

Genesis - Lesson 20

Genesis Chapter 20

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Memory verses for this week: *Php 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

Introduction: We continue our study on the book of Genesis this week as we read about Abraham's failure at Gerar as he continues to practice the bad act of deception.

I. Abraham's Practice of Deception

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.*

It is amazing how people are creatures of habit. If we habitually do a certain thing, then the odds are very high that we will probably do that again. Much money is spent by advertisers to buy lists of where people go online with their web browsers, in order to detect what they would likely to buy. I got a targeted email just today to try and sell me some more Christian books I had purchased because they saw I had bought several recently, and I might likely buy more.

While this has nothing to do with today's lesson, my point is we tend to repeat ourselves. And Abraham has an old sin reappear. Several times we saw Abraham lying, and again it comes up. Verse 1 says Abraham sojourned in Gerar. As before, Abraham declares Sarah to be his sister. He had purposed to do this while in Ur. This was a sin he had never confessed and forsaken.

It took 40 years in the wilderness to bring out what was in the hearts of Israel.

Deu 8:2 *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

Once a sin is committed, it is easy to repeat, unless it is thoroughly repented of. If we look back in Genesis 12, we can see some contrasts between what happened then and what is happening now in chapter 20

Gen 12:10 *And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.*

Gen 12:11 *And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look*

upon:

Gen 12:12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

Gen 12:13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

Gen 12:14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

Gen 12:15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

Gen 12:16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

Gen 12:17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

Gen 12:18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

Contrasts Between Gen. 12:10-20 And Gen. 20:1-18

1. Two different places involved--Egypt and Philistia.
2. Two different circumstances prevail.-- a. Famine.-- b. Here it is just Migration.
3. Two different modes of revelation--one surmises--the other is informed in a dream.
4. Abraham reacts differently in each case.
5. Two different conclusions.
 - a. Excluded from the land in chapter 12.
 - b. An invitation to remain in the land in this week's lesson.

II. God Intervenes With Abimelech

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.

Abimelech is warned by God in a dream. By this, he was providentially kept from adultery. Although he was a Gentile, he called God "Lord." He seems to have been a very exceptional man. God called Abraham a prophet and orders Sarah restored in verse 7. God sees His failing saints differently than the world sees them.

Num 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Num 23:20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

Num 23:21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

Matthew Henry had a good comment about what God warned Abimelech in verse 3.

God gives him notice of his danger ([Gen 20:3](#)), his danger of *sin*, telling him that the woman is a man's wife, so that if he take her he will wrong her husband; his danger of death for this sin: *Thou art a dead man*; and God's saying so of a man makes him so. Note, Every wilful sinner ought to be told that he is a dead man, as the condemned malefactor, and the patient whose disease is mortal, are said to be so. If thou art a bad man, certainly thou art a dead man.

By being saved, we have imputed righteousness, and it is what keeps us righteous before God. Sin still has a price, but it will never change the fact that we are a son of God. God protected Abimelech because adultery is a very serious sin. Some sin is without the body, but adultery and fornication involves our bodies. It is clearly forbidden by the Bible. One of the ten commandments forbids it.

Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Jesus was clear on this teaching also.

Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

2Pe 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

2Pe 2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

2Pe 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed

children:

III. Abimelech's Practice of Restoration

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?

Abimelech rose early in the morning and rebukes Abraham. He first tells his servants. Even though warned later in a dream, Abimelech had still committed a sin. Even though he did not know she was Abraham's wife, yet he had committed a sin. Ignorance is not an excuse when it comes to keeping God's laws. Many in the world today are not aware that they are in enmity with God because they have not accepted Christ as their own personal savior. If ignorance was a valid excuse, then we would be better off not sending missionaries to foreign lands to preach the gospel. But the truth is all are born separated from God, and after the age of accountability, there is no hope without repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Ignorance is not bliss.

John Wesley had these comments about the situation Abraham put Abimelech into.

Gen 20:9 Thou hast done deeds that ought not to be done - Equivocation and dissimulation, however they may be palliated, are very ill things, and by no means to be admitted in any case. He takes it as a very great injury to himself and his family, that Abraham had thus exposed them to sin, What have I offended thee? - If I had been thy worst enemy, thou couldst not have done me a worse turn, nor taken a more effectual course to be avenged on me. Note, We ought to reckon, that those do us the greatest dislikedness in the world, that any way tempt us or expose us to sin, though they may pretend friendship, and offer that which is grateful enough to the corrupt nature. He challenges him to assign any just cause he had to suspect them as a dangerous people for an honest man to live among.

IV. Abraham's Three Excuses

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.

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.

Abraham had 3 excuses for what he had done.

1. He thought the people of Gerar did not fear God, and he must do the lying to

save his life. There is no dependence upon God in this plan.

2. There was some truth in calling her his sister as he explains in verse 12. Error is never more dangerous than when it is mixed with truth. The end does not justify the means.

3. What he did was according to a prearranged plan he had made with Sarah when they started their journey.

V. Abimelech's Unexpected Threefold Action

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.

Rather than sending Abraham away as was the case in chapter 12, Abimelech gave a large gift to Abraham--similar to a dowry--only he returned Sarah also. Surely this would be classed as returning good for evil.

In verse 16, he called Abraham brother, and thus paid him damages for any esteem and respect lost by Sarah. And then he gave Abraham permission to dwell in any part of the land.

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.

God is so good to his children. Many times we do not deserve the mercy that God gives us. Here there is healing by God. Abraham prayed in verse 17, and this was in answer to Abraham's prayer. Surely it is of grace that God would hear the prayer of the offender. God caused them to be fruitful. I think we under estimate the power we have with the Heavenly Father when we pray through Jesus' name.

Jas 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Joh 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Conclusion: "Sin has many tools but a lie is a handle that fits them all. If the truth is stretched, expect it eventually to fly back and sting you."Keith L. Brooks

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who was the king of Gerar at the time of Abraham's sojourn in that country?

Abimelech

2. How did Abraham try to deceive this king?

Told him Sarah was his sister.

3. How does this incident differ from Gen. 12:10-20?

They had come in a time of famine, and felt they had no choice. Here they were simply traveling into the land.

4. How did Abimelech find out about Abraham's deception?

God revealed it to him in a dream.

5. What three excuses did Abraham give for his deception?

- a. People did not know his God and did not fear God.
- b. Sarah really was his half-sister. (Partial truth is still a lie)
- c. It had been a pre-arranged plan since they left his father's house between he and Sarah.

6. How was this situation between Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech resolved?

God gave mercy and forgave them, and Sarah was restored to Abraham and was given several large gifts including money and animals and servants and allowed to stay in the land.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.