

Genesis Chapter 20

If you are new or visiting; *a special warm welcome to you.*
We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

v. 1 - "And Abraham journey from there toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar."

Abraham has left the plains of Mamre where it appears that he dwelt for some 20 years or more. (Gen 13:18; 18:1. The reckoning of years depends upon the time between the events of chapters 12 and 13 - it may have been shorter.) He has left a region primarily settled by Amorites (14:13) and Hittites (23:10-18) for the south country, at this point governed by Philistines (cf. Gen. 21:34). He has passed this way once before, on his way to and from Egypt (12:10), but for the most part this is unfamiliar territory and relatively unfamiliar government, perhaps even culture (20:11). You see, the Philistines were of Egyptian descent (Gen. 10:13-14) while the Amorites and Hittites, and the rest of Canaan, were of Canaanitish descent (Gen. 10:15-17). The name Abimelech ("Molech is father" is the most common rendering), which is most likely a title and not a proper name, however, is Semitic, not Egyptian. So perhaps the Philistines have tried to "mix" with their neighbours, or this may be an Hebraic rendering of an early Egyptian title. Either way, Abraham has gone from a place where he had friends (Gen. 23:15, or was at least on friendly terms with his neighbours) and which was ruled by a sort of "eldership" (Gen. 23:3-16; cf. the Hivites of Shechem, Gen. 34:20-24), to an area where he was unknown for the most part and which was ruled by a king.

The Philistines were originally of the land of Caphtor, in Lower Egypt, around the Nile Delta (see Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7). There appear to have been successive migrations of Philistines beginning at least before or concurrent with Abraham's time (ca. 2000-1800 BC). (See also Deut. 2:23) Modern criticism has attempted to show that the mention of Philistines here in Genesis, in the time of Abraham, is anachronistic - that is, the Philistines did not arrive in Canaan until much later (ca. 1200 BC), hence this is an editorial flaw and proves the Bible's historical inaccuracy. However, archaeological evidence has proven the link between at least one king who dwelt in the "land of the Philistines", as the Bible puts it, and the homeland of Caphtor as early as the 18th century BC.

v. 7 - This is the first time the word *prophet* is used in the Bible.

Chapter 21:

v. 1-3 - Notice the 3-fold repetition: "The LORD visited Sarah **as he had said**, and the LORD did unto Sarah **as he had spoken**. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time **of which God had spoken to him.**"* God is not forgetful! (Psalm 138:2)

v. 5 - Abraham was 25 years coming to this point. (Gen. 12:1-4. And it may actually have been longer since Stephen tells us God appeared to Abraham *before* Haran, in Ur.

Since we don't know how long Abraham dwelt at Haran, it is really at least 25 years coming from the promise to this point... it may be 30 or more.)

v. 9-11 - Ishmael is somewhere around 16 years old, having been born when Abraham was 86 (Gen. 16:16) and now Isaac is weaned, which would probably have been when he was about 3.

The idea of mocking expressed here cropped up 2 chapters ago in 19:14 when Lot's sons-in-law thought he was joking about destruction coming upon Sodom (same He-

