

Genesis 20.1-18

P.B.P.G.I.N.F.W.M.Y.

Genesis 18 / 19 > GRIM Chapters – Destruction of SODOM & GOMORRAH  
DRIFTING of Abraham’s Nephew LOT > From Outskirts of City to INSIDER  
SOBERING Reminder: NO MIDDLE GROUND  
DESTINED for Heaven or DELIVERED into Hell

Ch 20 FINALLY > We can think about REAL BELIEVER > Serious Disciple  
GREAT Abraham > GIANT for God > Father of our Faith

Absolutely TRUE > ...Rest of the Story > God’s People work in Progress  
Lest we become too PROUD & SELF ASSURED >

God’s Word tells this Story

40 yrs ago New Christian > GIVEN BUTTON > to  
wear P.B.P.G.I.N.F.W.M.Y.



Please Be Patient God Is Not Finished With Me Yet  
NOT ONLY NEW BELIEVERS >  
Tattooed on Foreheads at Conversion

1. Sinners in Process

Abe > Father of our Faith > Bible NOT HEROIC BIOGRAPHY

See how even the Righteous Fall > So we can LEARN from MISTAKES

See how God restores the Fallen > SO WE CAN HAVE HOPE

What can we AVOID in our Pilgrimage with the God of Abraham?

a. Cowardly Abe’s ULTIMATE CONCERN > OWN SAFETY

Lot’s Daughters > HAD to have CHILD > Made IDOLS of Children

Abe > IDOL > SAFETY – Today: Clean AIR? HEALTHY FOOD? > BALANCE

Raised in LA SMOG 1960’s – Don’t trust AIR Can’t See! – Cancer just 4 X’s!

Abe Risked Honor of Wife > God > Welfare of Abimelech & his Kingdom??

Abraham should have risked his own safety and honor for sake of His wife.

Often Repeated BIBLICAL THEME > Following Jesus Not Easy, Grueling

*Jesus never hides His scars to win disciples.*

*James Boice*

God will pass us by as long as we value safety over obedience. David Platt

STRANGE How ABE WIMPS OUT at this Point

Ch 14: RESCUED Lot from CLUTCHES of 5 Kings > 318 Trained Men

Was ABIMELECH REALLY going to Attack him for his 90 yr old WIFE??

We NEED Real COURAGE to Stand for Jesus These CHALLENGING DAYS

Great CHALLENGE Not GIVE IN to FEAR – Believe God is IN CONTROL!

Recently POLICEMAN: I want to be FRIEND > No! You want to Make Afraid!

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4.13

No place for Jesus & Scripture in HOSTILE World TODAY / or THEN > Cross

1<sup>st</sup> Followers Declared JESUS in same City where was KILLED Months Earlier

FIND OUR STRENGTH in God Himself > Confidence to Confess Him

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Proverbs 29.25

b. Cyclical DO WE LEARN FROM HISTORY?

“One thing we learn from history is that we do not learn anything from history.”

Professor Voskyl

30 YEARS EARLIER

“As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

Genesis 12.11-13

BEAUTIFUL 65 year old then > Chapter 20 > BEAUTIFUL 90 Year Old

1. Maybe Abimelech had a THING for OLD WOMEN?
2. Maybe PACT with Sarah meant Strategic Alliance with Respected Abraham
3. Maybe God Restoring Youth > Next Year give Birth to a Son > chapter 21
4. Ancient World lived Longer > Sarah died at 127, Abraham at 175?
5. Maybe Ancient Beauty Secret “Oil of Delay”

WHATEVER Reason – Abimelech wanted Abe’s WIFE – God’s Princess!

UNBROKEN CYCLE> Practiced by their Son Isaac > like Father, like Son

“When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful.”

Genesis 26.7

Critical Scholars > See Literary Parallel > Bible has Mistake > Sloppy Redactors

SLOPPY THING > Sinful Nature > Not Scripture > We Fall in Same Hole Again

Abe & Sarah’s Troublesome PLAN MADE MORE THAN 30 YEARS BEFORE

v. 13 “And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, `This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ”

SKELETON in their CLOSET: Long time before made Decision to Compromise

They Grew in Faith & Maturity > Fail to Repent of Weakness > Bring into Light

“Oh, that was a long time ago, what does that matter now?”

30 Years Later > Foolish Pledge > Popped OUT and LED to DOWNFALL

Perhaps YOU need to REVISIT some COMPROMISE from your PAST

Saying – God being my helper – I determine to CHANGE - Walk in New Life

“put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”

Ephesians 4.22-24

### c. Cooperation

Some SINS require HELP from OTHERS > SARAH HAS TO COOPERATE

ABIMELECH tells GOD v. 5 “Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and *didn't she also say, ‘He is my brother’?*”

“A home kept together by lies is in bad shape indeed” Warren Wiersbe

SIN DOES NOT GO AWAY WITH TIME > Only Festers & Grows Worse

Abe is 100 > Old Age does not Cleanse Us from Sin

Remedy is CLEANSING WITH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST > CONFESS

Do not...take part in the sins of others, keep yourself pure. 1 Timothy 5.22

### d. Cruising Abraham FREE TO MOVE > Whole Land Belonged to Him

v. 1 “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”

Toward Mediterranean Sea – Land of Philistines - GERAR



UNDERSTANDABLE WHY HE'D WANT TO MOVE from Mamre

Fabulous View Now Grim Vista > Graves of Sodom and Gomorrah

Clean Air > Hazy, Putrid, and Sulfurous

Grass for Cattle to Graze > Scorched with Brimstone

FREE to Cruise > But should Cruise WITH Christ & FOR Him

ROLLING Stone gathers NO MOSS – Many prefer CHURCH HOPPING

Always being GUEST at MEAL > Never having to WASH the DISHES

Church NOT Entertainment > EDIFICATION – Interact, Sharing, Serving

Work TOGETHER to GATHER, GROW, and GO for GLORY of GOD!

v. 13 “the gods caused me to wander” // Good Luck, Fate, My Lucky Stars

CARELESS STATEMENT > True > Abe did NOT know WHERE was Going  
 DANGER Take God's Name in Vain - BIG FELLA, MAN Upstairs, OLD MAN  
 Should Only Use Names God Gives Himself in Bible

BE ACUTELY SENSITIVE TO GOD'S PERSON AND PURPOSE > HOLY  
 NOT AIMLESS WANDERING > BUT PURPOSEFULLY FOLLOWING

FINAL WORDS OF RISEN JESUS TO THE CHURCH > Marching Orders

“go and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28.18

VERB not ‘GO,’ Verb is ‘Disciple’ > *be about Making Disciples* > COMMAND

GO ASSUMED > Go Here, Go There = Life > WHY DO YOU GO? Purpose??

Here to Follow Jesus: DISCIPLE = Follower > INVITE Others to FOLLOW

GIANT TANKER SHIPS > Carry Oil across World's Seas > 3 - 5 kms Full Stop

Engines CUT OFF 1 km Back, Appear to Observer going NORMAL COURSE

WALK with God: Appear to be Moving in Strength > Faith Summer Vacation?

OUTSIDE OBSERVER can be FOOLED by Appearances > But YOU KNOW!

ABE's statement in v. 13 “the gods caused me to wander”

TEMPORARILY ASLEEP ON HIS WATCH > Lapse of Memory

Clearly Called by a Sovereign God > CALL TO FOLLOW IN FAITH

Abe made what HE THOUGHT was GOOD PLAN > Failed > NOT God's Plan

“God does not allow his children to sin successfully” Charles Spurgeon

## 2. Surprising Pagan

To UNBIASED READER > Abimelech is MORE RIGHTEOUS than Abraham

Abimelech > TITLE = “God the King is My Father” > Another Abim. Gen 26

a. Communion few places in Bible > God speaks directly to an Unbeliever

v. 3 “God came to Abimelech in a dream one night”

Theologians COMMON GRACE and SAVING GRACE

SAVING – through Jesus, revealed in Scripture, for God’s Chosen People

COMMON – for all people, revealed in Nature, benefit those on Earth

COMMON GRACE referred to by Jesus: “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Matthew 5.45

COMMON GRACE > Protects Society from Anarchy > Restrains Evil in Hearts

ABIMELECH also needs SAVING GRACE v. 3 "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

WITHOUT SALVATION > Without Christ > "You are as good as dead"

God Loves all People > Paul tells unbelieving Gentiles in Lystra

“He has not left himself without testimony” Acts 14.17

PRAY TO GOD THAT HE WILL AROUSE SLEEPING SINNERS

CALL THEM by GOSPEL DREAMS & VISIONS to REPENT & BELIEVE

b. Conscience ALL PEOPLE been GIVEN GOD-SENSITIVE Conscience

v. 6 “Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.”

Abimelech is OBEDIENT to the LIGHT of Truth which HE HAD RECEIVED

Perhaps he LEARNED LESSON thru Judgment upon Sodom

Today SOME Mock Story of Sodom & CURSE God of JUDGMENT

v. 8 “Early the next morning Abimelech summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid.”

DANGEROUS > Continual ATTACK TODAY on our CONSCIENCE

Paul “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” Acts 24.16

c. Confrontation Dramatic Scene > Abe appears before entire Royal Court

vs. 9,10 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." And Abimelech asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?"

ABE'S LAME EXCUSE > Plays Blame Game > Old as Garden of Eden

v.11-13 "Abraham replied, 'I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife...I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." '

NOTHING MORE SHAMING for Believer > Confronted in sin by Unbeliever

Believer in H.S. > Out of Paganism > Drunken Evangelist > Jim Kuch – Son of Mormon Bishop in Town "If you really believe in Jesus, why are you drunk?"

Jim Kuch DIED about 15 years later from AIDS

### 3. Sovereign Purpose

Main Character NOT Abe or Abimelech BUT GOD

We learn about God & His Purposes > IRONY – Godless FEAR God

v. 8 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.

a. Patience – God does not Reject His Disobedient Children // like any Parent

Abimelech probably had MANY NAMES for Abraham

Coward, Hypocrite, Two-Faced, Charlatan > KZ – GOAT or SHEEP

God's view of Abraham does not change w/ Lame Excuses > **Friend of God**

v. 7 "Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet"

God DID NOT IGNORE ABE'S SIN > He would Deal with It

## BUT SIN DOES NOT ALTER OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD

Our STANDING is SECURE in CHRIST > Even 2000 years before Jesus Came

“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”  
John 8.56

CHANGE OF NAME > “No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.” Genesis 17.5

CHANGE OF NATURE > Irrevocably God’s Man > CANNOT OUTFRAN GOD

This Deceit and Cover-up > Ch. 20 > Lapse in Abe’s Consistent Walk with God

As Child of God REPENTANCE not just Beginning of Christian Life

IT IS the Christian LIFE: Daily Business of Believer, Sinner under Construction

Covenant Promise > Needs to become Christian Possession > Repent & Believe

1. “When Jesus said "repent" he meant that believers should live a whole life repenting” Martin Luther

1<sup>st</sup> of 95 Theses nailed to All Saint’s Church door in Wittenberg, 1517

b. Pardon Again surprising how passage picture’s God’s pardon...

v. 7 “Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live.”

v. 17 “Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again”

Early History of Christian Church > DONATIST CONTROVERSY

Can Sinful Pastor be instrument of blessing? Dirty Sacraments? Obscure Word?

Minority > NO! Separated from Unholy Leaders > Where are you going to go?

Where is the SEMINARY that Graduates SINLESS PASTORS?

No ORDINATION will REMOVE All Sin!

...the righteous falls seven times and rises again

Proverbs 24.16



“It would almost appear as if the Spirit of God took delight in showing that the original texture of God’s saints was not higher than that of other men...What they became, they became in spite of their natural selves. So marvelous is the wonder-working power of the grace of God that He can graft His rare fruits on the wildest stocks.”

F.B. Meyer

WILDEST STOCKS > Reformer’s Called “Total Depravity”

EVERY Part of Man’s Being is Touched and Tainted by Sin’s Effects

ABUNDANCE OF PARDON > pictured in Abimelech’s Gift to Abraham

Abraham deserved a Kick in the Pants > or Much Worse > Got MUCH BETTER

vs. 14-16 Then Abimelech brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like." To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated."

Silver’s Value > MORE than Laborer would earn in LIFETIME

VALID Concern: How can Holy God allow sinful Christians to do Holy Work?

Has not God thrown His Pearls before the Swine?

UNANSWERABLE Question: All Eternity will not Provide Answer – Why?

WHY have you LOVED US GOD? Saved Us, Use us in your Kingdom Work?

Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere...*Who is sufficient for these things?*

2 Corinthians 2.14,16

c. Plan of God No Matter our Failures & Foibles > God’s Purpose will Stand

Sovereignly RESTRAINS Sin / Speaks to CONSCIENCE of Unbelievers

OPENS and CLOSES Womb – God of LIFE

v. 18 For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

SAVING His COVENANT People > “because of Sarah”

“This episode is chiefly one of suspense: on the brink of Isaac’s birth-story here is the very Promise put in jeopardy, traded away for personal safety. If it is to ever be fulfilled, it will owe very little to man. Morally as well as physically, it will clearly have to be achieved by the grace of God.” Derek Kidner

Abraham’s Shenanigans > Puts The PROMISED SON at Risk > Long Awaited Child of Promise > from **Abraham and Sarah** NOT Abimelech and Sarah  
NARRATIVE Version of Romans 8.28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8.28

We DO what we DECIDE to DO – BUT it is according to God’s DECREE  
Both TRUTHS are Taught Clearly in the Bible

God uses CHOICES of those who DON’T Know Him > For God’s People  
Even Uses PAGAN Presidents, Legislators, Courts, Civil Society, etc.

What it MEANS for Jesus to have ALL AUTHORITY in Heaven & Earth  
Sometimes He orders things that HURT DEEPLY – 8.28 comes thru 8.29

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.  
Romans 8.29

CONFORMED to be like JESUS means the CROSS

What God do you believe in? God who behaves nicely? What we consider reasonable and nice? Always does right thing for us? Can He do hard things?  
Why does He allow His people to get into a crazy mess?

d. Praise to God - God DELIVERED A & S DESPITE their ACTIONS

If Salvation DEPENDED on what WE DO, we would be TOAST!

But BIBLE DECLARES What GOD Does – All of Grace, All the Glory is His!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age Galatians 1.3,4

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1.13,14

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 2 Timothy 4.18

“...never once does God bring up this incident as if to highlight Abraham’s failure – not in Romans, not in Galatians, not in Hebrews 11... It was forgiven and gone. It was forgotten. It is good to serve a God like that, a God who remains sovereign even when we doubt His ability to care for us, a God who remains gracious even when we sin. To serve a God like that is the world’s greatest joy and opportunity. To know that He is like that is the greatest incentive you will ever have to keep from sinning.”

James Boice

How sweet and awesome is the place with Christ within the doors,  
While everlasting love displays the choicest of her stores.

While all our hearts and all our songs join to admire the feast,  
Each of us cries, with thankful tongue, ‘Lord, why was I a guest?’  
‘Why was I made to hear your voice, and enter while there’s room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come?’

‘Twas the same love that spread the feast that sweetly drew us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin.  
Pity the nations, O our God, constrain the earth to come;  
Send your victorious Word abroad and bring the strangers home.  
We long to see your churches full, that all the chosen race  
May, with one voice and heart and soul, sing your redeeming grace.

Isaac Watts, 1707

Genesis 20 <sup>1</sup>From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb & lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. <sup>3</sup>But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night & said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." <sup>4</sup>Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? <sup>5</sup>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 & the innocence of my hands I have done this." <sup>6</sup>Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, & it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup>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 & all who are yours" <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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." <sup>10</sup>And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father tho not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. <sup>13</sup>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.'" <sup>14</sup>Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. <sup>15</sup>And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." <sup>16</sup>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." <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. <sup>18</sup> For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

1. It seems like Abraham set off on a journey having forgotten to pack his Bible and search the web to find a good church. Have you ever taken such a 'God-less' trip?
2. Where is God when you make plans for 'health care,' 'life insurance,' 'staying fit,' 'career moves,' 'children and their education,' and 'retirement'??
3. Do you, like Abraham in this text, think unbelievers have no fear of God?
4. Have you ever been embarrassingly surprised by unbelievers whose words and actions were more like Jesus than yours?