

Who is Abraham's sister, who is his wife?

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It has been asked from time to time, why is it that Abraham wed his sister when such a thing is strongly forbidden, or at least why did he say such a thing? Why did Abraham say, "she is the daughter of my father"? When one has a problem verse, it is not the verse that is the problem but the reading of it without reading the rest of the text around it. But one also needs to understand the culture of the day as well.

There are two main issues here with the verse, "she is the daughter of my father", these being: what the Bible says and what culture says. When we look at these things carefully, we will see that Abraham never wed his sister.

So we will need to look at both matters but first let us look at the issue of culture. Our culture as is now stands uses the word father as the one from whom one was and is directly begotten. That was not always so. Father simply meant male from where you came, and that can be a few generations of fathers in between who are not looked at.

We in today's culture like to be more specific when it comes to which father is which in lineage, so we add 'grand' or 'great grand' and so on. That simply did not exist in the past going back hundreds of years and beyond.

The term 'grand-' was taken into English from the French use of translating the Latin word 'Magnus' into the French 'grand'. Magnus shares a common root to the words, mighty and magi, hinting at greatness or greatness in age in the context. This was taken into English the 13th year-hundred. Before that, when English still had the right to be called 'English' (Angloish), 'grand' was not used. Rather, and I quote; "In Old English, the prefixes *ealde-* (old) and *ieldra-* (elder) were used (*ealdefæder/-mōdor* and *ieldrafæder/-mōdor*). A great-grandfather was called a *þriidda fæder* (the letter 'þ' no longer used but it was a form of 'th' and thus *þriidda* is *thriidda* or...third father), a great-great-grandfather a *fēowerða fæder* (the letter 'ð' is also a form of 'th' so *fēowerða* is *Feowertha* or... fourth father)" and-so-on was used.

So we had Elderfather and Eldermother, then Thirdfather/Thirdmother and-so-forth. Thus each generation was simply called father but to stress which generation, a 'tally-word' (third/forth/fifth and-so-on) was added. That was the Sakson custom.

The whole 'great' or 'grand' thing was Latin in concept. The Latinizing of our culture is part of the cultural curse hence, the Man in Daniel which has the feet of Iron and clay, symbolism hinting at the Roman influence all the way to us now. That will be smashed one day, and the whole English tongue together with our culture (on the whole) will be 'Unbablyonized' and thus, 'Unlatinized'. These influences have from that system of Man, has caused many confusions...but then, that is the by-meaning of Babylon; confusion.

So going back in time, Father was a word used for the males who went before you of

your lineage. Those fathers who were a shame to the lineage were not even remembered. Father and the word son, were used as terms of lineage, not numeric parentage. Hence Jesus is called, the Son of David. Yet he is not, in today's reasoning. But in those days, we honoured the father who was most honourable, so if fathers one generation to let's say 5 in a row were scoundrels, we then never used their names, but instead looked back to the most honourable one and called us by his name. So, the bible is not wrong when it says, that Abraham says, "she is the daughter of my father". The issue then is which father?

To understand that, the answer was given to me by a 'brother' (and as you can see, even the word brother can be used to mean a brother of choice rather than one of clan). This brother answered the matter of 'which father' by pointing out what is said in the Book of Jasher. And the book of Jasher gives the answer that Sarah, Abraham's wife shares the same 'Elderfather'. So as we have seen above, in Biblical culture, and early culture before the Latinizing thereof, she is deemed of the same father of Abraham.

My 'brother' sent me these words, *"We looked into this recently, with quite a discussion and research. The answer is found in the Book of Jasher. Incest was forbidden, so Sarah was NOT Abraham's sister, nor his "half sister."*

In actual fact, she was Lot's sister and therefore Abraham's niece. Therefore they were of the same (grand)father, but not the same (grand)mother." HR.

The Bible is thus 100% true to living custom of the time, and true to itself in being true to upholding The Law. Further hints to the usage of which parent to honour we see in several places in the Bible as in the case of Matthew 12:48-50 "He (Jesus) answered him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." The one that does the Will of God is the honoured relative, the one who does not, is not remembered. The Bible tells us that the ones not honourable (by not doing God's Will) are to be "blotted out."

This has had many think that Jesus was somewhat ruthless and harsh here, but that is not so. Instead, he was reminding folks of what was customary, to always look to the one/s who are to be honoured most and how one sets the bench mark on what is honourable. Hence, we can call God our Father as he is the most honourable father we can have. The amount of other fathers generations between when God begat us to where we are is irrelevant in the context.

This also allowed Abraham to say what he had said to be true, but in this case in the Bible, he left what he had said open to interpretation without being dishonest, hence what I wrote earlier..

"When one has a problem verse, it is not the verse that is the problem but the reading of it without the rest" but also without understanding of customs of culture.

The verse is part of an account within a segment of history. That history is that following the fordoing (destruction) of the towns of the plains where great frowardness (perversion) took place. It stands to reason that when leaving such places, one would be fearful that other places around it may well be tainted by their frowardness, and so Abraham left with a feeling of fear of what he was to be met with next by the surrounding folk in their towns and their shires.

We see that there was a fear of some frowardness as this is backed in a verse in Genesis Ch 20. So it pays to back track to ch 19 to get the mood of the setting and events, then carry-on with all of ch 20, ...and not to rely on one verse.

Ch 20 begins basically with Abraham telling a half truth. He did this out of fear for his life, and also for that of his wife. If he was to be killed, then she would be fair game for anyone. He did not know that Abimelech, king of Gera, had a level of fear of the Lord...after all, no one else he came across in that region had that fear. In Genesis 12:10-13, Abraham first said such a thing for reasons apt then.

Anyhow, in verse 11 of Chapter 20 we read that Abraham had a fear of the folk of the area not knowing what they believed. Thus in verse 2 we see the beginning of his half-truth. It's worth reading every verse in the chapter. By the time we get to Abraham's confession, he is in a spot where he had 'sort-of lied', it is confessing to such and yet to save face, he made a 'white lie', truth but one that can be taken in a way that suited his needs. We can take from this that he was careful and he did not want to cause undue shame to himself and to the king (just in case the king was a believer).

Also, the Bible does not say that what Abraham said here was untrue, it only says that he said what he had said, that's all. Knowing the context therefore, and knowing who Abraham is and how he feared the Lord (and knowing the custom of how the word 'father' can be used) he would not have broken the law on this issue of with who he could wed himself to. He hid the full truth from the king by not saying that Sarah was also his wife. Thus in context, it was a face saving confession, and a lesson to us all that we at times need to be 'diplomatic'. God can read the hearts of men, but we can not, so we need to err on the side of caution at times.

Christians have always been taught to be bluntly frank, but that is not always what the Bible teaches. Christians have wrongly been taught that being diplomatic, is being dishonest, that has been a wrong teaching. We are to be honest to trusted kin, not to those who we do not trust in times of great danger.

Seeing that he later realized that Abimelech was not all that bad, he had said well, it allowed for Abraham to be seen as honest by the king as the king was not lied to and thus not insulted, and Abraham did not dishonour his God. This then had given Abimelech some face saving too and he rewards Abraham, and I guess one could say, he was able to see Abraham's wisdom in how he handled the situation, which was in the end, the will of God.