

God will use His prophet, despite his failures. It doesn't matter what people may think about him.

And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife and his handmaids, and they bore children .

- Gen. 20:17

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton January 7, 2008

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Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included which are from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and word definition's are taken from the excellent source, the e-Sword Bible computer program found at <http://www.e-sword.net/index.html> unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

In Genesis chapter 20, we will see that Abraham moves into the south country of Palestine, and has dealings with Abimelech, the king of Gerar. He says his beautiful wife Sarah is only his sister. She was his wife as well. Abimelech took her into his court. God then struck the women of his court barren, and told Abimelech that Sarah was Abraham's wife, and she must be returned. We see then that Abraham, will pray for Abimelech's relief. God blessed Abraham in all of this matter, despite his cowardice.

Lesson Text - Genesis 20 -

And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Gen 20:1 And Abraham departed thence towards the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned at Gerar.

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

Gen 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art *but* a dead man, because of the woman that 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 also kill a righteous nation?

Gen 20:5 Did he not say to me, She is my sister? and she, even she said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and in the innocency of my hands have I done this.

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

Gen 20:7 **And now, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and will pray for thee, that thou mayest live. And if thou do not restore *her*, know that thou shalt certainly die, thou and all that is thine.**

Comments -

Let's think about this situation a moment.

Abraham was afraid of attack by the inhabitants of the new area that he decided to move into. Did God move him there? Once there, he told the half truth that Sarah was only his sister. And he pressured Sarah to say the same thing. She was beautiful, and was promptly taken into the local king's harem. And there's no hint that Abraham objected, or tried to defend Sarah. But he knew that she was the one that God had said the child of inheritance would come through.

Once God revealed the situation to king Abimelech, he was properly shocked and pleaded his innocence. God accepted that as true, and told him to return Sarah to Abraham. But here is the interesting point. God told him that Abraham was a prophet, and if Abimelech returned Sarah, that Abraham would pray for his court. We see in vs. 17 below, that God had shut up the wombs of the women in Abimelech's court because of Sarah. If he did not return Sarah to Abraham, then he would die. Abraham was God's prophet.

It didn't matter if he had failed badly, and left Sarah undefended. He was still God's prophet, and God would bless Abimelech only through Abraham. That is a lesson which the believers should remember.

The church would not have accepted any ministering from Abraham at this point. He had told such an obvious lie, and what about his poor undefended wife. She was left defenseless, and at the mercy of the pagan king, and his court. Didn't Abraham have concern for his family life, and his future children. Today, he would be required to repent openly, and submit to the elders of the assembly. Then after awhile God could again listen to his prayers. That is the church's attitude.

But God told Abimelech, that he had to do the fence mending. Then Abraham, who caused this problem, would pray for Abimelech. Only then, would God bless him and remove the barrenness of the women or his court. And if he didn't do it, God would kill him.

God's ways and attitudes are not ours. And there's a hint that He doesn't view some sins

the way the church does.

Gen 20:8 And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and spoke all these words in their ears; and **the men were greatly afraid.**

Comments -

It is interesting that these people seemed to have a true sense of God's morality even though not from the lineage of Shem.

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

Gen 20:10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, What hast thou seen that thou hast done this?

Comments -

Why indeed. Abraham had told the half truth, and caused all of this confusion. He deserved the rebuke Abimelech gave him.

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

Gen 20:12 But she is also truly my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

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

Comments -

But it turned out that there still was some genuine fear of God even in Canaan. Their judgment was not yet ready.

Gen 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and bondmen and bondwomen, and gave *them* to Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

Gen 20:15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it is good in thine eyes.

Gen 20:16 And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver; behold, let that be to thee a covering of the eyes, in respect of all that are with thee, and with all; and she was reproved.

Gen 20:17 **And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife and his handmaids, and they bore *children* .**

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

Comments -

This was pointed out by my brother in a lesson one Sunday morning in 2007. There was surely some rebuke from God here, because Abraham, and Sarah were advanced in their years, and had never had any children. And surely they had prayed for them many times. But Abraham had to pray for God to heal these pagan people of the same condition that he and Sarah had not been able to get relief from. Abraham had to feel the jest, and rebuke from God in this situation.

Conclusion -

Abraham moved into the south country of Palestine. There he had dealings with Abimelech, the king of Gerar. In fear that his beautiful wife Sarah would be taken, and himself killed, he said that she was his sister only. Which was half true, as she was his half sister, as well as his wife. But he left off the important part about being his wife. And so king Abimelech took her into his court, intending to make her one of his concubines. And God struck the women in his court barren. Then he came to the king in a dream, and told him Sarah was Abraham's wife, and that he must return her to him. God also said that Abraham, a prophet would have to pray for Abimelech's relief. God blessed Abraham in all of this, despite his cowardice.