

Day 19 - THURSDAY: November 10th

Genesis 20 & 21

Genesis 20:1-18 NKJV

And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. 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." But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 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 innocence of my hands I have done this." And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended 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." Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" 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. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to

wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' " Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." Then 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. So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Genesis 21:1-34 NKJV

And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." And the matter was very displeasing in

Abraham's sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." And Abraham said, "I will swear." Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. And Abimelech said, "I do not know who

has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by yourselves?" And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

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servants had seized. And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

Daily Deep Dive:

In Genesis 20:2 it states "She is my sister." In verse 12 it says "She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife."

Adam Clarke commentary records "Ebn Batrick, in his annals, among other ancient traditions has preserved the following: "Terah first married Yona, by whom he had Abraham; afterwards he married Tehevita, by whom he had Sarah."

Verse 7 – It's interesting to me that God requires Abimelech to go to Abraham and have Abraham pray for him to be healed, which we see in Verse 17 that Abraham prays for his healing and God then heals them all. God could have just healed him, but chose to work through this manner which brings to mind James 5:14-15 which says "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."

The UCG reading program states the following about Genesis 20:

"In this chapter we find the second incident in which Abraham identifies Sarah as his sister. The first time was the incident with the Egyptian pharaoh in Genesis 12. Now, in

Genesis 20, he does the same thing with another ruler, Abimelech. While in neither case was this a complete lie, as Sarah was his half-sister, the intent was nevertheless one of outright deception. Interestingly, the strategy backfires in both circumstances. Repeating the same mistake is not unusual for any of us. Sometimes it takes multiple times before we learn our lesson. And like everyone else, Abraham and Sarah had to grow in faith. Sometimes we think that our own “prudence” is compatible with faith when, in fact, it is not. Perhaps this is what was behind the action of Abraham and Sarah. In any event, these incidents affirm to us that God will protect His people in spite of our weaknesses or the unforeseen twists of circumstance. We all make mistakes or wrong choices. In some cases, there may be consequences. But ultimately, God will work things out for our good (Romans 8:28).” [END]

Genesis 21:5 – Abraham is now 100, and Sarah is now 90 years old when God in His faithfulness fulfills His promise and through a miracle allows Sarah to have a child. Abraham & Sarah had to wait 25 years for this promise to be fulfilled. Imagine all they learned during that time about reliance on God, God’s faithfulness, God’s ability to do miracles, and God’s perfect timing.

Verse 8 – This appears to be at either 2 or 3 years old. John Gill commentary states “Jarchi and Ben Melech say that Isaac was weaned twenty four months after his birth; a chronologer of theirs says (q) it was in the hundred and third year of Abraham, that is, when Isaac was three years old, which agrees with the Apocrypha:”But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee such three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education.” (2 Maccabees 7:27)” [END]

Verse 21 – Remember that Hagar was Egyptian (Gen 16:1) and it makes sense that she would find her son a wife from her people.

Verse 27 & 32 – Both of these verses state “made a covenant”. As mentioned before the Hebrew here for “made” literally means “cut a covenant”.

Adam Clarke commentary states “then they slew an animal, poured out the blood as a sacrifice to God, and then passed between the pieces.”

John Gill commentary states “cut the sacrifice in pieces and passed between them, in token of the compact and agreement they entered into with each other; signifying that whoever broke it deserved to be cut in pieces as those creatures were.”

Verse 33 – Beersheba means “Well of the sevenfold oath”

Here is the UCG reading program about the contention between Sarah and Hagar: “But the birth of the promised son did not lead to peace and joy. Instead, the fruit of Abraham and Sarah’s attempt to fulfill God’s promise through Hagar was now beginning to be borne. Strife rent the household of Abraham, with Sarah seeking to ensure Isaac’s preeminence and resenting Abraham’s love for Ishmael, his other son. Although the narrative presents the entire transaction in a relatively brief space, it is likely that the tensions in the household had been building for quite some time. Ishmael’s ill treatment of Isaac was merely the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Abraham was distressed by the entire affair. He truly loved Ishmael (Genesis 17:18) and, given God’s pointed mention of Hagar in Genesis 21:12, Abraham may have had tender feelings toward her. He probably tried everything he could to keep peace in the house. But it was to no avail. In this circumstance, God told Abraham to heed the words of Sarah. Whether or not Sarah had a right to feel and behave as she did, God’s plan necessitated the separation of Ishmael from the household.

In requiring the separation, however, God reassured Abraham that Ishmael would be blessed, “because he is your seed” (verse 13). In other words, although God had not obligated Himself to provide for Ishmael, nor bless him, God would graciously bless Ishmael because God loved Abraham and Abraham loved Ishmael. God’s grace sometimes falls on others because of His love toward His people. When we become His children, God’s love and affection is extended to more than simply ourselves. Because He loves us and we love others, God, for our sake, sometimes extends His protection and blessing to those we love. This is born out explicitly in 1 Corinthians 7:14, where Paul tells us that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believer—an extension of God’s love toward us. So, though we are separated from the world by the plan and call of God, nevertheless we are given the sure knowledge that *because* of our separation to God, our unconverted loved ones will often share in the overflow of God’s grace.

We should also stress in this context the kinds of problems that can arise whenever we depart from God’s pattern for marriage—that a man and woman unite for life in a loving monogamous relationship (Matthew 19:5-6). As we see from the example of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar—here in Genesis 21 and earlier in chapter 16—relationships contrary to this pattern lead to heartache, jealousy, bitterness and misery. We see many of the same problems again when we come to the life of Abraham’s grandson Jacob. These stark examples should remind us of the kinds of consequences we saddle ourselves and others with when we decide to ignore God’s laws and instructions.” [END]