

## Genesis Lesson 14: Genesis 20-21

### Lecture

- As Genesis 20 opens, Abraham has moved his base of operations to the Negev, between Kadesh and Shur.
  - Verse 1 notes that he sojourned in Gerar.
  - Scholars are not sure where Gerar was located but it may have been on the plain between Gaza and Beersheba.
  - Gerar may have served as a temporary location for Abraham's flocks and herds as he moved them around to find grass and water.
- In his Genesis commentary, Victor Hamilton notes that Genesis 20 contains the 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 instances in Genesis in which an outsider receives a dream revelation from God.
  - The other instances are Laban in Chapter 31; the Egyptian butler and baker in Chapter 40, and Pharaoh in Chapter 41.
  - He notes that these instances show that the Israelites do not have a monopoly on a revelation from God.
  - It is possible for God to reveal his will to all people.
- Victor Hamilton also states that we should understand that all peoples are subject to God's disapproval of adultery.
  - Committing adultery brings damaging consequences whenever and wherever it occurs, regardless of the culture.
  - Fortunately for Abimelech, he was not guilty of adultery, merely guilty of taking Abraham's "sister" (so he thought) inside his harem.
  - One must wonder if Abimelech would have even considered having sexual intercourse with Sarah given her advanced age.
  - Surely the luster of her earlier beauty must have diminished by this point.

- Nevertheless, God must intervene to ensure that Sarah's child to come is born of Abraham, not Abimelech.
- Chapter 20 verse 4b is interesting.
  - Abimelech asks God the following in his dream: "Lord, will you kill an innocent people?"
  - This parallels Abraham's remonstrations with God in Genesis 18 regarding the slaying of any righteous people who might exist in Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - God has only told Abimelech that he himself will die. Abimelech extends the death sentence to his entire nation.
  - Abimelech is more prescient than we know at this part of the story.
  - He is actually correct as we learn in verse 18 that God has prevented all the females of Abimelech's house from becoming pregnant. This could, in effect, result in the death of his line if they had not sought females elsewhere to produce children.
  - It is also possible that some sort of disease or plague has befallen Abimelech at this point.
- Abimelech appeals to God's sense of justice by telling God that both Abraham and Sarah claimed the brother/sister relationship. He is trying to shift the blame for his unknowing actions to Abraham and Sarah.
  - God replies that it was only God, not Abimelech's high moral convictions, who kept Abimelech from sinning.
  - Further, God tells Abimelech that the sin of adultery would have been against God, not against Abraham.

- We come finally to Genesis 20:7, where God reveals that Abraham is a prophet and that he is the one who will pray for Abimelech.
  - “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.”
  - We should equate the phrase “pray for you” with “intercede in prayer for you.”
  - We have already seen Abraham intercede for any righteous souls in Sodom and Gomorrah.
- In Chapter 20 verses 8 – 18 we see Abimelech confront Abraham about his lying and we learn why Abraham’s intercessory prayer for Abimelech is so urgently needed.
  - When Abraham is confronted, he does not admit his guilt.
  - Instead, he makes excuses.
    - He thought that Gerar was a God-less place and that he would be killed because of his wife.
    - Sarah is really his sister, albeit a half-sister. (Later, we see that Leviticus 18:9 and Deuteronomy 27:22 will explicitly prohibit marrying a half-sister.)
    - He implicates Sarah in the lying by stating that he and Sarah had a standing agreement for her to tell that Abraham was her brother whenever such a ruse was called for.
  - Abimelech wants to be sure that his own honesty and reputation remain intact with his own people.
    - He gives Abraham sheep, oxen, servants and 1,000 pieces of silver.
    - The sheep, oxen, and servants would be payment enough to discharge any hint of misdeed on the part of Abimelech.
    - 1,000 pieces of silver is an exorbitant price to pay to ensure that Sarah’s reputation remains intact.

- Is Abimelech trying to ensure that Abraham will pray for him as directed by God? Is it a bribe?
  - He must surely need Abraham's prayers since no female in his household has been able to conceive because of Abraham's misdeeds in Gerar.
  - As a further sign of generosity, Abimelech invites Abraham to remain in Gerar.
- There is one last point of irony in this chapter.
  - Abraham had induced Sarah to lie because he thought that there was no fear of God in Gerar.
  - On the contrary, Abimelech is revealed as a man who truly fears God and his power.
- In short order, Chapter 21 tells us that the Lord visited Sarah.
  - This is a fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 18:10 that he would return to visit Sarah again.
  - The purpose of this visitation is to open Sarah's womb so that she can conceive.
  - She does conceive and bears a son in the timeframe promised by God ("this time next year").
  - As much as Sarah is delighted over the birth of this promised child, she also is worried that people will make fun of her for having a child at her advanced age.
- Moving to verses 8 to 10, we see Sarah taking umbrage when she notices Ishmael laughing on the feast day marking Isaac's weaning.
  - Notice that the narrator mentions the name Hagar, but Sarah refers to her as "that slave woman" and refers to Ishmael as "the son of this slave woman."
  - The Hebrew word translated as laughing is ambiguous. It may be interpreted as mocking.

- In Galatians 4:29, Paul suggests that Ishmael, he who was born of the flesh, was persecuting he (Isaac) who was born of the Spirit. Here, persecuting may also be interpreted as mocking. Paul uses being born of the Spirit here to mean that Isaac was the child of the promise.
- Another possible interpretation is that Sarah does not want her first-born son, the child of the promise, consorting with the child of a slave, even if they are half-brothers.
- A third interpretation is that Sarah may be angry with Ishmael for stealing the show on a day that has been set aside to honor Isaac.
- Lastly, Sarah may simply be looking for an excuse to rid herself of Hagar and Ishmael.
  - Hagar was Abraham's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife. Ishmael had a legal claim to part of Abraham's property. As the first-born son, he actually had a stronger claim than Isaac.
- Whatever the rationale, Sarah demands that Abraham banish the slave woman and her son.
  - Sarah may actually be demanding that Abraham divorce Hagar so that Ishmael cannot inherit.
  - Abraham does not want to take this action, but God tells him to proceed as Sarah instructed him.
  - God reminds Abraham that Isaac is the child of the promise through which all the descendants of Abraham will be named (blessed). He reiterates his promise to also make a nation from Ishmael.
  - Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael off the next morning with bread and water. In the Hebrew, Abraham is sending them out, not divorcing Hagar. She and Ishmael wander in the wilderness of Beersheba.
  - Water was not readily available in Beersheba; most water came from man-made wells. Reference Genesis 21:30 which tells us that Abraham dug a well later in Beersheba.

- When the water runs out, Hagar distances herself from Ishmael. She cannot watch her son perish.
- Hagar is again visited by the angel of God, who calls to her from heaven.
- The angel of God shows her a nearby well of water and also reaffirms God's earlier promise to make Ishmael into a great nation.
  - The promise to Hagar of "a great nation" is stronger than the promise God made to Abraham.
  - The well may have been there all along, but Hagar just did not realize it was there.
- At this juncture, it appears that Hagar is unaware of God's earlier promises to Abraham to bless Ishmael.
- Ishmael settled in the wilderness of Paran, a desert in the eastern Sinai Peninsula. It may have stretched from the Red Sea as far north as Kadesh or Beersheba.
- This section ends with Hagar returning to her roots. She procures a bride for Ishmael from among the Egyptians. She clearly wants to put some distance between her son's line and that of Abraham through Isaac.
- Chapter 21 ends with an argument over a well and a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech.
  - Apparently, Abraham has gone back to Gerar with his herds and flocks.
  - Abimelech wants Abraham to swear that he will not deal falsely with any of Abimelech's descendants.
    - Abimelech remembers his past interaction with Abraham and not in a positive way.
  - Apparently, Abraham and his men had dug a well on Abimelech's land and Abimelech's servants had seized it.
    - When Abraham brings up the seizure to Abimelech, his response is, "Why am I just now hearing about this?"

- Perhaps to mollify Abimelech before the situation gets out of hand, Abraham gives sheep and oxen, including 7 extra ewe lambs, to Abimelech. Ewe lambs were valuable because they could breed and give milk.
- Abimelech is unsure of Abraham's intentions regarding the 7 ewe lambs. Abraham explains that, by accepting the 7 ewe lambs, Abimelech is acknowledging that Abraham is the legitimate owner of the well he dug, and that Abimelech's men seized.
  - By granting Abraham rights to the well, Abimelech makes it possible for Abraham to live in the region on a more permanent basis.
- The 2 men make a covenant. There is no covenant ceremony and no covenantal meal. The 2 men just swore an oath to each other for Abraham to behave himself and not deal falsely with Abimelech. Abraham also gets rights to the well he dug.
- Verses 32 and 34 mention the land of the Philistines.
  - This may be an anachronism added by later Old Testament editors, as Egyptian texts only attest to the Philistines occupying this area only around 1200 BC, which postdates Abraham.
  - However, the Philistines are genetically related to sea people from the Aegean region, and it is possible that Gerar was settled by an earlier group of sea peoples.
- There is one final area to note from the conclusion of Chapter 21.
  - The section with Abimelech in verse 22 has him making this profound statement, "God is with you in all you do."
  - Abimelech is acknowledging God's power and his granting of success to Abraham.
  - Gordon Wenham says that Abimelech is, in his own way, affirming his confidence that Abraham's line will continue to exist under the blessing of God.
  - The divine promises to Abraham are being confirmed by this Gentile.
  - And Abraham is learning that God is sovereign everywhere.

Genesis Lesson 14: Genesis 20-21

**God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind.  
Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23:19**

1. Read Genesis 20:1-18

a. Where had Abraham moved?

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

b. What did Abraham say about Sarah?

And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." Genesis 20:2

c. As a result, what happened to Sarah?

And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. Genesis 20:2

d. What do you think Sarah was thinking?

- "I cannot believe this is happening to me a 2<sup>nd</sup> time."
- "I may even be pregnant with Abraham's son."
- "What is going to happen to me in Abimelech's household?"

e. What did God say to King Abimelech?

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." Genesis 20:3

f. What was the king's response?

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." Genesis 20:4-5

- g. Why did God intervene with King Abimelech? (Hint: see Genesis 18:10.)  
God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son. She could already be pregnant with that child. If she was not pregnant, then if she had intercourse with Abimelech and conceived the child she had would not be of Abraham.
- h. What did God say would be the result if the king did not obey God's command?  
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." Genesis 20:6-7
- i. What would be the result if he did obey?  
Abimelech would live.
- j. How did Abraham justify his actions to King Abimelech?  
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." <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."'" Genesis 20:11-13
- k. What did you learn about the genetic relationship between Abraham and Sarah?  
Sarah is Abraham's half-sister.
- l. What did King Abimelech do next?  
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." Genesis 20:14-16

- m. What had happened to the women in Abimelech's household and how did Abraham intervene?

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. Genesis 20:17-18

- n. Why do you think did Abraham used the same "sister" ruse a 2<sup>nd</sup> time?
- Abraham did not trust God to protect him in Gerar.
  - Abraham feared that the men of Gerar might kill him and take Sarah from him by force.

2. Read Genesis 21:1-7.

- a. How did God fulfill his promise to Abraham and Sarah?

The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup> And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Genesis 21:1-2

- b. How old were Abraham and Sarah? (See Genesis 17:15-21.)

- Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Genesis 21:5
- Sarah was about 91 years old.

- c. Using Genesis 12:1-4 and this passage, how long had the couple waited for this child?

25 years

- d. What name was given to the child and what does the name mean? Why was it an appropriate name?
- Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. Genesis 21:3
  - Isaac means “he laughs.”
  - Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” Genesis 17:17
  - So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?”<sup>13</sup> The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’” Genesis 18:12-13
  - And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.”<sup>7</sup> And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.” Genesis 21:6-7
- e. What did Abraham do with the child and why? (Hint: see Genesis 17:12.)
- And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Genesis 21:4
  - Isaac had to be circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day as a sign of the covenant.
- f. How does Sarah react to the child’s birth?
- And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.”<sup>7</sup> And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.” Genesis 21:6-7

3. Read Genesis 21:8-21.

- a. How old would Ishmael have been at this point?  
If Isaac had been weaned at age 2 or 3, then Ismael would be about 16 or 17.
- b. Why was Ishmael mocking at Isaac’s weaning celebration?  
Ishmael may have been mocking the child who was Abraham’s primary heir. Ishmael was full-grown and Isaac may not have survived.

- c. What was Sarah's response?  
So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." Genesis 21:10
- d. How did this impact Abraham?  
And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. Genesis 21:11
- e. What did God tell Abraham about his 2 sons?  
But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. <sup>13</sup> And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring." Genesis 21:12-13
- f. What did Abraham do next?  
So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. Genesis 21:14
- g. Why was Hagar crying?  
When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. Genesis 21:15-16
- h. How did God show mercy to Hagar and Ishmael?  
And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. <sup>18</sup> Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. Genesis 21:17-19

- i. What happened next to Hagar and Ishmael?  
And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow.<sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. Genesis 21:20-21
4. Read Genesis 21:22-34.
- a. What does Abimelech want from Abraham?  
At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do.<sup>23</sup> Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned.”<sup>24</sup> And Abraham said, “I will swear.” Genesis 21:22-24
  - b. Why do you think he wanted this?  
Abraham had become rich, and Abimelech recognized that God supported him in all his activities. He may have heard about the miracle of Isaac’s birth. Abimelech may have felt threatened by Abraham’s increased wealth and power.
  - c. What complaint did Abraham make to Abimelech?  
Abraham reproved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech’s servants had seized Genesis 21:25
  - d. How was the complaint resolved?  
Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today.”<sup>27</sup> So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant.<sup>28</sup> Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart.<sup>29</sup> And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?”<sup>30</sup> He said, “These seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand, that this may be a witness for me that I dug this well.” Genesis 21:26-30
  - e. What place name was given to location of the treaty?  
Therefore that place was called Beersheba, because there both of them swore an oath. Genesis 21:31

f. Where did Abraham choose to live?

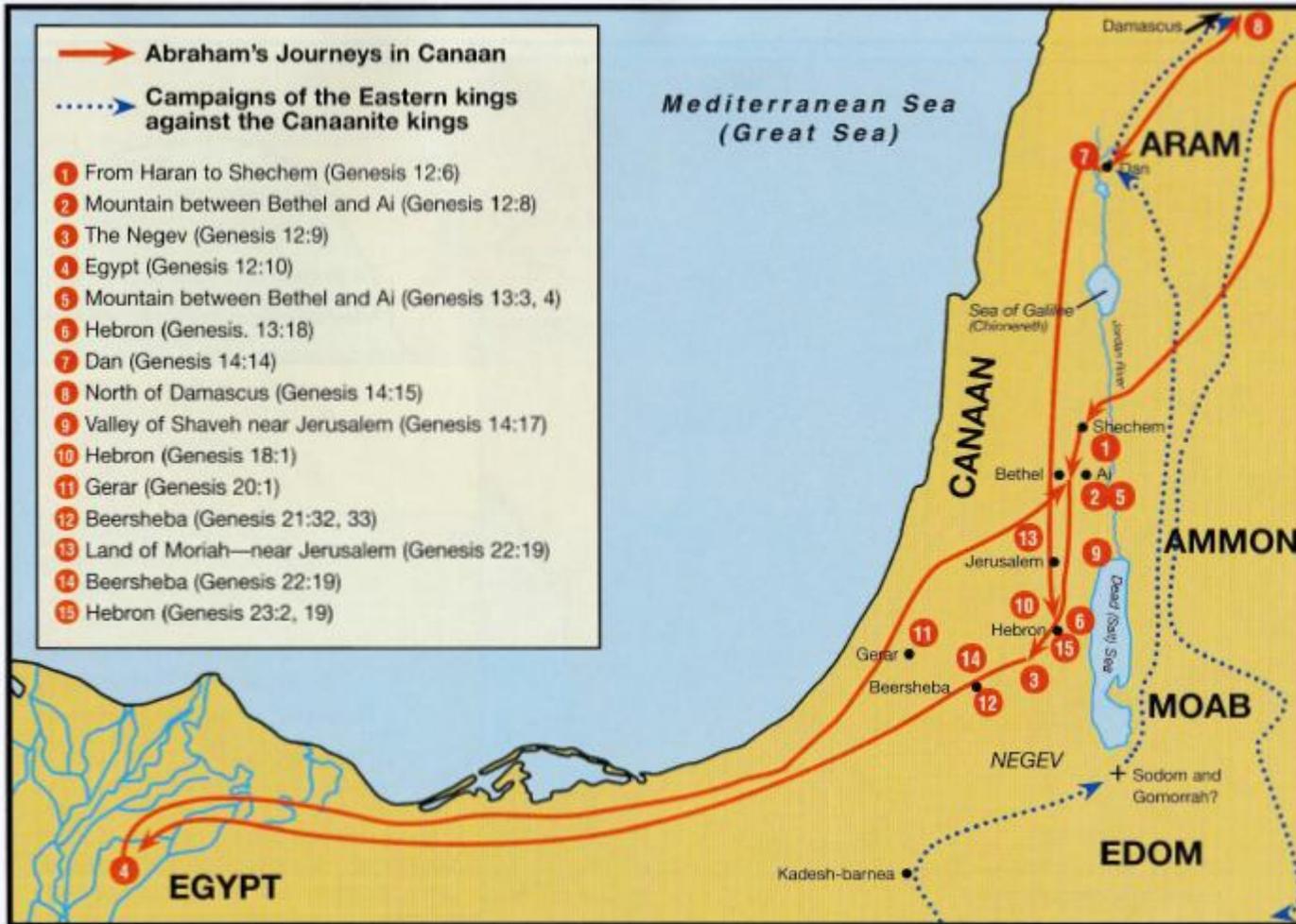
Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. <sup>34</sup> And Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines. Genesis 21:33-34

# Genesis Lesson 14

## Genesis 20-21

# Abraham Sojourns in Gerar

- Abraham Has Moved His Base of Operations to the Negev, Between Kadesh and Shur
- Genesis 20:1 Says He Sojourned in Gerar
- Gerar May Be on the Plain Between Gaza and Beersheba
- Gerar May Have Served as a Temporary Location for Abraham's Flocks and Herds



Abraham's Journeys (2200 bc - 2000 bc) • 8

Copyright: Then and Now Bible Maps; 2008, Rose Publishing

# A Dream Revelation from God

- Victor Hamilton: Genesis 20 Contains the 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 Instances in Genesis of an Outsider Receiving a Dream Revelation from God
- The Others: Laban in Genesis 31; the Egyptian Butler and Baker in Genesis 40; Pharaoh in Chapter 41
- Israelites Do Not Have a Monopoly on a Revelation from God
- God Can Reveal His Will to All People

# God Disapproves of Adultery

- Victor Hamilton: All Peoples Are Subject to God's Disapproval of Adultery
- Adultery Brings Damaging Consequences, Regardless of the Culture
- Abimelech Was Not Guilty of Adultery
- Why Would Abimelech Even Consider Sexual Intercourse with Sarah Given Her Age?
- Surely the Luster of Sarah's Earlier Beauty Must Have Diminished
- God Must Intervene to Ensure that Sarah's Child to Come is Born of Abraham, Not Abimelech

# Abimelech Returns Sarah to Abraham



Copyright: Abimelech Restores Sarah to Her Husband Abraham; Frans Geubels; 1580; Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio

# Genesis 20:4b

- Abimelech Asks God, “Lord, Will You Kill an Innocent People?”
- Parallels Abraham’s Remonstrations in Genesis 18 Regarding Sodom and Gomorrah
- God Has Only Told Abimelech That He Will Die; Abimelech Extends This to His Nation
- Abimelech Is More Prescient Than We Know at This Point of the Story
- Genesis 20:18: God Has Prevented All Females in His House from Becoming Pregnant; Could Be the Death of His Line
- It Is Also Possible That Some Disease or Plague Has Befallen Abimelech at This Point

# Abimelech Appeals to God's Sense of Justice

- Both Abraham and Sarah Claimed the Brother/Sister Relationship (Blame-shifting)
- God Replies: Only God, Not Abimelech's Moral Convictions, Has Kept Him from Sinning
- The Sin of Adultery Would Have Been Against God, Not Abraham

# Genesis 20:7

- Abraham Is a Prophet and He Will Pray for Abimelech
- “Pray for You” = “Intercede in Prayer for You”
- Abraham Has Already Interceded for Any Righteous Souls Who Might Be in Sodom and Gomorrah

# Abimelech Confronts Abraham

- Abraham Does Not Admit His Guilt; He Makes Excuses
  - He Thought Gerar Was a God-less Place
  - He Thought He Would Be Killed Because of His Wife
  - Sarah Is Really His Sister, Albeit a Half-Sister; (Leviticus 18:9 and Deuteronomy 27:22 Will Later Prohibit Marrying a Half-Sister)
  - He Implicates Sarah in the Lie; They Had a Standing Agreement to Use the Lie When Necessary

# Abimelech Confronts Abraham

- Abimelech Wants to Ensure His Own Honesty and Reputation Remain Intact
- He Gives Abraham Sheep, Oxen, Servants, and 1,000 Pieces of Silver
- Sheep, Oxen, and Servants Would Have Been Sufficient
- 1,000 Pieces of Silver Is an Exorbitant Price to Ensure That Sarah's Reputation Remains Intact
- Is It a Bribe to Ensure Abraham Will Pray for Him Since No Female in His Household Can Conceive?
- In a Further Sign of Generosity, Abimelech Invites Abraham to Remain in Gerar

# A Final Irony in Genesis 20

- Abraham Induced Sarah to Lie Because He Thought There Was No Fear of God in Gerar
- On the Contrary, Abimelech is Revealed as a Man Who Truly Fears God and His Power

# Genesis 21

- The Lord Visited Sarah (Fulfillment of Genesis 18:10)
- The Purpose: to Open Sarah's Womb
- She Conceives and Bears a Son in the Timeframe Promised by God ("This Time Next Year")
- She Is Delighted over the Birth of This Promised Child
- She Is Also Worried People Will Make Fun of Her for Having a Child at Her Advanced Age

# Sarah Takes Umbrage

- She Notices Ishmael Laughing on the Feast Day Marking Isaac's Weaning
- Sarah Calls Hagar "That Slave Woman" and Calls Ishmael "the Son of This Slave Woman"
- The Hebrew Word for Laughing is Ambiguous; Might Be Interpreted as Mocking
- Galatians 4:29: Ishmael, Born of the Flesh, Was Persecuting Isaac, Born of the Spirit
  - Persecuted May Be Interpreted as Mocking
  - "Born of the Spirit" = Isaac Was the Child of the Promise

# Sarah Takes Umbrage

- Another Interpretation: Sarah Does Not Want *Her* First-born Son Consorting with the Child of a Slave, Even if They are Half-Brothers
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> Interpretation: Sarah May Be Angry with Ishmael for Stealing the Show on a Day Set Aside to Honor Isaac
- Lastly, Sarah May Be Looking for an Excuse to Rid Herself of Hagar and Ishmael
  - Ishmael, as Abraham's First-born Son, Had a Stronger Claim to Abraham's Property Than Isaac

# Sarah Takes Umbrage

- Another Interpretation: Sarah Does Not Want *Her* First-born Son Consorting with the Child of a Slave, Even if They are Half-Brothers
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> Interpretation: Sarah May Be Angry with Ishmael for Stealing the Show on a Day Set Aside to Honor Isaac
- Lastly, Sarah May Be Looking for an Excuse to Rid Herself of Hagar and Ishmael
  - Ishmael, as Abraham's First-born Son, Had a Stronger Claim to Abraham's Property Than Isaac

# Sarah Takes Umbrage

- Sarah Demands that Abraham Banish the Slave Woman and Her Son; She May Actually Be Demanding that Abraham Divorce Hagar so That Ishmael Cannot Inherit
- Abraham Does Not Want to Do This, But God Tells Him to Proceed
- God Reiterates: Isaac is the Child of the Promise; He Will Also Make a Nation from Ishmael
- Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Off the Next Morning; He Is Sending Them Out, Not Divorcing Hagar

# Sarah Takes Umbrage

- Sarah Demands that Abraham Banish the Slave Woman and Her Son; She May Actually Be Demanding that Abraham Divorce Hagar so That Ishmael Cannot Inherit
- Abraham Does Not Want to Do This, But God Tells Him to Proceed
- God Reiterates: Abraham is the Child of the Promise; He Will Also Make a Nation from Ishmael

# Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away

- Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Off the Next Morning; He Is Sending Them Out, Not Divorcing Hagar
- She and Ishmael Wander in the Wilderness of Beersheba Where There Was Little Water; Most Water Came from Wells (Genesis 21:30)
- Hagar Cannot Watch Ishmael Perish
- The Angel of God Calls to Her from Heaven
- He Shows Her a Nearby Well and Reaffirms God's Earlier Promise to Make Ishmael into a Great Nation
- "A Great Nation" Is Stronger than the Promise to Abraham
- Hagar Is Unaware of God's Earlier Promises to Abraham to Bless Ishmael

# The Angel Appearing to Hagar and Ishmael in the Desert



Copyright: Guiseppe Ghezzi; circa 1690's; courtesy of Sotheby's Auction House

# Ishmael

- Ishmael Settled in the Wilderness of Paran, a Desert in the Eastern Sinai Peninsula; May Have Stretched from the Red Sea as Far North as Kadesh or Beersheba
- Hagar Returns to Her Roots and Secures a Bride for Ishmael from Egypt
- She Wants to Put Some Distance Between Her Son's Line and That of Abraham Through Isaac

# Abimelech and Abraham Meet Again

- Abraham Has Returned to Gerar
- Abimelech Wants Abraham to Swear That He Will Not Deal Falsely with Any of Abimelech's Descendants
- He Remembers His Past Interaction with Abraham and Not in a Positive Way
- Abraham Complains That Abimelech's Servants Had Seized a Well He Had Dug
- Perhaps to Mollify Abimelech, Abraham Gives Him Sheep, Oxen, and 7 Extra Ewe Lambs, Which Were Valuable
- What Is Abraham's Intention with the Ewe Lambs? To Have Abimelech Acknowledge Abraham's Ownership of the Well

# Abimelech and Abraham Meet Again

- Granting Abraham Rights to the Well Makes It Possible for Him to Live in the Region on a More Permanent Basis
- The 2 Men Make a Covenant; No Covenant Ceremony; No Covenantal Meal; Just an Oath for Abraham to Behave and Rights to the Well He Dug
- The Philistines Mentioned Here May Have Been a Later Editorial Addition; Egyptian Texts Attest to the Philistines Occupying This Area Around 1200 BC, Which Postdates Abraham
- The Philistines Are Genetically Related to the Aegean Sea People; An Earlier Group May Have Settled in Gerar

# Genesis 21:22

- Abimelech Says, “God Is with You in All You Do.”
- Abimelech Is Acknowledging God’s Power and His Granting of Success to Abraham
- Gordon Wenham: Abimelech is Affirming His Confidence that Abraham’s Line Will Continue to Exist under the Blessing of God
- The Divine Promises to Abraham Are Being Confirmed by This Gentile
- Abraham Is Learning that God Is Sovereign Everywhere