

2/20/05

Genesis 20-21

It has been twenty-five years since God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans. He has had many experiences that have revealed his trust in God and those of not having faith in God.

We are brought to one of those misfortunate events that do not reveal the “Father of Faith” as a spiritual man but rather one trusting in his flesh.

The occasion is a repeated sin of Abraham as he lies about his wife Sarah once again, declaring she was his sister.

20:1-7 **The lapse of faith of Abraham.**

20:1-2 The journey of Abraham to Gerar.

- 1) Abraham moved from his home. Vs. 1
 - a) And Abraham journeyed to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur. Vs. 1a-b
 - 1) Last time he was dwelling in Manre at Hebron. Gen. 18:1, 33
 - 2) We are not told why he left but probably for grazing.
 - 3) He entered Egypt last time due to severe famine. Gen. 12:10
 - 4) Shur. Gen. 16:7, 14

b) And stayed in Gerar. Vs. 1c

- 1) This is after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2) This is after the incestuous relation of Lot with his daughters.
- 3) Gerar was about 16 miles north-west of Beesheba, 5-6 miles from Gaza.

2) The lie of Abraham. Vs. 2

- a) Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” Vs. 2a-b
 - * This is similar to the account in Egypt, fearing for his life. Gen. 12:12
- b) And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah into his harem. Vs. 2c
 - * Abimelech means “my father is king” and is a title of the Philistine king, like Pharaoh for the king of Egypt.
- c) Whether she was taken for marriage or mere political alliances is not stated, nor is any reference made to her beauty. Gen. 12:14-15

20:3-7 The warning by God to Abimelech.

- 1) The intervention of God. Vs. 3
 - a) The stern warning by the Creator for accountability came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him,

“Indeed you are a dead man.” Vs. 3a-c

* Literally, dying or about to die.

1)) A dream is while a person is asleep, like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, etc.

2)) A vision is while they are awake.

b) The simple reason was because he had taken a man’s wife.” Vs. 3c-d

* “But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” Gen. 12:17

2) The commentary is for the sake of the promised seed Isaac, who was to be born directly by the hand of God. Vs. 4

a) But Abimelech had not come near her.” Vs. 4a

b) “And he said, “Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also?” Vs. 4b-d

3) The defense of Abimelech. Vs. 5

a) Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister?’” Vs. 5a-b

b) And she, even she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’” Vs. 5c-e

c) In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.” Vs. 5f

* The word integrity “tam” means completeness of heart, no guile.

4) The commendation and condemnation of Abimelech by God. Vs. 6

a) And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart.” Vs. 6a-c

b) For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.” Vs. 6d-e

5) The proclamation of God to Abimelech. Vs. 7

a) The command, “Now therefore, restore the man's wife.” Vs. 7a

b) The reason, “For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live.” Vs. 7b-c

* A prophet was the mouthpiece of God, not so much predicting the future.

c) The warning, “But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.” Vs. 7d-f

* This I am sure kept Abimelech from retaliating against Abraham.

20:8-16 The reproof of Abraham.

20:8 The morning meeting of Abimelech with his officials.

1) Abimelech moved in immediate obedience. Vs. 8a

- * So Abimelech rose early in the morning.”
- 2) Abimelech summoned his leaders. Vs. 8b
* He called all his servants.”
- 3) Abimelech disclosed all the matter. Vs. 8c
* He told all these things in their hearing. Vs. 8c
- 4) Abimelech’s men were frightened. Vs. 8d
* And the men were very much afraid.”
Vs. 8d
 - a) Fear had motivated Abraham to lie.
 - b) Fear had motivated both Abimelech and his officials to obey.

20:9-10 The confrontation of Abraham by Abimelech.

- 1) The king makes Abraham accountable. Vs. 9
 - a) He rebuked Abraham for the gravity and consequences of his sin, “What have you done to us?” Vs. 9a-b
 - 1)) Us, implying the entire population.
 - 2)) “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. 12:18
 - b) He allowed Abraham to make accusations, if he had any, “How have I offended you.” Vs. 9c

- c) He charges Abraham with sin and guilt, “That you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Vs. 9d
* Pharaoh said, “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. 12:19
- c) He accused Abraham of treachery, “You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.” Vs. 9e
- 2) The king inquired the motive of Abraham. Vs. 10
 - a) Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you have in view.” Vs. 10a-b
 - b) That you have done this thing?” Vs. 10c

20:11-13 The condemnation of the defense of Abraham.

- 1) The defense of Abraham. Vs. 11
 - a) And Abraham said, “Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place.” Vs. 11a-c
 - b) “And they will kill me on account of my wife.” Vs. 11d
 - c) Abraham got his eyes on the situation and sought his own solution.
- 2) The justification of Abraham. Vs. 12

- a) But indeed she is truly my sister.” Vs. 12a
- b) She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.” Vs. 12b-d
- 3) The pre-arranged plan of Abraham and Sarah. Vs. 13
 - a) The time is declared, “And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house.” Vs. 13a-b
 - b) The suggestion was Abraham’s, “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.” Vs. 13c-g

20:14-16 The reconciliation of the matter by Abimelech with Abraham.

- 1) Abimelech presented gifts of compensation and appeasement for full restitution for his fault in taking Sarah. Vs. 14
 - a) Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham.” Vs. 14a-d
 - b) “And he restored Sarah his wife to him.” Vs. 14e
- 2) Abimelech made an alliance of friendship with Abraham. Vs. 15
 - a) And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you.” Vs. 15a-b

- * The land was already Abrahams by the promise of God.
- b) “Dwell where it pleases you.’ Vs. 15c
 - * The land was unrestricted and without any limits.
- 3) Abimelech rebukes Sarah indirectly. Vs. 16
 - a) The public proclamation of Abimelech’s honorable restitution and her guilt of lying, “Then to Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver.” Vs. 16a-b
 - * The use of “your brother” without doubt was to point out her guilt.
 - b) The public proclamation of Abimelech having restored honor of Sarah, “Indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody.” Vs. 16c
 - * The word vindicates [k@cuwth](#) means a covering or clothing, she being a married woman should of presented herself as such honoring her husband, veiling her beauty.
- b) The personal commentary, “Thus she was rebuked.” Vs. 16c
 - * “So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.” Gen. 12:20

20:17-18 The intercession of Abraham.

20:17 The intercession for healing.

- 1) The instrument was chosen by God. Vs. 17a
* “So Abraham prayed to God.”
- 2) The individuals healed by God. Vs. 17b-c
* “And God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Vs. 17d-g
- 3) The indicated result of the healing. Vs. 17h
* “Then they bore children.”

20:18 The barrenness was brought directly by God.

- 1) The identity relevant to the account.
* “For the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech”.
 - a) Yahweh, the covenant God, who covenant with Abraham protected Him.
 - b) Yahweh could not allow anything to question or bring doubt on His promise regarding the heir to come, Isaac.
- 2) The indicated reason for the punishment.
* “Because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.”
 - a) Sarah was married to Abraham, God could not allow her to be humbled and defiled by another man.

b) Sarah would bare Isaac through Abraham.

* God’s will and God’s timing are two different things!

21:1-7 The fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah.

21:1-2 The unmistakable details regarding God.

- 1) The faithfulness of God. Vs. 1
 - a) “And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said.” Vs. 1a
* Twenty-five years since the call of Ur. Gen. 12:1-3
 - b) “And the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.” Vs. 1b
* A years since Yahweh appeared to Abraham after thirteen years of silence. Gen. 17:1
- 2) The fertility of Sarah. Vs. 2
 - a) “For Sarah conceived.” Vs. 2a
 - b) “And bore Abraham a son in his old age,.” Vs. 2a
 - c) “At the set time of which God had spoken to him.” Vs. 2b
 - 1)) A little under a year when Jesus and two angels visited Abraham Sarah had laughed in disbelief. Gen. 18:10, 12, 14

- 2)) In the fullness of time had come...
Gal. 4:4
- 3)) Three times the point is made.

21:3-5 The undaunted obedience regarding Abraham.

- 1) The name had been given by God. Vs. 3
 - a) And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him. Vs. 3a
 - b) Whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac. Vs. 3b
 - * The name was given an everlasting covenant. Gen. 17:19
- 2) The covenant had been seal with the rite of circumcision. Vs. 4
 - a) Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old. Vs. 4a
 - * According to the covenant. Gen. 17:10, 12
 - b) As God had commanded him. Vs. 4b
- 3) The age of Abraham is recorded. Vs. 5
 - a) Now Abraham was one hundred years old.
 - * "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." Rom. 4:20-21

- b) When his son Isaac was born to him.
 - * "By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore." Heb. 11:11-12

21:6-7 The unbelievable response of Sarah.

- 1) The elation of Sarah. Vs. 6
 - a) And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Vs. 6a
 - * A play on words to the name Isaac.
 - b) And all who hear will laugh with me." Vs. 6b
 - 2) All would laugh in astonishment with her ability to bear.
- 2) The celebration of Sarah. Vs. 7
 - a) She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children" Vs. 7a-b
 - b) For I have borne him a son in his old age." Vs. 7c
 - 1) As he had spoken. Gen. 12:2-3; 15:4; 17:16; 18:10
 - 2) God is not a man... Num. 23:19

21:8-13 The foolishness of Ishmael towards Isaac.

21:8-9 The occasion was in celebration of Isaac.

- 1) Isaac had been weaned. Vs. 8
 - a) So the child grew and was weaned. Vs. 8a
 - * Children were weaned between 3-5 years of age.
 - b) And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.” Vs. 8b
- 2) Ishmael had behaved disrespectfully. Vs. 9
 - a) “And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham.” Vs. 9a-b
 - b) “Scoffing.” Vs. 9c
 - 1) The word scoffing “tsachaq” is a pun on the name of Isaac, to pock fun at, mocking or sporting with the meaning of his name, perhaps even laughing at the fact that he was the heir.
 - * “But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Gal. 4:29

2) Paul uses it as an allegory to teach the two Covenants. Gal. 4:22-31

21:10-11 The occasion resulted in consternation towards Ishmael.

- 1) Sarah became incensed. Vs. 10
 - a) Therefore she said to Abraham, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” Vs. 10a-b
 - b) “For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.” Vs. 10c-d
 - 1)) There could be not union of the two, from the beginning of Hagar’s pregnancy.
 - 2)) There had to be a separation.
- 2) Abraham became grieved. Vs. 11
 - a) “And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight.”
 - * “And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You! Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him.” Gen. 17:18-19
 - b) “Because of his son.”
 - * His own flesh and blood!

21:12-13 The occasion brought about the intervention of God.

- 1) God communicates with Abraham. Vs. 12
 - a) “But God said to Abraham, “Do not let it be displeasing in your sight.” Vs. 12a-b
 - b) “Because of the lad or because of your bondwoman.” Vs. 12b
 - 1) The word for lad “na’ ar” can indicate a child to a young man.
 - 2) Ishmael was around 17 or 18 years old if Isaac was 3-4 years old, because he was circumcised at 13.
- 2) God commands Abraham to obey Sarah. Vs. 12c-e
 - a) Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice.” Vs. 12c-d
 - b) “For in Isaac your seed shall be called.” Vs. 12e
- 3) God comforts Abraham regarding Ishmael. Vs. 13
 - a) “Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman.” Vs. 13a
 - b) “Because he is your seed.” Vs. 13b

21:14-21 **The fondness of Abraham towards Ishmael.**

21:14 The difficult task for Abraham.

- 1) The dreaded morning of Abraham. Vs. 14

- a) So Abraham rose early in the morning.” Vs. 14a
- b) “And took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar.” Vs. 14b-d
- c) “And sent her away.” Vs. 14e
- d) “Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.” Vs. 14f

21:15-16 The difficult trial of Hagar and Ishmael.

- 1) The provision were exhausted. Vs. 15
 - a) “And the water in the skin was used up.” Vs. 15a
 - b) “And she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.” Vs. 15b
- 2) The potential death of Ishmael was unbearable for Hagar. Vs. 16
 - a) “Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot.” Vs. 16a
 - b) “For she said to herself, “Let me not see the death of the boy.” Vs. 16b-c
 - c) “So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.” Vs. 16d

21:17-19 The difficult situation was relieved by God.

- 1) The cry of Ishmael was heard. Vs. 17
 - a) “And God heard the voice of the lad.” Vs. 17a

- b) “Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven.” Vs. 17b
- c) “And said to her, “What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.” Vs. 17c-h
- 2) The promise to Hagar about Ishmael. Vs. 18
 - a) “Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand.” Vs. 18a-b
 - b) “For I will make him a great nation.” Vs. 18c
- 3) The provisions of God for Hagar and Ishmael. Vs. 19
 - a) “Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.” Vs. 19a-b
 - b) “And she went and filled the skin with water.” Vs. 19c
 - c) “And gave the lad a drink.” Vs. 19d

21:20-21 The difficult life of Ishmael prospered by God.

- 1) God was faithful to His promise. Vs. 20
 - a) “So God was with the lad.” Vs. 20a
 - b) “And he grew and dwelt in the wilderness.” Vs. 21b
 - c) “And became an archer.” Vs. 21c
 - * God had already promise when she first ran away. Gen. 16:10
- 2) God multiplied Ishmael. Vs. 22

- a) “He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran.” Vs. 21a
 - * The northern part of the Sinai peninsula and the area south of the Dead Sea.
- b) “And his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.” Vs. 21b

21:22-34 **The covenant of Abraham and Abimelech.**

21:22-24 The visit of Abimelech to Abraham.

- 1) The recognition of God’s hand on Abraham. Vs. 22
 - a) “And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham.” Vs. 22a-c
 - b) “Saying, “God is with you in all that you do.” Vs. 22d-e
 - * Abimelech feared future dominion by Abraham
- 2) The proposal presented to Abraham. Vs. 23
 - a) “Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity.” Vs. 23a-c
 - b) “But that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to

me and to the land in which you have dwelt.' Vs. 23d-e

* The word kindness "hesed" is a covenant word, loving-kindness.

3) The agreement of Abraham. Vs. 23

* "And Abraham said, "I will swear."

21:25-28 The voicing of Abraham's complaint to Abimelech.

1) The problem dealt with water. Vs. 25

a) "Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech." Vs. 25a

b) "Because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized." Vs. 25b

2) The plead of ignorance on Abimelech's part. Vs. 26

a) "And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing." Vs. 26a-b

b) "You did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." Vs. 26c-d

3) The covenant between the two. Vs. 27-28

a) "So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant." Vs. 27

b) "And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves." Vs. 28

21:29-31 The token of the covenant.

1) The inquiry of Abimelech. Vs. 29

a) "Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs." Vs. 29a-b

b) "Which you have set by themselves?" Vs. 29b

2) The reply of Abraham. Vs. 30

a) "And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand." Vs. 30a-b

b) "That they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Vs. 30c

3) The covenant place was memorialized. Vs. 31

a) "Therefore he called that place Beersheba." Vs. 31a

1)) Beersheba, means well of the oath or seven, about 28 miles southwest of Hebron.

2)) Both of their names appears seven times.

b) "Because the two of them swore an oath there." Vs. 31b

21:32-34 The peaceful outcome of the covenant.

1) The departure of Abimelech. Vs. 32

a) "Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba." Vs. 32a

b) "So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they

returned to the land of the
Philistines.” Vs. 32b-d

- 2) The devoted worship of Abraham. Vs. 33
 - a) “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba.” Vs. 33a
 - b) “And there called on the name of the LORD.” Vs. 32b
 - c) “The Everlasting God.” Vs. 33c
 - 1)) “El Elyon”, The Most High God. Gen. 14:19
 - 2)) “El Shaddai”, God Almighty. Gen. 17:1
 - 3)) “El Olam”, The Everlasting God, the only time in Genesis.
- 3) The dwelling of Abraham. Vs. 34
 - a) “And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines.”
 - b) “Many days.”