



THE STUDY OF

GENESIS

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED
THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH."

Fear Factor

Genesis 20:1-18

Big Picture

- Redeemer/Seed Hunt Gen. 3:15;
12:1-3
- Past promises point to future faithfulness, different times and the same Lord.

“Chapter 20 seems about as necessary as a fifth leg on a cow. It is a chapter that you feel as if you would like to leave out, because in it Abraham repeat the same sin which he committed when he went down into the land of Egypt... [they are] going to have to deal with this sin before they can have Isaac - the blessing” - J Vernon McGee

v.1- South: Faith, Fear, and Failure

Whenever Abraham leaves the places of worship, the places of God's presence and security something bad always follows (compare to **Gen. 12**).

The city Abimelech ruled when he took Abramam's wife Sarah was Gerar (Gen. 20:1–18). It was thought to have been just a few kilometers south of the ancient Philistine city of Gaza, but excavations in the 1950s place it more likely to the southeast of Gaza.

Research: The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology, The Zondervan Corporation
Grand Rapids, Mich., 1983. Map: Accordance Bible Software.



v.2 Repeated Rebellion

Twenty-five years earlier, God rescued him from Pharaoh (Gen. 12:17-20). This wasn't ignorance but fear of man and unbelief.

Sarah was likely pregnant or about to conceive the promised heir (Gen. 18:10), deserving special protection (Judg. 13:4)

Psalms 118:8-9 "Better to take refuge in the LORD than trust in man. Better to take refuge in the LORD than trust in princes."

Prov. 3:5-7 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil."

Matt. 10:28 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

v.3-6 The Dreamy Abimelech

The consequence of compromise: Loss of character, testimony, and relationship.

**God intervenes despite His representative,
He will still use Abraham, but...**

v.7-10 Not- for-Prophet

1st appearance of "prophet" in Scripture

How God still uses me/them?

1. Paralyzed by failure? this comes from the enemy, not God (Jn 10:10)
2. God's gifts and calling stand secure - "what wasn't earned cannot be lost" (Rom 11:29, 1 Thes 5:24)
3. God will complete the good work He started in you (Phil 1:6)

4. Remember biblical examples: Abraham, Peter, and Paul all failed yet were mightily used by God (Gen 20:1-18, Jn 21:15-19, 1 Tim 1:12-16)
5. God's mercy is new every morning, and He faithfully forgives when we confess our sins (Lam 3:22-23, 1 Jn 1:9)

v.11-13 Situational ethics?

Lying is ok when...

1. I am afraid? v.11
2. I will be harmed? v.11
3. Its a half lie? v.12
4. Someone else made me do it? v.13
5. This is our tradition/culture? v.13

Trust His sovereignty, knowing "all things work together for good to those who love God" ([Romans 8:28](#)). Through Christ's Spirit, we understand right from wrong. Seeking God earnestly brings His guidance, for "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" ([Matthew 5:6](#)).

Abraham should have said: “Forgive me, Abimelech, for dishonoring you and my God. My cowardice led me to deny my God by fearing He couldn't protect me. He is not like your idols, but the living Creator, the most High God who owns heaven and earth. He promised to be my shield and provider. By sinning against Him, I wronged you. Forgive me.”

v.14-17 belongings, not blessing, not better

Interestingly, Abraham accepted these gifts despite previously refusing gifts from a pagan king (**Gen.14:21–24**) to avoid claims that a man made him rich. This compromise weakened his moral standing.

v.18 The Ironic Prayer

God uses compromised Abraham to pray for an innocent gentile, asking for the very thing that Abraham himself still awaits and has not yet received. (cf. Gen. 12:1-3)

Where do you go to find:

What is right?

What is just?

What is good?

Fear of Man? or Faith in Most High?

Resources/ bibliography:

1. <https://www.preceptaustin.org/genesis-20-commentary>
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Obedient, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 86–91.
3. MAP: <https://hallel.info/genesis-vayera-abraham-sodom-gomorra-abimelech-faith-2016/genesis-20-locations-of-gerar/>
4. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Abimelech-Bible.html>
5. <https://www.gotquestions.org/habitual-sin.html>
6. “Gods plural”: <https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+20>
7. David Guzik, Genesis, David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Ge 20:11–13.
8. Barnhouse, Donald Grey "Genesis: A Devotional Exposition" Volumes 1 and 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1973)
9. Morris, Henry M. "The Genesis Record: A Scientific And Devotional Commentary On The Book Of Beginnings" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976)

Abraham's Chronology:

Age 75 (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:16) (Sarai = 65).

- Father a great nation (the Jews)
- Possess a specific land
- Be blessed above all nations
- Through them, all nations would be blessed
- Gospel to Abraham (Gal. 3:8)

Land Covenant - “unconditional”
geographical boundaries (Gen. 12:7;
13:14-15; 15:18-21), temporary exile as
a “conditional” part of the covenant
(Deut. 30:1-10)

Age 86 (Gen. 16:16) Abe and Hagar had
Ishmael,

Age 99 (Gen. 17:1, 17:17) changed his name to Abraham, reiterated the covenant and added that Kings would come from his line, and circumcision as a sign

Age 100 (Gen. 21:5) Abraham fathers Isaac with Sarah

Gen. 22 Gospel type, God speaks and swore He would fulfill these promises by Himself, 1st Love and Lamb

Age 137 (**Gen. 23:1**) Abraham's wife Sarah dies

Age 140 (**Gen. 25:20**) Abraham's son Isaac marries Rebekah

Age 175 (**Gen. 25:7**)₂₈ Abraham dies