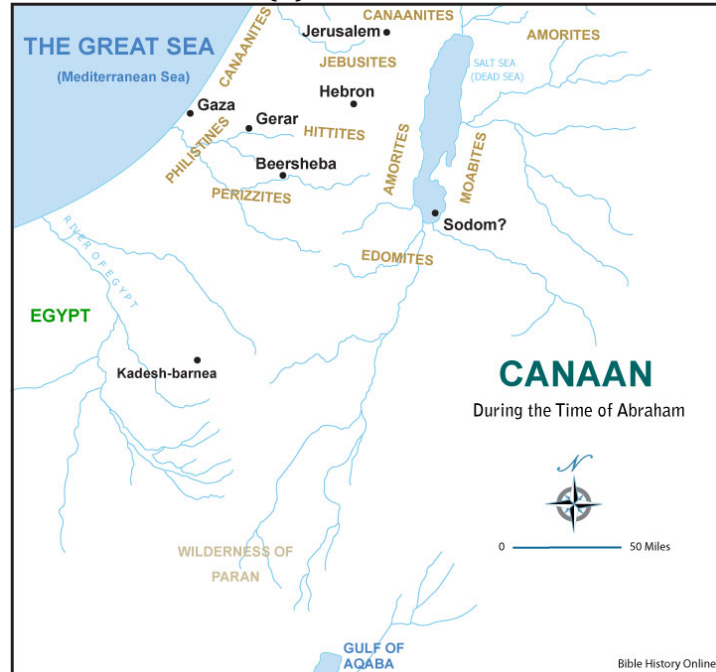


Genesis 20 – God Will Always Protect His Promise

I. God's Promise In Jeopardy Again. (1-2)

A. Abraham Moves To Gerar (1)



- 1.
2. Gerar is part of the land which is inhabited by the Philistines
3. Why did Abraham move?

B. Abraham Again Claims Sarah As Sister (2a)

1. Abraham exhibits the same lack of faith we saw in Chapter 12 (25 years earlier)
2. Abraham has demonstrated Great Faith in God since then
 - a. He gave Lot his choice of the land
 - b. He took 318 men to save Lot from invading Kings
 - c. He refused to accommodate the ruler of Sodom after returning the plunder the army took
 - d. He was given the covenant of God Himself
3. Why Does Abraham Fail To Trust God Now?
 - a. Didn't Abraham remember the shame and embarrassment he felt when Pharaoh took Sarai?
 - b. We have the same tendency – to trust our plans and schemes rather than trust God
 - i. Although Abraham has grown in his faith – there are still those sins that are hard to get rid of.
 - ii. Although Abraham has shown himself more faithful than Lot – we must remember that he is still just a man and capable of falling back into the same stupidity

C. Sarah Again Taken by A Ruler (2b)

1. Sarah is Taken By Abimelech
 - a. Abimelech is not a name but a title (like Pharaoh)
 - i. Abimelech means “my father is king” or “my father king”
 - ii. Another Abimelech is said to rule the Philistines in Gen. 26 when Isaac and Rebecca encounter him
 - iii. Another Abimelech is mentioned in the title of Psalm 34 during the time of David. This Abimelech is identified as Achish the King of Gath (A Philistine City) in 1 Sam. 21:10
 - b. Abimelech Takes Abraham’s “sister” For His Harem
 - i. Remember Sarah is about 90 years old now
 - ii. Why would he take her for one of his wives?
 - Sarah lived to be 120 so she may have looked 50 or 60.
 - Abimelech may have thought it would be a good way to ally himself with Abraham’s clan
2. The Promise of God is Again in Jeopardy
 - a. Abraham’s Lack of Faith in God has placed God’s promise in peril
 - i. Remember God told him that within a year Sarah would have his son
 - ii. How could God fulfill His promise now?
 - b. Abraham has repeated his previous sin with the same result

II. God Intervenes For His Promise’s Sake (3-7)

A. God Threatens Abimelech In a Dream (3)

1. God Pronounces Death To Abimelech
 - a. God tells Abimelech – “you are a dead man”
 - b. God has pronounced judgment on Abimelech for violating Abraham and Sarah’s covenant of marriage
2. God Holds Abimelech Accountable To the Law
 - a. Notice that God holds even this pagan king accountable to God’s purpose of marriage
 - b. God’s view of marriage stands for every people, in every culture, and in every age
 - c. Abimelech is held accountable because he has disturbed the covenant of another couple. (Being ignorant of it does not excuse him as we shall see)

B. Abimelech Pleads His Case Before God (4-5)

1. Abimelech Bemoans Abraham and Sarah’s Deception (5a)
 - a. Notice that not only Abraham was involved in the faithless deception of Abimelech – but Sarah was as well

- b. Abraham told the ruler Sarah was his sister and Sarah also said Abraham was her brother
 - 2. Abimelech Pleads His Innocence Before God (4 & 5b)
 - a. We are told that Abimelech had not gone near Sarah (sexually) and so he claims innocence before God.
 - b. He asks “will you slay a righteous nation?”
 - i. Here Abimelech assumes the same thing Abraham knew when he interceded for Sodom
 - ii. The judge of all the earth will do right – he will not judge the righteous with the wicked
 - iii. Abimelech rightly understood that by placing the King under judgment, the whole nation would suffer (Later we will see that God indeed included all Abimelech’s house in the judgment)
 - c. Abimelech says that he acted innocently in his heart and with his hands
 - i. Abimelech rightly claims he is blameless because both the husband and wife told him they were brother and sister
 - ii. Abimelech also claims that his hands are innocent because he had not yet touched Sarah
 - iii. God will not allow Abimelech to say it is his inherent goodness that kept him from touching Sarah...

C. God Has Kept Abimelech From Sinning (6)

- 1. God’s Omniscience and Omnipotence Protected His Promise To Abraham
 - a. God knew that Abimelech did not do this thing in a premeditated way but was deceived by Abraham and Sarah (we will see that this doesn’t let him off the hook)
 - b. God kept Abimelech from sinning against Him
 - i. Notice God doesn’t say He kept Abimelech from sinning against Abraham – but against God
 - ii. To corrupt the marriage union is a sin against God, not just man
 - iii. We are not told exactly how God kept Abimelech from touching Sarah
 - c. God intervened and saved Abimelech from destroying himself – and also protected the promise He made to Abraham
 - d. Though Abimelech was deceived, He is still liable to God’s judgment. God dictate the terms by which Abimelech must address the situation or face the judgment.
 - i. (v. 17-18 show that God had already closed the wombs of Abimelech’s people)

D. God Instructs Abimelech To Avert Judgment (7)

1. He is to Restore Abraham's Wife
2. He is to Have Abraham Intercede For Him
 - a. This is the first use of the word prophet in the Bible
 - b. Abraham is called a prophet who will intercede for Abimelech
 - i. Abraham is still God's chosen even though he has acted faithlessly
 - ii. God's faithfulness to His word to Abraham was not dependant on Abraham (Remember Genesis 15 and God walking through the pieces by Himself)
 - c. Though sinning inadvertently, Abimelech stands under judgment unless someone mediates for him (This is a picture of what?)
3. He is Warned That Disobedience Will Bring Death

III. Abraham's Lack of Faith is Displayed...Again (8-13)

A. Abimelech Publically Informs His People (8)

1. Abimelech doesn't hide his actions or God's message of judgment toward him
2. Abimelech assembles his servants (probably his court officials) and tells them of the judgment that has befallen them
3. Abimelech's servants fear greatly – Later Abraham will say he thought there was no fear of God among these people – he is wrong

B. Abimelech Scolds Abraham's Unfaithful Actions (9-10)

1. Abimelech cannot understand the deceitful actions of this "prophet of God"
2. Abimelech wants to know why Abraham would do such a thing. He asks what has Abraham seen here that would cause him to treat them this way.

C. Abraham Makes Excuses For His Sin (11-13)

1. Abraham Acted Out of Fear (11)
 - a. He was scared the people would kill him because they did not fear God (In fact, Abraham is showing a lack of trust in God's promise...again)
 - b. He thought they would kill him for Sarah
2. Abraham Argued About A Technicality (12)
 - a. Abraham tries to justify his deception by saying he and Sarah are really half brother and sister
 - b. However, by leaving off the fact that they are also husband and wife, Abraham has in fact lied and placed Abimelech under judgment
3. Abraham Made a Practice Of This Deception (13)
 - a. Apparently Abraham and Sarah have perpetrated this deception everywhere they went

- b. We only have the two recorded events here and in Egypt, but undoubtedly, their deception has worked in many other places
- c. Evidently, this has been Abraham and Sarah's practice for the majority of their lives

IV. Abraham's Promise Is Fulfilled By God (14-18)

A. Abimelech Makes Proper Restitution (14-16)

- 1. Abimelech Gives Abraham Possessions (14a)
- 2. Abimelech Restored Abraham's Wife (14b)
- 3. Abimelech Gives Abraham the Choice of Land (15)

B. Abimelech Proves Sarah's Honor is In Tact (16)

- 1. He gives her "brother" 1000 pieces of silver (that's a lot)
- 2. He also calls Abraham her "brother" probably in a sarcastic way

C. Abimelech is Restored to Health (17-18)

- 1. Abraham Prayed For Abimelech
- 2. God Healed Abimelech and His House
- 3. God Opened the Wombs of Abimelech's House
 - a. Apparently God had closed the wombs of all the people in Abimelech's house because of the taking of Sarah
 - b. The wombs were closed until Abraham prayed for Abimelech's restoration.