

GENESIS 20

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Genesis 20:1–18

Abraham Deceives Abimelech

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Document Navigation

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Quotations | Preface | Outline of Chapter |
| Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines | Doctrines Alluded to | Chapters Alluded to |
| Dictionary of Terms | Introduction and Text | Addendum |

Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse](#) studies of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

J. Vernon McGee: *Chapter 20 seems about as necessary as a fifth leg on a cow. It is a chapter that you feel as if you would like to leave out, because in it Abraham repeats the same sin which he committed when he went down into the land of Egypt and lied concerning Sarah, saying, "She is my sister."*¹ As an aside, this seemed to be the opinion of many commentators who barely spoke about this chapter, if at all.

Coffman: *There are the best reasons why this deplorable episode from the life of Abraham SHOULD appear exactly here. The...narrative, at this point, stands poised to relate the birth of the promised "seed" of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. And it was imperative that the wonder of God's amazing grace should not appear as being the result of merit or sinlessness on Abraham's part...[that] Abraham's faith, as evidenced here, was weak and inadequate, inexcusable doubt and fear having, for a while, taken possession of him. And yet, Abraham was the best human specimen available. And God would see to it that His promise through Him would, in time, be fulfilled.*²

On lying:

Mark Twain: *If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.*³

S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*: *I lie to myself all the time. But I never believe me.*⁴

Benjamin Disraeli: *There are three types of lies -- lies, damn lies, and statistics.*⁵

Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*: *People think that a liar gains a victory over his victim. What I've learned is that a lie is an act of self-abdication, because one surrenders one's reality to the person to whom one lies, making that person one's master, condemning oneself from then on to faking the sort of reality that person's view requires to be faked. The man who lies to the world, is the world's slave from then on. There are no white lies, there is only the blackest of destruction, and a white lie is the blackest of all.*⁶

Robert Brault: *Every lie is two lies - the lie we tell others and the lie we tell ourselves to justify it.*⁷

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg: *The most dangerous untruths are truths moderately distorted.*⁸

Edgar J. Mohn: *A lie has speed, but truth has endurance.*⁹

Bill Copeland: *When you stretch the truth, watch out for the snapback.*¹⁰

Yiddish Proverb: *A half truth is a whole lie.*¹¹

¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed August 24, 2014.

² From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

³ From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/lying> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁴ From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/lying> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁵ From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/lying> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁶ From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/lying> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁷ From <http://www.quotegarden.com/honesty.html> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁸ From <http://www.quotegarden.com/honesty.html> accessed August 21, 2014.

⁹ From <http://www.quotegarden.com/honesty.html> accessed August 21, 2014.

¹⁰ From <http://www.quotegarden.com/honesty.html> accessed August 21, 2014.

¹¹ From <http://www.quotegarden.com/honesty.html> accessed August 21, 2014.

Col. 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put away *[the conduct of]* your old person with its practices. (AUV-NT)

On Abraham's failure:

H.C. Leupold: *On the very eve of the fulfilment of the long-hoped-for promise, Abraham, largely through his own sins, imperils the precious hope. So once again, as so often in Genesis, the sovereign mercy of God is made to stand forth as supreme, that no flesh may glory before God.*¹²

Prov. 24:16 The righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity. (ESV)

Eccles. 7:20 Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. (ESV)

And when it comes to explaining **Gen. 20:16**, Adam Clarke comments: *And unto Sarah he said - But what did he say? Here there is scarcely any agreement among interpreters; the Hebrew is exceedingly obscure, and every interpreter takes it in his own sense.*¹³

Preface: Once again, Abraham will tell a half-truth about his relationship to Sarah, and the king of Gerar, the authority of the land where Abraham has moved to, will take Sarah as his wife.

I have to admit that, based on a precursory glance, I wondered if there would be anything in this chapter that was really important (as we have a similar narrative in two other places). However, I have come to find that this is a powerful, information-packed chapter.

This is a deceptive little chapter. First of all, it seems very similar to the time that Abraham went to Egypt and lied about Sarah. Later on, in Gen. 26, Isaac will lie to Abimelech about his wife. So, at first we might think this chapter to be repetitive and perhaps even disconcerting to those of us who believe in the inspiration of Scripture (is this merely a tradition handed down from 3 different sources?). And it is a scant 18 verses long. For these reasons, a great many commentators chose not to even comment on this chapter. That is a big mistake.

One of the most important aspects of this chapter is, Abraham is clearly set up as a type of Christ, both as a man who represents God to man, and as a man who represents man to God. He will intercede on behalf of Abimelech, and heal him. In all of this, Abraham illustrates the Messiah to come. Not only is this quite amazing, but I do not believe that many commentators fully appreciated this.

Fundamental to this chapter is the concept of grace.¹⁴ God is about to bless Abraham and Sarah with a child—a child who will be a type of Christ—who begins the line of promise and is a sign of the good things to come (that is, the fulfillment of God's many blessings which He has promised to Abraham). And what does Abraham do, literally a month or so before his wife is to conceive—he gets himself into a jackpot in Gerar by lying to the king, and exposes his wife to another man. Abraham puts everything at risk. What Abraham potentially has done here is put his position as father of the Jews into question for all time. He could not have done anything more stupid or dishonorable. All of a sudden, Abraham is doubting God and God's protection, despite the fact that God has been with Him for all this time. But, despite Abraham's failure, God does not withdraw His blessing from him. God pours on the blessing. If you understand grace, you are fine with all this. If you do not understand grace, then this chapter becomes confusing. Abraham fails again, and yet, God still blesses him? And Abraham is already a rich man, and God blesses him more. This chapter should rock the world of the legalist. Furthermore, it ought to rock the world of those who believe in covenant theology. They believe that God finally just gave up on the

¹² From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxii.html> accessed August 28, 2014.

¹³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16.

¹⁴ If you think that God did not think up the concept of grace until the Church Age, then you do not know God and you do not know His plan.

Jews and gave their inheritance away to us, Church Age believers. Then why didn't God do that right here? Why didn't God say to Abraham, "Look, you are not the man I thought you were; you have failed me again and again. You just hang out here and do whatever and I will find someone else worthy of My blessings." But God does not do that. God not only blesses this failure (and right after he failed too), but God later calls Abraham *His friend*.

Outline of Chapter 20:

Introduction

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| vv. | 1–2 | Thinking That Sarah Is Abraham's Sister, King Abimelech Takes Her to Wife |
| vv. | 3–7 | God Warns Abimelech of His Sin |
| vv. | 8–16 | Abimelech Returns Sarah to Abraham |
| vv. | 17–18 | Abraham Prays for God's Judgement to be Lifted from Abimelech's House |

Addendum

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

| | | |
|--------------|----|---|
| Preface | | Quotations |
| Introduction | | Parallels between Genesis 19 and Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | The Prequel of Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | The Principals of Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | The Abrahamic Timeline for Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | A Synopsis of Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | Matthew Henry's Outline for Genesis 20 |
| Introduction | | Hajime Murai Organizes Genesis 20:1–18 |
| v. | 1 | The Negev; a Graphic and Explanation |
| v. | 1 | A map of Abraham's journeys |
| v. | 1 | Map of Gerar, Shur and Kedesh-barnea |
| v. | 1 | Kedesh of Judah (a.k.a. <i>Kadesh</i> or <i>Kadesh-barnea</i>) |
| v. | 1 | Map of Gerar and Beersheba |
| v. | 1 | Map of Shur, the Negev and Gerar |
| v. | 1 | Map 12: of the Arabah, Negeb, Wildernesses of Zin and Paran |
| v. | 1 | Speculation: Why did Abraham move? |
| v. | 2 | So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah (a painting) |
| v. | 2 | Summarizing logical points of speculation from Genesis 20:2 |
| v. | 2 | Alan Carr: Sin Cannot Derail God's Plan |
| v. | 3 | The 20 Dreams of Scripture |
| v. | 3 | The Bible Query on, <i>Why didn't Abimelech die?</i> |
| v. | 3 | Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death |
| v. | 3 | How Shem's Lifetime Overlapped Abraham's Lifetime |
| v. | 5 | The Poetic Nature of Abimelech's Words |
| v. | 6 | Examples of God's protective, overruling will |
| v. | 7 | Commentators on the Use of the word "Prophet" in Genesis 20:7 |
| v. | 7 | The Parallels Between the Coming Savior and Abraham in Genesis 20 |
| v. | 8 | The Little Prince Meets the King |
| v. | 8 | Had Abimelech believed in the Revealed God? |
| v. | 9 | Abimelech Rebukes Abraham (Graphic) |
| v. | 9 | Whedon Notes the Poetic Nature of Abimelech's Words |
| v. | 10 | What is fundamental to a good nation? |
| v. | 10 | What is not fundamental to a good nation? |
| v. | 11 | The Abbreviated Doctrine of <i>Fear of the Lord</i> |

| | | |
|----|----|--|
| v. | 11 | Did Abraham believe the people of Gerar to be like the Sodomites? |
| v. | 11 | Speculation about Abraham and his lying to the King of Gerar |
| v. | 13 | Coffman on Abraham's four-fold excuse |
| v. | 13 | Goettsche on <i>How we should view our confessed sins</i> |
| v. | 13 | Goettsche on, <i>Know your weaknesses and avoid them</i> |
| v. | 14 | Abraham receives Sarah from King Abimelech, a painting by Nicolaes Berchem |
| v. | 14 | When Christians Ask— "Why did God let Abraham prosper by lying?" |
| v. | 16 | Commentators Explain Genesis 20:16 |
| v. | 16 | Summarizing the Meaning of Genesis 20:16 |
| v. | 16 | What Abimelech gives to Abraham |
| v. | 18 | Keeping the dream alive: Abraham and Sarah (Painted by Lars Justinen) |

| | |
|----------|---|
| Addendum | Comparing Genesis 12 to Genesis 20 |
| Addendum | What We Learn from Genesis 20 |
| Addendum | Why is Genesis 20 in the Word of God |
| Addendum | Josephus' History of this Time Period |
| Addendum | Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 20 |
| Addendum | The Testing of Abraham |
| Addendum | Gen. 1–22 Genesis a retrospective |
| Addendum | Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22 |
| Addendum | A Complete Translation of Genesis 20 |
| Addendum | Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 20 |
| Addendum | Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 20 |

| Chapter Outline | Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Beginning of Document | Doctrines Covered or Alluded to | Chapters of the Bible Alluded to |
| Definition of Terms | Introduction and Text | Addendum |
| www.kukis.org | Exegetical Studies in Genesis | |

| Doctrines Covered or Alluded To | | | |
|---|--|------------|--------------------|
| Abraham's spiritual life | Fear of the Lord | Heathenism | Revolution |
| | The Spiritual Life of the Believer in the Church Age | | The Three Kedesh's |
| Additional doctrines and links are found in Definition of Terms below. | | | |

| Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter | | | |
|--|--------|--------|---------|
| Gen. 1 | Gen. 2 | Gen. 3 | Gen. 4 |
| Gen. 5 | Gen. 6 | Gen. 7 | Gen. 8 |
| Gen.11 | Gen.12 | Gen.13 | Gen.14 |
| Gen.15 | Gen.17 | Gen.19 | Gen. 20 |
| Gen. 21 | Gen.22 | | |

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Blessing by Association | Friends and relatives and associates of a spiritually mature believer receive some overflow of blessing from that believer. People in the same geographical area of a mature of maturing believer receive blessings through their association. Blessing by Association (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). |
| Chiasm | A chiasm (also spelled chiasmus) is the way that some portions of the Bible are organized. It takes its name from the Greek letter chi (χ). The first section matches with the last, the second with the second-to-the-last, etc. It is called a chiasm, because the inverted parallelism looks like a chi (actually, half a chi) when one looks at it from its organizational standpoint. |
| Client nation | The client nation is a nation where there are a lot of believers and a lot of mature and growing believers. This nation is known for its evangelization, for its Bible teaching, its Bible scholarship, and missionary activity. The government and leaders may or may not be supportive of such activity. However, generally speaking, such activity is allowed within the national entity. It is this activity which preserves such a national entity. Doctrine of the Client Nation (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). |
| Laws of Divine Establishment | Since the world appears to be made up of mostly unbelievers, God must have some kind of plan for the unbelievers while they are alive. These are called the laws of divine establishment, and they are applicable to both believers and unbelievers. These are the laws which protect the freedom of a nation, and allow for evangelism and for the teaching of the Word of God. See the Laws of Divine Establishment (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). |
| Pivot | In nearly any nation, there will be believers and there will be mature believers (which is called a <i>pivot</i>). If these groups are large enough, a nation will be preserved and, in most cases, greatly prospered. If the pivot is small, or if there are very few mature believers in this pivot, then that nation will go down. The concept of a pivot of believers preserving a nation is found in Gen. 18:22–33 Matt. 5:13. For more information, see Bible Doctrine Resource or R. B. Thieme, Jr. (these appear to be identical). |
| Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God) | In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). |

| Definition of Terms | |
|---|---|
| The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord) | <p>We do not look within ourselves or do we build up some concept of God based upon our own experiences, but we first understand God as He has revealed Himself. Throughout the lives of the saints who have gone before us, God revealed Himself through the written Word and sometimes through direct contact. Once a foundation is laid, then we can see how God is understood through various experiences in our lives.</p> <p>We do not look within to find God and we do not go out and search for God. He will reveal Himself to us. Those who look to other gods are simply worshiping that which others have defined as <i>God</i>; or, in many cases, they incorporate their own norms and standards into their belief of the God they choose to believe in. Essentially, such a person is making God in his own image.</p> |
| Scar Tissue on the Soul | <p>Scar tissue of the soul is also called hardness of the heart, the uncircumcised heart, and stubbornness of heart. It is a divine judgment of the soul that restricts capacity for life and love. Unlike divine discipline that produces temporary suffering with no lasting side effects, scar tissue of the soul leaves a debilitating loss of capacity for life or love. However, since it is part of the soul's immaterial essence like emotion, it has no known physical properties. However, it does restrict the capacity of the soul. It blocks Spiritual light, which leads to affinity to the Cosmic System as well as soulish and physical ailments. Psychosis and psychopathic personality are examples of scar tissue of the soul. Although behavior can be altered by psychotherapy and psychiatric drugs, the only cure for such problems is the divine solution, which requires Rebound and application of Bible Doctrine.¹⁵ See Bible Doctrine Resource for more information.</p> |
| Type, Antitype, Typical | <p><i>A type is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1).</i>¹⁶ See the Doctrine of Typology (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p> |
| <p>Some of these definitions are taken from http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html http://www.theopedia.com/</p> | |

An Introduction to Genesis 20

Introduction: In Gen. 20, Abraham and Sarah move, temporarily, to Philistine¹⁷ territory, to Gerar. Abraham makes it known that Sarah is his sister—he does not claim that she is his wife—in order to protect himself. Consequently, King Abimelech of Gerar claims Sarah, calling for her to come to him and to marry him. While Sarah is in the king's palace, God comes to Abimelech in a dream, and tells Abimelech that he is a dead man for taking another man's wife. Abimelech protests to God, saying, "I did this innocently! Abraham told me that she is his sister!" God agrees that Abimelech did this innocently, and tells him to return Sarah immediately, because Abraham is a prophet and that Abraham would pray on behalf of Abimelech, so that he might live.

¹⁵ From http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1501 accessed August 31, 2013.

¹⁶ From <http://www.dake.com/dake/types.html> accessed July 30, 2013.

¹⁷ Whether or not the Philistines lived in this area at this time will be discussed in Gen. 21.

Abimelech tells his servants and they are afraid; then he calls in Abraham and complains to him for his lies. Abraham offers the excuse that he did not believe that there was a fear of God was in this place, and that he would be killed and Sarah taken from him. Then Abraham gives the excuse that she is actually his half-sister.

Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham, along with many sheep and oxen, as well as male and female servants, by way of apology. He also gave Sarah 1000 pieces of silver to show that she is an innocent party in all of this.

Abraham does pray on behalf of Abimelech and his country, and his wife and female servants are able to bear children again (God had stopped up their wombs while Sarah was in Abimelech's harem).

Chapter 20 places Abraham in a similar situation to Gen. 12, when Abraham failed a test of trusting in God. God has made many promises to Abraham concerning his seed; and, if this chapter is in order, concerning the seed of his wife, Sarah. Therefore, Abraham cannot be killed without having sired a son by Sarah. These two situations will be **compared** in the **addendum**.

It is worth noting that Abraham does not come off looking too good in this chapter. The purpose of a chapter like this is that, God has promised Abraham great things in previous chapters. These promises are related to Abraham's obedience to God. However, it is important to recognize that Abraham never achieved some semblance of sinless perfection. This chapter records one of his failures, so that we are not ever confused by the fact that after salvation, we will sin. There is no one who has lived at any time who did not sin after they were saved (unless they died 30 seconds later).

There is an extremely important truth to remember from this chapter: God is about to bless Abraham and Sarah with a child—the child of promise that they have been waiting decades for—and immediately before this blessing, Abraham fails, and he fails big-time. Yet God still blesses them. *That* is grace.

At this point, in Gen. 20, we would expect it to be 1–3 months later, and either Sarah has not yet conceived, or she is barely pregnant with Isaac (but she is obviously not showing yet). We would expect Abraham and Sarah to be dealing with her pregnancy. We would have expected Gen. 17 (where God promises a year from then that Isaac would be born) to go straight to Gen. 21 (the chapter where Isaac is born). However, for whatever reason, Gen. 18–20 is thrown into the middle of this. Gen. 20 is the oddest insertion of them all.

I believe that this chapter is placed in chronological order. Most commentators do not speak to this issue, but Coffman writes: *...this chapter is exactly where it belongs in the first book of Moses, and is not displaced chronologically. Efforts to move it around in the Book of Genesis do not derive from any solid evidence, but from the intention of trying to make it some kind of variant. "We see no reason for insisting that Genesis is not in its proper chronological position."*¹⁸ I have not read a commentator yet who placed this chapter elsewhere and with any reason to (I check about 30 commentators when wrapping up this study).

Coffman goes on: *There are the best reasons why this deplorable episode from the life of Abraham SHOULD appear exactly here. The Mosaic narrative, at this point, stands poised to relate the birth of the promised "seed" of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. And it was imperative that the wonder of God's amazing grace should not appear as being the result of merit or sinlessness on Abraham's part...The current theory that Abraham was possessed of some glorious kind of "saving faith" at this period of his life is contradicted and destroyed by the events of this chapter. Abraham's faith, as evidenced here, was weak and inadequate, inexcusable doubt and fear having, for a while, taken possession of him. And yet, Abraham was the best human specimen available. And God would see to it that His promise through Him would, in time, be fulfilled.*¹⁹

¹⁸ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014. Coffman is quoting from G. Ch. Aalders, Genesis Vol. II (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 27.

¹⁹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

Gen. 17:19, 21 was quite clear: God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." This means *at this set time next year*. Therefore, Gen. 20 cannot be too far in the future (assuming that it is in chronological order).

In Gen. 18:10–14 The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (ESV)

Now, even though the ESV translation of *about this time next year* sounds almost like an exact year, that is not necessarily the exact amount. The Hebrew allows for this to be more than a year, but, given the information about Abraham's age, at most, we are looking at 14–16 months down the road. Probably the child would be born in the same season that they were in, in the following year. However, Gen. 17:21 is more precise (in the Hebrew).

After making this promise in Gen. 17 and then in 18, God and two angels spoke to Abraham of the impending destruction of Sodom. Abraham intercedes for his nephew Lot who is living there, and we learn about the concept of intercessory prayer as well as the concept of a pivot of believers whose presence preserves a geographical area. In Gen. 19, we have the actual destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah followed by the incest of Lot's daughters (which acts of incest could have occurred any time after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, unrelated to the birth of Isaac, which birth is yet future in our study).

However, Gen. 20 is an even odder chapter to find, because in this chapter, Abraham and his wife move to another area—and yet, we do not even know whether or not she is pregnant yet. Her pregnancy would occur a few months or so after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, assuming that these chapters are in chronological order (and there is no reason to think that they are not). Furthermore, this chapter appears to take place over a period of a month or two at least.

God has promised Abraham that he would have a son, Isaac, through his wife Sarah, and, God put a time frame on this. God told Abraham back in Gen. 17:21: "My covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time in the next year." And then all of these things happen—the meal with Abraham and our Lord, the warning of God's judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the move in this chapter—all of these things falling in between this promise, which has a fairly short timetable, and the fulfillment of this promise.

Gen. 20 is the one more thing that happens to seemingly slow down the promise of God (it doesn't actually, but it seems to). Abraham and company will pull up stakes and move, finally settling in Gerar. At some point, he is questioned about Sarah and he says that Sarah is his sister. When Abimelech, the king of Gerar is told this, he takes Sarah as his wife, but never consummates the marriage. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him of impending death if he does not return Sarah to Abraham. So he does, but he first chews out Abraham for deceiving him as he did.

When studying the Bible—particularly the psalms—the key to understanding a passage often goes beyond interpreting the verses themselves, but setting up a theme or an outline or a structure. Once that has been established, everything else seems to fall into place. One of the keys to Gen. 20 is in how it parallels Gen. 19, although that is not obvious at first.

Gen. 20 belongs here in the book of Genesis thematically as much as it does chronologically. There are many important parallel themes found in both Gen. 19 and 20, even though they may not be obvious at first. . So, it is possible that the final editor of Genesis, throws Gen. 20 in at this point simply as a contrast to what was found in the previous chapter.²⁰

Parallels between Genesis 19 and Genesis 20

| Genesis 19 | Genesis 20 |
|--|--|
| The people of Sodom and Gomorrah occupied the land that Israel would one day control. | The people of Gerar were a people in an area that Israel would someday control. |
| Lot lived in Sodom for over 20 years, and yet was still treated as an outsider. | Abraham has only lived among the Philistines for a month or two, and yet he is afforded great respect. |
| The people of Sodom lacked establishment morality. They desired the two angels, who appeared to them to be men, and they were going to rape these men, even if they had to kill Lot to get to them. | The men of west Canaan (along the Gaza strip) were very concerned about marriage, and would not have disturbed Sarah had they known that she was Abraham's wife. |
| We might ask ourselves, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, "If the rest of Canaan is like this, should it not be destroyed as well?" In Gen. 19, we saw the great degeneracy of Sodom and how that affected the souls of Lot's daughters, even after Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed (they committed incest with their own father in order to perpetuate their name). They showed absolutely no fear of God, no understanding of God's power and the concept of destiny; they just did what was right in their own eyes. This was after witnessing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah while two angels led them to safety. As an aside, this tells us that a great experience does not advance a person spiritually; what occurs in your soul is what advances you spiritually. | Not all of the people of Canaan were like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. An example of this that comes to the mind of the person compiling this material is the people of Gerar. The king of Gerar and most of his servants will clearly present themselves as believers in the Revealed Member of the Trinity, Jehovah Elohim in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New. God even reveals Himself to this king in a dream. How can God reveal Himself to someone who does not believe in Him? |
| There is another thematic parallel between this and the previous chapter (actually, previous chapter and a half): Abraham will act as a mediator between the people and God in both chapters. At the end of Gen. 18, Abraham spoke to God about preserving Sodom because of the number of righteous people in Sodom. Abraham began at 50 righteous and continued speaking to God until he was down to 10 righteous people, and left it at that, expecting that Lot and his family totaled 10 believers. | Here in Gen. 20, Abraham will also intervene on behalf of the people of Gerar. In Gen. 19, God will honor the desire behind Abraham's prayer, but not the actual prayer; and in Gen. 20, God will honor both the request and the desire behind the request. |
| A third parallel theme is, Abraham was more than willing to excuse the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah (about which he knew very little at the time). He prejudged them not to be reasonably destroyed. | At the same time, Abraham was willing to prejudge the people of Gerar (he will again lie about his relationship with Sarah, thinking these men to all be heathen). |

²⁰ However, we will eventually conclude that Gen. 20 is correctly placed thematically and chronologically speaking.

Parallels between Genesis 19 and Genesis 20

| Genesis 19 | Genesis 20 |
|---|--|
| Abraham prayed to God not to simply preserve Lot and his family, but to preserve Sodom, which was wholly given over to great degeneracy. | However, Abraham simply took it for granted that the people of Gerar—their king in particular—were godless souls which lacked any true concept of morality. |
| Finally, we will note a contrast between the way Lot interacts with the men of Sodom and how Abraham interacts with Abimelech, king of Gerar. Lot knew the people of Sodom for over two decades and even had a position of authority in this city; and yet, when they were overcome with lust, they were ready to kill him. | Abimelech barely knew anything about Abraham. He took his “sister” to wife. However, when God spoke to Abimelech, he snapped to and he will become more than accommodating to Abraham. |
| To put it simply, there were no establishment norms and standards in Sodom; just their lusts, to which they were subject. They had no fear of God in an ultimate judgment. | Abimelech took the dream from God very seriously, as did the rest of his cabinet. They understood how serious the judgment of God was. |
| Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom, but Sodom was not preserved. There were not enough believers in Sodom to preserve it. | Abraham interceded on behalf of Abimelech, and God healed him and gave his line life (and, therefore, prosperity). |

The insertion of this chapter seems to be very much in keeping with the Hebrew mind. The content of Genesis is as important to them as is chronology. This is reflected in the very way that their language is structured. In the English, we have a clear emphasis on time; our language is based upon a past, present and future verb structure. If a politician sins, we often ask, “What did he know and *when* did he know it?” The mind of the ancient Jew is not like this. Past, present and future is not the foremost thing in his mind; and the very verb tenses of this language reflect that (perfect, imperfect, and imperative).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This does not mean that the Jewish writers of Genesis were confused about chronology. The writer of Genesis often puts a time frame on a chapter. In Gen. 15:1, we begin with the phrase *after these things*. We find similar phrasing in Gen. 22:1, 20 39:7 40:1 and 48:1. We have several places in the history of Abraham where the action is tied to Abraham’s age: Gen. 12:4 16:16 17:1, 17, 24 21:5. So, it is not that Jewish writers were oblivious to time and chronology; it simply was not their first consideration or the defining structure for their writings.

It is also important to recognize that this chapter is tied directly to the chapter which follows, which chapter describes and defines much of Abraham’s life while living in the land of the Philistines. We learn about Abraham’s first encounter with Abimelech, how Abraham manages to make the very worse first impression that a believer can make on another person; and yet, God, in His grace, allows Abraham to get past this. In the chapter that follows, we will see another meeting between Abraham and Abimelech, and this meeting will be the result of a very important dispute (important to those involved in the dispute). This will actually define Abraham’s life for several decades, so much of this chapter is the setup for that.

There are questions whether the people along the coast are the same Philistines that the judges, Samuel, Saul and David concerned themselves with. According to Kidner, *The Philistines arrived in Palestine in force in the early twelfth century; Abimelech's group will have been early forerunners, perhaps in the course of trade.*²¹ This will be discussed in detail in **Gen. 21** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

²¹ From <https://bible.org/seriespage/dont-ever-say-never-genesis-201-18> accessed August 27, 2014. Deffinbaugh cites Derek Kidner, Genesis (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), p. 142.

So that there is no misunderstanding, I have not solved the problem of whether this chapter is chronological or simply placed here for thematic reasons. However, we will eventually come to the conclusion that Gen. 20 is correctly placed in time, because of where Abraham is before Gen. 20 and where he is afterwards. Gen. 20 is consistent with Abraham's geographical moves, which follow a certain chronology. Before Isaac is born, much of the Abrahamic narrative takes place in east-central Judah; and after Isaac is born, Abraham will be living in southwestern Judah. Isaac will be born in Gen. 21:1–4 and the very end of Gen. 21 will confirm that Abraham is living among the Philistines. That suggests that this chapter is correctly placed time-wise.

There is one more thing that this and the previous two chapters accomplish: they make it seem as if a very long time passes between the promise of a uniquely-born son the Abraham and Sarah and the fulfillment of that promise. There is enough which happens in Gen. 18–20 to nearly forget about God's covenant with Abraham and about his soon-to-be-born son. This is one of many parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord.

What is happening in Gen. 20 is, Abraham is going to go to a new area where heathen (in his opinion) are in charge, so he will lie about who Sarah is—again—presumably to protect himself. He did this before back in Gen. 12:11–13 and this reveals that Abraham really did not learn anything from that incident.

One of the interesting things that we find in the Bible narrative is, these many parallel incidents which are found throughout the Bible. Over and over again, some incident will occur; and then, 10 years (or 100 years or 1000 years) later a very similar incident would occur, and be recorded in Scripture. As a result, there have been all kinds of theories—the most common among liberal scholars (those who do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God) is, we are seeing the same narrative, but recorded at different times by different people as a result of a different oral tradition; and that this accounts for the differences. However, in our own lives, we have parallel situations which occur. That in no way means that we remember the same incident in two different ways in later life.

Gen. 20 is one of those parallel situations. Abraham had been in this situation before and he mishandled the situation, and, this time, he will make the same mistake. However, what we are to understand is, the Bible is filled with parallels. The relationship between a father and a son parallel God's relationship with us. When Abraham offers up his uniquely-born son as a sacrifice to God (this is coming in Gen. 22), that was a parallel to Jesus offering up Himself on the cross to God. In the psalms, we come across remarkable passages, where the writer seems to be recording his thoughts and feelings about one incident; but that the words that he writes actually look forward to a parallel situation (for instance, Psalm 22, which appears to both describe David when deathly ill and, at the same time, describe our Lord on the cross).

Therefore, God wants to get our attention with these parallel situations in Scripture, so that we are able to recognize other parallels which are pertinent to our lives and our relationship with Him.

You know that Jesus taught in parables and He is the Living Word of God (John 1:1–3, 14). So it is logical that the written Word of God contain real life situations which have meaning beyond the narrative given.

One more thing: it is important to realize that, Abraham has not reached some pinnacle of sinlessness so that God can now bless him with a child. Although, as we get older and more spiritually mature, it is likely that our sins will be reduced; but that does not mean that we will ever enter into some kind of sinless perfection. So, what appears to occur right before Sarah gives birth is, there is again another attack upon the line of Abraham and another failure on the part of Abraham.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 20

For a long time, God has been promising Abraham that he will have a son, and that son would be the beneficiary of all the promises of God (which have been numerous). However, just recently, God has told Abraham, "Next year, you and Sarah will have a son and I will see you then." Gen. 17:15–17, 21 18:10

The Prequel of Genesis 20

However, right after that, there have been all of these detours. In the latter half of Gen. 18, God told Abraham about the destruction of Sodom, and Abraham bargained with God about this destruction; and God agreed that, if there were 10 righteous people in Sodom, that He would not destroy it.

Then, because there were not 10 righteous people in Sodom, God destroyed that city along with Gomorrah and 2 other smaller cities in Gen. 19.

Gen. 20 will begin with Abraham and Sarah will move their compound first to the south, and then up northwest to Gerar.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 20

| Characters | Commentary |
|---|--|
| Abraham | Abraham is the father of the Jewish race, who has had a child by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid, but he has not yet fathered a son by Sarah, his wife. This takes place during a period of 2 or 3 months before Abraham actually impregnates Sarah. |
| Sarah | Sarah, in this chapter, picks up and moves with Abraham and their compound. When the Angel of the Lord said that she would bear a child, she laughed at hearing that. Here, she will tell the representatives of Abimelech, king of Gerar, that she is Abraham's sister (as they has agreed to). |
| Abimelech | Abimelech, the king of Gerar, will take Sarah into his harem in this chapter, expecting to marry her, as she is a single woman who is probably reasonably attractive. |
| Elohim (God) | God will come to Abimelech in a dream and warn him that he has taken another man's wife, and tells him that he will die if he does not return her to Abraham. |
| The servants of Abimelech | These are probably Abimelech's cabinet members or his underlings who carry out his bidding. He gathers them together and tells them of his dream, and they are all afraid. |
| Abimelech and his servants are believers in the Revealed God. | |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 20

| Legend | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Birth or death | God speaks with Abraham |
| Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham) | |
| Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date. | |

The entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
 The entire **Patriarchal Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

| Brent MacDonald | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible | Scripture | Event/Description |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| 2164 B.C. | 0 | 1967 B.C. | Gen. 11:26–27 | Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran. |
| Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's. | | | | |
| | | 1907 B.C. 1927 B.C. (Klassen) | Gen. 11:28, 20 | Abram's family travel from Ur to Haran , although their original intention had been to go to the land of Canaan . Gen 11:28, 20 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. |
| | | 1892 B.C. | Gen. 11:32 | Death of Terah, Abram's father. Gen. 11:32 Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran. |
| 2089 B.C. | 75 | 1892 B.C. | Gen. 12:1–4 | Abraham leaves for Promised Land from Haran , after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. |
| | | 1891 B.C. 1892 B.C. (Klassen) | Gen. 12:10–20 | Abraham & Sarah in Egypt (Goshen, Memphis), return to the Land of Promise (Genesis 12:10-20:1) |
| | | 1891 B.C. | Gen. 13:1–4 | Abram returns to Bethel in the land of Canaan , returning as a very wealthy man. |
| | | 1891 B.C. 1889 B.C. (Klassen) | Gen. 13:5–13 | Abram and Lot separate from one another. |
| | | | Gen. 13:14–17 | God renews His covenant with Abram. |
| | | | Gen. 13:18 | Abram moves to the plain of Mamre , which is in Hebron . |

| Brent MacDonald | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible | Scripture | Event/Description |
|-----------------|----------------|---|-------------------|---|
| | | 1884 B.C. 1888 B.C. ²² (Klassen) | Gen. 14:5–16 | Lot is taken captive and Abram delivers Lot. |
| | | 1883 B.C. | Gen. 14:17, 21–24 | Abram speaks with the King of Sodom after his victory. |
| (2065 B.C.) | 99 | 1868 B.C. | Gen. 17:1–22 | God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 <i>When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout. The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year."</i> |
| (2065 B.C.) | | (1867 B.C.) | Gen. 18:1–15 | Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 <i>The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son."</i> |
| (2065 B.C.) | | (1867 B.C.) | Gen. 18:16–33 | The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised. Abraham intercedes on behalf of Sodom. |
| (2065 B.C.) | | (1867 B.C.) | Gen. 19:1–23 | The angels visit Lot and warn him of the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. |
| 2065 B.C. | | (1867 B.C.) | Gen. 19:24–29 | Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela are destroyed by fire and sulfur and possibly by volcanic eruptions. Reese suggests that this is when the Dead Sea is formed. |

²² I had 1868 B.C.; I do not know if that is a typo on my part or if Klassen had a different order of events.

| Brent MacDonald | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible | Scripture | Event/Description |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | Gen. 20:1–18 | Abraham lies again about his wife to King Abimelech in Gerar , in southern Judah. Although some believe that this chapter is placed here in Genesis due to thematic elements rather than because it belongs here chronologically, we find Abraham in Gerar in the next chapter, which suggests that this chapter is correctly placed. |
| Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge puts this at 1897 B.C. ²³ If this chapter is in Chronological order (which appears to be the case), then MacDonald would have this date as 2065–2064 B.C. and Reese would have it at 1867–1866 B.C. | | | | |
| Coffman writes: <i>...this chapter is exactly where it belongs in the first book of Moses, and is not displaced chronologically. Efforts to move it around in the Book of Genesis do not derive from any solid evidence, but from the intention of trying to make it some kind of variant. "We see no reason for insisting that Genesis is not in its proper chronological position."</i> ²⁴ | | | | |
| 2064 B.C. | 100 | | Gen. 21:1–7 1Chron. 1:34 | Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 th generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. |
| | | 1867 B.C. | Gen. 19:30–38 | Lot's daughters bear sons to their father Lot. |
| 1989 B.C. | 175 | 1792 B.C. | Gen. 25:7–10 | Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years. He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah). |

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

From: http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf (Christian shepherd)

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Here is what to expect from Genesis 20:

²³ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Gen. 20:1.

²⁴ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014. Coffman is quoting from G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 27.

A Synopsis of Genesis 20

Abraham leaves Mamre, and, after having lived at Kadesh and Shur, and settled in at Gerar (Gen. 20:1). Abimelech takes Abraham's wife Sarah, because acknowledged her only as his sister (Gen. 20:2).

Abimelech is warned by God in a dream to restore Sarah to Abraham (Gen. 20:3). Abimelech asserts his innocence (Gen. 20:4–5). Nevertheless, he is clearly warned (Gen. 20:6–7).

Abimelech speak with about this situation (Gen. 20:8–10) and Abraham attempts to vindicates his conduct (Gen. 20:11–13).

Abimelech restores Sarah, and also makes Abraham a present of sheep, oxen, and male and female slaves (Gen. 20:14). In addition, Abimelech offers him a residence in any part of the land (Gen. 20:15); and he reproves Sarah (Gen. 20:16).

At the intercession of Abraham, the curse of barrenness is removed from Abimelech and his household (Gen. 20:17–18).

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

This was mostly taken from Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20 chapter comments.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Coffman presents a short summation: *This whole chapter deals with another incident in the lives of Abraham and Sarah in which Sarah was represented by both of them as being the sister of Abraham and not his wife. It appears here that this subterfuge was a definite characteristic of the modus operandi adopted by the patriarch as a maneuver which both of them doubtless considered to be a protective device, designed to prevent Abraham from being killed by someone who coveted his beautiful wife.*²⁵

This is not too different from mine.

Matthew Henry's Outline for Genesis 20

- I. Abraham's sin in denying his wife, and Abimelech's sin thereupon in taking her (Gen. 20:1–2).
- II. God's discourse with Abimelech in a dream, upon this occasion, wherein he shows him his error (Gen. 20:3), accepts his plea (Gen. 20:4–6), and directs him to make restitution (Gen. 20:7).
- III. Abimelech's discourse with Abraham, wherein he chides him for the cheat he had put upon him (Gen. 20:8–10), and Abraham excuses it as well as he can (Gen. 20:11–13).
- IV. The good issue of the story, in which Abimelech restores Abraham his wife (Gen. 20:14–16), and Abraham, by prayer, prevails with God for the removal of the judgment Abimelech was under (Gen. 20:17–18).

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20 chapter comments.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

I have made a few changes on Murai's excellent work. This is known as a **chiasm**. ESV is used below.

²⁵ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

Hajime Murai Organizes Genesis 20:1–18

| Structure | | ESV Text |
|-----------|--|---|
| A | Abimelech takes Sarah (vv. 1–2) | From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. |
| B | God warns Abimelech of impending death and says that Abraham must intercede for him. (Vv. 3–7) | 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." Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? 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." 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. 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." |
| C | The words of Abimelech (vv. 8–10) | 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. 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." And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" |
| D | Abraham's apology (vv. 11–13) | 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. Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 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.'" |
| C' | The words of Abimelech (vv. 14–16) | Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." 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." |
| B' | Abraham prays to God, interceding for Abimelech (v. 17a) | Then Abraham prayed to God,... |
| A' | God heals Abimelech for taking Sarah (vv. 17b–18) | ...and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This is one of the oddest chapters in the Bible. We have been expecting the birth of Isaac since Gen. 17 (the text seemed to indicate that 1 years from that time, Sarah would give birth to a boy), and yet, 3 chapters later, and it has not occurred yet (his birth will occur in Gen. 21).

Just as interesting, this chapter is quite similar to Gen. 12 and 26 (which involves Isaac and Abimelech). In this chapter, the Philistines are in contrast to the Sodomites of the previous chapter; and in Gen. 26, there will be a contrast drawn between the Philistines of this generation and those of the next generation.

Perhaps because of the similarities between this and Gen. 12, many commentators had very little to say about this chapter of Genesis.

Coffman presents a short summation: *We confidently reject the unproved speculative assertions of alleged scholars to the effect that, "It is impossible to doubt that the two accounts (here and in that recorded in Genesis 12:10-20) are variants of the same tradition." These episodes are far more dissimilar than similar. In fact, about the ONLY correspondence between them lies in the fact of Abraham's passing off his wife as his sister. They occurred at different periods of the patriarch's life, involved different kings, of different countries, resulted in different treatment of Abraham, were marked by different forms of restraint upon the royal intentions, were distinguished by different forms of rebuke to Abraham, and different responses from Abraham; one event took place in Egypt, the other in Gerar, a city of the Philistines; in one Abraham was expelled from the country, and in the other he was kindly treated and invited to remain; one ruler did not believe in the true God, the other did; in one episode, Abraham did not pray for the king; but in the other he did so, resulting in the restoration of perfect health for the beneficiaries of his prayers; in one, Sarah's beauty resulted in Pharaoh's taking her, and in the other, it was the desire to form alliance with Abraham that seems to have been the reason. How could anyone ever believe that these are variant accounts of the SAME episode?*²⁶

These two accounts will be **studied** side-by-side at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Thinking That Sarah Is Abraham's Sister, King Abimelech Takes Her to Wife

Driver, perhaps with a smile, entitled this: *Sara's adventure at the Court of Gerar*.²⁷

Slavishly literal:

And so sets out from there Abraham landward, the Negev. And so he stays between Kadesh and between Shur. And so he resides in Gerar.

Genesis
20:1

Moderately literal:

Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he was temporarily residing in Gerar.

Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he resided temporarily in Gerar.

²⁶ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014. Coffman appears to be quoting John Skinner, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1910), p. 315. However, it is unclear where the parentheses are closed (my guess is at the end after the question mark).

²⁷ From [Driver's text online](#), accessed August 28, 2014; p. 205.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation²⁸; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> and first published in 1862.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so sets out from there Abraham land-ward, the Negev. And so he stays between Kadesh and between Shur. And so he resides in Gerar.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Unfortunately, what was recovered the Dead Sea Scrolls of Genesis, with very little of the second third of the book being preserved. Nothing of Gen. 20 survives.

²⁸ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abraham went on from thence to the land of the south, and dwelt between <u>Rekam</u> and <u>Chagra</u> , and had his habitation in Gerar. |
| Latin Vulgate | Abraham removed from thence to the south country, and dwelt between Cades and Sur, and sojourned in Gerara. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | AND Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and settled between <u>Rakim</u> and <u>Gadar</u> , and Abraham sojourned in Gadar. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abraham journeyed from there to the southern country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. |
| Significant differences: | Two of the targum and Syriac city names do not match the Hebrew. |

Gill: *Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the words between Rekam and Chagra, or Hagra, the same place where the angel of the Lord met with Hagar at the well.*²⁹

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | Abraham and Sarah visit Gerar Abraham traveled from there toward the land of the arid southern plain, and he settled as an immigrant in Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. |
| Contemporary English V. | Abraham moved to the Southern Desert, where he settled between Kadesh and Shur. Later he went to Gerar, and while there... |
| Easy English | Abraham and Abimelech Abraham went from that place to the area called the Negev. He lived between the cities called Kadesh and Shur. And he stayed in Gerar for some time. |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev. [111] Abraham settled in the city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar,... |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Abraham moved from Mamre to the southern part of Canaan and lived between Kadesh and Shur. Later, while he was living in Gerar,... |
| <i>The Message</i> | Abraham traveled from there south to the Negev and settled down between Kadesh and Shur. While he was camping in Gerar,... |
| New Berkeley Version | Abraham moved from there to the South country and lived between Kadesh and Shur; then he lived for a time in Gerar. Gerar is 6 miles south of Gaza, on the Philistine boundary |
| New Living Translation | Abraham Deceives Abimelech 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,. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| American English Bible | Thereafter, AbraHam moved to the southern part of the country and took up living between Cades and Sur, staying for a while in GeraRa. |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abraham journeyed from there to the land of South-Canaan, and dwelled between the rest-stop and the trade-route. When he stayed in Gerar,. |
| Christian Community Bible | Abraham and Sarah at Gerar Abraham left there for the territory of the Negeb, and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he stayed for a time in Gerar.. |
| NIRV | Abraham and Abimelech Abraham moved away from there into the Negev Desert. He lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Abraham left there for the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While staying in Gerar,... |

²⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| New Simplified Bible | Abraham moved from Mamre to the southern part of Canaan and lived between Kadesh and Shur. Later, while he was living in Gerar,... |
| Revised English Bible | Abraham journeyed by stages from there into the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur, living as an alien in Gerar. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abraham went on his way from there to the land of the South, and was living between Kadesh and Shur, in Gerar. |
| Conservapedia | Abraham traveled from there toward the Negev, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed as a guest in Gerar. |
| The Expanded Bible | Abraham Tricks Abimelech Abraham left Hebron [13:18] and traveled to southern Canaan [^L the Negev; 13:1] where he stayed awhile between Kadesh [16:14] and Shur [16:7]. When he moved to [sojourned/lived as an alien in] Gerar [^C north of Kadesh and Shur; present-day Tell Abu Hureirah], he said to people about Sarah his wife, "She is my sister" [12:10-20; 26:1-11]. Abimelech king of Gerar heard this, so he sent some servants to take her. V. 2 is included for context. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | Abraham and Abimelech Abraham then removed quietly from there landward, and settled between Kadesh and the Wall, and resided at Gherar. |
| NET Bible® | Abraham journeyed from there to the Negev [Or "the South [country]"; Heb "the land of the Negev."] [Negev is the name for the southern desert region in the land of Canaan.] region and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he lived as a temporary resident [Heb "and he sojourned."] in Gerar. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. |
| NIV – UK | Abraham and Abimelech Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar,... |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Complete Jewish Bible | Avraham traveled from there toward the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. While living as an alien in G'rar,... |
| exeGesés companion Bible | <u>ABRAHAM PULLS STAKES</u> And from there Abraham pulls stakes toward the south land and settles between Qadesh and Shur and sojourns in Gerar. |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negev and settled between kadesh and shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar,... |
| Kaplan Translation | <i>Sarah and Abimelech</i> Abraham migrated from there to the land of the Negev, and he settled between Kadesh and Shur [This would be the area around Beer Lachai Roi, see note on Genesis 16:14.]. He would often visit Gerar [On the southwest border of the Holy Land, see note on Genesis 10:19. The Midrash identifies it as Gerdike or Gerarike (Bereshith Rabbah 52), which is this Gerar. It is a city some 55 miles north of Kadesh, so although Abraham's primary dwelling was to the south, he would often visit Gerar, perhaps for supplies (cf. Radak). Some, however, suggest that this Gerar was Wadi Gerur, some 13 miles southwest of Kadesh, literally between Kadesh and Shur. See Genesis 26:17. (Also see Yov'loth 16:10).]. The Kaplan |

Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.

The Scriptures 1998

And Abraham set out from there to the land of the South, and dwelt between Qadēsh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

NOW ABRAHAM journeyed from there toward the South country (the Negeb) and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he lived temporarily in Gerar. "Primitive geographic expressions such as 'the South country (the Negeb)' (Gen. 12:9; 13:1, 3; 20:1; 24:62) and 'the east country' (Gen. 25:6) are used in the time of Abraham... After the time of Genesis they have well-known and well-defined names; I submit that they were written down in early days, and that no writer after Moses could have used such archaic expressions as these" (P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*).

Concordant Literal Version

And journeying thence is Abraham to the south-rim. And dwelling is he between Kadesh and Shur, and is sojourning in Gerar.

Green's Literal Translation

And Abraham pulled up stakes from there to the land of the Negeb, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

Heritage Bible

And Abraham pulled up from there toward the land of the Negev, and sat down between Kadesh and Shur, and resided temporarily in Gerar.

Kretzmann's Commentary

Sarah Again in Danger

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. From the grove of Mamre at or near Hebron Abraham gradually journeyed, with all his possessions, to the extreme southern part of Canaan, very likely in search of better pasturage. The region where he tented was, roughly speaking, between Kadesh and Shur, and in his wanderings he encamped also at Gerar, in the land of the Philistines.

Modern KJV

And Abraham moved from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

NASB

Abraham's Treachery

Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev [i.e. South country], and settled [Lit dwelt] between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar.

New RSV

From there Abraham journeyed towards the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While residing in Gerar as an alien,....

Syndein/Thieme

{Disillusion, Degradation, Decoration - Verse 1 - Disillusion} And Abraham kept on journeying from there toward the south country {Abraham leaving the land is always a picture of a believer out of fellowship - see Chapter 19:26-28 for the reason why}, and kept on dwelling in prosperity {yashab} between Kadesh {name means prostitution - picture of idolatry or eyes off the Lord} and Shur {name means 'to stir up dust' or 'get excited' - emotions now rule Abraham}, and kept on 'dwelling temporarily'/sojourning in Gerar {name's meaning comes from its sound (ana-poetic) - means sawing and came to mean 'dragging away' - so here Abraham is 'dragged away' and is 'out of fellowship'}.

Webster Bible

And Abraham journeyed from thence towards the south country, and dwelt between Kadash and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

Young's Updated LT

And Abraham journeys from there toward the land of the south, and dwells between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourns in Gerar.

The gist of this verse:

Abraham travels down south to Gerar.

A great deal has happened. God promised Abraham and his wife a son in one year's time. Sodom has been destroyed, and, for all Abraham knows, so has his nephew Lot. Without being given a reason, Abraham pulls up

stakes and he moves to Gerar, which is a Philistine controlled area. These may not be related to the Philistines which interfere so much with Israel in the time of the Judges and Samuel and David.

| Genesis 20:1a | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| nâça' (נָצַח) [pronounced naw-SAHG] | <i>to pull up [stakes], to pull out, to break camp and move out, to set out, to journey, to march, to depart</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #5265 BDB #652 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced min] | <i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i> | preposition of separation | Strong's #4480 BDB #577 |
| shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm] | <i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i> | adverb | Strong's #8033 BDB #1027 |
| 'Ab ^e râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |
| 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets] | <i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i> | feminine singular noun with the directional hê | Strong's #776 BDB #75 |
| negeb (נֶגֶב) [pronounced ne-GHE ^{BV}] | <i>south, south-country; southern portion of Judah, southern district of Palestine; often transliterated Negev or Negeb</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #5045 BDB #616 |

Translation: Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev,... Abraham had apparently lived in Mamre for about 20 years;³⁰ which can be surmised from Gen. 13:18 18:1 and the Abrahamic Timeline. Now, he is suddenly picking up and moving.

The Negev; a Graphic and Explanation, from newsyoucanbelieve.com, accessed August 29, 2014.

Peter Pett: [Abraham] had been



³⁰ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1–2.

*established many years by the Oaks of Mamre but now he moves on, although he would later return to the area. There Sarah died and was buried (Genesis 23:19), and he himself was buried there (Genesis 25:9). Isaac later returns there (Genesis 35:27) and Jacob was also buried there (Genesis 50:13).*³¹

Matthew Henry: *In a world where we are strangers and pilgrims we cannot expect to be always in the same place...Wherever we are, we must look upon ourselves but as sojourners.*³²

We're not really given any reason for Abraham picking up stakes and moving on, but there are several reasons that come to mind: trading groups that usually pass through there may no longer come through because the entire Sodom and Gomorrah area has been destroyed. And, Abraham has livestock and they need to be constantly attended to and moved about to those greener pastures. However, I think that the actual reason is, Abraham was somewhat disillusioned with God. He believed that he had successfully argued for Sodom to be spared, and yet he saw it destroyed, and probably thought that Lot and his family were dead as well.

At some point, someone knew that Lot was still alive. Since we don't really know anything about Lot after his daughters had sex with him, it is likely that Abraham did not know if Lot was still alive at this point in time. However, at some point, perhaps a few generations later, the presence of the Ammonites and the Moabites became better known; and, obviously, their origins became known as well.

Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev,... I don't know what Abraham was thinking or feeling at this time, as it was clear the whole area where Lot lived had been devastated, as there was billowing smoke coming from there (Gen. 19:27–28). We don't know if Abraham went down there to investigate and found out or if he wrote Lot off as dead, and simply moved to the southern part of Judah. Abraham could have gone through or near that area traveling in the direction that he does. He would have seen all of the devastation as he traveled east of Sodom and Gomorrah; and it is highly unlikely that he would have seen Lot. Furthermore, just seeing this land, as destroyed as it was, with smoke and strange gases billowing up, probably caused Abraham to move more toward the Mediterranean Sea.

Clarke: *It is very likely that...[Abraham] was so deeply affected with the melancholy prospect of the ruined cities, and not knowing what was become of his nephew Lot and his family, that he could no longer bear to dwell within sight of the place.*³³

Abraham is moving southwest; south, would have been the direction of Lot and the destroyed cities. Now, whether Abraham chose to go this route to first look for Lot, we are not told. If they ever saw one another again, we are not told. It seems unlikely.

Abraham would have gone by the area within a week of Gen. 19, when God destroyed the 4 cities, and it would have appeared to Abraham, from the west view, that no one has survived. If everyone was destroyed, then it would have appeared unsafe even to travel on the ground that had been destroyed and was probably covered with burning oils and sulphur.

Normally, the amount of movement described in this verse would take place over a period of 5 or 10 years. However, if this is in chronological order, then this movement would have taken place in the space of a few months. This may have simply been the right time for Abraham to try new pastures for his animals; and he may have been looking for a new place to settle down to, not wanting to remain at a place from which he could see the smoke of Sodom.

³¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 24, 2014.

³² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1–2.

³³ This seems to be the view of several commentators. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1. John Calvin offers the same opinion.

Genesis 20:1b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{pv}] | <i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3427 BDB #442 |
| bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane] | <i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i> | preposition | Strong's #996 BDB #107 |
| Qâdêsh (קָדֵשׁ) [pronounced kaw-DAYSH] | <i>sacred, holy, set apart; transliterated Kadesh, Kedesh</i> | proper noun; location | Strong's #6946 and #6947 BDB #873 |
| This city is in the extreme southern portion of Judah and is the same as Kadesh-barnea. | | | |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane] | <i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i> | preposition | Strong's #996 BDB #107 |
| Shûwr (שׁוּר) [pronounced sher] | <i>wall, fortress and is transliterated Shur</i> | proper noun, location | Strong's #7793 BDB #1004 |

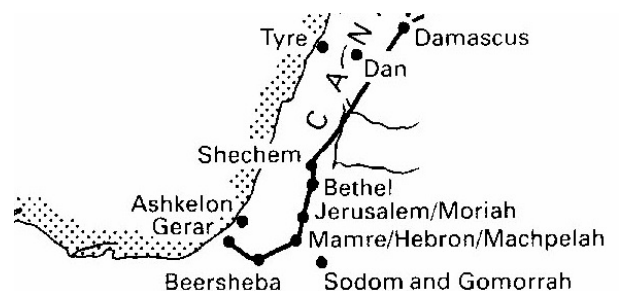
A place southwest of Palestine on the eastern border or within the border of Egypt; the Israelites passed through the wilderness of Shur after crossing the Red Sea

Translation: ...and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Shur is the desert region along the Mediterranean coast between Egypt and Palestine. Kadesh is a city about 50 miles southwest from the southern tip of the Dead Sea.

So far, this is what we have: Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Logically, given what has taken place in previous chapters, it seems unlikely that this is a trip that Abraham has made prior to Gen. 17. Abraham moves toward the land of the Negev, meaning that he is moving south-southwest from the Oaks of Mamre. At first, Abraham stops between Kadesh and Shur and the text here seems to indicate that Abraham was considering staying there. However, he seems to backtrack somewhat and go back up towards Gerar. In all, if Abraham and company actually stay for a week or so between Kadesh and Shur, this journey could have taken 1–2 months. Timing, at this point, is critical, because we are in a countdown to the conception and then birth of Isaac.

The map of Abraham's journeys is from <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/0415236614/resources/maps/map3.jpg> accessed March 5, 2013.

What appears to be the case is, Abraham first went between the Desert of Shur and the city of Kadesh, and then he circled back up into the land of the Philistines.



Although I found several graphics based upon Gen. 20, it was surprisingly more difficult to find a map of exactly Abraham's route. The one above more or less gives his movement over several years, the bottom portion covering where Abraham journeyed in Gen. 20. It was difficult to simply find maps with Shur, Kadesh and Gerar.

If you look at the map to the right, Abraham has lived in Mamre for an extended period of time. In order for him to go south between Shur and Kadesh, he would be traveling west or northwest of Sodom and Gomorrah. He would not be able to see the small city that Lot escaped to; he would have no idea at this time that Lot is still alive. All that Abraham can see is great devastation.

Then he moves north-northwest toward Gerar. He would be moving away from Sodom and Gomorrah, which no doubt have tons of noxious fumes spreading out from ground zero. Moving to Gerar will take Abraham and his compound away from the fumes and the sight of a God-destroyed region.

This **Map of Gerar, Shur and Kedesh-barnea** is from:

<http://www.christian-knowledge.com/images/canaan.jpg>
(Accessed March 5, 2013).

The overall map is one of the better, more detailed maps of Canaan, mostly during this time period.

So far, v. 1 reads: **Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur.** So Abraham originally moves south (which is what *Negev* means). He apparently does not go as far as Kadesh, but stops between Kadesh and Shur. The verb here is the Qal imperfect of *yâshab* (יָשַׁב) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^{BV}*], which means *to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442. An imperfect verb can view action as extended over a period of time or as future. However, here, we have 3 *wâw* consecutives with 3 imperfect verbs. This suggests the order in which things were done. He *sets out*, he *stays* and then he *resides*. In a construction like this, the period of time is not in view, just the succession of actions. So this could describe something taking place over 10 years time or over the period of a month. Given everything else that we know (the series of events on both sides of this chapter), this probably all took place over the period of a month.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Hagar, when she left Abraham and Sarah, was on the road to Shur when God spoke to her (Gen. 16:7).

Here is some basic information about Kadesh.

Kedesh of Judah (a.k.a. Kadesh or Kadesh-barnea)

Kedesh of Judah (with this spelling) is mentioned twice in Scripture. It is a city given over to Judah in Joshua 15:23 where it is described, with several other cities, as being a city at the extremity of the tribe of Judah toward the border of Edom. This would place Kedesh in far southwestern Judah, possibly as far as the wilderness of Zin (which is pretty much on the border of Judah and Edom).

It is very likely—that this is equivalent to Kadesh-barnea. The difference in spelling simply comes down to vowel points, which were added two millennia after Joshua 15 was written. The reason that I believe these cities to be equivalent is that Kadesh-barnea is given in the description of the border of Judah (Joshua 15:3), but is never mentioned as one of the cities given over to Judah (Joshua 15:21–62). Given that Kadesh-barnea is one of the more famous of the cities of Judah, I would think that it would have been named separately as a city which was given by lot to Judah. I am not aware of any event recorded in Scripture which would contradict this identification.

If we understand Kedesh of Judah to be equivalent to Kadesh-barnea (also called Kadesh), then this city is mentioned a number of times. Originally, Kadesh was known as *En-mishpat*. A later writer of Genesis so identified the city in Gen. 14:7.

Abraham's Egyptian mistress was dismissed from Abram's household by Sarai, and she got about as far as Kadesh when God came to her and turned her around and sent her back to her mistress. Gen. 16:7–16

Abraham travels by Kadesh when he leaves Mamre, but then turns around and heads northward to Gerar. Gen. 20:1

Moses leads the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the desert, and they stop right around Kadesh to assess their situation and to send spies into the Land of Promise prior to invading that land (which they will not do). Num. 13:26

When Kadesh is next mentioned (in Num. 20:1), 38 almost silent years have passed (Deut. 2:14). Most of gen X (the generation of adults to leave Egypt with Moses) has been killed off (they had been adult slaves in Egypt). They were the rebellious ones of Israel, whose sons were saved by the pleading of Moses. It was in Kadesh that Miriam died and was buried.

This is taken from **The Three Kedesh's** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Gill: *[Kedesh and Shur are the] two wildernesses, as Jerom says, one of which joined to Egypt, to which the people of Israel went when they passed over the Red sea, and the other, Kadesh, reached to the desert of the Saracens.*³⁴

Genesis 20:1c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |

³⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1.

Genesis 20:1c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| gûwr (גור) [pronounced goor] | <i>to temporarily reside, to sojourn; to gather together with, band together with</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1481 BDB #157 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| G ^e râr (גרר) [pronounced gher-AWR; possibly g ^e rawr] | <i>a lodging place, dwelling; transliterated Gerar</i> | proper singular noun; location | Strong's #1642 BDB #176 |

Translation: *Therefore, he was temporarily residing in Gerar.* Gerar is a city in southern Philistia, and it appears that Abraham would have circled back to get to it.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Here he dwelt between Kadesh (Gen. 14:7) and Shur (Gen. 16:7), and remained for some time in Gerar, a place the name of which has been preserved in the deep and broad Wady Jurf el Gerâr (i.e., torrent of Gerar) about eight miles S.S.E. of Gaza, near to which Rowland discovered the ruins of an ancient town bearing the name of Khirbet el Gerâr.*³⁵

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *Gerar was a city of Arabia Petrea, under a king of the Philistines, 25 miles from Eleutheropolis beyond Daroma, in the south of Judah. From Gen. 10:19, it appears to have been situated in the angle where the south and west sides of Canaan met, and to have been*



From:

http://www.genesisfiles.com/Maps/Gerar/Gerar_MR.jpg

³⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:1–3.

*not far from Gaza. Jerome, in his Hebrew Traditions on Genesis, says, from Gerar to Jerusalem was three days' journey.*³⁶

Genesis 20:1 And Abraham moved from there toward the south country [or, the Negev], and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

All of this is in what would later become southern Judah. In fact, Shur refers to the desert which is between Egypt and Israel. Kadesh here refers to Kadesh-Barnea, which is about 100 km south-southwest of Beersheba on the boundary line below, below the southern portion of the map below.

Map of Gerar and Beersheba. So Abraham has moved far into the south. Even though this is within the territory of Philistia, Abraham is still within the geographical will of God, because God gave Abraham a huge amount of land, in which Abraham was to walk (Gen. 13:17).

So far we have examined Gen. 20 overall and have concluded that it belongs here both thematically and chronologically. And we have studied the first verse:

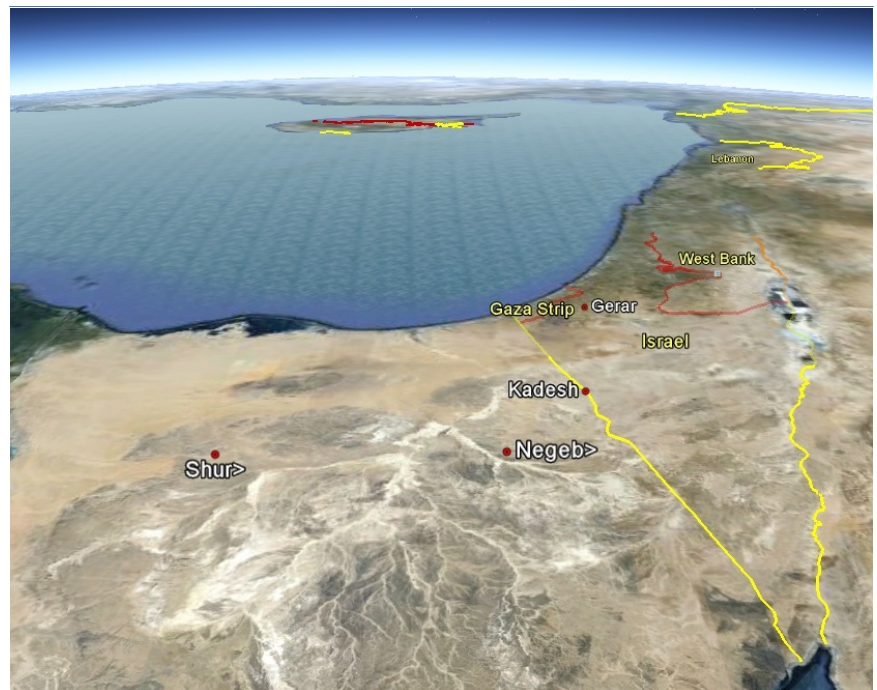
Genesis 20:1 And Abraham moved from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

This move could have taken anywhere from 2 weeks to a month or two. I mention the time, as we are in a countdown to the conception and birth of Isaac. Abraham has moved from the east central part of Judah to the southwestern part of Judah. The land that he has moved to is controlled by Philistines.

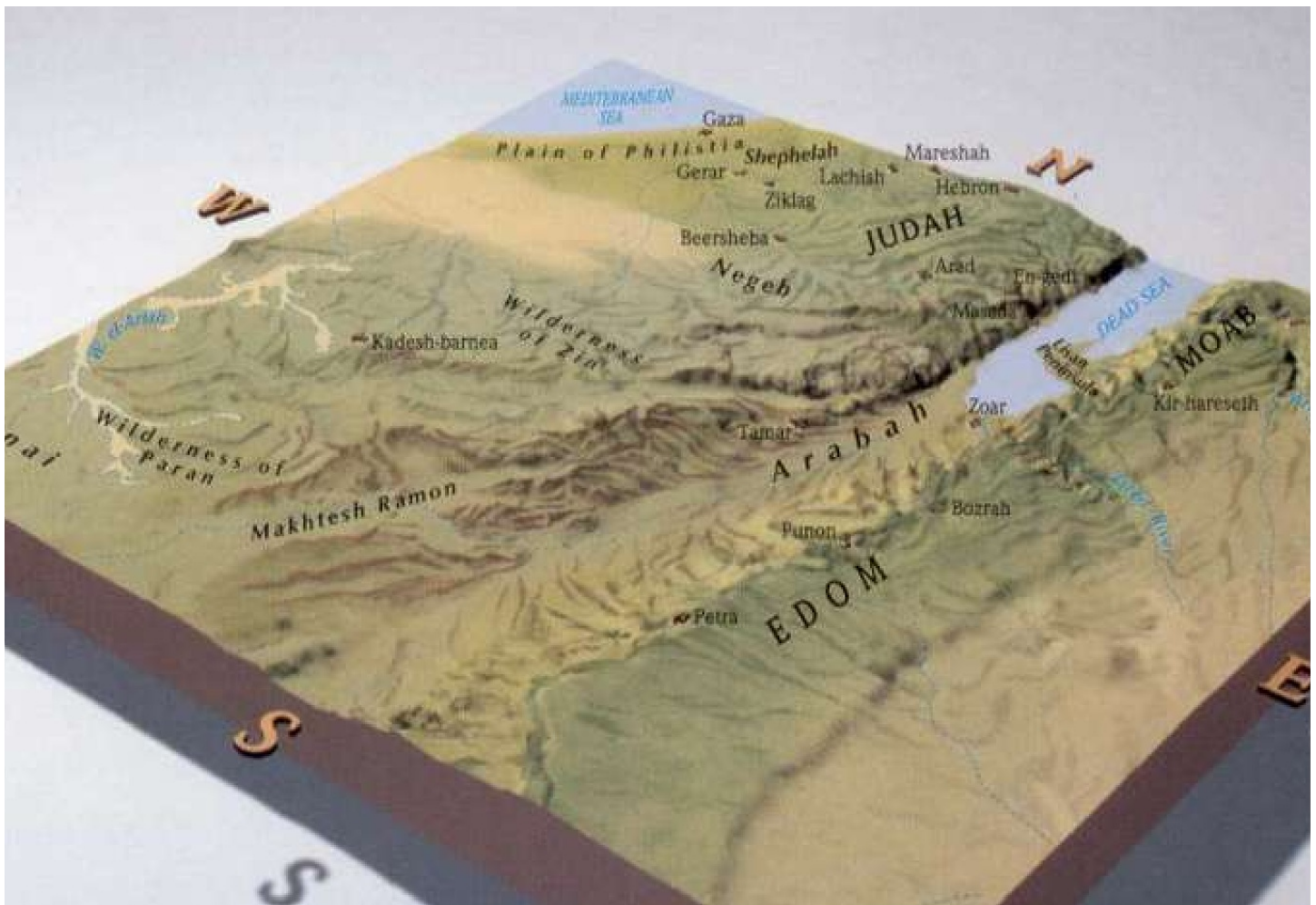
All the land that Abraham travels on is controlled by peoples that the Jews would later defeat—initially under Joshua and also under King David.

Map of Shur, the Negev and Gerar. Taken from [My Bible \(on News You Can Believe\)](#); accessed August 29, 2014.

This would put Abraham southwest of the Dead Sea. We are not always told exactly why Abraham picks up and moves from point A to point B, except that God had commanded him some time ago to walk the length and the breadth of the land which He had given him (Gen. 13:17). What will occur is another test; Abraham failed this test the first time and he will, essentially, fail this test again. However, it might be important to point out that when we fail a test, we have not necessarily completely failed that test. Abraham will fail the test here; he will be corrected severely by an unbeliever; and, if he ever was faced with the same choice again, Abraham would have made the correct choice.



³⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Gen. 20:1.



This map is from the Bible Atlas Maps in e-sword. It is **Map 12: of the Arabah, Negeb, Wildernesses of Zin and Paran**. This can also be found online [here](#) and [here](#). You can see from the map where the people of Esau (the son of Abram and his wife's personal servant) settled (called Edom). You can also see where the Moabites (descendants of Moab, the son/grandson of Lot) took up residence. It is also helpful to see the topological aspects of this region.

Commentators love to speculate.

Speculation: Why did Abraham move?

| Commentator | Opinion |
|-------------|--|
| John Gill | <i>Canaan: the reason of this remove is not certain; some think, because he could not bear the stench of the sulphurous lake, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were become; and others, because of the scandal of Lot's incest with his daughters, which prejudiced the idolatrous people in those parts more against the true religion; neither of which are likely, by reason of the distance; but the better reason seems to be, that it was so ordered in Providence that he should remove from place to place, that it might appear that he was but a sojourner in the land.³⁷</i> |

³⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1.

Speculation: Why did Abraham move?

| Commentator | Opinion |
|-----------------------------|--|
| David Guzik | <i>After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham moved. Perhaps he did not want to live in the hills overlooking the destroyed region any longer, and be reminded of those people and the judgment visited upon them.</i> ³⁸ |
| Jamieson, Fausset and Brown | <i>In the neighborhood of Gerar was a very rich and well-watered pasture land.</i> ³⁹ Isaac will move to the same land, when he finds himself in the midst of a drought (Gen. 26). |
| Keil and Delitzsch | <i>After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham removed from the grove of Mamre at Hebron to the south country, hardly from the same fear as that which led Lot from Zoar, but probably to seek for better pasture.</i> ⁴⁰ |
| Gary Kukis | He could not bear to be so close to Sodom which had just been destroyed. This allowed him to travel by Sodom to get a better look at what had happened. |

Given the time that this occurred, it is most likely that Abraham moving was related to Sodom and to the supposed destruction of Lot.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And so says Abraham unto Sarah his wife, “My sister, she.” And so sends Abimelech king of Gerar and so he takes Sarah.

Genesis
20:2

And Abraham said regarding Sarah his wife, “She [is] my sister.” Therefore, Abimelech the king of Gerar sent [for her] and he took Sarah.

And Abraham said, regarding Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” Therefore, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent servants for Sarah and took her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so says Abraham unto Sarah his wife, “My sister, she.” And so sends Abimelech king of Gerar and so he takes Sarah. |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abraham said concerning Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelek, king of Gerar [JERUSALEM. King of Arad.], sent and took Sarah. |
| Latin Vulgate | And he said of Sara his wife: She is my sister. So Abimelech the king of Gerara sent, and took her. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister; and Abimeleck king of Gadar sent and took Sarah. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abraham said concerning Sarah his wife, She is my sister, <u>for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest at any time the men of the city should kill him for her sake.</u> So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. |

Significant differences: The Greek has a lot of additional text.

³⁸ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:1–2.

³⁹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 20:1.

⁴⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:1–3.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contemporary English V. | ...he told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. |
| Easy English | And Abraham said that Sarah was his sister. So Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent for Sarah. And he took her into his *household. |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Abraham told people that Sarah was his sister. Abimelech, king of Gerar, heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her. |
| New Berkeley Version | About Sarah, his wife, Abraham said, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for Sarah and took her. |
| New Century Version | ...he told people that his wife Sarah was his sister. Abimelech king of Gerar heard this, so he sent some servants to take her. |
| New Life Bible | Abraham said about his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her for his wife. |
| New Living Translation | 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. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | And [there], AbraHam said concerning SarAh his woman, 'She's my sister.' He didn't want to tell them 'She's my woman,' for fear that the time would come when men of that city would kill him because of her. So AbiMelech (the king of GeraRa) sent for SarAh and took her [to be his woman]. |
| Beck's American Translation | Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She's my sister." And so Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent men who took Sarah away. |
| God's Word™ | Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Conservapedia | Abraham said about his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for Sarah to marry her. "Abimelech" means "my father the king." |
| The Expanded Bible | ...he said to people about Sarah his wife, "She is my sister" [12:10-20; 26:1-11]. Abimelech king of Gerar heard this, so he sent some servants to take her. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Complete Jewish Bible | Avraham was saying of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister"; so Avimelekh king of G'rar sent and took Sarah. |
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Abraham says of Sarah his woman, She is my sister: and Abi Melech sovereign of Gerar sends and takes Sarah:... |
| Kaplan Translation | [There] he announced that his wife Sarah was his sister, and Abimelekh [Literally, 'father-king.' This was a title given to Philistine kings, much like Pharaoh was given to Egyptian monarchs (Psalms 34:1, Rashi ad loc.; cf. Sefer HaYashar 65,66). Persian kings were given the title Padi-shach, which also means 'father-king.' In Hebrew, av means master as well as father. So the designation Avi-melekh may mean 'master-king' or arch-king. See note on Genesis 41:43.], king of Gerar, sent messengers and took Sarah. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah [into his harem].

Concordant Literal Version

And saying is Abraham concerning Sarah, his wife, "My sister is she, for he feared to say, "My wife is she, lest he be killed by the men of the city because of her. And sending is Abimelech, king of Gerar, and taking Sarah.

Context Group Version

And Abraham said of Sarah his woman { or wife }, She's my sister. And Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, She is my sister; and Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah. As in Egypt, Gen. 12:13, Abraham did not tell the exact and complete truth when he stated that Sarah was his sister. So the king of Gerar, whose standing title was Abimelech, acted in good faith when he added her to his harem. Either the transformation worked in Sarah as a result of God's promise had renewed her youth, or Abimelech found it to his advantage to be related to the rich Abraham by marriage.

LTHB

And Abraham said with regards to his wife Sarah, She is my sister. And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Syndein

{Disillusion, Degradation, Decoration - Verse 2 - Degradation}

And Abraham kept saying {amar} of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister'. And Abimelech king of Gerar kept on sending and taking { laqach - for his wife} Sarah. {Note: When God restored Sarah's womb, apparently her physical beauty was also restored. So, Abraham is afraid that he will be killed so they can 'have' Sarah.}.

Young's Updated LT

And Abraham says concerning Sarah his wife, "She is my sister;" and Abimelech king of Gerar sends and takes Sarah.

The gist of this verse:

Abraham has continued to tell folks that Sarah is his sister. The king of Gerar, Abimelech, sends men to bring Sarah to him.

Genesis 20:2a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| 'Ab ^e râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |
| 'el (עַל) [pronounced eh] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW] | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i> | proper noun; feminine singular | Strong's #8283 BDB #979 |
| 'ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |

Genesis 20:2a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| 'āchôwth (אָחוּת) [pronounced aw-KHOWTH] | sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #269 BDB #27 |
| hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee] | she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one) | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

The Greek adds to this: ...for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest at any time the men of the city should kill him for her sake.

Translation: And Abraham said regarding Sarah his wife, “She [is] my sister.” When Abraham went to Egypt, he had this same agreement with Sarah. She would identify herself as his sister. He had assumed the heathenism to be at a stage where, if they knew she was his wife, they would kill him and take her. Quite obviously, this shows a lack of faith in God, as God has made specific promises to her and Abraham. Let me suggest that Abraham observed the destruction of Sodom and might had been disheartened by it.

Matthew Henry: *[Abraham's] sin in denying his wife, as before (Gen. 12:13), which was not only...a lie, and which, if admitted as lawful, would be the ruin of human converse and an inlet to all falsehood, but was also an exposing of the chastity and honour of his wife, of which he ought to have been the protector...[Furthermore,] he had been guilty of this same sin before, and had been reproofed for it, and convinced of the folly of the suggestion which induced him to it; yet he returns to it. Note, It is possible that a good man may, not only fall into sin, but relapse into the same sin, through the surprise and strength of temptation and the infirmity of the flesh. Let backsliders repent then, but not despair (Jer. 3:22).*⁴¹

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[Abraham's] conduct was highly culpable. It was deceit, deliberate and premeditated—there was no sudden pressure upon him—it was the second offense of the kind [see on Gen. 12:13] —it was a distrust of God every way surprising, and it was calculated to produce injurious effects on the heathen around. Its mischievous tendency was not long in being developed.*⁴²

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

Abraham is near a large city and the king there, Abimelech, has become aware of Abraham's arrival. He did not know Abraham or anything about Abraham, other than he is said to be traveling with a very beautiful woman (Sarah is apparently quite beautiful despite her age).

This sort of action by a ruler appears to be customary. He would send for the most prominent woman of a caravan, and such an action would apparently establish a peace between the two parties. He got the women and the caravan were at peace with him in the land that he controlled. People who have power tend to take advantage of possessing this power.

⁴¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1–2 (slightly edited).

⁴² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 20:2.

Now, this ought to also strike us as unusual: Sarah is still attractive enough to be desired at age 90. Recall that the age of man was higher then than it is now; and that Abraham will live to be 175. Now, my recollection of Suzanne Somers is that, at around age 70, she is still very attractive. This suggests that it is possible, in that day and age, for Sarah to be attractive at age 90. As you will recall, man's age began to fall after the flood from living 800–1000 years, and, with Abraham, we are down to 175 years. Sarah will live to be 127 years old.

In our day and age, it is typical for a woman to **enter into menopause** between the ages of 40 and 61. Sarah became menopausal around age 85–90, as she clearly does not see herself as having children when the **Revealed Lord** told her that she would (Gen. 18:11–12). However, this narrative suggests to us that she does not look like any 90 year old woman that we have ever seen.

Stephen Cole approached this proportionally.⁴³ Sarah, at age 90, is comparable to a woman who is 53 and will live to be 75. It is very possible for a woman at age 53 to be attractive.

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

This is the second time that Abraham has done this. It suggests that whenever he and Sarah went anywhere where there was a prominent ruler, he take this approach. He continued with human viewpoint. Recall that God has promised him a son by Sarah, and that was going to occur in the very near future. We are talking mere months away. And yet, with this deception, Abraham appears to doubt the protection of God.

This tells us that Abraham vacillated between very strong faith (when he allowed himself to be circumcised) and no faith, e.g. here, where he thinks that lying is the best solution. In a previous chapter, we learned his reasoning: that some heathen leader would simply kill him and take his wife (Gen. 12:11–13). The Greek text contains this thought as well; it appends this portion of v. 2 with *...for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest at any time the men of the city should kill him for her sake.*

I want you to notice just who is put at risk here: Sarah. This has happened before. If a ruler takes a liking to Sarah or if a ruler decides to take Sarah, Abraham figures that, if they are brother and sister, he will be preserved and Sarah would go into a harem. However, you will recall in the previous chapter that God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled in Sarah. She will bear his son. She cannot bear a son to Abraham if she is in the harem of some foreign prince. This would forever call into question Isaac's paternity.

Abraham should have continued to exercise faith in God; yet he chooses not to.

What is in the making is one of the most important births in human history, and it was designed to not just move the Jewish race ahead to a second generation, but to foreshadow the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as well. Therefore, Sarah being in a harem is not a part of God's plan.

Application: What Abraham does here is clearly wrong. However, as you will find in life, God will use you, despite your many failures. I can personally testify to that.

Let's take a moment and think this through. At some point, messengers from Abimelech of Gerar would have stopped Abraham's very large caravan and inquired as to the nature of the people there, their intentions, and a number of other questions which were standard. They would have ascertained from the beginning, who was in charge (Abraham), and they would have checked out his wife/sister Sarah. It is clear that she has great status within this large caravan—making her suitable for a king. It is likely, as suggested above, that she is also beautiful. So, Abimelech's messengers, always on the lookout for the king, tell him about Sarah.

Abimelech, hearing all of this, sends for Sarah. Gill⁴⁴ suggests that Sarah is taken by force; however, there is no indication of that. Now, there may have been some slight intimidation involved, but only because soldiers of the

⁴³ See <http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/102796M.pdf> accessed August 27, 2014.

⁴⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:2.

king had come to Abraham. Again, remember that Abraham and his men put down in military action one of the greatest powers known in that era (Gen. 14), so it is not as if Abraham could not have mustered his troops into action. However, things like this can go down in a much congenial fashion. No threat needs to be stated or even implied, as Abraham and his caravan are on the land of the king. Abraham has made no personal claim upon Sarah, and now the king has called for her. Abraham essentially set himself up here for all of this to happen.

All of this is legitimate in the minds of the messengers from Gerar because Abraham presents Sarah as his sister; and kings in that era (men of power in many eras) had several wives. However, as we will find out, Abimelech is not at immoral as Abraham supposes him to be.

Very likely, Abimelech viewed this as making an alliance with Abraham. He has just promised to take care of Abraham's sister Sarah for the rest of her life.

What would have been the proper approach by Abraham? Clearly, honesty; and, given what we know about the king, later on in this chapter, he would not have called for Sarah—but he may have called for Abraham and Sarah for a meal or a discussion. Let's say that the messengers from Gerar were hostile. Abraham has both a scratch army which defeated the greatest army of that day; and he has Y^ehowah God with him, Who has made great promises to Abraham.

Let me add that, Abraham and his very large caravan are now in the land of Gerar and subject to the laws of the king of Gerar. Since Abraham has absolutely no evidence of hostility on the part of Abimelech or his men, then his approach is to be at peace with all men. Remember, Abraham got Sarah to agree to this even before the messengers from the king of Gerar came to them. So Abraham had prejudged these people, knowing very little about them.

Application: We need to evaluate every situation that we are in and act accordingly. As believers, we all have God the Holy Spirit and, if you have grown spiritually, then you know Bible doctrine, and you are learning how to think like God in your soul.

Why does Abraham appear to lack trust in God at this point? He just stood face to face with God and got God to agree to spare Sodom (or so Abraham thought). And Sodom lay in ruins, as Abraham observed, both from afar and recently when traveling along side that region. Why does Abraham distrust the king of Gerar? Although Abraham had met the king of Sodom before (Gen. 14), it is clear that Sodom had descended into great degeneracy (even though Abraham may lack the details of this). So, since God is giving him the land, perhaps Abraham has supposed that all the indigenous people are like the Sodomites.⁴⁵

Genesis 20:2a And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." Abraham is lying and he gets his wife to go along with it. As a result, she is taking all of the risk; he is taking none of it.

Arthur Pink: *The contents of Genesis 20 furnish a striking proof of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. No fictitious historian would have recorded this dark blot on the life of such an illustrious personage as Abraham. The tendency of the human heart is ever toward hero worship, and the common custom of biographers is to conceal the defects and blemishes in the careers of the characters which they delineate, and this, had it been followed, would naturally forbid the mention of such a sad fall in the life of one of the most venerated names on the scroll of history. Ah! but herein the Bible differs from all other books. The Holy Spirit has painted the portraits of Scripture characters in the colors of nature and truth. He has given a faithful picture of the human heart such as is common to all mankind.*⁴⁶

⁴⁵ I realize that this seems contradictory to distrust God's promises on the one hand; and yet to partially consider them on the other. However, let me suggest to you that, because of this lie, Abraham is out of fellowship, and therefore, his thinking is not necessarily crisp and clear.

⁴⁶ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_23.htm accessed August 24, 2014.

Ellicott: *Holy Scripture neither represents its heroes as perfect, nor does it raise them disproportionately above the level of their own times.*⁴⁷

| Genesis 20:2b | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH] | <i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7971 BDB #1018 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek] | <i>king, ruler, prince</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #4428 BDB #572 |
| G ^e râr (גֵּרָר) [pronounced gher-AWR; possibly g ^e rawr] | <i>a lodging place, dwelling; transliterated Gerar</i> | proper singular noun; location | Strong's #1642 BDB #176 |

Translation: *Therefore, Abimelech the king of Gerar sent [for her]...* We are going to find that this particular king is fairly likeable and fairly moral. However, he takes as a perk of his job, appropriating any woman that comes into his territory. As we will find out, he probably would not take a man's wife.

Abimelech is transliterated from the Hebrew word ʾĀbiymelek^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u^b-vee-MEH-lek] and it means *my father is Melek, my father is king*. Strong's #40 BDB #4. This name shows up in Gen. 26, so it is reasonably a title for the king. *Abraham* in the Hebrew is *father*; the *y* is the possessive pronoun *my*; and *melek* means *king*. Barnes suggests⁴⁸ *father of the king*, but I believe that to be incorrect.

| Genesis 20:2c | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH] | <i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | <i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |

⁴⁷ From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

⁴⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:2.

Genesis 20:2c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW] | <i>princess, noble woman</i> ; transliterated Sarah | proper noun; feminine singular | Strong's #8283 BDB #979 |

Translation: ...and he took Sarah. We do not know how large Abraham's entourage happened to be,⁴⁹ but, apparently at some point, they were stopped and interviewed by Abimelech's people, and Sarah apparently stood out to these men.

Poole: *For though Sarah was ninety years old, yet she retained her beauty in good measure, partly, because she had not been broken by bearing and nursing of children; partly, because in that age of the world men and women, as they lived longer, so they did not so soon begin to decay, as now they do; and partly, because of God's special blessing upon her.*⁵⁰

Barnes: *Sarah, though now eighty-nine years of age, was as youthful in look as a person of forty would now be. She had, moreover, had no family, was remarkable for her good looks, and was at present, no doubt, renewed in health and vigor* 9Gen. 12:11–16).⁵¹

Peter Pett: *Sarah was an outstandingly beautiful woman, and, even though she has now matured, the bloom of childbearing is on her and there are unquestionably some women who have something about them which gives them an attraction far beyond the norm at all ages. Sarah was clearly one of them. The beauty and attractiveness of a tribeswoman may well have been very different from that of Philistine women. So if Abraham did persist in describing her as his sister when they moved about the surprise is that there were only two such incidents known. Men will move mountains for an alluring woman.*⁵²

Some commentators suggested that, since Sarah's reproductive organs were activated, that she may have taken on a more youthful appearance for that reason as well.

So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah (a painting). From Prayer: Communication with God; accessed August 29, 2014.

Genesis 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Even though Abraham has come a very long way, spiritually speaking, he is certainly not a sinless man. Again, he claims that Sarah is his sister and not his



⁴⁹ Recall that Abraham raised an army of 318 from his compound.

⁵⁰ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:2 (slightly edited).

⁵¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1–7.

⁵² From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 24, 2014.

wife. This essentially invites King Abimelech to take her. There is nothing which stops him. Furthermore, taking Sarah as a wife is seen as (1) a favor to Abraham; and as (2) a possible alliance.

Men did not typically have multiple wives in that era (there are a lot of practical considerations involved here—such as, having two women under the same roof (remember Sarah and Hagar?). However, there does not appear to be a universally accepted moral law against it (no more than there is a universal moral law which would forbid men marrying their half-sisters).

However, it will become clear the adultery is clearly forbidden. Both Abraham and Abimelech are in agreement on this point of moral behavior. When Abimelech finds out that Sarah is Abraham's wife, that in itself is understood to be an evil that God would punish.

Despite her age, Sarah is apparently still a beautiful woman, attractive enough for a king to take as his wife.

Arthur Pink: Sad indeed, inexpressibly sad, was Abraham's conduct. It was not the fall of a young and inexperienced disciple, but the lapse of one who had long walked the path of faith that here shows himself ready to sacrifice the honor of his wife, and what is worse, give up the one who was the depository of all the promises...What made the matter so much worse in Abraham's case was that it was not a question of being surprised into a sudden fault. It was the recurrence of an old sin. Long ago he had followed the same wicked course in Egypt, where his duplicity had been discovered and from whence he was banished in disgrace. But the experience profited him not. Some twenty or twenty-five years had passed since then, and in the interval he had built an altar unto the Lord, had vanquished Chedorlaomer, had been blessed by Melchizedek the priest of the Most High God, had repulsed the offer of the King of Sodom to be enriched at his hands, and had received wondrous revelations and promises from God; yet now we see him leaving God out of his reckoning, and ensnared by the fear of man, resorting to the most shameful deception.⁵³

Two things that we learn from this: God has given Abraham a beautiful woman who has remained beautiful throughout most of her life. Secondly, Abraham is not living in sinless perfection. He still sins, and God still blesses him.

Now, Sarah is definitely an older woman, but we do have examples today of women who are older, who are quite attractive. **Suzanne Somers** comes immediately to mind. Furthermore, recall that people from **the era of Abraham** still lived long lives (Abraham will live to be 175).

Sarah is probably reasonably attractive, even though she is 90+ years old in this chapter. It is likely that Abimelech desires a political alliance with Abraham as a rich, nomadic chieftain (as Zodiates puts it). Abraham, like all believers, has a Christian life with its high and its low points. This is a low point.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So, to sum up some logical points of speculation:

Summarizing logical points of speculation from Genesis 20:2

1. Abraham may doubt God's protection because God destroyed Sodom (and presumably, Lot).
2. Abraham may doubt the character of the people of Gerar because of the rumors about the people of Sodom.
3. The king of Gerar probably looked upon this act of taking Sarah in marriage as a good thing that he is doing toward Abraham.
4. None of this was done by force; the king of Gerar did not send in a small army and take Sarah from the

⁵³ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_23.htm accessed August 24, 2014.

Summarizing logical points of speculation from Genesis 20:2

caravan. There is nothing in the context to suggest such a thing. Abimelech blames Abraham later on in this narrative, which would make little sense if Abimelech took Sarah by force.

5. Sarah, even at age 90, was probably pretty hot.

Although none of these things are stated outright, these are logical points, based upon the text.

Abraham is apparently at some low point in his life, despite the fact that God is about to give him a son. Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he resided temporarily in Gerar. And Abraham said, regarding Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." Therefore, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent servants for Sarah and took her. As speculated above, perhaps he began to distrust the Lord, because he could see the destruction of Sodom with his own eyes.

Arthur Pink: As we have seen, it was stress of circumstances which revealed the state of Abraham's heart, as it is of ours. Though the wording of it might be improved, we thoroughly agree with the sentiment of a preacher who long ago said, "We possess no more religion than what we have in the time of trouble." It is comparatively easy to trust God while everything goes along pleasantly, but the time of disappointment, of loss, of persecution, of bereavement, is the time of testing; and then how often we fail! Here is where the Lord Jesus is in such striking contrast from all others. Stress of circumstances only served to display the perfections of His heart. When He was a hungered, and tempted by Satan to make bread to supply His own need, He lived by every word of God. When He sat by the well, worn with His journey, He was not too weary to speak words of grace and life to the poor Samaritan woman. When the cities in which His mightiest works had been done rejected His message, He meekly submitted, saying "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight" (Matthew 11:23-26). When He was reviled, He reviled not again. And in the supreme crisis, on the cross, His perfections were fully displayed- praying for the forgiveness of His enemies, speaking the word of acceptance to the repentant thief, making provision for His widowed mother, yielding up His spirit into the hands of the Father.⁵⁴

We see over and over again, the imperfections of the great saints. Here it is Abraham; soon it will be Isaac and Jacob. But our Lord has no such imperfections. But despite Abraham's shortcoming, God has given him a firm timetable for the birth of Isaac, and God will always keep His Word, regardless of how unfaithful we are.

Rev. Bruce Goettsche writes: Have you ever had someone tell you that all Christians are hypocrites because of their inconsistency? They hear us proclaim a love of holiness but they also see us sin. A Christian stumbles and all the world seems to point their finger at them. This shows that there is an inherent misunderstanding of grace and discipleship. He then adds: Grace is given to us not because we are good but because God is gracious and good even though we are not. In fact, one of the prerequisites of salvation is a confession that we are helpless to save ourselves. Before we can be "saved" we have to confess that we are sinners. When we do this and receive the gift of life that comes from the Lord we are made clean before the Lord . . . sin's penalty is taken care of. . . however, sin's power and influence continues to pursue us. Old habits die hard . . . very hard.⁵⁵ Then Goettsche quotes Paul in Romans 7:16-25 (NLT) I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁵⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_23.htm accessed August 24, 2014.

⁵⁵ From <http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/053099.html> accessed August 27, 2014.

So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

What we read so far in Gen. 20:1–2 is quite problematic. God has just promised Abraham, within the past month or so, that Abraham would father a child at age 100.

Alan Carr: Sin Cannot Derail God's Plan

1. When Abraham left the promised land to enter Gerar, he [appears to have] placed the plan of God in jeopardy. You see, God had promised to send the promised seed within a year, Gen. 18:10-14. Abraham showed very poor judgment! If Abimelech had been allowed to sleep with Sarah, it could have short-circuited God's plan. Of course, the Scriptures tell us that God prevented anything like that from taking place!
2. Another problem is the fact that Abraham is...[a] representative of God Almighty, v. 7. He has been commissioned to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead of being a blessing and a witness for God, Abraham's life could have been a hindrance to prevent Abimelech from coming to God. However, in spite of Abraham's sin, God spoke to Abimelech and dealt with him anyway, v. 6-7.
3. Regardless of what we do, God's plan will be accomplished! For too long, preachers have tried to keep the people of God in line by using fear tactics against them. The saints have been told to live right or God can't bless, He can't work and He can't save souls. Many have been told that they have sent others to Hell by the lifestyles they live. Well, I just want to set the record straight this evening! You cannot hinder God from doing His work! You might miss out on the blessing of being a part of what He is doing, but God will accomplish His will in the church and in the world whether we cooperate or not!
4. And, another thing, you cannot "send anyone to Hell". Men go to hell when they refuse to receive Christ as their Savior and nothing you or I do can cause them to do that or prevent them from doing that! That may not be what you have heard all your life, but it is still the truth! Our job is to warn them and to live right before them, but the decision they make in the end is theirs and theirs alone, Eze. 3:18!
5. Did you know that Abraham's sin should have shamed Abraham? But there is no indication that he ever acknowledged it or repented of it! Much like many in our world today! But, think about this: Abraham's sin was used as testimony to the greatness of God. Abimelech would have never known that God was a God of mercy, grace, forgiveness and restoration if that old saint had never fallen into sin! But, because he did, God was able to demonstrate His power through forgiving and restoring Abraham by grace. (Note: This is not an excuse for sinning! It is just a reminder that our sin will not stop God from saving folks. People need to know that our God is a God Who saves and keeps through grace not works!)
6. [Despite Abraham's failure here, he will still sire Isaac in the next chapter.]

From http://www.sermonnotebook.org/old%20testament/Gen%2020_1-18.htm accessed August 28, 2014 (edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God Warns Abimelech of His Sin

And so comes Elohim unto Abimelech in a dream the night and so He says to him, "Behold you—dying upon the woman whom you took. And she is married of a lord." Genesis 20:3

Then Elohim came unto Abimelech in a dream that night and He said to him, "Listen, you will perish because of the woman whom you have taken, since she is married to a husband."

Then God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and said to him, "Listen, you will die because of the woman you took, since she is already married."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so comes Elohim unto Abimelech in a dream the night and so He says to him, "Behold you—dying upon the woman whom you took. And she is married of a lord." |
| Targum of Onkelos | And a word came from before the Lord unto Abimelek, in a dream of the night, and said to him, Behold, you die, because of the woman whom you have carried away, and she a man's wife. |
| Latin Vulgate | And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and he said to him: Lo you will die for the woman that you have taken: for she has a husband. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | But God came to Abimeleck in a dream by night and said to him, Behold, you will die on account of the woman whom you have taken; for she is another man's wife. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And God came to Abimelech by night in his sleep, and said, Behold, you'll die for the woman whom you have taken, for she has lived with a husband. |
| Significant differences: | None. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Contemporary English V. | But God came to Abimelech in a dream and said, "You have taken a married woman, and for this you will die!" |
| Easy-to-Read Version | But one night, God spoke to Abimelech in a dream. God said, "You will die. That woman you took is married." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | One night God appeared to him in a dream and said, "You are going to die, because you have taken this woman; she is already married." |
| <i>The Message</i> | But God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and told him, "You're as good as dead--that woman you took, she's a married woman." |
| New Berkeley Version | But in a dream by night God came to Abimelech and said to him: Tanke notice! You are about to die because of the woman you have taken; for she has a husband. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| American English Bible | But God came to AbiMelech at night in a dream and told him: 'Look; You're going to die because of this woman you've taken, because she [already has] a husband!' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You will die here over the woman you took. She married a master." |
| Beck's American Translation | But in a dream one night God came to Abimelech. "You will die," He told him, "because you took that woman. She is a man's wife." |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!" |
| New Jerusalem Bible | But God visited Abimelech in a dream one night. 'You are to die,' he told him, 'because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman.' |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Conservapedia | But God came to Abimelech in a dream that night, and told him, "Look, you're as good as dead, on account of the woman you thought to marry, because she belongs to someone else." |
| The Expanded Bible | But one night God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and said, "You will die. The woman you took is married." |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | God, however, came to Abimelech in a dream at night, and said, "Beware of death because of this woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| HCSB | But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman." |
| New Advent Bible | And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and he said to him: Lo you shall die for the woman that you have taken: for she has a husband. |
| NET Bible® | But God appeared [Heb "came."] to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, "You are as good as dead [Heb "Look, you [are] dead." The Hebrew construction uses the particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] with a second person pronominal particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] with by the participle. It is a highly rhetorical expression.] because of the woman you have taken, for she is someone else's wife [Heb "and she is owned by an owner." The disjunctive clause is causal or explanatory in this case]." |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Complete Jewish Bible | But God came to Avimelekh in a dream one night and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, since she is someone's wife." |
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and Elohim comes to Abi Melech in a dream by night and says to him, Behold, you die; for the woman you take is married to a master. |
| Kaplan Translation | God came to Abimelekh in a dream that night. 'You will die because of the woman you took,' He said, 'She is already married.' |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and He said to him, "Behold you are going to die because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a married woman." |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said, Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken [as your own], for she is a man's wife. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And coming is the Elohim to Abimelech in a dream in the night, and is saying to him, "Behold yourself dying on account of the woman whom you take, when she is possessed by a possessor. |
| Context Group Version | But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, Look, you are but a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken. For she is a man's woman { or wife }. |
| English Revised Version | 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." |
| Heritage Bible | And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, you are about to die over the woman whom you have taken, and she being married to a lord. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. God prevents the greater sin which might have happened as a result of Abraham's weakness. Appearing to Abimelech in a dream by night, a form of communication which He often adopted, the Lord told him: Behold, thou art destined to die. Sarah was not free to be married: she was literally under her husband as the head of the household: she was a married woman. |
| New King James Version | But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." |
| Syndein | {Disillusion, Degradation, Decoration - Verse 3-13 - Decoration} |

Young's Updated LT

Elohiym/Godhead kept on coming to Abimelech in a dream by night, and kept on saying to him, "Behold, you . . . {are} a dead man, for the woman whom you have taken. For she is a man's wife."

And God comes in unto Abimelech in a dream of the night, and says to him, "Lo, you are a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken—and she married to a husband."

The gist of this verse:

God comes to King Abimelech in a dream at night and warn him that he will die because he took Sarah because she is a married woman.

| Genesis 20:3a | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh] | <i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| ʿel (לְ) [pronounced eh] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| chālôwm (חֹלֶם) [pronounced khuh-LOHM] | <i>dream</i> | masculine singular noun | Strong's #2472 BDB #321 |
| lay ^e lâh (לַיְלָה) [pronounced LAY-law] | <i>night; that night, this night, the night</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #3915 BDB #538 |

Translation: Then Elohim came unto Abimelech in a dream that night... Abimelech has taken this woman, and God has promised Abraham that God's promises would be fulfilled in Sarah. There is this dependence upon the woman in order to fulfill God's plan. Abraham cannot simply sire a child by any woman.

It is clear from this verse that God spoke to people in their dreams and it is unclear whether Abimelech (which is probably a title for a king, like Pharaoh, rather than a proper name) is a believer or not, however, he will believe in Yahweh during this dream.

There is somewhat of a hierarchy that ought to be noted. God came to Abraham on several occasions and spoke to him directly. God spoke to Hagar, when she ran away, directly; and when she and her son were suffering from great thirst. However, God did not speak to Lot directly, but sent to angels instead. Here, God speaks to Abimelech in a dream (which is also how God will speak to Jacob sometime later).

Some commentators make a big deal out of Elohim speaking to Abimelech here (and in dreams to other gentiles), and that only Y^ehowah (by name) speaks to Jews and those who are saved. Even if that turns out to be the general case, Abimelech clearly believes God in this dream—he clearly believes that God will destroy him and his family. His cabinet is equally concerned. Therefore, at the bare minimum, Abimelech become a believer at the time of this dream; and it is clear that he acts upon his belief that Elohim will harm him if he does not act.

All passages below are the ESV capitalized.

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|---|--|
| Gen. 20:3–5 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." Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? 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." | <p>Abimelech has taken Abraham's wife to be his wife, after Abraham and Sarah both assured Abimelech that she was only Abraham's sister.</p> <p>At some point in time—and this may have been a week or three later—God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him that he is a dead man for taking Abraham's wife.</p> |
| Gen. 20:6–7 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. 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." | <p>Abimelech protests his innocence, although God says that He kept Abimelech from sinning. We later find out that Abimelech had been ill, and it is likely that he did not touch Sarah because of his illness.</p> <p>God makes it clear that Abimelech must release Sarah back to Abraham, and then to ask Abraham to pray on his behalf, in order to save him from death.</p> |
| Gen. 28:10–12 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! | <p>Jacob, after stealing Esau's blessing, was told by his mother Rebekah that he had better leave because his brother Esau was mad enough to kill him. Since Rebekah was in on this ruse to deceive his father, she could not appear as though she is helping Jacob to leave their compound because of Esau. So the cover story was, Jacob was going back east to marry a woman from his own people.</p> <p>Then Jacob has this marvelous dream!</p> |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|---|---|
| <p>Gen. 28:13–16 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."</p> | <p>Y^ehowah stood above the escalator/staircase, identifies Himself, and gives Jacob his real blessing (the blessing which he receive from his father Isaac, despite the deception, was real). God essentially confirms that blessing.</p> <p>Jacob did not have a close relationship with God (nor did his father Isaac), but God promised to stay with him and bring him back to the Land of Promise.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 28:17–18 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.</p> | <p>Jacob awakes from this dream, and is amazed that God spoke to him at this place. He calls this the <i>house of God</i> and the <i>gate of heaven</i>.</p> <p>He set up the stone where he lay his head as a marker for that place. Pouring oil upon it was a response to God.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 31:4–10 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.</p> | <p>Laban clearly was looking to cheat Jacob. Whenever they decided that spotted animals would be Jacob's wages, then the herd would produce spotted animals. Laban did not like that, so he would change the deal to striped animals, and then the flock would produce striped animals.</p> <p>Because of Laban's dishonest business practices, God honored Jacob and honest wages for him.</p> <p>Jacob also saw the goats mating with the flock in a dream, and those goats were striped, spotted or mottled. What this means is, they carried the genes within them to produce striped, spotted or mottled offspring, even though they did not appear that way on the outside.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 31:11–13 Then the Angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And He said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'"</p> | <p>God had promised Jacob that He would be with him and so He was, making certain that Jacob received fair wages for his work.</p> <p>Then God told Jacob that it was time to return to the Land of Promise.</p> |
| <p>I don't know the significance (if any) that in the first dream, Y^ehowah stands before Jacob and speaks to him. In the second dream the Angel of God spoke to him. They should be equivalent.</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|---|
| <p>Gen. 31:22–24 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad." (Narrative continued below)</p> | <p>Laban realizes that Jacob has fled with his wives, with his wages, and he pursues Jacob for 7 days. At some point in time, God comes to Laban and warns him not to say anything good or bad to Jacob.</p> <p>It was God's will for Jacob to return to Canaan; therefore, Laban was to do nothing to convince Jacob to remain in Padan-aram.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 31:25–29 And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'</p> | <p>Laban is upset over what has happened, but also realizes that, because God came to him, not only could he not judge Jacob, but he could not harm him either.</p> <p>What he does have a right to be concerned about is being able to say goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 37:5–8 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.</p> | <p>Joseph, the second youngest son of Jacob, and Jacob's favorite son, has a dream and tells his brothers what the dream represents, which is, they, his older brothers, would bow down to him.</p> <p>His brothers hated him for this dream; but it did foretell the future. Joseph would become prime minister of Egypt, and his brothers would come to him for grain during the time of a drought.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 37:9–11 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.</p> | <p>There was another dream that Joseph had when not only his brothers bowed before him, but his father and his wives as well.</p> |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|---|
| <p>Gen. 40:5–11 And one night they both dreamed--the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison--each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them."</p> | <p>Joseph finds himself imprisoned with two high officials of the Pharaoh. Both of these men have dreams, and they would like or their dreams to be interpreted.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 40:5–11 And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me." So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."</p> | <p>Joseph says that the interpretation of dreams belongs to God. He listens to the dream of the chief cupbearer first.</p> <p>The chief cupbearer is the man in charge of whispering into the pharaoh's ear, telling him who each person is that he is meeting.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 40:12–15 Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."</p> | <p>Joseph tells him that, in three days, he will both be released and restored to his position of power.</p> <p>Then Joseph makes a mistake. He depends upon this man for freedom. He tells the chief cupbearer—a man whose charge it is to remember the names, faces and bios of all the people to come into contact with the pharaoh—to remember him. Rather than depend upon God, Joseph depends upon man. The chief cupbearer will forget about Joseph.</p> |
| <p>Gen 40:16–20 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." And Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head--from you!--and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you." On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.</p> | <p>The chief baker liked the interpretation that Joseph gave to the chief cupbearer, so he tells Joseph his dream. Joseph tells him that he will be beheaded.</p> <p>What Joseph said would happen to the chief baker did.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 40:21–22 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.</p> | <p>These verses just give us the summation, that, what Joseph interpreted came to pass.</p> |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|---|
| <p>Gen. 41:1–4 After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke.</p> | <p>The Pharaoh has a dream, where there are 7 fat and plump cows, and then 7 ugly and thin cows emerge from the Nile and they eat the plump cows.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 41:5–8 And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.</p> | <p>The Pharaoh has a very similar dream, but with ears of corn. He calls in his various people to interpret the dreams, but they cannot help him.</p> <p>At this point, the chief cupbearer will suddenly remember Joseph, and he will be fetched from prison, and he will give the proper interpretation of his dreams to Pharaoh.</p> |
| <p>Judges 7:13–15 When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat." And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp." As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand."</p> | |
| <p>1Kings 3:4–5 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you."</p> | |
| <p>1Kings 3:6–9 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>1Kings 3:10–14 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."</p> | |
| <p>1Kings 3:15 And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.</p> | |
| <p>Job 4:12–20 [Eliphaz the Temanite is speaking to Job] "Now a word was brought to me stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it. Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: 'Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth. Between morning and evening they are beaten to pieces; they perish forever without anyone regarding it.</p> | |
| <p>Job 33:13–18 Why do you contend against him, saying, 'He will answer none of man's words'? For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings, that he may turn man aside from his deed and conceal pride from a man; he keeps back his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>Job 33:19–28 "Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones, so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food. His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. His soul draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death. If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him, and he is merciful to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom; let his flesh become fresh with youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor'; then man prays to God, and he accepts him; he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness. He sings before men and says: 'I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me. He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.'</p> | |
| <p>Job 33:29–30 "Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be lighted with the light of life.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 2:1–2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 2:3–4 And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 2:5–7 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation."</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 2:8–9 The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm--if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>Daniel 2:10–11 The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 4:1–3 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 4:4–7 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:1–6 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.</p> | |
| <p>Dan 7:7–8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>Daniel 7:9–12 "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:13–14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:15–19 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:19–22 "Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|--|---|
| <p>Daniel 7:23–25 "Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:26–27 But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'</p> | |
| <p>Daniel 7:28 "Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart."</p> | |
| <p>Matt. 1:19–23 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).</p> | <p>Matt. 1:24–25 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.</p> |
| <p>Matt. 2:7–12 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.</p> | |

The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture

| Scripture | Text/Commentary |
|---|---|
| <p>Matt. 2:19–23 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."</p> | |
| <p>Matt. 27:15–19 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream."</p> | <p>Matt. 27:20–24 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."</p> |
| I need to come back at a later date and fill in some details and include some explanations. | |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

| Genesis 20:3b | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lamed (ל) [pronounced lə] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

Genesis 20:3b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|--|
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>] | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i> | masculine singular, Qal active participle | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |

Translation: ...and He said to him, “Listen, you will perish... In the Old Testament, God appeared to specific individuals from time to time for specific reasons. God’s promises would be fulfilled by means of Sarah, so that she cannot have relations with another man. God warns Abimelech that he is about to die.

God’s plan depends upon Abraham and Sarah having a son—and that this line would lead to the Savior, Jesus Christ. So, no one is going to stand in the way of this genealogical line. Abimelech may have no idea what he is interfering with, but God will not allow His plan to come to a halt. As some have translated this, “Listen, you are a dead man!” That certainly caught Abimelech’s attention.

God told Abimelech that he was dying; so, simple question: *why does he not die in this chapter?*

The Bible Query on, *why didn't Abimelech die?*

Q: In Gen 20:3,6 why did God contradict say Abimelech was a dead man, yet Abimelech lived?

A: God does not change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8). However, Ezekiel 33:12-20 shows that God’s revealed will towards people can change when they change.
See the discussion on Ex 33:5-6; Dt 20:17; Jer 15:6; Jon 3-4; Jon 3:10; and Jon 4:1-2 for more info.

Bible Query March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006. Gen. 20:3. Accessed from e-sword.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 20:3c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| ‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| ’ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |

Genesis 20:3c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER] | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i> | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH] | <i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |

Translation: ...because of the woman whom you have taken,... The reason that Abimelech is about to die is the woman that he has taken, Sarah.

You will recall that there was a similar incident in Egypt with Abraham, Sarah and the ruler of Egypt.

Abraham is supposed to learn from experience and from doctrine. He failed before. Right now, having a son by Sarah is on the near horizon, and yet, Abraham reverts to human viewpoint and he makes the same mistake that he had made some 15 or so years ago.

We all apparently have weaknesses, and even when we are believers, we sometimes revert to those weaknesses. Abraham was strong in faith to agree to have himself be circumcised and all of the males with him. However, here, he returns to an old behavior pattern.

Genesis 20:3d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee] | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |
| bâ'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced baw-AHL] | <i>married to, being subject to [a lord, a husband]; ruled over by, possessed by [a husband]; used primarily in relationship to a wife or mistress</i> | feminine singular, Qal passive participle, construct form | Strong's #1166 BDB #127 |
| ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced BAH-gah] | <i>owner, lord, husband; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i> | masculine singular noun; pausal form | Strong's #1167 BDB #127 |

Translation: ...since she is married to a husband.” God, in this dream, points out to Abimelech, that Sarah is a married woman. She belongs to another man. Abimelech is clearly unaware of this fact. That God would say this to Abimelech certainly suggests that Abimelech understands that this is a moral problem. One man does not take another man's wife. That is not right.

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and He said to Abimelech, “Listen, you are about to die, for the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife.”

It is interesting that God speaks to Abimelech in a dream. This would suggest that (1) Abimelech is a believer in Jehovah Elohim and (2) God is threatening him here with the sin unto death (the sin unto death is where God removes a believer from this life—usually for persistent sin or reversionism; however, sometimes, the sin unto death is used to make an example or an important point, as in Acts 5).

Usually, when there is a doctrine out there which covers the topic, I defer to that doctrine; however, there are at least 3 sources out there, which, individually, present an incomplete picture. Therefore, I have taken their material and put it together below. However, almost none of the doctrine below is original with me.

Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death

1. Introduction and definition

- 1) The phrase "sin unto death" describes the final stage of divine discipline in which God removes from the earth the person who is totally alienated from God. The "sin unto death" is not a particular sin; but it is, rather, a mental attitude of total indifference to and rebellion against the will and purpose of God.
- 2) The spiritual condition of the person who comes under the "sin unto death" is characterized by continual and maximum carnality (remaining out of fellowship); and this punishment represents God's final step of chastisement to those who are in maximum alienation from God. Only God can discern the true nature of a person's mind, attitude, or volition; and only God knows whether a person is actually implacable and deserving of physical death.
- 3) The "sin unto death" is described as a principle in 1John 5:16 Psalm 118:17,18 Ezek. 18:21-32.
- 4) The sin unto death is not a particular sin nor is it a list of sins.
- 5) There are definite characteristics by which to recognize the conditions which lead to God's applying the "sin unto death":
 - (1) A persistent, unconfessed sin.
 - (2) Sin which continues unchecked with no repentance, may bring a person under this category.
 - (3) The person who persistently ignores Grace, warnings, and discipline may come under the "sin unto death." Lev. 26.
 - (4) Sin which has a maximum adverse effect on other people (causing stumbling) may lead a person into severe discipline, even to the sin unto death.

2. Illustrations

- 1) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death.
 - (1) Gen X of the Exodus generation. They are described in Num. 14:26–30 *And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.'* " See also Num. 14:20–23, 33 Joshua 5:6 Heb. 3:7–11
 - (2) Nadab and Abihu. Their lines were ended, and Eleazar was not commanded to provide for their lines to be preserved. Lev. 10:1-2 1Chr. 24:1-2
 - (3) Eli and his sons. 1Sam. 2:12-17,22-36 3:1-21 4:4-18
 - (4) Saul and his sons. 1Sam. 15:10-35; 31:1-7 1Chr. 10:13-14
 - (5) Ananias and Saphira. Acts 5:1-11
 - (6) Hymenaeus and Alexander. 1Tim. 1:20
- 2) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death judgment being stayed.
 - (1) David's almost dying the sin unto death. 2Sam. 12:13
 - (2) Hezekiah's close call. 2Kgs. 20:1-11; Isa. 38:1-22
 - (3) The Corinthian man who committed incest. 1Cor. 5:5 2Cor. 2:6-11
- 3) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death judgment being stayed, then reinstated.
 - (1) Moses' deferment (Ex. 4:24) and later judgment (Deut. 32:48-52).

Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death

- (2) Balaam's deferment (Num. 22:31) and later judgment (Num. 31:8).
3. Suffering the sin unto death does not mean a loss of salvation. With regards to the incestuous believer in Corinth, Paul wrote: **You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord** (1Cor. 5:5). Our salvation is dependent upon Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for our sins. It is not dependent upon the sort of life we lead post-salvation. If you can lose your salvation after God has saved you, then your salvation is dependent upon you. Our salvation is a matter of faith alone in Christ alone; and once we have believed in Jesus Christ, we cannot lose the eternal life which God grants us. John 5:24 **Point of fact: I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.** 2Tim. 2:13 **if we are faithless, He [yet] remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.**
 4. There are at least nine descriptive terms for the Sin unto Death in the Bible.
 - 1) Delivered over to Satan (1Cor.5:5 1Tim.1:20 Phil.3:19).
 - 2) Carcasses falling (Heb.3:17; 1 Cor.10:5; Num.14:29).
 - 3) Given over to death (Psalm118:18).
 - 4) Taken away (John 15:2 Acts 5:1-11).
 - 5) Swift destruction (2Peter 2:1, 12).
 - 6) Destroyed by the Destroyer (1Cor.10:10 Jude 5).
 - 7) Crawling out a burning house with clothes on fire (Jude 23)
 - 8) Premature death (Eph.6:1-4 Ex.20:12 Deut.5:16)
 - 9) Sleep (euphemism for death of believer) (1Cor.11:27-32/ Eucharist/ 11:30)
 5. There are sins which are not "unto death."
 - 1) First of all, there is a sin not unto death (ἀμαρτάνοντα ἀμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον). 1John 5:16–17
 - (1) The context is a confident prayer ministry based upon our life in Christ. 1John 5:13-15
 - (2) Intercessory prayer is prescribed for brothers sinning non-leading-to-death sin.
 - (3) We should never request that any brother is subject to the sin unto death. Such a request is an ἐρωτάω request (1John 5:16b) rather than an αἰτέω request (1John 5:14–16a).
 - 2) A sin which is confessed is not "unto death." God does not discipline us with the sin unto death for a forgiven sin. 1John 1:9 1Cor. 11:31 Psalm 32:5 38
 - 3) A sin which is discontinued is not "unto death." Heb. 12:1 Ezek. 18:21-32
 - 4) The person who responds positively to divine discipline is not involved in the "sin unto death." Heb. 12:6, 11-15
 - 5) The antithesis of death as a purpose-consequence is the glory of God purpose-consequence. John 11:4
 - (1) Unrepentant, unconfessed sin results in operational death and premature physical death.
 - (2) Confessed sin restores operational life and extends physical life with the purpose-consequence of God's glory being achieved.
 6. So there is no fear that you might be suddenly subject to the sin unto death, there is a series of steps leading to that point. Heb. 12:5–11
 - 1) Light discipline, called knocking in Heb. 12:5a Rev. 3:19–20 (which is a discipline passage, not a salvation passage, as it is too often incorrectly portrayed).
 - 2) Heavy or severe discipline. **Do not faint when you are reprov'd by Him; for those whom the lord loves He disciplines and He scourges every son whom He receives** (Heb. 12:5b–6). Scourging certainly represents severe discipline.
 - 3) Then the sin unto death.
 - 4) There are exceptions to this, as we saw above with Ananias and Sapphira. They were give a very short time to be honest and they chose not to be.
 7. Summary and conclusions
 - 1) The OT and the NT provide multiple illustrations for the Sin Unto Death.
 - 2) Illustrations are provided as warnings. 1Cor. 10:1-11
 - 3) The bottom-line cause of Sin Unto Death is idolatry (which is placing something else over God in your scale of values). 1John 5:21
 - (1) The case of "lying to the Holy Spirit" (Ananias and Sapphira). Acts 5:1-10. Ananias and

Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death

- Saphira pursued the idolatry of approbation-lust (Acts 5:1-11).
- (2) The case of persistent carnality while sitting at the Lord's Table. Defiling the Lord's Supper is the idolatrous practice of eating the table of demons. 1Cor. 10:20-22 11:30-31
 - (3) Apostasy is the idolatrous practice of living the teachings of demons. Rev. 2:20-24 1Tim. 4:1
 - (4) The case of disobedience to the Word of God.. King Saul did not kill Agag although directly ordered to do so by God; he insisted on personally offering sacrifices in the place of divinely appointed priests; and he consulted a witch, itself a capital offense. 1Chron.10:13,14 1Sam. 13:9-14
 - (5) The case of self-righteousness and dependence on man which was perpetuated (case of Hezekiah). Isa. 38
 - (6) The case of apostasy on the part of a believer. Num. 31:8 1Tim. 1:19,20.

Sources:

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/sindeath.html>

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=539

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D100105.pdf>

These were all accessed February 11, 2013. However, L. S. Chafer taught the sin unto death briefly in his 8 volume set *Systematic Theology* (Vol. VII, p. 166); which doctrine was expanded upon considerably by R. B. Thieme, Jr. I believe that most of the doctrine above is ultimately original with Thieme.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and He said to Abimelech, "Listen, you are about to die, for the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife."

How did Abimelech become a believer? We do not know, but there is evidence that not only Abimelech believed in Jehovah Elohim, but that many of his people believed as well. We do not know how people were evangelized prior to nation Israel; and we have only a few examples of geographical areas being evangelized after the establishment of nation Israel.

It is clear that the priest Melchizedek was a believer in the Revealed Lord, as we studied back in Gen. 14, and that he had a very active ministry which Abraham supported financially (Gen. 14:20 Heb. 7:4, 9-11). So Melchizedek was likely teaching about the Revealed Lord, the God of Creation; and, as I have suggested before, probably had the Scriptures up to his date and time (which is why Abraham was willing to accept his authority so easily).

This was also a period of time when the patriarchs Shem, Ham and Japheth were either still alive or only recently passed away. Many people would have known the Revealed Lord through them or through their sons (or through their sons' sons)—all of whom were alive up until about this time in human history. So, even though we have already studied these ten generations going from Shem to Abraham, many of these people are still alive or only recently deceased. Therefore, many people of this era know of the Revealed Lord who destroyed the earth with a great flood and then, later, confounded the language of the people.

How Shem's Lifetime Overlapped Abraham's Lifetime



This chart is according to the Hebrew Bible. Recall that the Greek Septuagint has another generation in here of an additional 130 years (if memory serves). The entire chart is found at ChurchAges.com. Accessed August 29, 2014.

We also know other things apart from the Bible concerning this time period. For several hundred years, there seemed to be an emphasis upon determining **what sorts of laws man ought to be subject to**. When men are with men in close proximity, *what things are illegal and punishable by death; what things should be adjudicated in a court*, etc. The idea was to rule over the most righteous country. This was important to men as cities began to flourish a few hundred years after the flood. Because there was a great migration and population explosion, mankind had to determine the best ways to deal with large groups of people in cities.

Many of us view rulers today with great suspicion and skepticism, which is generally justified. However, there are a handful of leaders today, and probably a larger percentage in the ancient world, who are concerned with having a righteous and just society, where that which is wrong is discouraged or punished, and that which is good is encouraged or rewarded. Presently, it appears as if the interest is, what kinds of sins can be legalized, regulated, and, most importantly, taxed? If taxing sin were the solution to our financial problems, then California and Nevada would be the two most fiscally solid states in the union. The two states which legalized marijuana usage (I write this in 2013⁵⁶) will find out that hard way that legal dope will cost the states far more than it will bring in revenue (in loss of productivity, increased welfare costs, crime, and traffic accidents). But I digress. My point was, organizing a society in a just and righteous way was important to the leaders of that day (Sodom and Gomorrah being glaring exceptions to this).

Being a righteous man heading a righteous nation was important to Abimelech. He, like most rulers of his day, placed a premium upon honesty.

So far, we have studied the first 3 verses of Gen. 20.

Genesis 20:1–3 Then Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he was temporarily residing in Gerar. And Abraham said regarding Sarah his wife, “She [is] my sister.” Therefore, Abimelech the king of Gerar sent [for her] and he took Sarah. Then Elohim came unto Abimelech in a dream that night and He said to him, “Listen, you will perish because of the woman whom you have taken, since she is married to a husband.”

After the promise of having a son in the next year, and after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham and Sarah, who are ages 99 and 89 respectively, move southwest into the territory controlled by Philistines. Abraham uses deception again in order to protect himself (showing a lack of faith in God’s promises and His

⁵⁶ And finalized this chapter August of 2014.

provision), and Abimelech, the Philistine king, takes Sarah as his own wife. However, God comes to Abimelech in a dream and threatens him with the sin unto death (which we studied in the previous lesson).

And Abimelech had not come near unto her and so he said, "My Adonai, a people also righteous You will kill?"

Genesis
20:4

But Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said "My Adonai, will you also kill a righteous people?"

Now Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said, "Lord, will you also kill a righteous people?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And Abimelech had not come near unto her and so he said, "My Adonai, a people also righteous You will kill?" |
| Targum of Onkelos | But Abimelek had not come nigh to defile her; and he said, Lord, shall the son of a people who hath not sinned, and whom it is right to absolve in the judgment, be killed? |
| Latin Vulgate | Now Abimelech had not touched her, and he said: Lord, will you slay a nation that is ignorant and just? |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | But Abimeleck had not touched her; and he said, O LORD, wilt you slay an innocent people? |
| Septuagint (Greek) | But Abimelech had not touched her, and he said, Lord, will You destroy an ignorantly sinning and just nation? |

Significant differences: No dramatic differences; the targum language is more flowery.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Common English Bible | Now Abimelech hadn't gone near her, and he said, "Lord, will you really put an innocent nation to death?" |
| Contemporary English V. | Abimelech said to the Lord, "Don't kill me! I haven't slept with Sarah. Didn't they say they were brother and sister? I am completely innocent." |
| Easy English | Now Abimelech had not touched Sarah. So he said, "Lord, I cannot believe that you will kill an innocent nation, |
| Easy-to-Read Version | But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah. So Abimelech said, "Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent person?" |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, "Lord, I am innocent! Would you destroy me and my people?" |
| <i>The Message</i> | Now Abimelech had not yet slept with her, hadn't so much as touched her. He said, "Master, would you kill an innocent man?" |
| New Berkeley Version | However, Abimelech had not touched her, and said, "O Lord, wilt Thou slay a plainly blameless people?" |
| New Life Bible | But Abimelech had not come near her. He said, "Lord, will You destroy a nation who is without blame?" |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | Well, AbiMelech hadn't touched her [yet], so he replied: 'Lord, would you destroy a righteous nation that has sinned in ignorance?' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abimelech never neared to her. He said, "Lord, will you also slay a righteous nation?" |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Christian Community Bible | But Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "My Lord, are you going to kill a pagan who acted with good intention? |
| God's Word™ | Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent? |
| NIRV | But Abimelech hadn't gone near her. So he said, "Lord, will you destroy a nation that hasn't done anything wrong? |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Abimelech, however, had not gone near her; so he said, 'Lord, would you kill someone even if he is upright? |
| Revised English Bible | Abimelech, who had not gone near her protested, 'Lord, will you destroy people who are innocent? |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord, will you put to death an upright nation? |
| Conservapedia | But Abimelech had not compromised her yet. So he said, "Lord, you're not going to kill innocent people over this, are you?" |
| The Expanded Bible | But Abimelech had not gone near Sarah, so he said, "Lord, would you ·destroy [·kill; slay] an innocent nation? |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | But Abimelek had not made advances to her, so he replied, "My LORD, would you kill a just person?" |
| New Advent Bible | Now Abimelech had not touched her, and he said: Lord, will you slay a nation that is ignorant and just? |
| NET Bible® | Now Abimelech had not gone near her. He said, "Lord [The Hebrew term translated "Lord" here is 'ādōnāy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>].], would you really slaughter an innocent nation? Apparently Abimelech assumes that God's judgment will fall on his entire nation. Some, finding the reference to a nation problematic, prefer to emend the text and read, "Would you really kill someone who is innocent?" See E. A. Speiser, Genesis (AB), 149. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| exeGeser companion Bible | And Abi Melech had not approached her: and he says, Adonay, slaughter you also a just goyim? |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | Now Abimelech had not approaches her. He said, "O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent? |
| Kaplan Translation | Abimelekh had not come near her. He said, 'O Lord, will You even kill an innocent nation [The guilty nation was Sodom.]? |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | But Abimelech had not come near her, so he said, Lord, will you slay a people who are just and innocent? |
| Concordant Literal Version | And Abimelech comes not near to her. And saying is he, "Yahweh, a nation, moreover, unknowing and just, are you killing? |
| Context Group Version | Now Abimelech had not come near her. And he said, Lord, will you kill even a vindicated nation? |
| English Standard Version | Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? |
| Heritage Bible | And Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, Lord, will you even strike a righteous people fatally? |
| NASB | Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless [Lit righteous]? |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Syndein | But Abimelech had not 'come near' her {no sexual relations or marriage here}. And he said, "'Adonay/Lord, will You slay also a righteous {tsaddiyq} nation?" |
| Updated Bible Version 2.11 | Now Abimelech had not had any sex with her. And he said, Lord, will you slay even a righteous nation? |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abimelech has not drawn near unto her, and he says, "Lord, also a righteous nation do you slay?" |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech has not come close to Sarah, so he protests to God, asking if He would destroy an innocent nation.

| Genesis 20:4a | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אַבִּימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>u^b-vee-MEH-lek</i>] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| lô ^ʾ (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced <i>low</i>] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| qârab (בָּרַב) [pronounced <i>kaw-RA^BV</i>] | <i>to come near, to approach, to draw near</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong #7126 BDB #897 |
| ʾel (עַל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |

Translation: But Abimelech had not come near to her,... Although Abimelech had taken this woman as his wife, he had done nothing yet with her. He had not consummated his marriage with her.

Think about this for a moment—Abimelech has a new woman in his harem (however large or small that it is); and yet he has not consummated his marriage. Why would that be? Keil and Delitzsch suggest⁵⁷ that he is ill, that God struck him ill, and that has kept him from going further regarding his marriage. In v. 17, Abraham prays to God and God heals Ahimelech. This would, therefore, suggest that Ahimelech was ill. Therefore, this all fits together in a reasonable way.

The word *to draw near to* is not used too much until we get to Exodus and Leviticus, and it is used in connection with drawing near to God by offering up an animal sacrifice to Him.

⁵⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:4–7.

Genesis 20:4b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʾâmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>] | <i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i> | masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10 |

There are actually 3 forms of this word: ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; ʾădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנִי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find ʾădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAH*] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] in Job 28:28 Isa. 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Yehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Yehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Yehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if every manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

Translation: ...so he said, "My Adonai,... God allows interaction between the people He has breathed life into and Himself. This suggests that Abimelech believes in Jehovah Elohim. He says, "My Adonai." However, we do not here have His personal name (*Yehowah*). Nevertheless, this may be all that has been revealed to Abimelech.

In Ex. 6:3, God says: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them." (NIV) This sounds as if God has not revealed His name *Yehowah* to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Quite obviously that opens up a whole can of worms that I do not want to get into right here.

Genesis 20:4c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>] | interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> . | | Strong's #none BDB #209 |
| gôwy (גוי) [pronounced <i>GOH-ee</i>] | <i>people, nation</i> | masculine singular noun | Strong's #1471 BDB #156 |
| gam (גם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>] | <i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i> | adverb | Strong's #1571 BDB #168 |
| tsaddîyq (צדיק) [pronounced <i>tsahd-DEEK</i>] | <i>just, righteous, justified, vindicated; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i> | adjective, often used as a substantive | Strong's #6662 BDB #843 |
| hârag (גר) [pronounced <i>haw-RAHG</i>] | <i>to kill, to slay, to execute; to destroy, to ruin</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #2026 BDB #246 |

Translation: ...Will you also kill a righteous people? Apparently, people have obsessed over the word *people* or *nation* here. I think that we are dealing with a saying, an exaggeration. Abimelech has not consummated this false marriage; he has done nothing to harm this woman in any way. He simply asks God, “Would you destroy a righteous nation?” In other words, “You would kill me; would You also just destroy a righteous nation?”

Righteous people are the two familiar words tsaddîyq (צדיק) [pronounced *tsahd-DEEK*] and gôwy (גוי) [pronounced *GOH-ee*], the former meaning *righteous* or *justified* and the latter meaning *nation, people, gentile or heathen*. Abimelech understands adultery and the fact that it is wrong, even as a gentile.

Furthermore, he did nothing wrong to take this woman (despite already having a wife); and he has not gone into this woman either, so she remains untouched. This king seems to understand the issues here, indicating a very similar morality to Abraham's.

Genesis 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near her. And he said, “Lord, will You also kill a righteous nation?”

God came to Abimelech in a dream, and Abimelech responded to God, “Lord, will you also destroy a righteous nation?” This would suggest that Abimelech ruled over a nation of believers; or, at the very least, those who adhered to the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This would mean that, there had to be information both about the True God and about the laws of divine establishment available to Abimelech. Abimelech had responded to that information with faith in the Revealed Lord.

What seems to be the case is, Abimelech is aware of the destruction of Sodom. It was quite severe. And he would have known of the degeneracy there as well. So, it would make sense that he knew that God destroyed them for their degeneracy; and here, he is defending his own people.

Please note that God is not giving the land to Abraham right at this point in time. The Land of Promise will be given to Abraham's descendants. The only portion that was filled with degenerates and needed to have been dealt with was Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the people of this land had not fallen into great degeneracy as a whole. In fact, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah staved off a wider destruction, because the cancer had been removed.

Somehow, Abraham received the Scriptures of God, and I suspect that they were given to him by Melchizedek (they would have likely have been communicated verbally). This is only a theory, and there is no Scripture to back this up. However, Melchizedek is clearly presented as a priest to God in Genesis; and Abraham, in his early life, is said to come from a background that was not ideal.

Now, if Melchizedek, amongst the Jebusites, had the truth of God and communed with Abraham as two believers might today, then there is no reason to suppose that Melchizedek is the only priest of God in Canaan. If a person has positive volition toward God, then God must take the gospel message to him. See the **Doctrine of Heathenism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

One of the things which I missed in these lessons was the importance of Gen. 11:31 [And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.](#) (NASB).

Now, pay close attention to the logic here. If Terah was simply moving his family to the west and just intended to stop at Haran (Charan), then there would be no reason to mention Canaan. However, there is the implication that the true destination was originally Canaan, but they stopped part way to Canaan in Haran (Charan). Further evidence of this is found in Acts 7:2–3 [And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.'](#) (ESV)

So, Abraham (Abram then) was told back in Ur to go to Canaan. He was also told to separate from his family. However, he moved with his family and they only got as far as Charan and then they stopped. God had clearly asked Abraham to separate from his family, which he was unwilling to do at first. So, despite the many meetings with God, Abraham did not start out doing exactly what God told him to do.

We will also find evidence in the Bible that some in his family were (or became) idolaters (or became idolaters) and turned away from the Revealed Lord.

My point in all of this is, it was not yet time for Abraham to take Canaan. The people of this land were not completely degenerate (apart from Sodom and Gomorrah). This king is a perfect example of a man who believed in the Revealed Lord (and therefore was saved) and it will become clear that his nation is righteous as well.

Not only does Abimelech believe in the Revealed God, but so do members of his cabinet. They will become fearful because of his dream. Notice that they will not say, "Look, Abimelech, it was a dream—nothing more, nothing less. Don't give it a second thought." Instead, they are fearful. So he believes in the Revealed God and so do his advisors.

Abimelech will continue to defend his actions before God in his dream:

Had not he himself say to me, 'My sister, she.'
And she also, she herself said, 'My brother,
he.' In integrity of my heart and in and in
 innocence of my palm, I did this."

Genesis
20:5

Did he himself not say to me, 'She [is] my
sister'? Furthermore, she also said, herself,
'He [is] my brother.' [Therefore] I did this in
 the integrity [or, *innocence*] of my heart and in
 the innocence of my hands."

Didn't he himself tell me, 'She is my sister'? Didn't she herself tell me, 'He is my brother.' Therefore, I did this with the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | Had not he himself say to me, 'My sister, she.' And she also, she herself said, 'My brother, he.' In integrity of my heart and in and in innocence of my palm, I did this." |
| Targum of Onkelos | Did he not tell me, She is my sister? and did not she also say, He is my brother? In the truthfulness of my heart and the innocency of my hands have I done this. |
| Latin Vulgate | Did not he say to me: She is my sister: and she say, He is my brother? in the simplicity of my heart, and cleanness of my hands have I done this. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | Behold, he said, She is my sister; and she herself also said, He is my brother; in the innocence of my heart and purity of my hands have I done this. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | Did he not say to me, She is my sister, and she, even she herself said, He is my brother? With a pure heart and in the righteousness of my hands have I done this. |
| Significant differences: | None. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | Didn't he say to me, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she-even she-say, 'He's my brother'? My intentions were pure, and I acted innocently when I did this." |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Abraham himself told me, 'This woman is my sister.' And the woman also said, 'This man is my brother.' I am innocent. I did not know what I was doing." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Abraham himself said that she was his sister, and she said the same thing. I did this with a clear conscience, and I have done no wrong." |
| <i>The Message</i> | Didn't he tell me, 'She's my sister'? And didn't she herself say, 'He's my brother'? I had no idea I was doing anything wrong when I did this." |
| New Berkeley Version | Did he not tell me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' I have done this from an honest heart and with clean hands." |
| New Century Version | Abraham said to me, "She is my sister." Sarah too said, "He is my brother." So I took her into my house. I did not know that it was wrong.' |
| New Life Bible | Did the man not tell me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' I have done this with a heart of honor and with hands that are not guilty. |
| New Living Translation | 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." |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Beck's American Translation | Didn't he tell me, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she say, 'He's my brother'? My conscience was clear and my hands were clean when I did this." |
| <i>God's Word™</i> | Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience." |
| New American Bible | Was he not the one who told me, 'She is my sister'? She herself also stated, 'He is my brother.' I acted with pure heart and with clean hands." |
| NIRV | Didn't Abraham say to me, 'She's my sister'? And didn't she also say, 'He's my brother'? I had no idea I was doing anything wrong. I'm not guilty." |
| New Simplified Bible | »Abraham said that she was his sister. She said the same thing. I did this with a clear conscience. I have done no wrong!« |
| Revised English Bible | He told me himself that she was his sister, and she also said that he was her brother. It was in good faith and in all innocence that I did this.' |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bible in Basic English | Did he not say to me himself, She is my sister? and she herself said, He is my brother: with an upright heart and clean hands have I done this. |
|------------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Conservapedia | "He told me, 'She is my sister.' Besides, she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In all this I have acted with a sincere heart and innocent hands." |
| The Expanded Bible | Abraham himself told [‘Did he not tell.?’] me, ‘This woman is my sister,’ and ‘she also said [‘did she not also say.?’], ‘He is my brother.’ I am innocent and did not know I was doing anything wrong [‘did this with a pure conscience/blameless heart and innocent hands].’" |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | Has not this man said to me, ‘She is my sister?’ And did not she herself say to me, ‘He is my brother?’ In the honesty of my heart, and the innocence of my hand, I have done this." |
| New Advent Bible | Did not he say to me: She is my sister: and she say, He is my brother? In the simplicity of my heart, and cleanness of my hands have I done this. |
| NET Bible® | Did Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent has been specified in the translation for clarity] not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said [Heb "and she, even she."], 'He is my brother.' I have done this with a clear conscience [Heb "with the integrity of my heart."] and with innocent hands [Heb "with the integrity of your heart."]" |
| NIV – UK | Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Complete Jewish Bible | Didn't he himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In doing this, my heart has been pure and my hands innocent." |
| Kaplan Translation | Didn't [her husband] tell me that she was his sister? She also claimed that he was her brother. If I did something, it was with an innocent heart and clean hands.' |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Concordant Literal Version | Said not he to me, ‘My sister is she’? And she, moreover, said, ‘My brother is he.’ In the sincerity of my heart and in the innocency of my palms, I did this. |
| English Standard Version | 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." |
| Heritage Bible | Did he not say to me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother; in the integrity of my heart, and complete <i>innocence</i> of my palms I have done this. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Said he not unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself, said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. It is not only the transgression in deed which makes a person guilty in the sight of God, but even an intention that may result in evil without the knowledge of the person. The majority of the sins of Christians are committed in ignorance. In Abimelech's case, where the Sixth Commandment had not yet been broken in deed, he defends himself by referring to the plain statements of Abraham and Sarah, on the basis of which he had acted in good faith. Surely the Lord would not slay a people in spite of its righteousness, since he had acted in the guilelessness of his heart and in the purity of his hands; he had not knowingly polluted either his heart or his hands. |
| Syndein | Said he not unto me, "She . . . {is} my sister?" And she, even she herself, said {‘amar}, "He . . . {is} my brother. In the integrity of my heart/'right lobe' and innocence of my hands have I done/manufactured {‘asah - out of pure intentions}. |
| World English Bible | Didn't he tell me, 'She is my sister?' She, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands have I done this." |
| Young's Updated LT | Has he not himself said to me, She is my sister! and she, even she herself, said, He is my brother; in the integrity of my heart, and in the innocency of my hands, I have done this." |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech protests that both Abraham and Sarah told him that Abraham was her brother. Therefore, Abimelech sees himself as one with an innocent heart and clean hands.

| Genesis 20:5a | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>] | interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> . | | Strong's #none BDB #209 |
| lô' (אול or אל) [pronounced <i>low</i>] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| Hă lô' together expect an affirmative answer. In fact, these two words together present a question with an obvious, self-evident answer. | | | |
| hûw' (אוה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>] | <i>he, it; himself</i> as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |
| This pronoun can be used in the emphatic sense. Sometimes, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied when this pronoun is used. | | | |
| 'amar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'achôwth (אחות) [pronounced <i>aw-KHOWTH</i>] | <i>sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another</i> | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #269 BDB #27 |
| hîy' (איה) [pronounced <i>hee</i>] | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

Translation: "Did he himself not say to me, 'She [is] my sister'?" Abimelech appears to be a believer. He recognizes God's authority and he tries to explain himself. Abimelech alleges, honestly, that Abraham clearly told him that Sarah was his sister.

Genesis 20:5b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wāw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| hîy' (אִיה) [pronounced <i>hee</i>] | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |
| gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>] | <i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i> | adverb | Strong's #1571 BDB #168 |
| hîy' (אִיה) [pronounced <i>hee</i>] | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |
| This pronoun can be used in the emphatic sense. Sometimes, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied when this pronoun is used. | | | |
| 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| 'ach (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>] | <i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i> | masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #251 BDB #26 |
| hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>] | <i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

Translation: Furthermore, she also said, herself, “He [is] my brother.” Similarly, this woman was quizzed and she answered likewise—“Yes, I am certainly his brother.” Let me suggest that, if he asked *both* of them this question, then Abimelech had some questions about their relationship.

Abimelech continues to make the argument with God. Abimelech had very good reason to believe that Sarah was single and available because of what both she and Abraham said.

Genesis 20:5c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| tôm (תּוֹם) [pronounced <i>tohm</i>] | <i>integrity, completeness, innocence; safety, prosperity; fulness [for number and measure]</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #8537 BDB #1070` |

Genesis 20:5c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|--|
| lêbab (לְבַב) [pronounced lay-BAHB ^v] | <i>mind, inner man, inner being, heart</i> | masculine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #3824 BDB #523 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| niqqâyôwn (נִקְיָאוֹן) [pronounced nik-kaw-YOHN] | <i>freedom from guilt [punishment], innocence, innocency; purity; cleanness [of teeth]</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #5356 BDB #667 |
| kaph (כַּף) [pronounced kaf] | <i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i> | feminine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #3709 BDB #496 |
| These nouns are tied together because of the fact that they are concave. | | | |
| ‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| zô'th (זֹאת) [pronounced zoth] | <i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i> | feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb | Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260 |

Translation: [Therefore] I did this in the integrity [or, innocence] of my heart and in the innocence of my hands.” Abimelech rightly claims that he is innocent in this. He took Sarah as a wife, but without knowing that she belonged to Abraham.

Integrity of heart means that Abimelech had no intention of doing wrong; he did not plot or choose to do evil in God's sight. *Innocence of hands* means that he has not had sex with Sarah; that is, he has not sinned against God and committed adultery. He is asserting that he is blameless in his motivation and in his actions.

However, with regards to the laws of divine establishment, Abimelech was out of line. Men were not to have multiple wives and he probably collects women. However, this does not appear to be a clear norm of that era. Nor does God question him about this.

Genesis 20:5 “Did he himself not say to me, ‘She [is] my sister’? Furthermore, she also said, herself, ‘He [is] my brother.’ [Therefore] I did this in the integrity [or, innocence] of my heart and in the innocence of my hands.”

Abimelech continues to present his case to God—in this dream. Abraham told him that Sarah was his sister, and she confirmed that relationship.

The word *integrity* is tôm (טוֹם) [pronounced tohm], which means, *integrity, completeness, innocence; safety, prosperity; fulness [for number and measure]*. Strong's #8537 BDB #1070. There were social norms and standards to which Abimelech was holding to. Despite the model of man and wife given to us by Adam and Eve, Abimelech, along with many kings of that era, collected wives. We know, from the Mosaic Law and from the New

Testament, that this is not God's plan for man to collect wives. However, the Mosaic Law had not yet been given. So, in Abimelech's own estimation, his heart was innocent because these were the norms and standards of his day. He did not have a reason to think differently. He was not contradicting the standards of that day; so he was therefore demonstrating integrity and innocence.

This does not mean that Abimelech is completely blameless. He would have known the example of Adam and Eve. God did not give Adam a harem. God gave Adam exactly one wife. At this point in time in human history, Shem, Ham and Japheth are all still alive or only recently deceased. Therefore, for those who want to know God, would have known about Adam and Eve.

Abimelech claims to be innocent. The word *innocence* is, *niqqâyôwn* (נִקְיָאוֹן) [pronounced *nik-kaw-YOHN*], which means, *freedom from guilt [punishment], innocence, innocency; purity; cleanness [of teeth]*. Strong's #5356 BDB #667.

Abimelech, according to the laws of his city and according to the norms and standards of his own thinking, was innocent. He saw an attractive woman and he took her into his harem. That was the privilege of the king.

The political class often exempts themselves from the standards they apply to everyone else. Not too long ago, Martha Stewart was legally pursued for having committed *insider trading* (I think she was charged with something else, but the insider trader led to that point). However, **insider trading** is something which politicians have done for decades. They know the sorts of regulations or investigations that they might do to this or that business, to this or that sector, and then they buy stocks accordingly, in anticipation of such action. If one followed the average stock portfolio for the average Congressman or Senator, you would find yourself being amazed at how they beat the market consistently; and how they beat some of Wall Street's best stock pickers. In a similar vein, many politicians buy cheap land, and then, a few years later, by happy coincidence, some public improvement project just happens to occur adjacent to that land, doubling and tripling its value in a year or two. The head of our Senate, Harry Reid, is famous for making money on such land deals. He is a multi-millionaire today, despite making around \$200,000/year. He is just such a "wise" investor when it comes to land.

So Abimelech is blameless in the sense that contemporary politicians who pick stocks and make land deals all of the time are innocent. These politicians make investments based upon legislation which they know will affect the stocks and land which they have an interest in, and this was completely legal for many years and politicians of both parties took advantage of this.

Abimelech, as king, could take on several wives. Since he works for the public, he can support these wives with public funds (as did David and Solomon). However, before God, this was not legitimate; just as, before God, Abimelech was not completely innocent and pure. In one sense he is; and in one sense he is not. Abimelech, by the laws of his day, was innocent. In the eyes of God, he was not. However, there is no clear law; there is only the precedence of Adam and Eve. So God overlooks this aspect of Abimelech's life. Acts 17:30–31 **"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent [= to change their minds], because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."** (ESV)

God will not hold him accountable for multiple wives. Furthermore, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, and heir to the promises of God, will have multiple wives. At this point, God is concerned about one woman, and that is Sarah, Abraham's wife. Their seed must be *uncorrupted*. That is key. Abimelech, despite his adherence to the laws of divine establishment, represents corruption.

Whedon observed a certain poetic nature in the words of Abimelech:

The Poetic Nature of Abimelech's Words

Gen. 20:4–5 **But Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said "My Adonai, will you also kill a righteous**

O Lord, a nation also righteous will you slay? Did not he say to me,

The Poetic Nature of Abimelech's Words

people? Did he himself not say to me, 'She [is] my sister'? Furthermore, she also said, herself, 'He [is] my brother.' [Therefore] I did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of my heart and in the innocence of my hands."

My sister is she?
And she, she also, said,
My brother is he.
In the integrity of my heart,
And in the innocency of my hands,
Have I done this.

Partially taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/whe/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 27, 2014 and slightly edited.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And so says unto him, Elohim, in the dream, "Even I, I have known that in the integrity of your heart you have done this. And so I hold, even I, from sinning to Me. Upon so, I have not given you to touch unto her.

Genesis
20:6

Then Elohim said to him in the dream, "I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you [the opportunity] to touch [or, *violate*] her.

Then God said to him in the dream, "I knew in eternity past that you acted in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you the opportunity to violate her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so says unto him, Elohim, in the dream, "Even I, I have known that in the integrity of your heart you have done this. And so I hold, even I, from sinning to Me. Upon so, I have not given you to touch unto her. |
| Targum of Onkelos | And the <u>Word of the</u> Lord said to him in a dream, Before Me also it is manifest that in the truthfulness of your hear you did this, and so restrained I you from sinning before Me; therefore I would not permit you to come near her. |
| Latin Vulgate | And God said to him: And I know that you did it with a sincere heart: and therefore I withheld you from sinning against me, and I suffered you not to touch her. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And God said to him in a dream, Yea, I know that you have done this in the innocence of your heart; for I also restrained you from sinning against me; therefore I did not permit you to touch her. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And God said to him in his sleep, Yes, I knew that you did this with a pure heart, and I spared you, so that you should not sin against Me, therefore I did not let you touch her. |
| Significant differences: | The targum adds a couple words at the beginning. The Latin leaves out the dream part. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | God said to him in the dream, "I know that your intentions were pure when you did this. In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't allow you to touch her. |
| Contemporary English V. | God spoke to Abimelech in another dream and said: I know you are innocent. That's why I kept you from sleeping with Sarah and doing anything wrong. |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Then God said to Abimelech in a dream, "Yes, I know that you are innocent. And I know that you did not know what you were doing. I saved you. I did not allow you to sin against me. I was the One who did not allow you to sleep with her. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | God replied in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did it with a clear conscience; so I kept you from sinning against me and did not let you touch her. |
| <i>The Message</i> | God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know your intentions were pure, that's why I kept you from sinning against me; I was the one who kept you from going to bed with her. |
| New Berkeley Version | In the dream God said to him, "I knew very well that you did this from an honest heart and I, Even I, restrained you from sinning against Me; for this reason I did not let you touch her. Man's relation is primarily to God first, as later Joseph felt and it helped him not to sin; and as David realized after he was rebuked for a sin. |
| New Century Version | Then God said to Abimelech in the dream, "Yes, I know you did not realize what you were doing. So I did not allow you to sin against me and touch her. |
| New Living Translation | 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. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| American English Bible | Then God replied to him in his [dream]: 'Yes, I know that you did this with a pure heart. That's why I've spared you and [kept you from] sinning against Me. And that's why I also kept you from touching her. |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | God said to him in a dream, "I also know you did this with integrity in your heart. I also restrained you from sinning to me. So I never gave her over to you to touch. |
| Beck's American Translation | "Yes I know your conscience was clear when you did this," God told him in the dream. "And to keep you from sinning against Me, I didn't let you touch her. |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. |
| NIRV | Then God spoke to him in the dream. He said, "Yes, I know you had no idea you were doing anything wrong. So I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | 'Yes, I know,' God replied in the dream, 'that you did this with a clear conscience and I myself prevented you from sinning against me. That was why I did not let you touch her. |
| Revised English Bible | God replied in the dream, 'Indeed, it was I who held you back from committing a sin against me. That was why I did not let you touch her. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | And God said to him in the dream, I see that you have done this with an upright heart, and I have kept you from sinning against me: for this reason I did not let you come near her. |
| Conservapedia | God told him in a dream, "Yes, I know that your heart's in the right place. So I had to stop you from sinning against Me, and that's why I didn't let you be intimate with her." |
| The Expanded Bible | Then God said to Abimelech in the dream, "Yes, I know you did not realize what you were doing [this with a pure conscience/ ^L blameless heart]. So I did not allow you to sin [restrained you from sinning] against me and touch her. |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | Then God said to him in a dream, "I also know that in the honesty of your heart you have done this, so I restrained you; I also warned you from sin against Me; therefore, I did not permit you to approach her. |
| NET Bible® | Then in the dream God replied to him, "Yes, I know that you have done this with a clear conscience [Heb "with the integrity of your heart."]. That is why I have kept you [Heb "and I, even I, kept you."] from sinning against me and why [Heb "therefore."] I did not allow you to touch her. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Elohim says to him in a dream, Yes, I know you work this in the integrity of your heart; for I also withheld you - even I from sinning against me: so I gave you to not touch her:.... |
| Kaplan Translation | God said to him in the dream, 'I also realize that you have done this with an innocent heart. That is why I prevented you from sinning against Me, not giving you an opportunity to touch her. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | Then God said to him in the dream, Yes, I know you did this in the integrity of your heart, for it was I Who kept you back and spared you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not give you occasion to touch her. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And saying is the Elohim to him in the dream, "Moreover, I know that, in the sincerity of your heart you did this, and I, moreover, am keeping you back from sinning against Me. Therefore, I did not allow you to touch her. |
| Context Group Version | And God said to him in the dream, Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also withheld you from disgracing [God] against me. Therefore I didn't allow you to touch her. |
| English Standard Version | 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. |
| Green's Literal Translation | And God said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the honor of your heart, and I also withheld you from sinning against Me. On account of this I did not allow you to touch her. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. The Lord accepted the excuse of Abimelech, incidentally telling him, however, that the sickness which had prevented the king from consummating the supposed marriage had been inflicted from above, to prevent a greater wrong from being committed. Thus the Lord makes use even of misery and tribulation to keep His children from sin and transgression. |
| NASB | Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept [Lit restrained] you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. |
| Updated Bible Version 2.11 | And God said to him in the dream, Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also withheld you from sinning against me. Therefore I didn't allow you to have any sex with her. |
| Young's Updated LT | And God says unto him in the dream, "Yea, I—I have known that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I withhold you, even I, from sinning against Me, therefore I have not suffered you to come against her. |

The gist of this verse: God responded that He knew that Abimelech had taken Sarah in innocence, and therefore God kept Abimelech from sinning against Him.

| Genesis 20:6a | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| ʾel (אל) [pronounced eh] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| ʾĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| chālôwm (חלום) [pronounced khuh-LOHM] | <i>dream</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #2472 BDB #321 |

Translation: *Then Elohim said to him in the dream,...* The fact that God speaks to Abimelech suggests to me that he believes in God. In this dream, Abimelech expresses no disbelief, no false names for deity or anything else that indicates that he does not believe in the God Who created us all.

As has been pointed out on many occasions, righteousness was credited to Abraham because he believed in Y^ehowah. We have no idea how Abraham was originally taught about Y^ehowah; we only know Abraham's personal talks with the Lord. He originally came from the area that is now known as Bagdad (generally speaking).

Now, here is Abimelech, who lives near the Mediterranean Sea, and he seems to immediately recognizes God's authority and reality. Furthermore, he will act on this dream; he will not wake up the next morning and say, "You know, I had the nuttiest dream!" Abimelech takes this dream seriously. He takes these words of God seriously.

Not far from Abimelech, relatively speaking, is Salem, where Melchizedek lives, and Abraham accepted the authority of Melchizedek and paid tithes to him, despite the fact that Abraham had spoken with God on several occasions and despite the fact that Abraham enjoyed this great spiritual victory. Therefore, suggesting that Abimelech is a believer is not a crazy thing to propose.

My point is, there had to be a way for these 3 men, in very different regions, to somehow have had God revealed to them. We are told very little about evangelism specifically in Genesis, other than clues like this—that these are 3 men in different regions, and all of the believed in the Revealed God. Therefore, somehow, they had to have been evangelized. It may have been no more complex than hearing about the God of the Flood, the God of Noah,

and believing in that God. In any case, we know that whenever each man believed in the Revealed God, then God credited that man with righteousness (Gen. 5:6).

Genesis 20:6b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|---|
| gam (גם) [pronounced gahm] | <i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i> | adverb | Strong's #1571 BDB #168 |
| ʾānōkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE] | <i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i> | 1 st person singular personal pronoun | Strong's #595 BDB #59 |
| yādaʿ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG] | <i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #3045 BDB #393 |
| kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| <p>Kîy, like many of the small words in Hebrew, has a large number of uses: ❶ It is used as a relative conjunction, particularly after the verbs <i>seeing, hearing, speaking, knowing, believing remembering, forgetting</i> and in such cases means <i>that</i>. ❷ Although kîy is used for consecution and effect and rendered <i>to that, that</i>; it sometimes has an intensifying force and is rendered <i>so that, so even, even</i>. This is how it is used in this context. ❸ The connective can be used of time and be rendered <i>at that time, which, what time, when</i>. ❹ Kîy can be used of time, but in such a way that it passes over to a demonstrative power where it begins an apodosis (<i>then, so</i>). ❺ It can be used as a relative causal particle: <i>because, since, while, on account that</i>. When we find it several times in a sentence, it can mean <i>because...and</i> or <i>for...and</i>. ❻ It can also have a continuous disjunctive use here and be rendered <i>for...or...or</i> (when the second two kîy's are preceded by conjunctions). ❼ After a negative, it can mean <i>but</i> (the former must not be done because the latter is to be done).</p> | | | |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| tôm (תּוֹם) [pronounced tohm] | <i>integrity, completeness, innocence; safety, prosperity; fulness [for number and measure]</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #8537 BDB #1070 |
| lêbab (לִבָּב) [pronounced lay-BAHB ^v] | <i>mind, inner man, inner being, heart</i> | masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #3824 BDB #523 |
| ʾāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| zô'th (זֹאת) [pronounced zoth] | <i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i> | feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb | Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260 |

Translation: ...“I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of your heart. Twice, God will emphasize that He is the One acting. *Know* is in the perfect tense. God knew in eternity past that this would happen. God knew all about Abraham’s trip to Gerar and that Abimelech would call for Abraham’s wife.

Integrity is the word *tôm* (תם) [pronounced *tohm*] and it means *completeness, integrity* and *innocence*. In this context, it is a combination of the latter two. The sense here is that his heart is *whole* or *complete*. Therefore, it is not duplicitous; it does not go off into two directions; there is not a hidden agenda of evil.

Now, Abimelech has a sense of right and wrong, although it may not be an absolute sense. My guess is, Sarah would be added to a harem. So, in the thinking of Abimelech, having a harem and having many wives is an accepted practice—many rulers did this. So, by his own thinking—by *his own heart*—what he was doing was correct. God repeats his words almost exactly here.

God does not say, “Hmm, just where do I start with you? Should I tell you about polygamy?” God is protecting the seed of Abraham and Sarah; and God has not yet given the Law to Moses; so God speaks directly to the one issue of Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech.

What Abimelech did was, call for Sarah to become his wife.

Genesis 20:6 so far: Then Elohim said to him in the dream, “I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of your heart.

This is an interesting thing that God says to Abimelech. God uses the first word to apply to Abimelech, but not the second. Abimelech was consistent with the laws and standards of his day, he had not violated his own norms and standards, but he was not necessarily completely innocent. Just like the Congressman who has seen great returns on his stock portfolio and land purchases, who may be acting in accordance with the law, so he is adhering to the laws and standards of his time—but he is certainly not completely innocent. He just isn’t breaking the law (which laws, he helped to pass).

So God recognizes that Abimelech is acting within the norms and standards of his day, and agrees to that.

One might sense a double standard with Abraham and Sarah; God has not allowed Sarah to be violated by another man; however He allowed Abraham to copulate with Sarah’s servant, Hagar. However, God did not use Abraham for 13 years after that incident, and Sarah and Hagar were also disciplined. Furthermore, they all lived together which was even worse than discipline. Two women under the same roof where one is haughty and the other is jealous is awful pressure for the two women and for Abraham. No one gets away with anything under the justice of God. God sometimes withholds discipline and withholds the pain that we believe someone deserves, but He will see to these things.

Genesis 20:6c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong’s Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong’s # BDB #253 |
| châsak ^e (חָשַׁק) [pronounced <i>khaw-SAHK^e</i>] | <i>to hold in, to restrain, to preserve, to keep safely from something, to withhold, to refrain</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal imperfect | Strong’s #2820 BDB #362 |
| gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>] | <i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i> | adverb | Strong’s #1571 BDB #168 |

Genesis 20:6c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| 'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE] | <i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied) | 1 st person singular personal pronoun | Strong's #595 BDB #59 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 2 nd person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced min] | <i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i> | preposition of separation | Strong's #4480 BDB #577 |
| châtâ' (חָטָא) [pronounced khaw-TAW] | <i>to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression</i> | Qal infinitive construct | Strong's #2398 BDB #306 |
| A Qal infinitive construct with a preposition can introduce a purpose clause, a result clause or a temporal clause. An infinitive construct can indicate a continuous sense. | | | |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

Translation: *Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me.* So, although a period of time has elapsed—certainly time designed to cause Abraham to think over his situation—God has restrained Abimelech from sinning with regards to God. We do not know just exactly what happened during these few days, but one can assume, based upon Abraham praying and Abimelech being healed, that Abimelech was made ill, and was unable to continue with whatever wedding ceremony was proper and with the consummation of the marriage. God could not allow that; and in this way, God restrained Abimelech from sinning.

Often, when God speaks of someone sinning against Him, the *bêyth* preposition is used. Here, however, the softer *lâmed* preposition is used; so that the sin is not said to be *against God* but *with respect to God*. The *bêyth* preposition would suggest that Abimelech knew that was a sin and was going to do it, but God restrained him. The *lâmed* preposition suggests that Abimelech did not know that he was about to sin; and God restrained him from sinning.

I believe that the word *also* means, in addition to coming to Abimelech in a dream. God *also* kept Abimelech from sinning again Him. Abimelech is saying, “I am innocent; I have not touched this woman.” And God says, “Yes, I kept you from touching her.”

The mechanics here is probably an illness that Abimelech began to suffer upon taking Sarah into his harem (God will cure him of an illness in v. 17). A period of time passes between his taking Sarah and his restoration of Sarah to Abraham (probably more than a couple days⁵⁸; probably less than 3 months⁵⁹). Since Abimelech does not touch Sarah during this time, there must be a reason for that. Logically, the reason would be, Abimelech was too ill to marry and consummate his marriage to Sarah.

⁵⁸ Part of what happened was, no one in his house was giving birth. If this occurs over a period of a couple days, this might not be noticeable.

⁵⁹ Remember that we are on the clock for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham to give Abraham a son by Sarah. God said it is going to happen in a year's time. So God needs to get Sarah out of Abimelech's harem untouched and relatively soon.

From the Life Application Study Bible Notes: *Abimelech had unknowingly taken a married woman to be his wife and was about to commit adultery. But God somehow prevented him from touching Sarah and held him back from sinning. What mercy on God's part! How many times has God done the same for us, holding us back from sin in ways we can't even detect? We have no way of knowing-we just know from this story that he can. God works just as often in ways we can't see as in ways we can.*⁶⁰

Genesis 20:6d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| ‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>] | <i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i> | adverb | Strong's #3651 BDB #485 |
| Together, ‘al kên (כֵּן עַל) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason.</i> | | | |
| lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>] | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #5414 BDB #678 |
| All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: 1) <i>to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute.</i> | | | |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| nâga' (נָגַע) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHG</i>] | <i>to touch, to reach into; to violate, to injure; to come to a person; to strike</i> | Qal infinitive construct | Strong's #5060 BDB #619 |
| ‘el (עַל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |

Translation: For this reason, I have not given you [the opportunity] to touch [or, violate] her. God did not give Abimelech the opportunity to touch Sarah, which would mean to violate her. Although Abimelech may have been weak on the idea of polygamy, he certainly understood the concept of marriage vows and that he would be going against God to violate Sarah.

⁶⁰ From <http://newsyoucanbelieve.com/bible/2010/01/06/day-006/> accessed August 29, 2014.

As a result of being sick, Abimelech was unable to violate Sarah; God did not give him the opportunity to sin against God. This is God’s overruling will.

Genesis 20:6 Then Elohim said to him in the dream, “I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you [the opportunity] to touch [or, violate] her.

God has a specific plan and that is for a new race to begin with Abraham. From him would come the Jewish race. Had Abimelech taken Sarah and copulated with her, this would have sullied the beginnings of the Jewish race (much like the seed of Lot was sullied in the previous chapter through incest). We could no longer be assured that Abraham had fathered the child-to-come. There would have been corruption in this line that God was establishing.

God speaks to Abimelech and acknowledges his reasoning; and adds that, God had not allowed Abimelech to have sexual relations with Sarah. It was God who has kept them apart, although the specific mechanics are not given here.

Gill: *There is nothing done but what is done by divine permission, so many more evils would be committed than there are, were it not that men are restrained from them by the power and providence of God, not suffering them to do them; and in particular this sin was prevented, that it might not in any respect be a doubtful point whether Isaac, whom Sarah had now conceived, was a legitimate son of Abraham; and these expressions of Abimelech not coming near her, Gen. 20:4; and not touching her as here, are used for that purpose.*⁶¹

Matthew Henry makes a similar point: *He lets him know that he was kept from proceeding in the sin merely by the good hand of God upon him: I withheld you from sinning against me. Abimelech was hereby kept from doing wrong, Abraham from suffering wrong, and Sarah from both. Note, (1.) There is a great deal of sin devised and designed that is never executed. As bad as things are in the world, they are not so bad as the devil and wicked men would have them. (2.) It is God that restrains men from doing the ill they would do. It is not from him that there is sin, but it is from him that there is not more sin, either by his influence upon men’s minds, checking their inclination to sin, or by his providence, taking away the opportunity to sin. (3.) It is a great mercy to be hindered from committing sin; of this God must have the glory, whoever is the instrument, 1Sam. 25:32–33.*⁶² Can you imagine how many times, particularly in our youth, that God kept us from sinning, and many times, that meant the difference between life and death? You may or may not have that sort of experience. I was not a very good person in my youth. In retrospect, God ran interference for me in those days beyond what is imaginable.

Translation used is the ESV capitalized unless otherwise noted.

When God needs to, he can bend circumstances to affect the free will of a king. The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will. (Prov. 21:1)

| Examples of God’s protective, overruling will | |
|--|--|
| Scripture | Commentary |
| Gen. 20:6 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." | Even though Abimelech took Abraham’s wife to himself to marry, he never got as far as marrying her or consummating the marriage, probably because God made him too ill to go through with it. Gen. 20:17 |

⁶¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:6.

⁶² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:3–7.

Examples of God's protective, overruling will

| Scripture | Commentary |
|---|--|
| <p>Gen. 31:4–9 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me."</p> | <p>Jacob is about to take his wives and leave Laban because Laban has cheated Jacob over and over again. Jacob recognizes that God has overruled Laban's dishonesty over and over again. When Jacob and Laban agreed that Jacob could keep the spotted from the flock, then all of the flock would bear spotted. This is God's overruling will. God chose to take Laban's livestock from him and give them to Jacob because of Laban's treachery.</p> |
| <p>Gen. 35:2–5 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem. And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.</p> | <p>Jacob enjoyed a great deal of God's overruling will and was protected by it. God told Jacob it was time to return to Bethel, but it had to be done as pure. They could not bring the idolatry of Jacob's wives with them.</p> <p>They were able to travel without being harassed as God brought terror to the cities that they traveled near, so that Jacob and his seed—the line of promise—was protected.</p> |
| <p>Ex. 34:23–24 Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.</p> | <p>God is promising to protect the nation Israel, when they go in and take the land; and that He would cast out nations within that land before their eyes.</p> <p>Furthermore, when the men of Israel would go to worship, God would protect them.</p> |
| <p>1Sam. 25:23–26 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal."</p> | <p>David protected Nabal and his flocks, but Nabal would not pay him for what he did, so David was furious and was about to kill Nabal. Abigail, Nabal's wife, stops David and keeps him from killing Nabal, and says that the Lord is restraining him from killing Nabal so that David is not guilty of murder.</p> <p>Again, this is God overruling what David would have done; and this would have made David a criminal and it would have changed Israel's history and destroyed the line of David (from which will come the Lord Jesus Christ).</p> |

| Examples of God’s protective, overruling will | |
|--|---|
| Scripture | Commentary |
| 1Sam. 25:32–34 And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand! For as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male." | David agrees with Abigail. His intention would have been to come there and kill every man associated with Nabal. David agrees that God has stopped him from doing this. |
| Hosea 2:6–7 “Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me than now.' ” | God will guide Israel to be unable to pursue her former lovers (that is, will no longer find fulfillment in idolatry or in improper alliances). Therefore, Israel will return to her first husband, Who is God. |
| To sum up this principle: Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor [= grace] and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. | |
| The Scriptures used came from <i>Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge</i> ; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Gen. 20:6. | |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God intends for Sarah to have a uniquely-born son by Abraham, which is the result of a miracle, and this son is to be separate from all other claims to the promises made to Abraham—that is, that son uniquely will be heir to the promises of God. This child, who will be born will be uniquely able, through birth, to claim the promises which God had originally delivered to Abraham. Therefore, God cannot allow there to be any impurity in Sarah, in this regard. She must carry Abraham’s seed only. There can be no corruption of this line. At this point in the narrative of Abraham’s life, we are perhaps a month away from Isaac’s conception.

And now return woman of the man for a prophet he [is]. And so he prays because of you, and live! And if you are not restoring, know that dying, you die, you and all that [is] to you.”

Genesis 20:7

Now, therefore, return [this] man’s wife, for he [is] a prophet and he will pray on behalf of you and you will live. And if you do not return [her to him], know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you [lit., *all that (is) to you*].”

Now, therefore, return this man’s wife to him, for he is a prophet and he will pray on your behalf to deliver you from My judgement. And if you do not return her to him, know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And now return woman of the man for a prophet he [is]. And so he prays because of you and live. And if you are not restoring, know that dying, you die, you and all that [is] to you." |
| Targum of Onkelos | And now let the wife of the man return; for he is a prophet; he will pray for you, and you will live: but if you wilt not let her return, know that dying you will die, you and all who are yours. |
| Latin Vulgate | Now therefore restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet: and he will pray for you, and you will live: but if you wilt not restore her, know that you will surely die, you and all that are yours. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | Now therefore restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for you, and you shall live; but if you do not restore her, then know that you will surely die, you, and all your family. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | But now return the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for you, and you shall live; but if you restore her not, know that you and all yours shall die. |
| Significant differences: | <i>Live</i> is in the imperative in the Hebrew, but that is very difficult to translate that way. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contemporary English V. | Her husband is a prophet. Let her go back to him, and his prayers will save you from death. But if you don't return her, you and all your people will die. |
| Easy English | Now give back the man's wife. He is a *prophet. He will then pray for you, so that you will live. But if you are not willing to give her back, then you will certainly die. And all that belong to you will certainly die.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version | So give Abraham his wife again. Abraham is a prophet [A person God called to speak for him.]. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give Sarah back to Abraham, then I promise that you will die. And all your family will die with you." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | But now, give the woman back to her husband. He is a prophet, and he will pray for you, so that you will not die. But if you do not give her back, I warn you that you are going to die, you and all your people." |
| <i>The Message</i> | So now give the man's wife back to him. He's a prophet and will pray for you--pray for your life. If you don't give her back, know that it's certain death both for you and everyone in your family." |
| New Berkeley Version | Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet; he will pray for you and you will survive. But if you do not return her, understand that you and all yours will surely die. As a man who customarily lived and spoke God's thought, Abraham was a prophet. |
| New Century Version | Give Abraham his wife back. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will not die. But if you do not give Sarah back, you and all your family will surely die." |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

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|---------------------------|---|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Now return the man's woman, for he's a prophet, and he <i>will</i> pray for you and yours to live. If you <i>do</i> not return her, know that you <i>will</i> die --you, and all of yours." |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die." |
| NIRV | "Now return the man's wife to him. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But what if you do not return her? Then you can be sure that you and all of your people will die." |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| New Jerusalem Bible | Now send the man's wife back; for he is a prophet and can intercede on your behalf for your life. But understand that if you do not send her back, this means death for you and all yours.' |
| New Simplified Bible | »Give the man's wife back to him now. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die.« |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | So now, give the man back his wife, for he is a prophet, and let him say a prayer for you, so your life may be safe: but if you do not give her back, be certain that death will come to you and all your house. |
| Conservapedia | "So now give the man his wife back. He is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, know this: you'll be dead meat, you and all your people, too." Hebrew commonly repeats verbs for emphasis, as in the verb "to die" in this verse. |
| The Expanded Bible | Give Abraham [the man] his wife back. He is a prophet [one who interceded for others]. He will pray for you, and you will not die. But if you do not give Sarah back, you and all your family [who belong to you] will surely die." |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | So now return the woman to her husband, for he is a Great Teacher, and will intercede for you. But if you do not return her, know that you shall certainly die, and all that you have." |
| NET Bible® | But now give back the man's wife. Indeed [Or "for," if the particle is understood as causal (as many English translations do) rather than asseverative.] he is a prophet and he will pray for you; thus you will live [After the preceding jussive (or imperfect), the imperative with vav conjunctive here indicates result.] [He will pray for you that you may live. Abraham was known as a man of God whose prayer would be effectual. Ironically and sadly, he was also known as a liar.] But if you don't give her back [Heb "if there is not you returning." The suffix on the particle becomes the subject of the negated clause.], know that you will surely die [The imperfect is preceded by the infinitive absolute to make the warning emphatic.] along with all who belong to you. " For a discussion of the term prophet see N. Walker, "What is a Nabhi?" ZAW 73 (1961): 99-100. |
| NIV, ©2011 | Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all who belong to you will die." |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| exeGeses companion Bible | ...and now restore the man his woman; for he is a prophet; and he prays for you to live: and if you restore her not, know this, in dying, you die, you and all who are yours. |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | Therefore, restore the man's wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours." |
| Kaplan Translation | Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not return [her], you can be sure that you will die - you and all that is yours.' |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | So now restore to the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her [to him], know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours. |
| English Standard Version | 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." |
| Heritage Bible | And now turn back to the man his wife, because he is a prophet, and he will judge in prayer for you, and you will live; and if you do not return her, know by seeing that dying, you shall die, you and all that is to you. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Now, therefore, restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; and if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt surely die, thou and all that are thine. If, after this revelation, Abimelech had persisted in keeping Sarah, his sin would have been one of malice, and death would have been the certain retribution, not only his own death, but that of his whole family. By telling Abimelech that he would remain alive only by virtue of the intercession of Abraham, who was one of His own prophets, the Lord showed that He knew the king to be capable of true moral understanding. It is a wise person that permits himself to be governed by God's directions after some stumble or mistake. |
| Syndein | "Cause the restoring of the man his wife. He . . . {is} a prophet, and he himself shall keep on praying for you, and you will live. If you do not cause the restoring {of her to her husband}, know {yada`} . . . dying . . . you will die {muwth muwth}, you, and all that are yours." |
| Webster's Bible Updated | Now therefore restore to the man [his] wife, for he [is] a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live: and if you will not restore [her], know you that you will surely die, you and all that [are] yours. |
| World English Bible | Now therefore, restore the man's wife. For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. If you don't restore her, know for sure that you will die, you, and all who are yours." |
| Young's Updated LT | And now send back the man's wife, for he is inspired, and he does pray for you, and live; and if you do not send back, know that dying you will die, you, and all that you have." |
| The gist of this verse: | God tells Abimelech to return Abraham's wife to him, or Abimelech and all that he has will die. |

Genesis 20:7a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>gaht-TAWH</i>] | <i>now, at this time, already</i> | adverb of time | Strong's #6258 BDB #773 |
| When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ʿattâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another. | | | |

Genesis 20:7a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v] | <i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative | Strong's #7725 BDB #996 |
| ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |
| ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh] | <i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i> | masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the definite article | Strong's #376 BDB #35 |

Translation: *Now, therefore, return [this] man's wife,...* God gives Abimelech an order, and Abimelech will obey this order. Again, this suggests that Abimelech is a believer. I have read several commentaries about Abraham interacting with Abimelech and how Abraham, the believer, is a lousy witness to this heathen, but there is no reason to assume that Abimelech is a heathen. Abraham is certainly a lousy witness, but when God gives Abimelech a clear and unequivocal order here, Abimelech takes it to heart, even though this is just a dream.

Genesis 20:7b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| nâbîy' (נָבִיא) [pronounced naw ^b -VEE] | <i>prophet [true or false]; spokesman, speaker</i> | masculine singular noun | Strong's #5030 BDB #611 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in the Bible. | | | |
| Barnes: [A prophet is] he who speaks by God, of God, and to God, who declares to people not merely things future, but also things past and present, that are not obvious to the sense or the reason. ⁶³ | | | |
| hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo] | <i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is implied</i> | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

Translation: *...for he [is] a prophet...* Here is the first time that the word *prophet* is found in the Bible: Abraham is called a prophet. God did not make up this word on the spot. He did not tell Abimelech, "This Abraham is a

⁶³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:7.

gurglesnap” and then later defined it. Abimelech knew what God was saying. Abimelech knew what the word prophet meant, at least to some limited degree (as the revealed Word of God was limited at that time).

Nâbîy' (נָבִי) [pronounced *naw^b-VEE*] began as a nontechnical word that means *spokesman* or *speaker*. Whereas, this is not clear in this passage, it is more clear in Ex. 7:1 where Moses is complaining to God that he just is not articulate enough to represent God, so God tells Moses that his brother Aaron will fill in for him when it comes to speaking to Pharaoh. The word, beginning as spokesman then meaning God's spokesman, finally came to mean prophet as we almost correctly understand it. I say *almost* because what people focus on when they hear the word *prophet* is prophecy, but that is not its primary meaning. A prophet is one who speaks for God; sometimes this includes the foretelling of events and sometimes it does not. Nevertheless, the person is still a prophet.

The word is nâbîy' (נָבִי) [pronounced *naw^b-VEE*] now means, *prophet [true or false]; spokesman, speaker*. When speaking of a true prophet of God, he speaks God's message to man (or he represents God to man). God speaks to the prophet and then the prophet speaks God's message to man. Strong's #5030 BDB #611.

Commentators on the Use of the word “Prophet” in Genesis 20:7

| Commentator | Commentary |
|--------------------|---|
| Adam Clarke | <i>The word prophet, which we have from the Greek προφητες, and which is compounded of προ, before, and φημι, I speak, means, in its general acceptance, one who speaks of things before they happen, i.e., one who foretells future events. But that this was not the original notion of the word, its use in this place sufficiently proves. Abraham certainly was not a prophet in the present general acceptance of the term.</i> ⁶⁴ |
| Keil and Delitzsch | <i>Abraham was προφήτης as the recipient of divine revelation, and was thereby placed in so confidential a relation to God, that he could intercede for sinners, and atone for sins of infirmity through his intercession.</i> ⁶⁵ |
| Albert Barnes | <i>[Being a prophet means that] the things of God are known only to him, and therefore must be communicated by him; secondly, the prophet must be enabled of God to announce in correct terms the things made known to him. These things refer not only to the future, but in general to all such matters as fall within the purpose and procedure of God. They may even include things otherwise known or knowable by man, so far as these are necessary to the exposition of the divine will.</i> ⁶⁶ |
| Thomas Coke | <i>The Greek προφητης, a prophet, signifies immediately one that speaks for another: and the Hebrew נָבִי nabi, signifies a person who speaks something in an eminent and extraordinary manner. As prophets, or those who spoke for and as commissioned by God, foretold future events in his name, hence the word prophet came to imply not only a person who has familiar intercourse with God, and who is authorised to declare his will, and who by his prayers could obtain special blessings for others, but also a discloser of future events. Jeremiah 14:11; Jeremiah 15:1; Jeremiah 27:18. Psalms 99:6.</i> ⁶⁷ |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Abraham is a prophet because God has told him what is in the future, and he has certain shared this with others. So he has related God's Word to others.

⁶⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:7.

⁶⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:4–7.

⁶⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:7.

⁶⁷ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

If you are the kind of person who has a schedule to read through your Bible once every year (or 2 years or whatever), you probably breezed right by this verse and did not notice anything remarkable.

In contrast to the prophet, a priest represents man to God. The Old Testament priest brought offerings to God on behalf of Charley Brown, and God pardoned Charley Brown because of the intercessory work of the priest. Jesus Christ is both a prophet and a priest.

I read through a great many commentaries, and only Whedon seemed to grasp the difference: Here the word prophet first occurs, but the spirit of prophecy had been abroad long before, speaking though Enoch and Noah. A prophet, איב, is one who announces a divine message. The message itself may refer to things past, present, or future, so that prediction, or foretelling of events, is only incidental to prophecy, not its leading idea...Abraham was a prophet to Abimelech, and sent to pray for him; for prayer and praise were elements of prophesying. In the offering of sacrifices and in his intercession for Sodom, he appeared as priest. In his battles with the eastern kings, and in his disposal of the spoil, he appeared as king; so that in the father of the faithful we may see these several offices combined.⁶⁸

Note here that Abraham will pray on behalf of Abimelech. When Abraham does this, he is standing in between God and man, acting on behalf of the man in speaking to God. He becomes an intercessor. As an intercessor between Abimelech and God, Abraham is a **type** of Christ. God will heal Abimelech, as God heals us in salvation (we are not physically healed when we are saved, but our soul is apparently cleansed of **scar tissue**).

| Genesis 20:7c | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| pâlal (לָלַל) [pronounced paw-LAHL] | to pray, to intercede, to make intercession for, to ask for a favorable determination | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect | Strong's #6419 BDB #813 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in the Bible. | | | |
| ba'ad (דָּעַב) [pronounced BAH-gad] | by, near; because of; behind, after; about, round about; between [two things], through; into, among; pro, for; away from, behind; on behalf of | generally a preposition of separation or nearness with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #1157 BDB #126 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| châyâh (חַיָּה) [pronounced khaw-YAW] | to live, to have life, to revive, to recover health, to be healed, to be refreshed | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative | Strong's #2421 & #2425 BDB #310 |

Translation: ...and he will pray on behalf of you and you will live. We have another word that occurs for the first time in Scripture, and, again, we must reasonably assume that this is a word that Abimelech knew and understood. We have already been introduced to the concept of prayer, where Abraham prayed on behalf of Lot (which is known as an intercessory prayer) at the end of Gen. 18. We know that when Abraham prays to God, this is powerful and that God answers his prayers (Gen. 19:29).

⁶⁸ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/whe/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 27, 2014.

God answered Abraham's prayers on both occasions, although Abraham may not realize that God listened to him regarding Lot and Sodom. However, here Abraham were clearly understand that his prayer is answered by God and that he will see the results.

There is another word in this verse which occurs for the first time: *pâlal* (פָּלַל) [pronounced *paw-LAHL*], which means, *to pray, to intercede, to make intercession for, to ask for a favorable determination*. Strong's #6419 BDB #813. This is the first time that these two words occur in the Bible and they are both found here, right in this one verse.

You may not realize it, but finding these words together in the same verse at the same time is *very significant*. And it is even more significant that these two words are found together for the first time in the Bible in the same verse.

God has essentially warned Abimelech that he was facing the sin unto death. Not only would God take out Abimelech under the sin unto death, but God would have taken out Abimelech's family as well. There is **blessing by association**; but there is also cursing by association, which fact is revealed here. So, God warns Abimelech in this dream, and tells him that this Abraham is a prophet and that he will pray or intercede for Abimelech.

There is the easy way and there is the hard way. Sarah is about to be impregnated by Abraham (or she is already pregnant). God cannot allow for this to become corrupted. Abimelech's involvement would corrupt the line of promise. If God has to, He will kill Abimelech and all those related to him (probably, God would use a communicable disease in order to accomplish this). The easy way is for Abimelech to give Sarah up, and to allow Abraham to pray for his deliverance.

If Abraham prays on behalf of Abimelech, he would be acting as a priest, speaking to God on Abimelech's behalf. A priest represents man to God. Think of him as a defense lawyer, if that helps. So, hidden in this verse is both Abraham as a prophet (speaking for God to man) and Abraham functioning as a priest (speaking to God on behalf of man). This would make Abraham a unique person before God, and in this way, as the intercessor between Abimelech and God, Abraham foreshadows Jesus Christ. Abraham was able to do this. He could speak to God for Abimelech, and God would not act against Abimelech.

This is interesting; that God does not simply tell Abimelech, "Look, you release Sarah back to Abraham and I will not kill you." He tells Abimelech to release Sarah because "Abraham is a prophet and he will pray on your behalf." So, God expects for Abraham, even in this situation where God has intervened directly, to pray for God to spare Abimelech and his family.

Application: God expects for you to pray on behalf of those whom you know. You may not be able to do anything else, and others including them, may ridicule you for what you do, but you still pray on their behalf.

Genesis 20:7d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʾîm (יִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>] | <i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event) | primarily an hypothetical particle | Strong's #518 BDB #49 |

Genesis 20:7d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| The particle ʾim (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage). | | | |
| Gesenius writes: <i>Its primary power I regard as demonstrative, lo! Behold!</i> ⁶⁹ | | | |
| ʾēyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān] | <i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i> | particle of negation; substantive of negation; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #369 BDB #34 |
| shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b ʋ] | <i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i> | Hiphil participle | Strong's #7725 BDB #996 |

Translation: *And if you do not return [her to him],...* The particle here seems to be both used as a demonstrative and as a conditional particle. *And, listen, if you do not return [her to him]...* seems to be what is being said here. At this point, God will tell Abimelech of the consequences of disobeying him.

Genesis 20:7e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| yâdaʿ (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHḡ] | <i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative | Strong's #3045 BDB #393 |
| kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth] | <i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i> | Qal infinitive absolute | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |
| The Qal infinite absolute is a verbal noun which can serve as a noun, verb or adverb. Here, it is used to intensify the meaning of the main verb and would be translated <i>surely, certainly, indeed, must</i> . | | | |
| mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth] | <i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |

⁶⁹ Gesenius *Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, Baker Books; ©1979; p. 55.

Translation: ...know that you will certainly die,... God does not simply say, “You will die.” God says, “**Know [this], that, while dying you will die.**” What God is saying here is very powerful and in terms that cannot be mistaken.

This is firstly addressed to Abimelech. However, God widens this warning to include all of his family.

God has set up a very clear delineation here of the crime and the punishment and he will allow this Abimelech the free will to make his choice. If he believes in Yahweh, he will obey and if he does not, he will ignore the dream. This is why we know that he is a believer. Despite Abraham's duplicity, God still uses this opportunity to confront Abimelech. God has always combined all things together for good.

| Genesis 20:7f | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| 'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW] | you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied) | 2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #859 BDB #61 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]; also kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl] | all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything | masculine singular noun without the definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | that, which, when, who, whom | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| I could not find any indication that these two words together mean anything other than <i>all that, all things which [that] [is, are]</i> . | | | |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | to, for, towards, in regards to | directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix; pausal form | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

Translation: ...you and all that belongs to you [lit., *all that (is) to you*].” God makes certain that Abimelech knows that this will be done to his entire family. Everyone who belongs to you (that is all of Abimelech's family and servants) would die. God does not mince words here. What is at stake is very important. Abraham is going to be the father of the Jewish race, and he will sire a son through Sarah. Nothing is going to get in God's way in order to bring this to pass.

Genesis 20:7 Now therefore, restore his wife to the man. For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. And if you do not restore her, know that you will surely die, you, and all that are yours.”

This may not seem fair to you. Abraham was the one who was dishonest. Abimelech was just acting according to what he believed to be true. Why is Abimelech at fault? This is a parallel which is set up. Abimelech is simply acting within his own nature according to the laws as they were in that day. In this way, he is representative of all mankind—he is acting according to his own nature. You and I both have weaknesses; we suffer from a lust pattern. When we give in to this lust pattern, we are acting according to our fallen nature. It is volition which takes us to that point. Abimelech is acting in accordance with his natural desire.

On the other hand, Abraham represents the Revealed Lord. Through Abraham alone could Abimelech emerge from this situation unharmed. Through Abraham alone was Abimelech protected. Don't get confused; this is all illustrative. Abimelech and Abraham are both believers. We are not talking about a real relationship here, we are talking about a representative relationship; we are talking about a relationship between man and God that is foreshadowed here. We require Jesus to stand between us and God, to intercede for us; and that is what Abraham will do on behalf of Abimelech. Abimelech is already saved; he already believes in the Revealed Lord; but this is done for us today to simply illustrate how Jesus acts as both priest and prophet; He represents us to God and He represents God to us, acting as an intercessor between us and God. Many times in the Bible, there is an intercessor between man and God, and this intercessor illustrates Jesus Christ.

Abraham here is a type of Christ.

The Parallels Between the Coming Savior and Abraham in Genesis 20

| The Type | The Antitype |
|--|---|
| Abimelech is presented as a man subject to his own nature. He may not even realize that he is sinning. | Abimelech represents all mankind, and men act according to their own nature, perhaps not even realizing that they are sinning against God. |
| Abraham is spoken of here as a prophet—a prophet represents man to God. This is the first time we have the word <i>prophet</i> used. | Jesus Christ is <i>the</i> Prophet, and all that He spoke was God's Word. "For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak." (John 12:49; ESV; capitalized) |
| Abraham will also pray to God on behalf of Abimelech. In this way, he represents Abimelech to God. Again, this is all illustrative (that is, this is <i>typical</i>). Abimelech is a believer in the Revealed Lord. However, here, he is presented as helpless, ignorant and subject to his own nature. | Heb. 4:14–16 Having, therefore, a great high priest who penetrated the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast this profession of our hope. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of his grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (JUB 2000) |
| Keil and Delitzsch write: <i>Abraham was προφήτης as the recipient of divine revelation, and was thereby placed in so confidential a relation to God, that he could intercede for sinners, and atone for sins of infirmity through his intercession.</i> ⁷⁰ | Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us. (Rom. 8:33–34; NASB, capitalized) |
| God promises Abimelech life, if Abraham should intercede on his behalf. Otherwise, the sin that he has committed will result in death. | Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (John 3:36; ESV) |

⁷⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:4–7.

The Parallels Between the Coming Savior and Abraham in Genesis 20

| The Type | The Antitype |
|---|---|
| Abimelech is ill and Abraham will pray on his behalf and he will be healed. This healing is representative of salvation. When Jesus healed, this represented salvation. | Jesus literally healed people, but this was illustrative of the healing of salvation. Luke 7:20–22 And when the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are You the One Who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" In that hour He healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind He bestowed sight. And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." (ESV; capitalized) |
| Those women under Abimelech had their wombs stopped up by God. They were not giving birth and they were not conceiving. Gen. 20:17–18 | John 10:10b "I've come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (ISB) God is the giver of all life, but when Abimelech placed his nation in a place outside of the plan of God, God removed new life from his nation. |

Now see if you have a better understanding of Rom. 8:33–34 **Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is **interceding** for us.** (ESV) 1Tim. 2:5–6 **For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.** (ESV mostly) A mediator is nearly the same thing as an intercessor. He is equal to both parties and he stands in between both parties to reach an agreement.

Because this chapter is often skipped, thinking it to be repetitive, it is actually very revealing and has information which is pertinent to us today.

Other commentators understood this to one degree or another:

John Calvin: *But since Abraham is a prophet, he is constituted, as it were, a mediator between God and Abimelech. Christ, even then, was the only Mediator.*⁷¹

Keil and Delitzsch: *God described Abraham as a prophet, whose intercession alone could remove his guilt, to show him the way of salvation.*⁷²

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So that there is no misunderstanding, even though this is all illustrative, what God warns here is real. If Abimelech stands as an obstruction to the plan of God, then God will remove him and his family. So, this is a very serious situation. So, this is not some made-up story to illustrate something; this is a true situation—this really happened—and God the Holy Spirit includes this in the narrative of Genesis because it foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prophet of God, our Priest and our intercessor, our only Mediator between us and God. 1Tim. 2:5 **For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.** This is all found right here in this verse, foreshadowing Jesus Christ.

⁷¹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword; Gen. 20:7.

⁷² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:4–7.

God is preserving the line of Abraham; God is preserving Sarah as being Abraham's alone; and God is guaranteeing that the son of promise will be born to Abraham and Sarah. The line cannot be corrupted.

So far we have studied:

Gen, 20:1–7 Abraham moved to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was living in Gerar, Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah. God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!" Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent? Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience." "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die." (God's Word™)

For the second time, Abraham presents his wife Sarah as his sister in order to protect himself. She was taken into Abimelech's harem, but Abimelech had not yet touched her. God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and warned him.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Abimelech Returns Sarah to Abraham

And so rises up Abimelech in the morning and so he calls to all his servants and so he speaks all the words the these in their ears and so are afraid the men very.

Genesis
20:8

Consequently, Abimelech arose early the next morning and summoned all of his officials [lit., *servants*]. He declared all of these things in their hearing and the men were very afraid.

Consequently, Abimelech rose up early the next morning and he summoned all of his officials. He declared all that had happened in his dream to them and the men were very afraid.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so rises up Abimelech in the morning and so he calls to all his servants and so he speaks all the words the these in their ears and so are afraid the men very. |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abimelek arose in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these words before them; and the men feared greatly. |
| Latin Vulgate | And Abimelech forthwith rising up in the <u>night</u> , called all his servants: and spoke all these words in their hearing, and all the men were exceedingly afraid. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | Therefore Abimeleck rose early in the morning and called all of his servants and told them all these words; and the men were exceedingly afraid. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears, and all the men feared exceedingly. |

Significant differences: The Latin has Abimelech rising at night.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contemporary English V. | Early the next morning Abimelech sent for his officials, and when he told them what had happened, they were frightened. |
| Easy English | So early in the morning Abimelech called all his servants. He told all the servants about his dream. They were very afraid. |
| Easy-to-Read Version | So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants and told them about the dream. The servants were scared. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Early the next morning Abimelech called all his officials and told them what had happened, and they were terrified. |
| <i>The Message</i> | Abimelech was up first thing in the morning. He called all his house servants together and told them the whole story. They were shocked. |
| New Berkeley Version | Early in the morning Abimelech got up, summoned all his attendants and repeated all these words for them to hear, and they were thoroughly frightened. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abimelech arose in the morning, called all his servants, and spoke all these words in their ears. The men feared a hundredfold. |
| <i>God's Word™</i> | Early in the morning Abimelech called together all his officials. He told them about all of this, and they were terrified. |
| New American Bible | Early the next morning Abimelech called all his servants and informed them of everything that had happened, and the men were filled with fear. |
| NIRV | Early the next morning Abimelech sent for all of his officials. He told them everything that had happened. They were really afraid. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Early next morning, Abimelech summoned his full court and told them the whole story, at which the people were very much afraid. |
| New Simplified Bible | So Abimelech got up early in the morning. He called all his servants and told them everything. The men were very afraid. |
| Revised English Bible | Next morning Abimelech rose early and called together all his court officials; when he told them the whole story, the men were terrified. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bible in Basic English | So Abimelech got up early in the morning and sent for all his servants and gave them word of these things, and they were full of fear. |
| Conservapedia | So Abimelech got up early in the morning, and called all his slaves, and briefed them thoroughly, and the men were very much afraid. Literally, "spoke all these things into their ears." |
| The Expanded Bible | So early the next morning, Abimelech called all his officers [^L servants] and told them everything that had happened in the dream. They were very afraid. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | When Abimelech awoke in the morning, he called his ministers, and related in their hearing the whole of these events, and the men were greatly afraid. |
| HCSB | Early in the morning Abimelech got up, called all his servants together, and personally told them all these things; and the men were terrified. |
| New Advent Bible | And Abimelech forthwith rising up in the night, called all his servants: and spoke all these words in their hearing, and all the men were exceedingly afraid. |
| NET Bible® | Early in the morning [Heb "And Abimelech rose early in the morning and he summoned."] Abimelech summoned [The verb qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>] followed by the lamed preposition lâmed (ל) [pronounced / ^L /] means "to summon."] all his servants. When he told them about all these things [Heb "And he spoke all these things in their ears."], they [Heb "the men." This has been replaced by the pronoun "they" in the translation for stylistic reasons.] were terrified. |
| NIV – UK | Early the next morning Abimelech summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| exeGeser companion Bible | And Abi Melech starts early in the morning and calls all his servants and words all these words in their ears: and the men awe mightily:... |
| Kaplan Translation | Abimelekh got up early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants. He discreetly [Literally, 'in their ears' (see Genesis 44:18). Or 'publicly,' see Genesis 23:10,13.] repeated all these words to them, and the men were very frightened. |
| The Scriptures 1998 | So Abimelek rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and spoke all these words in their hearing. And the men were greatly frightened. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| The Amplified Bible | So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things; and the men were exceedingly filled with reverence and fear. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And early is Abimelech rising in the morning, and calling is he all his servants, and is speaking all these words in their ears. And fearing are all the mortals exceedingly. |
| Heritage Bible | And Abimelech rose early in the dawn, and called all his servants, and spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were exceedingly afraid. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Abimelech Reproves Abraham Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were sore afraid. The sincerity of Abimelech is shown by the fact that he lost no time in righting the unconscious wrong which he had committed. At the very earliest opportunity he informed his servants of the true state of affairs, to whom the effect of his own reverent fear was communicated. |
| Syndein | {Indicates a Good King} Abimelech kept on rising early {shakam} in the morning, and kept on calling his slaves/servants {`ebed}, and intensively communicated categorically {dabar - Piel intensive stem} these words {dabar} in their ears. And the men were greatly afraid. |
| Updated Bible Version 2.11 | And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his slaves, and told all these things in their ears. And the men were very afraid. |
| World English Bible | Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ear. The men were very scared. |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abimelech rises early in the morning, and calls for all his servants, and speaks all these words in their ears; and the men fear exceedingly. |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech got up early the next morning and called all of his servants together to tell them what happened. They were immediately frightened.

Genesis 20:8a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah] | and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |

When we find the wâw consecutive linking a host of Qal imperfects, the sense is not a continuous or prolonged action in the verbs, but a continued, chronological and/or logical action of the action of the verbs.

Genesis 20:8a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| shâkam (שָׁכַם) [pronounced shaw-KAHM] | <i>to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start; morning</i> (in the Hiphil infinitive absolute) | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #7925 BDB #1014 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced ū ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced BOH-ker] | <i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i> | masculine singular noun with a definite article | Strong's #1242 BDB #133 |

Translation: *Consequently, Abimelech arose early the next morning...* In this verse, we have 4 wâw consecutives followed by 4 imperfect verbs which simply indicates consecutive actions. No thought is given to the duration of any of these actions. Abimelech begins to do what God requires immediately. God said, *do this*, so Abimelech gets up immediately in order to do what God told him to do.

Matthew Henry: *Abimelech, being thus warned of God in a dream, takes the warning, and, as one truly afraid of sin and its consequences, he rises early to obey the directions given him.*⁷³

Although it does not clearly state this, I would think that, immediately after the dream, Abimelech sits up in bed. At this point, if it is dark, he thinks about what has happened and stresses over it. If there is any light whatsoever, he gets up. Whatever the scenario, Abimelech is concerned over this dream. He does not slough this dream off as having had too much to eat the night before.

I want you to notice what else. Abimelech discussed everything that he needed to discuss in the dream. He did not wake up the next day and start to second-guess God or to second-guess what he was supposed to do.

Genesis 20:8b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW] | <i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name</i> [when followed by a lâmed] | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7121 BDB #894 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

⁷³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8–13.

Genesis 20:8b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl] | with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i> | masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ʿE ^B -ved] | <i>slave, servant</i> | masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #5650 BDB #713 |

Translation: ...and summoned all of his officials [lit., servants]. Abimelech will have a chief-of-staff, and he will summon all of the palace staff; all of the palace staff will put out the word to bring in all of the city officials. They are called his *servants* here, but this word has a wide application.

To the leader of a country, all men can be referred to as *his servants*. Which reminded me of...

The Little Prince Meets the King

"Ah! Here is a subject," exclaimed the king, when he saw the little prince coming.

And the little prince asked himself:

"How could he recognize me when he had never seen me before?"

He did not know how the world is simplified for kings. To them, all men are subjects.



Image is originally from the book, *The Little Prince*. <http://www.angelfire.com/hi/littleprince/images/king.jpg> is where I got the graphic from. Accessed August 22, 2014.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 20:8c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |

| Genesis 20:8c | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR] | <i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect | Strong's #1696 BDB #180 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl] | <i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i> | masculine singular construct followed by a definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| d ^e bârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -vawr-EEM] | <i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #1697 BDB #182 |
| 'êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh] | <i>these, these things</i> | demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article | Strong's #428 BDB #41 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| 'ôzen (אָזְן) [pronounced OH-zen] | <i>ears</i> | feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #241 BDB #23 |

Translation: He declared all of these things in their hearing... Once all of the men are assembled, he tells them all that happened in his dream. Among these men are those who brought Sarah to him. Abimelech is not placing any blame, as he gave the original orders to go fetch Sarah for his harem (again, I am assuming that Abimelech has a harem).

There is no indication that he is blaming anyone—not even himself. He is just laying out the facts, those being that God came to him in a dream and warned him that he must return Sarah or he and all his people would die.

Now, this is interesting to me. Abimelech does not call in 3 or 4 of his most trusted men and say, we have to deal with this immediately; you all follow my instructions. He instead calls in everyone on his staff. My guess is, this probably exceeds 10 and is less than 100.

God warned him that all of his people could die, so Abimelech is going to make certain that everyone is on the same page.

| Genesis 20:8d | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY] | to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3372 BDB #431 |
| 'ănâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-sheem]; also spelled 'îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM] | men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #376 BDB #35 |
| m ^o ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE] | exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very | adverb | Strong's #3966 BDB #547 |

Translation: ...and the men were very afraid. Everyone here is very afraid. Although fears can be very irrational, most people tend to fear that which is rational and actually imminent. Therefore, I would also postulate that all of Abimelech's staff believed in the God of his dream.

Gill: *perhaps they might call to mind the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins, they had lately heard of, and might fear that some such calamity would befall them.*⁷⁴

The Pulpit Commentary: *It spoke well for the king's household that they received the communication with seriousness.*⁷⁵

Consider that the warning from God is clear and relatively easy to obey. Abimelech does not want there to be the slightest problem, so his entire staff is going to get on board with this. All of them being afraid—and very afraid—indicates that they all believed that the alternative to obeying God's demands was death.

Let's take this assumption one step further. God promised Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations that blessed him (and his descendants); it would have been nice for him to have a decent reputation as well. It would have been nice for Abimelech to have some respect for Abraham and his character as well. However, despite Abraham's lie, Abimelech has still believed in the God Who came to him, and so have his city officials.

Application: Your reputation and your actions may make you the sorriest person on the planet. However, there are times when God puts people in your path to witness to and you still witness to them. You may want to begin you witness with, "Look, we both know that I am a sorry jackass..." and then explain that Jesus Christ died for their sins and they need only believe in Him.

Clarke: *God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and we find as the day broke he arose, assembled his servants, (what we would call his courtiers), and communicated to them what he had received from God. They were all struck with astonishment, and discerned the hand of God in this business.*⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8.

⁷⁵ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 20:8.

⁷⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8.

Genesis 20:8 And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called in his state department [lit., *all his servants*], and told them all these things. And the men were greatly afraid.

In the Hebrew, we have 4 wâw consecutives followed by 4 imperfect verbs, which indicates a series of successive actions. Abimelech had to act upon what God told him, and he does immediately. He gets up early to take care of it. His swift and obedient action indicates to me that he is a believer in Jehovah Elohim. The God Who came to him is the Revealed God; and if he obeys what the Revealed God said to him, then obviously Abimelech believes in Him.

Abimelech tells his servants these things, and they are afraid. Now, if his servants do not believe in Jehovah Elohim, then why would they be afraid? They would have thought to themselves, "It is just nutty old Abimelech and another of his weird dreams." However, these people believe in Jehovah Elohim, in the Revealed Lord, and therefore, they take Abimelech's word for what has transpired.

Their fear would be based upon recognizing that they are a corporate entity before God. Believers who understand some doctrine know that they can be destroyed as a nation by God, as happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, whose devastation was even visible in the time of Josephus. They were also a corporate entity before God, but they felt no fear of God.

Furthermore, these Philistines (who are possibly not related to the Philistines who lived in this area during the time of Joshua, the Judges and David) stand in stark contrast to the Sodomites that we have studied. The Sodomites are completely controlled by their lusts; Abimelech and his state department are not. The difference is stark. When the Sodomites showed up at Lot's front door, they were eaten up with desire. However, when it comes to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, and his state department, they feared God more than the king was willing to give into his own personal desires.

Do you recall how God was not going to take over all of the Land of Promise because [the iniquity of the Amorites had not yet reached completion](#) (Gen. 15:16). At this point in time, there were a number of peoples who lived in the land of Canaan who were believers in Jehovah Elohim. They led righteous lives and they believed in the imputed righteousness of Jehovah Elohim. 4 generations from now, that will all change; but, at this point in time, God will not harm them because they trust in Him.

You will note that, not one of the men of Abimelech's state department steps forward and says, "Look, Abimelech, you just had a bad dream. Let it go and be happy. Don't worry about it."

There is a lot of discussion⁷⁷ about these dreams, and how Elohim speaks to one group of people; but Y^ehowah speaks to another.

Had Abimelech believed in the Revealed God?

1. In the dreams of non-Jews, we generally have Elohim speaking to them, rather than Y^ehowah. This has caused many theologians and exegetes to discuss whether or not Abimelech (or some of these others) are actually saved.
2. It is clear from the New Testament that faith in Jesus Christ is what saves us (from the human perspective). John 3:16, 18, 36
3. And, it is clear that faith in the Revealed God is what is required for salvation in the Old Testament (Gen. 15:6). This is not a *different* God; it is the same Person of Jesus Christ. He is revealed in the Old Testament differently than He is after His incarnation.
4. Abimelech clearly understands what God is saying, he clearly believes what God told him, and he acts upon this as soon as he wakes up. People act upon things that they believe. People do not act upon things that they do not believe. You have gotten emails about some extremely wealthy man in Nigeria who has passed away and wants to give you \$14.3 million. My guess is, you did not act on this wonderful

⁷⁷ In commentaries. Probably not at your house.

Had Abimelech believed in the Revealed God?

opportunity to become a multi-millionaire, even though most of you think becoming a multi-millionaire might be a good thing. You did not act on this because you did not believe it.

5. Abimelech acts upon what God says.
6. Furthermore, his staff become afraid at hearing what God said to Abimelech.
7. No one suggests, "You obviously ate too much pizza last night, Abimelech; and you had a weird dream. Let it go."
8. There is no indication anywhere in Scripture that only those of the covenant are saved. God concerns Himself with those people who are not a part of the covenant relationship that He has with Abraham and with the descendants of Abraham. We have already seen this with Hagar and Ishmael. Ezek. 18:23,32 John 3:16 Rom. 11:32 1Tim. 2:4 4:10 Titus 2:11 2Pet. 3:9 1John 2:1 4:14.
9. Therefore, despite whatever discussion there is about Abimelech communicating with Elohim rather than Y^ehowah, since Abimelech obviously believes God and acts upon that faith, we may therefore assume that he is saved and that we will even get to meet him in heaven.

Even though this topic is discussed here and there, I believed it needed to be summarized.

A portion of point 8 came from <http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/pdf/EN/VOL01BOT.pdf> accessed August 28, 2014.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The big difference between the seed of Abraham and the seed of Abimelech is, Abraham will pass along his faith to his son, and grandson and great grandson. However, the faith of Abimelech here will, within 3 or 4 generations, die out throughout most of Canaan, leaving great pockets of degeneracy in its wake, which degeneracy will be wiped out the Jews about 500 years in the future from this narrative.

Why does this happen? Why does Canaan go from this point where the king speaks to God in dreams, the people in his cabinet respond appropriately, to the point where, God will tell the Jews to wipe out the people in Canaan?

One big change is, Ham, Shem and Japheth will die, as will their sons and their sons' sons, etc. The people of the earth will know for a half millennium men who were alive during the previous civilization, men who saw the great flood and some who were even alive during the time of great degeneracy. And suddenly, they will die out, along with several generations all at once. There are no more eyewitnesses to the flood, the devastation of the flood—all of which represents the judgment of God of sin.

Furthermore, the Word of God is not preserved by the Canaanites as it will be preserved by Abraham and his descendants. But, far more important is the volition of the people themselves. There will be a great deal of positive volition among the Jews. Even the exodus generation, despite their negative volition to God's plan, were all believers. But the Canaanites will descend into the same degeneracy that we have already observed in Sodom. Not necessarily the same kind of degeneracy; but degeneracy nonetheless.

It is marvelous that Abraham can do something this foolish, and yet God uses this opportunity to witness not only just to Abimelech but to his entire household. Their fear shows that they believed God and believed the actuality of the discipline which God had promised. It is ironic that Abraham should be a witness to Abimelech and to his household; however, it is Abimelech who will witness to his own household, having just believed in Yahweh. Furthermore, they find his witness credible.

And not only does God use Abraham, despite his dishonesty, as a witness to Abimelech; but God uses this situation where Abraham is a **type of Christ** as well.

And so calls Abimelech to Abraham and so he says to him, “What have you done to us and how have I sinned with regards to you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom great sin—deeds which [should] not be done, you have done against me.”

Genesis
20:9

So Abimelech summoned Abraham and he said to him, “What have you done to us and how have I sinned regarding you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great disaster [lit., *sin*]. Deeds which [should] not be done [to anyone], you have done against me.”

So Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What is it that you have done to us? How have I wronged you? Listen, you brought a great disaster upon me and my kingdom. Things which should not be done to anyone, you have done to me!”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so calls Abimelech to Abraham and so he says to him, “What have you done to us and how have I sinned with regards to you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom great sin—deeds which [should] not be done, you have done against me.” |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abimelek called Abraham, and said, What have you done to us? And in what have I sinned against you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin. You have wrought with me works that are not right. |
| Latin Vulgate | And Abimelech called also for Abraham, and said to him: What have you done to us? what have we offended you in, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? you have done to us what you ought not do. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | Then Abimeleck called Abraham and said to him, What have I done to you? and what crime have I committed against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom such a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, What is this that you have done to us? Have we sinned against you, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me a deed, which no one ought to do. |
| Significant differences: | Nothing significant. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Common English Bible | Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? What sin did I commit against you that you have brought this terrible sin to me and my kingdom, by doing to me something that simply isn't done?" |
| Contemporary English V. | Abimelech then called in Abraham and said: Look what you've done to us! What have I ever done to you? Why did you make me and my nation guilty of such a terrible sin? |
| Easy English | Then Abimelech called Abraham. He said to Abraham, 'You have done a very wrong thing to us. You have caused very bad things to happen to me and to my *kingdom. I have not *sinned against you. You have done things to me that you should never have done.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do against you? Why did you lie and say that she was your sister? You brought much trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done these things to me. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Then Abimelech called Abraham and asked, "What have you done to us? What wrong have I done to you to make you bring this disaster on me and my kingdom? No one should ever do what you have done to me. |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>The Message</i> | Then Abimelech called in Abraham and said, "What have you done to us? What have I ever done to you that you would bring on me and my kingdom this huge offense? What you've done to me ought never to have been done." |
| New Berkeley Version | Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? In what have I offended you, that you have involved me and my kingdom in a great sin? You have treated me in an unbecoming way." |
| New Century Version | Then Abimelech called Abraham to him and said, "What have you done to us? What wrong did I do against you? Why did you bring this trouble to my kingdom? You should not have done these things to me." |
| New Life Bible | Then Abimelech called Abraham and said, "What have you done to us? What wrong have I done to you, that made you bring a great sin upon me and my nation? You have done to me what should not have been done." |
| New Living Translation | 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!" |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | And thereafter, AbiMelech called AbraHam in and asked, 'What have you done to us? [What type of bad] have you seen in me that you should do such a thing? Have we sinned against you in some way so that you would draw my whole kingdom and me into such a great sin? Why, you've done something to me that no one should ever do! |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What did you do to us? What is my sin to you for bringing a great sin over me and my realm? Do not do that handiwork with me!" |
| Beck's American Translation | Then Abimelech called Abraham. "What did you do to us?" he asked him. "And how did I sin against you that you should bring such a great sin on me and my kingdom? You've done things to me that shouldn't be done." |
| <i>God's Word™</i> | Then Abimelech called for Abraham and asked him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you that you would bring such a serious sin on me and my kingdom? You shouldn't have done this to me." |
| New American Bible | Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him: "What have you done to us! What wrong did I do to you that you would have brought such great guilt on me and my kingdom? You have treated me in an intolerable way." |
| NIRV | Then Abimelech called Abraham in. He said, "What have you done to us? Have I done something wrong to you? Why have you brought so much guilt on me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that shouldn't be done." |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Then summoning Abraham, Abimelech said to him, 'What have you done to us? What wrong have I done you, for you to bring such guilt on me and on my kingdom? You had no right to treat me like this.' |
| New Simplified Bible | Then Abimelech called Abraham. He said to him: »What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you? You have brought a great sin on me and on my kingdom. You have done to me things that ought not to be done.« |
| Revised English Bible | Abimelech then summoned Abraham. 'Why have you treated us like this/' he demanded. 'What harm have I done you that you should bring this great sin on me and my kingdom? You have done to me something you ought never to have done.' |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | Then Abimelech sent for Abraham, and said, What have you done to us? what wrong have I done you that you have put on me and on my kingdom so great a sin? You have done to me things which are not to be done. |
|------------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Conservapedia | Then Abimelech called Abraham, and asked him, "What have you done to us? And what did I ever do to you, so that you should bring such a great sin on me and my kingdom? Men don't do things like that to other men!" |
| The Expanded Bible | Then Abimelech called Abraham to him and said, "What have you done to us? What ·wrong [offense; sin] did I do against you? Why did you bring this ·trouble [great offense/guilt; ^L great sin] to my kingdom? You should not have done these things to me. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | Abimelech consequently called Abraham and asked him, "What have you done to us? And what have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom this great danger for acts they have not done? You have done us a wrong. And Abimelech continued to Abraham, "What have you seen that you have done this thing?" |
| HCSB | Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said to him, "What have you done to us? How did I sin against you that you have brought such enormous guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done." |
| NET Bible® | Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? What sin did I commit against you that would cause you to bring such great guilt on me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done [Heb "Deeds which should not be done you have done to me." The imperfect has an obligatory nuance here.]" Heb "How did I sin against you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?" The expression "great sin" refers to adultery. For discussion of the cultural background of the passage, see J. J. Rabinowitz, "The Great Sin in Ancient Egyptian Marriage Contracts," JNES 18 (1959): 73, and W. L. Moran, "The Scandal of the 'Great Sin' at Ugarit," JNES 18 (1959): 280-81. |
| NIV – UK | Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said, What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and Abi Melech calls Abraham and says to him, What work you unto us? And what sin I against you, that you bring a great sin on me and on my sovereigndom? you work works unto me that ought not to be worked. |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done. |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us, and what have I sinned against you, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? Deeds that are not done, you have done to me." |
| Kaplan Translation | Abimelekh summoned Abraham and said to him, 'How could you do this to us? What terrible thing did I do to you that you brought such great guilt upon me and my people? The thing you did to me is simply not done!' |
| <i>The Scriptures</i> 1998 | And Abimelek called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? In what have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my reign a great sin? You have done matters to me that should not be done." |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| The Amplified Bible | Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, What have you done to us? And how have I offended you that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me what ought not to be done [to anyone]. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And calling is Abimelech to Abraham, and saying to him, "What have you done to us? And in what have I sinned against you, that you bring on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Deeds which are not being done you do to me. |
| Context Group Version | Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, What have you done to us? And in which have I disgraced you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great disgrace? You have done deeds to me that should not be done. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Then Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. Abimelech's open stand in this matter, particularly in inquiring of Abraham the reason and the object of his behavior, was well taken, for the king had acted in good faith, a fact that cannot be alleged on Abraham's side. |
| LTHB | And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, What have you done to us? And in what have I offended you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done. |
| Syndein | {A Correct Unbeliever Rebukes A Mature Believer} Then Abimelech kept on calling Abraham, and kept on saying to him, "What have you done/manufactured? {'asah - potential discipline out of deceit} What offense {did I do to you}? that you have caused to bring on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done/manufactured deeds {unto me} that ought not to be done/manufactured." |
| Updated Bible Version 2.11 | Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, What have you done to us? And in what have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done. |
| World English Bible | Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done!" |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abimelech calls for Abraham, and says to him, "What have you done to us? and what have I sinned against you, that you have brought upon me, and upon my kingdom, a great sin? works which are not done you have done with me." |
| The gist of this verse: | Abimelech summons Abraham and complains about the situation that Abraham has placed him in. It was not right for Abraham to do this. |

Genesis 20:9a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW] | to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed] | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7121 BDB #894 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |

Genesis 20:9a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'Ab ^e râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |

Translation: *So Abimelech summoned Abraham...* Abimelech has a full court of Gerar officials surrounding him. He determines who knows where Abraham is, and then he summons Abraham. Several men go out and bring Abraham directly to Abimelech.

Clarke: Abraham is then called, and in a most respectful and pious manner the king expostulates with him for bringing him and his people under the Divine displeasure, by withholding from him the information that Sarah was his wife; when, by taking her, he sought only an honorable alliance with his family.⁷⁸

Genesis 20:9b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

Translation: *...and he said to him...* Abimelech is speaking to Abraham. Remember that Abimelech is upset and fearful; as are the men with him.

Notice that the preposition of mutual respect is not used here. Most of the time, we would expect the words *unto him* in a situation like this. Abimelech is affording Abraham no special respect here.

Genesis 20:9c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>] | <i>what, how, why</i> | interrogative; exclamatory particle | Strong's #4100 BDB #552 |

⁷⁸ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8.

Genesis 20:9c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person plural suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |



Translation:... “What have you done to us... The first thing Abimelech says sounds very American to me. This is a word-for-word translation: “What have you done to us?” Abimelech is going to talk for awhile. He needs to get all of this out of his system. Remember, he is both sick and frightened (vv. 8, 17).⁷⁹

The graphic here is **Abimelech Rebukes Abraham** by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607 - 1677), which is on display at the University of Toronto. Graphic was taken from [wikipedia](#), accessed August 29, 2014.

Genesis 20:9a Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, “What have you done to us? Abimelech associates himself with the people of his

country. What Abraham has done to him, he has done to all the people of Gerar. Abimelech is their representative.

Genesis 20:9d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>] | <i>what, how, why</i> | interrogative; exclamatory particle | Strong's #4100 BDB #552 |
| châtâ' (חָטָא) [pronounced <i>khaw-TAW</i>] | <i>to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #2398 BDB #306 |

⁷⁹ V. 8 says that his servants are frightened, but we may reasonably assume that Abimelech is as well. If he just passed this off as a bad dream, then why call in his cabinet?

Genesis 20:9d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

Translation: ...and how have I sinned regarding you? He asks Abraham how has he sinned against him? How has he wronged him? What did he do against Abraham that Abraham would hold against him?

He is stating that Abraham has no reason whatsoever to lie to him.

Abraham, who has been a believer in Yahweh for decades, is morally corrupt before Abimelech, who may possibly have been a believer for 3 hours⁸⁰ (we do not know when he trusted in Abraham's God). Abraham lied to him as a stranger, did not trust God himself, and placed Abimelech in a situation where he could have lost his life and the lives of those in his household. Abraham has such a poor testimony here. And yet God takes this mess and works it all together for good (Rom. 8:28). In fact, this chapter is a case study in God taking Abraham, a believer who has lied to his host king; and Abimelech, a host king with too many wives—and God will take these men and their actions and still work it altogether for good, for His glory, and for His plan.

Genesis 20:9e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| kîy (כי) [pronounced kee] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| bôw' (אוב) [pronounced boh] | <i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| 'al (על) [pronounced gah ^l] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| 'al (על) [pronounced gah ^l] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| mam ^e lâkâh (מַמְלָכָה) [pronounced mahm ^e -law-kaw] | <i>kingdom, national government; sovereignty, dominion, reign, dynasty; used to refer to both the royal dignity and to the country of a king</i> | feminine singular noun with 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #4467 BDB #575 |

⁸⁰ I think that Abimelech believed in the Revealed God prior to this chapter taking place.

Genesis 20:9e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| chăṭā'âh (חַטָּאָה) [pronounced <i>khuht-aw-AW</i>] | <i>sin, sin offering; sacrifice for sin</i> | feminine singular noun | Strong's #2401 BDB #308 |
| gādôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>] | <i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i> | masculine singular adjective | Strong's #1419 BDB #152 |

Translation: For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great disaster [lit., *sin*]. This is why Abimelech asks Abraham the questions above. Abraham has brought a great disaster upon him. The word found here is not the normal word for sin, but it is very, very close. When Abimelech is facing a potential disaster. What Abraham has brought upon him and his kingdom is a sin. Abimelech and his kingdom have been marred and marked by this sin that Abraham brought to him.

Now, there may be some amount of curiosity here. Abimelech may agree and understand that adultery is wrong and it is possible that he has never committed adultery. However, God has come to Abimelech in the middle of the night and frightened him terribly over a sin that he has not yet committed. This has to be a very odd thing for his entire kingdom to face disaster over this one sin—a sin which God prevented Abimelech from committing.

There is no reason, despite all that has happened in Sodom, to assume the worst about Abimelech and the people of his kingdom. He may have been a very moral man and his kingdom might be following the laws of divine establishment. Yet, out of nowhere, God come to him and threatened his life and the life of his kingdom. Just what the hell is going on here?

Genesis 20:9a Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I sinned regarding you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom [this] great sin?”

Again, just like before, Abraham, who ought to be seen as a mature believer, misrepresented Sarah as a woman who was not his wife, to his host country. Abimelech has a good reason to complain to Abraham. God had made clear and unequivocal threats against Abimelech and his people, and Abimelech believes God (see Gen. 15:6).

Abimelech does not really understand more than Abraham has deceived him and that this is a pretty big deal. Abimelech uses the verb for sin, asking Abraham what did Abimelech do to sin against him to cause Abraham to bring a great sin upon him.

The verb used here is the normal verb translated *to sin*: *châṭâ'* (חָטָא) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], which means, *to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression*. Strong's #2398 BDB #306. There are two possible prepositions which could follow this verb which would indicate that Abimelech has sinned against Abraham. However, the *lâmed* preposition does not necessarily mean that Abimelech sinned against Abraham, but that he has done something which was clearly wrong that may have involved Abraham, but not directly.

Then Abimelech accuses Abraham of bringing *sin* upon him and his realm. There are at least two related words translated *sin*, and this is the one which is more rare, found fewer than 10 times in the Old Testament (the verb above occurs about 240 times). Abimelech is not complaining about the guilt or about the judgment against him,

but about the *sin* or *offense* that Abraham has brought upon Abimelech personally. That is the fact that Abimelech has a married woman in his harem. He holds Abraham responsible for that.

Abraham told him that Sarah was his sister; he said nothing about her being his wife. Abimelech holds Abraham accountable for this lie, which has led to everything else that has happened.

As was discussed previously, Abimelech bears some responsibility because, even though he has a clear understanding of the morality of taking another man's wife, he has strayed from the morality of one man/one woman.

| Genesis 20:9f | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| ma'ăšîym (מַעֲשִׂיִּם) [pronounced mah-ġuh-SEEM] | deeds, works, production, that which is produced or done [crops, property, goods] | masculine plural noun | Strong's #4639 BDB #795 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | that, which, when, who, whom | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| lō' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low] | not, no | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH] | to be done [made, produced]; to be offered, to be observed, to be used; was made [constructed, fashioned], to be formed, to be prepared | 3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH] | to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| 'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem] | with, at, by, near; like; from; against; toward; as long as; beside, except; in spite of | preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #5973 BDB #767 |

Translation: Deeds which [should] not be done [to anyone], you have done against me.” Abimelech is still speaking to Abraham, and Abimelech has a point here. Abraham should not have deceived him; there was no reason for Abraham to do this. So Abimelech lays it on pretty thick against Abraham.

From the Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *[Abimelech reveals a] Belief in a moral standard of right and wrong. He did not regard human actions as indifferent, or to be determined by the mere will and caprice of the individual without any reference to their moral qualities and issues. They are to be referred to a standard, whose witness and counterpart is the law written in the heart. In his view there were "deeds that ought not to be done" (Gen). Moral obligation is herein implied. This ought and ought not is the imperative of conscience. The action of conscience implies that there is a law existing somewhere. Though the man may be greatly ignorant, yet that faculty when awakened obeys the impulse from an unseen source...He knows that the welfare of nations depends upon their righteousness...He censures the conduct of Abraham, which had nearly involved both himself and his nation in a great sin...[Abimelech understood that] A nation cannot maintain existence without some moral bonds...[he had] A sense of injured moral feeling in the presence of wrong. He*

not only recognised the moral character of actions, and held human responsibility as a doctrine, but also as a principle of heart and life. He felt strongly upon the subject. His moral sensibilities were wounded and outraged at the very thought of the sin which he was so near committing...[furthermore, Abimelech reveals] A readiness to make restitution for faults committed against others...Abimelech not only restores Abraham his wife, but gives him presents by way of atonement for any wrong he may unwittingly have done him. His high sense of justice is not content with sentiment and abstractions, but contemplates practical duty.⁸¹

In short, Abimelech believes in the laws of divine establishment. He is not an immoral man nor does he want to preside over an immoral country. It is Abraham who comes off looking poorly in this interaction.

Genesis 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I sinned regarding you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.”

The word for *deeds* is *ma’āšîym* (מַעֲשִׂיִּים) [pronounced *mah-ğuh-SEEM*], which means, *deeds, works, production, that which is produced or done [crops, property, goods]*. Strong's #4639 BDB #795. This is a morally neutral term. Abraham has simply done things which should not have been done. This focuses on Abraham's dishonesty to begin with, his not attempting to speak to Abimelech in private, his not attempting to set things straight. Abraham has just gone along with all of this, and all that he did made it appear that Sarah is just his sister and nothing more.

We fully understand the narrative, which is not as clear to Abimelech. We understand that we need to have an unadulterated line from Abraham to Jesus Christ—this unadulterated line includes a natural born son to Abraham and Sarah. We need to pick up again with the great theme of Gen. 3:15 of the seed of the woman and how important this all is, and where this is leading to. He may know about the seed of the woman, the flood, and the Creator God (Whom he believes in), but Abimelech would not know about God's promises to Abraham about his lineage. He is completely outside of the loop in this regard. He brought a woman home to marry, and suddenly, God has threatened to kill him. If Abimelech was not so frightened, he would be thinking, “This is really quite remarkable, whatever it is that is going on.”

Whedon again notes the poetic way that Abimelech speaks.

Whedon Notes the Poetic Nature of Abimelech's Words

Gen. 20:9 So Abimelech summoned Abraham and he said to him, “What have you done to us and how have I sinned regarding you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great disaster [lit., *sin*]. Deeds which [should] not be done [to anyone], you have done against me.”

What have you done to us?
And what have I sinned against you?
That you bring upon me and upon my kingdom
A great sin?
Deeds which should not be done
Have you done with me.

Partially taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/whe/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 27, 2014 and slightly edited.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Summarizing vv. 8–9, Keil and Delitzsch: *Abimelech carried out the divine instructions. The next morning he collected his servants together and related what had occurred, at which the men were greatly alarmed. He then sent for Abraham, and complained most bitterly of his conduct, by which he had brought a great sin upon him and his kingdom.*⁸²

⁸¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 24, 2014.

⁸² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:8–9.

And so says Abimelech unto Abraham, "What had you seen that you did the word the this?" Genesis 20:10 **Abimelech also said unto Abraham, "What did you see that you did this thing?"**

Abimelech also said to Abraham, "What made you do this thing?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so says Abimelech unto Abraham, "What had you seen that you did the word the this?" |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abimelek said to Abraham, What have you seen, that you did this thing? |
| Latin Vulgate | And again he expostulated with him, and said: What did you see that you have done this? |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And Abimeleck said to Abraham, What induced you to do this thing |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abimelech said to Abraham, What have you seen in me that you have done this? |
| Significant differences: | <i>Word</i> can also be translated <i>thing</i> . The Syriac seems to be adding a little spin to the word <i>seen</i> . |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contemporary English V. | What were you thinking when you did this? |
| Easy-to-Read Version | What were you afraid of? Why did you do these things to me?" |
| New Century Version | What were you thinking that caused you to do this?" |
| New Life Bible | Abimelech said to Abraham, "What made you do such a thing?" |
| New Living Translation | Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?" |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | And AbiMelech added, 'What [bad] have you seen in me that you would do such a thing?' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abimelech said to Abraham, "What <i>did</i> you see, when you did this word? |
| Beck's American Translation | Then Abimelech added, "What did you have in view to do such a thing?" |
| Christian Community Bible | Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why did you act as you did?" |
| New American Bible | What did you have in mind," Abimelech asked him, "that you would do such a thing?" |
| NIRV | Abimelech also asked Abraham, "Why did you do this?" |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Abimelech then said to Abraham, 'What possessed you to do such a thing?' |
| Revised English Bible | And he asked, 'What was your purpose in doing this?' |
| Today's NIV | And Abimelek asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?" |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abimelech said to Abraham, Why did you do this thing? |
| Conservapedia | Abimelech said to Abraham further, "What possible grounds did you think you had to do this thing?" |
| The Expanded Bible | What were you thinking [possessed you] that caused you to do this?" |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | And Abimelek continued to Abraham, "What have you seen that you have done this thing?" |
| HCSB | Abimelech also said to Abraham, "What did you intend when you did this thing?" |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| New Advent Bible | And again he expostulated with him, and said: What did you see, that you have done this? |
| NET Bible® | Then Abimelech asked [Heb "And Abimelech said to."] Abraham, "What prompted you to do this thing [Heb "What did you see that you did this thing?" The question implies that Abraham had some motive for deceiving Abimelech.]?" |
| NIV – UK | And Abimelech asked Abraham, What was your reason for doing this? |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--|--|
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | "What then," Abimelech demanded of Abraham, "was your purpose in doing this thing?" |
| Kaplan Translation <i>The Scriptures</i> 1998 | Abimelekh then asked Abraham, 'What did you see to make you do such a thing?' And Abimelek said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this matter?" |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | And Abimelech said to Abraham, What did you see [in us] that [justified] you in doing such a thing as this? |
| English Standard Version | And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" |
| Heritage Bible | And Abimelech said to Abraham, What did you see that you have done this word? 20:10 word. dabar. Always remember that everything has its ground of existence in words. Other translations constantly translate dabar as thing, which is a correct interpretation, but it hides the truth that the ground of existence of all things is words, because dabar is word. Therefore The Heritage Bible consistently translates dabar as word. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing? He wanted to know what Abraham had had before his eyes, what object he had had in acting as he did. |
| NASB | And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What have you encountered [Lit seen], that you have done this thing?" |
| New RSV | And Abimelech said to Abraham, 'What were you thinking of, that you did this thing? |
| Syndein | And Abimelech kept on saying to Abraham, "What did you perceive { ra'ah } {idiom: what were you thinking when you did this?}, that you have done/manufactured {asah} this word/matter {dabar}?" |
| Young's Updated LT | Abimelech also says unto Abraham, "What have you seeing that you have done this thing?" |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech asks Abraham directly, "Why did you do this to us?"

Genesis 20:10a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |

Genesis 20:10a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אָבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>u^b-vee-MEH-lek</i>] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| ʾel (לְ) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| ʾAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |

Translation: *Abimelech also said unto Abraham,...* So Abimelech vents for awhile, and then he comes down to his primary question, and he speaks to Abraham with some respect here.

Genesis 20:10b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|---|
| mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>] | <i>what, how, why</i> | interrogative; exclamatory particle | Strong's #4100 BDB #552 |
| râʾâh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>] | <i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #7200 BDB #906 |
| kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| ʾâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>] | <i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #1697 BDB #182 |
| zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>] | <i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i> | masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article | Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260 |

Translation:... *“What did you see that you did this thing?”* We have very common words here in this phrase. Abimelech is asking Abraham that, after arriving in Gerar, and looking around, what did he see that caused him to do this thing. Was there a reason for Abraham to be suspicious of the behavior of Abimelech or those in his kingdom?

Abimelech can hardly believe it; Abraham is related directly to God; he has walked with God for decades; how could he do this kind of thing to a stranger who has done him no harm? In our own lives, as believers, we are carefully scrutinized by unbelievers for imperfections (and by other believers as well). If that bothers you, then you should not reveal to anyone that you believe in Jesus Christ. *What were you thinking* has recently entered into our language. This often describes some of the things that we do as believers in the Lord.

Genesis 20:10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you see that you have done this thing?”

Abimelech is asking Abraham, *what did he observe in Gerar that made him think that he needed to lie to him*. Abimelech apparently presided over a society which adhered, for the most part, to the laws of divine establishment. This city-state had an adherence to the same God that Abraham had faith in. So Abimelech asks Abraham, “What did you observe that made you think that you needed to lie to me?”

God is not going to destroy Gerar. These are decent people. Many of them have believed in the Revealed God. Many of them have a reasonable understanding of the laws of divine establishment. So this is a good nation.

What are the bare minimums that we need as believers in Jesus Christ?

What is fundamental to a good nation?

1. There must be law and order.
2. The gospel must be able to be proclaimed without attacks or persecution.
3. Bible doctrine must be able to be taught without persecution.

What are we allowed to do if we lack those rights? We can evangelize and we can teach the Word of God, regardless of what the law says. Even if we lack those rights, we do not get to revolt against our government.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

I have heard of talk, by born again believers, who seem to have considered armed resistance if the government comes for their guns. The believer in Jesus Christ is not guaranteed to be able to own a gun on earth. Certainly persuasive arguments can be made on behalf of the 2nd Amendment, as well as persuasive arguments against the confiscation of guns—but, we as believers, do not get to make that decision. If the government has decided to come for our guns, we do not get to rise up in armed revolt.

This leads us to the question:

What is not fundamental to a good nation?

1. There are a lot of good things in our nation, but are not imperative to have: we have freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, freedom not to incriminate ourselves, etc. The Bill of Rights was a stroke of genius and a blessing to this country for about 240 years (I write this in 2014). However, that does not mean that we will have these rights in 2020.
2. We, in the United States, may see a serious erosion of these freedoms in our generation or in the next. This does not mean that we get to revolt against the government.
3. As long as you have the items listed above, so that we can meet as local churches, then that is good enough.
4. It ought to be clear that the United States may be under God’s discipline, and it could get far worse, as we have moved away from God, as a nation.
5. Should we want the best government that we can get? Of course! But, we do not have the right to revolt against the current government in order to get a better government. That is not to be a part of the believer’s list of things that he can do.
6. There are a whole host of liberal issues, such as, gay marriage, income inequality, social justice, etc. which are unnecessary and, when such things are partially or fully implemented, that more is lost than

What is not fundamental to a good nation?

gained.

We need to trust God with the future of our nation. In the year of our Lord 2014, we live in the greatest nation that has existed on planet earth. However, we live here on the basis of the **pivot** of this nation, which has preserved **client nation** U.S.A.

Related to this discussion is the **Doctrine of Revolution** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Similarly, Abraham needed to trust God to keep His promises. It was not up to Abraham to secure these promises through dishonesty.

We do not know if there was anything that Abraham had actually observed. He was certainly aware to a limited degree about the degeneracy of the Sodomites, but he certainly does not have a clear picture of the other peoples in this land. Some of them, like Abimelech and his state department, appear to be very honorable.

Abraham has misjudged this people, and he has acted in accordance with his prejudices and not in accordance with what he has observed.

Vv. 9–10 read: *So Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What is it that you have done to us? How have I wronged you? Listen, you brought a great disaster upon me and my kingdom. Things which should not be done to anyone, you have done to me!" Abimelech also said to Abraham, "What made you do this thing?"* Bear in mind that God has, for all intents and purposes, threatened Abimelech. This is all come about because Abraham has lied to Abimelech, and Abimelech is demanding to know why.

Unstated, but certainly an issue here is, Abraham's relationship to God. Abimelech is aware of this because God spoke to him. So, Abimelech could have said, "Aren't you, Abraham, a man of God? A man God is looking out for? Then how can you have deceived me as you did?"

Barnes summarizes vv. 9–10: Abimelech retraces his steps, and rectifies his conduct. He makes known his dream to his assembled court, who are filled with astonishment and apprehension. He then calls Abraham, and in bold and manly style remonstrates with him for leading him into error and sin. Abraham is apparently silent from confusion and self-condemnation. Abimelech, after a pause, demands of him his reason for so doing.⁸³

Gill: [Abimelech] desires to know what he had observed, either in him or his people, that gave him any reason to conclude that they were a lustful people, and would stick at nothing to gratify their lusts, which put him upon taking such a method to secure his life, lest they should kill him for his wife's sake.⁸⁴ These people are not Sodomites, for pity's sake.

"What reason did you have to think that you or your wife was in danger?" And there is absolutely nothing that Abraham observed or knew about of a certainty that made him misjudge this people—at least there is not good reason that Abraham is able to come up with. The Sodomite were way out of line in their actions; but there would have not even been rumors about the people of Gerar in the same way.

⁸³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8–13.

⁸⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:10.

And so says Abraham, “For I said, ‘Surely [there is] no fear of Elohim in the place the this. And they will kill me upon a word of my woman.’

Genesis
20:11

Abraham replied [lit., *said*], “For I thought, ‘Surely [there is] no fear [respect] of Elohim in this place. Furthermore [lit., *and*], they will kill me because of my wife.’

Abraham replied, “For I thought, ‘Surely there is no fear or reverence for God in this place. Therefore, they will kill me for my wife.’

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so says Abraham, “For I said, ‘Surely [there is] no fear of Elohim in the place the this. And they will kill me upon a word of my woman.’ |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abraham said, Because I said in my heart, The fear of the Lord is not in this place, and they will kill me for the sake of my wife. |
| Latin Vulgate | Abraham answered: I thought with myself, saying: Perhaps there is not the fear of God in this place: and they will kill me for the sake of my wife. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And Abraham said, Because I thought, perhaps there is no fear of God in this country; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abraham said, Why I said, Surely there is not the <u>worship</u> of God in this place, and they will slay me because of my wife. |

Significant differences: *Said* can be translated *thought*. The word *worship* in the Greek in more of an interpretation than a translation. The Hebrew words before *wife* are difficult to translate.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | Abraham said, "I thought to myself, No one reveres God here and they will kill me to get my wife. |
| Contemporary English V. | Abraham answered: I did it because I didn't think any of you respected God, and I was sure that someone would kill me to get my wife. |
| Easy English | Abraham replied, 'I was sure that you did not have fear towards God here. I thought that your men would kill me in order to take my wife. |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Then Abraham said, "{I was afraid.} I thought no one in this place respected God. I thought someone would kill me to get Sarah. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Abraham answered, "I thought that there would be no one here who has reverence for God and that they would kill me to get my wife. |
| <i>The Message</i> | Abraham said, "I just assumed that there was no fear of God in this place and that they'd kill me to get my wife. |
| New Century Version | Then Abraham answered, "I thought no one in this place respected God and that someone would kill me to get Sarah. |
| New Living Translation | Abraham replied, "I thought, 'This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.' |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | Then AbraHam replied, '[My thinking was] that; This surely couldn't be a place where they worship God, so they will kill me for my woman. |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abraham said, "I said, 'This place never feared God. They will slay me only over the word of my woman.' |
| Beck's American Translation | Abraham said, "I thought, certainly nobody fears God here, and they'll kill me for my wife. |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| God's Word™ | Abraham said, "I thought that because there are no God-fearing people in this place, I'd be killed because of my wife. |
| New Simplified Bible | Abraham said: »I thought that because there are no people who reverence God in this place, I would be killed because of my wife. |
| Revised English Bible | Abraham answered, 'I said to myself, "There is no fear of God in this place, and I shall be killed for the sake of my wife." |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abraham said, Because it seemed to me that there was no fear of God in this place, and that they might put me to death because of my wife. |
| Conservapedia | And Abraham said, "I told myself, 'There is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me to have my wife.'" |
| The Expanded Bible | Then Abraham answered, "I thought no one in this place ·respected [feared] God and that someone would kill me to get ·Sarah [^L my wife]. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | But Abraham replied, "I said that, perhaps, there is not fear of GOD in this place, and they will kill me on account of my wife. |
| HCSB | Abraham replied, "I thought, 'There is absolutely no fear of God in this place. They will kill me because of my wife.' |
| NET Bible® | Abraham replied, "Because I thought [Heb "Because I said."], 'Surely no one fears God in this place. They will kill me because of [Heb "over the matter of."] my wife.' |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Complete Jewish Bible | Avraham replied, "It was because I thought, 'There could not possibly be any fear of God in this place, so they will kill me in order to get my wife. |
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Abraham says, Because I say, Only the awe of Elohim is not in this place; and they slaughter me for word of my woman. |
| Kaplan Translation | Abraham replied, 'I realized that the one thing missing here is the fear of God. I could be killed because of my wife. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely there is no reverence or fear of God at all in this place, and they will slay me because of my wife. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And saying is Abraham, "For I feared seeing that I say, 'But no fear of the Elohim is in this place, and they will kill me over the matter of my wife. |
| Context Group Version | And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place. And they will kill me for my woman { or wife } 's sake. |
| English Standard Version | 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. |
| New King James Version | And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. |
| Syndein | And Abraham kept on saying {amar}, "Because I 'said in my mind'/thought {amar}, surely the respect/fear/awe { yir'ah} of 'Elohim/Godhead {is} not in this area. And they will kill me for my wife's matter {dabar} {idiom: meaning 'remove the obstacle in the way, take the beautiful wife' a custom in lawless societies - all you have really belongs to the strongest}." |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abraham says, "Because I said, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they have slain me for the sake of my wife. |

The gist of this verse: Abraham tells Abimelech that he prejudged Gerar, assuming it to be a country filled with heathen, and therefore decided to lie about his wife in order to protect himself.

Genesis 20:11a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| To comport with English usage, I sometimes translate this <i>to reply, to answer</i> ; however, strictly speaking, this is not the Hebrew word for that. | | | |
| ʾAbʿrâhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |
| kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>] | <i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i> | explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition | Strong's #3588 BDB #471 |
| ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| raq (רַק) [pronounced <i>rahk</i>] | <i>only, provided, altogether, surely</i> —this adverb carries with it restrictive force | adverb | Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956 |
| ʾêyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ān</i>] | <i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i> | particle of negation; substantive of negation | Strong's #369 BDB #34 |
| yirʿâh (יִרְאָה) [pronounced <i>yir^e-AW</i>] | <i>fear, dread, terror, reverence, respect, piety; it can also be used for the object of fear</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #3374 BDB #432 |
| ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| mâqôwm (מִקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>] | <i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #4725 BDB #879 |

Genesis 20:11a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh] | <i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i> | masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article | Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260 |

Translation: Abraham replied [lit., said], "For I thought, 'Surely [there is] no fear [respect] of Elohim in this place. Abraham, perhaps because of Sodom, or perhaps based upon rumor (although, I doubt this), has assumed that the people of Gerar did not believe in the Revealed God, and, therefore, could not be trusted. However, it ought to be clear that these people did believe in the Revealed God and they feared Him as well.

This is the first time that we have the phrase *fear of God* in the Bible (although, Job 1:1 probably predates this passage in time). The fact that Abraham uses this phrase here suggests that he understands what this phrase means and he expects that the king of Gerar also understandings the meaning of this phrase.

This is taken from **Fear of the Lord** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of *Fear of the Lord*

- Definition: the fear of the Lord (or a fear of God) means:
 - A person believes in God.
 - A person believes in both the power of God and the involvement of God in our lives.
 - A person believes that there are divine consequences for behavior, whether or not there is a governmental entity to punish wrongdoing.
 - A person who fears God concentrates upon Him; thinks about Him.
 - One of Solomon's conclusions of a futile examination of what the world has to offer, is [The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man](#) (Eccles. 12:13). Fearing God is reaching spiritual maturity. Keeping God's commandments during the Jewish Age was not a means of salvation, but a means of preserving nation Israel and teaching God's Word to subsequent generations.
 - Therefore, *fear of the Lord* indicates spiritual maturity in the Old Testament.
- Job is a good example of someone who fears the Lord. At the end of this Job 1, Job will have all of his blessings taken from him, and yet he will say, "[Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.](#)" (Job 1:21). This is concentration upon God. No matter what the situation—blessing or difficulties—Job thinks about God.
- Let's say you are trapped in a confined geographical space with something that you fear: a spider, a snake, a mouse. All of your concentration is focused upon whatever it is that you fear. The idea of that intense concentration conveys to us, in part, what it means to *fear the Lord*.
- In the Old Testament, *fear of the LORD* is always closely associated with obedience. Gen. 20:11 42:18 2Kings 4:1 Job 1:1, 8 Proverbs 1:7 Isaiah 11:2
- A good example of someone who believes in the Revealed Lord but does not fear Him is Lot.
 - Although many foreigners recognized Abraham's unique relationship with the Revealed God (Gen. 20:7–9 and believed that they were best served by being associated with Abraham (Gen. 21:22), Lot, when given the chance, struck out on his own and separated from Abraham, who was the reason for his blessing. Lot was blessed because of his association with Abraham. Gen. 13:2–13
 - Abraham rescued Lot, when Lot has associated himself with a bunch of reprobates (Gen. 13:13 14:1–16), yet Lot makes no effort to realign himself with Abraham again. He stays in Sodom. Gen. 19:1
 - Even though Lot has a reasonably large family, there are not even ten people in his family (or of

The Abbreviated Doctrine of *Fear of the Lord*

- his in-laws) who have even believed in the Revealed God. This is all it would have taken for God to have delivered Sodom from destruction. Gen. 18:32 19:12
- 4) When faced with the destruction of Sodom, and the angels were right there trying to get Lot to move along, Lot first tarries, and then argues with the angels about where he should go. Gen. 19:16–20
 6. The phrase *fear of God* or *fear of the Lord* is only found thrice in Genesis (Gen. 20:11 22:12 42:18); and is otherwise not found in the Pentateuch (with the exceptions of Ex. 1:17, 21). We have similar number of occurrences in the book of Job (Job 1:1, 8, 9 2:3). The uses here would suggest much more than simple faith in God, as God points to Job as an exceptional man on earth (Job 1:8). Therefore, the idea of being mentally occupied with the Person of Y^ehowah is what is being referred to here, which is a result of spiritual maturity.
 7. Fear of the Lord is knowledge of Bible doctrine. [Listen, the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding](#) (Job 28:28). See also Psalm 111:10 Prov. 1:7 2:5 9:10 16:6
 8. Hating Bible doctrine is equivalent to rejecting spiritual maturity (= fear of the Lord). Prov. 1:29
 9. Fear of the Lord (spiritual maturity) endures forever and is to be preferred over gold or other material treasures. Psalm 19:9–10 Prov. 15:16
 10. Those who fear the Lord (that is, are spiritually mature) hate evil and arrogance and lying. Prov. 8:13
 11. A man who fears God will be a just ruler. 2Sam. 23:3 2Chron. 19:7
 12. An honorable and spiritually mature leader will not overtax his people. [The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God](#) (Neh. 5:15).
 13. Instruction in truth is the key to spiritual maturity (= fear of the Lord). [Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Y^ehowah](#) (Psalm 34:11). Prov. 15:33
 14. However, the key to a nation being blessed and protected by God, is there being many believers who are mature. 2Chron. 20:29
 15. Do not get your focus on people; keep your focus on God (which is also known as fear of the Lord). Prov. 23:17
 16. God listens to the prayers of David, but will humble his enemies, because David fears God and they do not (Psalm 55:16–22). For this reasons, David adjures others to [Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be knocked off balance](#) (Psalm 55:22).
 17. The fear of the Lord (spiritual maturity) gives one courage for battle. [And they attacked all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD was upon them](#) [giving them courage for battle]. [They plundered all the cities, for there was much plunder in them](#) (2Chron. 14:14).
 18. Those who fear God are interested in the teaching of the Word of God. Furthermore, God's effect upon man is in his soul. [Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul](#) (Psalm 66:16).
 19. Even though there are examples, from time to time, of those who do evil, and yet live for a long time, Solomon learned from his father David that it will be well with those who fear God. Eccles. 8:12

Because this phrase occurs so often in Scripture, it is a good idea for us to actually know what it means.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

All men are depraved. All men are born with a sin nature. However, this does not mean that the city-state of Gerar is anything like Sodom. The doctrine of universal depravity does not mean every city-state is depraved like Sodom. When such depravity occurs, God destroys them.

Genesis 20:11b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| ו ^e (or ו ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| hârag (גָּרַח) [pronounced <i>haw-RAHG</i>] | <i>to kill, to slay, to execute; to destroy, to ruin</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #2026 BDB #246 |
| ‘al (לַע) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| dâbâr (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>] | <i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1697 BDB #182 |
| Together, ‘al dâbâr (לַע דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>gahl-daw^b-VAWR</i>] mean <i>because of, because of [that], for the sake of, for the cause of [that]</i> . | | | |
| ‘ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |

Translation: Furthermore [lit., *and*], *they will kill me because of my wife.* This is what Abraham believed; that all of the people around him were uncivilized (some were) and that they would kill him to take whatever they wanted (this was unlikely). Abraham had painted, with a wide brush, all of the people of Canaan. However, he ought to know better, as, when he saved Sodom, he met the king of Sodom, who seemed to be a decent fellow; and he met Melchizedek, a priest of God, who lived in Jebus.

Genesis 20:11 And Abraham said, “Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will kill me for my wife's sake.

Abraham gives an honest answer here. He does not give a background of Sodom and Gomorrah, insofar as we know. They were extremely degenerate and willing to do anything to get what they want. Abraham had assumed that, because he did not clearly observe that these men believed in Jehovah Elohim, that they could not be trusted as being sufficiently moral.

Now, if this was in the back of Abraham's mind, but he refused to suggest this, let's look at such

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown suggest: *From the horrible vices of Sodom he seems to have taken up the impression that all other cities of Canaan were equally corrupt.*⁸⁵

Did Abraham believe the people of Gerar to be like the Sodomites?

1. We do not know how much Abraham knew about the depravity of Sodom. Someone, at some point in time, realized just how bad things were (the story of Lot reveals their deep degeneracy). However, at this point in time, there is no reason for Abraham to know this.
2. But what Abraham does know is, God told Abraham first that Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed; God had judged them and their evil required for them to be destroyed.

⁸⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 20:11.

Did Abraham believe the people of Gerar to be like the Sodomites?

3. There is nothing in God's conversation with Abraham to indicate why Sodom had come under judgment.
4. However, what is important is, Sodom's evil had reached a point where God judged them, and Abraham observed this judgment. God destroyed them with fire and brimstone (that is, fiery sulphur and petroleum products).
5. God has not told Abraham that He is going to destroy Gerar; God did not warn Abraham not to go to Gerar. So Abraham has no reason to think that these are insufferable heathen. If they were degenerate to a point of just killing innocent people, then they would be subject to God's judgment—a judgment that Abraham has seen with his own eyes.
6. Therefore, even if Abraham believes that the people of Gerar are as godless as the people of Sodom, he should expect God to judge and destroy them.

Hence, Abraham has no reason to think that the people of Gerar were complete reprobates.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

I think what is more in play here is Abraham's temporary loss of faith in God.

Speculation about Abraham and his lying to the King of Gerar

1. We cannot view what Abraham says here in a vacuum. That is, even though these chapters are divided up all nice and neatly, this does take place at a certain time in Abraham's life.
2. He has just spoken face to face with God about Sodom, and Abraham believed that he got God to agree to not destroy Sodom. This is based upon Abraham getting God to agree to preserve Sodom for the 10 righteous people that Abraham believed lived there.
3. As discussed in Gen. 19, Abraham did a mental headcount, figured out that there had to be about 10 believers or more in Sodom, based upon what he knew about Lot, and figured that Sodom would be preserved.
4. However, the next morning, Abraham wakes up, goes out to where he talked with God, and he could see the smoke coming up from Sodom.
5. At the beginning of this chapter, Abraham is said to follow a particular route. What he does is, walk along the west side of Sodom and Gomorrah (Abraham travels nearly due south), and it is likely that he can see the destruction which took place. Then he takes an abrupt turn to travel northwest up to Gerar.
6. So, my guess is, Abraham might be somewhat disenchanted with God. He does not know that God preserved Lot. At some point in time, Abraham did know this, but he would not have known it right then.
7. Therefore, although Abraham believed that he had secured things for Lot in Sodom, being given God's Word, Abraham may possibly lack trust in God and what God has said.
8. Abraham has the promises of God about having a child; but let me suggest that, Abraham's faith in God, at this point, is at a low ebb.
9. This appears to be a short-lived low ebb in the spiritual life of Abraham. At the end of Gen. 18, Abraham made a brilliant plea to God to preserve Sodom; and in the following chapter, Isaac will be born. So, I believe that we are looking at a temporary downturn of a few months at worst of Abraham's spiritual life.
10. Abraham has apparently has assumed, that God has come to him only, and not to these people. However, based upon what we have already read, it is clear that these people have trusted in the same God that Abraham trusts in. However, the people of Gerar are very concerned for their own well-being when they disobey the Sovereign God. That is strong faith.
- 11.

Guzik: *This was Abraham's excuse for his sinful deception by saying, but the real problem was that the fear of God wasn't in Abraham. If he really respected the Lord, His commandments, His promises, and His protection, then Abraham would have never trusted in his own efforts to keep his family together.*⁸⁶

It is possible that the indignance expressed by the king of Gerar will snap Abraham back to reality and increase his faith in God.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

As we have already discussed, there is a true respect for God in this land. Abimelech woke up in deep fear over his dream; and when he relays this to his state department, they respond in the same way.

In our time, we have trivialized God. We think of Him as our Buddy, our Pal. But God has, on several occasions, wiped out thousands of people and has either ordered or allowed the destruction of millions. God's threat to Abimelech was real. "Listen to my instructions and do them, or you will die and everyone that you know will die." That rightly struck fear in Abimelech's heart.

Noah represented the only uncorrupted line of Adam before the flood. The entire human population had become corrupted—they intermingled with fallen angels—and God destroyed all of them, which would have been millions of corrupted beings. So there is no doubt that God would have ended everyone in the house of Abimelech to protect the line of Adam, Noah, Shem and Abraham, if that were necessary for Him to do.

At this point in time, we have a relationship to God through Jesus Christ His Son. There are things which we enjoy in this dispensation that no other believer prior to this time enjoyed. You as a believer can enjoy direct and personal fellowship with God. You may be the most inconsequential person in the world, according to the thinking of the few who know you, and yet you have a direct and personal relationship with the Person of God.

However, bear in mind that, we are here for a reason. We are on earth with a purpose, and it goes far beyond being nice to people and treating them in the same way we want them to treat us. That is an establishment principle (which makes it valid and important); but it is not the Christian way of life. You can view your place in God's plan as unimportant, and God may simply choose to take you out of this world, as He did to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–10). However, no matter who you are or at what stage of life you are, if you are alive and breathing, then you have a part to play in God's plan, a part that is suitable for you.

In the time of Abraham, this was quite different. Not every believer had an important part to play. Whereas Paul speaks of every believer as being a part of the body, where the eye cannot tell the hand, "I don't need you." No such language is ever used in the Old Testament. For a more in-depth look at this, see **Abraham's spiritual life** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Along the same lines, see the **Spiritual Life of the Believer in the Church Age** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The fear felt by Abimelech and his cabinet members was real and appropriate to this situation. Abraham had nothing to fear from Abimelech; but Abimelech had a great deal to fear from God. Consequently, Abimelech acted quickly to resolve the conflict revealed to him by God.

Unfortunately, there is nothing that we find here to suggest that Abraham was introspective enough to admit, "I did not trust God's promises enough when I came into your jurisdiction. God has made great promises to me, and I believed that I needed to protect them with lies. I was wrong to do that."

Keith Krell: *[It is] a grievous truth [that too] often non-Christians are more moral than Christians. The Christian community has come up with Christian Yellow Pages in the hope that we can support fellow believers, yet often these believers are not ethical or hardworking. If you are a Christian business man*

⁸⁶ David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:11–13.

or woman, please be a person of integrity for your sake, for our sake, and most importantly, for the sake of Christ. One last tip: If an unbeliever ever rebukes you, you better listen! At least ask the question: Is what he or she is saying about me true? God does speak through unbelievers. And He usually does so as a means of humbling us. So don't assume that because your boss, neighbor, or relative is an unbeliever that God can't speak through him or her.⁸⁷

Bob Deffinbaugh, also writing for Bible.org, says, *I know there are those who teach sinless perfectionism, but I cannot fathom why. The old man, while positionally dead, is very much alive and well for the time being. While we should be living out the victorious life of Romans 8, most of us find ourselves continually in chapter 7. Such was true of Abraham, the friend of God, also. Privileged position does not preclude failure. Abraham was God's elect, God's chosen, but he still floundered and failed. Abraham was God's prophet, but that did not make him more pious than others. Abraham prospered both in Egypt and in Gerar, but it was not because he attained a higher level of spirituality. The most dangerous doctrine for the Christian is that which suggests that Christians can be above temptation and failure in their Christian lives, even after years of service or in a privileged position.⁸⁸*

This does not mean that you are honest under all circumstances. Lot, when faced with the Sodomites, his life and the lives of those with him in danger, could have lied to this mob, if there was a lie that could have dissuaded them. The problem is, when dealing with a mob, they are not reasonable, and even lies do not work. However, with the people of Gerar—and with their king—there was no observable reason to distrust them (at least, Abraham does not give any).

And also indeed my sister a daughter of my father [is] she; only not a daughter of my mother. And so she is for me for a woman.

Genesis
20:12

Also, she [is actually] my sister, the daughter of my father; but [she is] not the daughter of my mother. So she is to me a wife.

Also, she is actually my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. She became my wife.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And also indeed my sister a daughter of my father [is] she; only not a daughter of my mother. And so she is for me for a woman. |
| Targum of Onkelos | But in truth she is my sister, the daughter of my father's brother, but not of the kindred of my mother; and she became my wife. |
| Latin Vulgate | Howbeit, otherwise also she is truly my sister, the daughter of my father, and not the daughter of my mother, and I took her to wife. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And yet truly she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | For truly she is my sister by my father, but not by my mother, and she became my wife. |

Significant differences: All retain the gist of the original Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

⁸⁷ From <https://bible.org/seriespage/been-there-done-genesis-201-18> accessed August 27, 2014 and slightly edited.

⁸⁸ From <https://bible.org/seriespage/dont-ever-say-never-genesis-201-18> accessed August 27, 2014.

| | |
|--|---|
| Common English Bible | She is, truthfully, my sister-my father's daughter but not my mother's daughter-and she's now my wife. |
| Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version | Besides, she is my half sister. We have the same father, but different mothers. She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | She really is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not of my mother, and I married her. |
| <i>The Message</i> | Besides, the truth is that she is my half sister; she's my father's daughter but not my mother's. |
| New Berkeley Version | Besides, she actually is my sister; she is my father's daughter, but not my mother's and she became my wife. |
| New Century Version | And it is true that she is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but she is not the daughter of my mother. |
| New Living Translation | And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her. |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | [And in fact], she really is my sister by my father (but not by my mother), whom I took as my woman. |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | She truly is also my sister. She's the daughter of my father and not the daughter of my mother; however, she's woman to me. |
| Beck's American Translation | Then too she really is my sister, my father's daughter but not my mother's, and she married me. |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | Besides, she is my sister-my father's daughter but not my mother's. She is also my wife. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Anyway, she really is my sister, my father's daughter though not my mother's, besides being my wife. |
| Revised English Bible | She is in fact my sister, my father's daughter though not by my mother, and she became my wife. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bible in Basic English | And, in fact, she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. |
| Conservapedia | "And in point of fact, she is my sister; she is my father's daughter, though not my mother's daughter, and so we were married." |
| The Expanded Bible | And it is true that she is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but she is not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | And indeed she is my sister, the daughter-in-law of my father, but not of my mother; and she was given to me for a wife. |
| HCSB | Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |
| New Advent Bible | Howbeit, otherwise also she is truly my sister, the daughter of my father, and not the daughter of my mother, and I took her to wife. |
| NET Bible® | What's more [Heb "but also."], she is indeed my sister, my father's daughter, but not my mother's daughter. She became my wife. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Complete Jewish Bible | But she actually is also my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother, and so she became my wife. |
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and yet truly she is my sister: she is the daughter of my father |

Kaplan Translation but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my woman. In any case, she really is my sister [Also denotes any close relative. See Genesis 13:8.]. She is the daughter of my father [He actually meant, 'granddaughter of my father,' since Sarah was a granddaughter of Terach. Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's brother Haran (see note on Genesis 11:29). (cf. Rashi).], but not the daughter of my mother. She [later] became my wife.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Concordant Literal Version | And, moreover, truly, my sister is she, the daughter of my father is she, yea, but not the daughter of my mother, and she becomes my wife. |
| Context Group Version | And moreover she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my woman { or wife }. |
| English Standard Version | Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |
| Heritage Bible | And yet she is really my sister; she is the daughter of my father, and not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |
| Third Millennium Bible | And yet indeed she is my sister: she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |
| World English Bible | Moreover she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. |
| Young's Updated LT | And also, truly she is my sister, daughter of my father, only not daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. |

The gist of this verse: Abraham reveals that Sarah is, in truth, his half sister, whom he married.

Genesis 20:12a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>] | <i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i> | adverb | Strong's #1571 BDB #168 |
| Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> . | | | |
| 'âm ^e nâh (אָמֵנָה) [pronounced <i>aw-m^e-NA</i> or <i>om-NAW</i>] | <i>indeed, truly, surely, certainly, in truth</i> | adverb | Strong's #546 BDB #53 |
| 'âchôwth (אָחוּת) [pronounced <i>aw-KHOWTH</i>] | <i>sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another</i> | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #269 BDB #27 |
| bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>] | <i>daughter; village</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #1323 BDB #123 |

Genesis 20:12a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 'āb (אָב) [pronounced aw ^b] | <i>father</i> , both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; <i>founder</i> , <i>civil leader</i> , <i>military leader</i> | masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #1 BDB #3 |
| hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee] | <i>she, it</i> ; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

Translation: *Also, she [is actually] my sister, the daughter of my father;...* We get the actual story at this point of the relationship between Abraham and Sarah, which has not been given to us explicitly before. She is his half-sister; she has the same father as Abraham has.

The word *daughter* can also mean a *female descendant of*. Therefore, Sarah could even be Terah's granddaughter.

There are some commentators who doubt at this point, and it is reasonable that, when we are dealing with a quotation, it is not necessarily the gospel truth. However, given all of the circumstances—even given that Abraham does not want to come off looking like a complete and total jerk—it is very likely (in my opinion) that he is telling the truth here about Sarah.

Under the Law of Moses, a man is not to marry his sister or his half-sister. Leviticus 18:9, 11 20:17 Deut. 27:22. Some of the Mosaic Law simply deals with the preservation of the Jewish people. We know today that when close relatives intermingle, there is a great chance of problematic offspring. However, at this time in human history, there appears to have been a healthier gene pool (people did live a lot longer), and children produced by Abraham and his half-sister were not as likely to have genetic problems.

Genesis 20:12b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| 'akē (אֲכֵ) [pronounced ahk ^ē] | <i>surely, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, scarcely; only this once; nothing but, merely</i> [before a substantive]; <i>quite, altogether</i> [before an adjective] | adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle. | Strong's #389 BDB #36 |
| lō' (לוֹ אוֹ לֹא) [pronounced low] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth] | <i>daughter; village</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #1323 BDB #123 |

Genesis 20:12b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| 'êm (אֵם) [pronounced aim] | <i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i> | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #517 BDB #51 |

Translation: ...but [she is] not the daughter of my mother. However, Sarah is not Abraham's full sister. She is born to a different mother (which situation the Bible does not elaborate on).

There is a tradition which names the wives of Terah (Abraham's father), but that helps us very little.⁸⁹ The Bible does not inform us of this information.

There is nothing which forbids marriage between a man and his half-sister thus far in Scripture.

Genesis 20:12c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] | <i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| When followed by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> . | | | |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |

Translation: So she is to me a wife. Or, *she has become my wife*. At some point in time, Abraham and Sarah decided that they loved one another, more than just a brother and sister, and they were married. Again, we do

⁸⁹ Furthermore, there are different traditions here, one covered by Clarke and the other by Gill. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword. Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword. The Pulpit Commentary gives a whole other perspective: *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, all Gen. 20:12.

not know much more of this back story. Was Sarah born to a slave girl or a mistress? Was this where she came up with the idea of Abraham siring a son through her slave girl?

Abraham assumed the worst about this place; and furthermore, even if the land was filled with heathen, he is protected by the living God, so it is even worse that he has not trusted in God and His protection. This verse is often quoted to prove that Sarah was his half-sister. That is a distinct possibility, but remember that this is a direct quote from someone who has just lied to this king before so there is an equal likelihood that Abraham is thinking quickly on his feet and lying once again.

Genesis 20:12 And yet truly she is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. And she became my wife.”

Here, Abraham properly explains the relationship between Sarah and himself; she is actually his younger half-sister. So, on two occasions at least, Abraham told this half-truth about his wife and half-sister, Sarah.

Quite obviously, this half-truth was a lie. The most pertinent information required is that they are married. That would have changed everything. Abimelech, who apparently respects marriage, would not have done anything at that point.

Application: This should not be a difficult thing to understand: (1) if Abraham said that Sarah was his wife, but not mentioned that she is his half-sister; that would have been the truth. (2) If Abraham revealed that Sarah was both his wife and half-sister; that would have been the truth. (3) However, to only reveal that she is his sister is a half-truth, and does not answer the pertinent question of the king, which is, namely, is she an unmarried woman? So, sometimes, telling a half-truth is a lie and sometimes it is the truth. All depends upon the information one is after.

Or, as Guzik puts it: *This is another attempt to justify his lie, by saying it is really the truth. But a half-truth, said with intent to deceive, is always a whole lie.*⁹⁰ The key is intent.

And Matthew Henry writes: *But those to whom he said, “She is my sister,” understood that she was so his sister as not to be capable of being his wife; so that it was an equivocation, with an intent to deceive.*⁹¹

None of this makes Abraham look very good. Bear in mind, he is safe and sound, in his large encampment; and Sarah is by herself, in the king’s residence, possibly to be married and violated. Not only did Abraham not think this through, but he puts his wife in danger while he is not.

And so he is as which cause to wander me
Elohim from a house of my father, and so I say
to her ‘This [is] your grace which you do with
me unto all the place which we come there,
say for me, “My brother [is] he.” ’ ’ ”

Genesis
20:13

And so it is because Elohim [possibly, *the gods*]
has caused me to wander from my
father’s house that I said to her, ‘This [is] you
grace that you will do toward me in all the
place that we go to: say for me, “He [is] my
brother.” ’ ’ ”

And because God [possibly, *the gods*] has caused us to move from my father’s home, I said to her, ‘Do this gracious thing for me wherever we go: say with respect to me, “He is my brother.” ’ ’ ”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁹⁰ David Guzik’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:11–13.

⁹¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:8–13.

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so he is as which cause to wander me Elohim from a house of my father, and so I say to her 'This [is] your grace which you do with me unto all the place which we come there, say for me, "My brother [is] he." ' ' " |
| Targum of Onkelos | And it was <u>when they sought to turn me aside to the worship of idols</u> , and I went forth from my father's house, that I said to her, This is the kindness you will do me: in every place to which we come, say concerning me, He is my brother. |
| Latin Vulgate | And after God brought me out of my father's house, I said to her: You will do me this kindness: In every place, to which we will come, you will say that I am your brother. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And it came to pass when God brought me forth out of my father's house, I said to her, This is the favor which you shall do to me; at every place where we shall go, say of me, He is my brother. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And it came to pass when God brought me forth out of the house of my father, that I said to her, This righteousness you shall perform to me, in every place into which we may enter, say of me, He is my brother. |
| Significant differences: | The targum has a whole extra phrase within it. This is not uncommon for the targum. The other languages maintain the gist of the Hebrew. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Contemporary English V. | When God made us leave my father's home and start wandering, I told her, "If you really love me, you will tell everyone that I am your brother." |
| Easy English | God made me go away from my father's house. So I said to her, "Please be kind to me and do this. Tell people that I am your brother. Tell that to whomever we meet." ' " |
| Easy-to-Read Version | God led me away from my father's house. God led me to wander to many different places. When that happened, I told Sarah, 'Do something for me; wherever we go, tell people you are my sister.'" |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | So when God sent me from my father's house into foreign lands, I said to her, 'You can show how loyal you are to me by telling everyone that I am your brother.' " |
| <i>The Message</i> | When God sent me out as a wanderer from my father's home, I told her, 'Do me a favor; wherever we go, tell people that I'm your brother.'" |
| New Century Version | When God told me to leave my father's house and wander in many different places, I told Sarah, 'You must do a special favor for me. Everywhere we go tell people I am your brother.' " |
| New Living Translation | 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.'" |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | And when God took me from my father's house, I told her, I have a righteous thing that I want you to do for me; Wherever we go, tell [people] that I'm your brother.' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | When I had strayed with God from the house of my father, I said to her, 'Do this mercy with me: At any place that we come, say of me there, He's my brother.' |
| Beck's American Translation | When God made me wander from my father's home, I told her, 'Do me a favor: When we come to any place, say of me, "He's my brother." ' ' " |
| Christian Community Bible | So, when the gods made me wander far from my father's family, I said to her: Now, if you love me, I beg you to say that I am your brother wherever we go." |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | When God had me leave my father's home and travel around, I said to her, 'Do me a favor: Wherever we go, say that I'm your brother.'" |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | When God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, This kindness you can show me: at every place we stop, say of me, He is my brother. |
| Updated Brenton translation | And it came to pass when God brought me forth out of the house of my father, that I said to her, This righteousness you will perform to me, in every place into which we may enter, say of me, He is my brother. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And it comes, as the Elohim causes me to stray from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, that I am saying to her, "This is your kindness which you shall do for me. At every place where we are coming, say as to me, "My brother is he." |
| Context Group Version | ...and it happened, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, This is your family allegiance { Hebrew: hesed } which you shall show to me. At every place where we shall come, say of me, He is my brother. |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| English Standard Version | 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.'" |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me: at every place where we shall come say of me, He is my brother. This was an explanation, an attempted defense, but a questionable excuse at best, that he had not supposed that men feared God in the land of Abimelech, that consequently he feared for his life on account of Sarah, that he had made an agreement with his wife to have her masquerade as his sister. The Lord could very well have protected him and his wife without such questionable means. The Bible does not hide from us the weaknesses and foibles of the saints, but frankly tells them for our warning. If we are honestly engaged in the work of our calling, we need not resort to subterfuges to save our lives. Without the will of God not a hair of our heads may be touched. |
| Modern KJV | And it happened when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, This <i>is</i> your kindness which you show to me, at every place where we shall come, say of me, He <i>is</i> my brother. |
| Syndein | And it came to pass, when 'Elohiym/Godhead caused me to wander from my father's house, that I kept on saying unto her, "This is your grace {cheched} which you can keep on manufacturing {'asah - out of a good mental attitude} unto me. At every place to which we keep on coming, say of me, 'He . . . {is} my brother'." |
| Young's Updated LT | And it comes to pass, when God has caused me to wander from my father's house, that I say to her, This is your kindness which you dost with me: at every place where we come, say of me, He is my brother." |

The gist of this verse: Abraham, early on, as Sarah to present herself as his sister, when they began to travel into these new lands.

| Genesis 20:13a | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] | <i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e] | <i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i> | preposition | No Strong's # BDB #453 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i> | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| Together, ka'ăsher (כִּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Sam. 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> . | | | |

Genesis 20:13a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| tâ'âh (הָעָתָה) [pronounced <i>taw-GAWH</i>] | <i>to cause to go astray [by sin], to cause to [physically, mentally] wander [about]; to cause to stagger [from intoxication]; to cause to err; to mislead [mentally, morally]; to err</i> | 3 rd person plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #8582 BDB #1073 |
| 'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| 'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>] | <i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i> | preposition of separation | Strong's #4480 BDB #577 |
| bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>] | <i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1004 BDB #108 |
| 'âb (אָב) [pronounced <i>aw^bv</i>] | <i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i> | masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #1 BDB #3 |

Translation: And so it is because Elohim [possibly, *the gods*] has caused me to wander from my father's house... The word *wander* is the Hiphil imperfect of tâ'âh (הָעָתָה) [pronounced *taw-GAWH*], which is, generally speaking, a verb with negative connotations. In the Hiphil, it means, *to cause to go astray [by sin], to cause to [physically, mentally] wander [about]; to cause to stagger [from intoxication]; to cause to err; to mislead [mentally, morally]; to err*. Strong's #8582 BDB #1073. And it is God Who is causing Abraham to do this. So, without coming right out and directly saying this, Abraham is putting some of the blame on God. "Look, Sarah and I were fine where we were, but God caused me to wander off here, where I did not really know who to trust, who not to trust, so I just made this decision for all places that are new to us."

Donald Barnhouse: *There is a terrible meaning in this verb wander which Abraham uses. The Hebrew word occurs exactly fifty times in Scripture and never in a good sense. It is used of animals going astray, of a drunken man reeling, or staggering, of sinful seduction, of a prophet's lies causing the people to err, of the path of a lying heart. Six other words are translated wander, any one of which Abraham might have used, but he used the worst word available.*⁹²

There is also something hidden here that you cannot see, except in the Hebrew, and that is, the verb *to wander* is in the plural. Now, *Elohim* is, strictly speaking, a plural noun, but it always takes a singular verb when speaking of God (vv. 6, 17, for instance). Here, Abraham uses the plural verb.⁹³ This is also found in Genesis 35:7 Exodus 22:9 2Samuel 7:22 (but singular in 1Chronicles 17:20) and Psalms 58:11. Furthermore in Joshua 24:19, *Elohim* is joined with an adjective (holy) in the plural.⁹⁴ Ellicott adds: *These exceptions may either be relics of a*

⁹² David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:11–13.

⁹³ Initially, I missed this, but Calvin commented on it. John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Gen. 20:13.

⁹⁴ Taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

less strict use of the name *Elohim*, or they may be errors of copyists, misled by the ordinary rules of grammar. This latter view is confirmed by the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch, both here and in Genesis 35:7, has the singular.⁹⁵

Let me suggest that Abraham means three possible things by this: (1) he does not want to blaspheme God, so, by using a plural verb, he is saying *the gods caused me to wander*; and/or (2) he is talking down to Abimelech. Abraham believes in God; Abimelech must believe in the gods; and/or (3) Abraham was testing Abimelech, to see how he would react. Would he speak of *God* or of *the gods*? Regarding #2: this does not mean that Abimelech did not believe in the Revealed God; it simply means that Abraham might be treating him as if that is what he believes in.

| Genesis 20:13b | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| zeh (זה) [pronounced zeh] | <i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i> | masculine singular demonstrative adjective | Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260 |
| cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed] | <i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i> | masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #2617 BDB #338 |
| 'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i> | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i> | 2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| 'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem] | <i>with, at, by, near; like; from; against; toward; as long as; beside, except; in spite of</i> | preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #5973 BDB #767 |

Translation: ...that I said to her, 'This [is] you grace that you will do toward me... Abraham does take on himself all of the blame, although he has shuffled some of it on God. Some of this is moderately difficult to translate, and this may be due to the fact that Abraham is speaking to someone who speaks a different language.

⁹⁵ Taken from <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

Genesis 20:13c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]l] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]l] | <i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i> | masculine singular construct followed by a definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| mâqôm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced maw-KOHM] | <i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #4725 BDB #879 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i> | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| bôw' (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced boh] | <i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i> | 1 st person plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm] | <i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i> | adverb with the directional hê | Strong's #8033 BDB #1027 |

This simply means *there*; hê acts almost like a demonstrative.

Translation: ...in all the place that we go to:... This suggests that this was what Abraham and his wife did at any time that they moved around. When confronted with the locals, she would say that Abraham was her brother. In Abraham's mind, this gave him some modicum⁹⁶ of protection.

Genesis 20:13d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk] | <i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i> | masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #251 BDB #26 |
| hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo] | <i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |

⁹⁶ Or "emoticon" as Meghan McCain would say.

Translation: ...say for me, "He [is] my brother." ' ' ' Part of the difficulty in the translation is possibly that we have a quote within a quote within a quote.

At least here we have an improvement in Abraham's behavior. This reminds me of Adam at the fall; Adam immediately blamed God and blamed the woman for the fall, even though he knew exactly what he was doing. Here, Abraham begins to blame God, stops mid-sentence, and instead of blaming Sarah, takes the blame himself and says that he has asked her to say this. This may not be the best improvement over what has gone before, but it is some improvement.

Genesis 20:13 And it happened when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness which you show to me, at every place where we will come, say of me, He is my brother.' "

So Abraham formulated a policy early on once he and Sarah left their father's home. This tells us that what Abraham did in Egypt, when he lied about Sarah, was not just a one-time thing. It was the Abrahamic policy for dealing with heathen. Therefore, it makes sense that we see this situation occur more than once.

Notice what else is implied here: Abraham blames this on God; God is the reason he chose to do this. God caused him to wander from his father's home.

Coffman actually listed 3 excuses, but there are 4 in total.

Coffman on Abraham's four-fold excuse

- (1) He feared for his safety that men might kill him for the sake of his wife. Note that this was the object of the device at the time it was initiated. Abraham did not here allege that to have been the root of his fear in this instance.
- (2) He had not actually told a falsehood, since Sarah was indeed his half-sister. Still it was a lie, spoken with intent to deceive. Goettsche adds that Abraham is hiding behind the excuse that, *technically*, he wasn't telling a lie.
- (3) It was a habit of long standing, doubtless practiced over and over again throughout many years, and the indication in this is that Abraham was merely pleading that, "I, or we, always do this when we are traveling in strange territory." Inherent in such an admission is that Abraham had totally failed to learn the lesson he should have learned on that other occasion in Egypt when such a habit had involved him in serious trouble.
- (4) It appears that God may have had something to do with this, causing Abraham to wander into all kinds of different lands facing a variety of people.

It is often human nature that, the more you are guilty, the more excuses you are able to come up with.

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

There is a similar approach here: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/whe/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 27, 2014.

Goettsche is found here <http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/053099.html> accessed August 27, 2014,

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Unfortunately, what we do not find here is Abraham's confession of sin to God. However, Abraham will be praying to God on behalf of Abimelech, and since that prayer is efficacious, this suggests to us that Abraham did rebound at some point in time.

Assuming Abraham's confession of sin, Rev. Bruce Goettsche says that we ought to take this one step further.

Goettsche on *How we should view our confessed sins*

I find that the best way to deal with recurring sin is to identify the sin completely. Get to the root issues. See it in all it's ugliness . . . here's some examples:

- Don't just confess, "I lied". Confess that you turned away from the truth which means you turned away from the Lord. Recognize that in your lying you showed a lack of love to the one you lied to. Confess the pride that made you want to hide the truth.
- Don't just confess, "I lusted". Confess that you were allowing your mind to wallow in filth. Confess that you took something from the one you love in lusting for another. Ask yourself how you would feel if it was your son or daughter that was the object of your lustful thoughts.
- Don't confess "I took something that didn't belong to me." Confess that you stole. Admit that you robbed another. Admit that you are guilty of coveting what is not yours. Admit that you showed that you were ungrateful for what the Lord has provided you.
- Don't just confess, "I gossiped". Identify it for what it really is. Confess that you assaulted another's character. Confess that you were guilty of tearing down rather than building up. Confess the pride that made you savor the gossip and the arrogance that presumes to glory in another's failure.
- Don't just confess, "I didn't make it to church today." Confess the fact that you allowed other things to take priority over your worship of the Lord. Confess the laziness that kept you in bed. Confess your idolatry in honoring something above the Lord.

Don't misunderstand this. Goettsche is not saying that approach this is necessary for the forgiveness of sin, but that we ought to think of sin and see sin as God sees it. In other words, this is thinking as God thinks. This, he suggests, is a way to deal with recurring sin in our lives.

From <http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/053099.html> accessed August 28, 2014.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Goettsche: *Things that seem innocent can quickly become destructive. We need to be alert to those things that lead us into sin. Satan will lure us in with something that appears harmless. He will tempt us to get as close to sin as we can . . . all the time assuring us that we are not "technically sinning." But if we play with sin . . . we will get burned. Joseph had the right idea . . . when his boss's wife grabbed him and tried to seduce him, he didn't play around . . . he ran.*⁹⁷

Goettsche on, *Know your weaknesses and avoid them*

- If you have problems with lust don't linger at the magazine rack and don't rent movies that could turn your mind from the truth. Put a filtering software on your computer and have someone else set the password.
- If you have trouble with wasting time . . . chart the way you use your time. Then start cutting back. Limit your time on the Internet or with your video games, or in front of the television.
- If you have problems with alcohol you shouldn't go out with the boys "just to have a coke" at the local bar. Don't bring liquor into your home. Don't give in to the notion that "one won't hurt me."
- If you have problems with money, don't carry a credit card. Throw away catalogs before you look at them. Turn off those infomercials!
- If you have problems with gossip, walk away when gossip begins to take center stage. Learn to ask yourself, "would I want someone to be repeating these things about me?" Ask people for sources.
- If you have problems with resentment or bitterness, stay away from those who feed your feelings. When your mind starts replaying the hurt and imagining getting even . . . change the channel. Imagine instead what it would be like to forgive and to restore the relationship. Imagine being faithful to God rather than imagining playing God.

⁹⁷ This quote and doctrine are from <http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/053099.html> accessed August 28, 2014.

You know your own weaknesses; simply avoid circumstances which place you close to those temptations.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 20:13 And it happened when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness which you show to me, at every place where we will come, say of me, He is my brother.' "

There is one fascinating thing hidden in the Hebrew which is not generally pointed out in most translations: God is coupled with a plural verb here. Now, that normally is not the case; normally, the plural noun *Elohim* is nearly always coupled with singular verbs. *Elohim* can be translated *God*, *god* or *gods*. But Elohim, the Triune God, acts as a Single Entity and a single purpose, and therefore, takes a singular verb—when we are speaking of the Triune God. However, Abraham is actually saying here, “**Gods caused me to wander from my father's home.**” That is very odd. It is sort as though Abraham is talking down to Abimelech. Rather than speaking of the one God (the One Who spoke to Abimelech in his dream), Abraham here appears to be speaking of several gods. It is sort of like being around Muslims and referring to God as *Allah*.

In a way, this Abraham moving west was very much like Americans moving out west in the United States during the gold rush. He felt as if he was going from a fairly civilized land into a rough and tumble country, where nearly anything goes (in Abraham's perception), so he adjusted to compensate for that. However, Abraham has, on two occasions, come across men who are just the opposite from what he expected. Here, we find King Abimelech, who is a man who fears God; and back in Gen. 14, Abraham met Melchizedek, a priest of God. Both are believers in the Revealed Lord, the Creator of all mankind.

Abraham admits that this is his idea. He has misjudged the host nation in which he finds himself, and he has misjudged the character of Abimelech. In fact, Abraham continues to misjudge Abimelech by using a plural verb with the noun *Elohim*. By that, he is assuming that Abimelech worships many gods. In other words, Abraham does not yet recognize the legitimacy of Abimelech's faith.

To me, this is fascinating—that Abraham is still wrong about Abimelech and about his people. He has warmed up a little and recognizes the mistake that he has personally made, but Abraham is not yet ready to simply recognize that they both worship the same God.

So there is no misunderstanding, I am not saying that there are many roads to Rome and Abraham was on one of these roads and Abimelech was on the other. That is not my point at all. **There is only one Mediator between God and man; the man Christ Jesus.** I am saying that they both worship the same Revealed God, and that Abraham does not recognize that.

So far we have studied:

Gen, 20:1–13 Abraham moved to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was living in Gerar, Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah. God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!" Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent? Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience." "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die." Early in the morning Abimelech called together all his officials. He told them about all of this, and they were terrified. Then Abimelech called for Abraham and asked him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you that you would bring such a serious sin on me and my kingdom? You shouldn't have done this to me." Abimelech also asked Abraham, "What were you thinking when you did this?" Abraham said, "I thought that because there are no God-fearing people in this place, I'd be killed because of my wife. Besides, she is my sister-my father's daughter but not my mother's. She

is also my wife. When God had me leave my father's home and travel around, I said to her, 'Do me a favor: Wherever we go, say that I'm your brother.' " (God's Word™)

About a year before Isaac is to be born, and right after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pulled up stakes and moved to Gerar, which is a Philistine city.

Abraham set up a general policy of how he would interact with the various peoples of the land of Canaan. This was not something that God directed him to do; nor did this mean that he was surrounded by very degenerate groups of people. The only people who were truly degenerate and could not be trusted were those in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham prayed on their behalf because Lot lived among them. However, there are apparently many other groups of people who are very honorable, many of whom believe in the Revealed Lord and will be in heaven as well.

Abraham does not admit his sin to Abimelech; and he does not confess his sin to God. He should have said, "Look, Abimelech, I am wrong. I should not have done what I did."

Donald Barnhouse: *Abraham should have said: "Forgive me, Abimelech, for dishonoring both you and my God. My selfish cowardice overwhelmed me, and I denied my God by fearing that He who called me could not take care of me. He is not as your gods of wood and stone. He is the God of glory. He is the living God, the Creator, the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. He told me He would be my shield and my exceeding great reward, and supplier of all my needs . . . In sinning against Him, I sinned against you. Forgive me, Abimelech."*⁹⁸

Despite the way the Abraham generally impugned his character, this is how Abimelech responds:

And so takes, Abimelech, sheep and oxen and male servants and female servants and so he gives [them] to Abraham. And so he causes to return to him Sarah his wife.

Genesis
20:14

Abimelech then took sheep, oxen, male servants and female servants and he gave [them all] to Abraham. He also restored his wife Sarah to him.

Abimelech then took sheep and oxen, and both male and female servants, and gave them all to Abraham. He also restored Abraham's wife Sarah to him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so takes, Abimelech, sheep and oxen and male servants and female servants and so he gives [them] to Abraham. And so he causes to return to him Sarah his wife. |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abimelek took sheep, and restored Sarah his wife to him. |
| Latin Vulgate | And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and servants and handmaids, and gave to Abraham: and restored to him Sara his wife. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And Abimeleck took sheep and oxen and male and female servants and gave them to Abraham and restored to him Sarah his wife. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abimelech took a thousand pieces of silver, and sheep, and calves, and servants, and maid servants, and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. |

⁹⁸ David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:11–13.

Significant differences: The targum, for once, is missing a lot of text. It lacks the first sentence of the Hebrew. The Greek adds that silver was a part of what Abimelech gave to Abraham.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|---|--|
| Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version | Abimelech gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. He sent Sarah back... {Then Abimelech understood what had happened.} So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Then Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and at the same time he gave him sheep, cattle, and slaves. |
| <i>The Message</i> | Then Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and along with her sent sheep and cattle and servants, both male and female. |
| New Century Version | Then Abimelech gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves. He also gave Sarah, Abraham's wife, back to him... |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | Thereafter, Abimelech returned his woman Sarah, along with a thousand silver coins, as well as sheep, cattle, and male and female servants. |
| Christian Community Bible | Abimelech then brought sheep and cattle, male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he had Sarah returned to her husband. |
| <i>God's Word™</i> | Then Abimelech took sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham. He also gave his wife Sarah back to him. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | Abimelech took sheep, cattle, men and women slaves, and presented them to Abraham, and gave him back his wife Sarah. |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | Then Abimelech gave to Abraham sheep and oxen and men-servants and women-servants, and gave him back his wife Sarah. |
| Conservapedia | Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and gave him back his wife Sarah. |
| The Expanded Bible | Then Abimelech gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves. He also gave Sarah, Abraham's wife, back to him and said, "Look around you at my land [My land is before you]. You may live anywhere you want." V. 15 is included for context. |
| Ferrar-Fenton Bible | Abimelech, however, took sheep, oxen, slaves, girls, and gave to Abraham; and he returned Sarah his wife to him. |
| NET Bible® | So Abimelech gave [Heb "took and gave."] sheep, cattle, and male and female servants to Abraham. He also gave his wife Sarah back to him. |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Abi Melech takes flocks and oxen and servants and maids and gives them to Abraham and restores him Sarah his woman:... |
| Kaplan Translation | Abimelekh took sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves, and he gave [them] to Abraham. He [also] returned [Abraham's] wife Sarah to him. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Concordant Literal Version | And taking is Abimelech a thousand silverlings and a flock and a herd, and servants and maids, and is giving them to Abraham. And he is restoring to him Sarah his wife. |
| Context Group Version | And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male slaves and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his woman { or wife } to him. |
| Darby Translation | And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and bondmen and bondwomen, and gave [them] to Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. |
| English Standard Version | Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. |
| Heritage Bible | And Abimelech took flock animals, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah, his wife, to him. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah, his wife. The restoration of Sarah with her honor unspotted followed as a matter of course, but the giving of presents in such rich measure was an act of magnanimity on Abimelech's part, showing that he felt no false resentment. |
| Syndein | {Verses 14:16: Dignity of Abimelech} And Abimelech kept on taking sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and kept on giving them unto Abraham, and kept on causing to be restored to him Sarah his wife. |
| World English Bible | Abimelech took sheep and oxen, men-servants and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah, his wife to him. |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abimelech takes sheep and oxen, and servants and handmaids, and gives to Abraham, and sends back to him Sarah his wife. |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech honors Abraham with sheep, cattle and male and female servants, as he returns Sarah to him.

Genesis 20:14a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH] | <i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |

The Greek inserts 1000 pieces of silver right here. They will be mentioned in v. 16, so this is not invented out of whole cloth.

| | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn] | <i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i> | feminine singular collective noun | Strong's #6629 BDB #838 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced baw-KAWR] | <i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i> | masculine singular collective noun | Strong's #1241 BDB #133 |

Genesis 20:14a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>GE^B-ved</i>] | <i>slave, servant</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #5650 BDB #713 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>] | <i>maid, maid-servant, household servant</i> | feminine plural noun | Strong's #8198 BDB #1046 |

Translation: *Abimelech then took sheep, oxen, male servants and female servants...* Abimelech has spoken to God in his dream. This event did not fade with respect to Abimelech's thinking. He made a gift of sheep, oxen and slaves to Abraham, as an apology (even though Abraham was in the wrong). The reason that he would do this is, God spoke to him and God apparently thought a lot of Abraham to intervene as He did.

Genesis 20:14b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>] | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #5414 BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| ʿAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |

Translation: *...and he gave [them all] to Abraham.* In many Hebrew sentences, sometimes the direct object is so obvious that it is left out. What Abimelech is giving Abraham is these sheep, oxen, and slaves. However, the Hebrew does not see any reason to have a masculine plural pronoun here, because it is quite obvious what is being given.

So, Abimelech has called Abraham into his palace, and is talking with him. Abimelech probably had all of these items already gathered up before Abraham got there. The male and female servants are both in the plural, indicating that, at the very least, Abraham was given 4 slaves. Since they are not actually counted here, I would guess that Abraham is given 10 or more slaves. He probably needs enough to keep all of this livestock under control. It would make sense to provide enough slaves to take care of the gifts given to Abraham.

Guzik: *it is interesting to see Abraham accepts these gifts, when he had refused gifts from a pagan king previously (Genesis 14:21-24), because he wanted no one to think a man had made him rich. Here, because of Abraham's compromise, he finds it hard to reclaim the same high moral ground.*⁹⁹

| Genesis 20:14c | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v] | <i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #7725 BDB #996 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW] | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i> | proper noun; feminine singular | Strong's #8283 BDB #979 |
| 'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |

Translation: He also restored his wife Sarah to him. And, the main requirement of God was for Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham; and so he did.

Abimelech was the one who was lied to and had possibly faced death because of Abraham; still, being the bigger man in some ways, gives to Abraham more riches. What was done is a mess and God has worked everything out for good. Abimelech as believed in God, as has his household; Abraham has been fully chastised for his improper behavior by Abimelech; and God has increased Abraham's wealth in His matchless grace. Abimelech is acting out of fear and respect for God and Abraham's obvious relationship to God.

According to what was known in this era, Abraham was wrong and Abimelech was right. However, Abimelech recognizes that Abraham has a very special relationship with God, and this trumps making any sort of a point on who is right and who is wrong; and this even trumps Abraham being out of fellowship.

Genesis 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham. And he restored him Sarah his wife.

⁹⁹ David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:14–18.

This is quite interesting—Abimelech even blesses Abraham, giving him livestock and slaves, as well as restoring Sarah to him, despite Abraham’s duplicity. Why he does this is easy to explain: God came to Abimelech in a dream and threatened him. This suggests to him that Abraham is an important man in God’s plan; and that his marriage to Sarah is a key component of this plan. We know this to be true because we have studied the previous chapters in Genesis. Most of us know what will happen next. Abimelech knows this to be true because of a dream where God spoke to him, even though he may be sketchy on the other details—that is, *why* God is this concerned. Insofar as the king knows, he is violating adultery laws, but he is probably wondering just exactly why God is speaking to him about this.

Because the narrative often focuses in on just a few people (like Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech), we often forget that Abraham traveled with quite a large number of servants and employees. Even though the Bible often times seems to present Abraham and Sarah as just a couple with a servant or two with them, it should be obvious that they had quite a number of people still traveling with them. Otherwise, giving them all of these things would be difficult for them to oversee. However, Abimelech knows enough about their caravan that Abraham is able to integrate this into his possessions.

Furthermore, there would have been a large staff under Abimelech, so that he could collect these things and give them to Abraham.

Abraham receives Sarah from King Abimelech, a painting by Nicolaes Berchem (1665-1670). From Commoner Jim’s [wordpress site](#) accessed August 29, 2014.



Genesis 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham. And he restored him Sarah his wife.

When Christians Ask— “Why did God let Abraham prosper by lying?”

GENESIS 12:10–20 ; 20:1–18 —Why did God let Abraham prosper by lying?

PROBLEM: We are told in the Bible not to lie (Ex. 20:16), but, when Abraham lied about Sarah, his wealth was increased.

SOLUTION: First, Abraham’s increase in wealth should not be viewed as a divine reward for his lie. Pharaoh’s gifts to him were understandable. Pharaoh may have felt obligated to pay amends for the wicked constraint that his corrupt society put on strangers who visited his land.

Furthermore, Pharaoh may have felt he had to make amends to Abraham for unwittingly taking his wife into his palace. Adultery was strictly forbidden by the Egyptian religion.

What is more, Abraham paid for his sin. The years of trouble that followed may have been a direct result of his lack of faith in God’s protecting power.

Finally, although some people are portrayed as men of God, they are still fallible and responsible for their own sin (e.g., David and Bathsheba, 2 Sam. 12). God blessed them in spite of, not because of, their sins.

From Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Gen. 20:1.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And so says Abimelech, “Behold, my land to your faces; in the good in your eyes dwell.”

Genesis
20:15

Then Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you; live [in whatever place is] good [lit., *in the good*] in your eyes.”

Then Abimelech said, “Listen, my land is before you; live in whatever place pleases you.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so says Abimelech, “Behold, my land to your faces; in the good in your eyes dwell.” |
| Targum of Onkelos | This verse does not appear to be in the targums. |
| Latin Vulgate | And said: The land is before you, dwell wherever it will please you. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | Then Abimeleck said to Abraham, Behold, my land is before you; dwell wherever you please. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abimelech said to Abraham, Behold, my land is before you, dwell wherever it may please you. |
| Significant differences: | The Greek, Latin and Syriac appear to smooth out the more stilted Hebrew. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Common English Bible | Abimelech said, "My land is here available to you. Live wherever you wish." |
| Contemporary English V. | ...and told Abraham that he could settle anywhere in his country. |
| Easy English | Abimelech also said, 'Look! Here is my country. Live wherever you like.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version | And Abimelech said, "Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | He said to Abraham, "Here is my whole land; live anywhere you like." |
| <i>The Message</i> | He said, "My land is open to you; live wherever you wish." |
| New Century Version | ...and said, "Look around you at my land. You may live anywhere you want." |
| New Life Bible | Abimelech said, "See, my land is in front of you. Make your home any place you want." |
| New Living Translation | Then Abimelech said, "Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live." |

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| American English Bible | Then AbiMelech said to AbraHam, 'Look, my whole land lies before you, so go wherever you wish.' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abimelech said, "Behold my land in front of you--dwell as good in your eyes." |
| Christian Community Bible | And he told Abraham, "See, you have the run of my land; live wherever you please." |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™ | Abimelech said, "Look, here's my land. Live anywhere you like." |
| New American Bible | Then Abimelech said, "Here, my land is at your disposal; settle wherever you please." |
| Revised English Bible | ...and said, 'My country is at your disposal; settle wherever you please.' |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abimelech said, See, all my land is before you; take whatever place seems good to you. |
| Conservapedia | Abimelech also said, "Look, here's my land. You may live wherever you like." |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | And Abimelech said, "See my country is before you, stay wherever it is good for your eyes;..." |
| HCSB | Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Settle wherever you want." |
| NET Bible® | Then Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you; live wherever you please [Heb "In the [place that is] good in your eyes live!"]." |
| NIV, ©2011 | And Abimelek said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like." |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and Abi Melech says, Behold, my land at your face: settle where it is good in your eyes. |
| Kaplan Translation | Abimelekh said, 'My whole land is before you. Settle wherever you see fit.' According to many opinions, Abraham therefore decided to settle in Beer-sheba, which was the border of the Philistine territory (cf. Ramban on Genesis 21:32; Matnath Kehunah on Bereshith Rabbah 54:2). This is also supported in other ancient sources (Yov'loth 16:11). See Genesis 21:14. Others, however, maintain that Abraham remained in Gerar (Ibn Ezra; Radak). |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Concordant Literal Version | And saying is Abimelech to Abraham, "Behold! My land is before you. In that which is good in your eyes, dwell. |
| Context Group Version | And Abimelech said, Look, my land { or earth } is before you. Dwell where it pleases you. |
| Updated Darby Translation | And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before you: dwell where it is good in your eyes. |
| Heritage Bible | And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before your face; dwell where it pleases you. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee; dwell where it pleaseth thee. To offer to Abraham the choice of pasturage in his land in the circumstances was certainly heaping coals of fire on his head. |
| Modern KJV | And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before you. Live where it pleases you. |
| NASB | Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle [Lit dwell] wherever you please [Lit it is good in your sight]." |
| New King James Version | And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." |
| Syndein | And Abimelech kept on saying, "Behold, my land is before you. Dwell in prosperity where it pleases you." |
| Young's Updated LT | And Abimelech says, "Lo, my land is before you, where it is good in your eyes, dwell;" |

The gist of this verse: Abimelech tells Abraham to look over his land and to settle anywhere that suits him.

Genesis 20:15a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|--|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wāw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |
| ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets] | <i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i> | feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #776 BDB #75 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM] | <i>face, faces countenance; presence</i> | masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #6440 BDB #815 |

Together, they mean *before you, before your face, in your presence, in your sight, in front of you*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in Your judgment*.

Translation: Then Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you;... Abimelech realizes that it will be to his advantage for he and Abraham to be friends or to part as friends. Abimelech controls a great deal of land, and he is going to make whatever portion of this land that Abraham wants available to him.

Gill: *Instead of bidding him be gone, and sending him away in haste out of his country, as the king of Egypt did in a like case, he solicits his stay in it; and to encourage him to it, makes an offer of his whole kingdom to him, to choose which part of it he would to dwell in.*¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:15.

Genesis 20:15b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|---|
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| ṭōwbâh (טוֹבָה) [pronounced TOH ^B -vaw] | <i>welfare, benefit, good, good things</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #2896 BDB #375 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's # BDB #88 |
| ʿēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced ʿay-nah-YIM] | <i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i> | feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person plural suffix | Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744 |
| This phrase is literally <i>in your eyes</i> , but it can be translated <i>in your opinion, in your estimation, to your way of thinking, as you see [it]</i> . The dual and plural forms of this word appear to be identical. Possibly, this could also mean, <i>as you please, as you want, as you desire, whatever you think is right</i> . | | | |
| yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^B V] | <i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i> | 2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative | Strong's #3427 BDB #442 |

Translation: ...live [in whatever place is] good [lit., in the good] in your eyes.” Again, this strikes me as a little clunky, the language that Abimelech uses here. The chunkiness of the language suggests that these men are communicating, but that their languages are similar or, they know enough of the other’s language to speak it, but not perfectly.

Abimelech owns a great deal of the land, being the local ruler and he recognizes God's promise to Abraham (or realizes that Abraham has some reason to dwell in this land) and he gives a portion of his own land to Abraham to live on. Abraham does not live on this land, but he is allowed to live on it wherever he chooses. God's grace is coming through Abimelech.

When Abimelech says, “In the good, in your eyes...” (Which is the literal rendering of part of this verse), he simply wants Abraham to examine the land before him and choose a plot of land that is good in his eyes—that looks good to him.

Genesis 20:15 And Abimelech said, “Behold, my land is before you. Live where it pleases you.”

Abimelech is apparently quite shaken up because of his meeting with God. So he tells Abraham to examine the land that belongs to Abimelech. He probably gave Abraham a general idea of what the boundaries were.

This may strike you as odd at first; Abimelech’s life has been threatened, and this is because of Abraham and Sarah. So now he wants to keep Abraham and Sarah around? Abimelech understands, probably far more than most Americans understand, that there are great blessings which come by association. Abimelech knows that Abraham and Sarah are important to God—that they play an important role in God’s plan. God came and spoke to Abimelech personally about them. Therefore, having them nearby is a blessing to Abimelech and to his nation (which is probably a city state with some unincorporated area around it).

Genesis 20:15 And Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you. Live wherever it pleases you.”

Essentially what Abimelech is doing is saying is, "My troops patrol the land 30 miles (or, whatever) in all directions; you choose a place that you like, and my troops will be instructed to give you protection." Abimelech is offering more than just land to stay on. Since he is king, he must hold this land; in order to hold this land, he must have an army to both hold the land and protect the people on that land. He cannot claim some city 40 miles away that is occupied by Aramæans and say, "Live there, if you want." He is offering any portion of land that he has taken and that he protects.

Abimelech gives Abraham a free pass on his land, to travel on it wherever he chooses to. Recall that God is giving this huge land grant to Abraham, and it is on God's urging that Abraham is traveling throughout the land of Palestine. Abimelech assures Abraham that the doors are open for him to travel anywhere in the land that he controls.

Do you see how differently the men of Sodom treated Lot? When they crowded around his house, one demanded, "Who is this foreigner who made himself a judge over us?" And they threatened his life. Abimelech, the king of Gerar, a man who could simply call for a woman to be his wife and she was, treats Abraham with great deference and respect.

In the future, we are going to see Isaac interact with Abimelech (probably this Abimelech's son); and he will eventually be asked to leave this general area. The problem will not be so much with the leaders of that country, but with the people. So, one generation from now, we are going to observe a perceptible loss of morality and establishment principles from among this people.

There are many problems with this verse, in both translation and interpretation. Many commentators chose to put forth their own translation to work from. You will find more translations quoted below than for any other verse in this chapter.

The big picture view is quite easy to understand. Abimelech restores Abraham's wife to him; Abraham prays to God on behalf of Abimelech.

And to Sarah he had said, "Behold I have given a thousand of silver to your brother. Behold he to you a covering of your [two] eyes. To all who [are] with you and with the all, and she is being reprov'd [or, rebuked, corrected]."

Genesis
20:16

He also said to Sarah, "Listen, I have give 1000 silver [coins] to your brother. Listen, it [is] a covering for your eyes. For all who [are] with you and with all [others], she is being corrected [or, rebuked, reprov'd; possibly righted, vindicated]."

He also said to Sarah, "Listen, I have given your brother 1000 silver coins as a covering for your eyes. This situation is being corrected for all who are with you and for all others."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And to Sarah he had said, "Behold I have given a thousand of silver to your brother. Behold he to you a covering of your [two] eyes. To all who [are] with you and with the all, and she is being reprov'd [or, rebuked, corrected]."

Targum of Onkelos

And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given a thousand sileen of silver to your brother; behold, they are to you a veil of the eyes, inasmuch as you were hidden from your husband one night, and I would have seen you: for were I to give all that I have it would not suffice (or be proportionate). And the words were debated. And Abraham knew that Abimelek had not come near Sarah his wife.

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|--------------------------|---|
| Jerusalem. | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given a thousand sileen of silver to your brother; behold, that silver is given to you <u>as a present</u> , because <u>you were hidden from the eyes of Abraham your husband one night: and of all that I have,--for on behalf of all I am corrected,--behold, were I to give all whatever I have, it would not suffice. Let the words be approved, and may Abraham the Just learn that I have not known you.</u> |
| Latin Vulgate | And to Sara he said: Behold I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, this will serve you for a covering of your eyes to all that are with you, and <u>wherever you will go: and remember you were taken.</u> |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; behold, it is given for you, because you <u>have been humbled</u> in the eyes of my people, and because of <u>the other things</u> for which I have reprov'd you. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, those shall be to you for <u>the price of</u> your countenance, and to all the women with you, and speak the truth in all things. |
| Significant differences: | The targum is filled with extra text, and is missing most of the last half of the Hebrew of this verse. The latter half of the Hebrew is unintelligible, which probably explains the huge number of differences between these ancient languages. |

You will note the many translations taken from below. That means, this could be a very difficult verse to interpret.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | To Sarah, he said, "I've given your brother one thousand pieces of silver. It means that neither you nor anyone with you has done anything wrong. Everything has been set right." |
| Contemporary English V. | Then he said to Sarah, "I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver as proof to everyone that you have done nothing wrong." |
| Easy English | Abimelech then said to Sarah, 'Look! I am giving 1000 silver *shekels to your brother. That money is for you. It is because of what happened. So now I have settled the matter.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version | Abimelech said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham 1,000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am sorry for all these things. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | He said to Sarah, "I am giving your brother a thousand pieces of silver as proof to all who are with you that you are innocent; everyone will know that you have done no wrong." |
| <i>The Message</i> | And to Sarah he said, "I've given your brother a thousand pieces of silver--that clears you of even a shadow of suspicion before the eyes of the world. You're vindicated." |
| New Berkeley Version | And to Sarah he said, "Take note! I have give your brother 1,000 silver dollars by way of compensation to you for all that you and yours experienced, and, before all, your name is totally cleared." |
| New Century Version | Abimelech said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham twenty-five pounds of silver to make up for any wrong that people may think about you. I want everyone to know that you are innocent." |
| New Life Bible | He said to Sarah, "See, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is to pay you for all that has happened. Your honor is made right in the eyes of all men." |
| New Living Translation | And he said to Sarah, "Look, I am giving your 'brother' 1,000 pieces of silver [Hebrew 1,000 [shekels] of silver, about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight.] 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."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

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| American English Bible | Then he told SarAh, 'Look, I've given your brother a thousand silver coins. These are yours as the price of your face and for all the women who are with you. Always tell the whole truth.' |
| Ancient Roots Translinear | To Sarah he said, "Here, I gave your brother a thousand in silver. Here, it's for you, to cover the eyes of all with you for all your testing." |
| Beck's American Translation | He told Sarah, "I've given your brother a thousand shekels of silver. That will cover what I did, so that nobody who is with you will think any more of it and you will be justified in every way." |
| Christian Community Bible | And to Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand silver coins. It will be as a protection for you, and an evidence for all those who are with you. So none of them will think ill of you." |
| God's Word™ | He said to Sarah, "Don't forget, I've given your brother 25 pounds of silver. This is to silence any criticism against you from everyone with you. You're completely cleared." |
| New American Bible | To Sarah he said: "I hereby give your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This will preserve your honor before all who are with you and will exonerate you before everyone." |
| NIRV | He said to Sarah, "I'm giving your brother 25 pounds of silver. It will take care of the problem we caused you. And all those who are with you will know that you aren't guilty of doing anything wrong." |
| New Jerusalem Bible | To Sarah he said, 'Look, I am giving your brother a thousand pieces of silver. This will allay suspicions about you, as far as all the people round you are concerned; you have been completely vindicated.' |
| New Simplified Bible | He said to Sarah: »Do not forget that I have given your brother twenty-five pounds of silver. This is to silence any criticism against you from everyone with you. You are completely cleared.« |
| Revised English Bible | To Sarah he said, 'I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver to compensate you for all that has befallen you, you are completely cleared.' |
| Today's NIV | To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels[a] of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated." |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bible in Basic English | And he said to Sarah, See, I have given to your brother a thousand bits of silver so that your wrong may be put right; now your honour is clear in the eyes of all. |
| Conservapedia | To Sarah he said, "Look, I've paid your brother a thousand silver pieces. He is like an eye-covering for you, for everyone with you, and for everyone else." Thus she was reprimanded. |
| The Expanded Bible | Abimelech said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham ·twenty-five pounds [^L one thousand pieces] of silver ·to make up for any wrong that people may think about you [^L -a covering of the eyes to all who are with you; ^C an indication that nothing improper happened]. I want everyone to know that you are innocent." |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible | ...while to Sarah, he said, "I have given a thousand gifts to this 'brother' of yours, for he must be a covering of the eyes to all who are with you, and to all who meet you." |
| HCSB | And to Sarah he said, "Look, I am giving your brother 1,000 pieces of silver. It is a verification of your honor to all who are with you. You are fully vindicated." |

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| New Advent Bible | And to Sara he said: Behold I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, this shall serve you for a covering of your eyes to all that are with you, and wherever you shall go: and remember you were taken. |
| NET Bible® | To Sarah he said, "Look, I have given a thousand pieces of silver [A thousand pieces [Heb "shekels"] of silver. The standards for weighing money varied considerably in the ancient Near East, but the generally accepted weight for the shekel is 11.5 grams (0.4 ounce). This makes the weight of silver here 11.5 kilograms, or 400 ounces (about 25 pounds).] to your 'brother.' [To your 'brother.' Note the way that the king refers to Abraham. Was he being sarcastic? It was surely a rebuke to Sarah. What is amazing is how patient this king was. It is proof that the fear of God was in that place, contrary to what Abraham believed (see v. 11).] This is compensation for you so that you will stand vindicated before all who are with you [Heb "Look, it is for you a covering of the eyes, for all who are with you, and with all, and you are set right." The exact meaning of the statement is unclear. Apparently it means that the gift of money somehow exonerates her in other people's eyes. They will not look on her as compromised (see G. J. Wenham, Genesis [WBC], 2:74)]." |
| New Heart English Bible | To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, it is for you a covering of the eyes to all that are with you. In front of all you are vindicated." |
| NIV – UK | To Sarah he said, I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offence against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated. |
| Universal History (updated) | "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, or thirty of silver money, and behold it (this present) may serve to buy you a veil to cover your eyes, before all those with whom you will converse for the future, as well as before all those who will be with you." ¹⁰¹ |

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

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|---------------------------|--|
| Complete Jewish Bible | To Sarah he said, "Here, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. That will allay the suspicions of everyone who is with you. Before everyone you are cleared." |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | And to Sarah he said, "I herewith give your brother a thousand pieces of silver; this will serve you as vindication [lit., "a covering of the eyes" meaning of latter half of verse uncertain] before all who are with you, and you are cleared before everyone." |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And to Sarah he said, "Behold I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; behold it is to you a covering of the eyes for all who are with you, and with all you shall contend." |
| Kaplan Translation | To Sarah he said, 'I am giving [Literally, 'have given.' (See HaKethav VeHaKabbalah).] your 'brother' a thousand pieces of silver. Let it be compensation [A difficult idiom, literally translated as 'an eye covering.' Thus, 'something to prevent you from seeing any more evil' (cf. Ibn Ezra; Rashi). Others interpret it as a vindication, something that will cover other people's eyes and prevent them from seeing wrong (Rashbam). Another interpretation is that '[the money] will cover people's eyes and prevent them from looking at you wantonly' (Ramban). Other commentators take it literally, as a veil to show that Sarah was a properly married woman (HaKethav VeHaKabbalah). Still other sources translate <i>eynayim</i> as 'colors' rather than 'eyes,' and render the phrase, 'let [the money] be used to buy you a colorful cloak' (Radak). Finally, some make the subject of the phrase Abraham: '[Abraham] shall be for you as an eye-covering,' however the latter expression is translated (Ibn Ezra).] for you and all who are with you for all that has been done |

¹⁰¹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

[(Rashi). Others connect it to the end of the verse, 'Before everyone you stand tall' (Ibn Ezra).]. *You can stand up tall* [(Cf. Rashi). Others have, 'You should have learned a lesson from all this' (Targum; Ibn Ezra). Since this entire sentence involves ancient idioms, it is extremely difficult to interpret and translate.].'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

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|------------------------------|--|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given this brother of yours a thousand pieces of silver; see, it is to compensate you [for all that has occurred] and to vindicate your honor before all who are with you; before all men you are cleared and compensated. |
| Adam Clarke | Behold, I have given your Brother (Abraham, gently alluding to the equivocation, Gen. 20:2, Gen. 20:5) a thousand shekels of silver; behold, It is (that is, <i>the silver is</i> , or <i>may be</i> , or <i>let it be</i>) to you a covering of the eyes (to procure a veil; see above) with regard to all those who are with you; and to all (or and in all) speak you the truth. ¹⁰² It is rare that Clarke gives a full translation for any verse, and therefore, rare that I would include him here. But his translation and interpretation is excellent. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And to Sarah he says, "Behold! I gave a thousand silverlings to your brother. Behold! It is for you a covering of the eyes and for all who are with you. All is being corrected also. |
| A Conservative Version | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all who are with thee. And in regard to all thou are righted. |
| Context Group Version | And to Sarah he said, See, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Look, it is for you a covering of the eyes to all that are with you. And in the sight of all you are exonerated. |
| Darby Translation | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand [pieces] of silver; behold, let that be to thee a covering of the eyes, in respect of all that are with thee, and with all; and she was reproved. |
| Ellicott (updated) | "And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother (a gift worth) a thousand (pieces) of silver: behold, it will be to you for a covering of the eyes to all that are with you (that is, -so large a compensation for the wrong done you in taking you from your husband, will be a proof to all your friends and attendants that you have not been disgraced, but treated with honour); and in respect of all that has happened you are thus righted." |
| English Standard V. – UK | 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 [Hebrew It is a covering of eyes for all] who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." |
| Green's Literal Translation | And he said to Sarah, I, behold, I have given a thousand of silver to your brother. Behold, it is for you a covering of the eyes to all who are with you. And with all this you are reprov'd. |
| Heritage Bible | And he said to Sarah, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand of silver; behold, it is to you a covering of the eyes to all who are with you, and with all this you are made right. covering of the eyes. Read Gen 32:20 to understand that the gifts from Abimelech to Sarah were to cover the face of Sarah, meaning to appease her or cover the anger of her face, for the wrong done to her so that Sarah would not hold against Abimelech what he had done, although Abraham and Sarah were the ones who caused the misunderstanding. |
| Keil and Delitzsch (updated) | To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given a thousand shekele of silver to your brother; behold, it is to you a covering of the eyes (i.e., an expiatory gift) with regard to all that are with you ("because in a mistress the whole family is disgraced," Del.), and with all - so are you justified [that is, <i>justice has been done to you</i>]." |

¹⁰² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16 (edited).

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| King James 2000 Version | And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to you a vindication of the eyes, unto all that are with you, and with all others: thus she was righted. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | But unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee and with all other. Thus she was reproved. The goods which Abimelech had given to Abraham were estimated at this sum. Now Sarah was to know that this (or he) was to her a covering of the eyes and to her entire household and to all men; that is, according to some explanations, she was to look upon the gifts as presents of atonement, also with respect to such people in whose eyes she might be covered with dishonor. Or, if the reference is to Abraham, it means that he had willfully blinded the eyes of Abimelech and all his people in this transaction, and that Sarah should now be reminded, through this present, never again to agree to such a subterfuge. In that way she stood reproved. |
| Modern KJV | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, he is to you a covering of the eyes, to all that are with you, and with all this, you are reproved. |
| NASB | To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication [Lit for you a covering of the eyes] before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." |
| New King James Version | Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you [Literally it is a covering of the eyes for you] before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked |
| New RSV | To Sarah he said, 'Look, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your exoneration before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated.' |
| Syndein | And unto Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother {sarcasm} a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, he is to you a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with you, and with all other. {idiom: meaning is 'her husband is her protection'}" Thus she was chided. |
| A Voice in the Wilderness | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody. Thus she was rebuked. |
| Webster's Bible Translation | And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand [pieces] of silver: behold, he [is] to thee a covering of the eyes, to all that [are] with thee, and with all [other]: thus she was reproved. |
| World English Bible | To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, it is for you a covering of the eyes to all that are with you. In front of all you are vindicated." |
| Young's Updated LT | And to Sarah he has said, "Lo, I have given a thousand silverlings to your brother; lo, it is to you a covering of eyes, to all who are with you;" and by all this she is reasoned with. |
| The gist of this verse: | Abimelech then tells Sarah and tells her that he has given 1000 silver coins to her "brother" and that is to show that she is vindicated before all others. |

Genesis 20:16a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|------------------------|---------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (י, or ו) [pronounced weh] | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |

Genesis 20:16a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|--|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW] | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i> | proper noun; feminine singular | Strong's #8283 BDB #979 |
| 'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN] | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i> | 1 st person singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #5414 BDB #678 |
| 'eleph (אֶלֶף) [pronounced EH-lef] | <i>thousand, family, (500?); military unit</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48 |
| keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef] | <i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i> | masculine singular noun | Strong's #3701 BDB #494 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk] | <i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i> | masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #251 BDB #26 |

Translation: He also said to Sarah, “Listen, I have give 1000 silver [coins] to your brother. The first portion of this verse is straightforward and easy to understand.

Abimelech's first sentence is simple enough. When he says that he has given the silver to *her brother*, he is being sarcastic. He does not call him, *your husband*.

At some point—maybe at the time that he is talking with Abraham—Abimelech turns to Sarah and tells her that he has given 1000 silver coins to Abraham. It is possible that Abimelech brought Abraham first into the palace and interviewed him separately, which accounts for most of the text. Then Abimelech may have personally gone back to get Sarah and this is what he tells her as he brings her out to Abraham. The latter scenario seems to be the mostly likely.

Let's just say that these are 1 ounce coins. It is easy to know how much money this is, because metals like silver and gold have intrinsic value, whereas currency and coins have a face value but, essentially, no real value (unless they are composed of metals with intrinsic value). So, if we figure out the value of this silver in today's terms, that will give us a feel for their value then. Today (2013), an ounce of silver is worth around \$50. Therefore, Abimelech is giving them \$50,000. I doubt that these could be larger than 10 ounces each, which would make their value \$500,000. This gives us a reasonable range for the value of this gift. This could certainly refer to a weight of silver that he is giving them. But, whatever—Abimelech is giving Sarah and Abraham a lot of money here. Remember,

all that Abraham has done was to show up and lie about his wife. Other than that, Abraham has offered nothing of value to Abimelech.

Abimelech, in making restitution, is somewhat sarcasm with Sarah. “Listen, I have given *your brother* a thousand pieces of silver.” Abimelech does not call Abraham her husband.

So Abimelech also has given Abraham 1000 silver coins. It is quite obvious that this face to face contract with God in his dream had quite an effect upon Abimelech.

| Genesis 20:16b | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |
| hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced hoo] | <i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #1931 BDB #214 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^ə] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| k'çûwth (כֹּסֶת) [pronounced kehs-OOTH] | <i>covering, a cover; concealment; clothing, a garment</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #3682 BDB #492 |
| ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM] | <i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i> | feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744 |

Translation: Listen, it [is] a covering for your eyes. He begins with the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY] and it means *behold, lo*, but both of those words sound so *Old English*. I often translate this *observe*, but the connotation is slightly different. A little emphasis is lost, but a more readable translation is gotten if we translate this by the word *here*.

The Old English *behold* means *look, listen up, hey*. It often draws one's attention to see if from the point of view of the speaker. The intent is to grab someone's attention and to say, “Look at this.” This is followed by a masculine singular pronoun, which I have translated as a neuter singular pronoun (as there is no neuter in the Hebrew). It likely refers back to the *silver*, which is also a masculine singular noun.

This is followed by the personal pronoun in the 3rd masculine singular and there is no verb; we supply the word *is*. This is followed by the lamed preposition with the 2nd person feminine suffix, and this could be translated *your* or *to you* and it is a direct reference to Sarah.

Then we have the phrase *the covering of the eyes*, which could be a reference to a veil (not necessarily a literal veil), which is a type of protection for the woman. Abraham is her veil; her protection (not her lies). Or, the 1000 silver coins (which can be represented with the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun) will act as her veil.

A *covering of the eyes* suggests that Abimelech wants Abraham and Sarah to overlook what has happened. Abimelech has not done anything wrong, but God came to him in a dream and instilled the fear of God in him. Therefore, from his side, Abimelech is doing everything possible to iron things out. If he has done anything which is untoward, then he wants for this to make up for that.

There seem to be two basic interpretations of this:

From the Pulpit Commentary: (1) *he, i.e. your brother, will be to you a protection, hiding you like a veil, from the voluptuous desires of others* (Aben Ezra, Cajetan, Calvin, Kalisch); or (2) *it, i.e. this present of mine, will be to you a propitiatory offering to make you overlook my offence* (Chrysostom, Gesenius, Furst, Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy).¹⁰³ There are other interpretations, but these seem to be the most sensible.

Even though the verb *to be* is not found in this verse, the words used often come with an implied verb.

Poole: *He is to you a covering of the eyes, i.e. a protection to you from the wanton eyes and attempts of others, whilst they know you to be the wife of another man, and he such a one whom they reverence and fear; and therefore you took a very wrong course to disown him, whereby you exposed yourself to great danger.*¹⁰⁴

Gill: *Abraham being now known to be the husband of Sarah, would for the future be a covering to her, that no one should look upon her, and desire her, and take her to be his wife; and he would also be a protection to her maidens that were with her, the wives of his servants, that these also might not be taken from him: but it seems best to refer this to the gift of the thousand pieces of silver, and read the words, "behold, this is to you a covering of the eyes"; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; for the words are a continued biting sarcasm on Sarah; as Abimelech twits her with calling Abraham her brother in the preceding clause, so in this he tells her that he had given him so much money to buy her a veil with, and to supply her with veils from time to time to cover her eyes, that nobody might be tempted to lust after her, and that it might be known she was a married woman.*¹⁰⁵

I independently came to a very similar conclusion as Gill did (he explains his point of view in a very round-about way). Could Abimelech be saying, "I have given you the 1000 silver coins as a veil for your eyes because your husband is not acting as your protector?" I don't know if I am reading too much into this, but this would certainly be apt, coming from Abimelech.

Ellicott makes this interesting observation: *Next, if the pronoun is translated in the masculine, "he," the meaning would be that Abraham ought to have been Sarah's protector, but had failed in this duty; but, more probably, it is neuter, and refers to the gift.*¹⁰⁶

For a person who might speak another language, this would be a very sophisticated inference, to say, "This money will act as your protector; but your husband should have."

At this point, there are many suggestions. One is that, Abimelech is saying, "Buy something for yourself; a veil, perhaps?" Gesenius suggests that this gift is the sort of thing which would cause a person to just shut their eyes because they are overtaken by such a gift. Furthermore, that this is a present for a pardon.¹⁰⁷ The Complete

¹⁰³ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 20:16.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16 (edited).

¹⁰⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16.

¹⁰⁶ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 407.

Apostles' Bible says ...those shall be to you for the price of your countenance. Or, more crudely, "That ought to make you smile" (she would be smiling with her eyes).

| Genesis 20:16c | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | to, for, towards, in regards to | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl] | every, each, all of, all; any of, any | masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER] | that, which, when, who, whom | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | with, at, near, by, among, directly from | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #854 BDB #85 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh] | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | with, at, near, by, among, directly from | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) | Strong's #854 BDB #85 |
| kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl]; also kol (כֹּל) [pronounced kol] | all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything | masculine singular noun without the definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |

Translation: For all who [are] with you and with all [others],... The remainder of his quote is simple enough: to all who are with you and before everyone (the verb was supplied).

Again, we have two men communicating with one another, as best as they can, probably from different languages. I think that explains why some of this is difficult to grasp. Many of the words used are actually small words in this verse, which is what people of a different language often use to communicate.

In a narrative, it is easy to piece a sentence together. Often there are a few phrases with imperfect tenses strung together with wâw consecutives. However, when we leave that structure, it is hard to tell where one phrase begins and another ends. Many understand this to be a continuation of the previous sentence. I place it with the final two words; however, usually a wâw conjunction begins a new thought. Again, this probably because the language barrier.

If added on to what as gone before, then this covering of the eyes that Abimelech is speaking of, relates to all who are with Sarah and all others.

Genesis 20:16d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| yâkach (יָכַח) [pronounced <i>yaw-KAHK</i>] | <i>to reason, to reason together; to be argued with, to be argued down; to be reproved [rebuked]; to dispute</i> | feminine singular, Niphal participle | Strong's #3198 BDB #406 |
| Ellicott makes this interesting observation: <i>the verb rendered "reproved" is equivocal, and should rather be translated righted.</i> ¹⁰⁸ | | | |
| NASB, NKJV, "your vindication" NRSV "exoneration" TEV "that you are innocent" NJB "you have been completely vindicated" ¹⁰⁹ | | | |

Translation: ...*she is being corrected* [or, *rebuked, reprovved*; possibly *righted, vindicated*]." What follows is the simple conjunction *and* along with the Niphal participle feminine singular of *yâkach* (יָכַח) [pronounced *yaw-KAHK*] and it means *to be corrected*. The Niphal stem is the passive, so she has received correction. *And she was corrected* is correct, as is *thus she was reprovved*. The feminine singular logically applies to Sarah, because this is a participle, and a participle is not in the 2nd or 3rd person. Abimelech is attempting to make everything right. He has given the silver to Abraham on her behalf; rather than Abraham's lies or her lies, Abraham himself is her husband, her veil, her protection. As a husband, he functions in this capacity before all who are with them and to everyone else.

The final phrase is: ...*and with all [this], you are reprovved* [or, *made right*]." With all that Abimelech has done (given them money and livestock and slaves), this should make her right; that is, this should be a more than reasonable compensation for the inconvenience of the separation; and certainly this is done to mollify God as well. This word *made right* can also mean *reprovved, corrected*; so that, Abimelech is chiding Sarah to some degree. Not only does all of this make things right, but what he has done has subtly reprovved Sarah as well.

Another interpretation is, God the Holy Spirit records the divine evaluation of this: *she was thus reprovved* or *thus she received correction*.

Poole: *Thus she was reprovved, or admonished to be more circumspect for the future; or, and be admonished; for they may be the words of Abimelech.*¹¹⁰

Guzik: *The ancient Hebrew word for reprovved is "yakach." It has the idea of "set right," so it is debatable as if Sarah was "set right" by Abimelech's rebuke, or if she was "found to be right" because of her humble submission in this occasion. In a sense, both are true.*¹¹¹

Abimelech is careful to point out that she has not been violated; all who are with her can verify that she is vindicated. Abimelech is careful to point this out because he is honestly fearful of the living God. The point he is making is that the silver is a gesture of his good will, that he did not violate her and it is a material apology for what has happened.

¹⁰⁸ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Examples from <http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/pdf/EN/VOL01BOT.pdf> accessed August 28, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16 (edited).

¹¹¹ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 20:14–18.

The particulars of this verse may be difficult to tie down. However, the overall situation should be fairly easy to grasp. God spoke to Abimelech, told him not to touch Sarah, and this put a lot of pressure on Abimelech to straighten this whole situation out. So, that is what he is attempting to do, with the gifts and with what he is saying here.

If you do not read all of the various translations, I suggest that you go back and go through them. They may help to explain this verse.

In any case, despite the many verses in the Bible which are difficult to fully plunder for meaning, the narrative, the context, and the general meaning are usually able to be unearthed.

v. 16 reads: He also said to Sarah, "Listen, I have give 1000 silver [coins] to your brother. Listen, it [is] a covering for your eyes. For all who [are] with you and with all [others], she is being corrected [or, rebuked, reprov'd; possibly righted, vindicated]."

I feel as if I have made a mess of things; let's see how other commentators explained this verse.

Clarke comments: *And unto Sarah he said - But what did he say? Here there is scarcely any agreement among interpreters; the Hebrew is exceedingly obscure, and every interpreter takes it in his own sense.*¹¹² Clarke does an outstanding job of putting this all together.

Commentators Explain Genesis 20:16

| Commentator | Text/Commentary |
|-------------|---|
| Barnes | <i>He then accosts Sarah in respectful terms, informing her that he had presented her brother with one thousand silver pieces, probably shekels, on her account. He does not offer this directly to herself, that it may be distinctly understood that her honor was unstained. This may refer either to Abraham or to the sum of money. The latter is more natural, as the sentence then affords a reason for addressing Sarah, and mentioning this particular gift. "A covering of the eyes" does not mean a veil, the proper word for which is tsā'îyph (צִיִּף) [pronounced tsaw-GEEF], but is a figurative phrase for a recompense or pacificatory offering, in consideration of which an offence is overlooked. "Unto all that are with you." All her family were concerned in this public vindication of her character. "And all this that you mayest be righted." The original of this is most naturally taken as a pare of Abimelek's speech, and then it is to be translated as above. All this has been done or given that the injury to Sarah may be redressed. If the original be regarded as a pare of the narrative, it must be rendered, "And all this (was done) that she might be righted." The sense is the same in substance. In the former case the verb is in the second person, in the latter in the third.</i> ¹¹³ |
| Clarke | <i>Behold, he [or, it] is to you a covering of the eyes - It - the one thousand shekels, (not he - Abraham), is to you for a covering - to procure you a veil to conceal your beauty (unto all that are with you, and with all other) from all your own relatives and acquaintances, and from all strangers, [so that] that none, seeing you are another man's wife; may covet you on account of your attractiveness.</i> ¹¹⁴ |

¹¹² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16.

¹¹³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:14–18 (slightly edited).

¹¹⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16 (edited).

Commentators Explain Genesis 20:16

| Commentator | Text/Commentary |
|--------------------|---|
| Clarke | <i>Thus she was reprov'd</i> – The original is תחננו venochachath, but the word is probably the second person preterite, used for the imperative mood, from the root תנח nachach, to make straight, direct, right; or to speak rightly, correctly; and may, in connection with the rest of the text, be thus paraphrased: <i>Behold, I have given your Brother</i> (Abraham, gently alluding to the equivocation, Gen. 20:2, Gen. 20:5) <i>a thousand shekels of silver; behold, It is</i> (that is, the silver is, or may be, or let it be) <i>to you a covering of the eyes</i> (to procure a veil; see above) <i>with regard to all those who are with you; and to all</i> (or and in all) <i>speak you the truth.</i> Correctly translated by the Septuagint, και παντα αληθευσον, and in all things speak the truth – not only tell a part of the truth, but tell the whole; say not merely he is my brother, but say also, he is my husband too. Thus in All things speak the truth. ¹¹⁵ |
| Keil and Delitzsch | By the “covering of the eyes” we are not to understand a veil, which Sarah was to procure for 1000 shekels; but it is a figurative expression for an atoning gift, and is to be explained by the analogy of the phrase רפכ פ ינפ “to cover any one’s face,” so that he may forget a wrong done (cf. Gen. 32:21; and Job. 9:24, “he covers the faces of the judges,” i.e., he bribes them). ¹¹⁶ |
| Keil and Delitzsch | תחננו can only be the 2 nd person feminine singular perfect Niphal, although the Dagesh lene is wanting in the ת; for the rules of syntax will hardly allow us to regard this form as a participle, unless we imagine the extremely harsh ellipsis of תחננו for תחננו־תא. The literal meaning is “so you are judged,” i.e., justice has been done you. ¹¹⁷ |
| Keil and Delitzsch | To Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given a thousand shekels of silver to your brother; behold, it is to you a covering of the eyes (i.e., an expiatory gift) with regard to all that are with you (“because in a mistress the whole family is disgraced,” Del.), and with all - so are you justified [that is, justice has been done to you].” ¹¹⁸ |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 20:16 And Abimelech said to Sarah, “Listen, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It [is] to you a covering of the eyes, to all that [are] with you, and with all [this], you are reprov'd [or, *made right*].”

Summarizing the Meaning of Genesis 20:16

I may come back to this later.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

¹¹⁵ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:16 (edited).

¹¹⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:16.

¹¹⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:16.

¹¹⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:16 (slightly edited).

Vv. 14–16 read: Abimelech then took sheep and oxen, and both male and female servants, and gave them all to Abraham. He also restored Abraham’s wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, “Listen, my land is before you; live in whatever place pleases you.” He also said to Sarah, “Listen, I have given your brother 1000 silver coins as a covering for your eyes. This situation is being corrected for all who are with you and for all others.”

| What Abimelech gives to Abraham | |
|---|---|
| The Gifts/the Restoration | Commentary |
| Abimelech gave to Abraham sheep, oxen, and male and female servants. | This represents ancient world wealth. Abraham was already wealthy, and Abimelech gives him a superabundance of wealth. |
| Abimelech restores Sarah, Abraham’s wife, to him, untouched. | The Jewish race would be begun by Abraham and Sarah, and this is the line of promise which would eventually lead to Jesus Christ. |
| Abimelech places before Abraham any land that he desires. | This is the land that God would give to Abraham’s descendants; and this might be seen as a down payment. |
| Abimelech gives Abraham 1000 silver coins as a covering for her eyes. | This is another form of wealth in the ancient world. |

Now, let’s go back to the last time that God made a covenant with Abraham:

Gen 17:3–8 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The descendants of the covenant will come through Sarah, who has been restored to Abraham. His descendants will live in the land that Abraham has walked through, including this land belonging to the king of Gerar. In fact, all of that land would be the everlasting possession of Abraham’s descendants.

We have deduced that Abraham had probably lost some faith in God—he is supposed to have this child—and God has been promising him this for a very long time—but then, despite his intercessory prayer, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. But Abraham has had a sudden reversal of fortune. He has his wife, his has the land before him, and he has been blessed with great riches.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

One of the things which is so different between this and Gen. 20 is, Abraham finds himself greatly blessed this time. He has clearly failed, but he is, despite his failures, doing what God has told him to do. And therefore, God greatly blesses him.

With these great blessings also come responsibility. Many believers are not blessed financially, because this is a responsibility that they are not up for. But, when God gave those great promises to Abraham back in Gen. 17, there was one thing that Abraham had to do—he had to circumcise himself and everyone in his compound. This would be a sign between God and himself.

Now Abraham has been blessed again; but there is one more thing for him to do. He needs to offer up an intercessory prayer on behalf of Abimelech, the king of Gerar. He has to offer up an intercessory prayer for the

people of the king. Now, the last time that Abraham interceded for anyone was for Lot, and, as far as Abraham knows right now, Lot is probably dead (he isn't, but Abraham would not know that at this time). However, this time, when he intercedes for Abimelech, there will be immediate and tangible results.

Despite Abraham's faithlessness—his fear of the people and culture of Gerar and his lies to the king of Gerar—God will bless Abraham, God will hear Abraham's intercessory prayer, and God will answer that prayer before his eyes.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Abraham Prays for God's Judgement to be Lifted from Abimelech's House

And so prays, Abraham, unto the Elohim and so heals, Elohim, Abimelech and his wife and his female slaves and so they give birth.

Genesis
20:17

Then Abraham prayed to the Elohim and Elohim healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves, and so they gave birth.

Then Abraham prayed to God and God answered his prayer by healing Abimelech, his wife and his mistresses, and they were able to give birth.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so prays, Abraham, unto the Elohim and so heals, Elohim, Abimelech and his wife and his female slaves and so they give birth. |
| Targum of Onkelos | And Abraham prayed before the Lord: and the Lord healed Abimelek and his wife and his concubines, and they <u>were set at large</u> . |
| Latin Vulgate | And when Abraham prayed, God healed Abimelech and his wife, and his handmaids, and they bore children. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | So Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimeleck and his wife and his maidservants, and they bore children. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his women servants, and they bore children. |
| Significant differences: | The targum gives a slightly different result of Abraham's prayer on behalf of Abimelech. |

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Common English Bible | Abraham prayed to God; and God restored Abimelech, his wife, and his women servants to health, and they were able to have children. |
| Contemporary English V. | Meanwhile, God had kept Abimelech's wife and slaves from having children. But Abraham prayed, and God let them start having children again. |
| Easy English | So Abraham prayed to God. God cured Abimelech and his wife and slaves, so that they had children. |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | Because of what had happened to Sarah, Abraham's wife, the LORD had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's palace to have children. So Abraham prayed for Abimelech, and God healed him. He also healed his wife and his slave women, so that they could have children. |
| <i>The Message</i> | Then Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his maidservants, and they started having babies again. |

New Berkeley Version **Abraham prayed to God** [As Job was commissioned to pray for his three friends. The prayer of a devout worshiper “**avails much**” (James: 5:16), and believers need to exercise that grace in behalf also of non-believers] **and God healed Abimelech; also his wife and his maids, so they gave birth to children,...**

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible **Then AbraHam prayed to God, and God healed AbiMelech. [He also healed AbiMelech's] woman and his concubines, and they gave birth to children...**

God's Word™ **Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so that they could have children.**

New American Bible **Abraham then interceded with God, and God restored health to Abimelech, to his wife, and his maidservants, so that they bore children;...**

New Jerusalem Bible **Abraham then interceded with God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave-girls, so that they could have children,...**

Revised English Bible **Then Abraham interceded with God, and he healed Abimelech, his wife, and his slave-girls, so that they could have children.**

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English **Then Abraham made prayer to God, and God made Abimelech well again, and his wife and his women-servants, so that they had children.**

Conservapedia **So Abraham prayed to God. Then God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves, and they could bear children again.**

The Expanded Bible **Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls so they could have children.**

Ferar-Fenton Bible **Then Abraham appealed for Abimelek to GOD; and GOD made the wives of Abimelek fruitful, and his servants as well, and they gave birth to children;...**

NET Bible® **Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, as well as his wife and female slaves so that they were able to have children.**

NIV – UK **Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again,...**

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible **So Abraham prays to Elohim: and Elohim heals Abi Melech and his woman and his maids; and they birth.**

Kaplan Translation **Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelekh, as well as his wife and slavegirls, so that they were able to have children.**

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version **And praying is Abraham to the Elohim and healing is the Elohim Abimelech and his wife and his maidservants, and they are bearing,...**

Heritage Bible **And Abraham judged in prayer 17 with God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants, and they bore children,...** 20:17 judged in prayer. Hebrew, palal. Its primary meaning is to judge and decide an issue. It is often translated pray in other translations, but its main meaning is to intervene as a judge and decide who is right, then make it right by a judgment, by rendering a decision. Its first occurrence in the Bible is Gen 20:17 where Abraham judged in prayer with God to heal Abimilech's house. A key verse on understanding the meaning of palal is 1Sam 2:25 where the priest Eli rebuked his wicked sons and said, If one man sins

against another, God shall arbitrate [palad, judge in prayer, intercede], but if a man sins against Jehovah, who shall arbitrate for him? One of the main meanings of prayer is to arbitrate with God to set things right. God is never wrong, so praying is getting God's judgment on a thing and allowing him to set ourselves right with Him and it.

LTHB

And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his concubines, and they gave birth.

Modern KJV

And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave women, and they gave birth.

Syndein

{Verses 17:18: Rebound and Restored Dignity of Abraham}

So Abraham kept on praying himself unto 'Elohim/Godhead and 'Elohim/Godhead healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants. And they kept on baring {children}.

Young's Updated LT

And Abraham prays unto God, and God heals Abimelech and his wife, and his handmaids, and they bear [children].

The gist of this verse:

Abraham prays on behalf of Abimelech and his extended family, which opens up the wombs of the women with whom Abimelech was cohabiting.

Genesis 20:17a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| pâlal (לָלַץ) [pronounced paw-LAHL] | <i>to pray, to intercede, to make intercession for, to ask for a favorable determination</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect | Strong's #6419 BDB #813 |
| This is the second occurrence of this word in the Bible. | | | |
| 'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |
| 'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh] | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| 'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |

Translation: Then Abraham prayed to the Elohim... We are going to discover an unusual situation, which we were not told about earlier in this chapter. Back in v. 7, God warned Abimelech that he would die unless he got Sarah and Abraham back together. However, we will find out in this and the next verse that God did something else to Abimelech's household.

Genesis 20:17b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| râphâ' (רפא) [pronounced raw-FAW] | <i>to heal, to make healthy, to restore to health; figuratively used of nations undergoing suffering (to restore favor)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7495 BDB #950 |
| This is the first time that we find this word in the Bible. | | | |
| 'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | <i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i> | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) | Strong's #854 BDB #85 |
| 'Ābiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| 'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| 'âmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced aw-MAW] | <i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant female slave</i> | feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #519 BDB #51 |

According to Ellicott: *Maidservants.* -Not the word rendered women-servants in Genesis 20:14, but one specially used of concubines.¹¹⁹

Translation: ...and Elohim healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves,... For some reason, God needed to heal Abimelech, his wife and his servant girls. Earlier, we were told that the prayer was to prevent from God killing Abimelech; however, God first applied other forms of pressure.

Being that Abimelech was a believer, it is reasonable to suppose that he was under the **sin unto death**, facing illness as the first step.

¹¹⁹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

Notice that Abraham has acted as an intermediary between Abimelech and God. Because Abraham, in the line of promise, interceded on his behalf, Abimelech was healed; and life was given to his line. Hopefully, you are beginning to see some very important parallels here.

God, as the Author of Life, is shown many times restoring life to a variety of women. Gen. 29:31 30:22 1Kings 1:5–6, 20. Isa. 66:7–9 [God is speaking] "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?" says the LORD; "shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?" says your God." (ESV)

| Genesis 20:17c | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah] | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHd] | <i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i> | 3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect; pausal form | Strong's #3205 BDB #408 |

Translation: ...and so they gave birth. If these women start to give birth, then there has to be a period of time long enough where births are expected, but no one is delivering their baby. It is also likely that no one was conceiving as well.

Genesis 20:17 And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave women, and they gave birth.

The amount of time that Sarah was in Abimelech's harem had to be long enough for this to be noticeable.¹²⁰ My guess is, this took place over at least 1 to 4 month's time. There needs to be enough time that passes where it is clear that none of Abimelech's wives are being impregnated and the same was possibly true concerning his livestock. Quite obviously, women do not have to be showing in order for the king to figure out whether or not they are pregnant; if his wife and mistresses have their periods, then no one is getting pregnant.

At the same time, those who are already pregnant are not giving birth. Although that seems to be the focus of v. 17, that no conception took place appears to be the import of v. 18.

It is at this point that I started having a minor problem with the timeline. Remember that God came to Abraham and promised him that he would have a son by Sarah, in 1 year. But then we have Sodom and Gomorrah and then we have Abraham moving into Gerar. Somehow, he has to be in Gerar long enough and his wife has to be under Abimelech's control long enough for these women not to give birth. When this is combined with the beginning of this chapter, where Abraham is moving about, it is difficult to fit all of this into a 3 month period of time, but not impossible. Essentially, Abraham has to move out for Gerar almost immediately after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Actually, Abraham first went in a southwesterly direction, stopped for awhile at one point, and then moved in a northwesterly direction to go to Gerar. So one must add in a month for traveling as well.

¹²⁰ Although I suggested up to 4 months, that is not necessarily the length of time. 1 month would be certainly sufficient. And, if women and animals were pregnant and not giving birth, that can be noticed in the period of a week, depending on how far along they are. Furthermore, there is nothing in this passage which says this had to be noticed. This is given to us by way of information of the Holy Spirit, but that does not mean that everyone was aware of the lack of births.

Keil and Delitzsch: *The plague brought upon Abimelech's house, therefore, consisted of some disease which rendered the begetting of children (the coitus) impossible. This might have occurred as soon as Sarah was taken into the royal harem, and therefore need not presuppose any lengthened stay there.*¹²¹

What seems logical is, Abimelech collected women, and he may have had several women ready to give birth, but, once Sarah was brought into the fold, no one gave birth. The slave women are spoken of as well, so it is possible that there were some female slaves about to give birth, but were not giving birth. This could suggest a much shorter period of time—say a week.

It is likely that no one conceived either (since God is said to shut up the wombs in the next verse). This suggests that Sarah may have been under Abimelech's control for a week or so (maybe as long as a month); and during that time period, some women were ready to give birth, but that never took place. Not as long as Sarah was there. So, women not giving birth gives us an upper limit to the time frame here. When a woman is ready to give birth, this is quite noticeable; and there are only so many days that they can go without giving birth (and it my limited knowledge of this subject can be taxed at this point, it is my understanding that doctors will induce labor at a certain point in most women).

Therefore, no births occurring could be noticeable in a week's time, depending on how far along the pregnant women of the Abimelech household are. No doubt, within a month's time, this would be a crisis. Because of this, a reasonable upper limit may be placed on this time that Sarah is in the harem. Therefore, all of this can be placed into a timeline which was given to us by our Lord when He said He would return in a year and Isaac would be born.

God has already given Abraham and fairly specific timetable and this child would be given birth to by Sarah, so we are in a bit of a time crunch here. We are nearly to the point where Abraham is ready to impregnate Sarah (even though they have both expressed some serious doubts about that actually happening), and Sarah is sudden whisked away by Abimelech.

One of the things that we need to learn is, sometimes God's plan in our life grinds to a halt for a year or two; and sometimes, for many years. Abraham and Sarah's spiritual lives have come to a halt here because they had been dishonest with king Abimelech. That dishonesty has resulted in Sarah being taken into Abimelech's harem. God's plan for them was not on hold for a long time; just for a little while in this instance.

This does not mean that God's plan halts; are that God's plan is thrown off-kilter. It means that we are sitting on the sidelines while the game continues to be in progress. We are no longer participating.

There have been at least two occasions in the past when the plan of God for Abraham was put on hold. God told Abraham to leave his family and move to Canaan, but he did not. He went about three-fourths of the way to Canaan, and he also went with his family. Abraham eventually corrected this, left his family behind, and moved to Canaan. On another occasion, Abraham sired Ishmael, and, for about 13 years, the plan of God seemed to stop for Abraham there as well (we have nothing in the Bible about that intervening time).

Genesis 20:17 And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave women, and they gave birth.

Now, this may concern you because Abimelech was acting according to the information which Abraham gave him (that his wife was only his sister), and that Abimelech would not have done that had Abraham just been straightforward with him. And you may think, "Where does Abraham get off praying for Abimelech? Why doesn't he pray for himself for lying to Abimelech?" Well, Abraham has, and he has been forgiven, but Abimelech is still sick. So Abraham has to pray for Abimelech, to heal him, and to allow births to continue in his city.

¹²¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:17–18.

This is all very illustrative. I gave the **illustration** earlier in this dissertation. Abraham is the type; Jesus is the antitype. God allows all of this to proceed, particularly at this point in time, because Sarah will soon give birth to Isaac, also a type of Christ.

Keil and Delitzsch: *After this reparation, God healed Abimelech at Abraham's intercession; also his wife and maids, so that they could bear again, for Jehovah had closed up every womb in Abimelech's house on Sarah's account.*¹²²

Throughout Scripture, there are examples of intercessory prayer, which healed those who suffered from a malady. Moses prayed for Miriam, his sister, although God was predisposed to keep her outside of the camp of Israel as unclean (Num. 12:13–15). Job prayed for his friends, who had come first to comfort him; but ended up accusing him of various and sundry secret sins (Job 42:8–10). God is pleased to bless others through intercessory prayer.

And confining confines, Y^ehowah, round about all wombs to a house of Abimelech upon a word of Sarah woman of Abraham.

Genesis
20:18

So Y^ehowah, completely closed up all the wombs with respect to the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

This prayer was required because Jehovah had shut down all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And confining confines, Y ^e howah, round about all wombs to a house of Abimelech upon a word of Sarah woman of Abraham. |
| Targum of Onkelos | For <u>the Word of</u> the Lord shutting had shut <u>in displeasure</u> the wombs of all the women of Abimelech's house on account of Sarah the wife of Abraham. [JERUSALEM. closing had closed.] |
| Latin Vulgate | For the Lord had closed up every womb of the house of Abimelech, on account of Sara, Abraham's wife. |
| Peshitta (Syriac) | For the LORD had fast closed up the wombs of all women in the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |
| Septuagint (Greek) | Because the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |

Significant differences: The first part of the Hebrew is a little difficult. The other ancient translations appear to simplify it somewhat. The targum adds some additional text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Common English Bible | Because of the incident with Abraham's wife Sarah, the LORD had kept all of the women in Abimelech's household from having children. |
| Easy English | Because of Sarah, Abraham's wife, they had all been unable to have children. That was because the *Lord had prevented them. |
| <i>The Message</i> | For GOD had shut down every womb in Abimelech's household on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |
| New Century Version | The LORD had kept all the women in Abimelech's house from having children as a punishment on Abimelech for taking Abraham's wife Sarah. |
| New Life Bible | For the Lord had stopped all births in the house of Abimelech because of Abraham's wife Sarah. |

¹²² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 20:17–18.

New Living Translation For the LORD had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham's wife, Sarah.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear For Yahweh had [||retained||](#) all the wombs of the house of Abimelech over the word of Sarah the woman of Abraham.

Beck's American Translation On account of Abraham's wife Sarah the LORD had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's household to have children.
(The LORD had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's household to have children because of Abraham's wife Sarah.)

God's Word™ ...for Yahweh had made all the women of Abimelech's household barren on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

New Jerusalem Bible ...for Yahweh had made all the women of Abimelech's household barren on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

New Simplified Bible Jehovah had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's household to have children because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

Revised English Bible ...for the LORD had made every woman in Abimelech's household barren on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Today's NIV ...for the LORD had kept all the women in Abimelek's household from conceiving because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English For the Lord had kept all the women of the house of Abimelech from having children, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Conservapedia (The LORD had restrained all women of childbearing age in Abimelech's household, on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.) Literally, "restrained the wombs," a Hebrew idiom.

The Expanded Bible The Lord had ·kept all the women in Abimelech's house from having children [¹closed up every womb of the house of Abimelech] ·as a punishment on Abimelech for taking [¹on account of] Abraham's wife Sarah.

Ferar-Fenton Bible ...because the EVER-LIVING had sterilized those of the household of Abimelek, on account of Sarah the wife of Abraham.

HCSB ...for the LORD had completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech's household on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

NET Bible® For the LORD [In the Hebrew text the clause begins with "because."] [had caused infertility to strike every woman](#) [Heb had completely closed up every womb." In the Hebrew text infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb for emphasis.] [The Lord had closed up every womb. This fact indicates that Sarah was in Abimelech's household for weeks or months before the dream revelation was given (20:6-7). No one in his household could have children after Sarah arrived on the scene.] [in the household of Abimelech because he took](#) [Heb "because of." The words "he took" are supplied in the translation for clarity.] [Sarah, Abraham's wife.](#)

NIV, ©2011 ...for the LORD had kept all the women in Abimelek's household from conceiving because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible For ADONAI had made every woman in Avimelekh's household infertile on account of Sarah Avraham's wife.

exeGesés companion Bible For in restraining, Yah Veh restrains all the wombs of the house of Abi Melech for sake of the word of Sarah the woman of Abraham.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| JPS (Tanakh—1985) | ...for the LORD had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham. |
| Kaplan Translation | God had previously sealed up every womb in Abimelekh's house, because of Abraham's wife Sarah. |

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Concordant Literal Version | ...for Yahweh restrains, yea restrains all the wombs of the house of Abimelech over the matter of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |
| Context Group Version | For YHWH had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's woman { or wife }. |
| LTHB | For Jehovah had completely closed up every womb of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham. |
| Kretzmann's Commentary | For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. That was the manner in which God's punishment upon Abimelech had begun, by denying offspring to his entire household, for it is in His hands, as the Creator of the universe, to grant the blessing of children. The entire story shows that the Lord holds His protecting hand over His children in the midst of all the temptations of the world, Psalm 105:14-15. |
| NASB | For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |
| Syndein | For Jehovah/God closing . . . had closed up {`atsar `atsar} all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of the word/matter {dabar} of Sarah - Abraham's wife. |
| World English Bible | For Yahweh had closed up tight all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |
| Young's Updated LT | For Jehovah restraining had restrained every womb of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| The gist of this verse: | God had been restraining all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech, and, with Abraham's prayer, God allowed them to conceive and to give birth. |
|--------------------------------|--|

Genesis 20:18a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ‘âtsar (אַצַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw-TSAHR</i>] | <i>to confine, to detain, to restrain, to refrain to shut, to surround, to enclose, to hold back, to restrain by rule</i> | Qal infinitive absolute | Strong's #6113 BDB #783 |
| ‘âtsar (אַצַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw-TSAHR</i>] | <i>to confine, to detain, to restrain, to refrain to shut, to surround, to enclose, to hold back, to restrain by rule</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #6113 BDB #783 |
| YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>] | transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i> | proper noun | Strong's #3068 BDB #217 |

Genesis 20:18a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|---|
| ba'ad (בָּאֵד) [pronounced BAH-gad] | <i>by, near; because of; behind, after; about, round about; between [two things], through; into, among; pro, for; away from, behind; on behalf of</i> | generally a preposition of separation or nearness | Strong's #1157 BDB #126 |
| Like most translators, I have no idea how to fit this word into this translation. | | | |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh/]; also kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh/] | <i>all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything</i> | masculine singular noun without the definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| rechem (רֶחֶם) [pronounced REH-khem] | <i>womb; inner parts; poetically used to mean a girl, a woman</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #7358 (and #7356) BDB #933 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced / ^l /] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith] | <i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1004 BDB #108 |
| ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek] | <i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #40 BDB #4 |

Translation: So Y^ehowah, completely closed up all the wombs with respect to the house of Abimelech... God closed all of the wombs of those in the house of Abimelech. This would have been the wombs of his wives, his sons' wives, his female servants and the wives of his male servants. None would conceive; none would give birth.

There was a weird explanation by Gill¹²³ that this was done with tumors. There could have been many things involved here. Certainly, an illness, such as Abimelech himself had, could have prevented cohabitation in the first place. And clearly, no pregnant woman gave birth, even if it were her time to do so.

Somewhat after the fact, we are told that God had shut up the wombs of the women in the house of Abimelech. Again, this had to be noticeable for it to be meaningful, which suggests that Sarah was at least a week-long guest of Abimelech's. It also suggests that Abimelech had collected enough wives so that he had several women ready to give birth, and yet none of them did. Some may have miscarried and those who could be impregnated were not.

If the shutting of the womb also refers to these women not conceiving, then Sarah's stay here has to be at least for a month. Enough time would be given for Abimelech to think he should have been impregnating his women, but it was not happening. For there to be enough time for this to be noted, that would require about a month. Again, this would require a lot of women as well. If Abimelech had but 3 women, it might not be noticeable if none of them is impregnated after a month. But, if he has say, a dozen or two dozen women that he is attempting to impregnate, then, after a month, this would be noticed.

Genesis 20:18a For the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech...

¹²³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 20:18.

If Abimelech has taken Sarah out of a miscellaneous caravan, which he did; then this suggests that he was quite a collector of women. In other words, this is all in line with the assumptions that we would have to make in order for all this to fit into a timeline of a month or less.

This verse speaks of closing the wombs of the house of Abimelech, so this could apply to any of his grown children and their wives as well. Again, a month's time would have made it clear that no one is getting pregnant and no one is giving birth.

Genesis 20:18b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>] | <i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1697 BDB #182 |
| Together, ‘al dâbâr (עַל דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>gahl-daw^b-VAWR</i>] mean <i>because of, because of [that], for the sake of, for the cause of [that]</i> . | | | |
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>] | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i> | proper noun; feminine singular | Strong's #8283 BDB #979 |
| ‘îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>] | <i>woman, wife</i> | feminine singular noun | Strong's #802 BDB #61 |
| ‘Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #85 BDB #4 |

Translation: ...because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. Abraham has interceded on behalf of Abimelech. It is amazing that Abraham is failing time and time again, but God allows him the chance to again pray on someone else's behalf. There are people among us that we never know about who pray several times daily on our behalf. Their spiritual life may appear to be relatively unspectacular, but in eternity we will see that they played an important function in the edification of the body of Christ. Just as a quarterback has all the glory as he runs through a line; he could not do it without the blocking of his linemen. People who pray often act as our blockers; we don't even know that they are there sometimes, but without their persistence before the Lord of Glories, we would fall flat on our faces day after day.

You may ask, *why is this done?* It is the reason that *everything* is done. This all glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. So Charley Brown, someone we do not know, might be praying for us halfway across the world. God is aware of these prayers. The angels observing Charley Brown are aware of his prayers. And God makes these prayers efficacious. He prays for our protection, and God gives us protection. He prays for our needs to be met, and God meets and even exceeds our needs. All of this has us functioning at one body, the body of Christ, where He is glorified by these things.



Keeping the dream alive: Abraham and Sarah (Painted by Lars Justinen). From the [Scripture-for-today blogspot](#), accessed August 29, 2014.

Gen. 20:18 [This prayer was required because Jehovah had shut down all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.](#)

Here Abraham shows a bit more growth. He prays on behalf of the man who just rebuked him for his wrong behavior and Abraham still has the presence of mind to act as an intercessory between God and Abimelech. This is probably as per God's instruction.

We do not have a time frame for the time that Sarah was in the harem of Abimelech; it sounds at first as though it was one night and then God spoke to him; but the curse upon his household is not something which could have been discerned in the space of a day or even a week. This indicates that this took place probably over the space of at least a month and could have taken possibly three or more months.¹²⁴ Abimelech has a great many slaves and wives and is populating his kingdom with his children through these. Suddenly, there are no more children from his household. This would have taken time to notice and God would have certainly allowed Abimelech a certain amount of time to realize that there are no children being born to his household.

Abimelech himself would know that he is ill, as would those near him.

[Genesis 20:18 For the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.](#)

God's plan was for Sarah to bear Abraham's child and here we are but a month or less before that conception takes place, and Sarah finds herself confined to the palace of Abimelech. The child of Sarah and Abraham is going to be one of the most important births in human history, and God puts a halt to any similar activity taking place in the house of Abimelech. There cannot be any births and there cannot be any conceptions taking place, so that there is no doubt as to the fatherhood of Isaac (who will be born in the next chapter).

You may ask, *why?* Angels are observing all of this. God has promised before all angels, that Sarah and Abraham would produce a son, and God put a time frame on it—and suddenly, Sarah is trapped in Abimelech's harem. God has to show the angels that, nothing went on, that there are no births taking place, and that the child produced by Sarah will have been sired by Abraham.

In the past few months, some of the most unusual things have taken place related to the birth of Isaac. The first threat was from the nearby cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose perversion had reached such a startling climax that God needed to destroy those cities. Yet God preserved Lot, Abraham's nephew, because Abraham prayed for his deliverance. Then we have another perversion that seems to take place almost simultaneously with the conception and birth of Isaac; Lot's two unnamed daughters decide that sex with their father is necessary in order for them to have children (actually, we do not know the time frame for this, but it could have easily been coterminous with Isaac's conception and birth). The daughters of Lot will raise up two sons who will become thorns in the side of the descendants of Abraham.

Finally, in this chapter, possibly only weeks before Sarah is to conceive, Abraham foolishly tells all who ask that she is only his sister (indicating that Abraham is not a perfect man by any means), and Abimelech, the king of Gerar, comes in and snatches up Sarah because of Abraham's lie.

God then shuts up all of the wombs of those in Abimelech's house, because the one birth which is necessary has been halted by Abraham's sin and Abimelech's power. As has happened

God's blessing is always dependent upon grace, a point that is very difficult for many believers to fully grasp.

¹²⁴ *Three months* might be on the high side, because God told Abraham that, He would return to him in a year, when Sarah gives birth to their son. *2 months* might be a more accurate high side figure.

before, there is a sudden stop in the plan of God, so that Sarah can be removed from the harem of Abimelech and restored to Abraham.

In Gen. 21, God will begin to fulfill His promises to Abraham.

Only a couple of commentaries explain why we find this chapter in the Word of God. Some might find this so similar to Gen. 20 (it's not), that see this chapter as superfluous. The Bridgeway Bible Commentary explains this rather succinctly: *The failure of Abraham and Sarah at a time so close to the birth of Isaac showed once more that the fulfillment of God's covenant promise of an heir depended on divine grace, not on human merit.*¹²⁵ God's blessing is always dependent upon grace, a point that is very difficult for many believers to fully grasp.

| Chapter Outline | | Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Beginning of Document | Doctrines Covered or Alluded to | Chapters of the Bible Alluded to |
| Definition of Terms | Introduction and Text | Addendum |
| www.kukis.org | | Exegetical Studies in Genesis |

Addendum

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, who put together some of this chart, writes: *We have every reason to conclude that there are three events, similar in some details but decidedly different in many particulars. The similarities are intended to be instructive. Even mature saints are plagued with the sins of younger days (chapter 20), and "the sins of the fathers" surely are visited on the sons (as in chapter 26).*

Deffinbaugh continues: *The situation here is far more critical than in chapter 12. First, God has clearly revealed to Abraham and Sarah that together they will bear a son through whom the covenant promises will be realized. More than this, the conception of the child must be near at hand, for he was said to have been born within the space of a year (17:21; 18:10). Human reasoning would have considered the dangers in chapter 20 to be minimal since Sarah was long past the childbearing age (17:17; 18:11, 13). But the eye of faith would have seen the matter in an entirely different light. Was Abraham's faith at a low ebb? It must be so.*¹²⁶

Remember that the likely key to this is, Abraham interceded on behalf of Lot in Sodom, and, insofar as he knows, God seemed to go along with Abraham, but then, Abraham wakes up the next morning and he observes that Sodom and Gomorrah have been reduced to a smoldering rubble.

Comparing Genesis 12 to Genesis 20

| Genesis 12 | Genesis 20 |
|--|--|
| Reason for leaving: famine, probably the result of a drought | Reason for leaving: not given, but probably related to the destruction of Sodom. |
| Place: Egypt | Place: Gerar |
| Time: Early on in Abraham's spiritual life | Time: Late in Abraham's spiritual life |
| King: Pharaoh | King: Abimelech |

¹²⁵ From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bbc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014.

¹²⁶ Both from <https://bible.org/seriespage/dont-ever-say-never-genesis-20-18> accessed August 27, 2014.

Comparing Genesis 12 to Genesis 20

| Genesis 12 | Genesis 20 |
|--|--|
| Sarah described as very beautiful. The princes of pharaoh praise her beauty to pharaoh. | Sarah's appearance not recorded; it is assumed that she is still attractive. |
| Pharaoh gives Abraham many gifts for Sarah. | Abimelech gives Abraham many gifts with the return of Sarah. |
| The pharaoh and his house suffered many plagues. | Abimelech apparently made sick by God; and the people of his house could not conceive or give birth. |
| Pharaoh becomes aware that Sarai is Abram's wife, but we are not told exactly how he finds this out. | God speaks to Abimelech in a dream and tells him what is going on. |
| Abraham's response to rebuke: Silence | Abraham's response to rebuke: Excuses |
| Abram is sent away from Egypt. | Abimelech offers Abraham the option of staying anywhere on his land. |
| Result: Abraham left Egypt | Result: Abraham stayed in Gerar |

These two incidents have very few things in common. Abraham and Sarah travel to a strange land and Abraham lies about his relationship to Sarah. Everything else is different.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. said: *I read an account, not long ago, of a woman in Denver, Colorado who was out on a street corner and a mongrel dog came and bit her on the ankle and she was bitten rather badly and so they took her to the hospital which was just a few blocks away and thereafter, they had attended to her, she came back walking home and she went by the same corner and the same mongrel dog came out and bit her on the other ankle. It is an illustration of the fact that things do happen over and over again.*¹²⁷

H.C. Leupold: *It would be foolish to deny the similarity of this episode with those other episodes recorded in Gen. 12:10 ff. and 26:1 ff. It is equally foolish to claim the identity of the incidents on the ground that they merely represent three different forms of the original event, forms assumed while being transmitted by tradition. Critics seem to forget that life just happens to be so strange a thing that certain incidents may repeat themselves in the course of one life, or that the lives of children often constitute a strange parallel to those of their parents.*¹²⁸

Taken in part from <https://bible.org/seriespage/dont-ever-say-never-genesis-20-18> accessed August 27, 2014.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Here is the text of Gen. 20 in paragraph form:

Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he resided temporarily in Gerar. And Abraham said, regarding Sarah his wife, "She is my sister."

Therefore, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent servants for Sarah and took her. Then God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and said to him, "Listen, you will die because of the woman you took, since she is already married."

¹²⁷ From <http://slj.institute.net/pentateuch/genesis/patriarch-practicing-deceit/> accessed August 28, 2014.

¹²⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxii.html> accessed August 28, 2014.

Now Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said to the Lord, “Will you also kill a righteous people? Didn’t he himself tell me, ‘She is my sister’? Didn’t she herself tell me, ‘He is my brother.’ Therefore, I did this with the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands.”

Then God said to him in the dream, “I knew in eternity past that you acted in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you the opportunity to violate her. Now, therefore, return this man’s wife to him, for he is a prophet and he will pray on your behalf to deliver you from My judgement. And if you do not return her to him, know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you.”

Consequently, Abimelech rose up early the next morning and he summoned all of his officials. He declared all that had happened in his dream to them and the men were very afraid.

So Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What is it that you have done to me? How have I wronged you? Listen, you brought a great disaster upon me and my kingdom. Things which should not be done to anyone, you have done to me!” Abimelech also said to Abraham, “What made you do this thing?”

Abraham replied, “For I thought, ‘Surely there is no fear or reverence for God in this place. Therefore, they will kill me for my wife.’ Also, she is actually my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. She became my wife. And because God has caused us to move from my father’s home, I said to her, ‘Do this gracious thing for me wherever we go: say with respect to me, “He is my brother.” ’ ”

Abimelech then took sheep and oxen, and both male and female servants, and gave them all to Abraham. He also restored Abraham’s wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, “Listen, my land is before you; live in whatever place pleases you.” He also said to Sarah, “Listen, I have given your brother 1000 silver coins as a covering for your eyes. This situation is being corrected for all who are with you and for all others.”

Then Abraham prayed to God and God answered his prayer by healing Abimelech, his wife and his mistresses, and they were able to give birth. This prayer was required because Jehovah had shut down all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. said: *If we were to sum it all up, we would say the root of Abraham's problem was unbelief in the ability of God to fulfill His covenant promises. That's really what it comes down to, doesn't it? He really felt, when he went into Gerar, that God was not able to keep that king from Sarah his wife and consequently he schemed in order to avoid what he thought was coming. Abraham had a real faith, but it was partial faith. It was inadequate faith. It's what the Bible speaks of when it says little faith, but this chapter is an eloquent commentary on the mercy of God. How merciful He is and how patient He is.*¹²⁹

When I first began to study Gen. 20, I admit to being somewhat confused. Why is this in the Bible? What does God want us to get out of this? It appears to be a repeat of Abraham’s journey down into Egypt. However, there is much more to be found in this chapter than just that.

What We Learn from Genesis 20

- We find out that Abraham, although greatly blessed by God, is not a sinless person. He makes the same mistake here as he had made before. He is dishonest with his host, Abimelech. He also incorrectly prejudices Abimelech and his people.
- In other words, even though Abraham fails almost immediately after the promise of God, God still will bless him with the birth of Isaac.
- God does not end His relationship with Abraham simply because he repeats this mistake from before.
- There are some minor things that we learn—simply how Abraham ends up over in the land of the

¹²⁹ From <http://sljinstitute.net/pentateuch/genesis/patriarch-practicing-deceit/> accessed August 28, 2014.

Philistines, and this helps to explain things which happen later in Isaac's life.

- We discover that there are entire nations in Canaan that still believe in Jehovah Elohim, and that, somehow, apart from Abraham, they learned about Jehovah Elohim, they believed in Him, and their nations were based up the laws of divine establishment. This is likely because we are close enough to the flood where Shem, Ham and Japheth may all still be alive, along with their sons, grandsons and great-grandsons (at least within the past 100 years or so).
- This chapter gives us evidence that, [the sin of the Amorites is not yet complete](#). There will be a time when almost all those in Canaan will turn to idolatry, but that time is not yet come. The King of Gerar clearly believed in God, because immediately after his dream, he gets up early and he begins to deal with the problem of having Sarah in his harem. He wastes no time in obeying God.
- Not only has the king believed in Y^ehowah Elohim, but his staff has as well. When the king told them of his dream, they did not say, "[Behold the dreamer comes.](#)" They instead feared God. Abimelech's staff took his dream seriously.
- We learn from this and previous chapters that God appeared to man either face to face, as he did with Abraham; or in dreams, as He did with Abimelech.
- Also, we will study two incidents which follow this in time, and we will observe a steady decline in personal honor in the people of Gerar. This helps us to understand why God would have the Jews come into this land and destroy so many groups of people.
- Unbelievers are capable of morality just as believers are. In fact, what keeps a nation together is believers and unbelievers alike adhering to the **laws of divine establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). The closer a nation adheres to the laws of divine establishment, the more that nation will prosper. The laws of divine establishment are simple laws which are as dependable as the law of gravity.
- A simple example of this is raising a child. The laws of divine establishment prescribe that a family consist of a mother and a father and their biological or adopted children. This is taught in the Bible.
- A child who lives in a home with his mother and father [will fair much better](#) than a child in a home with just the mother. Study after study [affirms](#) this. Much has been made of the disproportionate number of blacks in prison; however, if you take and equalize out the number of children who come from two-parent homes for all races, then there is no disproportionate number of minorities in prison. A disproportionate number of single-mother homes results in a [disproportionate number of criminals](#). If one sub-group in a nation has more single mother families, then there will be more children from that subgroup in jail.
- Look at King David's children: his first set of children, who did not suffer from any financial want, as they were supported by the state at state (taxpayer) expense; and they were all failures, insofar as we know. One was a rapist; another was a murderer and a revolutionist; another attempted to seize power when David was ill; and the rest of them were easily frightened. None of them were a part of David's army. None of them are named in the Bible in any positive way. Then look at David's last 4 children, born to him and one woman, to whom he was faithful; and at least two of them (Solomon and Nathan) turned out okay (both of them being in the line of Jesus Christ—Nathan's line leads us to Mary and Solomon's line leads us to Joseph).
- Any of the laws of divine establishment can be followed out to yield similar statistical results. The end result is going to be a stronger society when the laws of divine establishment are studied and obeyed. Much of the content of the Mosaic Law is divine establishment law.
- In a previous study, we took note of the many kings of this general era who made every attempt to find or develop the right set of laws in order to insure a good, just and stable society. This also suggests that men who were leaders and men who had power were much more concerned with right and wrong than most leaders today—many of whom are interested only in the perpetuation of their own power.
- At this point in time, many people in the land of Canaan were living decent, moral lives; and many countries in the land feared God. The great exception to this was Sodom and Gomorrah. However, because of Sodom and Gomorrah and the recent demise of the fathers of humanity, who told about the flood, many other peoples were respectful of God and God's laws.
- At some time in the future, when the Philistines, the Canaanites and the Hittites turn away from God, God will judge these people. God will protect the remnant of people in the land who are His (the Israelites in the exodus), and He will destroy those who are not (much like the end of the tribulation).
- In Gen.20, we have the first occurrence of the word prophet and the word prayer as applied to a mediator or an intercessor. Both of these words occur for the first time in one verse and both are applied to

Abraham. This presents Abraham as both a prophet and a priest. A prophet represents God to man; and priests represent man to God. It is very significant to have these words occur together here for the first time; and this significance is pretty much ignored by most commentators. In this regard, Abraham is a type of Christ. In nearly every chapter of Genesis, there is some sort of foreshadowing of Jesus Christ or the cross (we will cover that in a future lesson).

- We also find out that there is no benefit to Abraham for him to lie. Had his people been at war with Canaan, that would be a different thing, as lying and subterfuge against your enemy are legitimate in war (which is taught in the Bible). However, Abimelech was a gracious host to Abraham; and therefore, Abraham should not have lied to him. It is a clear failing on Abraham's part.
- We find out the Abraham misjudges his host country; and acts according to it.
- We find out the exact relationship between Abraham and Sarah, and from whence Abraham came up with his half-lie that she is his sister.
- We find out that God is protecting Sarah from other men; she will have a uniquely-born son, who will, in this way, be a type of Christ. The parallels between Isaac and the birth of our Lord will be quite spectacular (also to be studied in the near future).
- We find out that Sarah must still be quite attractive at age 90 to be taken into a harem as she was. She will live for 37 more years after this. She might look today as a very attractive woman in her early 40's.
- For a short time, there were no births in Gerar; and, apparently, no conceiving. This brought the blessing God gave to Gerar to a halt (births are a blessing). Abraham and Sarah, who were about to conceive a child, were also put on hold. God had to separate Abraham and Sarah from all of this in order for His plan to continue through them.
- We ought not allow our own spiritual lives to come to a halt.
- Despite the sin of Abraham, God still blesses Abraham greatly.
- Deffinbaugh from Bible.org: *the Christian is eternally secure regardless of failures in faith. Backsliding is never encouraged, never winked at, and never without painful consequences according to Scripture. Nevertheless, backsliding will never cost the Christian his salvation. The salvation which God offers to men is eternal. If anyone should have lost his salvation, it was Abraham, but he remained a child of God...God blessed Abraham, He gave him wealth (Genesis 12:16,20; 13:1-2, 20:14-16) and the son He had promised (Genesis 21:1ff). He also gave him a privileged position (Genesis 20:7, 17-18). All those blessings were gifts of God's grace, not rewards for Abraham's good works.*¹
- Showing Abraham to be very human, able and willing to sin, gives great credence to the inspiration of Scriptures. He is presented as a real man with real fears and foibles. There is no hero-worship and no exaggeration of his character.
- Despite his sin, Abraham is still able to pray on behalf of Abimelech and he is healed (that is, the women in his house are able to conceive once again).

There were but 18 short verses in this chapter, but they had a lot to say.

¹ From <https://bible.org/seriespage/dont-ever-say-never-genesis-201-18> accessed August 27, 2014.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Why Genesis 20 is in the Word of God

1. One of the most important things that we learn in this chapter is about God's overriding grace. Abraham was not some sort of a perfect believer who never made a mistake. Right before a key event in his life—the birth of Isaac—Abraham fails big time, and yet, God still blesses him with a child.
2. We get a good feel for the people of the land during the time of Abraham. We have a great contrast between the people of Sodom (Gen. 19) and the people of Gerar (Gen. 20).
3. There are two incidents in the life of Abraham which are similar to some incidents in the life of his son, Isaac. These two incidents, when put side-by-side, help us to understand and chart the degeneracy of

Why Genesis 20 is in the Word of God

- the people of Gerar.
4. The combination of seeing Abraham as a prophet and also as a man who represents Abimelech to God is a phenomenal *type of Christ*.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time

CONCERNING ABIMELECH; AND CONCERNING ISMAEL THE SON OF ABRAHAM; AND CONCERNING THE ARABIANS, WHO WERE HIS POSTERITY.

ABRAHAM now removed to Gerar of Palestine, leading Sarah along with him, under the notion of his sister, using the like dissimulation that he had used before, and this out of fear: for he was afraid of Abimelech, the king of that country, who did also himself fall in love with Sarah, and was disposed to corrupt her; but he was restrained from satisfying his lust by a dangerous distemper which befell him from God. Now when his physicians despaired of curing him, he fell asleep, and saw a dream, warning him not to abuse the stranger's wife; and when he recovered, he told his friends that God had inflicted that disease upon him, by way of punishment, for his injury to the stranger; and in order to preserve the chastity of his wife, for that she did not accompany him as his sister, but as his legitimate wife; and that God had promised to be gracious to him for the time to come, if this person be once secure of his wife's chastity. When he had said this, by the advice of his friends, he sent for Abraham, and bid him not to be concerned about his wife, or fear the corruption of her chastity; for that God took care of him, and that it was by his providence that he received his wife again, without her suffering any abuse. And he appealed to God, and to his wife's conscience; and said that he had not any inclination at first to enjoy her, if he had known she was his wife; but since, said he, thou leddest her about as thy sister, I was guilty of no offense. He also entreated him to be at peace with him, and to make God propitious to him; and that if he thought fit to continue with him, he should have what he wanted in abundance; but that if he designed to go away, he should be honorably conducted, and have whatsoever supply he wanted when he came there. Upon his saying this, Abraham told him that his pretense of kindred to his wife was no lie, because she was his brother's daughter; and that he did not think himself safe in his travels abroad, without this sort of dissimulation; and that he was not the cause of his distemper, but was only solicitous for his own safety: he said also, that he was ready to stay with him. Whereupon Abimelech assigned him land and money; and they coventanted to live together without guile, and took an oath at a certain well called Beersheba, which may be interpreted, The Well of the Oath: and so it is named by the people of the country unto this day.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed March 13, 2012. Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 1, Chapter 12.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter 13, entitled *Abraham's Sojourn at Gerar—His Covenant with Abimelech*.

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 20

Abraham left the district of Mamre, and traveled in a south-easterly direction, where he settled in the territory of Abimelech, king of Gerar, in the land of the Philistines. Abimelech seems to have been a royal title, like that of Pharaoh. (Comp. Genesis 26:1, 8) But in this instance, as we gather from Scripture, the possessor of this title was far different from the king of Egypt. In fact, he appears to have been not merely true and upright in character, but to have feared the Lord. Accordingly, when Abraham was once more guilty of the same dissimulation as formerly in Egypt, passing off his wife for his sister from fear for his own life, God directly communicated to Abimelech in a dream the real state of matters. Upon this, Abimelech hastened to amend the wrong he had, unwittingly, so nearly committed. In comparison to the Gentile king, Abraham occupies indeed an unfavorable position. He is unable to vindicate his conduct on other grounds than what amounts to a want of faith. But, as God had informed Abimelech, Abraham, despite his weakness, was "a prophet;" and in that capacity, as already quoted, "He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." The alliance with Abraham which Abimelech had sought by marriage, was shortly afterwards concluded by a formal covenant between the two, accompanied by a sacrifice of the sacred number of seven ewe lambs. (Genesis 21:22) To show that this was intended not as a private but as a public alliance, Abimelech came accompanied by his chief captain, or phichol, (comp. Genesis 26:26) at the same time expressly stating it as the motive in the public step which he took, that God was with Abraham in all that he did. In similar manner, the sympathy on these points between Abimelech and his people had formerly been shown, when the king had communicated to "all his servants" what God had told him about Abraham, "and the men were sore afraid." In these circumstances we do not wonder that Abraham should have made the land of the Philistines the place of lengthened residence, pitching his tent close by Beersheba, "the well of the oath," with Abimelech, or rather "the well of the seven" ewe lambs, - and there he once more "called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God."

From <http://www.levendwater.org/books/v1bhot.pdf> accessed March 5, 2013.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The Testing of Abraham

When it comes to teaching the Bible correctly, there are many different approaches to the same passages. In looking at Robbie Dean's notes on Genesis¹³⁰ and my own, there has been one aspect that I have all but ignored, and that is the concept of testing. Much of Abraham's life has been God giving Abraham the Word—sometimes by way of a directive and sometimes by way of promise—and then God steps back and allows Abraham to act. Essentially, when Abraham is faced with truth, God then gives him some time to think about that truth and to apply it. In other words, Abraham is being tested by God, an aspect of the spiritual life which some of us may not like very much. After all, who likes being tested? However, truth and testing are intermingled throughout our lives as believers in Jesus Christ.

God has two basic things in mind for the life of Abraham: he needs to be in the Land of Promise and he needs to have a son who will change world history. God will accomplish these things in Abraham by moving him and then giving him both truth and the opportunity to apply truth, which means, *testing*. If Abraham applies the truth he learns, he passes the test; if Abraham doubts the truth, does not learn from it or does not believe it, then he fails.

As a former teacher, I was fond of giving tests; yet not quite as enamored of taking them (unless the result would be very good for me; I certainly did not mind that). There is also the concept of successfully doing something and being happy with that, and being able to move on.

¹³⁰ Credit needs to be given to Robbie Dean's [notes](#), which are the basis for the approach to this and the next lesson of Genesis. Notes accessed January 21, 2013.

Throughout these 9 chapters of Genesis, God has given Abraham truth, and then has allowed Abraham to make a series of decisions based upon the truth that he has been given. Sometimes Abraham succeeds and sometimes he fails.

As an aside, there is nothing magical about this numbering of tests. Anyone could probably go through these chapters and find more tests than are listed below.

Tests #1–2, the geographical will of God.

Gen 12:1 **Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.** Much of the Biblical text used will come from the English Standard Version. From time to time, it will be modified (they do not capitalize the pronouns referring to God and I do).

God comes to Abraham in a manner unknown and tells him to leave Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2–4). His family had originally come from area around Ur, a little more than 200 miles southeast of modern-day Baghdad, Iraq. God required Abraham to separate from his family. Abraham responded with half-way obedience. He moves with his family, rather than leaving them behind; and he and his family only get as far as Charan (Haran). It appears that his father Terah is calling all of the shots (Gen. 11:31).

Either God tells Abraham again to leave his family and go to the land of Canaan, or Abraham thinks back to this mandate and follows it completely this time. So, first time that Abraham hears this command, he does not follow it exactly. However later—whether a few years or a few decades later—Abraham follows the command as God gave it.

Gen 12:2–3 **And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**

God promised Abraham that he would be blessed, that a great nation would come from him, that his name would be made great, and that other nations would be blessed or cursed depending upon their attitude toward Israel (the nation that would come from Abraham). All nations of the earth would either enjoy blessing by association or cursing by association, depending upon their attitude toward Israel and the children of Abraham.

If you were to choose the nations today where you would most like to live, all things considered (personal freedom and economic opportunity, as well as personal safety), the nations which you choose will likely be allies with Israel today. And if you were to list those nations lowest on your list of nations in which to live, these nations would be hostile toward the Jew.

Gen 12:4 **So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran (Charan).**

Abraham passes this first test, eventually—he leaves his family and he goes to the Land of Promise. His nephew Lot, also goes with him, which was a good choice on the part of Lot. Abraham obeys God's directive, which automatically places him into the geographical will of God.

A few chapters back—and I neglected to point this out when it came up—it appears that Abraham was told to go west on two occasions: once when he was in Ur of the Chaldees and then later when he is here in Charan (Acts 7:2–4 is possibly different from Gen. 12:1–3, even though the content of the order is the same). It is also possible that this represents just one order from God. If that is the case, then Abraham heard it in Ur (**And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. Acts 7:2–4**), but he did not fully obey this mandate until Gen. 12:4.

So, Abraham first moves west with his family, in the direction of Canaan (Gen. 11:31), but then stops with them at Charan. Then God came to Abraham again and said, "[Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.](#)" It does not appear that God spoke just once to Abraham because of the construction of the Hebrew sentences. That is, Acts 7:2–4 tells us that Abraham got the call from God to move to Canaan *when* he was in Ur. The Hebrew sentence structure of Gen. 11:30 and 12:1 suggests that God *again* told Abraham to move to the land of Canaan.¹³¹

Abraham's test was to do what God told him to do, and he eventually did. Abraham will then built an altar to God once he arrives and settles in the Land of Promise. Gen. 12:8

Credit needs to be given to Robbie Dean's [notes](#), which are the basis for the approach to this and the previous lesson of Genesis (he lists [12 tests](#) in total). His notes were accessed January 21, 2013.

Abraham's first two tests were for him to leave his home and his family and move to the land of Canaan. He first heard this when living in Ur and he obeyed this halfway. Then he either heard this from God a second time or decided, eventually, to obey God, and he did leave his family and moved to the land of Canaan.

Test #3—Remaining in God's geographical will.

For Abraham's third test, he was to remain in the Land of Promise. He did not.

Gen 12:9–10 [And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.](#)

In life, there are difficulties. However, you may recall from our study of this section of Genesis that God did **not** come to Abraham and say, "Look, there is going to be a famine in the land of Canaan; so, you get up and move to Egypt." Abraham decided to do this on his own. This does not mean that Abraham is incapable of making his own decisions or that he needed for God to come to him every 2 minutes and tell him whether to turn to the left or to the right. However, Abraham's blessing was clearly associated with his move to Canaan and with the land of Canaan itself. So, moving out of that land was therefore the wrong choice. You may recall from that chapter that Abraham lied to the Pharaoh of Egypt about Sarah being his wife. Furthermore, it is likely that, on this same trip, Abraham and Sarah (then, Abram and Sarai) picked up a little slave girl named Hagar.

Although Abraham initially failed this test, he did return to the Land of Promise, putting him back into the geographical will of God. Gen. 13:1

Test #4—the prosperity test and the grace test

Abraham returns from Egypt to the land where God wanted him to be.

Gen 13:2–4 [Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD \[or, proclaimed \(or\) read aloud by the name of the LORD\].](#)

Abraham was back where he belonged, and God had greatly prospered him. God clearly does not hold grudges against believers, even when they make mistakes and travel out of His geographical will.

¹³¹ We have a series of wāw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs. If what God said to Abraham in Gen. 12:1 had come in the past, then Gen. 12:1 would have been a wāw conjunction followed by a perfect verb (i.e., *and God had said...*). But it reads, *And so, God says...*, which suggests action from that time period. We have a similar situation, but reversed, in Gen. 15:6, where it says, [And Abram had believed in God, and God credited that to him as righteousness.](#) That verb structure means that Abram had believed God in the past, separate from the narrative of Gen. 15.

Gen 13:5–7 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

There are always problems in life. In the middle of Gen. 12, the problem was a famine in the land. Here, in Gen. 13, Abraham and Lot just have too much cattle together—they are just too prosperous. In fact, they had so much cattle that the land would not support them. Their joint business venture had grown too large. It was time for them to break up the business into two businesses.

At this point, Abraham had to make the call. There was too much strife and too many disagreements about the wealth that he and Lot controlled.

Gen 13:8–9 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Abraham takes the grace position. He is in the land, God is still God; so, no matter what Lot does, Abraham would be prospered. He tells Lot to go in whichever direction, and Abraham would go in the other direction. Abraham, who is the oldest and has the authority, could have made the choice himself and told Lot to go in the other direction. Since Abraham was in the geographical will of God, and had the promises of God, he knew that God would bless him, no matter what. So he graciously gave Lot the choice.

Abram passes the prosperity and grace test. He is not so hung up on his personal wealth that he determines that he must choose first which way to go; he gives that choice to his young nephew, and that is grace.

Test #5—Will Abraham be gracious to Lot and rescue him?

This is one of the most interesting tests because God does not go to Abraham and say, "You need to rescue Lot; now here is My plan." Lot lived among a group of degenerates who had stopped paying tribute to the kings of the east; so these kings came to beat down Sodom and Gomorrah, and they took many of them prisoners (as slaves). Sodom and Gomorrah had been under the 4th stage of national discipline (they were under the control of an outside nation), and their rebellion against the kings of the east meant that they would be placed under the 5th stage of national discipline (God would remove them from their cities). All of this was a warning to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When they rebelled against the kings of the east, those kings showed up and soundly defeated them on their own land, using their own geography against them. Then they were going to be taken out of the land en masse, and put into abject slavery.

Abraham, with a very small force of 318 men, actually defeated and put on the run one of the greatest armies of his day—the coalition of eastern forces. This was an event which literally changed history and kept this eastern coalition out of Canaan for a very long time. Gen. 14.

Test #6—Abraham submits to the spiritual authority of Melchizedek.

The seventh test is when Abraham actually meets Melchizedek and he both recognizes Melchizedek's authority and tithes to him.

After Abraham and his men defeated the armies of the kings of the east—which was clearly a great victory of God—Abraham then meets Melchizedek, the priest of Salem (Jerusalem), who was a type of Christ. We speculated at that time that Abraham was able to submit himself to Melchizedek's authority, because Melchizedek may have possessed the Word of God (which would have been in oral form). It would have been very easy for Abraham to say, "Well, I have spoken to God face to face on many occasions; so maybe you ought to do

obeisance to me and pay tithes to me.” However, Abraham acted graciously, respectfully, and recognized Melchizedek’s authority.

You see, it would have been so easy for Abraham to try to play *spiritual king of the mountain*, but Abraham was not arrogant. Abraham recognized this man’s spiritual authority. We do not know with certainty why Abraham submitted to the authority of Melchizedek and paid him tithes, but this was the basis of a very important lesson in Hebrews, as Melchizedek represents a type of Christ. Gen. 14:18–20 Heb. 7:4–9

This, by the way, is one of the keys to King David’s greatness. On many occasions, David was subject to the words of the prophets, and, once and a while, they excoriated him for what he did (as Nathan did in the matter of Bathsheba). David, being humble, took it. He did not defy the prophets of God; he did not put them in jail or threaten their lives, as some kings of Israel would later do. David, one of the most powerful kings in history, set his authority aside and recognized the spiritual authority that these prophets had over him.

Test #7—The greed test.

After defeating the armies of the kings of the east, the people and goods of Sodom, Gomorrah, et al, were under the control of Abraham. He could have easily said, “These people now belong to me; these goods now all belong to me.” However, he did not. He gave the people and their possession back to the king of Sodom, keeping back only enough to pay his servants for combat pay. Gen. 14:21–24

Test #8—The faith-rest test.

Abraham became concerned about having this child of promise—he was uncertain that he was going to have him (Gen. 15). When God began to make promises to Abraham, Abraham began to be reassured.

Gen 15:2–3 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."

Abraham had begun to doubt whether he would have a true heir through which the promises of God would be fulfilled. What seemed logical is, Eliezer of Damascus, who was likely Abraham’s head servant (possibly the servant in Gen. 24), would be his heir. Abraham has no natural heir (Gen. 11:30).

Gen 15:4–5 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Then we had that famous quotation which is repeated many times in the New Testament:

Gen 15:6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

That referred to a past event. Then God reminded Abraham from where he had come. The Hebrew tense that we find here does not mean that God said this, and Abraham believed him; God said something like this in the past and, at that time, Abraham believed God. From what happens in this chapter, Abraham’s faith seems to be renewed.

Gen 15:7 And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess it."

This chapter indicates that Abraham continued to believe God. He placed his trust in God’s promises concerning his seed.

Test #9—Will Abraham continue to believe the promises which God made to him?

The ninth test also comes from Gen. 15, where Abraham asks God, “How do I know that I am going to inherit [or, possess] [this land](#)?” God then makes a covenant with Abraham, with animal sacrifices, and Abraham drives away birds which attempt to swoop down upon these carcasses (which represents Israel taking and holding the land of Canaan against the Hittite, the Canaanite and the Amorite).

God then makes both a far-off and a near promise to Abraham. God tells Abraham when his seed will take this land; and He also promises Abraham a very long and full life. The covenant and the additional promises appear to be believed by Abraham. So, despite not yet having a son, Abraham continues in faith.

Test #10—Will Abraham wait on God to fulfill the promise of his having a son?

The tenth test was that Abraham faced was with God’s promises about his seed. He was getting older; Sarah was getting older; and they had not had children yet. God’s promises can only be fulfilled if Abraham has a son and they had not produced a child. Sarah suggests that Abraham have a son through her personal servant, Hagar, the Egyptian girl.

At no time has God implied or stated that Abraham needed to have a child through a surrogate. However, Abraham will listen to the voice of his wife instead of listening to God, and become the father of Ishmael, Hagar’s son. Abraham failed this test. For this reason, the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham will be placed on hold for 12 or 13 years. Gen. 16

Test #11—God requires the sign of circumcision

As a result of Abraham failing the previous test, God essentially puts His plan for Abraham on hold. Abraham has a son by Hagar at age 87, and God does not come to Abraham for further guidance until he is 99 (Gen. 16:16 17:1). So, God waits for two things: for Ishmael to grow to an adult age so that he can be removed from Abraham’s compound with his mother; and for Abraham to no longer be able to father children.

All of this is found in Gen. 17, one of the most amazing chapters in the Bible.

God asks for a great sign of personal faith on the part of Abraham: God asks Abraham to circumcise himself and the males of his compound; and to circumcise all males on the 8th day after birth. Circumcision for Abraham represented taking that which was dead (Abraham’s phallus) and assigning life to it by removing a portion of it. The parallel is this: we are born dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1); God has come and has circumcised our hearts (Deut. 30:6 Rom. 2:28–29); this means we have been given new life (John 3:3–7 2Cor. 5:17 1John 5:11); and, at death, we will enjoy ultimate sanctification, where the sin nature is removed from us (1Cor. 15:35–54 Phil. 3:21 1Thess. 5:23 1John 3:2).

For those in Abraham’s compound, circumcision represented their faith in the Revealed Lord of Abraham. Circumcision represented that their faith and salvation was hidden from the outside world, but their faith and salvation could not be denied. For the most part, because we are clothed, we are unable to see if a man is circumcised or not; but there is no question to those who are. The circumcised male represents a man who is saved; and the uncircumcised male represents the unsaved man. The key to circumcision is not a circumcised phallus but a circumcised heart (Deut. 30:6 Jer. 32:39 Ezek. 11:19 Rom. 2:25–29).

Abraham passes this test and is circumcised. God’s plan for Abraham moves forward.

Test #12—The test of human graciousness

The next test is in Gen. 18 when two angels and the Revealed Lord come to Abraham. Abraham passes the test of human graciousness. Abraham enthusiastically prepares a meal for his guests, which includes freshly killed meat and other foods made fresh that day.

This is contrasted with Lot's hospitality (Gen. 19:1–3). Lot did bring them into his home to protect them, but his dinner party was nothing like Abraham's.

Test #13—A test to see how Abraham would react to hearing that Sodom, where Lot lived, would be destroyed. Abraham uses intercessory prayer. Gen. 18:17–33

The thirteenth test is where God reveals to Abraham that He would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham attempts to talk God out of it. This is intercessory prayer. It may appear, on the surface, that Abraham's prayer was for nought. However, he established the concept of a pivot (the believers in a nation who preserve that nation) and of God's corporate relationship with groups of men (which was clearly understood by Abimelech, the king of Gerar in Gen. 20).

We find that a fairly small pivot of believers would have delivered Sodom and Gomorrah. Had there just been 10 righteous living there, God would have not destroyed those cities. However, the number of righteous was 4; and God delivered 3 of those 4, but destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Test #14—Corruption of the promised line.

The next test is in Gen. 20, which chapter we just completed, where the promise of Abraham's seed was threatened with corruption. Abraham should have done nothing to endanger Sarah, his wife, or the promised child, who had not yet been conceived. As we saw, Abraham essentially failed this test, risking the life of his wife and the purity of his seed to protect himself. However, failing this test does not mean that God would stop blessing him. The child of promise would be born to Abraham and Sarah in Gen. 21. God promised this child to Abraham; God was unequivocal about it. The timing had already been given. So, despite Abraham's failure, God cannot go back on His Word.

The Bible is filled with promises and principles. You and I may be some of the most spectacular spiritual failures on earth, but we can still, at any point, go to God's promises and principles and claim them, and God must stand by His Word. God will and must vindicate His Word.

Test #15—The offering of Isaac

The final test is future from us in this study, and it is the most important of all: God will tell Abraham to do something that God has never told a man to do ever before—to offer up his own son as a sacrificial offering. We will study that in Gen. 22. 2000 years before Jesus, God needed to illustrate the cross that was to come, so that we could read and study these pages and appreciate that God's Word stands forever, and that we can depend upon God's Word.

Although the listing of these tests is, essentially, a review, it looks at these past few chapters of Genesis in a completely different light. One might say that this is viewing Abraham's life more from a divine perspective. God gives Abraham the doctrine, places a set of circumstances before him, and then steps back to see what Abraham will do.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Gen. 1–22 Genesis a retrospective

There are many ways to view sections of the book of Genesis. Most of our time is spent on a verse by verse analysis. However, recently we took a step back to look at Gen. 12–22 from the standpoint of God testing Abraham.

In this lesson, we will also view what we have studied in a slightly different light. We will take a look back at how many times we find Jesus and His work presented in the first 22 chapters of Genesis (we have not yet exegeted Gen. 21 and 22 yet).

There are many illustrations of Jesus Christ, the cross of Jesus Christ or of the death of Jesus Christ in Scripture.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

| Jesus Christ in Genesis | Text/Commentary |
|--|---|
| <p>Jesus Christ the Creator is found in Gen. 1–2</p> <p>Gen. 1 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> <p>Gen. 2 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> <p>We have been studying the book of Genesis verse by verse and chapter by chapter, but somewhat informally. The chapters listed above and below go into greater detail, but retain all the text of the weekly lessons as well.</p> <p>The commentary on each chapter of Genesis is typically 150–300 pages long.</p> | <p>Gen. 1:1, 26a In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." We find the Trinity both in the plural form Elohim (translated God) and in 1st person plural suffixes in Gen. 1:26.</p> <p>John 1:1–3, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. This tells us to the Revealed God—Jesus Christ—created all things.</p> <p>Col. 1:15–17 He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by means of Him all things hold together.</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ as our Savior is found in Gen. 3:14–15 (also called the protoevangelium; i.e., the first evangelism).</p> <p>Gen. 3 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Gen 3:14a, 15 The LORD God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Enmity would exist between Satan and his minions (seed) and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman (Gal. 3:16 4:4). Satan would bruise the heel of Jesus in the crucifixion (not a deadly wound); and Christ would bruise Satan's head, a deadly wound.</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ as our sacrifice in Gen. 3</p> <p>Gen. 3 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Adam and the woman covered their own nakedness with leaves. God replaces these leaf aprons with animal skins, which skins had to have come from a sacrificed animal. This would have been the first time Adam and the woman observed an animal being killed. The slaughtering of this animals represents Jesus Christ on the cross.</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ as our sacrifice is found in Gen. 4. It is clear in this passage that the issue is, works versus grace.</p> <p>Gen. 4 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Cain brings God the works of his own hands (a collection of his very best vegetables); which offering God rejects; Abel brings God a sacrificed lamb—representative of Jesus Christ, slain for us—and God has respect for that offering. Human works versus the grace of God goes back all the way to Gen. 4.</p> |

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

| Jesus Christ in Genesis | Text/Commentary |
|---|--|
| <p>The gospel message is given to us in the names of the line of Adam in Gen. 5</p> <p>Gen. 5 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>If we take the meanings of the names of the genealogical line of Adam to Noah, we end up with this sentence: “Man [is] appointed [to] mortal [ity]; purchased (or, possessed) [by] the Praise of God [Who] will descend [as the] Dedicated [One] (Who will be taken up). He dies and is sent [to the] poor [who are made strong in Christ] [bringing them] rest [or, comfort, repose, consolation].” So here we have the gospel of Jesus Christ as well as the history of mankind hidden within the names of the chosen genealogy.</p> |
| <p>The Ark is a picture of our salvation in Gen. 6–8.</p> <p>Gen. 6 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Gen. 7 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Gen. 8 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>The corrupted and unrepentant seed is outside of the ark; God's chosen ones are inside of the ark. Those inside of the ark are preserved, as believers in Jesus Christ will be preserved. The word used for <i>ark</i> in this passage is the exact same word used in the <i>Ark of the Covenant</i>; which is also a picture of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the ark. Those who are outside of the ark (Jesus Christ) will be destroyed.</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ as our sacrifice is found at the end of Gen. 8.</p> <p>Gen. 8 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>When Noah and his family emerge from the ark, he offers up animal sacrifices, which is a picture of the sacrifice of our Lord. Over and over again, the slaughter of an innocent animal foretells of the death of our Lord for our sins.</p> |
| <p>The line of Jesus Christ, as found in Gen. 5 and 11.</p> <p>Gen. 5 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Gen. 11 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Gen. 5:3–31 11:10–27 This is quite an amazing thing. There are only a few linear¹³² genealogical lines which are given in Scripture. These linear lines, recorded by perhaps a half-dozen authors over a period of at least 1500 years, take us from Adam to Jesus. There are no excess linear genealogies found in the Bible.</p> |
| <p>Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, in Gen. 12:7 13:15.</p> <p>Gen. 12 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Gen. 13 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Gal 3:16 (Green's LTHB) But the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed (it does not say, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ). Genesis 3:15 21:12 22:18, Rom. 9:6 Heb. 11:18</p> |
| <p>Melchizedek foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, as the priest in Gen. 14:18–21. He would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.</p> <p>Gen. 14 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The LORD says to My Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:1, 4). For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him...He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever (Heb. 7:1, 3). Compare Heb. 5:6, 10 6:20.</p> <p>Even though Jesus is our High Priest, He is not from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe; or from the line of Aaron, the priestly line.</p> |

¹³² Meaning a line of descendants with 4 or more generations in view.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

| Jesus Christ in Genesis | Text/Commentary |
|---|--|
| <p>Jesus Christ is represented by the burnt offering that Abraham offers up. Gen. 15:7–11</p> <p>Gen. 15 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>This burnt offering seals the promises of God, which God made to Abraham; which promises represent God's assurance of our own salvation through His covenant with us. This salvation is called the New Covenant of His Blood in 1Cor. 11:25, the Old Covenant being done away with in Christ (2Cor. 3:14).</p> |
| <p>In fact, the writer of Hebrews pulls together the covenant promises, the priesthood of Melchizedek, and Jesus Christ offering up Himself in Heb. 7:20–28 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.</p> | |
| <p>The everlasting covenant that God makes with Abraham represents our everlasting covenant with God through His Son. Gen. 17:7</p> <p>Gen. 17 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>God speaking to Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8). Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20).</p> |
| <p>The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a preview of the destruction of the unbeliever when Jesus Christ removes all unbelievers from the earth in the baptism of fire. Gen. 19</p> <p>Gen. 19 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>In Gen. 14, God warned the people of Sodom. In Gen. 19, God judged Sodom, where the population was out of control. God preserved the righteous and destroyed all the people of Sodom. This devastation was known by and witnessed to 2000 years later by historian Josephus.</p> <p>Rev. 11 speaks of the two witnesses who will be killed in that which is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt; and the great judgment to come upon the world is spoken of in Rev. 11:18–19.</p> |
| <p>The destruction of those in Sodom and Gomorrah also represent the final judgment of eternal fire for unbelievers, which judgment is carried out by Jesus Christ. Gen. 19</p> <p>Gen. 19 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire (Jude 6–7). And all such judgment is given to the Son. John 5:22 2Cor. 5:10</p> |

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

| Jesus Christ in Genesis | Text/Commentary |
|---|---|
| <p>Abraham, as a prophet (who represents God to man) and as a priest, (who represents man to God) acts as an intermediary between God and Abimelech; just as Jesus Christ is our Mediator. Recall that it is significant that these words occur for the first time right here. Gen. 20:7</p> <p>Gen. 20 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>And now return the wife of the man, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. And if you do not return her, know that dying you shall die, you and all that are yours (Gen 20:7). As Moses promised: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to Him." (Deut. 18:15). And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt. 21:11). For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1Tim. 2:5). The conclusion that we may draw is this: We have such a High Priest, Who has sat down on the right of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven (Heb. 8:1).</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant is found in Heb. 9:15 Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.</p> | |
| <p>The unique birth of Isaac in Gen. 21 foreshadows the unique birth of our Lord.</p> <p>Gen. 21 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>This will be covered in detail in Gen. 21. There are a dozen or so parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord.</p> |
| <p>The unique offering of Isaac, the uniquely-born son, by his father, in Gen. 22 as a sacrifice foreshadows our Lord offering Himself on the cross for our sins.</p> <p>Gen. 22 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>Notice how we go directly from Isaac's unique birth to Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice to God. This is because Jesus was brought into this world to die for our sins. That was His purpose.</p> <p>He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed (1Peter 2:24). This will be covered in great detail in Gen. 22.</p> |
| <p>Jesus Christ was born to the intent that He die for our sins.</p> <p>Gen. 21 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Gen. 22 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</p> | <p>The two most important chapters on Isaac are about his birth and his being offered up as a sacrifice to God (Gen 21–22). One follows the other. This represents Jesus' reason for coming to this earth and walking among us.</p> |
| <p>Unless otherwise noted, most Scripture quoted is from the ESV, pronouns referring to Deity having been capitalized.</p> | |

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

| A Complete Translation of Genesis 20 | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A Reasonably Literal Translation | A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase |
| Abraham moves his compound to Gerar | |

| A Complete Translation of Genesis 20 | |
|--|---|
| A Reasonably Literal Translation | A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase |
| Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he was temporarily residing in Gerar. | Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he resided temporarily in Gerar. |
| And Abraham said regarding Sarah his wife, "She [is] my sister." Therefore, Abimelech the king of Gerar sent [for her] and he took Sarah. | And Abraham said, regarding Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." Therefore, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent servants for Sarah and took her. |
| God threatens Abimelech, king of Gerar, because he took Sarah as his wife | |
| Then Elohim came unto Abimelech in a dream that night and He said to him, "Listen, you will perish because of the woman whom you have taken, since she is married to a husband." | Then God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and said to him, "Listen, you will die because of the woman you took, since she is already married." |
| But Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said, "My Adonai, will you also kill a righteous people? Did he himself not say to me, 'She [is] my sister'? Furthermore, she also said, herself, 'He [is] my brother.' [Therefore] I did this in the integrity [or, <i>innocence</i>] of my heart and in the innocence of my hands." | Now Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said, "Lord, "Will you also kill a righteous people? Didn't he himself tell me, 'She is my sister'? Didn't she herself tell me, 'He is my brother.' Therefore, I did this with the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands." |
| Then Elohim said to him in the dream, "I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity [or, <i>innocence</i>] of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you [the opportunity] to touch [or, <i>violate</i>] her. Now, therefore, return [this] man's wife, for he [is] a prophet and he will pray on behalf of you and you will live. And if you do not return [her to him], know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you [lit., <i>all that (is) to you</i>]." | Then God said to him in the dream, "I knew in eternity past that you acted in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you the opportunity to violate her. Now, therefore, return this man's wife to him, for he is a prophet and he will pray on your behalf to deliver you from My judgement. And if you do not return her to him, know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you." |
| Abimelech calls in Abraham to straighten all of this out | |
| Consequently, Abimelech arose early the next morning and summoned all of his officials [lit., <i>servants</i>]. He declared all of these things in their hearing and the men were very afraid. | Consequently, Abimelech rose up early the next morning and he summoned all of his officials. He declared all that had happened in his dream to them and the men were very afraid. |
| So Abimelech summoned Abraham and he said to him, "What have you done to us and how have I sinned regarding you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great disaster [lit., <i>sin</i>]. Deeds which [should] not be done [to anyone], you have done against me." Abimelech also said unto Abraham, "What did you see that you did this thing?" | So Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What is it that you have done to us? How have I wronged you? Listen, you brought a great disaster upon me and my kingdom. Things which should not be done to anyone, you have done to me!" Abimelech also said to Abraham, "What made you do this thing?" |

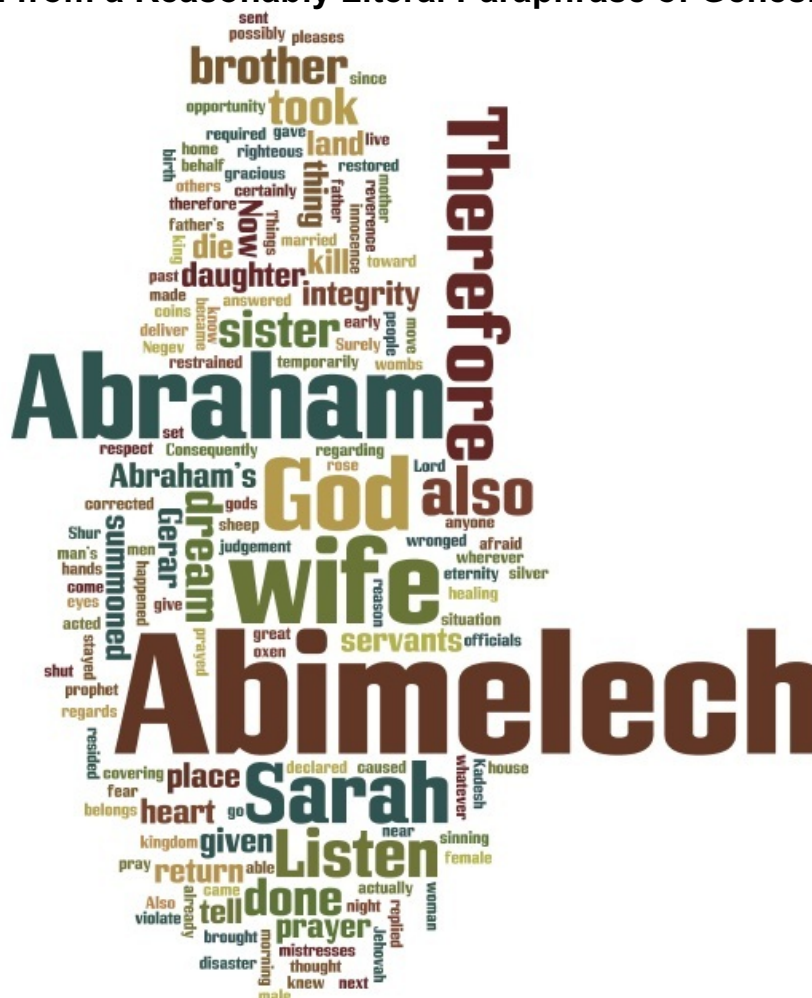
| A Complete Translation of Genesis 20 | |
|---|---|
| A Reasonably Literal Translation | A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase |
| Abraham replied [lit., <i>said</i>], "For I thought, 'Surely [there is] no fear [respect] of Elohim in this place. Furthermore [lit., <i>and</i>], they will kill me because of my wife.' Also, she [is actual] my sister, the daughter of my father; but [she is] not the daughter of my mother. So she is to me a wife. And so it is because Elohim [possibly, <i>the gods</i>] has caused me to wander from my father's house that I said to her, 'This [is] you grace that you will do toward me in all the place that we go to: say for me, "He [is] my brother." ' ' " | Abraham replied, "For I thought, 'Surely there is no fear or reverence for God in this place. Therefore, they will kill me for my wife.' Also, she is actually my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. She became my wife. And because God [possibly, <i>the gods</i>] has caused us to move from my father's home, I said to her, 'Do this gracious thing for me wherever we go: say with respect to me, "He is my brother." ' ' " |
| Abimelech then took sheep, oxen, male servants and female servants and he gave [them all] to Abraham. He also restored his wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you; live [in whatever place is] good [lit., <i>in the good</i>] in your eyes." He also said to Sarah, "Listen, I have give 1000 silver [coins] to your brother. Listen, it [is] a covering for your eyes. For all who [are] with you and with all [others], she is being corrected [or, <i>rebuked, reprov</i> ed; possibly <i>righted, vindicated</i>]." | Abimelech then took sheep and oxen, and both male and female servants, and gave them all to Abraham. He also restored Abraham's wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, "Listen, my land is before you; live in whatever place pleases you." He also said to Sarah, "Listen, I have given your brother 1000 silver coins as a covering for your eyes. This situation is being corrected for all who are with you and for all others." |
| Abraham prays on behalf of Abimelech and his house | |
| Then Abraham prayed to the Elohim and Elohim healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves, and so they gave birth. So Y ^e howah, completely closed up all the wombs with respect to the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. | Then Abraham prayed to God and God answered his prayer by healing Abimelech, his wife and his mistresses, and they were able to give birth. This prayer was required because Jehovah had shut down all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. |

Chapter Outline

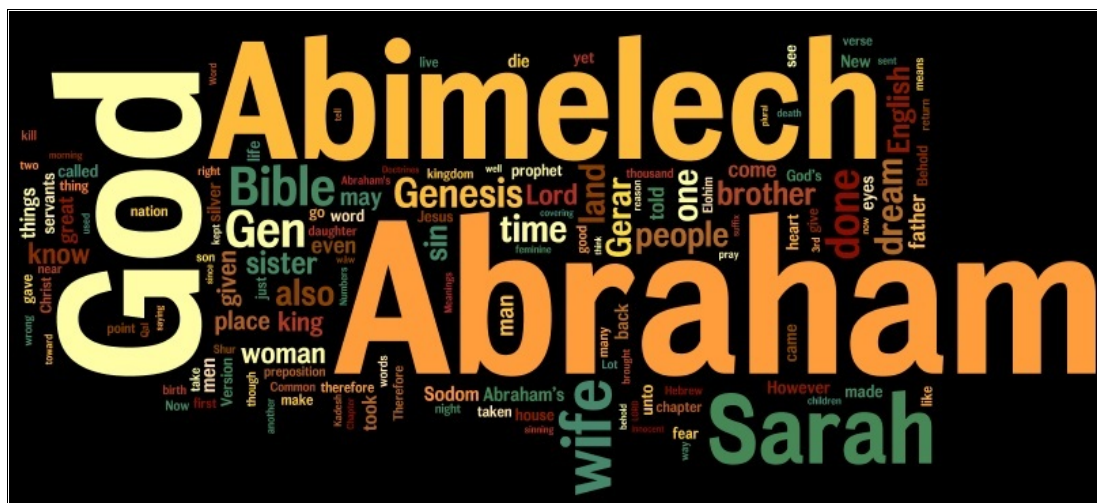
Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 20



Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 20¹³³



These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 20 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

¹³³ Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.

| Chapter Outline | | Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Beginning of Document | Doctrines Covered or Alluded to | Chapters of the Bible Alluded to |
| Definition of Terms | Introduction and Text | Addendum |
| www.kukis.org | | Exegetical Studies in Genesis |