

Genesis

Chapter 20:1-18

✎ **Gen 20:1-2** ¹ *And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. ² Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.*

Didn't we already read this?

No we didn't, this is just another occurrence of the same type of scenario.

But before you start getting all over Abraham for messing up again. Stop and consider yourself and how many times you have fallen into the same sin.

Also once again we see that Abraham may have forgotten about God's promise to him and Sarah. If he had trusted God, he would not have to worry, because the promise was to Abraham and Sarah, not Sarah and Abimelech or Abraham and Hagar. No it was to Abraham and Sarah. So wouldn't God protect them from king Abimelech or any of the people there? You bet God would, but still Abraham was looking at the physical and was afraid of it rather than trusting in God and His promise.

But regardless of whether Abraham believed or was afraid, God still made a promise and had a plan, which included Abraham and Sarah.

✎ **Gen 20:3-7** ³ *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." ⁴ But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? ⁵ "Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." ⁶ And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

One interesting thing is, Abimelech was not the king's name, but rather a title, just like we have for Pharaoh, but in Abimelech's case it is a title for a Philistine king as Pharaoh is a title of an Egyptian king. Just like we have the title President here in the USA.

Abimelech truly was an innocent man. But do you see once again how half-truths can hurt not only yourself, but others also. Because of Abraham and Sarah's sin, they were jeopardizing the life of another man along with his family, and not just his family but the whole nation.

But it's just a little white lie we say. Once again the color of something whether it be a lie or witchcraft does not change the fact that it's a sin. Do we think God will forgive or forget more easily because we consider it a small thing. But in God's eye's sin is sin, no

matter how small or large it is. Small or large, it's something Jesus paid the price for on the cross.

In verse 7 God calls Abraham a Prophet. This is the first mention of a prophet in the bible.

Let's look a little about who a Prophet is and does.

- † **1 Cor 14:3-5** ³ *But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.* ⁴ *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.* ⁵ *I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.*
- † **1 Cor 14:31** *For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*
- † **Rev 19:10** ¹⁰ *And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* (Underlined for emphasis)

God called Abraham a prophet, and as we see by the definitions in the bible, a prophet is one who speaks God's word to teach, comfort and build-up, or edify someone or the church. Also as we see in the book of Revelation's the spirit of prophecy is testifying of Jesus Christ, which Abraham did do, as we will continue to see throughout this study in Genesis.

So what was Abimelech's response to God's words?

- ✠ **Gen 20:8-13** ⁸ *So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.* ⁹ *And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done."* ¹⁰ *Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"* ¹¹ *And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife.* ¹² *"But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.* ¹³ *"And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, 'He is my brother.' ' ' "*

Abimelech woke up early from his dream and went and told his servants. And the result was fear in the men just as there was in Abimelech. Then Abimelech called for Abraham

to ask him what the in the world Abraham was doing or even thinking when he lied to him.

Abraham's response was that he was afraid of Abimelech and the people that were there because his wife Sarah was very beautiful, and he figured they would kill him to get her. Also Abraham's words were:

✎ *And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife."*

Just because someone has no fear of the Lord or believes in Him does not stop God from being in control. Even if you don't believe God will do something in your life, that doesn't stop Him and His will for your life. Abraham trusted in man more than God, and had no faith because he thought if these people don't believe in God then they will not listen to Him. But we see that, that's not true, because Abimelech may not have believed at the time, but as soon as the Lord spoke to him, he believed and listened to God.

Also in verse 13, Abraham brings God into the picture and uses Him as an excuse.

✎ *13a "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house,"*

Doesn't that sound familiar?

† **Gen 3:12** *Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."*

Abraham starts to blame God, but I don't remember reading where God caused Abraham to leave where he was. Abraham was using God's name, but was he really acknowledging Him for who He really is?

Just because someone mentions God's name doesn't mean that they are a believer in the true God of heaven and earth. Remember that there are many "so called gods" of this world; but only one true God. Yet Abraham's God is the true God of heaven and earth, the God of the bible, but still he didn't use God's name in the correct context of the situation.

So after all this Abimelech's response was.

✎ **Gen 20:14-16** ¹⁴ *Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him.* ¹⁵ *And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you."* ¹⁶ *Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked.*

Abraham was already a wealthy man, but he became even wealthier with all Abimelech had given him. This is the second time Abraham made out good on his lie. But God's word is not condoning lying, in fact as we read God's word; one of the Ten Commandments speaks against it.

† **Ex 20:16** *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

To bear false witness is to lie about someone or something, this includes half truth's as Abraham was speaking.

Abimelech was so happy to be forgiven that he basically told Abraham.

✎ **Gen 20:15 (NLT)** *"Look over my kingdom, and choose a place where you would like to live," Abimelech told him.*

In verse 16 the word rebuke is not what you may think it means. The original Hebrew is "yakah" which would mean "to clear". So to put it in today's term it would be "Sarah's named was cleared and Abimelech was not at fault." Or as it reads in the NLT:

✎ **Gen 20:16 (NLT)** *Then he turned to Sarah. "Look," he said, "I am giving your 'brother' a thousand pieces of silver to compensate for any embarrassment I may have caused you. This will settle any claim against me in this matter."*

A few years after this, Abimelech visited Abraham, who had moved southward beyond his territory, and there entered into a league of peace and friendship with him.

† **Gen 21:22-24** ²² *And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. ²³ "Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." ²⁴ And Abraham said, "I will swear."*

Has someone ever done you wrong in the past? Reading these verses we see that God can heal all relationships if we just take the time to talk with someone and confess our sins to one another.

✎ **Gen 20:17-18** ¹⁷ *So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; ¹⁸ for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.*

Even though God knew Abimelech was innocent, He still prevented him from sinning with Sarah. Remember what God told him?

✠ **Gen 20:6** *And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her."*

God's protection was on Abimelech because he was an innocent man. And God basically removed Abimelech's sexual desire or ability to have children.

As Christians, if we do someone wrong, even if they are not Christians, God will protect them for His sake and their innocence.

Finally, Abraham prayed to God. I wonder what he said to God? Probably confessing his own sin first to God, admitting his failure to trust in Him, and asking God to forgive Abimelech because he was an innocent man.

If you have done someone wrong, we should seek their forgiveness, but also afterwards we should seek the Lord's forgiveness and pray for them. We see the results of Abraham doing this, and the results were they became friends.

Maybe this is someone you would not think of being friends with because you are too ashamed for what you did to them. God can heal all wounds, including emotional ones. But first you must ask Him!