

Thank you for joining us today for "Take Ten."

Currently, we are on a journey to discover facts found in the Bible about sickness and healing. Today's focus is on:

The First Healing found in the Bible

Do you know when the first healing took place in the Bible? You might guess it was in the gospels, but that's not the case. It's found in the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis.

The first recorded healing took place by the prayer of a prophet. You may have heard of him - his name was Abraham. Ironically, this was also the first bodily affliction found in the Bible from wrongdoing - Abraham's wrongdoing.

Let's pick it up in **Genesis 20:1-18** (NLT), and it will make more sense:

"20 Abraham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to Gerar. While living there as a foreigner,

2 Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.

3 But that night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, "You are a **dead man**, for that woman you have taken is already married!"

4 But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation?"

5 Didn't Abraham tell me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'Yes, he is my brother.' I acted in complete innocence! My hands are clean."

It's not the first time we saw Abraham deceive someone about Sarah. She was so beautiful that everyone took note of her immediately. Abraham technically didn't lie because she was his half-sister, but he deceived them because they were also married. Abraham wanted to hide their marriage from the nobility, assuming they would kill him to get to her because of her beauty.

Now, God is telling Abimelech that he's a dead man for something he didn't know - ouch! Now he's pleading his case with God.

"6 In the dream God responded, "Yes, I know you are innocent. That's why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her.

7 Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a **prophet**. Then you will live. But if you don't return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die."

King Abimelech's and his people's outcome hangs in the balance of the king's response to God. God called Abraham a prophet, even with the deceit. He tells Abimelech to return Sarah and to have Abraham pray for him, and he will live. If not, he and his whole innocent nation will die - ouch!

"8 Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. 9 Then Abimelech called for Abraham. "What have you done to us?" he demanded. "What crime have I committed that deserves

treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you have done! 10 Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?"

11 Abraham replied, "I thought, 'This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.'

12 And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her.

13 When God called me to leave my father's home and to travel from place to place, I told her, 'Do me a favor. Wherever we go, tell the people that I am your brother.'"

14 Then Abimelech took some of his sheep and goats, cattle, and male and female servants, and he presented them to Abraham. He also returned his wife, Sarah, to him.

15 Then Abimelech said, "Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live."

16 And he said to Sarah, "Look, I am giving your 'brother' 1,000 pieces of silver in the presence of all these witnesses. This is to compensate you for any wrong I may have done to you. This will settle any claim against me, and your reputation is cleared."

17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so they could have children.

18 For the Lord had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham's wife, Sarah."

Interest that infertility was the issue here. Abraham and Sarah were struggling with the same problem. They were waiting for the child of promise through Sarah and already had Ishmael through Haggar.

Now all of a sudden, Abraham is praying for Abimelech and others to be healed of infertility. What's even more interesting is that in the next chapter, Abraham and Sarah have Issac right after this event.

How did Abraham operate in healing? Christ hadn't come yet.

To answer this question, we must go back to Isaiah 53:4. We discussed this scripture set in the last lesson; I won't go through the scripture set, but Isaiah is prophesying about Christ's atonement. I want to highlight the first three words, "**Surely God has.**"

Notice the past tense, "Surely God has." The book of Isaiah was written a thousand years before Christ and the atonement, yet it's still past tense. It's not, "Surely God will." It's "Surely God has."

If Isaiah were to say these words today, it would make sense because God has. Christ and the atonement are in the past, but Isaiah says, "Surely God has" 1,000 years before it took place.

What does this mean? It means that atonement was the plan from the very beginning.

It used to be that farmers used credit from the local stores for seed and other necessary items to plant and farm in early spring. The farmers didn't

have the money until harvest time, but the stores knew the harvest would come. Certainly, there was a relationship of trust among the locals, and the farmers would gladly pay their debts as the money from the crop would arrive. There was an exchange, based on trust, in what all parties knew would eventually come.

What took place with this healing in Genesis 20 and others in the Old Testament. The atonement was on the credit of "Surely God has" until the payment arrived.

Something to remember: If satan could have understood the depth of those three words, he wouldn't have put Christ on the cross.

See you in our next lesson.