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C&T 202 E
Class notes – 24 February, 2006

Abraham: Genesis 12-13, 15-18, 21-24

Important passages

- R-3: Ishmael will be wild ass of a man (linked to Islam)
- R-4: God will give Sarah a son, Isaac, in her old age
- R-4: Abraham and his offspring must be circumcised as a responsibility to God
- R-5: God is forgiving, he would spare Sodom for few righteous
- R-5/6: Story of Sarah and Hagar's conflict → root of dispute between Islam and Judaism today
- R-6: Abraham was very faithful and willing to sacrifice his own son
- R-7: Sarah dies at 127. Abraham was embraced by people, even though he was an alien

The conflict between Sarah and Hagar

- Sarah didn't conceive with Abraham while Hagar, the slave girl, did. Hagar looked on Sarah with contempt, which made Sarah very angry. But didn't Sarah expect that the contempt would be there?
- Sarah thought in herself that Hagar is better than her because Hagar can have children and she can't.
- This situation is similar to the situation in *The River Between*, the book we read in the African module last semester in C&T.
- The fact that Abraham married both Sarah and Hagar illustrates that some form of polygamy was acceptable in their culture at that time.
- Why was Hagar a slave girl? Isn't God supposed to be neutral, just and fair?

The meaning of circumcision

- Circumcision is a sign of faith and being under the law of God
- It is a sign that separates Hebrews from the other tribes
- In *The River Between*, there were opposing sides and opinions about circumcision, while here the people related to Abraham can't make the decision if they will be circumcised.
- In *The River Between*, boys were circumcised when they were eighteen years old, while the people related to Abraham were circumcised after eight days from their birth.
- Circumcision is also a symbol of purity

Other thoughts

- Abraham is a forward-thinking man: he was worried of the future of his kids and descendants
- There were many discussions between Abraham and God on a regular basis and on different matters, which illustrates the excellent relationship between Abraham and God
- In Genesis 18, v.17-19, God is debating within his head → God doesn't have a set path to follow?
- In Genesis 18, v.21: God can't see what is going on, he has to come down and see by himself. Where are the might and power of God in this case? Does he come down for another purpose than to see what is going on?