

**Story:**

One day, after I spent hours in the Word and had fellowship with God, I felt pretty spiritual and good about myself. I had to go to the store and pick something up, so I jumped in my car. As I was driving, a guy was walking up the street. I was doing the speed limit, well, maybe 2 mph over, and the man gave me a dirty look and motioned for me to slow down. That little gesture flipped a switch in me that I still don't fully understand. I went into full-NJ-Flesh mode, like a bad video game. I slammed on my brakes and, in typical NJ style, said, "What's your problem!?" I was offended because I wasn't speeding, well, not really. This was my street. I was 10 houses down from my own house! "Mind your own business, B!" and I sped off.

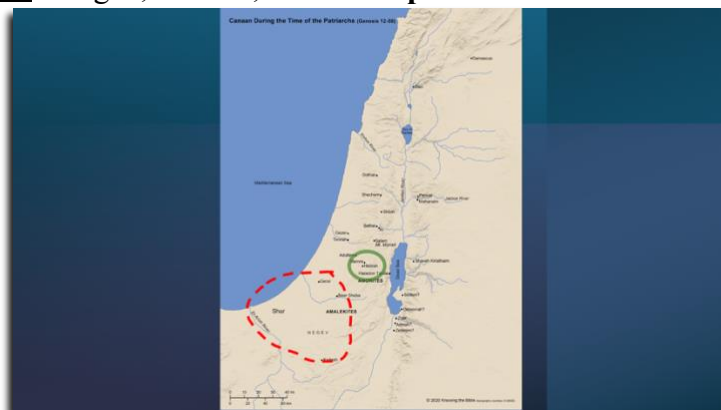
It was then that I realized I wasn't as spiritual as I thought I was. The flesh only needed an opportunity to remind me that it was only reckoned dead. I was unbearably sad about my actions as I reached the end of my street, so I turned around and tried to find that guy to apologize. He was gone. I never saw him again. I apologized to God and couldn't believe I blew it again! Especially after the time spent in the Word.

Have you ever messed up with an ongoing failure only to crawl back to God and ask forgiveness for blowing it again?

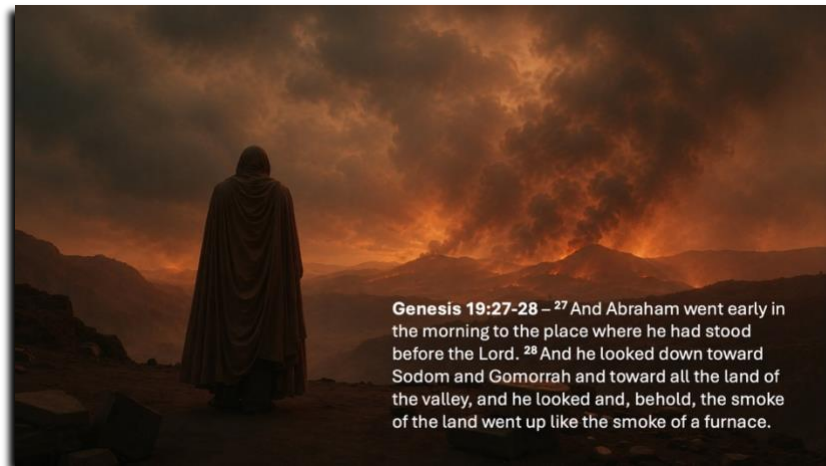
**Abraham and Abimelech**

**20:1** From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in **Gerar.**

- From there: Negeb, Kadesh, Shur – **Map**



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- The last time we saw Abraham: [Genesis 19:27-28](#)
- I wonder why he decided to move.
  - Maybe he didn't want to live in the hills overlooking the devastated area, as it reminded him of those people and their judgment.



- **Gerar** – this would become Philistine land

### Abraham's Deception



<sup>2</sup> And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. <sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife.”

- She is my sister. – Again?!? ([Gen 12](#))
  - We often think that our faith failures are a one-time issue. Not always!
    - Here, the “father of the Faithful” resorts to his natural default of truth-obscuring for self-preservation.
    - We sometimes do the same with God. Resorting to flesh driven action
      - After He intervenes and helps us, it’s easy to fall back to a default of faithlessness.
    - This failure has **potential implications** that could call into question God’s promise and plan. What if Abimelech knew Sarah (In the biblical sense)?
      - This would call into question Abraham’s son, God’s promise that “from Abraham’s body will come a son,” and the introduction of the sin of adultery into Abraham’s marriage.
        - God is serious about covenants
- God came to Abimelech –
  - This is around the time that Sarah will conceive.
  - God did not want any confusion about His promise to Abraham being fulfilled.
  - Even when Abraham was being weak, afraid, and faithless, God remained faithful to His promise.
    - Do you think God’s promise to you is based on your performance?
      - God’s promises are based on His goodness, not our performance.
        - They are irrevocable! [Romans 11:29](#) – For the gifts and the calling of God are **irrevocable**.
          - He has a hope and a future for you
          - [1 Corinthians 1:8](#) – who will sustain you to the end, **guiltless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
          - [2 Timothy 4:8](#) – Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on **that day**, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

- [Philippians 1:10](#) –so **that** you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the **day** of Christ,
  - [2 Timothy 1:12](#) – which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced **that** he is able to guard until **that day** what has been entrusted to me.
- Here, Abraham is acting out of **fear rather than** as a man of faith.
  - Yet God remained faithful to accomplish what He promised.
    - The same faithfulness is applied to His promise to you in Christ!

<sup>4</sup>Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, “Lord, will you kill an innocent people? <sup>5</sup>Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.” <sup>6</sup>Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart\*, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup>Now then, return the man's wife, **for he is a prophet**, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

- She herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ – Here, Abraham’s fearful operation pulled Sarah into his faithlessness.
  - Our faith failures can impact others
  - We want to try to operate from a position of faith in everything.
    - I know a pastor who asks the Lord about what cereal to eat!
      - The point is to incorporate God in every decision, no matter how small or safe.

- We must also strive to trust in God at all times. Even when we can not see Him, we must know to trust Him.
  - ~  **Bishop Way** said, “When you can’t trace God, you must know to trust God.”
  - ~  “We walk by faith, not by sight” – [2 Corinthians 5:7](#)
  - The collateral damage and unintended consequences of our faithless actions are rarely prayed through/ thought out.
    - Here, Sarah is being obedient to her husband but bending the truth as he directed.
    - This could also have been something they had been doing since they left Ur 25 years earlier. We will see in Verse 12
  - **Integrity** – 1<sup>st</sup> use in Bible
    - integrity, completeness; completeness, fulness; innocence, simplicity
    - Integer in math is whole number, not fraction
  - it was I who kept you from sinning against me. – God stepped in

<sup>7</sup>Now then, return the man's wife, **for he is a prophet**, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

- **for he is a prophet** – 1<sup>st</sup> use of this word, [Strong's #5030 – נָבִיא – nâbîy’ – naw-bee'](#)
  - **In the OT**, usually, God spoke through the **prophet**, and the **priest** spoke to God on behalf of the people
  - The prophet usually did signs and wonders as a confirmation of God,
  - However, the prophet did also have a ministry of intercession
    - [Jeremiah 27:18](#) – <sup>18</sup> If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, **then let them intercede with the Lord** of hosts, that the vessels that are left in the house of the Lord, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not go to Babylon.
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- he will pray for you – Acting in a priestly-type role
  - Similar to Job when he prayed for his friends
    - [Job 42:8-10](#)
  - Every Christian is called to operate as a priest: [1 Peter 2:9](#) – <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

<sup>8</sup> So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. <sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.” <sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you see, that you did this thing?” <sup>11</sup> Abraham said, “I did it because **I thought**, ‘There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’”

- And the men were very much afraid – these men are greatly afraid of God and what He revealed to the king.
  - This isn’t very long after Sodom was erased!
- **I thought**, – How many of our mistakes start with this phrase?
  - Again, we never get any indication about prayer
- There is no fear of God at all in this place – Wait what?!?! What about you, dude!?!
  - The hypocrisy of Abraham! Fear of God? What about you bending the truth?
  - The judgmental conclusion Abraham came to about this **innocent man (vs. 6)**
  - We have to be careful about how we assess people and people groups.
    - God cares for all mankind and wants everyone to come to Christ.
      - The Muslims, the gay people, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Illegals
        - Let’s not do like Abraham did and paint with a broad brush in the color of judgment.

- they will kill me – 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a **spirit of fear**, but of power, love, and self-discipline."
  - This is the same guy who achieved a great victory over the four kings of the east in chapter 14.
    - Abraham had only 318 men and won the victory!
    - Now he is worried and acting from fear.

<sup>12</sup> Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. <sup>13</sup> And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, "He is my brother."'"

- **David Guzik** – "A half-truth, said with intent to deceive, is always a whole lie."<sup>1</sup>
- How about speaking the truth and trusting God?

### **Healing of Abimelech's Household**

<sup>14</sup> Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. <sup>15</sup> And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." <sup>16</sup> To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. <sup>18</sup> For the Lord had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

- gave them to Abraham – What happened to the man of God who refused anything from the king of Sodom after the victory against the kings of the east?

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/study-guide/genesis/genesis-20.cfm?a=20001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/genesis/genesis-20.cfm?a=20001)

- His compromise of integrity has fractured his ability to be a moral witness to this king.
- Behold, I have given **your brother** – is this a slight dig at them? “Your brother” not husband
- Then Abraham prayed – Much like Job prayed for his friends – [Job 42:8-11](#)
- God heard both because they were mediators (priests in the order of Melchizedek, if you will)
- **Notice God here!**
- ★ ○ When we have these Bible stories, we need to pay attention to God’s words and actions. He is on display for us, and we can gain great insight into Who He is.
  - At the scene of the crime, when Abimelech and his people have been put in an untenable position, when Abraham’s ½ truth is exposed by God, we see God revealing truth to the leader, warning him of potential sin, and declaring him innocent and of integrity. However, we see something remarkable here.
    - Back to the crime scene

<sup>7</sup>Now then, return the man's wife, **for he is a prophet**, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

- God calls Abraham a Prophet! One of His own!
- Note: God **does not** say, “He is a no-good, lying, faithless, gutless, failure!”
  - The way God calls things is **not** how we call things!
  - “He is a Prophet” translated: He is my Prophet, my guy, He is on my team!
  - Abimelech was probably surprised! This guy? A prophet!?
  - What does God say about you?
    - [2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#) – <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the

ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- [Romans 3:23-25](#) – <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance **he had passed over former sins**.

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.