

The Journey to Gerar

Genesis 20:1-18

- I. THE TURNING TO DECEIT (Genesis 20:1-3)
 - A. The Place of Deceit (Genesis 20:1)
 1. The location of the place
 - a. Abraham journeyed from Mamre to Gerar (Genesis 18:1).
 - b. In Gerar, controlled by the Philistines.
 - c. Located on the southwest side of Israel.
 - d. Gerar was where a major Philistine power was located in these days.
 2. The lifestyle in the place
 - a. The Philistines are a type of the flesh and the world in the Bible.
 - b. Where you tend to “migrate to” will have an affect on you.
 - (1) The Philistines took from the Israelites (1 Samuel 13:16-18).
 - (2) The Philistines did not allow the Israelites any swords (1 Samuel 13:19).
 - (3) The Philistines were a constant menace to the Israelites (1 Samuel 17:1-11).
 - (4) David ended up going here when he trusted his own judgment (1 Samuel 27:1-4).
 - B. The Tendency of Deceit (Genesis 20:2)
 1. The lie of Abraham
 - a. Abraham claimed that Sarah was his sister.
 - b. Something he had done before (Genesis 12:10-20).
 2. The proliferation of the deceit.
 - a. Abraham’s lie was repeated by Isaac (Genesis 26:6-7).
 - (1) Both told this lie in Gerar (Genesis 20:1-2; Genesis 26:6-7).
 - (2) Both were exposed by Abimelech (Genesis 20:3; Genesis 26:8-9).
 - (3) Both lacked faith in God’s supernatural protection.
 - b. The king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.
- II. THE INTERVENTION OF THE DECEIT (Genesis 20:3-7)
 - A. The Enlightening of Abimelech (Genesis 20:3).
 1. God spoke to Abimelech in a dream by night.
 2. God told Abimelech that he was but a dead man for taking Sarah.
 - a. Abraham’s lie is revealed.
 - b. All sin will sooner or later be revealed.

- B. The Explanation of Abimelech (Genesis 20:4-5).
 - 1. Abimelech had not come near Sarah (Genesis 20:4).
 - 2. He knew of God's righteous judgment (Genesis 20:4; cp. Romans 2:14-15).
 - 3. His innocence versus Abraham and Sarah's guiltiness (Genesis 20:5).
 - a. Abimelech's motives were not evil.
 - b. He was indeed innocent of any wrongdoing.
- C. The Instructing of Abimelech (Genesis 20:6).
 - a. God's knowledge of Abimelech's innocence – showing God's omniscience (Psalm 139:4). God's omniscience allowed Him to judge Abimelech's actions by his intent.
 - b. God's knowledge in His presence – showing God's omnipresence (Psalm 139:8). God was right there in every action that took place.
 - c. God's foreknowledge allowed Him to work ahead in time to prevent anything wrong from happening. Notice: *"Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered thee not to touch her"* (Genesis 20:6).
 - (1) Abimelech was protected because of integrity (Genesis 20:6).
 - (2) God guides providence to prevent evil (Psalm 32:8).
- D. The Exhortation of Abimelech (Genesis 20:7) – God's requirement for restoring of Sarah.
 - 1. Abimelech was to restore Abraham his wife, Sarah. In return, Abraham, a prophet, was to pray for Abimelech that he might live.
 - 2. If Abimelech did not restore Sarah, he and his family would die.

III. THE CONFRONTING ABOUT THE DECEIT (Genesis 20:8-13)

- A. The Informing of the Dream (Genesis 20:8; Psalm 90:8).
 - 1. Abimelech called all his servants.
 - 2. Abimelech told his servants of his dream.
 - 3. Abimelech's men were sore afraid.
- B. Abimelech Confronts Abraham (Genesis 20:9-13).
 - 1. The four questions of Abimelech (Genesis 20:9-10).
 - a. One) *"What has thou done unto us?"* (Genesis 20:9).
 - (1) Abraham's deceit had brought affliction upon many Philistines, for because of the deceit which resulted in Sarah being taken by Abimelech, God *"had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because Sarah Abraham's wife"* (Genesis 20:18).
 - (2) This question told Abraham his deceit had hurt many other people.
 - b. Two) *"What have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?"* (Genesis 20:9).
 - (1) This question is the kind of question which the answer is implied.

- (2) The implied answer is that Abimelech had done nothing to deserve this cruel action of Abraham.
- (3) This question declared Abimelech's innocence and showed that Abraham was totally to blame for the problem.
- c. Three) "*Great sin... thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done*" (Genesis 20:9).
 - (1) Abimelech questioned Abraham concerning the lie (Genesis 20:9).
 - (2) Abimelech did not "beat around the bush," he got right to the point. He told Abraham plainly that his conduct was very evil ("*great sin*") and that it ought not to be done.
- d. Four) "*What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?*" (Genesis 20:10).
 - (1) This question went to the heart of the matter.
 - (2) What did he see as gain in telling this lie?
 - (3) Why did he do this?
 - (4) If Abraham had answered truthfully, he would have had to say, "I had no good reason."
2. Abraham's Motive Behind the Lie (Genesis 20:11-13).
 - a. The locality of the excuse (Genesis 20:11).
 - (1) "*Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place*" (Genesis 20:11). – This excuse only showed Abraham's low opinion of Gerar, and his poor judgment.
 - (2) If Abraham believed Gerar was such a bad place, then why was he here?
 - b. The living excuse (Genesis 20:11).
 - (1) "*They will slay me for my wife's sake*" (Genesis 20:11).
 - (a) Abraham excused his sin of lying on the basis of preserving his life.
 - (b) Yet, he did not worry that Sarah was taken into Abimelech's household.
 - (2) This strong excuse is one that few might condemn today.
 - (a) The excuse is faulty however, for it says preservation is more important than virtue.
 - (b) It says saving his own life was more important than saving morality.
 - (c) It says security was more important than character.
 - (3) This strong excuse is not valid for sinning.
 - (a) Many in our world today give popularity, money, position, safety and security preference over virtue and character.
 - (b) But if this excuse is embraced, it will bring much trouble.
 - (c) There is absolutely no exception or excuse for sin.
 - c. The lady in the excuse (Genesis 20:12).
 - (1) The small element of truth in Abraham's story (Genesis 20:12).
 - (a) Sarah was his stepsister.

- (b) She was the daughter of his father.
- (2) Abraham's half truth (Genesis 20:12).
 - (a) This was very clever of Abraham but was still very corrupt.
 - (b) This made his lie a half-truth but was still a whole lie in God's eyes. Remember Satan told Eve some truth in the Garden of Eden when he confronted her at the tree, yet these half-truths were still lies.
 - (c) God judges our speech by our intentions (Hebrews 4:12).
 - (d) Abraham's full intention was to deceive the people of Gerar, even though he spoke the truth concerning his relationship to Sarah.
- d. The Lord in the excuse (Genesis 20:13).
 - (1) This was the worst excuse of the lot, as it blamed God for his situation.
 - (2) The wording of Abraham here is interesting, he says, "*when God caused me to wander from my father's house.*"
 - (a) This wording insinuated that it was somehow God's fault for his situation.
 - (b) Mankind always has a way of blaming "someone else."
 - (c) One of the fruits of sin is that it will blame God for our evil deeds. (Genesis 3:12). When we blame God, we only add to our sin.
- e. The lovingkindness excuse (Genesis 20:13).
 - (1) "*This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me*" (Genesis 20:13).
 - (2) Abraham now is excusing his bad actions (his sin) by saying that it was an act of "*kindness*" (a loving act) on the part of Sarah. However, the "*kindness*" here is a one-way street. It was only kindness for Abraham, not for anyone else. It only benefited him. This reminds us of the pro-choice movement, the expecting mother gets a choice, but the baby in the womb gets no choice, including the **woman** that may be in the womb. This was selfish on the part of Abraham and showed his heart on the matter (Jeremiah 17:10).

IV. THE SENDING AWAY OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 20:14-18)

- A. The Reconciliation of the Situation (Genesis 20:14-18).
 - 1. These two men needed reconciliation from the situation.
 - 2. Abraham had put a severe strain on his and Abimelech's relationship.
 - 3. Abimelech is the one that took the lead in reconciling the relationship. Note: Abimelech would be sure to call out the need for honesty later in business dealings with Abraham (Genesis 21:23).

- B. The Presentations by Abimelech (Genesis 20:14-15).
1. Abimelech's part in the reconciliation is seen in what he presented Abraham.
 2. The presentation was threefold.
 - a. The benefits for Abraham
 - (1) Abraham was given many gifts by Abimelech.
 - (2) These gifts were Abimelech's way of saying that he was wrong in taking Sarah for his wife.
 - (3) Abimelech was acknowledging the fact and bending over backwards to make things right.
 - (4) It was shameful that a man of the world was acting better than God's man here.
 - b. The bride for Abraham – This act of Abimelech did three things.
 - (1) It revealed Abimelech's sincerity (Genesis 20:14).
 - (a) Abimelech had told God he was innocent in taking Sarah.
 - (b) The restoration proved this.
 - (2) It rebuked sin.
 - (a) The restoration said it was wrong for Abimelech to have taken Sarah.
 - (b) It said a man should not take another man's wife. – This very unlike our society today. Adultery and divorce are so common in our land today.
 - (3) It reproved Sarah (Genesis 20:16).
 - (a) "*She was reprov'd*" by the silver involved in her restoration.
 - (b) She was also reprov'd in Abimelech calling Abraham "*thy brother.*" This poured salt in the wound—Sarah had told Abimelech that Abraham was her brother.
 - i. Sinners need reprov'g.
 - ii. Failure to reprove sin only encourages more sin.
 - iii. Sin needs rebuking, not excusing.
 - c. The bestowment on Abraham (Genesis 20:15).
 - (1) This was generous of Abimelech considering what had just occurred.
 - (2) The last time Abraham had deceived someone (Pharaoh) concerning Sarah, he was sent out of that land (Genesis 12:19, 20).
 - (3) It is very likely that Abimelech valued having Abraham around (God had informed him that Abraham was a prophet).
- C. The Praying by Abraham (Genesis 20:17, 18).
1. The humbling in the prayer (Genesis 20:17).
 - a. This must have been very humbling for Abraham as he had to pray for the healing of a people whose sickness was caused by him.
 - b. However, to Abraham's credit, he did just that.
 2. The healing in the prayer (Genesis 20:18).
 - a. God had promised Abimelech that Abraham would pray for him.
 - b. God answers the prayer of Abraham and brought the needed healing to Abimelech's household.