

## Steve Greenberg's Handout

### Week 17, May 20, 2026 Genesis 20 Abraham Lies, God Appears to Abimelech

#### Genesis 20:1-7 Abraham lies and God appeared to Abimelech in a dream at night

Gen 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South (Negev region, south country), and dwelt (settled for a while) between Kadesh and Shur, and (then) stayed (or lived temporarily, as a foreigner) in Gerar (no reason is given for their move to Gerar)

Gen 20:2 Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister (second time Abraham said this half-truth, as a lie)." And Abimelech king of Gerar (Abimelech means "my father is king," appears to have been a common royal name, or title) sent and took Sarah (and brought Sarah to his palace, to be a part of his harem).

Twenty-five years later, Abraham is doing the exact same thing. You would think he would have learned by now? It was do to fear for his own life. He somehow did not trust that God could preserve him in these adverse situations and that fear caused him to enter into lying and declaring that Sarah was his sister rather than his wife. How tragic and evil fear can do, it is an enemy of faith.

#### Previously Abraham traveled to Egypt

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Gen 12:11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance.

Gen 12:12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.

Gen 12:14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.

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

The word "Abimelech" most likely a royal title, instead of a proper name. In either case this man is probably the father or grandfather of Abimelech king of the Philistines encountered later by Isaac (26:1). Sarah was about ninety years old at this time.

Instead of trusting God with his family, he devised his own plan that was centered on self and his fear.

Gen 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him (Abimelech), "Indeed you are (as good as) a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken (in your harem as your wife), for she is (another) man's wife (literally already married to a husband)."

Dreams often bring divine revelation (examples Joseph in Gen 37:5–9 40:5–8; 41:1).

Gen 28:12 Then he(**Jacob**) dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

Gen 31:10 "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I(**Jacob**) lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted.

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### The Eternal Faithfulness of the LORD

Psa 105:6 O seed of Abraham His servant, ...

Psa 105:9 The covenant which He made with Abraham ...

Psa 105:14 He(**the LORD our God**) permitted no one to do them wrong; Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,

Job 33:14 For God may speak in one way, or in another, Yet man does not perceive (**or notice the differences in**) it.

Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds,

Job 33:16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction.

Gen 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near (**or slept with**) her(**Sarah**); and he (**Abimelech**) said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation (**will you kill an innocent people**) also? (**I have done nothing wrong regarding Sarah**)"

### Abraham Negotiates for Righteousness

Gen 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

Gen 18:24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?"

Gen 18:25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Gen 20:5 "Did he(**Abimelech**) not say to me (**Abraham told me**), 'She is my sister'? And she(**Sarah**) even she, herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity (**clear conscience**) of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this (**my hands are clean**)."

Gen 20:6 And God said (**replied**) to him(**Abimelech**) in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart (**clear conscience**). For I(**God**) also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you (**nor allow an opportunity for you to**), touch her.

**Pro 21:1** The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

**Pro 21:2** Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.

### King David and the Evil Nabal

**1Sam 25:26** "Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal.

**1Sam 25:34** "For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!"

**Gen 20:7** "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he(**Abraham**) is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her(**Sarah to Abraham her husband**), know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours (**within your household**)."

**Abraham is the first person in the Scriptures called a prophet**

God told Adam for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

**Gen 2:16** And the LORD God commanded the man (**Adam**), saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

**Gen 2:17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

**Genesis 20:8-13 Abraham lies and God appeared to Abimelech in a dream at night**

**Gen 20:8** So Abimelech rose early (**took action**) in the morning, called (**quickly**) all his servants (**head officials and those of his household**), and told all these things (**that just happened**), in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid (**greatly afraid**).

**Gen 20:9** And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you (**what sin have I committed that deserves this treatment**), that you have brought on me, and on my kingdom a great sin (**great guilt**)? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done (**to anyone**)."

**Gen 26:8** Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that **Abimelech** king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife.

**Gen 26:9** Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.' "

**Gen 26:10** And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us."

**Gen 26:11** So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

**Gen 20:10** Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view (**what reason, what prompted you?**), that you have done this (**unjust**) thing (**and lied to me**)?"

**Gen 20:11** And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the **fear (or reverence) of God is not in this place**; and they will kill me on account of my wife (**previously it was because she was so beautiful they will do whatever, even kill me, so they could take her as their wife, but remember now she is close to ninety years old**).

Abraham's response betrays both his lack of faith trust in God and his assumption and misjudgment of the people of Gerar.

Another attempt to justify his lie, by saying it was really a half-truth\

The king and his servants were God-fearing people

Self-protection at the expense of his wife? How horrible?

Oftentimes these places of failure are also places of growth. God, in His love and grace towards us, reveals to us those areas of weakness in our lives only for the purpose that He might make us strong and be overcomers the next time by His grace.

**Gen 20:12** "But indeed she is truly my (**half**) sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother (**or we both have the same father (Terah), but different mothers**); and she became my wife.

**Gen 11:31** And **Terah** took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

**Gen 20:13** "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander (**travel**) from my father's house (**God called me out and said leave my father's & families home**), that I(**Abraham**) said to her(**Sarah my wife**), 'This is your kindness (**and how you can show your love to me, your loyalty**) that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me (**tell others**), "He(**Abraham**) is my brother." ' "

Abraham claimed that God sent him out, which He did? But instead of trusting God at this time he let fear get to him.

**Genesis 20:14-18** **Abraham lies and God appeared to Abimelech in a dream at night**

**Gen 20:14** Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants (**workers**), and gave them to Abraham; and he(**Abimelech**) restored Sarah his wife to him(**Abraham, as God had commanded**).

LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

Gen 12:14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.

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

Gen 12:16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

Gen 12:17 But 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 you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"

Gen 12:19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way."

Gen 12:20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him (**Abram**) away, with his wife and all that he had.

Abraham sometimes accepted gifts and at other times refused gifts from a pagan kings

Gen 14:21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

Gen 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth,

Gen 14:23 "that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'--

Gen 14:24 "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Gen 20:15 And Abimelech said, "See (**Look, Behold**), my land is before you; dwell (**live**) anywhere it pleases you."

Gen 20:16 Then to Sarah he (**Abimelech**) said, "Behold, I have given your brother (**Abraham**) a thousand pieces (**shekels**) of silver (**about a thousand days or 3 yrs. of wages**);; indeed this vindicates you (**Literally: this is a covering of the eyes for you**) before all who are with you and before everybody (**This is to compensate you and to clear me for any wrong, that I may have done**)." Thus she was rebuked (**has idea of things being set right**).

Gen 20:17 So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they (**again**) bore (**gave birth to**) children;

Gen 20:18 for the LORD had closed up all the wombs (**all the women**) of the house of Abimelech because of (**taking**) Sarah, Abraham's wife (**as his own, even though Abimelech had been lied to by both of them**).

## **End, Prayer**

### **Scripture**

**Numbers 23:19**  
**Joshua 21:45**       “  
**Joshua 23:14**  
**1 Kings 8:56**  
**Psalms 145:13**  
**Isaiah 55:10–11**  
**Lamentations 3:22–23**  
**2 Corinthians 1:20**  
**Hebrews 10:23**

### **Promises of God**

**God does not lie or change His mind; what He promises He will do.**  
**Not one of God’s good promises failed to Israel.**  
**Every promise God made came true.**  
**Not one word of God’s promise failed.**  
**The Lord is faithful in all His words.**  
**God’s word accomplishes what He sends it to do.**  
**God’s faithfulness is renewed every morning.**  
**All God’s promises are “Yes” in Christ.**  
**God is faithful to keep His promises (God who has promised is faithful).**