

Genesis 20:1-18 **Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech**

¹ “And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. ² Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." ⁴ But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "LORD, will You slay a righteous nation also? ⁵ Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." ⁶ And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

⁸ So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very afraid. ⁹ And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." ¹⁰ Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" ¹¹ And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. ¹² But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, 'He is my brother.'"

¹⁴ Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵ And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." ¹⁶ Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked.

¹⁷ So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; ¹⁸ for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife." NKJV

Facts revealed:

- ✧ At age 90 and pregnant, Sarah is still so beautiful that Abraham fears for his life because of her, so he uses the same deceit he used in Egypt twenty five years earlier and represented her as his sister.
- ✧ Sarah did as Abraham requested and said that he was her brother.
- ✧ True to his expectations she was taken by Abimelech the king of Gerar.
- ✧ When God is establishing a new thing He can and does protect against natural errors like the fear and misrepresentation done by Abraham.
- ✧ When God told Abimelech about Sarah being Abraham's wife and threatened his life and the life of all he had if he refused to restore Sarah to Abraham, we learn two things:
 1. In Egypt God plagued Pharaoh when he took Sarah, but here God came to Abimelech in a dream, demonstrating that God will appear to anyone He wants to in a dream just as He does a prophet of Israel. [[Numbers 12:1-8](#)]

2. Abimelech knew about God, called Him Adoney, and was trying to be head of a righteous nation as he asked, “Adoney, will You slay a righteous nation also?” Abimelech obviously knew then that *no harm was to be done to God’s “prophets”* and that Abraham was His prophet. [see 1 Chronicles 16:22]

✧ God acknowledged Abimelech’s integrity told him that it was the reason He had withheld Abimelech from touching Sarah and sinning against God.

So God considered adultery to be sin even before He gave the law at Mount Sinai to Israel and even when one of the parties has been deceived. Joseph demonstrated the same knowledge in Egypt by his response to Potiphar’s wife. [Genesis 39:9]

✧ This is the first reference to a prophet in the Bible. Abraham did not know that he was a prophet, but Elohiym Himself identified Abraham as a prophet and commanded Abimelech to return Sarah, and said Abraham will pray for you so you may live.

✧ Abimelech did as Elohiym had instructed, so he called Abraham and asked for an explanation for the deceit Abraham had done, saying,

“What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done. What did you have in mind that you have done this thing?”

✧ In Abraham’s answer we learn the following facts:

1. Abraham did not think that the knowledge of God extended to the Canaanites or the Egyptians all of whom were descended from Ham.
2. He thought that he would be killed and Sarah taken because of her great beauty.
3. Sarah really was the half sister of Abraham, from his father but not from his mother, which tells us that Abraham’s father Terah had more than one wife.
4. The choice to deceive the people started when God called Abraham to leave his father’s house, and from the start Abraham had made the request of Sarah to say that he was her brother wherever they should go.
5. Remember also in Egypt, Abraham had given one additional reason for the deception, and that was, *“That it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”* [Genesis 12:13]

✧ So Abimelech also treated Abraham well, but this time it was more in response to the command of God than because of Abraham, by giving him sheep and oxen, as well as, male and female servants. Abimelech also restored Sarah to Abraham and offered to allow him to dwell *anywhere he chose in the land.*

✧ Abimelech also gave Abraham 1,000 pieces of silver to vindicate himself for taking her before all witnesses. So Sarah was publicly justified.

✧ **Abraham prayed for Abimelech**, and Elohiym healed Abimelech, his wife, and his maidservants. We do not know the disease that had stricken Abimelech, but we do know that all the wombs of his females had been closed up by God because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

✧ God had acted very quickly to preserve the virtue of Sarah before the birth of Isaac, whom Sarah was carrying at the time.