

## The Structure of the Abraham Cycle (Genesis 11:27-25:11)<sup>†</sup>

**Orientation:** “Now Sarai was barren; she had no child” (11:30)

**Promise:** “I will make you into a great nation...” (12:1-3, 7)

<b>Crisis or Complicating Action</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Resolution/Divine Promise</b>
Threat to Sarai from Pharaoh (12:10-20)	→	Promise renewed (13:14-17)
Lot, a prospective heir leaves (13)	→	Promise ratified by covenant, and clarification that heir will come from Abram (15:7-21)
Threat to Abram: Middle Eastern war (14)		
Threat to another prospective heir: Ishmael (16)	→	Covenant Promise reaffirmed to <i>Abraham</i> and signified by circumcision; and <i>Sarah</i> will bear the heir (17)
Threat to Sarah from Abimelech (20)	→	Son of the promise born to Sarah (21:1-7)
Question of which son (21:8-21)	→	Ishmael sent away
A threat to the heir, Isaac (22)	→	Abraham is faithful
	→	A bride for the heir

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<sup>†</sup> Prepared by Tyler F. Williams (2003).