

A SHORT REVIEW

In earlier chapters we were introduced to Abraham as he became, first, the recipient of the Promised Land, yet was not told exactly *which land* that was. We saw him wander from the north, through the land, going as far south as Egypt, then back again, finally settling in Hebron.

Then we saw Abraham as the one promised a nation, yet he had not children. We watched as he seemed to think that perhaps his nephew Lot was the one through whom the promise would be fulfilled. Abraham seemed to take extra care to provide for Lot, to get him out of trouble, and to keep a close eye on him. But as chapter 20 begins, Abraham is not even sure Lot is alive, and almost certainly presumes him dead.

We originally saw Abraham alone, with only passing knowledge of his wife. But as Sarai became Sarah, we saw his wife become an integral part of the covenant relationship. It was not just “God and Abram,” but now “God and Abraham and Sarah.” But Abraham seemed to have difficulty recognizing Sarah’s role in the covenant relationship (and we shall see more of that in this sermon).

We saw Abraham as he moved from the promised father of *one nation* (Gen. 12:2) to the father of *many nations* (Gen. 17:4). As such, God felt an obligation to let Abraham know what He was up to in regard to the cities of the plain. And in his covenant role, Abraham ended up saving both Lot and, by extension, Zoar (though he is not currently aware of their salvation).

But as we continue into Genesis 20, we see Abraham seemingly *unsure about the whole thing*.

WHY, ABRAHAM, WHY?

When, in Genesis 20:1, Abraham leaves Hebron and journeys to Gerar. We immediately wonder why Abraham has begun to *wander* again. But then things get even worse in verse 2, where Abraham blatantly commits the *same mistake as Egypt* that had created such turmoil. The King of Gerar, Abimelech, takes Sarah, for what appears to have been a significant portion of time (see vv. 17-18), but does not consummate the marriage. God appears to Abimelech in a dream and rescues Sarah, and Abimelech returns her to Abraham (vv. 1-7).

Among other things, we see in this passage that Abraham was having a hard time bringing Sarah into the covenant status of the relationship. He seems to always want to treat her as something less than a covenant partner.

Abimelech confronts Abraham (vv. 8-9), showing him to be a God-fearing man of decency and morality. When the King asked Abraham **what hast thou done unto us?** (v. 9), Abraham begins to almost ramble incoherently (vv. 10-13).

Studying the life of Abraham, we cannot help but ask, *Abraham, what are you thinking!!*

And here is my *best guess*. It seems that Abraham (the hero of faith) is *despondent, unsure what to do, running from everything*.

Strangely, that is encouraging. God did not choose a *superhero*, but a man *very much like us*. He had incredible victories, but also incredible failures. But what is also encouraging is that *the Bible records it all*. I’m glad we do not have a record that is “photo-shopped,” but rather one that is *real as it gets*.

GOD DOESN'T GIVE UP

In verses 14-18 we have the restoration of a good relationship between Abraham and Abimelech. But even more encouraging is the restoration of God’s relationship with Abraham. In Genesis 20:6-7, God instructs Abimelech to go to Abraham because **he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee** (v. 7). The prayer of Abraham would make Abimelech and his household well (v. 18).

Why doesn’t God just say, “enough is enough?” It certainly seems He would be justified in doing so. But as *faithless* as Abraham can be, God is *always faithful to His Word*, and in this Biblical record we see this to be true.

ABRAHAM RESTORED

In Genesis 21:22-33, Abimelech shows up again. We are not really sure how much time had passed. Nor are we sure the motive of Abimelech’s visit to Abraham. But we are sure of one thing: *a town named Beersheba is named*. The name means “the well of an oath” idiomatically, or “the well of seven” literally.

Because this city is found on several occasions in the Bible, and because it is a large, modern, and important city in Israel today, it stands as a memorial to *Abraham’s time of despondency, and his restoration*.

Restoration is a beautiful thing, and if a water-well in the desert reminds us of *a man restored*, then that itself becomes a beautiful thing!