the same book, or forms an intertext with texts from other books. In this respect, this approach is an analysis of all textual relations within the book of Genesis. The contribution that each building blocks in the Abraham narrative and the remainders of Genesis make toward the understanding of the whole is determined. From this, the approach to text(s) can be named as intra-textuality, which is a quite literally text-centered to grasp the meanings of the texts in the Abraham narrative themselves rather than to reconstruct the texts in actual exegetical practice. (cf. M. G. Brett, "Intratextuality," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* [London: SCM Press, 1990], 320-21; Lotman, *Die Struktur interarischer Texte*, 81-91).

[208] To analyze the parallelism (i.e., similarities in the narratives context) three levels of intratextual relations (and thus, three phases in the analysis of the Abraham narrative), therefore, is acknowledged: thematic, structural, semantics [verbal] levels).

[209] A theory such as the Documentary Hypothesis, however, which reduces individual narrations to fragments and is hostile to parallel doublets in a single source, is incompatible with the chiastic structure of the Abraham narration.

numerous parallel themes, the themes-words and the correspondences in verbal parallels, which serve to establish nexuses with the intervening material, reflect the literary texture of this narrative section. The epilogue of the narrative (Gen 23:1-25:11) is the section as a concluding transition to the next units. The prologue of the narrative (Gen 11:27-32) reflects an intimate knowledge of the subsequent stories, in terms of dealing primarily with essential information for understanding the event in the Abraham narrative (i.e., characters, geographical information, and Sarah's barrenness). In light of this lens of methodology, all three subunits of the narrative section will be treated as integral parts of a unified work.

3.2. The Prologue: Terah's Genealogy (Gen 11:27-32)[210]

With the rise of literary or rhetorical studies, the search for links between the Abraham narrative in the larger context of Genesis to justify an integrated reading has resulted in an awareness that certain aspects introduced in the prologue actually emerge again in the rest of Genesis. Several obvious examples are the selection of the events in terms of thematic, structural and semantic levels[211] as follows. Firstly, Abraham's movement into Canaan from their homeland in Ur of the Chaldeans geographically links the call

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[210] Van Seters (*Abraham in History and Tradition*, 225 and *Prologue to History*, 202) appropriately observes a number of recent studies of the connections of the Gen 11:28-30 regarding Terah's life in this passage. See, also Blum (*Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, 440-41) and H. Specht, "Von Gott enttäuscht – Die priesterschriftliche Abrahamgeschichte," *EvTh* 47 (1987): 397-400.

[211] It is abundantly clear that the matching units are related. Numerous parallel themes and theme-words serve to connect them, alerting the reader to the literary texture of the Abraham narrative. The author/the final composer utilized techniques to link these complex cycles in Genesis. These include the following categories: 1) the similarity of the sameness of topics and themes; 2) the sameness of the role and experience of the corresponding characters; 3) the repetition of key-motifs; 4) the similarity of geographical indication; and 5) the repetition of Keywords and common phrases or clauses in the corresponding cycles.

of Abraham to the Tower of Babel story. Secondly, the infertility of Sarah, which becomes a central theme for the Abraham narrative specifically thematically links up with Genesis 12-50. Thirdly, Lot, whose enigmatic place in the family the author/the final composer explores at key points (Genesis 13-14; 18-19). Finally, more generally, links with the family in Haran continue through the Abraham cycle (Gen 22:20-24; 24) and Jacob (Gen 27:43-28:7; 29-31), as both Isaac and Jacob return to marry members of their family, that is, Rebekah; Rachel (Alexander 1997:105; Rendsburg 1986:29-30; Wenham 1987:263).[212] Therefore, while some view such similarities as evidence that one unifying mind must have been responsible for the composition of the book in its present form, little attempt has been made to further validate this through careful consideration of the language and rhetorical significance of the links to see if they are in fact indicative of the authorship at the compositional level.

In such a view, in the following discussion, episodes in the prologue and the different sections of Genesis that seem to be textually related will be closely examined to determine if there is more to these links than superficial textual association. If there is, an attempt will then be made to determine whether such links point to conscious design, since that would imply a closer relationship between the two sections than is generally recognized. After all, conscious design is often indicative of single authorship. In addition, other distinctive feature that provides further indication as to whether the prologue and the remainder of Genesis are related at a compositional level will also be explored. This concerns the pervasive use of references in both sections to the book of Genesis. It thus is apparent the fact that the Abraham narrative as a part of the

[212] For the variations of this format, see, Radday, "Chiasmus," 104, Sutherland, "The Organization of the Abraham Promise Narratives," 337-43, and Abela, *The Themes of the Abraham Narrative*, 2-3.

Pentateuch is put together in such a way that one can discern relationships among its parts. In other words, earlier events foreshadow and anticipate later events, which are written to remind the reader of past narratives.[213] In this sense, some cases of textual links will, thus, be closely examined to prove these textual relationships, they provide further indication as to whether the prologue and the remainder of Genesis are related at a compositional level.

3.2.1. Thematic Links

When it comes to thematic unity, the certain themes can be identified in the prologue and in the remainder of Genesis for which textual links with episodes in the prologue seem to exist in thematically. In fact, as the following discussion shows, these links to the prologue seem to bring an extra interpretive dimension to the related episodes in the rest of the book, such that in each case, the episode in the rest of Genesis receives clarity or added significance when viewed in light of the corresponding episode in the rest of the book.

3.2.1.1. Posterity: Sarah's Barrenness

As stated in the section 2.3.2.1 in chapter 2, the Nahor's genealogy (Gen 11:27-32) functions not only to connect Abraham with the preceding narratives, as the previous genealogies have done, but to provide the reader with the necessary background for understanding the events of the patriarchal narratives in general and the Abraham

[213] This feature has been called 'narrative typology.'

narrative in particular. The events in the narrative, thus, foreshadow the late events in the narrative and the remaining sections of Genesis. This is one of the literary devices in which the author/the final composer cautiously conveys his central theme, and also guides the reader toward the focus of his narrative – yet also holds the reader back in anticipation. In this sense, it is appropriate that the genealogy of Nahor largely anticipates the several events occurred in the Abraham narrative and the rest of Genesis. Above all this genealogical notice is thematically concerned with two essential details: Abraham married Sarah who was barren, and Abraham's clan left Ur for Canaan but stopped short and settled in Haran. As it were, this episode introduces the two major issues of the narrative: *offspring* genealogically and *land* geographically.

The problem of land is introduced by noting that the characters introduced are in the land of Mesopotamia. The larger context for this comment is the story of Babel. Abraham is in the land of rebellion and judgment, a most unlikely place for any hopeful future for God's salvation to arise. The problem of seed is raised in v. 30 in the remark about Sarah's barrenness.[214] These facts are the crucial components of the divine promise (or blessing), which drive the cycle within a promissory perspective.[215] Within the context of Genesis 12-50, such two themes play prominently as main strand that serves to integrate the individual subunits into a cohesive whole since the divine

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[214] The creation and blessing of humankind in Genesis 1, with its accompanying motif of fertility, has come to sterility. Thus, to bless is to bestow the dynamism of fertility (Gen 1:27). In this sense, the promises given to Abraham and the respective covenant God made with him are a reiteration of God's blessing upon man in Gen 1:28.

[215] Among recent scholars to consider the themes of the Abraham narrative, Abela, *The Themes of the Abraham Narrative*, 15-125, pertinently see as an autonomous narrative, which is consisted of the prominent themes: 'blessing', 'son' and 'land.' He suggests that the narrative has the overall cohesion with these traditional themes in literarily, structurally, and theologically. In the meantime, Moberly, *Genesis 12-50*, 23, says, "the overarching concern of the Abraham cycle is God's promise to Abraham of a land and a son (Gen 12:1-3)." Cf. Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 252, J. P. Fokkelman, "Time and the Structure of the Abraham Cycle," in *New Avenues in the Study of the Old Testament*, ed. A. J. van der Woude (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 103-04.

promises involve a numerous host of progeny for Abraham (Gen 12:2a; 15:4-5; 17:1-2; 18:10).[216]

Among these themes, the theme of posterity (or heir) is especially crucial to a proper understanding of each episode within the Abraham narrative and the remainder of Genesis (cf. Alexander 1993:255-270; 1994:10)[217] since the major issue of the narrative is the lack of an heir. The theme of heir, which is sounded in Gen 11:30 with the mention that "וַתְּהִי שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ וָלָד[218], Sarai was barren, she had no child." During the course of the Abraham narrative, this theme as a recurrent theme is developed in various way, with the relationship with Yahweh.

Significantly, one of the main themes running through the narratives involving Abraham concerns the fact he lacks a son. In Gen 11:30, one is informed that Sarah, Abraham's wife, is barren. In large sweep, Sarah barrenness was noted on eight separate occasions (Gen 11:30; 12:1-3, 10-20; 15:4; 16:1-14; 17:15-21; 18:1-16a; 20:1-18; 21:1-7) in the narrative.[219] Her infertility, which stands, with foreshadowing

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[216] In fact, the two themes of posterity and land are linked by an indissoluble tie. In the treatment given to these two themes, one can distinguish clearly between two plot-lines, which deals with the fufillment/nonfulfillment of offspring and that of land. However, though they are clearly distinguishable, these two plot-lines are interwoven into a singly thread that runs through the entire narratives in Genesis.

[217] The Hebrew word זרע occurs 59 times in Genesis as opposed to 229 uses in the whole Old Testament reflects the fact that the theme of seed centers on the divine blessing. In conjunction with this term, Alexander ("Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity," 260) has observed three factors of it: 1) זרע can be either singular (i.e., a single seed, Ishmael as Abraham's 'seed' in Gen 21:13) or plural (i.e., many seeds, the descendants of Jacob in Gen 28:14); 2) זרע normally denotes an individual's natural child or children (e.g., Eve's comment on Seth in Gen 4:25; Abraham's mention on Eliezer of Damascus as his heir in Gen 15:3); and 3) conveys the idea that there is a close resemblance between the 'seed' and that which has produced it (Gen 1:11-12).

[218] This word (rather than וֶלֶד), "children" is a rare form, occurring elsewhere only as a kethib reading in 2 Sam 6:23 in a similar context, describing the barrenness of Michal (cf. Judg 13:2; Isa 54:1) underscores at the start the need for God's help (Gen 17:17; 18:11-12; 21:1, 7; Rom 4:19; Heb 11:11). See, Westermann (*Genesis 12-36*, 139). This redundancy in the text occurs only for Sarah's barrenness unlike Rebekah (Gen 25:21) and Rachel (Gen 29:31), where "barren" alone occurs.

[219] Thus, the statement of Sarah's infertility plays as introduction to the Abraham narrative and achieves a certain emphasis through parallelism (cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 96).

significance, at the highlighted center of the Abraham narrative, prepares the reader for the tension that will dominates the narrative. However, it not merely serves as tension heightening the promise that Abraham will be made "a great nation" (Gen 12:1-3) whose "offspring" will be given the land (Gen 12:7), but sets against the background of the narrative in particular and the remaining of Genesis.[220] The juxtaposition of Sarah's barrenness in Gen 11:30 with the promise in Gen 12:1-3, 7, thus, sets up a tension that dominates much of the rest of the Abraham narrative. The promise, which is to be fulfilled, is put in danger in the wife-sister stories (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; cf. 26:1-11).[221] In the case of God's specific goals for a select nation headed by the patriarch Abraham, Sarah's infertility most severely jeopardizes God's plan. Not only does she impede the perpetuation of the Abrahamic line, her infertility also prevents the possibility of any progeny inheriting her husband's legacy and breeds familial dissension in the house of Abraham (cf. Callaway 1986:13).[222] Genesis 15, where delineates the covenant of God with Abraham for a heir (esp. Gen 15:1-6) describes both Abraham's complain to God because of no heir (עֲרִירִי)[223] and Yahweh's assurance of heir for him. In Gen 16:1-4, Sarah tries to compensate for her inadequacy with a gesture that seems altruistic: she gives her maidservant (שִׁפְחָה), Hagar, to

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[220] W. Zimmerli, "Land and Possession," in *The Old Testament and the World* (London: SPCK, 1976b), 18; C. Levin, *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 133.

[221] According to Westermann (*Genesis 12-36*, 161-168, 318-329, 394-400) the repetitions of the story of the ancestress (or promise) in danger are best explained as the reworking of Gen 12:10-20 by authors who, respectively, had the narratives in Genesis 12 and then Genesis 12 and 20 before them.

[222] Thus, as G. A. Yee, "Sarah," in *ABD*, vol. 1 (New York & London: Doubleday, 1992), 982, rightly pointed out, her infertility is a twofold stigma. "On one level, it represents a loss of status in a patriarchal, labor-intensive society with a high mortality rate. Here, a premium is placed on the ability to bear many sons. On another level, it seems to be an impediment to the fulfillment of God's promise of posterity to Abraham."

[223] According to V. P. Hamilton, "עֲרִירִי," in *NIDOTTE* (1996b), 535, Gen 15:2 represents a lament of a childless father, which may be compared to the Ugaritic Epic of King Keret and Aqhat those who were childless husband. This term occurs in only four verses where, excepting Gen 15:2, it is indicative of divine displeasure or punishment (Lev 20:21-22; Jer 22:30). The absence of a fertility rite to reverse barrenness in the passage may reflect Abraham's reliance on God's will.

Abraham. However, all that does is circumvent her obligation, create rivalry, and produce an Abrahamic line that is divided and at war throughout the remainder of the book of Genesis. In this sense, the absence of an heir leads to the Hagar episode, which depicts the stories of the birth and expulsion of Ishmael (Gen 16:1-15; 21:9-21).

At the same time, Sarah's childlessness draws attention to the need for God's help (Gen 17:17; 18:11-12; 21:1, 7). The barren Sarah is brought into God's covenantal promise as the mother of many nations and kings (Gen 17:16); the covenant of circumcision with Abraham (Genesis 17) illustrates the scene that God repeats his assurance that Abraham and Sarah shall have their own son (esp. Gen 17:15-21; cf. Gen 12:4). The reassurance that Sarah will bear a son constitutes the narrative about the visitors to Abraham's tent in Gen 18:1-15. The tension between barrenness and fertility of Sarah has been set up and is resolved only in Gen 21:1-7, when Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah, and he is circumcised.[224] In it, that Sarah was barren introduces a thread that leads to the birth and marriage of Isaac. Thus, the basic plot moves from profound tension to unexpected resolution. The promise is put in danger again and the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:1-19).[225] From the observations, one may affirm that the shape of the narrative itself is from the promise of an heir to the birth of an heir. In this respect, Sarah's barrenness is a trajectory of the Abraham narrative,

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[224] T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 106-08, in his work, the theme of barrenness and the birth of Isaac views as the ongoing blessing work of God originated from the beginning (Gen 1:22, 28). He distinguishes between the creational blessing and the constitutive blessing.

[225] See, R. S. Hendel, "Genesis, Book of," in *ABD*, vol. 2 (New York & London: Doubleday, 1992), 936); L. Hicks, "Abraham," in *IDB: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Nashville & New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 15-26; H. C. Leupold, Genesis, in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encylopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 686-90; J. J. Scullion, "Genesis, The Narrative of," in *ABD*, vol. 2 (New York & London: Doubleday, 1992b), 949-50; C. Westermann, "Genesis, The Book of," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, eds. B. M. Metzger & M. D. Coogan (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 247-48.

concerning the continuation of a family's life from one generation to another among threats and tensions.[226]

The infertility of Sarah in the narrative itself sets up a tension between the divine promises and the problem of exercising faith in this promise, at this point, together with her and Abraham's great age, is particularly emphasized to create a sharp contrast with the promise to them of a son of their own.[227] Arising from this contrast there is a steadily mounting tension about the fulfillment/non-fulfillment of this promise. In the Abraham narrative, the factors that generate this tension[228] are, on the one hand, the series of alternating threats to and self-fulfillment of this promise and, on the other hand, the belief that God in his own time was sure to make his promise good (cf. Kaiser 1978:263-269). Vosloo (1982:20) helpfully sets out the rhythmic alternation of promises and threats/self-fulfillment throughout the entire book of Genesis as follows:

Barrenness (11:30)

Promise (12:2)

1. **Self-fulfillment** – Lot as a child (12:4)

Promise repeated (12:7)

2. *Threat* – Pharaoh's harem (12:10-20)

Promise repeated (13:16)

3. **Self-fulfillment** – Eliezer as a child (15:2-3)

Promise repeated (15:4-5)

4. **Self-fulfillment** – Ishmael as a child (16:1-16)

[226] Thus, Terah's family (Gen 11:27b-30) history of early procreation in the Shem genealogy (Gen 11:10-26) not merely serves as a foil for Abraham and Sarah, who were childless but also introduces the tension of Sarah's barrenness.

[227] Although the Sarah's barrenness (Gen 11:30) is not etymologically related to the call to be fruitful and multiply in Gen 1:28, yet it is also emphasized to form a sharp contrast with the original blessing for humanity.

[228] The tension is built up when the fulfillment of the promise of a great posterity is delayed and is often only brought closer to fulfillment by divine intervention. The Abraham narrative, thus, is characterized by the basic element of tensions brought to resolution. This is crucial for Gen 11:27-22:24. The tension between promise and obstacle to promise systematically forms the underlying frame of reference, which links the sub-units together into their concentric pattern of arrangement as presented in chapter 2 (cf. Westermann, *Promises to the Fathers*, 69). Arrangement the material in this way suggests that a central concern of the author/the final composer is a tension between promise and obstacles to promise.

→ **Promise** repeated and linked to Sarah (17:4-7; 15-21; 18:10-15)
5. *Threat* – Abimelech's harem (20:1-18)
→ **Promise** to Sarah fulfilled (first step): Isaac (21:1-7)
6. *Threat* – sacrifice on Moriah (22:2)
→ **Promise** repeated (22:17)
7. *Threat* – Rebecca infertile (25:21)
→ **Promise** fulfilled (second step): Esau and Jacob (25:24-26)
8. *Threat* – Esau against Jacob (27:42)
→ **Promise** repeated (28:14)
9. *Threat* – Rachel infertile (29:31; 30:1)
→ **Promise** fulfilled (third step): Joseph (30:22-24)
10. *Threat* – Esau's revenge (32:6)
→ **Promise** repeated (35:11)
11. *Threat* – Great famine (41:56)

A great nation (50:20; cf. Exod 1:1-7)

In this respect, as Mathews (2005:99-104) rightly mentioned, mention of Sarah's infertility is a proleptic clue that Abraham was the chosen descendant in Terah's household who would inherit the blessing. Barrenness was a distinguishing feature of the elect line, beginning with Abraham-Sarah and Isaac-Rebekah and continuing with Jacob, who cased this trial with his favored wife, Rachel.

The barren condition of Rebekah parallels the Abraham narrative in Gen 11:30 (cf. Gen 29:31, Rachel). Rebekah's childlessness contrasts with the success of the search for her and the hopeful expectation of children (Gen 24:60). The barrenness of Rachel is a minor theme, while that of Sarah is a major theme in the Abraham narrative, since Jacob had many sons by his other wives. The infertility of Rachel, however, similarly jeopardizes God's goals just as Sarah endures and, more particularly, their family legacy. She endures an infertility crisis not dissimilar to the former travails of her husband's grandmother. Like Sarah, Rachel tries to overcome her infertility as a barren wife by offering her maidservant in her stead (Gen 30:3). However, this measure does not alleviate her grief, and the text goes on to describe a transaction wherein Rachel, in

the hope of conceiving, haggle with her sister Leah over a plant thought to be an aphrodisiac with fertility powers. Despite her willingness to bear children, Rachel presents an obstacle to the value of fertility. Although she does not pose the extreme threat that Sarah presented, since Jacob sires children through Leah and his two concubines, her infertility still represents a serious obstacle to both her universal and her particular function as child bearer.

In conclusion, Sarah's barrenness prepares the way for the main plot involving Abraham's heir. That is, possibly the thematic notice reflects an intimate knowledge of the subsequent accounts. In theological perspective, Sarah's infertility emphasizes the fact that God's sovereign grace is beyond human imagination, which means that she will conceive children not by natural generation but by supernatural life that faith engenders (cf. Gen 15:2-3; 17:17). Through the childless woman, the narrative eloquently describes the fact that God will bring into being a new humanity that is born not of the will of a husband but by will of God (cf. Waltke 2001:201).

3.2.1.2. Land: Ur and Canaan

As stated above, this genealogical section reveals two essential details: the infertility of Sarah in matrimony with Abraham and the migration of Abraham's clan from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan and the settlement in Haran. These facts set the stage for the two itineraries that drive the Abraham narrative, that is, the metaphorical journey from barrenness to fertility and the geographical journey from Mesopotamia to the promised land. Among them, this genealogical report (Gen 11:27-32) makes clear the fact that

Abraham's family had begun a journey to Canaan from their home in "Ur[229] of the Chaldeans[230]" (i.e., southern Mesopotamia[Babylonia][231] in first), where is probably the ancient center about 70 miles south of modern Baghdad, rather than Haran (cf. Gen 15:7; Neh 9:7; Acts 7:2).

A closer look suggests that the author/the final composer intends us to understand this genealogical section of Terah differently. In vv. 28, 31, we are explicitly shown that Ur of the Chaldeans, not Haran, was the place of Abraham's birth. The using same words, which are rendered "אֶרֶץ (land) " in Gen 11:28 and "אֶרֶץ (country)," also suggest that the place, where Abraham receives the divine call is Ur of the Chaldeans. Thus, when the command is given Abraham to leave 'the place of birth' (Gen 12:1), only Ur of the Chaldeans can be meant, despite the fact the narrative of Genesis 12 does not mention it and might suggest otherwise. The role of Gen 11:27-32 in providing the geographical context of Genesis 12, then, should not be overlooked, especially in view of the author's/the final composer's close attention to geography in working out his crucial themes. Therefore, one may state that the author/the final composer seems clearly intent on having the reader understand Abraham's call as a call to leave "Ur of the Chaldeans." That this is the view of the author/the final composer is confirmed by the

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[229] Some critics see the north Mesopotamian sites, the cities Urfa (Edessa, near Haran) in north Syria and Ura Armenia (Hittite) as the patriarchal אוּר (cf. C. H. Gordon, *Abraham of Ur, Hebrew and Semitic Studies: G R Driver FS.* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1963], 77-84, and "Where is Abraham's Ur?" *BAR* 3 [1977], 20-21, 52; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapter 1-17*, 364-65). However, these identifications contradict Act 7:2.

[230] The Hebrew word, כַּשְׂדִּים is kaldu (Akk.) in Assyrian texts of the ninth centry, and the Greek has καλδαιοι; the original *sd* has undergone a change to *ld* (see, R. S. Hess, "Childea," in *ABD*, vol. 1 [New York & London: Doubleday, 1992], 886-87). The geographical designation occurs three times in Genesis (i.e., Gen 11:28, 31; Gen 15:7) and once elsewhere in the Old Testament (Neh 9:7). Chaldea was a less ancient name of Babylonia from neo-Babylonian times (cf. Jer 50:1, 8).

[231] It can be translated Μεσοποταμία in Greek, cf. also that of the Hebrew word, אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם as "the town of Nahor in Gen 24:10; cf. Deut 23:4[5]; Judg 3:8; 1 Chr 19:6; Ps 60:1[2].

later reference to Abraham's call in Gen 15:7[232] when one looks back to the call of Abraham, as stated above. This denotes that the author/the final composer already put the call of Abraham within the setting of Ur of the Chaldeans, drawing a line connecting the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) with the dispersion of Babylon (Gen 11:1-9) and thus making Abraham prefigure all those future exiles who, in faith, wait for the return to the promised land (Sailhamer 1992:137-139).[233]

In this sense, the movement Abraham's clan links the call of Abraham to the Tower of Babylon story. The language "settled there" (Gen 11:31) significantly echoes[234] the Babel account (Gen 11:2, 8-9), where the residents of Shinar refused to "fill" the earth in accord with the divine mandate (Gen 1:28; 9:1). In other words, the language "settled there" is chosen by the author/the final composer to cast a shadow on Terah's decision to dwell in Haran (Gen 11:31), and it provides the negative contrast for Abraham's faithful answer to the call (Gen 12:4). This is one of many ways the faith of Abraham and his role in accomplishing the mandate to "fill" the earth are distinguished

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[232] Rendtorff (*Problem of the Process of Transmission*, 81) states "Gen 15:7-21 is formulated in quite obvious parallelism to Gen 11:31. The gift of the land is linked closely with the journey to the land. Gen 12:1, where Abraham is ordered to journey to the land, which YHWH will show him, fits nicely into this context."

[233] This is in harmony with the view of the later prophetic literature (esp. Neh 9:7) and the book of Acts (esp. Acts 7:2-3). For Isaiah the "glory of the Chaldeans" is the city of Babylon, which God will overturn "like Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isa 13:19; cf. 48:14). In Jeremiah (Jer 24:5; 25:12; 50:1, 8, 35, 45; 51:24, 54) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3; 12:13; 23:15, 23), the "Chaldeans are those who live in Babylon and who have taken God's people into captivity. In much the same way the prophet Micah pictures the remnant who await the return from exile as descendants of Abraham faithfully trusting in God's promise (Mic 7:18-20).

[234] Echo, which is used to link two or more units that are separated by a division marker in a cycle can be defined by McEvenue (*The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 38) as follows:

> It is not easily defined, but it is a repetition of a key word, phrase, or clause, which has occurred in a previous unit, sometimes, as here, the phrase is really planted in the previous units, even somewhat artificially, in order to prepare echo. The echo serves to unite units, and further it suggests a hidden order and plan in the world. To be an echo, the repeated element must be sufficiently imposing to be really experienced by the attentive reader as echoing, as recalling something already heard, something familiar.

from those of his Shemite heritage (Gen 11:10-26). In it, Sailhamer (1990:111) also notes that the theme of "separation" (cf. Gen 10:5, 32) reinforces the author's/the final composer's purpose, connecting "blessing" and the command to "fill the earth." In conclusion, the segmented genealogy (Gen 11:27-32) provides a geographical element, aligning the narrative section with themes that will prove central in the subsequent narratives in Genesis. The migration of Terah's clan with his family presages Abraham's pilgrimage to the promised land.

3.2.2. Textual Links

The introduction (Gen 11:27-32) of the Abraham narratives has an internal relationship to the other segments of that narrative and to the narrative of viewed as whole in verbal parallel. When we speak of structure as the literary context, we are speaking of the total set of relationship within a narrative unit. In this regard, structure implies purpose, which in turn suggests a central concern or integration point that gives a passage its meaning and direction.

3.2.2.1. Death of Terah (Gen 11:32) and Noah's Obituary (Gen 9:29)

The death of Terah in Haran (Gen 11:32) indicates the end of an era and closes out the role of Terah in the account, while he lived another sixty years. The obituary of Terah echoes of Genesis 5's genealogy in drawing together the converging lines of exclusive lineal descent: from Adam to Noah's son, Shem, and from Shem to Terah's son, Abraham. This notice most likely comes as the case with Noah's death, from the same

or similar source(s) as those of Gen 5:3-32 and 11:10-26, but the author/the final composer has chosen to announce Terah's death at Gen 11:32 just prior to Abraham's call (Gen 12:1-3).[235] From a literary perspective, the notice of Terah's death under the Terah תולדות (Gen 11:27-25:11) established the new era of Abraham just as Noah's passing marked the beginnings of the postdiluvian world. It transitions the primeval history ending with Terah to the patriarchal period beginning with Abraham.

3.2.2.2. Terah's and Nahorite Genealogy (Gen 11:27-32// Gen22:20-24)

As we had already discussed briefly in chapter 2, the Terah's genealogy which identifies the family members of the Terah clan and informs their relationship, is matched by the Nahor genealogy in Gen 22:20-24 but also by the concluding genealogy in Gen 25:1-11. In historical critical scholarship, the genealogy of Nahor (Gen 22:20-24) is generally taken to be artlessly incorporated into the biographical context of the narrative due to an Abramean genealogy in it.[236] However, one can recognize immediately that far from being carried out "artlessly," the author/the final composer had sophistically arranged Gen 22:20-24 as the matching bookend to Gen 11:27-32.

Rendsburg (1986:29-30) presents four points of textual linkage of the two genealogies. Firstly, the two important grandchildren, Lot for Haran (Gen 11:27) and Rebekah for Bethuel (Gen 22:22-23) link in terms of the last-named offspring in the respective

[235] In terms of concluding notices for the life of Abraham, Gen 25:7-11 parallels to the death of Terah (Gen 11:32) as the conclusion to the section as to Abraham. Thus, here, the passage serves double duty as the conclusion to the section of Abraham and as a conclusion to the Abraham narrative as a whole (cf. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 124).
[236] von Rad, *Genesis*, 240.

narratives. They dominantly play as crucial characters in the subsequent chapters, which follow. Secondly, that Gen 11:29 introduces a character, Haran, who is not central to the narratives with the word, אֲבִי, namely, אֲבִי־מִלְכָּה וַאֲבִי יִסְכָּה (the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah) parallels that of אֲבִי אֲרָם (the father of Aram, Bethuel), who is also a minor character in Gen 22:21 in the same phenomenon. Thirdly, Gen 11:30, which reports Sarah's infertility ties to the very fertile Milcah and Reumah in Gen 22:20-24 in view of antithesis mutually.[237] Finally, there is a textual connection between two narrative for mentioning Abraham's father, Terah (Gen 11:27-32) and his brother, Nahor (Gen 22:20-24).

In the meantime, Westermann (1985:366-367) recognizes that the Nahorite genealogy (Gen 22:20-24) is parallel to the genealogy of Terah (Gen 11:27-32) because of the appearance of certain figures common in both: Nahor, Milcah, and Abraham. Therefore, these observations would suggest a certain structural pattern: Terah's genealogy (Gen 11:27-32) – Nahor's genealogy (Gen 22:20-24).[238]

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[237] The appearance of the expression אחר הדברים האלה, "after these things or events" in Gen 22:20 (cf. Ge 15:1; 22:1), which functions to connect what follows it with what precedes it connects the Nahorite genealogy (Gen 22:20-24) with the preceding events in the Abraham narrative, just as the phrase "Milcah also has borne sons" (Gen 22:20) in the Nahorite genealogy recalls the birth of Isaac reported in Gen 21:1-7 (cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 119). In addition, B. Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible: Genesis*, abridged, ed., trans. E. I. Jacob & W. Jacob (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1974),147, also offers a plausible explanation concerning this phrase in Gen 22:20 in conjunction with its occurrence in Gen 22:1: "The paragraph begins with the same phrase as verse 1 in order to create a contrast. Not only had Isaac remained alive, but we shall already learn the name of his future wife." From these points it is clear that Nahor's genealogy (Gen 22:20-24) functions as a bookend following the inclusion of Gen 22:1-19, and at the same time prepares the way to the next cycle in which Isaac and Rebekah will be the main characters.

[238] In addition, according to von Rad (*Genesis*, 245), the twelve children of Nahor (Gen 22:20-24) has a particular parallel with the twelve children of Ishmael (Gen 25:12-18). Thus, one may suggest a triple structural pattern: Terah's genealogy (Gen 11:27-32) – Nahor's genealogy (Gen 22:20-24) – Ishmael's genealogy (Gen 25:12-18).

3.2.2.3. Two Introductions (Gen 11:27-32// Gen 25:19-26)

Sailhamer (1992:137-139) observes rightly marked similarities between the introduction to the narrative of Abraham (Gen 11:27-32) and the introduction to the narrative of Isaac (Gen 25:19-26), which indicate that the author/the final composer sees the two narratives as related.

Introduction to the Abraham narrative (11:27-32)	**Introduction to the Isaac narrative (25:19-26)**
וַיָּמָת הָרָן עַל־פְּנֵי תֶּרַח אָבִיו (v. 28)[239] Haran's premature death for his father, Terah	וַיִּגְוַע וַיָּמָת וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל־עַמָּיו (vv. 17-18) …עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אֶחָיו נָפָל Ishmael death before his brothers
נָחוֹר (v. 29; cf. 24:24) A brief introduction of Nahor, a key character in the narratives concerning the quest for a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac	לָבָן (v. 20; cf. 28:2) A brief introduction of Laban, the father of the bride of Isaac's son, Jacob
The key characters: Abraham and Lot(vv. 27, 31)	The key character: Isaac, Jacob and Esau(vv. 19, 21, 25, 26)
וַתְּהִי שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ וָלָד׃ (v. 30) Sarah's barrenness	וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַיהוָה לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא (v. 21) Rebekah's infertility
Abraham's companionship with and separation from Lot (vv. 27, 29; cf. 13:6-7)	Jacob's companionship with and separation from Esau (vv. 22-24; chaps. 25-28; cf. 36:7)

These textual parallels suggest that the two narratives have closely relationship in key characters (Abraham and Lot/Isaac-Jacob, Esau) and thematic element of struggle between brothers. Significantly, in the latter, the introductions to both narratives are

[239] Haran's premature death for his father, Terah (Gen 11:28) indicates another textual link with the unexpected sorrow for Jacob to outlive his son, Joseph (cf. Gen 37:34-35) as well.

centrally concerned with setting forth the necessary background of theme: struggle and separation (cf. Gen 10:5, 32). In this sense, such parallels have the effect of drawing the themes of the two narratives together so that they reinforces a central theme, the fulfillment of the blessing (Gen 1:28) and separation, which continues to play a central role in the author's/the final composer's purpose.

3.2.2.4. Semantic Ties (Gen 11:27-32// Gen 23:1-25:11).

In the general pattern of referring to an individual and listing descendant(s) or clans, far in Genesis, the author/the final composer has followed a pattern of listing ten names between important individuals in the narrative (e.g., Gen 5:1-32; 11:10-26). The author in this short genealogical list, however, presents only eight names. By listing only eight names, the author leaves the reader uncertain who the ninth and, more importantly, the tenth name will be. It is only as the narrative unfolds that the ninth and tenth names are shown to be the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael (Gen 16:15) and Isaac (Gen 21:3). In his genealogical introduction, then, the author anticipates the central event in the forthcoming narrative: the birth of Isaac, who will mark the tenth name (Gen 21:1-7). This is one of many ways in which the author/the final composer carefully guides the reader toward the focus of his narrative – yet also holds the reader back in anticipation.

The same concern can be seen in the initial reminder that "Sarah was barren; she had no child" (Gen 11:30), and in the prominence given in the following narrative to the wordplay on Isaac's name ("he laughs," Gen 17:17; 18:12-13, 15; 19:14; 21:3, 6). The unusual spelling of the word child (ולד) in Gen 11:30 may be an attempt to call

attention to this important element of the introduction. Later in the narrative, in Abraham's response to the announcement of the birth of this child, there appears to be a deliberate allusion to this unusual spelling, as well as to the name (יצחק, "Isaac") of the child: "Abraham fell facedown; he laughed [וַיִּצְחָק] and said to himself, 'Will a son be born [יִוָּלֵד] to a man a hundred years old?" (Gen 17:17).

3.2.2.5. Characters Links: Abraham, Lot and Nahor

This transition section (Gen 11:27-32), which introduces Terah's children and their relationships, mentions some those who are full and developing characters, Abraham, Sarah, and Lot as well as the other, agents. Lot who is the only male descendant from the Terah's clan, and is also Milcah's brother figures prominently in number of passages (Gen 11:31; 12:5; 13:1-12; 14:12-16; 19:1-38). Although he became a companion for Abraham in his early travels (Gen 12:4; 13:5), it is implicit that Abraham's regal heir is Eliezer of Damascus (Gen 15:2-3). Haran's premature death, which may have influenced Abraham's migration from Haran (Gen 12:4-5) suggests the fate of Haran's children in this closely knit family (cf. Gen 24:3; 27:46; 31:50). In a sense, Lot shows the continuous relationship with Abraham in Canaan. Thus, his role in the narrative context functions as a symbol of the relationship between the Abraham group in Canaan and the Nahor-Milcah group, the Aramean in Haran. This is striking since the Nahor-Milcah family constantly provides wives for the Abraham group in Canaan. The parallel description of endogamy of Abraham and Nahor's wives, thus, heightens the additional information given to Milcah's family connections.

In addition, Milcah's linkage with the Abraham branch in marriage to Nahor is

reinforced by her granddaughter Rebekah, born to Milcah's son Bethuel, who marries Isaac. Rebekah's marriage in the Abraham line of Terah, thus, reunited the two branches of Terah's descendants. The Aramean connection of the Nahor clan with Abraham is also achieved through Milcah's grandson, Laban, whose daughters, Leah and Rachel, marry their Hebrew cousin, Jacob. In both case, these grandchildren will play a prominent role in the chapters that follow (cf. Sarna 1981:78-80).

3.2.2.6. Geographical Shift

The genealogy of Terah (Gen 11:27-32), which involves Abraham as the main character starts with a brief genealogical introduction of Abraham and swiftly moves to a geographical change. In Gen 11:31, which makes a transition between the Noah Cycle (Gen 6:9-11:26) and the following the Abraham narrative, the geographical shift is abrupt and emphatic (cf. Baker 1980:206; Louis 1982:50[240]; Westermann 1985:159). Journeys, thus, become a leitmotif of the Abraham narrative: a journey from Haran to Canaan (Gen 12:1-9); a journey from Canaan to Egypt (Gen 12:10-20); a journey from Egypt through the Negev to Mamre at Hebron (Gen 13:1-18). In Isaac's account, there is a geographical shift apart from the Abraham narrative. While in Gen 24:19, it is reported that Abraham returns to Beer-Sheba from Mount Moriah and lives at Beer-Sheba, Gen 24:62 reports Isaac's movement from Beer-lahai-roi to the Negev, where he settles. Fokkelman (1999:159) recognizes a tripartite division of the Jacob Cycle (Gen 25:19-37:1), which is closely related to geographical shifts:

[240] Especially, Louis states that the garden, the ark and the promised land of Abraham are settings identified by God as special, secure, and protected. In his statement, the geographical shifts between the three cycles are striking.

Jacob's birth and his youth in Canaan (Gen 25:28)
Jacob starts a family in Haran, living with his uncles Laban (Gen 29-31)
Jacob returns to Canaan

In the Joseph Cycle (Gen 37:2-50:26), there also appears a geographical shift from Canaan to Egypt. Nevertheless, in this case, the geographical shift has an effect exclusively on the life of Joseph, since he alone moves to Egypt.

3.3. The Main Section (Gen 12:1-22:19)

It hardly seems likely that so many verbal parallels between the main cycle of the Abraham narrative and the remainder of Genesis could be a mere coincidence. The author/the final composer of Genesis, who frequently seizes on wordplays and the recounts wordplays within narratives, would not have been unaware of the parallels suggested by his narratives. The purpose of this section is to delineate and evaluate the validity of the textual relationship between the main section and the remaining of Genesis. In doing so one may expose and appreciate the compositional strategy and theological message of the book as it was originally intended by the author/the final composer, who deliberately recounting these various events in such a way to highlight their textual parallel through planned structure.

3.3.1. Thematic Links

One feature that serves to integrate the individual episodes into a close-knit whole is the prominent role played by divine promises in the Abraham narrative. Among these promises three above all – those of seed, land and blessing – are crucial to a proper

understanding of each episodes.[241] The fulfillment of the promise of offspring is made conditional on Abraham's obedience to the divine command to move away to a foreign land. Thus, throughout, the two themes of offspring and land are linked by an indissoluble tie. In the treatment given to these two themes, we can distinguish clearly between two plot-lines. One of these plot-lines deals with the fulfillment/non-fulfillment of the promise of offspring; the other plot-line deals with the fulfillment/non-fulfillment of the promise of land. However, though they are clearly distinguishable, these two plot-lines are interwoven into a single thread of divine blessing that runs through the entire patriarchal narratives.

3.3.1.1. Seed

The initial promises made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) possesses the three thematic materials, which as intertwined into one entity make up the book of Genesis' thematic-theological core and also provide the unifying center for the book's parts: the divine promises of blessing, seed, and land for Abraham and his successors (Mann 1991:34-53). The most frequent of the three promises is that of a seed. It is the first promise given by God to Abraham. Not only does this theme run through the Abraham narrative, but it may also be traced throughout the whole of Genesis as a prominent motif in Genesis (Gen 12:2; 12:7; 13:6,15-16; 15:4-5; 17:4-7,15-21; 18:10-15; 22:17; 26:3-4; 28:4,14; 35:11; 48:4).

This theme joins the motif of 'blessing and curse' to constitute the book's

[241] D. J. A. Clines views the theme as the idea that explains the unity and structural development of the Pentateuch, which is not-yet realized promise of blessing for the patriarchs (*The Theme of the Pentateuch*).

preoccupation with inherited blessing. The genealogical tables in the book are pressed into service as the bridge for the 'seed' element between the earlier and later narratives. This is a natural vehicle for the 'seed' theme in light of its prominent metaphorical sense in Genesis, meaning 'offspring' (cf. Alexander 1989:5-19). However, its first appearance is literal, occurring in the creation account (Gen 1:11-12, 19; cf. Gen 47:19, 23-24), which establishes at the outset that the 'seed,' whether of creation or patriarchs, has a proper place as appointed by the sovereign Creator-Lord.

'Seed' has its first metaphorical sense in Gen 3:15, where the antipathy between an evil 'seed' and the 'seed' of the woman is the second programmatic statement in Genesis. This dual lineage of serpent's family versus the woman's family has its history evidenced throughout the whole of human and patriarchal narratives as they reveal the approved line of descent versus the outcast – as early as Cain and as late as Esau. The remarkable parallel in genealogical structure in Gen 5:3-32 and 11:10-26 distinguishes their heritage as the elect lineage (Seth-Shem-Abraham), bridging the antediluvian and postdiluvian eras as constituting the one tree of lineal blessing.[242] In the history of early humanity, the "seed" and sibling-rivalry theme is first found in the murder of Abel by brother Cain (Gen 4:1-16). Yet the birth of Seth provides another 'seed' to Eve in Place of murdered Abel (Gen 4:25), establishing a new line of descent (Gen 4:25-26). The parallel but separate lines of Cainites and Sethites (Gen 4:17-26;

[242] Genealogical records for the excluded "seed" also are found, but the excluded family tree is usually presented firrst and passed over so as to pave the way for he appointed line that supersedes in the narrative sources: Cain precedes Seth (Gen 4:17-24; 5:3-32), Japheth and Ham precedes Shem (Gen 10:2-20; 10:21-31; 11:10-26), Nahor precedes Abraham (Gen 22:20-24; 25:1-4), and Ishmael precedes Isaac (Gen 25:12-18; 25:19-20). This pattern is altered with the Jacob-Esau rivalry, where the record of Esau's Edomite offspring (Gen 36:1-43) follows Jacob's twelve-son genealogy (Gen 35:22b-26). However, after dispensing with Esau's family, the narrative interest is sustained on the twelve sons, particularly Joseph, in the remainder of the book (Genesis 36-50).

5:1-32) intermarry, coinciding with the last days of the wicked antediluvian age (Gen 6:5-7), leaving the aftermath recalled in the Noah תולדות (Gen 6:8-9:29). Although not as well represented, 'seed' occurs twice in the flood narrative, a slight echo of the antediluvian past (Gen 7:3, 9:9), but the vineyard debacle (Gen 9:20-27) resounds the earlier division in the Adamic family by the rejected Ham-Canaan clan that is envisioned as subservient to the Shemite-Japhethite tent (Gen 9:24-27). The Han-Canaanite dishonor is anticipated at Gen 9:18 even before the sordid incident that leads to Ham's rejection, implying that emerging from the ark Ham was already to be distinguished from his brothers. The table of nations spells this out in listing the descendants of the three brothers as people groups of which the Hamite tree includes later Israel's notorious enemies (e.g., Egyptians, Canaanites, and Mesopotamians).

In the Abraham narrative, the theme of 'seed' is set against the backdrop of Sarah's infertility (Gen 11:30). Every promise of a 'seed' describes either what the offspring will be like (e.g., Gen 13:16; 28:14) or what it will become (e.g., Gen 28:3).[243] In each case God's use of language makes the promise of 'seed' a powerful vehicle for communicating the grand nature of his unconditional election of the patriarchs. The goal of the promise of a 'seed' goes beyond Abraham's receiving a son, even beyond the nation of Israel, to the inclusion of the nations and kingdoms. Through Abraham and his descendants, the Lord plans to redeem to himself "a community of peoples"

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[243] In the promise of increase, Rendtorff, *Problem of the Process of Transmission*, 61-63, largely divided the description of the promise of offspring into two categories: in the one, a group of speaking simply of the increase of the 'seed,' in the other, a group of missing of the idea of 'seed.' See, Rendtorff, *Problem of Process of Transmission*, 61-64. He insists that there are two different lines of tradition, which differ in the use of the word 'seed' as well as in comparative images by means of which the numerous descendants are described. He views that the use of the two different verb, רבה (to increase, *hiphil*) in the first group and פרה (to be/make fruitful, *hiphil*) in the second group reflect the fact that we are dealing with traditions, which are independent of each other (*Problem of Process of Transmission*, 64).

(Gen 28:3; 48:4).

3.3.1.2. Land

In the promissory triad, this theme prominently figures in the patriarchal narratives, particularly the tension in the Jacob and Joseph narratives in which these patriarchs are estranged from Canaan (e.g., Gen 12:5-7; 15:8; 26:1-3; 28:13; 35:12; 48:3-4; 50:24). The 'land' component is alluded to in Genesis 1-11 as shown by the early attention to the "earth"/"land" in creations six days (Gen 1:1-2:3) and the garden תולדות (Gen 2:4-4:26). The theme is particularly dense in the central episode of the primeval history, which detail the increasing violence in the "earth" by violent mankind (Gen 6:5-13) and the subsequent purging by the flood waters (Genesis 7-8).[244] This violence is the habit of antediluvian man and results in the destruction of the earth (Gen 6:17) and its inhabitants (e.g., Gen 7:4, 21). Particularly, the flood episode demonstrates the inherent creaturehood of humanity and the interdependence of man and beast as well as humanity's connection to the earth as both source and domain. Human sin brought on the fierce recompense of the Lord's anger against all terrestrial life over, which humanity presided (Gen 1:28).

Beyond the divine outrage, however, the earth receives God's persistent favor as shown by his re-creation of the new earth from the midst of the waters (Gen 8:7, 11-14) and by the reissuing of the creation command to replenish the earth (Gen 9:1, 7), assuring of a new beginning for the postdiluvian world. And in that new world is born

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[244] Cf. I. M. Kikawada, "The Shape of Genesis 11:1-9," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, PTMS 1 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974), 31.

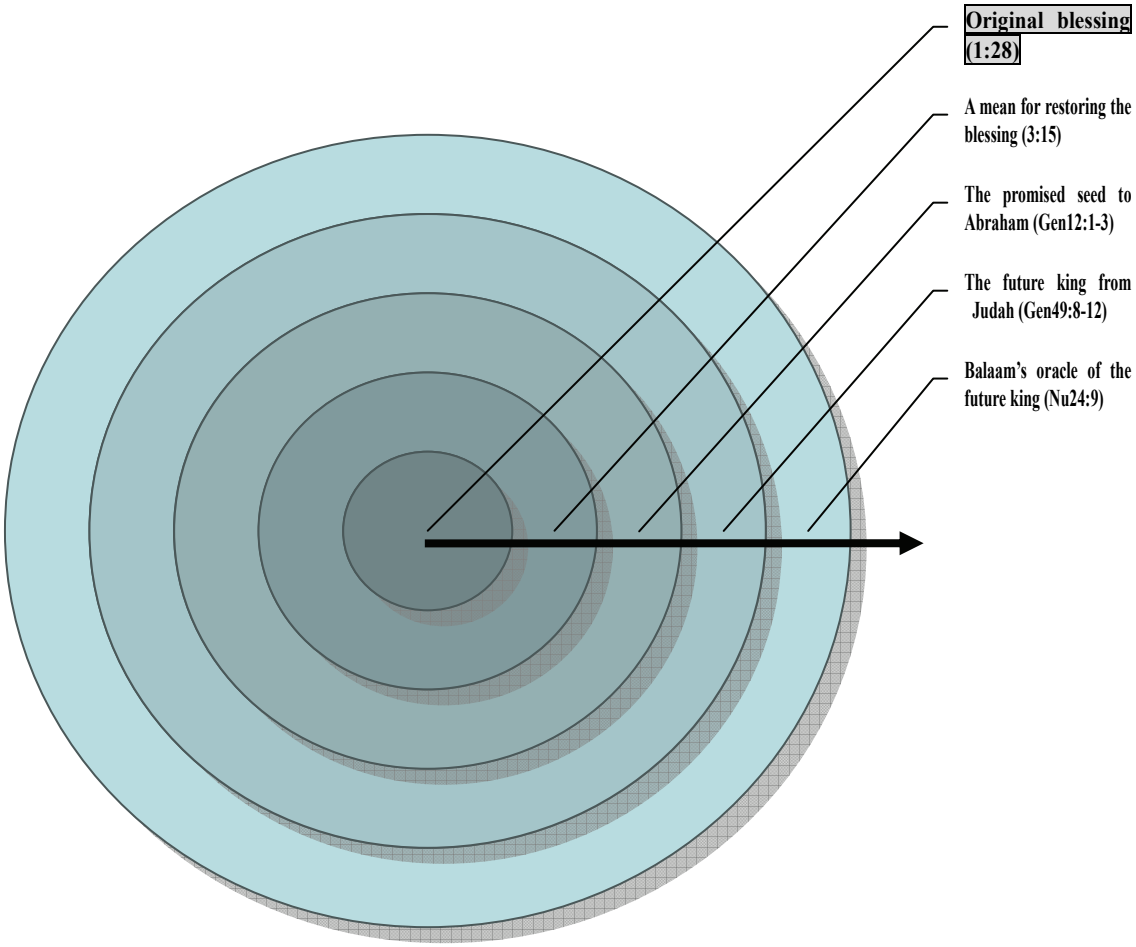
Abraham, who will bring renewal to all the peoples now scattered upon the earth (Gen 11:4, 8-9; cf. Gen 10:25, 32). The land language, "over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4, 9), in the Babel account echoes creation's charge to mankind (Gen 1:28-29), suggesting that the outcome of the dispersal at Babel in fact aided fearful man in fulfilling the divine charge to subdue the earth. In the aftermath of this dispersal arises the Terah clan whose member Abraham will bring blessing to those families of the earth (Gen 12:3).

3.3.1.3. Blessing

Throughout Genesis (and the Pentateuch), the 'blessing' remains a central theme (Westermann 1978:75, quoted by Sailhamer 1992:96). The blessing itself is primarily one of posterity: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land" (Gen 1:28). Thus, the fulfillment of the blessing is tied to the two themes, the human "seed" and "life," which laterly dominate the narratives of Genesis. In this sense, it is apparent the fact that the promises of descendants and land made to Abraham, the whole promise being categorized as 'blessing'. The divine promise to Abraham should be read, thus, in conjunction with Genesis 1 as a reaffirmation of the divine intentions for humanity, (cf. Clines 1997:85). Since at the center of God's purpose in creating humankind in Genesis 1 was to bless them (Gen 1:28).

Even after they fell away from God's protective care in the Garden of Eden, God let it be known that his plan for their blessing would not be thwarted by this act of disobedience. God promised that he would provide a means for restoring the blessing: a future "seed" who would one day come and crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).

Gen 3:15 shows plainly that God's original intention for humanity was blessing and that his continual concern for them remains the same. When God chose Abraham as the channel of the promised 'seed' (Gen 12:1-3), his express purpose was to bless Abraham and all the nations of the earth through his 'seed.' Like his original intent for Adam in the beginning, God's intent for Abraham was that he become a great people and enjoy God's good land. When Abraham's seed was on the verge of entering into Egyptian bondage, God furthered his promise by giving a prophecy to Jacob about one of his sons, Judah (Gen 49:8-12). The theme of the divine blessing may be diagrammed as follows:



In this respect, one may categorize God's activity in the world into saving and blessing, the divine blessing is given creation-wide scope from the beginning (Gen 1:22, 28), and continues Abrahamic world. Inasmuch as blessing belongs primarily to the sphere of creation, the non-elect peoples are not dependent upon the elect for many forms of blessing (cf. Westermann 1978). The genealogies of the non-elect, two of which bracket the story of Jacob, demonstrate this point (Ishmael and Abraham's other sons, Gen 25:1-18; Esau, Gen 36:1-42). This understanding of blessing in universal terms stands in some tension with the focus on blessing in Gen 12:1-3 and its mediation, by God and members of the ancestral family, throughout chapters Genesis 12-50. The phrase, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," repeated throughout Genesis, seems to suggest that blessing must be mediated by the Abrahamic family.[245] Yet, it is to be emphasized that Gen 12:3 ("I will bless those who bless you." cf. Gen 27:29) immediately recognizes that blessing is not simply something that the elect are able to extend to others; the non-chosen can also mediate blessing to the elect. This point is illustrated several times in the larger narrative (Gen 12:16; 20:14; 26:12-14).[246] This reality raises a question: If God as Creator already blesses the world after Abraham but independent of the chosen family and if the non-elect can mediate blessing to the ancestral family, of what purpose is Abraham's election? Though the narrative is remarkably reticent about this question, it is helpful to see that blessing in Genesis encompasses two different though not unrelated realities:

1. The general, creational realities such as fertility, prosperity, and success in the

[245] For instance, Gen 30:27, where Laban is blessed because of Jacob; Gen 39:5, where Pharaoh's house is blessed because of Joseph; so also Gen 47:7, 10.
[246] Melchizedek bears witness to the activity of God in Abraham's exploits and blesses him (Gen 14:18-20). Later, the foreign seer Balaam will be used by God to bless the people of Israel (Numbers 22-24).

sociopolitical sphere, which all of God's creatures can mediate and experience independent of their knowledge of God. The texts noted above illustrate this type of blessing, as do those cases where Joseph becomes a vehicle of blessing on Egyptian and other nonchosen communities. Even within the ancestral family, the blessing Isaac extends to Jacob in Gen 27:27-29 and may be so described.[247]

2. God's specific, constitutive promises to the elect family, initially through Abraham (son, land, many descendants, nationhood; Gen 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-18; 15:4-5, 18-21), and never mediated by the non-elect.[248] These promises are called "the blessing of Abraham" in 28:4, are repeated to Isaac (Gen 26:3-4, 24), and commended by Isaac to God on behalf of Jacob (Gen 28:3-4), who extends them to Jacob (Gen 28:13-15; 35:10-12).[249]

3.3.2. Textual Links

The subunits in the main section (Gen 12:1-22:1-19) of the Abraham narrative are connected thematically and structurally to the preceding and following episodes. In this section, one may examine thus such a textual relatedness between the main cycle and the remainder of Genesis.

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[247] Cf. T. E. Fretheim, "Which Blessing Does Isaac Give Jacob?" in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 279-91.
[248] Fretheim (*God and Worldt*, 106-08) calls them "constitutive" because they are community-creating, without which Israel would not have come to be.
[249] One might also distinguish between communal promises (e.g., Gen 28:13-14) and personal promises (Gen 28:15). L. A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 116, is right to criticize the distinction between "religious" promises and "earthly" promises. The last two phrases of Gen 27:29 do refer to Gen 12:3, but this is the only time it is recalled in Genesis and hence not integral to the "blessing of Abraham." It may be a more personal reference (cf. Gen 28:15).

3.3.2.1. Divinie Promissory Call and Abraham's Obedience (Gen 12:1-9)

3.3.2.1.1. Structure

The structure of the section (Gen 12:1-9)[250] can formally be divided into two parts and in turn subdivided into three subsections as Wenham has been outlined as follows:

I. Divine word (vv. 1-3)
   A. Command (v. 1)
   B. Promise (v. 2)
   C. Promise (v. 3)
II. Abraham's response
   A. Journey (vv. 4-5)
   B. Journey (vv. 6-7)
   C. Journey (vv. 8-9)

The narrative section eloquently summarizes the divine word (i.e., the divine call) that prompted Abraham's journey (Gen 12:1-3) and describes his response (Gen 12:4-9) as seen above. Each part begins with the keyword הלך (go, walk, vv. 1, 4): "Leave…" (v. 1) and "So Abram left…" (v.4), and this is also almost the final word of v. 9. Inclusions mark the beginning and end of paragraphs (e.g., אֶרֶץ, v. 1, with אֲדָמָה, v. 3; יצא, vv. 4, 5). The fulfillment (v. 4) inverts the word order of the command (v. 1):

v. 1 The Lord
to
Abraham
"Go"
v. 4 he went
Abraham
to him
The Lord

[250] Typically, critics have attributed this section to two sources, the Yahwist (J) in vv. 1-4a, 6-9 and the Priestly writer (P) in vv. 4b-5. The criteria of distinction of sources is based on the assumption that the age of patriarch (v. 4) and the travel itinerary (i.e. to Canaan) for P and the divine name "Yahweh" (vv. 1, 4, 7, 8) for J. For recent discussion of the sources in this section, see Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 104-05; Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 202-03; Wenham, *Genesis*, 270-71.

The structural analysis of the two verses shows the fact that this section has been carefully composed and the each verse is integral to it (Wenham 1987:269).

The divine call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) has been the subject because these verses are so central to the understanding of the whole of Genesis in general and Genesis 12-25 as a whole in particular. This section is the pivotal episode, which turns the narrative interest from the universal setting of the human family, viewed as essentially one people before the tower event, to the singular family of Terah's son, Abraham. As it were, the divine speech in Gen 12:1-3 develops themes, which play an important role in the primeval history, commenting on the expression of "all families of the earth can gain a blessing in you" (12:3b).[251] A further connection between Gen 12:1-3 and the primeval history has been observed in the divine promise to make Abraham's name great in contrast to the attempt of men to make a name for themselves by building a tower in Gen 11:4ff (Jenkin 1978:46). In addition, Gen 12:1-3 is the conclusion to the primeval history (von Rad 1972:154). Finally, a link with the primeval history comes in Gen 12:6-7 in connection with the incident of the blessing (Shem and Japheth) and curse (Canaan) for the sons by Noah (Gen 9:20-27). Possibly some knowledge of this incident lies behind the promise that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land of the Canaanites (Gen 12:7). It is hardly a coincidence that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, should be granted land belonging to the descendants of Canaan. In this sense, it roles to bind the primeval history and the patriarchal narrative by presenting the call and blessing of Abraham as the answer to the calamities that have befallen mankind in

[251] See, H. W. Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Yawhist," *Int* 20 (1966): 145. Cf. J. Muilenburg, "Abraham and the Nations," *Int* 19 (1965): 387-98.

Genesis 1-11[252] and look beyond it to the subsequent history of the nation. Thus, it is commonly observed that Genesis 11 (esp. the Babel story in Gen 11.1-9) provides a backdrop for reading the promises of Gen 12.1-3 (Turner 1990:52-53).

The patriarchal promises first found in Gen 12:1-3 are consciously pursued by the author/the final composer as they occur repeatedly in the Abrahamic narrative chain (e.g., Gen 12:7; 13:15-17; 15:1b, 4-5, 7, 9-21; 17:2, 4-8, 16, 19-21; 18:18; 22:16-18), again for Isaac (Gen 26:2-4) and Jacob (Gen 28:13-14; 32:29; 35:9-12), and in the Joseph narrative as well (Gen 46:1-4). Marvelous fulfillment of some of these promises is seen throughout Abraham's life and is particularly focused by the narrator towards the end of the narrative cycle (Gen 21; 23:1-1-25:11).[253] The narrative section possesses the three thematic elements, which as intertwined into one entity make up Genesis's thematic-theological core and also provides the unifying center for the book's parts: the divine promises of blessing, seed, and land for Abraham and his successors (cf. Clines 1997; Mann 1991:341-353), which are developed throughout the Abraham narrative and beyond. During the life of Abraham, these original promises are expanded (e.g., Gen 12:7; 13:15-16), specified (e.g., Gen 15:4; 17:16, 19), intensified (e.g., Gen 17:7; 18:18), and confirmed unconditionally with a covenanting ceremony as well as eternally with the covenant sign (e.g., Gen 15:17).

The passage (Gen 12:1-3) of the promises to Abraham consists of a command followed

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[252] Verbal and theological connections with the primeval history are numerous. Land (אֶרֶץ and אֲדָמָה), descendants, nation, name, greatness, curse and blessing, Canaan and the Canaanites have all already been broached in Gen chs. 1-11 and are here reintroduced with pregnant brevity.

[253] The whole literary unit of the Abraham cycle can be viewed as the outworking of the promises in Gen 12:1-3. A long list of scholarly works supporting this view is noted by Turner, *Announcements of Plot*, 51.

by seven clauses that entail the promises of the divine oath (vv. 2-3)[254] as follows:

Cluster	Texts	The divine promises and oath
	v. 1	לֶךְ (Leave), first imperative
The first cluster	v. 2a	גוי (A great nation)[255]
	v. 2b	Blessing Abraham
	v. 2c	Great name
	v. 2d	וֶהְיֵה (So that you will be a blessing)[256], second imperative
The second cluster	v. 3a	I will bless those who bless you
	v. 3b	And whoever curses you I will curse
	v. 3c	And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you

There are two imperatives around which the promises cluster into two groups. The first command (לֶךְ, "Leave," v. 1a) is followed by the first group of three promises (v. 2). These three employ a first-person verbal form (cohortative) conveying the Lord's resolve to bless the patriarch and his family: 1) "I will make you into a great nation"; 2) "and I will bless you"; and 3) "I will make your name great" (v. 2abc). The second group of three promises pertain to Abraham's mediation of the blessing for the world of nations (v. 3). The second imperative (וֶהְיֵה), which is itself a promise, transitions the passage from Abraham as the recipient of blessing (v. 2) to his mediation of blessing: "and you will be a blessing" (v. 2d). The use of the imperative instead of an imperfective verbal from heightens the certainty of the promise.

[254] The structure framework is similar with that of the promise to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 26:3-4; 27:28-29). Moreover, the fivefold use of the root ברך (bless) in vv. 2-3 parallels with the five curses on man and his world pronounced in the preceding chapters (Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25).

[255] Although this promise plays a major role in the Abraham narrative, it rarely repeated using this form. Gen 18:18 provides the nearest equivalent (cf. Gen 17:4-6; 21:13, 18). Interestingly, the promise of a great nation contrasts sharply with the barrenness of Sarah in the preceding verse (Gen 11:30).

[256] Zech 8:13 has the similar construction וְהִיִיתֶם בְּרָכָה ("and you will be a blessing"), which involves an invocation. The idea in Gen 12:2d may be a blessing formula in which Abraham's name appears (Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 276). For discussion of the syntactical options, see W. Yarchin, "Imperative and Promise in Genesis 12:13," *StudBT* 10 (1980): 167-88.

The three promises in this second cluster consist of two more first-person verbal forms (cohortatives) in arrangement and a third-person verb (perfect with *waw*)[257]: 1) "I will bless those who bless you"; 2) "and whoever curses you I will curse"; and 3) "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."[258] The third-person perfective verb (v. 3c) presents the final promise and is the ultimate goal of the previously stated intentions toward Abraham. From the observations Gen 12:1-3 establishes that by the Abrahamic lineage the nations (all humanity) will enter into the blessing envisioned for all peoples created in the "image of God" (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1b-2).[259]

As stated above, Gen 12:4-9, which relates Abraham's response to the divine call is structurally divided into three parts, which express the journey of Abraham. After the

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[257] In the second cluster, the fifth and sixth promises are a chiastic arrangement, which expresses explicitly as the actions of the Lord ("I will"): אור//ברך (v. 3ab), which are integral motifs in Genesis. The chiasmus structure, however, shows imbalance at three points that many commentators have considered significant. First, unlike the clause concerning divine "curse" (v. 3b), the promise of blessing (v. 3a) is marked syntactically (cohortative with waw) as the purpose of the call, continuing the nuance of the previous clauses in v. 2 (וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלֶּלְךָ אָאֹר – v. 3ab; the verb אָאֹר does not have the conjunctive *waw*.). In this regard, P. D. Miller, Jr., "Syntax and Theology in Genesis XII 3a," *VT* 34 (1984): 472-76, concluded that God's command (v. 1) is not intended to bring about curse, only to bless; curse is subservient to the intent of blessing, included as a promise of protection for Abraham.

[258] The seventh promise reveals the inclusive character of the promissory blessing, "all peoples on earth." The precise nuance of the verb (נִבְרְכוּ, *niphal*) is disputed; the verb permits the passive ("will be blessed" – cf. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapter 1-17*, 374-75; In this translation, Abraham is the vehicle of the divine gift for the nation, which means that a specific plan is envisioned for the blessing upon the nations.) or reflexive voice ("will bless themselves" – cf. J. A. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commenatry On Genesis*, 2nd ed. ICC [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930, 244-45; In this case, Abraham is a motivating example of faith, not the exclusive conduit; the promise therefore describes future nations who call for blessing in the name of Abraham as in Gen 48:20. A third possibility taken in the middle voice has received support recently: the verb נִבְרְכוּ is rendered "shall find blessing in you." This case focuses attention on the discovery of blessing, not the means (agent). In this view, Wenham (*Genesis 1-15*, 277-78) sees a progression of thought in the passage: Abraham is blessed (passive), people use Abraham's name for a blessing (reflexive), and all families find blessing in Abraham (middle). The passive translation probably suits the context of the passage best, since God is the source and Abraham is the channel. It also is consistent with the idea of a divine plan, which the tenor of the entire book conveys by the motif of an exclusive family (cf. Ps 72:17b). Significant is how the construction of this last verbal clause ("will be blessed, v. 3c) differs from the previous promises, which are first-person verbs (cohortative); this final promise is introduced by the perfective form (וְנִבְרְכוּ, "so that … will be blessed," *niphal*, perfect, 3rd person, plural).

[259] The repetition of 'blessing' human beings (Genesis 1-11 [esp. Gen 1:22, 28, 2:3; 5:2; 9:1] and Gen 12:1-3, five times each) and 'cursing' is an allusion to the creation account. These links imply that Abraham is of the seed of the woman (Waltke, *Genesis*, 203).

calling of Abraham, the account describes his act of obedience by detailing Abraham's departure (וַיֵּלֶךְ, v. 4), the members of the traveling party (v. 5)[260] and his itinerary in Canaan, where he erected altars of worship (vv. 6-9). Gen 12:4-5 recounts the first step of obedient faith, which is similar with that of Noah (Gen 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16; cf. Gen 17:23; 24:51; Exod 39:43; 40:16 for Moses' compliance). Also significant, it reflects how the patriarch must overcome the chief obstacles: his advanced age (seventy-five years), which establishes the timeline that measures his twenty-five-years wait for the gift of an heir (v. 4a) and Canaan's inhabitants (Canaanites). Thus, tension is created in vv. 6-7 by the close proximity of statements (v. 7). The possession of the promised land in Canaan by the other nations excludes the possibility of Abraham's descendants occupying it. The resolution of the tension with the Sarah's infertility provides the main plot for the Abraham narrative and beyond (Alexander 1982:34-37; Clines 1997:31-65).

Gen 12:6-7 expresses the theophany of God (at Shechem, Abraham's first residence in Canaan in v. 7b) and the response of Abraham (building an altar in 7b[261] [cf. Gen 28:10-19; 35:1; 48:3 for Jacob and Exod 3:2, 12, 16 for Moses]). In this passage, God reassures Abraham the promises by reiterating the two signal promises: offspring and land (v. 7a), and Abraham renders his act of obedience by building an altar (v. 7b).

The account of Abraham's entry into the land of Canaan is selective. The brief itinerary

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[260] As Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 278, points out, this verse closely parallels Gen 11:31 and also note the contrasts. Abraham's acquisition of wealth in Haran foreshadows his profitable visits to other foreign parts (cf. Gen 12:16; 20:14).

[261] In this sense, Y. Gitay, "Geography and Theology in the Biblical Narrative: The Question of Genesis 2-12," in *Prophets and Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Gene M Tucker* JSOTSup 22 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 209, states, "Canaan is not merely another new settlement," "but rather a sacred space."

of Abraham (Gen 12:6-9) presents his travelogue, which involved the three locations only: Schechem (oak of Moreh, 12:6-7), Bethel/Ai, the east of Bethel (v. 8) and the Negev (v. 9; cf. Genesis 23). In his itinerary, Abraham is portrayed as traversing the land of promise from end to end. The way of Abraham into Canaan has typologically the significance. As Cassuto (1964:303-306, 334-337) has pointed out, it can hardly be accidental that these are the same three locations visited by Jacob when he returns to Canaan from Haran (Genesis 34-35)[262] as well as the same sites occupied in the account of the conquest of the land under Joshua.[263]

ABRAHAM	Shechem (Gen 12:6) → Bethel and Ai (12:8) → Negev (12:9)
JACOB	Shechem (Gen 33:18-20) → Bethel (35:14-15) → Negev (35:27)
JOSHUA	East of Bethel and west of Ai (Jos 7:2; 8:9, 12) → Mount Ebal (next to Shechem [Jos 8:30]) → south of Bethel and Ai (Jos 10) and North of Shechem (Jos 11).

The route of Abraham into Canaan by way of the three sites is remarkably repeated by Jacob upon his return from Haran (Gen 33:18-20; 35:14-15, 27). The two patriarchs build altars of worship at Shechem and Bethel. The pattern of traversing these three regions is repeated in the conquest narratives of Joshua: Ai/Bethel (Josh 7:2; 8:9),

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[262] Jacob's return from the east and his journeys in the land are like those of Abraham. First, he goes to Shechem and purchases a section of a field where he puts his tent and erects an altar to the God of Israel (Gen 33:18-20). Before he leaves this site, he commands his household to put away the foreign gods which are in their midst (Gen 35:2) and hides all the idols he has received from Shechem beneath the oak tree which is there (Gen 35:4). Then he journeys to Bethel and sets up there a pillar to the glory of his God (Gen 35:14-15). Finally, he travels on to the south, which is the Negev, and comes to Hebron (Gen 35:27).

[263] There it is noted that the first city which they themselves conquered was Ai (Josh 7:2; 8:9; cf. also v. 12), and it uses the same expression as Gen 12:8. Immediately after this the book of Joshua recounts that Joshua built an alter at Mount Ebal, that is, next to Shechem (Josh 8:30). From there, the Israelites spread out into two further regions: south of Bethel and Ai (Joshua 10) and north of Shechem (Joshua 11). This is precisely the same three regions, which we see with Abraham and Jacob. In Shechem Joshua commanded the Israelites to put away the foreign gods which were in their midst (Josh 24:23), using almost the same words as those of Jacob in his day. There Joshua erected a large stone under the oak which was in the sanctuary of the Lord (Josh 24:26) – under the oak as in Gen 35:4.

Shechem, where an altar is built (Josh 8:30), and south of Ai/Bethel toward the Negev (Joshua 10) and then north of Shechem (Joshua 11).

These parallels show clearly the method of demonstrating that the deeds of the patriarchs in former times prefigure those of their descendants in the present.[264] Its intention is to show that what happened to Abraham also happened to Jacob and then also to their descendants. This is to show that the conquest of the land had already been accomplished in a symbolic way in the times of the fathers, demonstrated by means of their building their altars and purchasing property. Thus, it shows that in the deeds of the fathers there is a source of trust that the Lord has cared for them from the very start and that will still remain trustworthy in the days of the descendants of the fathers later on.

3.3.2.1.2. Call and Test (Gen 12:1-9// Gen 22:1-19)

According to traditional source criticism, Gen 12:1-9, which uses "Yahweh" for deity is mostly from J and Gen 22:1-19, which uses "*Elohim*" is from E. Thus, these two accounts about Abraham were written one hundred years apart from each other, and in different parts Canaan: Gen 12:1-9 in the south, Gen 22:1-19 in the north. Most recently, some critics have observed the textual resemblances between Gen 12:1-9 and

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[264] As we observed early, Pentateuch in structure (cf. בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים "days to come" [Gen 49:1; cf. Num 24:14; Deut 31:29] and תולדות) and theme (not-yet realized blessings) looks beyond itself to the eschatological realization of the promissory blessings. In it, Genesis also must be viewed as a component of this eschatological perspective. This suggests that Genesis is read as an interpretation of the past with an eye on Israel's future. It should no be surprising then to discover in the Genesis narratives precursory images that have their parallel in the experience of Israel. Genesis was cast so that the Mosaic community could draw the inferential analogies between the distant past and their present experiences. On the three major literary 'seams' (i.e., the three literary junctures) in the structure of the Pentateuch, see Sailhamer, "Genesis," 6-8; *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 35-44.

22:1-19,[265] the event for which Abraham earns God's promise and blessings. They have also come to recognize that these two episodes form a crucial *inclusio* and echo, which marks its beginning and end the Abraham narrative respectively. Sarna (1970:160-161) presents circumspectly several examples to demonstrate this thesis (so-called "spiritual odyssey"). Firstly, initially God commands Abraham "Go forth…to the land (לֶךְ־לְךָ…אֶל־הָאָרֶץ) that I will show you" (Gen 12:1) and employs similar language at the end of Abraham's journey "Go forth to the land (לֶךְ־לְךָ…אֶל־הָאָרֶץ)[266] of Moriah…on one of the heights, which I will tell you" (Gen 22:2). In both cases, the exact destinations are not given. Secondly, the weighty demand on Abraham is evident in the threefold epithets of the command. In both situations, the tension of the story is built up by the accumulation of descriptive epithets: "…וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ…מֵאַרְצְךָ…, You land, your homeland, your father's house" in Gen 12:1 and "…אֶת־יִצְחָק…אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ…, Your son, your only one whom you love, Isaac" in Gen 22:2.[267] Thirdly, Abraham as a son leaves forever his father Terah in Haran (Gen 12:1-3) and at Moriah, father and son are prepared to see each other for the last time (Gen 22:9f.). From this aspect, von Rad (1972:239) states that while Abraham was cut off from his whole past in 12:1f., in 22:1f. Abraham must give up his whole future (cf.

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[265] See, Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, II.310-11; Davidson, *Genesis 1-11, 12-50*, 94; Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible*, 143; Rendsburg, *Redaction of Genesis*, 30-35; Sarna, Understanding Genesis, 160-61; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 274-75.

[266] The Hebrew phrase לֶךְ־לְךָ occurs in the Old Testament only in Gen 12:1 and Gen 22:2, strongly suggesting that the author/the final composer intends his reader to see the frame.

[267] To draw attention of the reader to Abraham, the author/the final composer intentionally used three times second person masculine singular pronoun suffix (ךָ/ךָ)in each case (cf. Rendsburg, *Redaction of Genesis*, 31). In conjunction with these passages, Y Avishur compares the gradation of this three-phrase of Isaac (אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק [קַח־נָא]) in Gen 22:2, from the general to the specific, with the first command to leave Haran, also three expression (מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ) in Gen 12:1. See, Y. Avishur, "The Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22): The Structure of the Narrative. Its Link to Genesis 12 and Its Canaanite Background," in *Studies in Biblical Narrative* (Tel-Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication, 1999), 75-103 (esp. 92-93).

Jacob 1974:143; Rendsburg 1986:31).[268] Fourthly, in both passages, it is reported that at the very end of his journey Abraham builds an altar, one on the east of Bethel (Gen 12:8) and the other one on the heights of Moriah (Gen 22:9). Finally, the two episodes share in common strikingly similar divine blessings, so that the blessings given at the outset are finally confirmed by God at the end of Abraham's journey when he has demonstrated his absolute obedience to God: "Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son I will indeed bless you…and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice" (Gen 22:16-18; cf. Gen 12:2-3; 18:19)[269]. Sarna's final statement summarizes these aspects and presents the meaning of these two episodes in the Abraham narrative as follows:

> The Torah, then, has used the ancient Akedah tale to encase the account of the spiritual odyssey of Abraham within a literary framework, opening and closing with divine communications that involve agonizing decisions carried to completion with unflinching loyalty, and culminating in promises of a glorious posterity (1970:161).

These two sections have the same command "Go (לֶךְ־לְךָ) from God, which appears exclusively in both passages. More importantly, the promises in Gen 12:1-3 are repeated verbatim and confirmed in Gen 22:15-19. In this way, both episodes form an *inclusio* for the Abraham narrative.

In addition to the observations, Rendsburg (1986:32-33) presents sixteen parallels or

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[268] In this sense, they have regarded this divine imperative as a test of faith, namely, Abraham is to give up all he holds dearest for an unknown land promised by God.

[269] To put it concretely, the promise reiterated in Gen 12:2-3 is similar to that of Gen 22:15-19. The promise of 'blessing' (Gen 12:2) and 'curse' (Gen 12:3) are strikingly similar to that of Gen 22:17 (cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5; 17:2). The view of the 'nations enjoyment of and participation in Abraham's blessing (Gen 22:18) is similar to Gen 12:3 (cf. Gen 18:18). The reference to the gift of the 'land' is found throughout the earlier narratives (Gen 12:7. cf. Gen 13:15; 15:18; 17:8). Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 296-97, notes that these two blessings each contain seven expressions of benison (cf. Rendsburg, *Redaction of Genesis*, 32).

correspondences between two pericopes. The textual ties between two may be summed up as follows:

Texts	Key-words/expressions	Texts
12:4	וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו / וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט (traveling together Abraham and Lot / Abraham and Isaac)	22:6, 8
12:5	וַיִּקַּח (Abraham took)	22:3
12:5	אֶת־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו / וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן (The people he acquired in Haran / the two servants)	22:3
12:6	מְקוֹם / הַמָּקוֹם[270](Place / the place)	22:3-4
12:6	שְׁכֶם / וַיַּשְׁכֵּם (Shechem – prominent term in Gen 12:1-9 / he arose – echoing Shechem)	22:3
12:7	יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה (יְהוָה) יִרְאֶה / וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם (the appearance of God)	22:14

Besides the similarities in key-words and expressions, it is possible to observe some textual relevance more in a way of similar phrases. Gen 12:1-9 ends with the report of Abraham's traveling to the Negev, likewise Gen 22:1-19 ends with the account of Abraham's dwelling in Beersheba. In Gen 12:1-9 the words of God to Abraham occur in two separate parts, in Gen 12:1-3 and 12:7 with action described in the intervening verses. Similarly, in Gen 22:1-19, the words of God to Abraham also occur separately, in Gen 22:12 and 22:16-18 with action again described in the intervening verses. The expression וַיֹּאמֶר occurs before each speech, that is, twice in Gen 12:1, 7 and 22:2, 16. In each case, one speech is the conveyance of the blessing (Gen 12:1-3 and 22:16-18),

[270] The word is used with the connotation 'hallowed site' in both instances, namely "place which the Lord will choose" (cf. Deut 16:7). Some critics view Gen 12:6 as 'hallowed site.' See, Driver, *Genesis*, 146; Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora*, 341; Speiser, *Genesis*, 86.

and the other us a specific reference to the patriarch's offspring in Gen 12:7 (זַרְעֲךָ, "your seed") and in Gen 22:12 (אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ, "your son, your favorite").[271]

These textual linkages suggest that the two episodes are closely tied in theme, key-words, and expressions, which are used by the author/the final composer, so as to alerting the reader to the literary texture of the Abraham narrative.

3.3.2.1.3. Compliance (Gen 12:1-7) and Disembarkation (Gen 8:15-20)

There is a striking thematic parallel between the picture of God's calling Noah out of the ark (Gen 8:15-20) and the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-7).

Genesis 8:15-20	Genesis 12:1-7
8:15 וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ And God said to Noah	12:1a וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם And God said to Abram
8:16 צֵא מִן־הַתֵּבָה Go out from the ark	12:1b לֶךְ־לְךָ מֵאַרְצְךָ Go out from your land
8:18 וַיֵּצֵא־נֹחַ And Noah went out	12:4 וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם And Abram went out
8:20 וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה And Noah built an alter for the Lord	12:7 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה and he (Abram) built an alter for the Lord
9:1 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ And God blessed Noah	12:2 וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ And I [God] will bless you
9:1 פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ Be fruitful and multiply	12:2 וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל I will make you a great nation
9:9 וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵקִים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם I will establish my covenant with you and your seed	12:7 לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת I will give your seed this land

Both Noah and Abraham represent new beginning in the course of events recorded in

[271] Rendsburg, *Redaction of Genesis*, 33.

Genesis. Both are marked by God's promise of blessing and his gift of the covenant. By placing the call of Abraham after the dispersion of the notion at Babylon (Gen 11:1-9), the author intends to picture Abraham's call as God's gift of salvation in the midst of judgment. As a way of sustaining this theme even further, the author has patterned the account of Abraham's call and blessing after an earlier account of a similar gift of salvation in the midst of judgment, the conclusion of the Flood narrative (Gen 8:15-19). The similarities between the two narratives are striking and show that the Abraham, like Noah, marks a new beginning as well as a return to God's original plan of blessing "all humankind" (Gen 1:28). The theme of Abraham and his descendants marking a new beginning in God's plan of blessing is developed in a number of other ways as well in Genesis. Most notable is the frequent reiteration of God's "blessing" in Gen 1:28 (and 9:1) throughout the narratives of Abraham and his descendants (e.g., Gen 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:5, 18; 17:2, 6-8; 22:17-18; 25:11; 26:2-4; 27:27-29; 49:28). The choice of the word פְּרִי, *be fruitful* in Gen 17:6 and רְבִי, *multiply* in Gen 17:2 seems intended to recall the blessing of all humankind in Gen 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land." And its reiteration in Gen 9:1: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land." Thus, the covenant with Abraham was the means through which God's original blessing would again be channeled to all humankind. The "promise to the fathers" is none other than a reiteration of God's original blessing of humankind (Gen 1:28). To make this clear the author has given a representative list of "all humankind" in Genesis 10 according to their "families" (Genesis 10:32) and has shown how their dispersion was the result of Babylon's rebellion (Gen 11:1-9). These same "families of the earth" are to be blessed in Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:3). Abraham is represented in Gen 12:1-9 as a new

Adam and the "seed of Abraham" as a second Adam, a new humanity. Those that "bless" him, God will bless; those that "curse" him, God will curse. The way of life and blessing, which was once marked by the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17), and then by the ark (Gen 7:23), is now marked by identification with Abraham and his seed. The identity of the "seed" of Abraham will be one of the chief themes of the following narratives. At the close of the book, a curtain on the future is drawn back and a glimpse of the future seed of Abraham is briefly allowed (Gen 49:8-12). This one "seed" who is to come, to whom the right of kingship belongs, will be the "lion of the tribe of Judah" and "to him will be the obedience of the nations" (Gen 49:10). The importance which the author attaches to the connection of the fulfillment of the "blessing" and coming of this one from the tribe of Judah can be seen in the narrative framework given to the prophetic poem of Jacob in Genesis 49. At the conclusion of Jacob's words (Gen 49:28), the author has repeated three times (וַיְבָרֶךְ, v. 28b, כִּבְרָכָתוֹ, בֵּרַךְ, v. 28c) that his words are to be understood as a renewal of the theme of the blessing (Gen 49:28):

3.3.2.2. Jeopardy and Separation (Gen 12:10-13:18)

3.3.2.2.1. Structure[272]

It is not easy to decide whether this passage ends at Gen 13:1 or at Gen 12:20. The

[272] Genesis 13 is essential to understanding the whole of the Abraham-Lot narratives, which has many textual relationships with the remainder sections of the Abraham narrative (e.g., v. 2 with Gen 12:16; v. 7 with Gen 12:6; 15:19-21; v. 10 with Gen 19:29). Although some critics (cf. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 172, 178) have typically proposed that vv. 14-18 is a late addition because of no vital contribution to the narrative, some parallels in lexical item (e.g., 'separation,' vv. 9, 11, 14) oppose this assertion (cf. Wenham's five parallel terms – 'separate,' 'look around,' 'see,' 'all the plain [land],' and 'camped' – between vv. 9-12 and vv. 14-15, 18). See, Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 294-95.

main arguments in favor of Gen 13:1 are descent of Abraham (Gen 12:10) matches ascent of Abraham (Gen 13:1) and that the verbal parallels (Gen 12:20//13:1) "him, his wife, and all who belonged to him" tie these two verses tightly together.[273] Gen 13:1 reiterates the outcome of the prior events by "his wife and everything he had" in Gen 12:20 (Mathews 2005:126). However, Wenham (1987:285-287) asserts "it seems slightly more natural to view the expulsion from Egypt as marking the conclusion of one scene, and the journeying to the Negev as signaling the start of a new episode. In confirmation of this reading is the fact that the final verb in Gen 12:20, 'sent away,' has no explicit subject, whereas Gen 13:1 reintroduces Abram." In this sense, probably it is best to take Gen 12:10-20 as a discrete unit. Thus, this section can be divided two subsections: 12:10-20 and 13:1-18.

The pericope (Gen 12:10-20) contains thematic components, which anticipate that of Gen 20:1-18. Commentators from all sides of the theological spectrum have focused on historical and thematic dimensions of the well-known episode of Abraham's sojourn to Egypt (Gen 12:10-20) to neglect of literary analysis.[274] Conservative interpreters have examined the passage with similar concerns.[275] Although these reflections are legitimate and important, they ignore the integrality of form and content

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[273] D. L. Petersen, "A Thrice-told Tale: Genre, Theme and Motif," *BR*[1] 18 (1973): 34, maintains "Gen 13:2 is yet another initial disjunctive clause; Gen 13:1 includes the phrases the phrase הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ, which is central to the tale; and the travel agenda is necessary to deposit Abraham back in the Negev." For more thesis, see, the discussion of the extent of the wife-sister pericopes in the section of Abraham and Sarah in Foreign Harem (Gen 12:1-20 and 20:1-18) in p. 148 and also Alexander, *Literary Analysis*, 136-37; id., *Abraham in the Negev: A Source Critical Inverstigation of Genesis 20:1-22:19* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997b), 32-34; K. A. Mathews, *An Exegetical Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Genesis 11:27-50:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Publishers, 2005), 126-30; Waltke, *Genesis*, 212.

[274] For instance, Skinner, *A Critical and Exegtical Commentary*, 248-50 and von Rad, *Genesis*, 168-69, who think that the text served primarily as a window to history and a mirror of their ethical interests

[275] C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament I: The Pentateuch*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 197 and D. Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1967), 117, who focused on historical and thematic dimensions of the pericope.

so vital to literary analysis of the passage. Thus, it is necessary to make an intrinsic inquiry, looking at the text itself, namely, the dramatic narrative flow. In it, formerly, the arrangement of Gen 12:10-20 is symmetrically organized as follows:

A. Problem (exposition): Entry in Egypt for famine (12:10)
B. Rising Action: Abraham and Sarah held by Egyptians (12:11-16a)
C. Turning point: Abraham blessed and Pharaoh cursed (12:16b-17)
B'. Falling Action: Abraham and Sarah freed by Pharaoh (12:18-19)
A'. Resolution (conclusion): Exit from Egypt with riches (12:20)

Gen 12:10 may be called the dramatic problem; it introduces the context out of which the narrative flows. Abraham goes to Egypt because of a famine and intends to stay there temporarily. The resolution (v. 20) balances with the beginning of the story. The author/the final composer contrasts the poverty of famine with the riches of Abraham as he completes his sojourn. Gen 12:11-16a contains the rising action. The plan to lie is carried through but leads Sarah into Pharaoh's harem. This section is balanced by the falling action of Gen 12:18-19. Both portions are predominantly dramatic dialogue and contain similar expressions – "you are my sister" (v. 13) and "she is my sister" (v. 19). Finally, the middle portion of Gen 12:16b-17, the turning point of the account, forms a skillful interlocking of perspectives. Abraham prospers but Pharaoh is cursed.[276]

These verses both foreshadow future action in the text and reflect on the previous events of the story. Gen 12:16b anticipates what will happen to Abraham; he will leave

[276] The early portions of the narrative divide into four sections, each introduced by the marker וַיְהִי "("and it came about"). Verse 10 opens the story in this manner. The word occurs again in v. 11, and again in v. 14. The last appearances (וַיְהִי־לוֹ) is found in v. 16b. Verses 16b-17 is best understood as a contrast between the prosperity of Abraham and the plagues on Pharaoh. The next sequence begins with v. 18. Without a doubt, v. 20 is to be closely associated with vv. 18-19, but the resumption of consecution after lengthy simultaneity (וַיְצַו) gives it some degree of independence.

with many riches from the Egyptians. Gen 12:17 deals with the problems that arose for Pharaoh "because of Sarah." In this way, the turning point of the drama looks forward and backward, adding to the symmetry. Through such a structural analysis, one may not merely see how each part contributes to the section, but treat the passage a whole as the conceptual units rather than dissecting it into it small parts, so one can probe into its meaning and relevance. The movement of sojourn, captivity, intervention, release, and return becomes the focus of the interpretative reflection, anticipating other portions of Genesis and countless realities in the life of faith.[277]

As Alexander (1982:37-38) suggested, the pericope (12:10-20) has been cautiously integrated into the larger narrative cycle, although the narrative may once have existed as an independent story. This fact can be confirmed in two ways. First, the account of Abraham in Egypt is connected thematically to the preceding episode (Gen 11:27-12:9). Following the announcement of the divine promises, we might have expected the narrative to continue by describing their fulfillment. However, in actual fact the exact opposite occurs; instead of a description of their fulfillment we are given a picture of their non-fulfillment (or 'anti-fulfillment).[278] By highlighting the non-fulfillment (or anti-fulfillment) of the promises, the story of Abraham in Egypt is intimately connected to the preceding episodes. It is also possible to observe in the events of Gen

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[277] See, Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretationl*, 375f. 'Thus, in all these various forms Abraham came to serve as the prototype of Israel for later generation'. Cf. also R. W. L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: patriarchal narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992c), 142-46.

[278] In this regard, J. Goldingay suggests the "anti-fulfillment" ("The Patriarchs in Scripture and Tradition," in *Essays on the Patriarchal Narrative*, eds. A. R. Millard & D. J. Wiseman [Leicester: IVP, 1980], 13; "Yahweh intends to make Abram a great nation, to make him a blessing to the nations, and to give the land of Canaan to his descendants. But as a result of an entirely human response to a real crisis, each element in this promise receives a kind of anti-fulfillment. Abram leave the land of Canaan, watches the potential mother of his descendants join the Pharaoh's harem, and causes Yahweh to bring affliction on the Pharaoh and his howse."

12:10-20 a connection with the promise of divine protection implied in Gen 12:3.[279] Viewed against the background of the divine promises in Gen 12:1-3, 7 the events in Egypt take on a deeper significance. Second, the episode is linked structurally to the preceding and following episodes. The initial journey of Abraham from Bethel to the Negev (Gen 12:8-9) and his return from the Negev to Bethel (Gen 13:2-4) also balance each other. Obviously, these verses function as bridges between Abraham in Canaan and Abraham in Egypt.

The next pericope, Gen 13:1-18 begins with an explicit mention of Abraham leaving Egypt, and a list of his fellow-travelers almost identical with Gen 12:20. This repetition serves to link the Egyptian affair with this following one. The one difference in the list of travelers is the addition of Lot's name, last mentioned in Gen 12:5. The episode also delineates the account of the separation of Lot from Abraham, which is connected to Gen 12:1-9 through the divine promises of the land (cf. Gen 12:7; 13:14-17).[280] Simultaneously, it also anticipates later developments and provides backdrop information essential for the inclusion of future episodes within the Abraham narrative (Alexander 1982:38-40). The episode then closes with Abraham building an altar in Hebron (13:18). The pericope can be arranged chiastically:

A Abraham building an altar at Bethel with fellow-traveler Lot (vv. 1-7)
B Abraham's speech: his offer of the land (vv. 8-9)

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[279] Pharaoh brings upon himself and his house the curse of God in the form of great plague.
[280] God not only reiterates the promise of land, but also clarifies the extent of the land promised. Gen 13:7, like Gen 12:6, introduces a certain tension into the narrative with regards to the possession of the land. Meanwhile, as G. C. Aalders, *Genesis*, 2 vols. trans. W. Heynen (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1981), I:279, pointed out, the separation of Abraham and Lot also fulfills one of the requirements made by God in the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1). "As long as Abram kept Lot with him, he still maintained a close tie with his 'father's household.' It was imperative that those ties be completely severed. It was Abram alone who was chosen to be the head of a special people of God who were to be the recipients of God redemptive revelation."

C Lot's choice of Sodom (vv. 10-13)[281]

B' Yahweh's speech: his offer of the land (vv. 14-17)

A' Abraham building an altar at Hebron alone (v. 18)[282]

A and A' indicate the geographical movement of Abraham from Bethel/Ai (the north) to Hebron (the south) in physically and spiritually. Since he is back at his altar in the heart of the promised land. Meanwhile the symmetric structure suggest that Lot's spiritual situation is blanked by Yahweh's and Abraham's speech. In this view, Lot appear to have made a poor choice spiritually. B and B' depict the scene that Abraham gives up his rights and offers Lot the pick of the land with an amazing generosity. The Lord in turn reaffirms his promise in the legal language of the time. Finally, C Lot's wicked decision marks their decisive separation: one to cursed prosperity, the other to true prosperity. Based on the structural analysis of the pericope, one may explore the textual links between the narrative (Gen 12:10-13:18) and the remainder of Genesis.

3.3.2.2.2. Ordeals and Parting (Gen 12:10-13:18// Gen 20:1-21:34)

The section structurally consists of three subunits: the story of Sarah in Pharaoh's harem (Gen 12:10-20), an ordeal, which ends in peace and success (Gen 13:1-4), and the story of Abraham's and Lot's parting (Gen 13:5-18). These passages parallel another three corresponding pericopes in Gen 20:1-21:34 respectively: the story of

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[281] This section (esp., vv. 10 and 13) contain explicit references to anticipate the divine judgment of Sodom. The events of Genesis 19 are also anticipated in Gen 13:10. Obviously the full outcome of the events related in Genesis 18 and 19 is presupposed in Gen 13:2-18. Apart from this reference to Gen ch. 19, Gen 13:10 also alludes to earlier episodes in Genesis: "the garden of Yahweh" (cf. Gen 2:4ff.); "the land of Egypt" (cf. Gen 12:10ff.). Thus, the present episode performs a vital function by preparing the reader for later events (cf. Alexander, *Literary Analysis*, 38-40, 215-23). For the discussion of the relationship between Gen 13:2-18 and Genesis 18-19, see von Rad's comments (*Genesis*, 172, 225). He concludes that Genesis 13 never existed independently of Genesis 18 and 19.

[282] See, Waltke, *Genesis*, 218.

Sarah in Abimelech's palace (Gen 20:1-18), the story of Abraham's and Ishmael's parting (Gen 21:1-21), and the conclusion of the Abimelech story leading to peace and success (Gen 21:22-34).

Abraham and Sarah in foreign palaces (12:10-20 // 20:1-18)
The peace and success accounts (13:1-4 // 21:22-34)[283]
Abraham's separation from Lot and Ishmael (13:5-18 // 21:1-21)

The two passages (Gen 12:10-13:18 and 20:1-21:34), thus, are divisible into three smaller sections in that order. The textual ties can be illustrated as below in sequence.

3.3.2.2.3. Sarah in Foreign Harem (Gen 12:1-20// Gen 20:1-18)

The two episodes of Sarah in a foreign palace (Gen 12:10-20 and Gen 20:1-18) are universally recognized as duplicates, which share many key-words and expressions. This may be diagrammatically represented as follows:

Text (12:10-20)	Key-words/Expressions	Text (20:1-18)
12:11	וַיֹּאמֶר (אַבְרָם) אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ (He said to his wife Sarai)	20:2
12:12	וְהָרְגוּ (they will kill me)	20:11, 18
12:13	הָאֲחֹתִי (my sister)	20:2
12:14-15	הָאִשָּׁה (the woman)	20:3
12:15	לקה (take)	20:3-4
12:16	Flocks and herds, and male and female	20:4

[283] For the reason why the story of Ishmael's and Abraham's separation (Gen 21:1-21) precede the verses dealing with Abraham's success, which culminates in his invoking Yahweh (Gen 21:22-34) is rightly presented by Rendsburg with twofold: opening the womb contiguous and Isaac's infant time and his grown lad (*Redaction of Genesis*, 38-39).

	slaves	
12:17	נגע (touch, afflict or plague)	20:6
12:17	עַל דְּבָר (on account of)	20:11, 18
12:17	אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם (אַבְרָהָם) Abra(ha)m's wife	20:18
12:18	Pharaoh called to Abraham and said" (Gen 12:18)/Abimelech called to Abraham and said" (20:9)	20:9
12:18	זֹאת עָשִׂיתָ (this you did, 12:18) עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת (you did this, 20:6)	20:6
12:19	וְעַתָּה (now)	20:7

In Gen 12:11 and 20:2 Abraham said to Sarah his wife twice, Sarah is called "the woman" (Gen 12:14-15; 20:3), the use of the verbs "לקח, take" (Gen 12:15; 20:3-4) and "נָגַע, touch, afflict or plague" (Gen 12:17; 20:6), the description of Abraham's property as "flocks and herds and male and female slaves" (Gen 12:16; 20:4), the words "עַל דְּבָר, on account of" (Gen 12:17; 20:11, 18), and the expressions "וְהָרְגוּ, they will kill me" (Gen 12:12; 20:11), "Abra(ha)m's wife" (Gen 12:17; 20:18), "my sister" (Gen 12:13; 20:2), "Pharaoh called to Abraham and said" (Gen 12:18) and "Abimelech called to Abraham and said" (Gen 20:9), "now" (Gen 12:19; 20:7) and "you did this" (Gen 12:18; 20:6). The twelve theme-words and expressions suggest that the two narratives are closely tied.[284] In addition, in comparison with the narrative line of Gen 12:10-20 and the new element in the periscope of Genesis 20 (esp. Gen 20:3-7, Abimelech's dream) Husser (1996:132-135) proposes the dream of the oneiric dialogue between God and man, a literary device as textual tie.

3.3.2.2.4. Peace and Success (Gen 13:1-4// Gen 21:22-34)

[284] *Ibid*., pp. 39-40.

Although these pericopes are not central to the Abraham narrative, they contain some textual links, which point to their in their connection within the narrative context. Gen 13:1 and 21:31 depict two regional etymologies, Negev and Beersheba, which is the most important city. We read of Abraham's possessions in Gen 13:2 (מִקְנֶה, livestock) and Gen 21:27 (צֹאן וּבָקָר, flocks and herds) each other. Most significantly we find the phrases of Abraham's invocation in Gen 13:4 (וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, Abram invoked there the name of Yahweh) and Gen 21:33 (וַיִּקְרָא־שָׁם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, he invoked there the name of Yahweh) respectively.[285]

3.3.2.2.5. Separation from Lot/Ishmael (Gen 13:5-18// Gen 21:1-21)

In these pericope, one may note some textual relevancies, which tie the two pericopes in verbally and thematically. Although they are from different verbal roots, both רִיב (quarrel, Gen 13:7) and רֹבֶה (archer, Gen 21:20), the assonance of the two words is unquestionable. Both Gen 13:10 and 21:19 occur a fair of expressional sameness of God's action and Lot's action: וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא, "Lot lifted up his eyes and saw (Gen 13:10)" and וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרֶא, God opened up her eyes and she saw (Gen 21:19).

We read the word, מִצְרַיִם (Egypt), which occurs in Gen 13:10 and 21:19. The word זַרְעֲךָ (your seed) appears in both Gen 13:15-16 and 21:13. One may find an analogy in God's promises made to Abraham (וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ , I will make your seed

[285] *Ibid*., pp. 35-37. Rendsburg views the matter of inserting Abraham's invoking Yahweh in Gen 21:33, which is a redactional structuring that Speiser regards it as a excerpt from the source J (cf. Speiser, *Genesis*, 160).

like the dust of the earth, Gen 13:16) and Hagar (לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ , I will make him a great nation, 21:18). Both Gen 13:14-17 and 21:1-7 depict the central theme, the land and Isaac, which are inextricably intertwined throughout the Abraham narrative, and are specifically collocated at the establishment of the covenant in Gen 17:8-10. In this regard, the acquisition of the land of Canaan for Abraham parallels to Isaac's birth that it is used to elicit a conflict, which leads to Ishmael's leaving, just as a conflict caused Lot's separation. (cf. Sarna 1970:171-172).

Moreover, in the thematic aspect, the reports of the separation in the two pericopes deal with an important theme concerning the promised seed. At the outset of his journey, Abraham must have considered Lot as his possible heir because Sarah was barren at that time (cf. Helyer 1983:77-88). Ishmael was also considered by Abraham as his legitimate heir in Gen 17:18. Thus, these two episodes deal with the separation of the illegitimate heirs from Abraham. These separations are fully compensated for by the birth of Isaac, which is placed between the stories of "Sarah in Abimelech's palace" and Ishmael's parting from Abraham" in the second of the two separation units (Gen 21:1-7). In Gen 12:10-13:18, the order of events is ordeal, peace and success, and separation, but in Gen 20:1-21:34, the order of events is ordeal, separation, and success ad peace. Rendsburg offers some reasons for the change of order in the second part. He contends that by switching the order of these two events, the author/the final composer tries to make the two passages dealing with opening the womb (Gen 20:17-18 and 21:1-2) adjacent to each other, which leads to separation. The success and peace event in Gen 21:22-34 allows for the lapse of time between Isaac the infant (Gen 21:8-10) and Isaac the grown lad who can carry sacrificial wood in Gen 22:6 (Rendsburg 1986:38-39).

In addition, one more goal the author/the final composer must have had in mind when he put the episode of Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21:2-34) closer to the final event in Gen 22:1-19 is that he wanted to demonstrate the partial fulfillment of Abraham's blessings given by God in Gen 12:1-3, when Abraham set out his journey. The partial fulfillment of these blessings must have been observed by the foreign king Abimelech. This can be assumed by Abimelech's statement, "God is with you in all that you do (Gen 21:22)," and by the fact that Abimelech wants to have a relationship with Abraham through covenant.[286]

3.3.2.2.6. Conflicts: Abraham and Lot (Gen 13:6), Jacob and Esau (Gen 34:7)

There are striking verbal parallels between the accounts of the struggle that arose between Abraham Lot and the struggle between Jacob and Esau.

Abraham and Lot	Jacob and Esau
13:6 ~~וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֹתָם~~ הָאָרֶץ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו׃ The land was not able to support them both because their possessions were great; they were not able to live together.	34:7 כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב מִשֶּׁבֶת יַחְדָּו וְלֹא יָכְלָה ~~לָשֵׂאת אֹתָם~~ אֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵיהֶם מִפְּנֵי מִקְנֵיהֶם׃ Because their possessions were great, the land of their sojourning was not able to support them because of their cattle.

Such parallels have the effect of drawing the themes of the two narratives together so that they reinforce a central them. The theme in this case is the fulfillment of the blessing: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land" (Gen 1:28).

[286] In this regard, Muilenburg ("Abraham and the Nations," 376-378) argues that the nations will receive the divine blessing through their relationship to Israel.

3.3.2.2.7. Wife-Sister Episodes (Gen 12:10-20// Gen 20:1-19// Gen 26:1-13)

With the two pericopes, Gen 12:10-20 and 20:1-18 together, scholars have relegated Gen 26:1-13 to the wife/sister deception episodes, which are commonly termed 'doublets' or 'duplicate narrative'[287] in the patriarchal history.[288] Since these provide important evidence for the existence of parallel documents. The episodes have naturally led scholars to consider their relationship to one another, as the close proximity of these incidents in Genesis and the complete absence of such

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[287] In 'the Documentary Hypothesis' U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I: From Adam to Noah*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press & The Hebrew University, 1989), 69, suggests "duplications and triplications" in the pentateuchal narrative "are of two kinds". When "parallel sections appertain – or are considered to do so – entirely to one subject, which is depicted in each of them in a different from and with variation in detail", he calls them "duplication." When such parallel passages concern events, which are "unrelated to each other but yet are so similar in their principal motifs, that one may conjecture that they are simply divergent developments of a singly narrative," they may be termed "repetitions." The wife-sister stories would then fit the latter category, repetition, Cassuto suggests. He (84ff.) does not recognize the compositeness of stories such as the Flood narrative, but interprets the perceived duplications in terms of a "literary technique." For Cassuto the real question concerning repetitions and duplications is not their possible prehistory, but why they appear in the Torah as it is (Cassuto I.82; II.339). The answer to this, he (72) suggests, comes from understanding the purpose of the Torah, namely that of religious and ethical instruction. Thus, in wife-sister stories the "teaching and promise" of the Genesis 12 episode was "corroborated and confirmed" by the events of Genesis 20, and finally "strengthened and consolidated" by Genesis 26, as "everything that is done twice or thrice is to be regarded as confirmed and established" (I.82-83).

[288] Critics have been examined the extent of the pericopes. Most scholars take Gen 12:10-20 as the basic Abraham/Sarah account (E. H. Maly, "Genesis 12, 10-20; 20, 1-18; 26, 7-11 and the Pentateuchal Question," *CBQ* 18 [1956]: 255-62; Speiser, *Genesis*, 89-94; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 159-68; W. Zimmerli, *1. Moses 12-25: Abraham*, ZB [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976a], 24-29). Some, however, wish to extend the final form of the narrative to include Gen 13:1 (Petersen, "A Thrice-told Tale," 30-43; von Rad, *Genesis*, 167-70), and Cassuto and Weimar maintain that, in its form , the story concludes in Gen 13:4 (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, II.334-365; P. Weimar, *Untersuchungen zur Redaktionsgenschichte des Pentateuch* [Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977], 48-51). As regards Genesis 26, the variety of possibilities has been proposed by critics. Some base their comparison with Gen 12:10-13:1 on verses 7-11 (Maly, "Genesis," 255-262; von Rad, *Genesis*, 271; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 363-365). While some include verse 6 (H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 3rd ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910], 301; Speiser, *Genesis*, 91). Westermann uses for his comparison verses 1-11 (*Genesis, 12-36*, 424-25); K. Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 111-32) verses 1-13. Some scholars include all the material in Gen 26:1-14 (S. H. Hooke, *In the Beginning*, The Clarendon Bible [Oxford: Clarendon, 1947], 95-96; G. Schmitt, "Zu Gen 26:1-14," *ZAW* 85 [1973]: 143-156), whereas R. C. Culley, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Philadelphia & Missoula: Fortress, 1976), 33-41, remains undecided as to whether verse 14 should be included along with verses 1-13. Thus, it is apparent that no consensus exists regarding how much of Genesis 26 should be compared with Gen 12:10-20 and Gen 20:1-18. In its present form, Gen 26:1 clearly commences with an 'initial disjunctive clause', whereas the start of the wife/sister episode in Genesis 26 is obvious.

circumstances elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Critics have long proposed various theories to the three episodes. With the development of source criticism it was suggested that the accounts, as 'doublets', reflect the existence of parallel documents in Genesis. The pericope in Gen 20:1-18 was assigned to the Elohist (except v. 18 to the Yahwist [J]), which was a compositional variant of the same Abraham story provided by the Yahwist in Gen 12:10-20 (or 13:1).[289] The accounts Gen 12:10-13:1 and 26:1-13 were widely held to originate from J (cf. von Rad 1972:226, 270; Skinner 1930:242-243, 315, 363; Speiser 1964:91). The two parallel narratives indicate that J itself is composed of two separate sources (cf. Sinner 1930:251, 363). Under the influence of form criticism, it was proposed that the three incidents developed as oral variants of one original story (cf. Koch 1969:111-132). In other words, form and tradition scholars observe that Gen 20:1-18 is neither a true parallel nor independent of Gen 12:10-13:1 but rather a moralistic adaptation of the story answering the question of "guilt" (Gen 20:9) raised in the former Abraham story (cf. Mathews 2005:124). More recently, however, some scholars have tended towards the opinion that account Gen 20:1-18 and 26:1-13 are literary compositions based upon and presupposing a knowledge of account Gen 12:10-13:1. They propose that Gen 26:1-13 reflects both stories, achieving a parallel between Isaac and his father (Van Seters 1975:167-191; cf. Biddle 1990:599-611; Carr 1996:200-201; Coats 1985:71-81; Westermann 1985:161, 318-320, 412, 424). In

[289] Source critics see the Elohist as the one, who handed down an independent version of the "wife-sister" accounts. The use of *Elohim* and the appearance of supposed E vocabulary led to this opinion. Suspicion about the cogency of such criteria for discerning a distinctive E document resulted in offering another explanation. Many now view it as an adaptation or expansion of the J account of Abraham in Egypt (Gen 12:10-13:1). See, T. D. Alexander, "Are the Wife/Sister Incidents of Genesis Literary Compositional Variants?" *VT* 42 (1992): 145-53.

particular, Gen 20:1-18 has been argued to be an expansion of Gen 12:10-20 (cf. Coat 1983:151). In addition, Alexander (1997b:32-51; cf. 1982:134-159; 1992:145-153) in his literary analysis of this wife-sister accounts proposes that these narratives are best explained as independent stories that came from one author. He believes that the trio were composed and modified by the author during their incorporation into Genesis, they, thus, prove to be complimentary stories addressing the wife-sister motif and not literary duplicates or variants of the same episode avoiding unnecessary redundancy. Although there are differences between the three episodes, the similarities in plot and characters point to the same underlying event.[290]

Meanwhile, Petersen (1973:35-36) cautiously offers some interesting insights that the wife-sister motif, which clearly present in all three pericopes is comprised of the following features:

1. Travel to a place in which the husband and wife are unknown (if such travel were not present, the ruse could not be undertaken).
2. A claim that the man's wife is his sister *because of the fear of death*[291]
3. Discovery of the ruse;
4. Resolution of the situation created by the false identity.

Moreover, Garrett ([1991] 2000:129-135) suggests the probability of the triadic structure as a story, which once circulated together, separate from other material in the ancestor epic pattern.[292] He argues that the similarity in form and content with the two

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[290] For instance, Speiser proposes an "underlying tradition" drawn on by two written sources (Gen 16:1-16 and 21:8-21), see Speiser, *Genesis*, 156-57.
[291] This feature in the second element (italic phrase) was expanded by Alexander to include the reason why the husband acts as he does. Without this additional element, there is no rationale for the deception (*Abraham in the Negev*, 35).
[292] In the process of developing his own theory on how Genesis came into being, he perceives that one can isolate within the present text of Genesis a number of literary sources. He focuses on the genealogies and concludes that these witness to a set of תולדות sources. He also proceeds to develop the proposal of

wife-sister deception episodes (Gen 12:10-20 and 20:1-18) is obvious. He proceeds to propose the structural parallels in a way of matching the wife-sister episodes by ordering the narratives in sequence: migration-deception-abduction-deliverance-confrontation-conclusion:

Cycles (Sections)		Texts	Contents
A. 1st cycle (12:10-20)	Migration	v. 10	Abraham goes to Egypt because of a famine.
	Deception	vv. 11-13	He sees Sarah is beautiful, so tells her to say she is his sister.
	Abduction	vv. 14-16	Pharaoh takes Sarah and rewards Abraham.
	Deliverance	v. 17	The Lord afflicts Pharaoh.
	confrontation	vv. 18-19	Pharaoh rebukes Abraham.
	Conclusion	v. 20	Abraham leaves with wealth.
B. 2nd cycle (20:1-18)	Migration	v. 1	Abraham goes to Gerar.
	Deception	v. 2a	He tells Abimelech that Sarah is his sister.
	Abduction	v. 2b	Abimelech takes Sarah.
	Deliverance	vv. 3-8	The Lord rebukes Abimelech in dream.
	confrontation	vv. 9-13	Abimelech rebukes Abraham.
	Conclusion	vv. 14-18	Abimelech rewards Abraham, and Abraham prays for Abimelech.
C. 3rd cycle (26:1, 7-17)	Migration	v. 1	Isaac goes to Gerar because of a famine.
	Deception	v. 7	He says that Rebekah is his sister when men of Gerar ask about her.
	Abduction		No abduction
	Deliverance	v. 8	Abimelech sees Isaac caressing Rebekah.
	confrontation	vv. 9-16	Abimelech rebukes Isaac, but God protects him; the Lord blesses Isaac.
	Conclusion	v. 17	Isaac separates from Abimelech when rivalry develops.

Garrent contends that "the three episodes are remarkably bound by a pattern in which a narrative element section is consistently present in two out of the three accounts." He

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I. M. Kikawada and A. Quinn that Genesis 1-11 resemble the structure found in the ancient Mesopotamian cosmological myth of Atrahasis; that is, a prologue, followed by three major stories of threat, and finally, a resolution (Kihawada & Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*). Garrett not only accepts that Genesis 1-11 conforms to this pattern, but argues that the whole of Genesis reflects the same structure, a form which he designates 'ancestor epic'. Furthermore, he argues that the same pattern explains the origins of the wife-sister epic (*Rethinking Genesis*).

also points out the fact that "the dominant concern of the triad is that of the full ancestor epic narrative – the survival of the race in the face of a threefold threat." He concludes that the structure Genesis 26 was to some extent determined by the narrative purpose of setting Isaac's life in parallel to that of Abraham. Gen 26:1-13 was integrated into the two episodes (Gen 12:10-20 and 20:1-18). The appearance that the last episode (Gen 26:1-13) is formally unlike the first two is misleading; it is the result of subsequent redaction (see, [1991] 2000:131-135). This pattern tends to debunk the view that these are doublets of the same event (cf. Rowley 1986:17-18). Yet, it can hardly be accidental that the three accounts have parallelisms.[293] We should note that the close similarity of the textual immediacies are contended that they share in this basic plot: 1) a problem arises; 2) a plan is devised; 3) the plan is carried out but with some complications; 4) an outside intervention occurs; and (5) good and bad consequences follow (Mathews 2005:124-125; cf. Van Seters 1975:168).

3.3.2.2.8. Abraham/Lot (Gen 13, 14) and Sodom (Gen 18:1-19:38)

At first glance, the ties between Genesis 13 and 14 seem scanty. With respect to both the time (i.e., "in the days of Amraphel, Gen 14:1) and the place (i.e., from Abraham's tent in Hebron in Gen 13:18 to that of an event of international wars of the four kings in Gen 14:1-11), the two narratives seem only distantly related. Several indications

[293] In the meantime, Cassuto, *Documentary Hypothesis*, 78-81) finds a kind of parallelism, for which he does not suggest a specific term, between larger, less obviously interrelated passages, such as Abraham's and Sarah's journey to Egypt in Gen 12:10ff., and those of Jacob and his sons in Gen 43:1ff. and 47:1ff., as well as Abraham's first journey to Canaan and Israel's later conquest of the land. For instance, the motif of "famine" in Gen 12:10 and Gen 43:1, that of "danger to life" in Gen 12:12 and Exod 1:16, and the itinerary in Canaan first in relation to Abraham in Gen 12:1-9, then in relation to Isarel in Josh 7:2, 8:9 and 8:30.

within the narrative, however, suggest that the author/the final composer intends Genesis 14 to be read closely with that which has preceded.

Firstly, in Gen 14:12, the focus of the account of the war between nations is quickly reduced to the scope of Genesis 13 by recounting that Lot had been captured and Sodom had bee sacked. Secondly, immediately following the report of Lot's capture, the narrative returns to the scene of Gen 13:18, with Abraham dwelling at the "oaks of Mamre" in Hebron (Gen 14:13). At that point, Abraham is brought into the center of the account of the battle with the four kings and, somewhat surprisingly, is capable of marshaling his forces to defeat the kings (Gen 14:14-17). Finally, the mention of "Mamre" at the end of the account (Gen 14:24) returns the reader to the scene at the close of Genesis 13.

Lot's capture and Sodom's sack (14:12)	→ Lot in Sodom (13:12)
Abraham at the oaks of Mamre (14:13)	→ Abraham at the oak of Mamre(13:18)
Mamre (14:24)	→ Mamre (13:18)

In putting these two narratives together in this way the author/the final composer has allowed an event of international importance to sweep past Abraham's tent in Hebron and thus to involve Abraham in an event that will show on an enormous scale the implications of Abraham's faith – yet without losing its simple and everyday character. In this narrative one can note the fact that as Gen 12:3 has forecast, those who join with Abraham (Gen 14:13) will enjoy his blessing (Gen 14:24), but those who separate from him, as Lot had done (Gen 13:2), will suffer the same fate as Sodom and

Gomorrah (Gen 14:11-12).[294]

Meanwhile, Garrett ([1991] 2000:135-141) proposes that the story of Abraham and Lot parting (Gen 13:1-18) and other sources concerning Abraham (Gen 14:1-24 and 18:1-19:38) would have shared material in the parallel structure of the epic of Lot.

Cycles	Sections	Texts	Formal Contents
1st Cycle (13:1-18)	A	vv. 1-4	Initial setting
	B	vv. 5-7	Crisis (quarreling with other men/the first threat to Lot)
	C	vv. 8-13	Abraham saves Lot/Sodom very wicked
	D	vv. 14-18	The Lord blesses Abraham
2nd Cycle (14:1-24)	A'	vv. 1-11	Initial setting
	B'	v. 12	Crisis (taken prisoner/the second threat to Lot)
	C'	vv. 13-16	Abraham saves Lot
	D'	vv. 17-24	Melchizedek blesses Abraham/Sodom very wicked
3rd Cycle (18:1-19:38)	A"	18:1-15	Initial setting
	B"	18:16-21	Crisis (immanent judgment/the third threat to Lot)
	C"	18:22-19:29	The Lord and Abraham saves Lot/Sodom very wicked
	D"	19:30-38	Lot's accused end

Above all, each of the three cycles begins with an initial setting. In the first, Abraham moves to the region of Bethel and Ai, and emphasis is on his wealth (Gen13:2) and piety (Gen 13:4). In other words, this is an ideal situation for Lot; he is attached to a godly and prosperous man (Gen 13:1c).[295] The initial setting of the second cycle is a war (Gen 14:1-11). The third cycle sets out in Gen 18:1-15, the annunciation of Isaac. Secondly, the first crisis in the first cycle comes in the quarreling of the rival herdsmen over pasture (Gen 13:5-7). The second occurs in Gen 14:12, where the crisis is declared: Lot has been taken prisoner. The third crisis is set up after the visitors finish their business with Abraham (Gen 18:16-21). Thirdly, as the weaker party, Lot is the

[294] Cf. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 145-48.
[295] Cf. Helyer, "The Separation of Abram and Lot," 77-88.

one in jeopardy. Abraham, however, in an act of grace, saves Lot from the dilemma (Gen 13:8-13). He allows the younger Lot to take whatever he wants, but Lot, against propriety, greedily seizes what looks best to him. The text then sounds an ominous warning: 'The men of Sodom were wicked…' The Sodomites do not actually figure in the story of Genesis 13, but this verse forebodes disaster for Lot. In the second cycle, Abraham also saves Lot by military action (Gen 14:13-16) and then once again, the wickedness of Sodom emerges, even though it does not yet really figure in the story. In the third cycle, Abraham, knowing by intuition what lies ahead, lingers to intercede with the Lord. The reader recognizes concern for Lot behind this intercession, and the Lord fulfills the intention although not the letter of the intercession in delivering Lot. As the angels enter Sodom, the wickedness of the city, to which the earlier cycles had proleptically alluded, is laid bare to the reader in all its ugliness. In Gen 19:27-29, Abraham looks toward Sodom and sees the smoke rising. Finally, the first cycle ends with a promise that all the land, as far as Abraham can see, will belong to his offspring (Gen 13:14-18). In the second cycle, Melchizedek then appears as suddenly as the Lord had in the first cycle and blesses Abraham (Gen 14:17-24). Then the third cycle closes with a dramatic reversal and resolution. Instead of concluding with a promise of blessing to Abraham (Gen 13:14-18; Gen 14:17-24), it finishes with Lot meeting a terrible, accursed end. Instead of a blessing on the seed of Abraham, there is a curse on the seed of Lot.[296]

3.3.2.2.9. Abraham and Lot Parting (Gen 13) and Deconstruction of Sodom (Gen 19:1-29) and Babylon (Gen 11:1-9)

[296] Garrentt, *Rethinking Genesis*, 135-41.

Within the narrative context, one can see definite ties between Lot's "separation" and the "separation" of the nations at Babylon (Gen 11:1-9) and the judgment of the nations at Sodom (Gen 19:1-29). The ties between Genesis 13 and the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19) can be seen in Gen 13:10: "before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah," and Gen 13:12-13: "And Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents in Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord." This is the same information restated at the beginning of Genesis 19. One of the interesting implications of the author's mention of the destruction of Sodom at this point in the text is that it shows that he assumes that his readers have already read Genesis 19.

The ties between Lot's separation (Gen 13) and the destruction of Sodom (Gen 19)	
לִפְנֵי שַׁחֵת יְהוָה אֶת־סְדֹם וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה "before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah" (13:10) 13:12b וְלוֹט יָשַׁב בְּעָרֵי הַכִּכָּר וַיֶּאֱהַל עַד־סְדֹם 13:13 וְאַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד …and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom (13:12b). But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly (13:13).	…אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלְחֵנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ …before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it (19:13b).

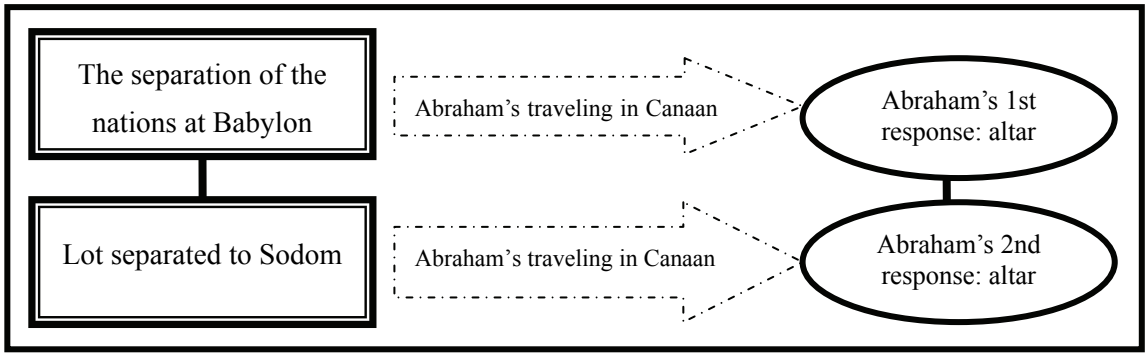
The ties between Genesis 13 and the account of the destruction of Babylon stem from the fact that Lot's separation from Abraham and his journey eastward appear to have been consciously shaped by the account of the fall of Babylon in Genesis 11.

The ties between the destruction of Babylon (Genesis 11) and the Lot's separation from Abraham (Genesis 13)	
13:11 וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֶת כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּפָּרְדוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו:	11:2 וַיְהִי בְּנָסְעָם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמְצְאוּ בִקְעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.	Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

In Gen 10:32, the author closes the account of the dispersion of the nations with the statement "From these the nations separated throughout the land after the flood." Then the narrative of the dispersion of Babylon opens with the account of the people of the land "traveling eastward" (מִקֶּדֶם) into "the plain of Shinar," where they set out to build the city of Babylon (Gen 11:1-2). In the same way Lot is said to have "traveled eastward" (מִקֶּדֶם) from the land into "the cities of the plain of the Jordan" when he "separated" from Abraham (Gen 13:11)

Following the "separation" of the nations at Babylon, the narrative resumes with Abraham traveling throughout the land of Canaan, receiving it as a promise and then building an altar in response to God's promise (Gen 12:1-9). So also, after Lot "separated" to Sodom, Abraham traveled throughout the land of Canaan, received it a second time as a promise, and built an altar in response (Gen 13:14-18):



Lot, then, is the link connecting the author's treatment of the two cities, Babylon and Sodom. The close parallels between the two which are created in the narrative of Genesis 13 suggest that the author intends both cities to tell the same story. As in the

case of parallels and repetitions throughout the book, the double accounts of God's destruction of the "city in the east" is intended to drive home the point that God's judgment of the wicked is certain and imminent (cf. Gen 41:32).[297]

3.3.2.3. Abraham's Intercession for Sodom and Lot (Gen 14:1-24)

3.3.2.3.1. Structure[298]

The pericope fall into two main sections: the war reports of the kings (vv. 1-16) and Abraham's encounter with the king of Sodom and Melchizedek (vv. 17-24). The structure forms an alternating pattern:

I. The war reports of the kings (vv. 1-16)
  A. Dead Sea kings versus Eastern kings (vv. 1-4)
    B. The Eastern allied forces conquer Transjordan and South (vv. 5-7)
  A'. Dead Sea kings versus Eastern kings (vv. 8-12)
    B'. The allied forces and Abraham conquer eastern allies (vv. 13-16)
II. The king's greeting to Abraham and their speech and Abraham's response (vv. 17-24)
  A. The meeting of king of Sodom and Abraham (vv. 17-18)
  A'. Melchizedek's blessing, kind of Sodom's demand and Abraham's oath (vv. 19-24)

vv. 1-16 provide an extensive narrative, which delineate the two warring factions (vv. 1-4), the battle itinerary of the eastern kings (vv. 5-7), and their defeat of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 8-11) with the report of Lot's capture (v. 12). The battle of Abraham

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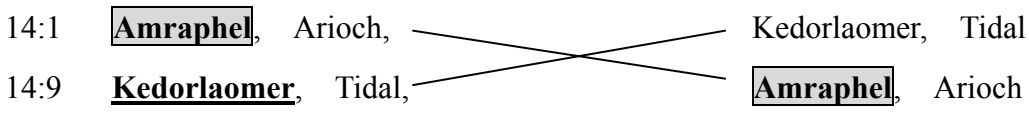
[297] Cf. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 143-44.
[298] This pericope has been the subject of extensive scholarly speculation because it presents a unique episode in Abraham's life and contains special interpretive problems. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapter 1-17*, 399, observes that this is the only portrayal of Abraham as a warrior and the only chapter in Genesis 12-22 in which no divine voice speaks and no explicit reference to the promises is found. One may conclude that the episode is a cohesive literary unit, not a patchwork of disparate narratives, which fits suitably in the present context of Genesis 13 and 15.

versus eastern kings (vv. 13-16) depicts how Abraham defeats the all-conquering eastern allies and intercepts Lot and his possessions. This forms the backdrop to the centerpiece of the story, the three-way discussion between Abraham, the king of Sodom, and Melchizedek (Wenham 1987:304-305). The second half of this pericope falls into two parts: the encountering with king of Sodom, Melchizedek and Abraham (vv. 17-18) and the blessing of Melchizedek and demands of king of Sodom (vv. 19-24). The mention of the king of Sodom in vv. 21-24 forms a stylistic inclusio with the king's first mention in v. 2, thus unifying the entire account (Waltke 2001:225-226). The encounters of Abraham with the king of Sodom and the priest-king Melchizedek provide a contrast between the spiritual characters of the two kings that will result in accenting Abraham's devotion to the Lord. In this sense, Melchizedek's words of blessing in Gen 14:19 are deeply significant.

Although of all the episodes, which combine to form the Abraham narrative, this pericope is the strangest, we have already observed the relationships between this episode and the other narratives in Genesis in earlier section. The most obvious connection between Genesis 14 and the preceding episodes is the reference to Lot living at Sodom (Gen 13:12). This account not only emphasizes the folly of Lot's choice, but reveals something of Abraham's attitude toward Lot, by placing the two accounts side by side. Meanwhile, that one may find a major feature of the episode is Abraham's ability to defeat the allied forces of the eastern kings. In this, it is possible to sate the fact that the divine promise of protection given in Gen 12:3 is fulfilled. Under God's protection Abraham is able to deliver Lot and the other captured inhabitants (including their possessions) of Sodom from the eastern kings. The episode can also be viewed in the light of the promise of making Abraham's name great in Gen

12:2-3.

Besides these connection with the preceding accounts, one should note the fact that a feature of the composition of this pericope reveals obviously the author's/the final composer's intent to link this narrative with the themes of the preceding episodes. At the outset of the episode of the war of the four kings, one may anticipate the author's/the final composer's intent, which consciously identifies 'Shinar' (Gen 14:1) as Babylon (Gen 10:10; 11:2, 9). He appears to have deliberately arranged the opening of this narrative so that the king of Shinar's name would come first in the list, thus aligning the narrative with the theme of "Babylon" introduced in Genesis 10 (10:10) and 11 (11:2). This point is suggested by the fact that the list of kings in v. 1 differs from the lists of the names of these four kings throughout the remainder of the chapter. Whereas in Gen 14:1 it is Amraphel king of Shinar who comes first in the list, throughout the chapter it is not Amraphel who is first among the four kings but Kedorlaomer king of Elam (vv. 4, 5, 9, 17) is always first. Thus, the break in the sequence of the names comes only at Amraphel's name as follows:



If the sequence in v. 9 is the original one, then, at the beginning of the narrative the author/the final composer has apparently broken the list into two sections, putting the section beginning with Amraphel first and the other section second. In Gen 14:12 the perspective of the narrative changes markedly from the global scope of the war with the four eastern kings to the sudden change in the fate of Lot. In it, the account is brought into the larger context of the blessing in the land (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17) and

the fate of all those who separate themselves from Abraham (Sailhamer 1992:145-146).[299]

In addition, the sense of Genesis 14 within the larger context of Genesis can be seen in the similarity between Abraham's response to the offer of the king of Sodom (Genesis 14) and to that of the Hittites in Genesis 23. In both case, the writer wants to show that Abraham would not accept a gift from the Canaanites. When the king of Sodom offered to reward Abraham, he replied that it should never be said that the king of Sodom made Abraham wealthy (Gen 14:23). In the same way, Abraham adamantly refused to accept the parcel of land as a gift. Apparently against the wishes of the Hittites, he paid the full price for the land. If viewed from the perspective of God's covenant promises to Abraham, both these narratives fit well within the overall themes of Genesis. God, not any human being, was the source of Abraham's hope of blessing. He would not seek to become wealthy or to own land apart from the promises of God. The same purpose also lies behind the note in Gen 33:19 that when Jacob returned to the land after his sojourn in the east, he purchased a portion of a field to pitch his tent. Wherever possible, the writer seizes the opportunity to show that the patriarchs came by their possession of the land fairly and that it was a gift from God, not from those who were dwelling in the land at the time. Accordingly, although this pericope shows some signs of having a quite different origin from other episodes in the Abraham cycle, it has been carefully integrated into the final form of the narrative (cf. Alexander 1982:223-233, on the actual origin of the pericope).

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[299] For the structural relationship between Gen 14:1-24 and 13:1-18 and 18:1-19:38, see Garrett's detailed analysis in the earlier section in p. 156.

3.3.2.3.2. War/Rescue (Gen 14:1-24) and Pleading/Judgment (Gen 18:16-19:38)

This pericope delineates Abraham's intervention into the affairs of Sodom resulting in the rescue of Lot. The two episodes in the content share numerous shared theme-words.

Gen 14:1-24	Theme-words	Gen 18:16-19:38
בֶּרַע (son of evil, in evil), 14:2	the root of the name of Sodom's king	רע/רעע (evil), 19:7, 9
בִּרְשַׁע (in wickedness), 14:2	The king of Gomorrah	רָשָׁע (wicked), 18:23, 25 (bis)
צֹעַר (Zoar), 14:2, 8	The place name, Zoar	צֹעַר (Zoar), 19:22
מֶלַח , 14:3	The etymology of 'salt'	מֶלַח , 19:26
הֶהָרָה נָּסוּ (fled to the hills/mountain), 14:10	the same stems of הַר ('hill') and נוס ('flee')	הָהָרָה…לָנוּס (to the hills…to flee), 19:19-20
הַפָּלִיט (refugee, escaped one, fugitive), 14:13	the similar sounding of two words semantically	הִמָּלֵט (to escape), 19:17 (bis), 19:19, 19:22 [cf. אִמָּלְטָה (let me escape), 19:20]
בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא (in the plain of Mamre), 14:13	the same locale	בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא (in the plain of Mamre), 18:1 [cf. וְאַבְרָהָם שָׁב לִמְקֹמוֹ (and Abraham returned to his place), 18:33]
הָעָם (the people), 14:16	referring to the general Sodomite population	הָעָם (the people), 19:4
מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק (righteousness), 14:18	the element of Melchizedek's name	צְדָקָה (righteousness), 18:19; צַדִּיק (righteous), 18:23-28 (seven times)
לֶחֶם וְיַיִן (bread and wine), 14:18	similar meal served	מִשְׁתֶּה וּמַצּוֹת (drink/feast and unleavened bread/cake)
בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם (blessed be Abram), 14:19	similar phenomenon	וְנִבְרְכוּ בּוֹ (they will be blessed through him [Abraham]), 18:18
קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ (creator of heaven and earth), 14:19, 22	God's name and the territory of his power	עַל־הָאָרֶץ… (…upon the earth), 19:23; מִן־הַשָּׁמָיִם… (…from the heavens), 19:24
מַעֲשֵׂר (one-tenth), 14:20	Abraham's tithe (one-tenth) to Melchizedek and his negotiations with God (ten	הָעֲשָׂרָה (the ten [men]), 18:32

	righteous men)	
שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ (heaven and earth), 14:22	Heaven and earth	הָאָרֶץ, 19:23; הַשָּׁמָיִם, 19:24

As seen above, the key vocabulary items link not only parallel units but also link successive units as well. Such verbal repetitions help clear up many puzzling aspects of the texts.[300] In this respect, the two passages share numerous key-words and expressions as presented above.

3.3.2.4. Covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:1-16:16)

3.3.2.4.1. Structure

The pericope divides naturally into two main sections: Gen 15:1-21[301] and 16:1-16. The first section (Gen 15:1-21) in turn consists of two roughly parallel sections (two parallel panels) involving two divine announcements (visionary oracles) in vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-21. It involves dialogue between the Lord and Abraham and powerful images symbolizing God's presence and promises (Gen 15:1, 12). To put it concretely, Gen 15:1-6 focus on the subject of Abraham's heir (esp., Gen 15:5). Gen 15:7-21 is

[300] Rendsburg, *Redaction of Genesis*, 39-41.
[301] Critical scholars have puzzled over the source and date of the pericope, resulting in widely diverse solution. For a comprehensive review of this passage's interpretation, see J. Ha, *Genesis 15: A Theological Compendium of Pentateuchal History*, **BZAW** 181 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989). In the meantime, Genesis 15 fits in the flow of Genesis 13-14, making it unnecessary to view the passage as independent. Shared motifs (land, descendants, blessing) and lexical allusions support the literary dependence of Genesis 14 and 15. Such lexical affinities include: "shield" (Gen 15:1) and "delivered" (Gen 14:20); "judge" (Gen 15:14) and the city Dan (Gen 14:14); and "possessions" (Gen 15:14) and "possessions, goods" (Gen 14:16, 21). The Lord is Abraham's "shield" (Gen 15:1) who "delivered" (Gen 14:14) him from the eastern kings and will deliver his descendants from Egyptian enslavement (Gen 15:14). Also, as Abraham had overcome the kings at "Dan" (Gen 14:14) and obtained their "possessions" (Gen 14:16, 21), he will "punish" the Egyptians and enrich Abraham's descendants with "possessions" (Gen 15:14). See, Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 164.

concerned with what will be inherited. This section enlarges upon the divine promise of land. These separate encounters in the first section run in close parallel structure:[302]

I. **First panel**: the divine promise of heir (15:1-6)

A. First vision (בַּמַּחֲזֶה): the Lord makes a promise to Abraham, using the divine self-declaration formula – "I am"/"reward" (v. 1).

B. Abraham's apprehensive questions of the "Sovereign Lord, אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִה" (vv. 2-3).

C. The Lord's reassuring Abraham by symbolic acts: the sign of stars with reference to the seed (vv. 4-5).

Linking verse: v. 6 – "Abraham believed the Lord" (וְהֶאֱמִן בַּיהוָה)[303]

II. **Second panel**: the divine promise of land (15:7-21)[304]

A'. Second vision: the Lord makes a promise to Abraham, using the divine self-declaration formula – "I am"/"this land" (v. 7).

B'. Abraham's apprehensive questions of the "Sovereign Lord, אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִה" (v. 8).

C. The Lord's reassuring Abraham by symbolic acts: the instructions for preparing covenant sacrifice, prophecy and the sign of passing torch with reference to the land (vv. 9-21).

Each panel begins with a divine self-declaration formula "I am" (vv. 1, 7). One may infer the evidences of matching between the two panels from the parallel pattern of the pericope. Vv. 1 and 7 match in terms of depicting the divine theophany. Also the divine

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[302] Many critics have acknowledged the parallels between Gen 15:1-6 and 15:7-21. See, Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 216; Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 305-306. This structural observation basically relies on the structural analysis worked by Mathews, *Exgetical Theological Exposition*, 159-61.

[303] Waltke, *Genesis*, 240-47, states "the narrator's theological declaration (Gen 15:6) provides a janus between the two encounters. The human partner counts on God to give him offspring, and the divine partner credits that faith as righteousness. On the basis, the Lord grants Abraham his immutable covenant (Gen 15:7-21). Gen 15:1-21 also serves as a janus between the first two acts of the Abraham narrative, linking the two key themes: seed (Gen 15:1-6; Genesis 16-22) and land (Gen 15:7-21; Genesis 12-14).

[304] R. L. Pratt, Jr., *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives* (Phillipsburg: Reformed Publishing, 1990), 201, suggests an alternative structure of this pericope, emphasizing the turning point (or pivot).

A. Problem: Abraham's request of promised land of Canaanites (vv. 7-8)
B. Rising action: Beginning of the covenant ceremony (vv. 9-11)
C. Pivot (Turning point): Abraham receives promise in a dream (vv. 12-16)
B'. Falling action: Completing of the covenant ceremony (v. 17)
A'. Resolution: Divine statement of covenant to give Abraham the land of Canaanites (vv. 18-21)

promise of the land (v. 7) clarifies the meaning of "reward" (v. 1). Another evidence of matching between the two sections is the answer, "to give you this land" (v. 7), to the initial question, "What can you give me?" (v. 2).[305] The divine promises of descendants (vv. 4-5) and land (v. 7) come together in the final divine message (vv. 18-21). By placing them alongside each other, the author/the final composer affirms that both hopes were certain because of the reliability of the Lord's promises. The fulfillment of the first half requires the fulfillment of the second, for an innumerable posterity must have a great land; likewise the land promise presupposes the earlier oracle of descendants. Each of Abraham's addresses requests confirmation of the Lord's intentions (vv. 2, 8). The Lord reassures Abraham by symbolic acts displaying of the innumerable stars (v. 5) and passing of the blazing torch between the animal parts (v. 17), sealing the covenant promises. God's divine speech (vv. 1, 18-21), the renewed promise of seed (vv. 4, 13), and the bestowal of land (vv. 7, 18) envelope the episode.

The second section (Gen 16:1-16) consists of two major sections followed by a closing summary of the pericope. The first subunit commences with the problem of Sarah's barrenness (v.1; cf. Gen 11:30). After that, vv. 2-6 describe the occasion for Hagar's flight. The second subsection (vv. 7-14) concern the divine promise regarding the future of her son, Ishmael, and vv. 15-16 present a summary (v. 15) and a conclusion (v. 16). Sarah's inability to bear children (v. 1) forms an inclusio with the concluding notice that Hagar gave a child to Abraham (vv. 15-16). The structure of the passage can be summarized as follows:

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[305] Ha, *Genesis 15*, 49.

Introduction: Sarah's infertility to Abraham (v. 1)
The incident involving Sarah and Hagar (vv. 2-6)
The "angel of the Lord" promise Hagar a son (vv. 7-14)
Conclusion: Hagar fertility to Abraham (vv. 15-16)

3.3.2.4.2. Making Two Covenants and Annunciations (Gen 15:1-16:16// Gen 17:1-18:15)

The two pericopes, which standing at the center of the Abraham narrative deal with two covenants making and two annunciations. Even though many differences are readily observable between the two covenants, such as the names of the deity, the names of the patriarch, the style of the rituals and so on, the issues of the promised seed and promised land are strikingly similar in both pairs: the promised seed in Gen 15:4 and 17:16 and the promised land in Gen 15:7 and 17:8. While Abraham considers Eliezer of Damascus born in his house as his legitimate heir in Genesis 15, Abraham takes for granted that Ishmael is hi rightful heir in Genesis 17. However, in both cases, his choices are refuted by God, who designates Sarah's son Isaac as the promised seed (Gen 17:19). In Gen 15:4, when God refuses Eliezer as Abrahams heir, instead God asserts that Abraham's very own issue shall be his heir. But God does not designate who the mother of the rightful heir will be. For his reason, in Gen 16, Sarah forces Abraham to take her maidservant Hagar to bear Abraham's heir. Eventually, Ishmael is born (Gen 16:16). However, God also refuses Ishmael as Abraham's heir and now specifically designates the would-be mother of the rightful heir. Sarah must be the mother (Gen 17:19). The Lord appears to Abraham again (Gen 18:1-16) and announces the heir through Sarah. Gen 16 and 18:9-17 (cf. Gen 17:17) deal with the etymologies of the names of both Ishmael and Isaac. Finally, Ishmael who comes through a human plan (Genesis 16) is replaced by Isaac who come from a divine plan (Gen 17:15-22;

18:9-14). In both chapters, it is promised that Abraham's offspring will be numerous beyond measure (Gen 15:5; 17:6-8). In both cases, the directions for the rituals are specifically given by God (Gen 15:8-9; 17:10-14). Likewise, these two units employ perfectly parallel sequences of thought, speech, and action (Rendsburg 1986:41-44; Davidson 1979:54-56). Rendsburg also observes a progression in the cycle. In Gen 17, the reader encounters two new names. The name "God" (*Elohim*) is introduced for the first time in the Abraham narrative, only the name "Yahweh" having been used up to this point (along with two *El* names in Gen 14:20, 22; 16:13). Thus, as God is introduced as *Elohim*, the name of the human partner undergoes a name-change from Abram to Abraham. While in the first portion of the cycle, he is called "Abram," he is called "Abraham" throughout the second half of it (Rendsburg 1986:46; cf. Sasson 1984:307[306]).

3.3.2.4.3. Two Covenants (Gen 15:1-21// Gen 17:1-27)

Genesis 15 shares with Genesis 17 a structure entailing two parallel panels built around five successive speeches by God.[307] There is similarity in the narrative structures occurring in Genesis 17and 15-16 (also 18-19). Genesis 17 has parallel units or panels as found in Genesis 15-16. Read together, the two chapters reveal a progression in the revelation of the covenant: the promises of land and descendants are clarified, the confirming rite of animal slaughter is carried out, and the covenant sign of

[306] J. M. Sasson states, "This particular series of scenes is complicated by the fact the collection is, for theological reasons, allocated to materials concerning Abram and to those concerning Abraham" ("The Biographic Mode in Hebrew Historiography," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G W Ahlström*, eds. W. B. Barrick & J. R. Spencer [Sheffield: Sheffield Ademic Press, 1984], 305-12.

[307] The structural analysis of Genesis 17 will be presented in the next section.

circumcision is ordained. The author of Genesis 17 is fully aware of the Abraham complex of stories, especially Genesis 15. It fits comfortably in the horizon of the promissory theme in the Abraham narrative, presupposing the promises of Genesis 12-13 and 15-16. Abraham's proposal of Ishmael as heir (Gen 17:18) makes sense only in light of the events in Genesis 15 and 16; further, the divine predictions respecting Isaac and his rival Ishmael (Gen 17:19-21) echo the same concerns raised by Abraham and Sarah in Gen 15:2-4 and chap. 16, pertaining to substitute heirs and a future for the outcast Ishmael. Rendsburg (1986:41-44) presents not only several theme-words, but the exact order of action, ideas, and motifs shared by the two chapters.

Text (Genesis 15)	Literary correlations	Text (Genesis 17)
מַחֲזֶה (vision, noun), v. 1	God's appearance to Abraham	וַיֵּרָא (appeared, verb), v. 1
אָנֹכִי מָגֵן לָךְ (I am your shield), v. 1	The divine speech of protection	הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי (walk before me), v. 1
שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד (your reward will be very great), v. 1	God's speaking of reward and increase	וְאַרְבֶּה אוֹתְךָ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד (I will make you exceedingly great), v. 2
הֵן לִי לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע (but you have given me no offspring), v. 3	Abraham's complaint about no offspring and God's response	וְהָיִיתָ לְאַב הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם (you will be the father of a multitude of nations), v. 4
יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ (will issue from your loins), vv. 4-5	Many offspring	מִמְּךָ יֵצֵאוּ (from you will issue), v. 6
לָתֵת לְךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְרִשְׁתָּהּ (…to give you this land to inherit it.	The promise of the land of Canaan as an inheritance	וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ…כָּל־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם (I will give you…all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession), v. 8[308]

[308] Concerning the promise of land to Abraham and his progeny in Gen 17:8, Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, 283, observes that this corresponds more closely to Gen 13:14-17 than to Gen 15:18, which mentions only Abraham's descendants.

vv. 9-11	The description of the ritual ceremony: animals and circumcision	vv. 10-14
וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם (he said to Abram), v. 13	A similar phenomenon: a second communication from God to Abraham and a second speech to the patriarch	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם (God said to Abraham), v. 15
Prophecy, vv. 13-16	The second communication concerning the promised offspring	The explanation of the covenant promises, vv. 15-22
בֵּין הַגְּזָרִים (between the pieces), v. 17	The completion of the ceremony	מול (circumcise), vv. 23-27

As Rendsburg mentioned (1986:42-44), one can easily find the striking similarities between the two pericopes in using "similar language, perfectly parallel sequences of thought, speech, and action. The paired units with the most affinities for each other within the Abraham narrative "may be by design, for these episodes are by far the most important within the collection of stories which comprise the narrative."

Taken together, the evidence points to Genesis 15 and 17 are related, although some scholars maintain the discontinuity of the two chapters in the names of the deity, the names of the patriarch, the ritual utilized.[309] Alexander (1994:7-28) also has been

[309] Alexander, *Literary Analysis*, 170-82 has demonstrated that the correlations between Genesis 17 and 15 (also Genesis 18) are not sufficiently clear to support a literary indebtedness. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 82-85) believes that Genesis 17 exhibits an original independence of its present context. In this regard, among the arguments Carr puts forward are these: the appearance of *El Shaddai* indicates that the story comes from a literary layer in which the patriarchs do not know the name *Yahweh* (unlike Gen 15:7); mention is made of the promises of children and land, but Genesis 17 appears unaware of the same promises in prior stories (e.g., Gen 15:4-5, 7-18). Some scholars prefer to characterize Genesis 17 as a "confirmation" or "reaffirmation" of the initial covenant. In this view too, however, many admit that the covenant of Genesis 17 evidences some development or clarification of Genesis 15 (cf. P. R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000]). What they hold in common is more important, namely, that there is one covenant in view, not two covenants, since the term "covenant" occurs thirteen times in nine verses (vv. 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19) and also the patriarchal promises of heir, numerous descendants, land, nations, and blessing all appear in Genesis 17. The chapter, at the center of the Abraham narrative (esp. Genesis 12-22), emphasizes the transformation of barrenness to fruitfulness at the personal, community, and national levels (cf. W. Brueggemann, "Expository Articles: Genesis 17:1-22," *Int* 45 [1991]: 55-59). Unlike the covenant in Genesis 15, which

proposed that the two covenants related but different covenants existed. He explores the constituent differences between Genesis 15 and 17, concluding that the former is an unconditional covenant and the latter a conditional one. The "covenant of circumcision" is announced in Genesis 17 but is not established until Gen 22:15-18 by divine oath after Abraham meets the requirements. Each covenant are reflected a feature first promised in Gen 12:1-3. Genesis 15 focuses on the promises of nationhood (land, seed), and Genesis 17 concentrates on the promise of international blessing. The difference between the accounts of the covenant in Genesis 15 and 17, however, oppose the idea that Genesis 17 is a priestly retread (P) of chap. 15's oath (E/J). The Abraham narrative describes the giving of the same covenant in successive narrative stages,[310] thereby maintaining the story's tension and heightening the Genesis theology of divine provision expressed through human instrumentation (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:4-21; 17:1-22; 18:3-15; 21:1-7, 10; 22:15-18).

Meanwhile, one may find another literary correlation between the two chapters including Gen 16:1-16 in a sense of dramatic account. The dramatic account suggests that the author/the final composer arranges these texts according to topics in order to form large segment of narratives into dramatic accounts. Gen 15:1-17:27 forms a three-step dramatic account and deals with three principal subjects: covenant promises to Abraham (Gen 15:1-21), the patriarch's failure with Hagar (Gen 16:1-16), and Abraham's covenant fidelity (Gen 17:1-27).[311]

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had no requirements, Genesis 17 includes two demands: 1) to live uprightly before the Lord (v. 2); and 2) to practice circumcision faithfully (vv. 9-11).

[310] For instance, Kidner, *Genesis*, 128 and Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 16-17.

[311] Pratt, Jr., *He Gave Us Stories*, 222-29.

I. Problem
God's Covenant Promises (15:1-21)

Abraham assured of seed (15:1-6)
A. God promises reward (15:1)
B. Abraham requests confirmation of seed (15:2-3)
C. God confirms seed promise (15:4)
D. God assures by pointing to stars (15:5)
E. Abraham believes God's promise (15:6)

Abraham assured of land (15:7-21)
A. God promises land; Abraham requests confirmation (15:7-9)
B. Covenant ceremony is prepared (15:10-11)
C. God confirms land promise (15:12-16)
D. God demonstrates reliability by covenant ritual (15:17)
E. God swears oath for land (15:18-21)

II. Turning Point
Abraham's Failure with Hagar (16:1-16)

Hagar becomes surrogate but is expelled (16:1-6)
A. Barren Sarah has Hagar as handmaiden (16:1)
B. Sarah and Abraham talk about substitution (16:2)
C. Hagar conceives and ridicules Sarah (16:3-4)
D. Sarah and Abraham talk about ridicule (16:5-6a)
E. Sarah expels Hagar (16:6b)

Hagar returns and gives birth (16:7-16)
A. Angel finds Hagar in wilderness (16:7)
B. Angel assures and commands Hagar to return (16:8-14)
C. Hagar gives birth to Ishmael (16:15-16)

III. Resolution
Abraham's Covenant Fidelity (17:1-27)
A. God instructs Abraham on covenant requirements (17:1-21)
B. God departs (17:22)
C. Abraham fulfills covenant requirement (17:23-27)

In this passage the dramatic problem consists of Abraham receiving divine assurance of a seed and land. Gen 15:1-21 consists of two confirming parallel accounts. The first tells of God's assurance to Abraham regarding the seed; the second reparts the covenant ceremony that assured Abraham of possessing the land. The beginning and end of this account balance each other in a number of ways. The opening mentions promises and covenant (Gen 15:1-21); the closing also mentions promises and covenant (Gen 17:1-27). However, the first story deals primarily with the divine promises, and the last episode speaks primarily of Abraham's obligations. In the

opening account, God obligates himself through a cutting ritual; in the closing episode, Abraham and his household undergo the cutting ritual of circumcision.

In short, it seems best to see the pericopes as two ratifications of the same covenant relationship. The first emphasizes divine promise and the second highlights human obligation as stated above. The tendency to treat Gen 15:7-21 as more essential covenantal structures in the patriarchal period hardly accords with the importance placed on circumcision and obligation throughout the Old Testament. Both passages should be given equal weight when reconstructing the features of the Abrahamic covenant.

3.3.2.4.4. Two Annunciations (Gen 16:1-16// Gen 18:1-15)

A comparison of the two pericopes reveals certain significant parallels between them, which continue the same order established in Gen 15:1-21 and 17:1-27. Rendsburg (1986:44-45) observes that "both episodes do not move directly to annunciation, rather Gen 16:1-6 and 18:1-8 each set the scene for the pronouncement of conception and each is characterized by a high percentage of dialogue. Only then do the actual annunciations follow, in Gen 16:7-16 and 18:9-16." He also presents two important theme-words appeared in both episodes: the word, שׁמע (Gen 16:11; 18:10), which is a central to two episodes and the word, ראה (Gen 16:13-14), which is echoed at the end of Gen 18:1-15, with יָרֵאָה (was afraid, Gen 18:15). "Although from different roots, these words, one dealing with Hagar and God and one dealing with Sarah and God, are assonant and accordingly link the stories."

3.3.2.4.5. Episodes of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 16:1-16// Gen 21:8-21)[312]

The two Hagar and Ishmael episodes are commonly explained as a literary "doublet," that is, two independent narratives recalling the same event.[313] Source critics typically assigned Genesis 16 to J with P in vv. 1a, 3, 15-16 and Gen 21:8-21 to E.[314] They infer that a redactor modified the two accounts to accommodate the chronology and theological theme of the Abraham narrative (cf. MeEvenue 1975:64-80). Other critics, however, have questioned this source analysis by contending for the essential literary unit of each episode and, importantly, by demonstrating that Genesis 21 assumes a knowledge of and literary dependence on the prior narrative (Gen 16). Van Seters (1975:192-202) concluded that Genesis 21 is a literary variant that consciously made use of Genesis 16, simultaneously that it is not an independent account arising from an oral tradition. Alexander's analysis explored eight significant differences and concluded that the stories are too dissimilar to be explained as modified reports of one

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[312] Both the positioning and the nature of the Hagar episodes point to their complexity and far-reaching effect upon the Abraham narrative. The reality is that the episodes of Hagar are their brevity might easily be subsumed in the Abraham cycle. Yet the messages proclaimed therein are distinct and specific (H. Gossai, *Power and Marginality, in the Abraham Narrative* [Lanham: University Press of America, Inc, 1995]). While the Hagar episodes traditionally have not generated significant attention in scholarly commentaries, more recently, under the feminist-literary works (cf. E. Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. A. Y. Collins [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], 117-36; S. P. Jeansonne, *The Women in Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphars Wife* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990]; S. J. Teubal, *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs* [New York: Harper & Row, 1990]) and from the perspective of liberation theology (cf. E. Tamez, "The Woman who Complicated the History of Salvation," in *New Eyes for Reading: Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women from the Third World*, eds. J. S. Pobee & B. von Wartenberg-Potter [Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986], 5-17), some important studies have been done.

[313] In her recent study of the doubled narrative and its role in the formation of critical method over the past three centuries, Aulikki Nahkola succinctly illustrates the nomenclature employed by scholars to describe the doubling of the Hagar stories of Genesis 16 and 21. For Astruc and Cassuto, the stories are referred to as "receptions"; for Gunkel they are "variants"; for the followers of Wellhausen they are "doublets," while for Alter they represent a "type-scene." See, Aulikki Nahkola, *Double Narratives in the Old Testament: The Foundation of Method in Biblical Criticism* BZAW 290 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 164.

[314] Alexander's the source analysis of Gen 16:1-16, however, points out the fact that the criteria employed in favor of assigning the two pericopes to J and E prove unconvincing. See, Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev*, 53-62.

event.[315]

Although such source-critical analyses of the Hagar episodes are plausible, we agree that the similarities between Gen 21:8-21 and the events in chapter 16 can hardly escape the attention of even the casual reader. Several connections between two episodes can be investigated at large. Above all, the title of 'the angel of God' in Gen 16:7 occurs in Gen 21:17, who also speaks from heaven to Hagar; in giving the promise of descendants, the angel's language is authoritative like that of divine promises made earlier by God to Abraham. In Gen 16:11-12, the angel announces the pregnancy of Hagar, instructs her to name the child, and describes the hostility he and his descendants will manifest toward others. Similarly, God announces the birth of Isaac and directs Abraham to name the child (Gen 21:3; cf. Gen 17:19; 18:10). In this case, one may learn the fact that the author's/the final composer's close attention to the similarities in the details of the two episodes is perhaps best explained by the frequent use of foreshadowing in these narratives to draw connections between important narratives. In this sense, the Lord's promise to Hagar (Gen 16:11-12) was recounted in a strikingly similar fashion to the actual fulfillment of the promise (Gen 21:18-21). Thus, the promise foreshadows the fulfillment. Verse 11 points forward by the similar play on Ishmael's name in Gen 21:7, where both the mother and child bemoan their thirst (Gen 21:15-18). In addition, Hagar's declaration of God as אֵל רֳאִי (God of Sight, Gen 16:13a) and the naming of the well as בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי (Beerlahairoi, v. 14) are verbally linked with Hagar's miraculous sighting of the well (וַתֵּרֶא, she saw, Gen

[315] Ibid., 52-69: 1) the stories begin at different points; 2) the cause for the tension between Hagar and Sarah differs; 3) Abraham's role differs in each event; 4) Hagar's character differs significantly; 5) Hagar's departures are dissimilar; 6) the well functions differently; 7) the names "Ishmael" and "Beer-lahai-roi" are important to Gen ch. 16 but absent in Gen ch. 21; and 8) the conclusion of each episode differs.

21:19) in a sense of the pun "seeing."[316] Finally, one may define some thematic similarity made by Garrett (2000:141-143), who views the two text as 'a parallel epic' in form and theme.

3.3.2.4.6. Human Plan for Blessing (Gen 16:1-16// Gen 3:6// 4:25// 12:3)

Genesis 16 alludes to three other important passages in Genesis: Gen 3:6; 4:25; 12:3. By bringing the events of Hagar and Abraham into the larger context of these other passages, the author/the final composer enlarges the reference of the story beyond Abraham and Hagar as individuals and ties their actions to the themes of the Pentateuch as a whole. The account of Sarah's plan (Gen 16:1-6) to have a son has not only been connected with the list of nations in Genesis 15, but also appears to have been intentionally shaped with reference to the account of the Fall in Genesis 3. That is to say, the author/the final composer shows Sarah's plan, like Eve's scheme to be like God, to be an attempt to circumvent God's plan of blessing in favor of gaining a blessing on her own. Sarah's scheme was intended to head off that divine promise by supplying it with a human solution. Each of the main verbs (*wayyiqtol* forms) and key expressions in Gen 16:2-3 finds a parallel in Genesis 3.

Gen 16:2-3	Genesis 3
16:2a וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם…	3:2a וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ…
And Sarai said to Abram…	And the woman said to the serpent…
16:2b וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרָי	3:17 …כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ…
and Abram heard to the voice of Sarai.	…because you have heard to the voice of

[316] S. Nikado, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextuality Study," *VT* 51 (2001): 219-42.

	your wife…
16:3a וַתִּקַּח שָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הָגָר…	3:6a וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל…
And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar…	He took of the fruit and did eat…
16:3b וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה	3:6b וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ…
and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife	and gave also to her husband with her…
16:8 וַיֹּאמַר הָגָר שִׁפְחַת שָׂרַי אֵי־מִזֶּה בָּאת וְאָנָה תֵלֵכִי	3:9 …אַיֶּכָּה:
And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?	…where are you?
16:10 הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֵךְ…	3:15 וְאֵיבָה׀ אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ ׀הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב
I will multiply your seed exceedingly…	And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel
16:11 הִנָּךְ הָרָה וְיֹלַדְתְּ בֵּן וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל…	
Behold, you be with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael	
16:12 יָדוֹ בַכֹּל וְיַד כֹּל בּוֹ…	
his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him…	

Sarah's scheme was intended to head off that divine promise by supplying it with a human solution. Meanwhile, these parallels establish an association between the Hagar episode and the Fall (Genesis 3), the repeated use of the verb קלל "curse" in Gen 16:4-5 appears also to mark an intentional association of the passage with the patriarchal blessing in Gen 12:3. It is mentioned twice within Gen 16:4-5 that Hagar the Egyptian "despised" Sarah, the very thing, which Gen 12:3 warned would end in God's curse (קלל /ארר, Gen 12:3). Furthermore, as in Gen 3:15, where a renewed hope of blessing was sounded amid the chords of despair, so also in Gen 16:10-12 the angel of the Lord offered a blessing to a distraught Hagar wandering through the wilderness.

Moreover, it is possible that the author/the final composer intends the narrative of

Sarah's barrenness to be read in the light of Eve's situation in Gen 4:25 where she gave birth to another son, Seth. The first words of Eve after the Fall raise many questions. Two diverse readings of the passage can be possible. First, in a way of positive impression it can be translated: "with the help of the Lord I have brought forth [or acquired] a man." Second, the other translation of it is in a sense of a less positive light: "I have created a man equally with the Lord" (cf. Cassuto, Genesis 1:201). Since throughout the narratives of Genesis, a recurring theme is that of the attempt and failure of human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give, the latter interpretation is more likely, though the immediate context offers little help to decide between two such diverse readings of the passage. God continually promised a person a blessing, and that person pushed it aside in favor of his or her own attempts at the blessing (e.g., the story of the building of Babylon in Genesis 11). In particular, Eve's situation brings to mind that of Sarah's attempt to achieve the blessing through her handmaiden Hagar. Just as Sarah had tried to bring about the fulfillment of God's promised "seed" (Gen 16:1-4) on her own, so also Eve's words expressed her confidence in her own ability to fulfill the promise of a "seed" to crush the head of the serpent in Gen 3:15.

3.3.2.5. Covenant with Abraham (Gen 17:1-18:15)

3.3.2.5.1. Structure

The pericope of Gen 17:1-27 begins with the marking of Abraham's age "ninety-nine years old" (Gen 17:1, 24) forms an inclusio around the episode of Gen 17:1-27. The major section, the theophanic revelation (vv. 1b-22) dominates the passage, which can

be divided into three parts: the announcement of the general promise of many progeny (vv. 1b-8), instructions pertaining to the "sign" of the circumcision[317] (vv. 9-14), and the explanation of the covenant promise of the individual heir (vv. 15-22). Furthermore, this unit also consists of five divine speeches (vv. 1b-2, 3b-8, 9-14, 15-16, 19-21) and two responses by Abraham (vv. 17, 18).[318] The structure, thus, can be arranged as follows:

Introduction: Abraham's age (v. 1a)
The Lord's appearance (v. 1b)
Lord's self-identification (אֵל שַׁדַּי) and preamble (vv. 1c-2)
Abraham's response: collapses (v. 3a)
Lord: the renaming for Abraham and divine promise (vv. 3b-8)
Lord: Sign of circumcision and obligations (vv. 9-14)
Lord: the renaming for Sarah and divine promise (vv. 15-16)
Abraham's response: collapses, laughs, and offers Ishmael (vv. 17-18)
Lord's rebuttal: future for Isaac and Ishmael (vv. 19-21)
The Lords' ascension (v. 22)
Conclusion: Abraham's and Ishmael's age (vv. 23[319]-27)[320]

The introductory episode of Gen 18:1-15 elevates Abraham and Sarah as the appointed

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[317] Van Seters, *Abraham in History*, 286.
[318] The first speech to Abraham, which is as a summary introduction to the second speech establishes the interpretive boundaries for the rest of the pericope representing the making of a covenant between the Lord and Abraham with regard to the promise of abundant descendants. The second speech is marked by the reintroduction of the clause "and God said" (וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים, v. 3b; וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, vv. 9, 15). The third divine speech extends to the covenant of offspring to include Isaac and consequently excludes Ishmael identifying that the descendants of Abraham who are heirs of the covenant are those through Sarah, namely the offspring of Isaac. In this respect, God's words to Abraham concerning Isaac in Genesis 17 already anticipated the reiteration of these words in the covenant with Isaac in Gen 26:3b. See, Sailhamer, "Genesis," 137-41.
[319] V. 23 which depicts the inauguration of circumcision can be included in this unit since there is a similar description concerning the circumcision of Abraham's family (v. 24-25). Thus, it is not necessary to eliminate this verse from the concluding section in the structure.
[320] Wenham in this structure presents the similarities with Genesis 16 in the opening and closing time references, namely Gen 17:1a, 24-27 and Gen 16:1,16, and in the content of the main section, that is, five divine speeches with Abraham's two responses and four angelic speeches (Gen 16:8a, 9, 10, 11-12) with Hagar's two comments (Gen 16:8b, 13). See, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 16-8.

couple for future blessing; Abraham is the perfect host (Gen 18:1b-8), and Sarah is the subject of divine announcement (Gen 18:9-15).

I. Introduction to the theophany (18:1a)
II. Abraham the host (18:1b-8)
    Abraham hosts the three visitors (18:1b-2)
    Abraham's dialogue with the visitors (18:3-5)
    Abraham and Sarah prepare the meal (18:6-8)
III. Annunciation of Isaac's birth (18:9-15)
    The Lord reveals Sarah will give birth (18:9-10a)
    The Lord dialogues with Abraham and Sarah (18:10b-15)

Gen 18:1b-8, which delineates the arrival of three men at Abraham's tent is complicated by several uncertainties within the text: 1) the relationship between the three men and the appearance of the Lord (Gen 17:1a) is not explicitly explained; 2) there appears to be a conscious shift in the verbal forms between verse 3 (all masculine singular, including pronouns) and verses 4-9 (masculine plural); 3) there is the question of the nature of the relationship between the uncertainties just raised in chapter 18 and their apparent counterparts in Genesis 19 (e.g., the relationship between the "two angels" or "messengers," in Gen 19:1). Such features have left the impression that the text of these chapters has comes down to us in a highly irregular and uneven form, leading many to supposes that more than one version of the story lies behind the present narrative (cf. Gunkel [1910] 1977:194).

Throughout the narrative the apparent irregularities in the text can be seen not as the result of a haphazard weaving together of divergent stories, but as the result of the author's/the final composer's careful balancing of two central theological positions with respect to the divine presence and power. Such irregularities as exist in the

narrative are best understood as the result of a conscious attempt to stress at one and the same time the theological relevance of the promise of God's presence along with his transcendent, sovereign power. Thus, the final unevenness of the narrative should be traced to the author's/the final composer's struggle to remain faithful to the central theological constraints of his task, namely, the need to reconcile two equally important views of God. In this sense, the close similarities between the two introductory sections (Gen 18:1-3 and 19:1-2) that the narratives should be explored further for clues regarding their interrelationship, will be presented below in the section of The Parallels Between Genesis 18 and 19 (see, p. 188).

The pericope of constitutes a larger literary unit with the annunciation of Isaac's birth (Gen 17:19-22) and its fulfillment (Gen 21:1-3). In this context, Gen 18:1-15 plays a bridge between these pericopes.[321] In addition, although Gen 18:1-15 does not appear to contribute to the tension of the Sodom (Genesis 18-19) narrative, the resemblances in setting, vocabulary, and narration between Gen 18:1-15 and Genesis 19 (esp. vv. 1-3) lead to the conclusion that chaps 18-19 are "a deliberate literary composition" (Mathews 2005:210).[322]

3.3.2.5.2. Abrahamic/Noahic Covenant (Gen 17// Genesis 6-9)

The covenant of circumcision shares important features with the Noahic covenant (esp. Gen 6:18; 9:8-17). Genesis 17 employs the same literary form of covenant and share

[321] R. Alter, "Sodom as Nexus: The Web of Design in Biblical Narrative," in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory* (Cambridge & Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 146-60.
[322] Cf. R. I. Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom: Abraham and Lot in Genessi 18-19* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 30-70. The textual relationship between Genesis 18 and 19 will be presented below.

many covenant terms (Gen 9:8-17):[323] the covenants are patterned after a royal land grant; covenant אוֹת ('sign') are established (Gen 9:12-13,17; 17:11)[324]; the covenants are described as בְּרִית עוֹלָם ('everlasting' or 'eternal' covenant, Gen 9:12, 16; 17:7-8, 13, 19); and they share covenant vocabulary, "establish a covenant" (מֵקִים בְּרִית, and variations; Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17; 17:7, 19, 21; cf. Exod 6:4), "give a covenant" (נתן בְּרִית, Gen 9:12; 17:2; cf. Num 25:12), and a covenant "between me and you (pl.)" (בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, Gen 9:12,15; 17:2, 7, 10, 11; Exod 31:13). In addition the observations stated above, there are further parallels between the covenants: the benefit, which each covenant brings for those with whom it is established is that they shall not be cut off (Gen 9:11; 17:14); the divine command in Gen 17:1, 'walk' (הִתְהַלֵּךְ) and 'blameless, perfect' (תָּמִים) correspond to the same words describing Noah in Gen 6:9[325], 'blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God.' The word תָּמִים (blameless) is found only on these two occasions in the whole of Genesis. This list of similarities highlights the close parallels, which exist between the two covenants.

3.3.2.6. Abraham's Intercession for Sodom and Lot (Gen 18:16-19:38)

3.3.2.6.1. Structure

The pericope of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-19:29) is closely

[323] For Genesis 'covenant' occurs twenty-seven times, eight of those in the flood narrative (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11-13, 15-17) and sixteen times in the Abraham narratives (Gen 15:18; 17:2, 4, 7 [2x], 9-11, 13 [2x], 14, 19 [2x]), especially pertaining to the rite of circumstance as a sign (Gen 17:9-14).
[324] In the case of Noah it is the rainbow (Gen 9:12-14), and in the case of Abraham it is circumcision (Gen 17:11). The rainbow is related to rain, which in turn would remind the people of the flood. Circumcision relates to the procreation of descendants, which is a point of emphasis in the covenant of Genesis 17.
[325] According to source theory, both pericopes are from the P material and so too the Enoch verses. For some critics this affords evidence of a flashback technique consciously employed. See, McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 39.

integrated. G. Wenham has presented the following analysis.[326]

1. Abraham's visitors look toward Sodom (18:16)
2. Divine reflections on Abraham and Sodom (18:17-21)
3. Abraham pleads for Sodom (19:1-3)
4. Angels arrive in Sodom (19:1-3)
5. Assault on Lot and his visitors (19:4-11)
6. Destruction of Sodom announced (19:12-13)
7. Lot's sons-in-law reject his appeal (19:14)
8. Departure from Sodom (19:15-16)
9. Lot pleads for Zoar (19:17-22)
10. Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed (19:23-26)
11. Abraham looks toward Sodom (19:27-28)

Summary (19:29)

As Wenham mentioned, the structure "is enhanced by the outer panels. Genesis 18-19 begins with the promise of Isaac's birth (Gen 18:1-15) and closes with the story of the birth of Lot's sons (Gen 19:30-38), thus enhancing the concentric organization of these two chapters."[327] This literary device of imitation between parts of a composition is accepted by all for Genesis 18-19.

3.3.2.6.2. Sodom-Lot Episodes (Gen 18-19) and the Flood Narrative (Gen 6-9)

Similarities between the story of Sodom's destruction and the flood narrative have been noted. In thematic parallels, one may find many verbal similarities between the episodes. Abraham's "going" (הלך) with them" in Gen 18:16 evokes Gen 6:9, "Noah walked (הלך) with God." Noah's righteousness (Gen 6:9; 7:1) is similar to Abraham's

[326] Wenham , *Genesis 16-50*, 41.
[327] Ibid., 42.

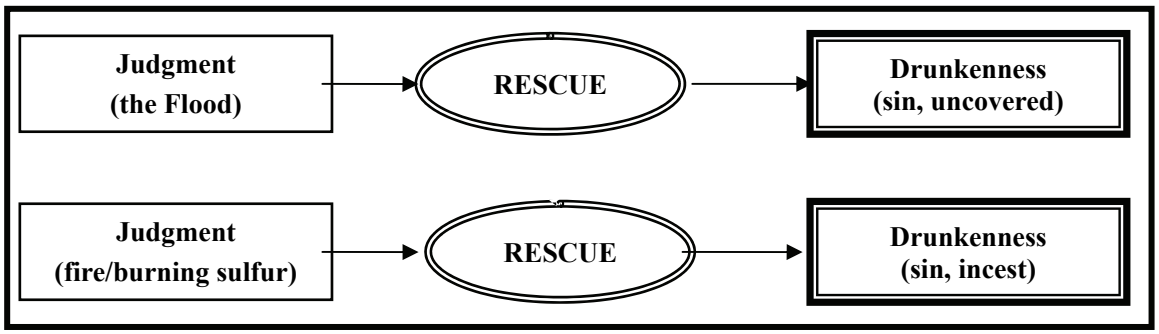
teaching his family to do righteousness (Gen 18:19) and his argument for the sparing of Sodom on the presence of "righteous" in Sodom (Gen 18:23-32). We read the Lord's self-reflection on righteousness in Gen 18:17-21, likewise the same phenomenon in Gen 6:5-8 (cf. Gen 6:11-13), where the Lord himself brings sanctions against all humanity because of their cooperative depravity. The word, שׁחת ("ruin") is a key verb describing the destruction in both accounts (Gen 6:13, 17; 9:11, 15; 18:28, 31-32; 19:13-14, 29). The angel's action in putting out their hand and bringing Lot back inside the house, shutting the door in Gen 19:10 (וַיָּבִיאוּ, "brought in" and סָגָרוּ, "shut") is akin to that in Gen 8:9 Noah put out his hand and brought the dove into the safety of the ark, and in Gen 7:16 the Lord shut the door of the ark (בָּאוּ, "going in" and וַיִּסְגֹּר, "shut").

In addition, there are divine forewarning and instructions for escape (Gen 6:13-22; 19:15-22), and one family alone is preserved (Gen 7:21-23; 19:15, 25-29). In Gen 19:12-13,15-16 we read the angel's warning Lot in the evening and then making him leave next morning; and in Gen 6:13-22 and 7:1-4 similarly we read God's first warning Noah of the need to build and enter the ark before commanding him to enter. Both stories report the similar list of escapers: Lot, his wife, and his two daughters and Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives. In Gen 19:19 we read מָצָא עַבְדְּךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ in Noah's pleading with angels, we read a similar idiom phrase, חֵן בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה הִנֵּה־נָא וְנֹחַ מָצָא in Gen 6:19-20. In both stories, the Lord's making rain (מַמְטִיר, "rained" brimstone) and מַמְטִיר, ("rained" floodwaters), occurs in Gen7:4 and 19:24.[328] The phrase, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אַבְרָהָם ("God remembered Lot") in Gen 19:29 parallels to the phrase וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ ("God remembered Noah") in Gen 8:1a since the Lord

[328] See, Clark, "Flood and the Structure," 184-211, esp. 194-95, and I. M. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark,"1129-130.

delivers Noah and Lot.[329] Both concern sexual improprieties as reason for the disaster (Gen 6:1-4; 19:1-11) and there is drunkenness by the survivor, which results in family shame (Ham's sin, Gen 9:22-23; Lot's incest, Gen 19:30-38). Finally, there are many shared lexical items: Also, each of the two narratives – the Noah account and the Sodom and Gomorrah – possesses a chiastic structure as presented above.[330] These resemblances between two pericopes suggest that they are being deliberately exploited by the author/the final composer of Genesis.

Finally, in Gen 19:29-38 the author/the final composer is free to recount the events of the final days of Lot, events which cast Lot in a very different light. In tragic irony, a drunk Lot carried out the very act, which he himself had suggested to the men of Sodom (Gen 19:8) – he lay with his own daughters. The account is remarkably similar to the story of the last days of Noah after his rescue from the Flood (9:20-27). There, as here, the patriarch became drunk with wine and uncovered himself in the presence of his children. In both narratives, the act had grave consequences.



Thus, at the close of the two great narratives of divine judgment, the Flood and the

[329] See, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 42-43. He also mentions that Lot's salvation is the consequence of the patriarch's intercession (59).
[330] For the structural analysis, see, Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis," 23-29.

destruction of Sodom, those who were saved from God's wrath subsequently fell into a form of sin reminiscent of those who died in the judgment. This is a common theme in the prophetic literature (e.g., Isa 55;66; Mal 1).

3.3.2.6.3. Parallels (Gen 18// Gen 19)

Gen 18:1-15 plays as an introduction, which supplies the necessary background information of a literary unit, Gen 18:1-19:29. Most critics have proposed so many parallels between the two chapters in focusing on parallel language. Letellier (1995:30-70) presents the most compelling case of parallels for the literary unit of Genesis 18-19. expands the levels of correlation to similar settings, motifs, and actions. On this basis, he demonstrates how this literary device reinforces the narrative movement from the initial actions in Genesis 18 to their denouement in Genesis 19. A representative sampling of the parallels between the two episodes here is sufficient, as the following table shows:[331]

Text (Genesis 18)	Contents	Text (Genesis 19)
וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֹהֶל Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent (v. 1)	Sitting place	וְלוֹט יֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר־סְדֹם Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom (v. 1)
וַיַּרְא וַיָּרָץ לִקְרָאתָם when he saw them, he hurried toward them (v. 2)	Seeing and meeting visitors	וַיַּרְא־לוֹט וַיָּקָם לִקְרָאתָם when Lot saw them, he got up to meet them (v. 1)

[331] Cf. Letellier, *Day in Mamre*, 64-66 and Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 40-45.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אָרְצָה and bowed himself toward the ground (v. 2)	Making a bow to visitors[332]	וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפַּיִם אָרְצָה he bowed himself with his face toward the ground (v. 1)
אַל־נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדֶּךָ please do not pass your servant by (v. 3)	Pleading for having the visitors	נָא אֶל־בֵּית עַבְדְּכֶם Please turn aside to your servants house (v. 2)
וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשָּׁעֲנוּ and wash your feet and rest yourself (v. 4)	Taking a rest	וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם and wash your feet (v. 2)
אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ afterwards you can go on (v. 5)	Inviting them to sleep over	וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדַרְכְּכֶם and go on your ways (v. 2)
עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם כִּי־עַל־כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם For this is why you have come to your servant	The reason for hospitality	כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאתֶם בְּצֵל קֹרָתִי for they have come under my roof for this reason (v. 8)
He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them (v. 8)	Giving them hospitality	He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast (v. 3)
וַיֹּאכֵלוּ they ate (v. 8)	Dining	וַיֹּאכֵלוּ they ate (v. 3)
אַיֵּה שָׂרָה אִשְׁתֶּךָ Where is Sarah your wife? (v. 9)	Questions	אַיֵּה הָאֲנָשִׁים Where are the men? (v. 5)
וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה Sarah laughed (צחק, *qal*, vv. 12,13,15)	Laughing	וַיְהִי כִמְצַחֵק בְּעֵינֵי חֲתָנָיו his sons-in-law thought he was joking (צחק, *piel*, v. 14)
זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי־רָבָּה the outcry against Sodom/Gomorrah is so great (vv. 20-21)	Outcry	כִּי־גְדֹלָה צַעֲקָתָם The cry of them is great (v. 13)
Abraham's plea for Sodom (vv. 23-32)	Plea	Lot's plea for Zoar (vv. 18-22)

[332] "The effect of these unmistakable similarities between two accounts is to highlight the one primary difference between them: the way the visitors are greeted. Abraham addressed the visitors as "Lord" and appropriately used the singular to address all three men in verse 3. Lot, however, addressed the visitors as "lords" and thus used the plural to address the two angels/men. The reason for making this difference here is that the author/the final composer wants the reader to see that Abraham, who had just entered the covenant (Genesis 17), recognized the Lord when he appeared to him, whereas Lot, who now lived in Sodom, did not recognize the Lord. The lives of the two men continue to offer a contrast" (Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 161-65).

סָפָה (*qal*) sweep away (vv. 23,24)	Destruction	סָפָה (*niphal*) sweep away (v. 13)
לְהָמִית to slay/put to death (v. 25)	Death	וָאָמוּתָה and I die (v. 19).
וְנָשָׂאתִי לְכָל־הַמָּקוֹם בַּעֲבוּרָם Then I will spare all the place for their sakes (v. 26)	Assent to the request	נָשָׂאתִי פָּנֶיךָ I will grant this request (v. 21)
אֹהֶל tent (vv. 6,9,10)	Dwelling types	וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמְּעָרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵּי בְנֹתָיו he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters (vv. 30-38)
הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do (v. 17)	The divine plan	וַיְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ The Lord hav sent us to destroy it (v. 13)
The Lord promises mercy to the few righteous (vv. 26-32)	God's mercy	Lot receives mercy (vv. 16,21-23,29)
The Lord will judge the guilty (vv. 21b,26-32)	Judgment	The Lord destroys the cities and Lot's wife (vv. 24-26)

These interesting similarities suggest that the two pericopes are correlated at the levels of similar settings, motifs, and actions.

Moreover, Genesis 18 is an extensively developed narrative showing clear signs of theological reflection at several key points. The issues that appear to be central to the pericope – the annunciation of Isaac's birth and the question of the fate of the righteous amid divine judgment – are dealt with not only in this episode but also in Genesis 17 (announcement of Isaac's birth) and 19 (fate of the righteous amid divine judgment).

Genesis 17	Genesis 18	Genesis 19
The announcement of the birth of Isaac	The announcement of the birth of Isaac/ the question of the fate of the righteous amid divine judgment	The question of the fate of the righteous amid divine judgment

The author's/the final composer's treatment of these two themes in chapter 18, however, shows his concern to push beyond a mere reporting of the events to develop them into a lesson in theology. In the meantime, that the whole chapter of Genesis 18 is to be understood within the context of the Lord's appearance to Abraham can be seen in the final verse (v. 33), which recounts that after he had finished speaking, "the Lord went away." Elsewhere, the conclusion of the expression "the Lord/God appeared" is marked by a brief notice of the Lord's departure (cf. Gen 17:1b, 22a; 35:9, 13).

	Genesis 17	Genesis 18	Genesis 35
Started speaking	1b וַיֵּרָ֥א יְהוָ֖ה אֶל־אַבְרָֽם	1a וַיֵּרָ֤א אֵלָיו֙ יְהוָ֔ה	9a וַיֵּרָ֨א אֱלֹהִ֜ים אֶל־יַעֲקֹ֗ב
Finished speaking	22a וַיַּ֣עַל אֱלֹהִ֔ים מֵעַ֖ל אַבְרָהָֽם	33a וַיֵּלֶךְ֙ יְהוָ֔ה	13a וַיַּ֥עַל מֵעָלָ֖יו אֱלֹהִֽים

As Wenham pointed out, Genesis 18 and 19:1-22 are told in two parallel panels. In this regard, McEvenue drew attention to the use of this literary technique combined with a broad palistrophe in Genesis 17 as presented earlier section. It is striking that the same combination of techniques, palistrophe and parallel panel-writing, is found in the successive chapters, although according to traditional source analysis, Genesis 17 is commonly treated as a literary unity coming from the Priestly writer (P) because of its legislation of circumcision and the chapter's "P-like" vocabulary (e.g., "*El Shaddai*," "confirm" a covenant), whereas Genesis 18-19 are assigned to the Yahwist excepting 19:29 (P).[333]

[333] McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* is cited by Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 44.

3.3.2.7. Jeopardy and Separation (Gen 20:1-21:34)

3.3.2.7.1. Structure and Textual Links

The narratives largely fall into three main sections: the story of Sarah in Abimelech's harem (Gen 20:1-18), the story of Abraham's and Ishmael's parting (Gen 21:1-21), and the conclusion of the Abimelech story leading to peace and success (Gen 21:22-34).[334] Gen 20:1-18, which depicts the story of the abduction of Sarah by Abimelech, in turn, can be divided by the introduction (vv. 1-2), the two main parts (vv. 3-7 and vv. 8-17a) and the conclusion (vv. 17b-18). The introduction provides the background for making sense of the two main sections. In the main parts, the first one, which occurs during the night, the dream segment carefully forms a chiastic pattern, and the second one, which occur during the day (in the morning), the encounter segment shapes parallel panels. The conclusion consists of the final two verses (vv. 17b-18), confirming Abraham as prophetic mediator whose prayer results in God healing the Abimelech household:[335]

First section: Introduction (20:1-2): Abraham – Abimelech (deception and abduction in Gerar)

Second section (20:3-7): God-Abimelech encounter in a dream by night

A you are as good as dead (v. 3)
B you have taken a man's wife[336] (v. 3)
C Abimelech had not gone near her (v. 4)
D Abimelech claims to be innocent (v. 4)
E with a clear conscience (v. 5)

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[334] Cf. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* II.334-61 and Sarna, *Understanding Genesi*, 161. For the textual interrelationship between Gen 20:1-21:34 and 12:10-13:18, see, pp. 145 in this study.
[335] Cf. Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev*, 39 and *Literary Analysis*, 150. He proposes parallel panels between vv. 8-13 and vv. 14-17a but admits it is "less obvious."
[336] Within Gen 20:1-18, the key word "his wife Sarah" (v. 2, 3) and "Abraham's wife Sarah" (v. 18) forms an inclusio.

F God said to him in a dream (v. 6)
E' with a clear conscience (v. 6)
D' God kept him from sinning (v. 6)
C' I did not let you touch her (v. 6)
B' Restore the man's wife (v. 7)
A' You shall live; if not you shall die (v. 7)

Third section (20:8-17a): Abraham-Abimelech encounter by day (morning)

A Abimelech reveals his dream to his servants (v. 8)
B Abimelech questions Abraham (v. 9)
C Abimelech again questions Abraham (v. 10)
D Abraham explains his actions (vv. 11-13)
A' Abimelech gives Abraham gifts (v. 14)
B' Abimelech offers Abraham land (v. 15)
C' Abimelech vindicates Sarah (v. 16)
D' Abraham prays for Abimelech (v. 17a)

Fourth section (Gen 20:17b-18): God – Abimelech (prayer and restoration)

The relationship of this pericope (Gen 20:1-18) to the "wife-sister" tradition (Gen 12:10-20; 13:1; 20:1-18; 26:1-13) has observed in our earlier discussion (pp. 150-155) in the present study. We concluded that although the three narratives are not duplicates from parallel sources but three originally independent accounts by one author who consciously penned each within the larger patriarchal framework so as to provide three complementary pictures of three similar events in the lives of the patriarchs, simultaneously, shouldn't be ignored the textual resemblances between the narratives.

In the present story the author/the final composer dwells on two features that are passed over quickly in the other two accounts: 1) the foreign ruler's discovery of the deception (Gen 20:3-7; 12:17; 26:8); 2) the confrontation between Abraham and the

ruler (Gen 20:8-16; 12:18-19; 26:9-10).[337] In the literary context of Genesis, many view Gen 20:1-18 as the beginning of an independent narrative tradition regarding Abraham and Gerar that concluded with the treaty at Beersheba (Gen 21:22-34).[338] In particular, Coats (1983:189,193) observes the parallel between Gen 20:1-18; 21:22-34 and Isaac's encounter with the Philistines (Gen 26:1-17; 26:17-33) as part of the narrative tradition pertaining to the king of Gerar. In this sense, it might possible that the author/the final composer interspersed the Abraham-at-Gerar narrative (Gen 20:1-18; 21:22-34) in the promised heir narrative in which the birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1-7) originally followed on Gen 18:1-15. The abrupt transition after Gen 20:17-18 (Abraham's prayer for the household of Abimelech) to Isaac' birth (Gen 21:1-7) led scholars to regard it an interruption in the Abraham-at-Gerar account (cf. Thompson 1987:57, 96-97).[339] However, the difficulty in this line of argument is the linkage chap. 20 evidences with the Abraham narrative and the immediate context of Genesis 18-19 and 21 as investigated in the earlier observation. The chapter is not loosely connected with its context. As we discussed above, it is clear that the author of Genesis 20 knows of Genesis 18-19 as they now appear.

Gen 20:1-18 continues the Sodom story (Genesis 18-19) by a geographical reference (Mamre [Hebron] – Gen 18:1; 19:27; cf. Gen 13:18; 14:13) and by addressing many of the same motifs. In the motifs, the motif of a traveling alien (*gēr*, a soundalike Gerar [*gĕrār*]), which dominant in Genesis 18-19 is reintroduced by Abraham's movement

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[337] Alexander, *literary Analysis*, 157-58, id., *Abraham in the Negev*, 42; id., "Wife/Sister Incidents?" 145-53.
[338] Coats, *Genesis*, 149, 155; T. L. Thompson, *The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel*, 57, 96-97; Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, 185.
[339] Thompson contends that Gen 20:1-18 had no original relationship to any earlier Abraham narrative; the year's interim before the birth of Isaac (Gen 18:10, 14) provide the redactor opportunity to include the Gerar episode.

toward Gerar (Gen 20:1). The question of divine justice toward the "righteous" and "wicked" (Gen 18:23-32; 19:7), pertains to the fate of an "innocent" (צַדִּיק, Gen 20:4), which is central to the dream scene (Gen 20:3-7). The motif is addressed in the setting of a private dialogue between God and Abraham (Genesis 18) or Abimelech (Genesis 20). The motif of anxiety over "life"/"death" (Gen 19:19, 20) and to "preserve" one's legacy (Gen 19:32,34) reappears in the dream sequence when the Lord declares Abimelech a "dead" man (Gen 20:3) whose life and legacy can only be spared by the prophet Abraham (vv. 3, 7, 17).[340] At this point, one should note the correlation between Gen 20:1-18 with Isaac's birth (Gen 21:1-7). This suggests that the common feature is the healing of the barren women at Gerar (Gen 20:17-18) and the immediate pregnancy of Sarah (Gen 21:1-2). In this sense, one may propose that the juxtaposition of Sarah's pregnancy with the outcome of Abraham's prayer for the Gerarites suggest that the patriarch's intercession shows that the blessing for Abraham's descendants also extends to the nations (Gen 12:3). Thus, it is difficult to view the two narratives (Gen 20:1-18 and 21:1-7) as originally unrelated, since one can find that Gen 21:1-7 has many literary allusion to Genesis 20.

In addition, this fact can be verified in a sense of structural framework. Indeed, the narratives about the jeopardy of the matriarch in the foreign harems form an inner

[340] In these verses, Abraham is explicitly called a "prophet." In Genesis 15, the author/the final composer goes to great lengths to cast him in that role. In fact, in Gen 19:15-16 the author/the final composer reminds the reader that Lot's rescue was an answer to Abraham's prayer (Genesis 18). The point of Gen 19:17-22, which depicts Lot's flight to Zoar is that in spite of the destruction of Sodom, Abraham's prayer was answered at Zoar (cf. the picture of Abraham in this passage and Moses in the battle with Amalekites in Exod 17:11-12). Gen 19:29 is a clear reminder of the role of Abraham in Lot's rescue. In Genenesis 20 and 21, where focus on the relationship between Abraham and nations, Abraham's role is a prophetic intercessors, as in the promise "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 12:3). He prayed for the Philistines (Gen 20:7), God healed them (v. 17). Thus, the author/the final composer is carrying through with the theme of God's promise in Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:3).

frame around the Abraham narrative before the transition to the next cycle in Gen 22:20-25:11. After the divine promises pertaining to the seed, the land and a great nation, Sarah is immediately jeopardized by Abraham's deception in Pharaoh's harem. Now, immediately before the birth of the promised seed, Isaac, the ancestress is endangered by another ruse of her husband in Abimelech's palace (Waltke 2001:285).

The Abraham Cycle (Gen 11:27-25:11)			
The initial call to the promise of heir (12:1-3)	Fist jeopardy of the promise (12:10-20)	Second jeopardy of the promise (20:1-18)	**The fulfillment of the promise of heir, Isaac's birth (21:1-7)**

Thus, one may affirm that the pericope is structurally integrated in coherent scheme by author/the final composer with the earlier narratives in the Abraham cycle.

Gen 21:1-34 can customarily divided into the three distinct sections that are generally believed to be self-contained by critics: the nativity of Isaac and circumcision (vv. 1-7)[341], the story of the feast and Hagar's and Ishmael's expulsion (vv. 8-21)[342], and the account of the treaty at Beersheba (vv. 22-34). In the structural context, the second section (vv. 8-21), in turn, falls into the three settings in this pericope: the first setting,

[341] Source critics view vv. 1-7 as a combination of two or three sources (J – vv. 1a, 2a, 6-7; P – 1b, 2b-5; particularly, for Westermann J – vv. 1-2, 6-7 and P – vv. 3-5, cf. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 331, 333. However, one may not accept this theory of the two different sources for the textual relevance in both external and internal textual evidences: 1) as stated in earlier section (in p. 194), vv. 1-7 has many allusions to Genesis 20. Isaac's postponed birth (vv. 1-7) by the intervening threat of Sarah's abduction (Genesis 20) provides narrative tension and theologically reaffirm that the child was a miracle achieved by God. Most interestingly, the birth of Isaac and the rivalry with Ishmael (vv. 1-21) appear between two Abimelech episodes (Genenesis 20; Gen 21:22-34), imputing a broader significance to Isaac's birth. In the internal relationship, the repetition in v. 1 ("he had said"//"he had promised") is a parallelism emphasizing the fulfillment of the divine promise, not the evidence of two different sources. Moreover, the repetition of the birth and naming of Isaac in vv. 2-3 is the result of adhering to set formulas rather than the consequence of two sources. See, Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev*, 62-65.

[342] For the relationship between this section (vv. 8-21) and Gen 16:1-16, see the section of "The Hagar and Ishmael episode (Genesis 16) and Gen 21:8-21" above in p. 175-77.

telling of the banquet celebration and provision for Isaac (vv. 8-13), the second setting, describing the expulsion and deliverance of Hagar and Ishmael (vv. 14-19), and the third setting, reporting desert life and marriage of Ishmael (vv. 20-21). In addition, the first setting consists of the two speeches: Sarah (vv. 8-10) and God (vv. 11-13). The second setting may be divided into two units: Hagar and Ishmael's expelling to the desert (vv. 14-15) and God's deliverance of them in the desert. Finally, the last section (vv. 22-34) consists of one scene (vv. 22-3), depicting the three speeches by Abimelech and Abraham's response, and the geographical notice of Abraham's stay as concluding note (cf. Wenham 1994:90). In the larger structural context of the pericope, one may find three inclusions framed the narrative. The first inclusion is the time reference, "at that time" (v. 22) and "for a long time" (v. 32). The second one is the approach and departure of Abimelech and Phical (vv. 22, 32). The final inclusion can be found in vv. 23 and 33, where depicts the acknowledgement of God.

Critics traditionally assigned Gen 21:8-21 to the Elohist (E), which contain a number of features that either resemble closely or presuppose a knowledge of Gen 22:1-14, 19 attributed to E.[343] In this sense, some links can be represented: 1) the angel's calling from heaven (Gen 21:17//22:11); 2) the discovery of the well and ram (Gen 21:19//22:13); 3) the geographical references to Beersheba (Gen 21:31, 32//22:19); and 4) the references to Isaac as Abraham's only son (Gen 21:14ff.// 22, especially vv. 2, 16). Further, David Dorsey, assisting his student David Carr, suggests that this episode representing the birth of Isaac opens up a new unit featuring Isaac (Gen 21:8) and

[343] Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev*, 82-83. However, as Alexander admitted, the examination of the source analysis of Gen 21:8-21 are unsatisfactory. He stated that "If uncertainty exists regarding the attribution of Gen 21:8-21 to E, there remains no reason to assign Genesis 22 to E on the basis of similarities between the two chapters." Yet, the existing similarities between the two episodes is beyond the source analysis for them.

displaying the constituent episodes and narrative segments, which contains thirteen parts arranged in a conspicuous symmetry including most having well-marked introduction and conclusion. This chiastic structure shows much of the repetition and positioning of episodes. One can find the two well-matched stories of the family tragic strife that resulted in the expulsion of one of the two sons in the family (Gen 21:8-13 and 27:1-28:4). Secondly, there are the two brief stories about the marriages of the non-chosen elder son to foreign women (an Egyptian and the Hittite) in Gen 21:20-21 and 26:34-35. Finally, one may find another textual resemblance in the two stories of making covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba. The episodes delineate the two treaties with Abimelech of Gerar and Phicol, involving Abraham's wells and the town of Beersheba.[344]

3.3.2.8. Divine Promissory Commands and Abraham's Obedience (Gen 22:1-19)

3.3.2.8.1. Structure and Textual Links

The Abraham narrative (Gen 11:27-25:11), a pericopes devoted to the growth of Abraham's faith within the context of the divine call and promise to make him into a great nation, now reaches its denouement. On the one hand, this episode presents the radical nature of true faith: tremendous demands and incredible blessings (Waltke 2001:301) in content. On the other hand, the manner in which the narrative has been together evidence great literary artistry in structure. Two factors unite to make the case. First, the literary arrangement of the passage features particularly rich in complexity

[344] Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 57-58.

due to numerous repetitions within the narrative[345], giving the passage a coherence by following the story line of problem to denouement. Second, there is a certain symmetry to the story, which is, in part, achieved through the use of both triplets (vv. 2, 3,6, 10, 17, 18)[346] and tensions/resolutions[347]. The pericope may be divided into the three main sections: presentation of the divine test (vv. 1-2), compliance with the instruction (vv. 3-10), and approval of the compliance (vv. 11-19). In addition, it is framed by the twofold repetition of Abraham in v. 1 and v. 19. The structural analysis, thus, will be done according to the following seven parts plot structure:[348]

The prologue: tension and irony introduced
by the narratival report of the divine text (v. 1a)
Presentation of the test: tension grew
as God's utterly ironic test specified (vv. 1b-2) — Presentation of the divine test

Progression of the test: tension escalated
and ironies permeated the test (vv. 3-10) — Compliance with the instructions

Revelation of the test result: tension began
to ease as the turning point reached (vv. 11-12)
Resolution of the test: tension further resolved
and God centeredness highlighted (vv. 13-14)
Conclusion of the test: tension completely resolved
and ultimate climax reached (vv. 15-18)
The epilogue: an irony filled narratival report
of Abraham's trip home (v. 19) — Approval of the compliance

[345] The use of one such repetitions statement in vv. 1, 11 (אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי), which naturally divides the story into two general movements. The use of another "אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ" used three times (vv. 2, 12, 16) tends to increase the gravity of the situation.
[346] For instance, the use of the imperatives ("take," "go," and "offer") in v. 2, 3, 6, 10 and the blessing formula in vv. 17, 18.
[347] The "only son" at the beginning is contrasted by the "greatly multiplied" seed at the conclusion (v. 17). Finally, the test (v. 1) is turned into a "blessing" (vv. 17-18).
[348] This structural analysis is based on the work of Ross. See, Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 392.

In the previous observation (pp. 134-137), we have already investigated that Gen 22:1-19 fits in the Abraham narrative within numerous echoes of the preceding accounts. This episode shares many parallels with Genesis 16 and 21 as well:

1. A parent and child on a difficult journey (Hagar and Ishmael in 16:6//Abraham and Isaac in 22:4-8)
2. The intervention from the angel of the Lord (16:7//22:11) with the promise of numerous descendants, using the key word, הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה ("I will [greatly] increase," 16:10//22:17[349])
3. The naming of the place of God's provision, using the key word, ראה "to see" or "to provide" ("Living one who sees me," 16:14//"The Lord will provide," 22:14)[350]

Moreover, this passage also shares many features of significant similarities with the preceding expulsion episode (Gen 21:8-21), indicating Gen 22:1-19 originally was composed in concert with the Hagar-Ishmael episode. Both narratives contain a similar plot development and many striking correlations in comparisons and contrasts when analyzed together.[351]

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[349] Meanwhile, one should note that the importance of the blessing of Abraham by the Lord lies in similarity of the blessing of Rebekah to that which her family gave to her in Gen 24:60. The purpose is once again to show the Lord's careful attention to detail in choosing this wife for Isaac. In God's plan, the same blessing has been given to both Isaac and his bride. This is the way the author/the final composer shows that Rebekah had taken the place of Sarah in the line of the seed of Abraham.

[350] J. Lawlor, "The Test of Abraham, Genesis 22:1-19," *GTJ* 1 (1980): 19-35, and Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 99-100, detail many parallels between Gen 22:1-19 and the Hagar-Ishmael stories (Genenesis 16 and 21).

[351] This analysis is based on the work of Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 99-100, and of Lawlor, "The Test of Abraham" 33-35. In reference to this narrative pattern, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 119-20, 321-23, notes that all patriarchal narratives have a similar sequence in concluding their stories: divine call to journey (Gen 22:1-2; 35:1; 46:2-3); obedience (Gen 22:3-14; 35:2-8; 46:5-7); divine promise reaffirmed (Gen 22:15-18; 35:9-14; 48:4), journey (Gen 22:19; 35:16; 48:7), birth of children (Gen 22:20-24; 35:17-18; 48:5-6), and death and burial of patriarch's wife (Genesis 23; 35:18-20; 48;7); son's marriage (Gen 24:1-67; 35:21-22; [48:8ff.] 49:3-4); list of descendants (Gen 25:1-6; 35:22-26; 49:3-28); and death and burial

Genesis 21	Genesis 22
Contrasts	
Crisis created as a result of a human directive: Sarah tells Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (v. 10)	Crisis created as a result of divine directive: God tells Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (v. 2)
Abraham shows real reluctance to follow through (v. 11)	Abraham shows no real reluctance to follow through (vv. 3ff.)
God refers to Ishmael as "Abraham's seed," זֶרַע (v. 13)	God refers to Isaac as "Abraham's son," בֵּן (v. 2)
Sarah aware of the circumstances; she was the "perpetrator" (vv. 9-10)	Sarah apparently not aware of the circumstances
Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, could not stand to watch her son die (vv. 15-16)	Abraham, the father of Isaac, did not shrink from observing (in fact, participating in the death of his son)
Action takes place in the wilderness of Beer-sheba (v. 14)	Action takes place in the land of Moriah (vv. 2-4)
Comparisons/Similarities	
God requires the dismissal of Ishmael (vv. 12-13)	God requires the dismissal of Isaac (v. 2)
God commands Abraham to take a journey of Hagar and Ishmael (vv. 4-8)	God commands Abraham to take a journey of himself and Isaac (vv. 2-8)
God promised to make a nation of Ishmael because he was Abraham's seed (v. 13)	God promised to make a great nation of Isaac because Abraham had not withheld him (vv. 16-18)
The provision made for the journey (v. 14)	The provision made for the journey (v. 3)
Abraham "rose up early in the morning" (וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם ו בַּבֹּקֶר) to follow through (v. 14)	Abraham "rose up early in the morning" (וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר) to follow through (v. 3)
Divine intervention occurs: angel of God calls out to Hagar; reversal of danger (v. 17)	Divine intervention occurs: angel of Yahweh calls out to Abraham; reversal of danger (vv. 11ff.)
The angel uses the key word, ירא "fear" (אַל־תִּירְאִי "Do not be afraid" in v.17)	The angel uses the key word, ירא "fear" (יְרֵא אֱלֹהִים "fear God" in v. 12)
The verb שמע "hear" appears as a key word (v. 17)	The verb שמע "hear" appears as a key word (v. 18)
The promise of great descendants through the "lost" son is given to Hagar and Ishmael (v. 18)	The promise of great descendants through the "lost" son is given to Abraham (v. 17)

(Gen 25:7-10; 35:27-29; 49:29-50:14). These parallels imply that the author's/the final composer's the materials were composed according to a coherent scheme. Also, see J. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); H C White, "The Initiation Legend of Isaac," *ZAW* 91 (1979): 13-18.

The "eyes" of the protagonist are mentioned with reference to seeing the Lord's provision: water (life-preserving) was providentially provided (v. 19)	The "eyes" of the protagonist are mentioned with reference to seeing the Lord's provision: ram (life-preserving_ was providentially provided (v. 13)
Hagar appropriates the water without a specific divine directive (v. 19)	Abraham appropriates the ram without a specific divine directive (v. 13)

In addition, in the view of Hagar's role in Genesis as Sarah's antagonist takes on a striking likeness to Abraham in his "trial" on Mt Moriah in Genesis 22.

Although some critical studies, which exhibit difference in their results and practice diverse methods of analysis, some based more on content and others relying on words and clause, they agree that the evidence of repetitions shows an artful design. The significance of such connections, therefore, shows the author's/the final composer's abiding interest in the inheritance theme as played out by the two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The verbal affinities among the three narratives (Genesis 16, 21, 22) heighten the tension of what is at stake in the death of Isaac.

3.4. The Genealogy of Nahor (Gen 22:20-24)

This genealogical notice reports a brief details of Nahor's family, who have been mentioned only in the genealogy of Terah (Gen 11:27-32).[352] At a glance, its present location awkwardly interrupts the flow of the episode of Isaac's sacrifice (Gen 22:1-19) and Sarah's burial (Genesis 23). However, the opening phrase (v. 20a) "some time later" (or "after these things) shows a formal connection chronologically between the

[352] For the similarities between Nahor's genealogy and that of Terah (Gen 11:27-32), see, the earlier section above in pp. 111-12.

preceding account (vv. 1-19), while "Milcah too has borne sons" make an explicit connection with Gen 21:1-7, the nativity of Isaac (cf. Wenham 1994:119).

Moreover, the special reference to Rebekah in v. 23 clearly anticipates the events recorded in Genesis 24, which narrates the betrothal of Rebekah as Isaac's wife from the Nahor clan in Aram (Gen 24:10, 15, 24, 47). Thus, the author/the final composer brings forward the history of the Nahor family because of its importance for the Abraham-Isaac group. Reporting the productivity of the Nahor clan after the promise of blessing for "all nations" (v. 18) implies that the Nahor history is part of the beginning fulfillment; also, noting "Rebekah" (v. 23) refers to the future matriarch by whom blessing will be occur for Abraham's family and, ultimately, all nations. In short, the status of the Abraham-Sarah family in Genesis 21-22 and 23, including the proleptic reference to Rebekah in Gen 22:20-24, prepare for the reunification of the Terah families in Genesis 24. In this sense, the genealogical connection between Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, and Abraham's branch explains the commissioning of his servant in Gen 24:3-4. By such genealogical accounting, the inheritance of the promise is shown to be passed down within the family.

The interest in the twelve children of Nahor (Gen 22:20-24) has a particular parallel with the twelve children of Ishmael (Gen 25:12-18).[353] In addition, the twelve non-chosen sons of Nahor (vv. 20-24) parallel to the twelve elect sons of Jacob as stated in our earlier discussion (see, note. 192 in p. 88). The Nahor genealogy structurally forms an inclusio around the main corpus of the Abraham narrative, as the Abraham's test

[353] This parallel was recognized by von Rad, *Genesis*, 245, although he hesitated to press it because the genealogy of Nahor was brief and, in recording a confederation of twelve Aramean tribes, apparently meant to be a literary link.

(Gen 22:1-19) echoes the Abraham's initial call to journey (Gen 12:1-8). This framework, thus, enhances the overall chiastic arrangement of the major part of the Abraham cycle (Gen 11:27-22:24).[354] The borders of the episode itself consists of genealogies, the prominent fraternal lines of Terah's clan: Nahor and his wife and concubine (Gen 22:20-24) and Abraham and his wife and concubines (Gen 25:1-11). In this sense, this genealogical notice is an appropriate fit in the present narrative arrangement since it provides a buffer between the narrative's high point of Gen 22:1-19 and the low point describing Sarah's death (Genesis 23). And, as an interlude the episode easily transitions to Sarah's death by the genealogy's mention of Milcah (Alexander 1982:62).

3.5. The Epilogue (Gen 23:1-25:11)

The present symmetry of the canonical narrative, understanding Gen 23:1-25:11 as the epilogue to the Abraham narrative provides information the narrative requires in order to ensure the reader that the promises were passed down to Isaac as required. The motif of marriage and offspring so essential to the thematic thread of the whole links Gen 11:29 and 22:20-24 and Genesis 24, making it unnecessary to view Genesis 24 as a supplement (Emerton 1992:41-42; cf. Carr 1996:198-199). In this sense, the epilogue transitions Abraham's story to the Jacob narrative (Gen 25:19-35:29) by establishing the union of Isaac and Rebekah who parent Jacob and his brother (Gen 25:21-26). Before taking up the next patriarchal narratives, the author/the final composer includes the Ishmael genealogy (Gen 25:12-18) so as to close out the former episodes of

[354] See, the section of the main cycle (Gen 12:1-22:19) in chapter 2 of the study (pp. 87-92).

fraternal rivalry.

3.6. Concluding Summary

In this chapter we have tried to uncover the techniques by which the skillful the author/the composer of Genesis has masterfully woven the Abraham narrative in the canonical text. Through the examining of the main body, it is abundantly clear that the main section of the Abraham narrative (Gen 11:27-22:24) has a self-sustaining unity articulated in numerous parallel themes, key-words and key-expressions, and also continues the major theme of the Creation and Noah Cycles. These features are intended to alert the reader to both the literary texture and religious message of the Abraham narrative. This we believe is best explained as the creation of one author. In the next chapter (Chap. 4), intertextual links between the Abram narrative and the remainder texts of the Pentateuch will be observed in terms of verbal, thematic, theological sense.