

## **GENESIS Lesson 22 – 4/07/19**

### **Abraham in Gerar**

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

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

**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.**

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

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

Abraham “the father of faith” once again shows us his weakness, this time while he is Gerar. Once again Abraham travels south and finds himself lying in order to save His skin (see Lesson 12). The reason he fell into this lapse of was simple, he was scared (see verse 11). Your child may on occasion lie to you for fear of getting punished if the truth were

told. Never let your child getting away with lying; lying is #2 on God's most hated list (Proverbs 6:17).

Fear is an indication that we are not fully trusting God. Repeatedly Christ told His disciples, "Fear not..."

F. W. Grant said, "What then is man, and what hope for him except in God. None, surely. And it is to ground us well in this that we are given to see the sad and terrible failures of these honored servants of God. Not to discourage but to lead us to the Source of all comfort and strength. Only in realized weakness do we find this. Only when unable to do without God for a moment do we find what He is for us moment by moment."

This time he is in the land of the Philistines and Abimelech is the king. Abimelech is not a name but a title just like Pharaoh. It means "my father is king."

Sarah was almost 90 years of age, yet Abimelech found her attractive enough to take her as his wife. And Abraham did nothing. But six chapters earlier (Genesis 14) Abraham, then Abram, with 318 men slaughtered all the kings of the east! Where was his courage when it came to rescuing his wife?

But God came to the rescue, at night He scared the bejesus out of Abimelech! God simply says, "Behold, thou art but a dead man..."

This brings us to another point. Abimelech is having a conversation with God as if he knows Him; Abimelech answered God and said, "...in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this." This is not the talk of a heathen who doesn't know better.

Abimelech feared God. Abimelech was the king of Philistines; he was a contemporary of Abraham and Isaac. Furthermore Abimelech says, “Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?” He calls God “Lord” and claims his people are righteous! And 400 years later, his people, the Philistines were worshipping Dagon!

So when the Israelites were entering the Promised Land, God was fulfilling His promise to Abraham, and at the same time bringing in judgement to these heathen nations who forsook God generations ago. God was killing two birds with one stone.

Often, you get the question: “What about the heathen? What about those who never heard about Christ? What about the natives in the jungles?”

The heathen are not as innocent as you think they are (Romans 1). Here is Abimelech, and he knew right from wrong. Here is Abimelech, and God is talking to him! You cannot put God in a box. There is another non-Jewish prophet God talked to—who was he? (Balaam – see Numbers 22). Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon received a vision from God (Daniel 4 and 7).

Here’s a brief study on how to teach “What about the heathen?”

1. Heathen are obligated to follow their conscience (Rom. 2:15).
2. They are born, and they live, with enough light to know right from wrong (Rom. 2:14).
3. Where they are mentally limited or insane, they are not held accountable.
4. Where they die before attaining the age accountability, they are innocent (2 Sam. 12:23; 1 Kings 14:13; Rom. 5:13).

5. Where they follow their conscience, God gets the gospel to them (Psalm 50:23).
6. Where they do not, they are judged for violating their conscience (Rom. 2:12).

Gen. 18:25: "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

It wasn't until around the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that the Chinese moved away from worshipping one God.

So God warns Abimelech to give Sarah back to the prophet or else! This is the first time the word "prophet" appears in the Bible. But we know from the scriptures that Abraham was not the first prophet, Abel was (Matt. 23:35). Enoch was a prophet (Jude 14). A prophet is associated with prayer: "...he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee..."

But imagine what Abimelech must have thought, "Abraham is a prophet, why, he lied to me!" Is this not the way the lost see us sometimes? "You a Christian? No way!"

**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.**

**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.**

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

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

Evidently Abimelech took God's warning seriously and gathered all his people and told them what God had said to him. The men were extremely afraid; sore means extremely or severely.

We know from Abraham's response that Abimelech feared God, but Abimelech wasn't going to let Abraham get away with what he had done. He took the initiative and accused Abraham of setting him up to die. "What have you done to us!" Abraham's sin was going to cost this man his life, and the lives of his people.

Rom. 14:7: For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Abimelech asks Abraham 3 questions:

1. What hast thou done unto us?
2. What have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?
3. What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

I could just imagine how angry and terrified Abimelech must have been; He was warned by God. Only if we took God's warnings as serious as this man did!

Abimelech knew that God had not intervened; he would have committed a great sin; adultery indeed is a great sin.

This is the punishment God had set up in the Law:

Lev. 20:10: And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

God describes adultery as such in Proverbs 6:27-29, 32-35

<sup>27</sup> Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

<sup>28</sup> Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

<sup>29</sup> So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.

<sup>32</sup> But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

<sup>33</sup> A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

<sup>34</sup> For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

<sup>35</sup> He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

But Abraham tried to explain himself: “I didn’t do anything; Sarah really is my sister, well only my half-sister.”

Abraham had made a deal with Sarah. Whenever he would introduce her as his sister, she was to agree with him.

A. W. Pink says it “...was due to the feebleness of his faith in God’s power to take care of them.”

Abraham still had not learned to trust God one hundred percent. Even the “father of faith” had inconsistent faith; even he waivered.

There has only been one man who never wavered, and that was Jesus Christ. Romans 3:23 is correct when it says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

And how did God respond to Abraham’s transgression? Instead of casting him off, God delivered Abraham and his wife when their faith faltered. We have the promise that God will help us when things get too hot for us.

1 Cor. 10:13: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

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

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

**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 reprov'd.**

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

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

After Abimelech confronts Abraham, he does something strange. He gives Abraham livestock, servants and silver and tells him he was free to live in the land (irony here is that the land belonged to Abraham by divine promise).

By the way God appeared to Abimelech, Abimelech realizes that he better be on good terms with this guy, and what better way than to give him these gifts. But the thousand pieces of silver is difficult to figure out.

Abimelech now turns to Sarah and tells her he gave “her brother” one thousand pieces of silver. We can take Abimelech calling Abraham “her brother” as a not-so-subtle sign of his continued displeasure with Abraham; since this was the half-truth, half-lie used by Abraham.

The best explanation I have found for this large sum of silver was that it was meant to protect Sarah’s reputation; Abimelech was telling everyone through this large sum that she had not been compromised while in Abimelech’s household—the man didn’t want to die! He wanted to do right by Sarah; Abimelech then reproves Abraham in telling Sarah that he (Abraham) should have been “a covering of the eyes.”



Some commentators suggest the language Abimelech used was meant to rebuke Sarah for not wearing a veil to conceal her beauty, and also as a married woman she ought to have worn a veil.

Then Abraham the prophet prayed for the man God was going to kill, and when he did, God healed Abimelech.

Jesus the prophet prayed for you and me, upon whom abode the wrath of God (John 3:36), and by whose stripes we were healed.

Do you see the typology here? The only difference was that Christ was sinless.

The last verse tells us what God did to the Philistines to show them that he was serious: "For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs..."

#### Isaac is Born

**21:1: And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.**

**21:2: For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.**

**21:3: And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.**

**21:4: And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.**

**21:5: And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.**

**21:6: And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.**

**21:7: And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.**

The birth of Isaac marks a key milestone in the outworking of God's eternal purpose. The birth of Isaac was accomplished through divine intervention; it was physically impossible for Sarah to conceive, a woman's ovaries go dormant after menopause.

So when the LORD visited Sarah He 'rejuvenated' her previously dormant ovaries stimulating the release of an egg for fertilization and thus she was able to conceive.

And all this happened according to God's timetable. God is in no hurry in the working out of His plans. We may fret and fume, feel hassled and hurried, but God works things out at His leisure and with deliberation.

The selection of Abram to be the father of the chosen nation was the first great step in God's plan and purpose to redeem mankind. The birth of Isaac was the second. In Hebrew Isaac means "laughter." God had fulfilled His promise (Gen. 15:4). Isaac was born 1892 BC, and by the way, Shem was still alive! Shem was 550 years old at this time.

And Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eight day "as God had commanded him" (see Gen. 18:19).

The eight day was commanded by God who knew that it is not until the eighth day the human body has enough Vitamin K and prothrombin to form a blood clot. From birth till the 8<sup>th</sup> day the levels of these chemicals increase, there are highest on the 8<sup>th</sup>, the levels decrease after the 8<sup>th</sup> until they reach "normal."

Doctors now know operations performed before the 8<sup>th</sup> day could cause massive bleeding and lead to the death of the newborn, whose body does not yet have the ability to stop the blood flow on its own.

Sarah said, “God hath made me to laugh,” and this time it is not the laughter of unbelief and skepticism (Gen. 18:12) but the laugh of joy (Psa. 113:9; 126:2).

This is a picture of God’s faithfulness!

**21:8: And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.**

**21:9: And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.**

**21:10: Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.**

**21:11: And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.**

**21:12: And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.**

**21:13: And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.**

Now we will start seeing the typology between Christ and Isaac. “And the child grew...” The same wording was given concerning Christ.

Luke 2:40: And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

We have commented on the significance of Ishmael mocking Isaac in Lesson 16 (see also Gal. 4:29); this began the 400 year affliction spoken of in Gen. 15:13. We also showed that Isaac was 5 when he was weaned and Ishmael was 19.

He who “persecuted” Isaac is now “cast out.” Galatians 4:29 says, “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. The “even so it is now...” refers to the present struggle we all face between our flesh and our revived spirit. Ishmael a type of the flesh must be cast out because he is at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:15-16; James 4:4).

Gal. 4:31: So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

The bondwoman refers to the covenant of the Law, and freewoman to the new covenant. And the two do not mix.

Sarah calls Ishmael “her son,” i.e. the son of the Egyptian (Hagar) she does not even acknowledge that Ishmael is Abraham’s son. But by law though Ishmael was born to Hagar, he was Sarah’s son (see Gen. 30:3-6) because Hagar was Sarah’s maid, she belonged to her.

But Abraham was not too happy with what Sarah asked him to do, and God steps in, and this time says, “Listen to your wife.” Isaac was the plan all along...Oh, and don’t worry, I will bless Ishmael too, but my purpose will be accomplished through Isaac.”