

Gen. 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

Gen. 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, *She is my sister*: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

In chapter 20 we find Abraham on the move again—to the region of the Negev. He stopped in Gerar and again claimed that Sarah was his sister. Remember, Sarah is almost 90 years old! And she is still a very desirable woman, because the king of Gerar, Abimelech, takes her for his own.

Gen. 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

Gen. 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

Gen. 20:5 Said he not unto me, *She is my sister?* and she, even she herself said, *He is my brother*: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

Gen. 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Gen. 20:7 Now therefore restore the man *his wife*; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

But God intervenes for Abraham again. Again, that lack of faith in God from a man with so many examples of obedience in faith in his life. Misery loves company, as the old saying goes. Because I struggle constantly with making the right choices, it is comforting to know that I'm in pretty good company. I've often thought, "If I could just talk to God personally—just once—I know it would be easier to make the best choices—just to know from His mouth that it was the right choice. It seems like that one experience would make you so confident that you would never waiver in faith again. But, I think God is again reminding us of our sinful nature and the fact that we can do nothing right without Him. If Abraham messed up, we certainly aren't going to do any better.

Enough digression. God appears to Abimelech in a dream and tells him that Sarah is married and he is in deep trouble. Abimelech had not touched her and protested his innocence. He had been told by both Abraham and Sarah that they were brother and sister. God tells him that He knows his conscience was clear and that He had protected Abimelech from violating her. Then God told him that Abraham was a prophet; he should return Sarah to him and he (Abraham) would pray for Abimelech and he would live. God then warned him that he and all that was his would die if he did not return her.

(1/05) Courson made some interesting points in this section (my paraphrasing):

- I made the point that God had intervened on Abraham's behalf. Courson makes the point that God intervened on Abimelech's behalf because of his *integrity*. This is the first mention of *integrity* in the scripture, and it is associated with God's protection from sin. That is an important principle for life.

- Abraham is identified by God as a *prophet*. This is also the first mention of this word. It is interesting that Abraham's lack of faith in this instance had no bearing on his calling from God.

Rom. 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

Gen. 20:8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

Gen. 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

Gen. 20:10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

Gen. 20:11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

Gen. 20:12 And yet indeed *she is* my sister; *she is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

Again, even though it is a dream, it is recognized as a visit from God. When the king got up the next morning, he called all his officials together and told them of the dream—and they were afraid. Then he summoned Abraham and wanted to know why he would tell such a lie. Abraham tells the king that he thought he was in a place where there was no fear of God. Then Abraham tells him that she really is his sister (half sister), but she is also his wife. She was so beautiful that he lied to protect his own life!

Gen. 20:13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.

Curious verse. Abraham asserts that he is a wanderer from his father's household in obedience to the Lord's command—and in the same breath he explains how he asked Sarah to lie about their relationship during their travels to show her love to him because he didn't trust God to protect him. What warped logic we use sometimes! This wasn't a great testimony by Abraham of God's ability to protect him.

Gen. 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

Gen. 20:15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

Gen. 20:16 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.

Abimelech feels like he needs to vindicate Sarah for the appearance of sin I guess. He gives Abraham a gift of sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves. He gives him permission to live wherever he chooses in his land. He tells Sarah that he is giving Abraham 1,000 shekels of silver to ensure that she is completely vindicated before her people.

Gen. 20:17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare *children*.

Gen. 20:18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his slave girls so they could have children again. Again, one of many statements in scripture that refer to the fact that it is God who opens and closes wombs. I truly wish that Jim and I had had more faith in God as a young couple. I really wish we had never used any birth control. Who knows what blessings we missed.