

# When God's Leaders Fail

## Genesis Chapter 20

### Gen 20:1 1) Deception and a Vision vs 1-7

Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar.

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

- 25 years after last journey to Egypt
- Journeyed for trade purposes possibly. Abraham was quite wealthy at this time. Gerar was located on a major trade route.
- Sarah is 99 years old yet Taken by Abimelech
  - Possibly in the renewing of Sarah's body to give birth there was a renewing of beauty
  - Possibly a political move by Abimelech to form a treaty with wealthy Abraham
- Abimelech a title not a name (like Pharaoh in Egypt)

Gen 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married."

- Verse 3 & 6 God speaks to Abimelech in a dream
- What a thing to hear from God "YOU ARE A DEAD MAN"
  - That is the truth to all men. We are all facing death. Not only a physical death when age, disease or tragedy takes us. But an eternal second death faces us all. Eternal separation from God in a place of eternal torment.
  - I am so glad that God warns us "YOU ARE A DEAD MAN" It is His grace that He speaks to us the strong truth. His Word is necessary for us to see our condition and repent.

Gen 20:4 Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even {though} blameless?"

- Very important that Abimelech had not touched Sarah. This would have put doubt on the promise of God that Issac was Abraham's son.

Gen 20:5 "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."

Gen 20:6 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 you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.

- "Yes I Know"
  - God is all knowing. He is fully aware of Abimelech's heart
  - God knows more than Abimelech. That is was by God's had that Abimelech did not touch Sarah. It was not Abimelech's goodness
  - Psalm 14:3 + Romans 3:10 "[there is] none that doeth good, no, not one."
  - Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags;

Gen 20:7 "Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore {her,} know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

- Abraham called a prophet
  - Wasn't seeking an office
  - Called by God a prophet, not self proclaimed
  - This was told to someone else not to Abraham
- Priest = presents people to God
- Prophet = presents God to people, and in this instant to pray deliverance/healing
- Even though Abraham shows doubt in God's ability to keep Them and fulfill the promise he is called a prophet
  - Thus you can see that men of God are called to an office not rewarded to an office

Gen 20:8 **2) Confrontation and Rationalization** vs 8-13

So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened.

- *Abimelech responds quickly to the Vision (the motivation was "You will die")*
- *He consults those close to him*  
- *Prov 11:14 & 24:6 "and in multitude of counselors [there is] safety."*

Gen 20:9 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 on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done."

Gen 20:10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?"

Gen 20:11 Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.

Gen 20:12 "Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife;

Gen 20:13 and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, "This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."""

- *Abraham displays 4 typical rationalizations for his failure*
  - *Because of some else's godlessness I had to sin*
  - *The half truth is ...she is my sister (sin of omission)*
  - *God caused me (he was too harsh/unjust)*
  - *This is how I was raised - Family Rule*

Gen 20:14 **3) Vindication and Intercession** vs 14-18

Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him.

Gen 20:15 Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please."

Gen 20:16 To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared."

- *Abimelech gave compensation even when He was the one wronged*
- *Abimelech offered hospitality to him who offended him*
- *Abimelech restored Sarah's honor by paying restitution demonstrating to all men that he was wrong and Sarah was honorable*
- *God commanded Abimelech to Restore Sarah and he did*
- *Reproved (cleared) "yakahh" = to be corrected or to be proved correct*

Gen 20:17 Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore {children.}

Gen 20:18 For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

- *Abimelech could now receive the blessing that was available to him through the man God has chosen. The blessing is not from a mystical holy man but it is from a holy God through a very flawed leader called by God.*

Application: Sometimes our role when leaders fail is not to cry aloud in the streets the shameful short comings but to hear God, confront and restore leadership.

Abimelech did this by   Hearing God.   Seeking Counsel.   Humbly Confronting  
Restoring Leader in others eyes   Restoring Leader in his eyes  
Receiving Again from the leader

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