

GENESIS 20: ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH

I. OVERVIEW

- A. Abraham leaves the oaks of Mamre and journeys to Gerar
 - i. Here a similar scenario plays out to chapter 12
 - a. Abraham tells Abimelech king of Gerar that Sarah is his sister
 - b. Abimelech takes her so God afflicts the people with barrenness
 - c. God appears to Abimelech in a dream and tells him to return Sarah to Abraham
 - d. Abimelech confronts Abraham
 - i. Gives him Sarah, sheep, oxen, male and female servants
 - ii. Gives him 1,000 pieces of silver and whatever land he wants
 - e. Abraham prays to God and Abimelech and his people are healed

II. NEGEB – V.1

- A. South toward Egypt
 - i. South is symbolic of the grave
- B. Why?
 - i. He just witnessed Sodom and Gomorrah get destroyed

III. SHE IS MY SISTER – V. 2

- A. Same as what he said to Pharaoh
- B. He falls back into same sin as last time he was near Egypt

IV. ABIMELECH – V. 2

- A. Title, not a name
 - i. Like Pharaoh, Caesar¹

V. TOOK SARAH – V. 2

- A. There is a child that will be born in the next year
- B. If Abimelech takes Sarah as his wife, the father of that child will always be in question²

VI. YOU ARE A DEAD MAN – V. 3

- A. In two ways:
 - i. God will kill him for taking Sarah unless he gives her back

¹ Armstrong, S. (2012b, January 8). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 20*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_20

² Guzik, D. (2018b). *Study Guide for Genesis 20*. Blue Letter Bible. https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/genesis/genesis-20.cfm

- ii. God has already made him and his household unable to produce any children³

VII. WILL YOU KILL AN INNOCENT PEOPLE – V. 4

- A. Power vacuum is created if the king has no offspring⁴
- B. Similar to what Abraham prayed in chapter 18

VIII. I DID NOT LET YOU TOUCH HER – V. 6

- A. God is protecting the integrity of the promised Seed

IX. HE WILL PRAY FOR YOU – V. 7

- A. Abraham proved himself an intercessor in chapter 18
- B. Now he is given the responsibility of prophet and intercessor for other nations

X. ABIMELECH CALLED ABRAHAM – V. 9

- A. He brought Abraham to his courts and confronted him with a strong rebuke
 - i. Righteous anger
 - ii. All his accusations were true
 - a. He didn't tone down his anger just to win Abraham's favor
 - b. Even though Abraham's prayers were the key to turning back God's judgment on his family⁵

XI. THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD AT ALL IN THIS PLACE – V. 11

- A. This may be true but it shouldn't be Abraham's concern
 - i. The main problem was there was no fear of God in Abraham's heart⁶

XII. SHE IS INDEED MY SISTER – V. 12

- A. This may be true
 - i. But a truth told with intent to deceive is still a lie

XIII. WHEN GOD CAUSED ME TO WANDER FROM MY FATHER'S HOUSE – V. 13

- A. This is true but Abraham is blaming his fear on God⁷
 - i. Instead of trusting God to protect him, he is taking his protection into his own hands

XIV. WANDER – V. 13

- A. Means to err, or go astray⁸

XV. GAVE THEM TO ABRAHAM – V. 14

³ Armstrong

⁴ Armstrong

⁵ Armstrong

⁶ Guzik

⁷ Guzik

⁸ Guzik

- A. Abraham had previously rejected gifts from a pagan king
 - i. But he had no moral high ground to refuse the gifts here⁹

XVI. MY LAND IS BEFORE YOU – V. 15

- A. Just like Abraham said to Lot when they were quarrelling

XVII. YOUR BROTHER – V. 16

- A. Abimelech mocks Abraham
 - i. He is clearly doing this out of respect for Abraham's God, not Abraham himself¹⁰

XVIII. VINDICATED – V. 16

- A. Abimelech recognizes in front of everyone that Sarah is not at fault

XIX. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Abraham, the first intercessor, is still found with sin
 - i. We still need a Great Intercessor who will fully trust in God

XX. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. In chapter 12 God sends a plague on Egypt when Pharaoh took Sarai as his wife. In chapter 20 God came to Abimelech in a dream and gave him a choice. Why did God give Abimelech a warning but not Pharaoh?

- B. Why did God require Abraham to pray for Abimelech to remove the barrenness on his family?

- C. What can we learn from Abimelech's response to God and to Abraham?

⁹ Guzik

¹⁰ Armstrong

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- D. How do we respond when we are confronted about our sin? Do we make excuses or do we humbly repent for what we've done?

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- E. Does God use unbelievers to address sin in His people? How should we respond when God does this?

XXI. FURTHER STUDY

- A. How should we confront those in the Church who sin against us? (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Timothy 5:19-21)

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- B. To what does verses 2-7 compare Sarah (Hint: See Genesis 3)? What could the author be trying to say through this comparison about Sarah and her coming child?

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- C. Compare Genesis 20:14 to Genesis 13:9. How has Abraham's role changed? What can we learn from this?
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D. What authority has Abraham now been granted as a result of his intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah?

E. What authority do those of us who have been grafted into the family of Abraham possess? How should we be using this authority? See James 5:16.

F. Why did Abimelech reward Abraham with animals and servants? Shouldn't Abraham have compensated Abimelech since Abraham was in the wrong? See Romans 12:20.
