

Jan 7, 2007 AM

**THE SEPARATION OF THE SEED FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD
GENESIS 25.1-6**

1. ABRAHAM AND HIS “GENTILE” WIFE (1)

Another wife: It seems as if that with the death of Sarah and the marriage of Isaac—i.e., provision for the continuation of the promise through Isaac—that Abraham is now somewhat freed from the position he once assumed.

This is clearly not the same kind of problem he ran into when Sarah was alive and he took another wife, Hagar.

“Another wife” or “again” emphasizes the differences with Sarah. Sarah was *the* mother of *the* seed. Neither Hagar nor Keturah could occupy that position. This doesn’t mean they were bad women. It means they didn’t have that position.

Being Abraham’s wives and bearing his sons, though, does give them a special position. Remember, Hagar’s son, Ishmael, is still Abraham’s seed even though he is not the promised seed. With that comes special privileges and promises. So it will be it Keturah and her children.

A second-class wife: Cp. 25.1 and Keturah being Abraham’s “wife” with 1 Chr 1.32 and her being “concubine.”

Note: A concubine is not a paramour. A concubine is basically a second-class wife. What distinguishes her from a first-class wife is what she receives before marriage from the bridegroom in terms of money.

Mohar (Hebrew) - the bridegroom would negotiate with the brother and sometimes the father of the bride-to-be concerning what he would provide for the sister/bride.

This was money given to the bride by the bridegroom to be hers. It would be like putting money in a savings account with only her name on the account. This money would be hers to use and would be for her protection against maltreatment, death, or divorce from her husband.

There were times that this *mohar* was not given to the woman. Money may have been given to the father/family of the bride. In this case, she has no monetary protection. She is an unendowed wife.

God set up special protection for these types of wives. She was not to be mistreated. If the husband took another wife, the husband could not diminish the unendowed wife’s food, clothing, or conjugal pleasures (cf. Exod 21.10-11). If he violated any of these, she could divorce him.

Prominent example: Jacob and the marrying of Rachel and Leah. Jacob negotiates with Laban concerning Rachel. He doesn’t have the *mohar* required. He will work seven years for Laban *and that which he earns will go to Rachel*.

Laban tricks Jacob, makes him work 14 years and still tries to steal the money that Jacob had earned for his wives. You see this when Jacob tells his wives that they will leave. Rachel and Leah both understand that Laban has sought to steal *their* money and has treated them like a “stranger,” which translates to them being treated like slave-wives rather than free-wives (cf. Gen 31.14ff.).

Keturah is a second-class wife, a slave-wife like Hagar. She doesn’t have the status of the Sarah, the *sister-wife*. Nevertheless, she is still a wife and is treated very well by Abraham.

Keturah: meaning: “fragrant smoke” or even “smoke of a sacrifice” (which is considered “sweet-smelling”).

Wenham: “An association with incense seems probable in that several of her sons seem to be involved in the international spice trade.” (158) I think it has more to do with the fact that children will be worshipers; esp. since one of the grandchildren will be a non-Israelite priest who offers up sacrifice to YHWH.

2. ABRAHAM AND HIS “GENTILE” CHILDREN (2-4)

Listed: 6 children of Keturah with 10 grand- and great-grandchildren.

Fulfilled: Abraham is the father of many nations (cf. 17.5-7). These sons would represent many other nations around Arabia.

Midian: A major player in redemptive history. Remember: these are brothers of the promised seed.

Esau will fight against and defeat the Midianites, his brothers (cf. Gen 36.35). The Midianites are associated with the Ishmaelites later on. The Midianites (along with the Ishmaelites) buy Joseph from his brothers and sell him to Potiphar in Egypt (cf. Gen 37.28ff.).

Moses and the Midianites: Moses flees to the land of Midian after killing an Egyptian. At a well there he meets the daughters of the priest of Midian: Jethro (Reuel). He marries one of those daughters, Zipporah.

Jethro brings Zipporah and children back to Moses after Exodus, meeting them in the wilderness. Jethro participates in the joy of the victory of YHWH over the Egyptians. He offers sacrifices and has a communion meal with Moses and Aaron. Jethro is like another Gentile priest we met earlier in Genesis: Melchizedek. He is a priest of the one true God even though he is not of the line of the promised seed of Abraham.

Jethro helps Moses organize the nation of Israel. Cf. Exod 18.

Later the Midianites join up with the Moabites (sons of Esau) to destroy Israel (cf. Num 22). This is the incident of Balaam being hired. Balaam cannot curse Israel, so he gives counsel to Moabites and Midianites to entice the men of Israel into worship of Baal through fornication with their women (Num 31.16). It is because Phineas runs a spear through a son of Israel and a Midianite woman that he is counted righteous before God (cf. Num 25.7ff.; Ps 106.30-31).

Moses is commanded to soundly defeat the Midianites before he dies (cf. Num 31). Later the Midianites would oppress Israel in the days of the Judges and Gideon will deliver them (cf. Jdg 6.1–8.35).

Sheba: Sheba is the son whose territory was eventually ruled by the Queen of Sheba. She was the queen who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon in 1 Kgs 10.1ff.

We also see in Psa 72 that the kings of Sheba bring gifts to God's king. Abraham gives gifts to these children, and they bring them back to the promised seed with interest, as it were.

3. THE SEED AND HIS SEPARATION FROM THE "GENTILES" (5-6)

Isaac and the blessing: Isaac is the inheritor of the blessing given to Abraham. This can only be given to one son at this time. This blessing has particular reference to the land of promise. Isaac and his seed will be the inheritors of the land.

These sons of Abraham do not stand in line to inherit the promise of the land. As such they are given a different mission.

Dominion in the east: East has negative connotations since the fall. Adam and Eve are driven east (ch. 3); Cain is driven east (ch. 4); apostate sons of Shem move east and build the Tower of Babel (11.2); Lot leaves Abraham and moves east (13.11).

From the beginning it was not supposed to be. In the beginning God had a land in which he planted a garden on the east side, the Garden of Eden. A river flowed from the top of the mountain and through the Garden, splitting into four (i.e., going to the four corners of the earth (ch. 2).

Where the Pishon river flowed, that is around Havilah, there is gold, bdellium (which might be some type of fragrant resin; it would be some type of incense), and onyx stones. It seems that the plan was to send out the children from the Garden to establish cultures, harvest the world taking dominion, and bring back a portion of the harvest to adorn the sanctuary-Garden.

We get clues of this with the children of Israel and their collection of these materials to build the Tabernacle; presumably gathering these specific elements from these areas.

Cf. Isa 60.1ff.; understand the mission of the sons of Keturah. Isaac was the priest-guardian of the Garden/Temple. The sons of Keturah were to go and "harvest the world" and bring a tithe back to glorify God's house. (Note: the kings that come from the east after Jesus is born. They come with gold, frankincense, and myrrh.)

The Gentiles, as we see here, are not necessarily all "pagan." They have a different function. They are still sons of Abraham though they are not circumcised. Circumcision marked the priestly nation. Abe is father of all who believe: Jew and Gentile (Rom 4)

(1) The kingdom expands and the house of God is adorned as different people fulfill various vocations.