

C&T Class 10/12

“An Everlasting Covenant”: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

31:44 – Jacob and Leban erect a pillar as witness to their covenant – Why?

- The visibility of the pillar reminds them of the covenant
- Also serves as boundary. They can't cross it in order to do harm to the other

16:11-13 – Negative connotations with Ishmael (who is the ancestor of the Muslim people)

- Sarai & Abram try to take matters into their own hands instead of trusting in God to provide a son. He's not the son that God promised to Abram
- Angel comes perhaps to consol Hagar, not berate her.
- Is the story different in the Quran? (ie Is Ishmael more respected?)

17:1 – Lord appears to Abram

- Turning point in Abram's life (his name gets changed to Abraham)
- Here is where God promises Abram a son & ancestors
- Abraham falls on his face and laughs at God – God doesn't seem to mind
- God promises descendents to be as many as stars – Why?
 - The pinnacle of Jewish salvation at this time is long life and many descendents
 - There wasn't a number to express how many there would be
- Why is Abraham so much more favored than anyone else?
 - Maybe there's more of a story behind why he is chosen that is not part of the Bible
 - There's a theme of God making the least glorious thing more glorious (eg. King David)

29:21-35 – Jacob works for 14 years to get both Rachel and Leah as wives

- 7 years each—7 is a symbolic number in the Bible
- Leban cheats Jacob here, just as he does with the sheep and goats later
- Jacob also tries to manipulate so he gets a larger wage
- Is Jacob moral?
 - Maybe he's morally neutral (breeding sheep so they will be spotted is not necessarily wrong)
 - Or not, Remember Jacob's name means “He takes by the heel”

27:27-29 – Jacob tricks Esau into giving up his birthright

- Recalls 26:23 “Two nations are in your womb...the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger”
- Jacob is like Odysseus: He uses his wits to get the best for himself

26:24 – Rebekah favors Jacob, Isaac favors Esau

- Shows how a family can be divided, even today

22:10-12 – Abraham nearly sacrifices Isaac

- Maybe this is why God favored Abraham, because he was willing to sacrifice his son?
- Maybe not, because this happens only after he has been chosen and all the promises have been made to him

Passages we didn't discuss

- 18:23-29 – Abraham asks if God will spare the city if there are only a few righteous people there
- 30 – Rachel becomes jealous of Leah

Miscellaneous Discussion topics

- The Genealogies provided in the Bible connect important people
- How long is a year?
 - Measured by seasons or another scale?
 - Maybe people lived longer because they were healthier