

Genesis Chapter 20

V: 1 Abraham journey's away from Hebron, southward towards the regions of Kadesh & Shur, and stays in Gerar.



- Kadesh = Holy.
- Shur: place meaning “wall” – the Northern border of Egypt.
- Gerar: “drag away” or “dwelling place”.
- It may have been omitted from the narrative, but we don’t read about God speaking to Abraham to leave the terebinth trees of Mamre, near Hebron.
- I believe that if we’ve received direction from God that we keep doing that or staying put until the Lord speaks otherwise.

Isaiah 30:21 “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “this is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.”

Psalm 119:105 “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

- God’s Word will show us the way.
- Nevertheless Abraham leaves the place of “richness” and “communion” between Mamre & Hebron – and moves into the desert wilderness between “Holy” and the “wall” – closer to Egypt, closer to being “dragged away”.
- Moses, in his travels wouldn’t move unless God went with him.

Exodus 34:15 “Then he said to Him, if Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.”

V: 2 As like Egypt 25 years before, (**Genesis Ch. 12**) Abraham seems to have made a decision to move to Gerar, placing himself and his wife outside of God’s will – into harms way.

- In fear, Abraham again bears false testimony, repeating previous sin with Pharaoh.
- Faith and fear are mutually exclusive terms.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

- If God doesn't give us a spirit of fear, then who does? The enemy, the Devil. The enemy uses fear to manipulate and deceive, he uses fear to get people to do what they would normally not do.
- Paul points out that when we are in a fearful state we're not of a "sound mind."
- Don't make big decisions based on fear.
- Just to state the obvious none of what we're about to examine would have happened if Abraham had stayed in Mamre near Hebron.
- Abraham said of Sarah, "she is my sister." He lied.
- Even though the Law wasn't codified just yet, I believe it still applied as a universally known truth.

Exodus 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

- Abimelech king of Gerar sent for and took Sarah. The narrative kind of implies that if Abraham had been honest and declared Sarah to be his wife, that Abimelech would not have done what he did.
- Apparently Sarah is 90 years old and still a babe!
- There is no such thing as "a ½ truth or ½ lie, they are both lies."

Psalms 51:6 "God requires truth in the inward parts."

- Abraham was known for his faith, a seeming strong point – and exactly where the enemy attacks.

James 1:3-4 "3knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Matthew 26:33 "Peter answered and said to Him, even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

- Abraham has a lapse in his faith, but God never does!

2 Timothy 2:13 "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

V: 3 Notice that God speaks to Abimelech, as opposed to Abraham.

Numbers 22 - When God couldn't get through to Balaam, He talked to his donkey instead...

- God speaks to Abimelech in a dream and tells him he's a dead man! That's a pretty serious warning.
- God had promised to bless and protect Abraham, even if from himself.

Genesis 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

Psalms 105:14-15 "14He permitted no one to do them wrong; yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, 15saying, do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm."

- Through this God is doing a work in Abraham's life:

Philippians 1:6 "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

V: 4-5 God kept Abimelech from going near to Sarah, protecting Sarah as well.

- God knew that Abimelech was not completely responsible and protected him – or it may have purely been for Abraham and Sarah's sake. Either way he was given a chance to get away, God gave him a way out, just like He does for us.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

- Notice that Abimelech's appeal is based on the character of God, not unlike Abraham's appeal for the righteous of Sodom - will you judge the righteous with the wicked?
- **1st mention** of "integrity" in the Bible. I can buy the "*integrity of his heart*" given the circumstances and because God seems to agree, but I'm not too sure about the "innocence of his hands..."

V: 6 God agrees with Abimelech regarding the issue of integrity and kept him from sin.

- When we seek to be men of integrity, even though we fall short – there is an inherent protection against sin.

Psalm 25:21 “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.”

- Sinning against God, not Abraham. When we sin, it is always against God.

Psalm 51:4 “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”

- This is why when we sin, even though others people may be involved, our first obligation is to God. First we settle up with Him.

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Then after we’ve settled up with God, been reconciled to Him through our confession and repentance, then we need to exercise Biblical reconciliation with anyone else who was involved.

V: 7 Very clear direction – what to do and why to do it.

- Restore the man’s wife, give her back.
- Why? Abimelech is given two reasons:

Reason #1 “for he is a prophet” – 1st mention of prophet.

Psalm 105:15 “saying, do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.”

- Two things we learn about prophet² in this first mention of prophets is:
 1. Don’t mess with God’s prophets.
 2. Prophets are not perfect.

Reason #2 “If you don’t I will kill you and everyone connected to you!”

“If you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death...”

- Sometimes that verse is more practical and real than we realize!

V: 8 Abimelech took God seriously, he took heed, not wasting any time he is up early.

- Abimelech testifies to his servants – and they feared God – they believed.

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

- Abimelech is behaving wisely in this because of the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 13:13 “He who despises the Word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.”

V: 9-13 Abimelech confronts Abraham with his lie, asking why he did it – rebuking him.

“*9You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.*” - True!

Proverbs 25:26 “A righteous man who falters before the wicked is like a murky spring and a polluted well.”

Proverbs 25:26 “A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.”

V: 10 What were you thinking?! Fear! When you fear God you don't need to fear anything else!

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Ephesians 5:15 “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.”

V: 11-13 **There are only two responses to sin:**
Repentance. Rationalization.

- Abraham responds that they don't fear God in this place. “*They will kill me on account of my wife...*”
- They won't! They can't! God in **Genesis Ch. 18** promised Abraham that in a years time he would have a son - he's basically invincible at least until that time!
- Abraham rationalizes the ½ truth, saying that he's always done it – leftovers from the Ur of the Chaldees, the old life. (Back-sliding!)

Proverbs 29:25 “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”

V: 14-15 Whether or not Abraham's responses made sense to him or not, God's warning certainly did!

- Abimelech obeyed God and returned Sarah to Abraham along with compensation for the offense. (2nd time Abraham makes out on a deal like this...)
- Abimelech gives Abraham sheep, oxen, and servants – then invites him to stay in his land.

Genesis 12:3 “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

V: 16 “*And unto Sarah he said, behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved.*” KJV

- Sarah was part of the deception – the silver is to restore her honor, and restoring her to her “brother” – using Abraham & Sarah’s terms.
- The rebuke is that Abraham should not be hiding behind his wife, but that he is to be her covering, and if her beauty is going to stumble people – she should be veiled / covered up.
- Thus she is reproved for her part of the deception.

V: 17-18 God told Abimelech to restore Abraham’s wife to him and he would pray for him, which he now does. Abraham prayed to God on Abimelech’s behalf and his household was healed.

Proverbs 15:29 “The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”

James 5:16b “... the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

- The consequences would have been devastating and far reaching.
 - God blesses Abraham.
1. Tests and failures are part of the process, they are what causes us to trust in the Lord.
 2. This is the last recorded lapse in Abraham’s faith.
 3. Seemingly this needed to be dealt with prior to the birth of Isaac.

Proverbs 24:16 “For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise up again,...”