

God Preserves Two Covenants

Genesis 20

Genesis 20 is, as Yogi Berra might say, *like déjà vu all over again!* Just like back in Gen. 12, Abraham passes off his wife as his sister. But this time, Sarah is 90 years old. Once again, God steps in; here He preserves *two* covenants: A marriage, and His promise.

The Story

Conflict: Abraham moves to Gerar, says Sarah is his sister, and Abimelech king of Gerar takes Sarah into his harem. (1-2)

Intervention: God tells Abimelech he has taken another man's wife, and instructs him to return her to her husband. (3-7)

Obedience: Abimelech confronts Abraham for his deception, returns Sarah to him, and shows his sincerity with gifts. (8-16)

Prayer: Abraham intercedes for Abimelech and his household, and God removes the judgment He had put on them. (17-18)

The Lessons

- Our foolish actions can jeopardize God's good plans for us.
- Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.
- God desires purity in marriage (adultery is a serious sin).
- Sin is always against God (which is why God judges it).
- When we have sinned, full restoration comes through prayer.

I fail.
God is faithful.



1. The story of Genesis 20 is similar to Gen.12.10-20. Abram was 75, Sarai was 65, and they were in Egypt then. Abraham is now pushing 100, Sarah 90, and they are in Gerar, where Abimelech rules the Canaanite residents. But while the time and place have changed, the sin is the same! We think of men like Abraham as being almost sinless, but this shows that not only did he sin, he sinned in the same way. Have you ever sinned in the same way more than once? Have you ever struggled to gain victory over a certain sin in your life?
2. Skip down to verses 11-13. How does Abraham explain why he deceived Abimelech? What deeper spiritual weakness does his explanation reveal? Hebrews 11.8-12 refers to Abraham during this time as a man of *faith*. Obviously, living by faith doesn't mean we *never* falter! How would you describe your personal walk of faith?
3. Abimelech and God have a *talk* in verses 3-7. What causes God to threaten Abimelech with death? Adultery was a common sin in Abraham's day, and it's common today; how does God view it? What kind of man was Abimelech, and what is his defense? Because of his integrity, how did God protect him (v.6)?
4. The message of this encounter is once again that though we are faithless, God remains faithful (2 Tim. 2.13). God preserved His covenant with Abraham, and Abraham and Sarah's marriage, in spite of their sinful, unbelieving deception. Why not thank God for His faithfulness to you, even when you were unfaithful?
5. If you 'step back' for a moment and look at the story of Sodom and this encounter in Gerar, it's clear that God views sexual sin very seriously. Rampant sexual immorality and homosexuality marked Sodom, and it was destroyed. Abimelech unknowingly took another man's wife, and faced imminent death. Living in a sexually promiscuous society, how can we avoid judgment that such sin brings?