

Faith's Second Chance

(Abraham Part 9)

March 18, 2018

The third test of Abraham's faith (Gen 20:1-18).

Abraham lies about Sarah and his relationship to Abimelech.

Outline:

1. Because of a famine, Abraham goes to Egypt, where he tells a half-truth to king Abimelech - that Sarah is his sister (Gen 20:1-2).
2. God warns Abimelech in a dream that Sarah, whom he has taken into his harem, is Abraham's wife. God then warns Abimelech to return Sarah to her husband or face death (Gen 20:3-8).
3. The dialogue between Abimelech and Abraham; Abimelech accuses Abraham of doing him wrong through deception. Abraham is defensive, fearful and told a half-truth about Sarah (Gen 20:9-13).
4. Abimelech makes a gift to Abraham and returns Sarah. Abraham prays for Abimelech, and God enables the women to have children again (Gen 14-18).

Thoughts:

Relapse:

Abraham started walking by sight (Gen 20:11 Abraham said, "... there is no fear of God in this place ...);

He became frightened (Prov 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare);

He began scheming a second time (Gen 12:10). This time, even Sarah lied (Gen 20:5).

Whatever we carry with us from our old life (Gen 20:13) will create problems for us in our new life.

It is one thing to confess our sins but another thing to repent from them.

Prov 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Revelation:

God spoke to the heathen king but not to His own friend, Abraham. Although God kept the king from sinning, He allowed Abraham to lie! God called Abraham to be a blessing, but now he had become a curse in the land. God was protecting Sarah, Isaac, and His great plan of salvation.

Rebuke:

What a humiliating thing to be openly rebuked by a pagan king. God sometimes uses the unsaved to chasten the saved. The fact that Abraham was a believer did not give him license to sin.

Unfortunately, years later, Abraham's son Isaac would imitate his father's sin (Gen. 26).

Restoration:

In those days, the paying of a large sum of money was public "atonement" for guilt; however, sin is never profitable. God did not forsake His friend (Ps 105:15; 2Tim 2:12-13) but honored him in the end and answered his prayer. Financially, Abraham was richer; spiritually, he was poorer. He lost character as well as opportunity to witness and glorify God.

Believers do sin.

The Bible tells the truth about all people, and that includes God's people. It does not hide the fact that:

Noah got drunk and exposed himself (Gen 9:20-23),
Moses lost his temper (Num.20:1-13),
David committed adultery and plotted the death of a valiant soldier (2Sam 11)
Peter denied the Lord three times (Mt 26:69-75),
Barnabas lapsed into false doctrine (Gal 2:13).

These things are recorded, not to encourage us to sin, but to warn us to beware of sin. After all, if these great men of faith disobeyed the Lord, then we "ordinary saints" had better be very careful. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Cor 10:12)

Abraham's fear:

He had never been able to conquer a deep-rooted fear that his beautiful wife would catch somebody's eye, and they would get rid of him to have her.

This streak of fear in Abraham is even more noteworthy when we remember his fearless approach to life in so many other dimensions.

He had not been afraid to launch out in faith from Ur.
He had been anything but fearful when he chased the kings who had captured Lot.
He had even been bold enough to challenge God in his intercession for Sodom.

But when it came to his own fears concerning his wife, his propensity to fear was exposed.

Abraham's prayer:

Gen 20:17-18 Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

The intercession of prophets:

Abraham:

Gen 18:23-25 Abraham came near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

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."

Moses: (Dt 9:25-29; Ex 32:31-32; 34:9; Num 14:17-19; 16:22; 27:16-17)

Ex 32:11-14 Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

David angel with plague (2Sam 24)

2Sam 24:17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."

Daniel

Dan 9:2-4 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,

Jeremiah (Jer11:14; 14:11; 15:1)

Jer 7:16 "As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you.

Amos (Am 7:2-5)

Like father, like son:

He received his father's promise (Gen 26:1-5, 24)

Gen 26:2-5 The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. 4 "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."

Gen 26:24 The LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham."

He faced his father's temptations and sins (Gen 26:6-7)

Famine (Gen 26:1), fear (Gen 26:7), telling lies at expense of wife (Gen 26:7)

His wife is restored by (God) Abimelech (Gen 26:8-11)

He has strife with Abimelech over wells and dug again his father's wells (Gen 26:12-22)

He makes a covenant with Abimelech (Gen 26:26-33)

He trusts his father's God, builds an altar and calls on God (Gen 26:23-25)

References used in this study:

The Outline Bible
A Handbook on Genesis (by Reyburn and Fry)
With the Word Bible Commentary
Be Obedient (by WW Wiersbe)
The Preacher's Commentary Series