

# GENESIS 20

## Abraham Lies About Sarah Again

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### KEYWORD

### REVERANCE

God (Plural)  
God (Singular)  
LORD  
GOD  
Lord  
lord  
El Olam  
Bara  
Asah  
Beth  
Numbers

Elohim (The Trinity)  
El  
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)  
Jehovah & or Yahweh  
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai  
Man the Master  
Everlasting God  
God creating from nothing  
God making or assembling from existent materials  
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

### Keywords

“create” (bara), “make” (asah), and “form” (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 – All the three are used.

*Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need*

### PRAYER

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**Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.**

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

**Jesus let thy Holly spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.**

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

**In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!**

# GENESIS 20

## REVIEW

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Genesis chapter 20 is familiar to Genesis chapter 12. In the prior account, Abraham and his household moved to Egypt to escape a devastating famine in Genesis 12:10.

Worried that the people would see how beautiful his wife was and kill him to get her, Abraham asked her to lie and say she was his sister in Genesis 12:13. This was a half-truth: they shared the same father, but different mothers in Genesis 20:12.

Perhaps Abraham imagined that, as her brother, any proposals would be brought to him and he could simply refuse them. That didn't work.

A Pharaoh in Egypt took Sarah for one of his wives in Genesis 12:15. In that first series of incidents, God intervened. Sarah was returned in Genesis 12:19. Abraham and his household left Egypt with far more than they had brought in. God blessed Abraham in spite of his fear and faithlessness in Genesis 12:16 and Genesis 12:20.

Here in chapter 20, a similar pattern emerges. Abraham and company pull up stakes at Mamre and move to a place called Gerar, south of Gaza. Once again, Abraham and Sarah lie: claiming they are brother and sister in Genesis 20:13. The intent is to disguise the fact that they are married.

Again, the most powerful man in the region, King Abimelech, takes this supposedly unattached woman for one of his wives in Genesis 20:2. God afflicts Abimelech with an illness and "closes the wombs" of all the women in his household in Genesis 20:18.

Then God appears to Abimelech in a dream, announcing that Abimelech will die for taking a married woman as his wife in Genesis 20:3. Abimelech responds truthfully that he has not yet approached Sarah and that he acted with full integrity, believing her to be Abraham's sister in Genesis 20:4–5.

The Lord agrees. If Abimelech will return Sarah, Abraham will pray for them, and Abimelech and all of his household will live. If not, they will all die in Genesis 20:7.

Abimelech confronts Abraham about his lie and demands to know why he did it in Genesis 20:9.

Abraham's excuse is his fear of being killed by someone who would take Sarah as a wife. He explains that she is, in fact, his half-sister, though also his wife in Genesis 20:12.

The answer reveals, once more, Abraham's lack of confidence in God to protect him and Sarah, in spite of all of the ways God has shown Himself faithful.

Abimelech returns Sarah, along with gifts of animals, servants, choice land, and a large sum of silver to show Sarah's innocence and protect her reputation in Genesis 20:14–16.

Abraham prays to God. Abimelech is healed. His wife and the women of his household are once again able to bear children.

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# GENESIS 20

## GEN 20: 1

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And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

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After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham moved.

Perhaps he did not want to live in the hills overlooking the destroyed region any longer, and be reminded of those people and the judgment that came upon them.

The south country is translated, “Negev Desert,” which is down toward Egypt.

Kadesh is on the northern end of the Negev, just south of Beer-sheva, where you come into the “promise land.” Shur is a little further south toward Egypt and Gerar is down near the Egyptian border.

Gerar was a very large city of Arabia Petraea in the south of Gaza, near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and within the borders of the Promised Land under a king of the Philistines called Abimelech which translates to *my father king*, who appears to have been not only the *father of his people*, but also a righteous man.

The archeologists have uncovered Gerar and it seemed to be a large merchandising town. Perhaps, even with all of his wealth, Abraham went down to trade to increase that wealth.

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## GEN 20: 2-3

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And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister;

(Twenty-five years earlier, when Abraham had first come into the land, there was a drought in the land and he went down to Egypt.

He asked Sarah to say that she was his sister, because he was afraid they might take her, for her beauty, and kill him.

The Pharaoh took Sarah into his harem, but God told him that she was a man’s wife. The Pharaoh sent Sarah and Abraham away.

Now, Abraham is doing the same thing here in Gerar. After twenty-five more years of walking with God and entering into covenants with him, Abraham still has not grown in faith to the place where he knows that God will, indeed, take care of him.

Abraham repeated the same sin that he committed twenty-five years ago and behind it all is the fact that he is afraid of being killed. How tragic, what fear can do. What an enemy of faith, fear becomes

Today however Abraham’s concern was probably not because Sarah looked like a young beauty at 90 years of age and probably pregnant with Isaac.

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We can surmise that she was reasonably attractive at that age, but more importantly she was connected to one of the richest and most influential men of the region.

In that day, a harem was sometimes more of a political statement than a romantic statement.

Sarah was probably now chosen by Abimelech more on the account of forming an *alliance* with Abraham, who was very rich, than on account of any personal accomplishments.

A petty king, such as Abimelech, would naturally be glad to form an alliance with such a powerful chief as Abraham was.

We cannot but recollect his late defeat of the four confederate Canannitish kings in Genesis 14:14.

This circumstance was sufficient to establish his credit, and cause his friendship to be courted and what more effectual means could Abimelech use in reference to this than the taking of Sarah, who he understood was Abraham's sister, to be his concubine or second wife, which in those times had no kind of disgrace attached to it?

At the same time, we should not ignore the idea of Sarah's continued attractiveness even in old age. She had in some measure been physically rejuvenated, in order to conceive, bear, and nurse Isaac, and possibly this manifested itself in renewed beauty as well.

Just as he lied back in Genesis 12:10-13, he showed that it was easy to slip back into sinful habits. Abraham stumbled in a place that he had stumbled before.

Instead of trusting God to keep his family together, he devised his own plan to do it. However his plan failed completely.

You need to understand that age does not automatically sanctify us. Unless yielded to the Spirit of God, we will repeat in our old age the sinful patterns of our youth.)

and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah, But God came to Abimelech

(Here we find that persons who were not of the *family of Abraham* had the knowledge of the true God. Indeed, all the *Gerarites* are termed a righteous nation in Genesis 20:4)

in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man,

(This may seem drastic, but something important was concerned.

Suppose Abimelech had taken Sarah and God had not intervened? Two seeds would have been at the door to Sarah's womb, and to this day an element of doubt would cling to the ancestry of our Lord.)

for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

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## GEN 20: 4-6

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But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

(Abimelech's question about God's character, whether the Lord would kill innocent people, echoes Abraham's question to the Lord about whether He would destroy righteous people in His judgment of Sodom in Genesis 18:23.

In both cases, the answer was "no." God's character remains intact throughout these moments.

This not only highlights the righteousness of God, it would have been a cutting point for Abraham to hear.

His own actions put the innocent at risk, though he had appealed to God for the sake of the innocent in Genesis chapter 18.)

Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother; in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart;

(Because Abimelech's **heart** was right in this regard, God kept him from worse sin. God's protecting power can guide even a pagan king in Proverbs 21:1)

for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

There are some interesting things in this interchange between Abimelech and the Lord. God is dealing with Abimelech in a dream.

You remember that later on he dealt with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, in a dream. God reaches men even the Pagans.

Abimelech, in this dream, has been declared by God as a dead man if he doesn't return Sarah to her husband.

Evidently, God had begun to strike the nation with a plague and people began to die for unknown reasons; also, God had shut up the wombs of the house of Abimelech.

We don't know how long Sarah was in the harem, but probably long enough for the plague to become evident.

Abimelech was probably wondering what was going on just as Nebuchadnezzar's dream followed his question of what's going to happen to my kingdom? So, the Lord, in a dream showed Abimelech that he would die if he didn't return Sarah to her husband.

The Lord said that He kept Abimelech from sinning against Him. I would think that the sin was against Sarah or Abraham. When King David took Bathsheba in adultery and had her husband put on the front line of battle and killed, his confession to God in Psalm 51 was, *"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned..."*

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In reality all sin is against God. It may affect other people, but God is the one I always sin against.

I cannot sin except I sin against God. It can have a very tragic effect on the lives of the people around me, but ultimately God is the one I will answer to because sin is against His holy law.

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## GEN 20: 7

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Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet,

(This is the first use of the Hebrew word for prophet, *nabiy'*, in the Old Testament.

God considered Abraham to be a prophet, one who speaks for God and to God on behalf of others. We saw this in Chapter 18 as he approached God on behalf of Lot and the people of Sodom.

The word prophet means, in its general acceptation, one who *speaks of things before they happen*, i.e., one who *foretells* future events.

But that this was not the *original* notion of the word, its use in this place sufficiently proves this notion.

Abraham certainly was not a prophet in the present general acceptation of the term, and for the Hebrew נביא *nabi*. As such we must seek some other meaning.

The proper ideal meaning of the original word is to *pray, entreat, make supplication*, and this meaning of it I have justified at large both from its application in this place, and from its pointed use in the case of Saul, mentioned 1 Samuel 10:0, and from the case of the priests of Baal, 1 Kings 18:0, where *prophesying* most undoubtedly means *making prayer and supplication*.

As those who were in habits of intimacy with God by *prayer and faith* were found the most proper persons to communicate his mind to man, both with respect to the *present* and the *future*, hence, נביא *nabi*, the *intercessor*, became in process of time the public *instructor or preacher*, and also the predictor of future events, because to such faithful praying men God revealed the secret of his will.

Hence St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:3, seems to restrain the word wholly to the interpreting the mind of God to the people, and their instruction in Divine things, for, says he, *he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort*)

and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

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One of the things that makes this so terrible is that Abraham has been walking with the Lord for many years now.

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He should have advanced further in his walk and his faith by this time.

Secondly, it's a repeated sin and not the first time it happened. Thirdly, he is jeopardizing the whole plan of God. God has declared through Sarah shall thy seed be called.

Actually, in a sense, God brought Abraham and Sarah back to life. He rejuvenated them at ninety and a hundred years old.

Have you ever wondered why she was so beautiful that a king took her into his harem?

It could be that God completely rejuvenated this old couple in order to keep His word to them.

If Abimelech had gone in and had relations with Sarah then the whole program could have been in jeopardy.

Abraham was about to mess up the whole plan of God, by the polluting of the line by which the Messiah would come, but God moved sovereignly to protect His program.

God will always protect His program. We may fail, but God will raise up someone else.

Remember when Mordecai sent the message to Esther, who was fearful to go in to Ahaserus because she might be killed, that she wouldn't escape just because she was in the palace.

If she chose not to go, God would raise up deliverance from another quarter. God would save His people, but she would have lost her chance to be used of God.

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## GEN 20: 8-9

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Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning,

(God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and we find as the day broke he arose, assembled his servants and communicated to them what he had received from God.

They were all struck with astonishment, and discerned the hand of God in this business.

Abraham is then called, and in a most respectful and pious manner the king expostulates with him for bringing him and his people under the Divine displeasure, by withholding from him the information that Sarah was his wife when, by taking her, he sought only an honorable alliance with his family.)

and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

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(Abimelech is rightfully angry. He calls Abraham before him and confronts him with very similar questions to those asked of Abraham by an Egyptian Pharaoh many years earlier in Genesis 12:18–19.

Here, though, the questions have a more pointed tone. Abraham has lied and told Abimelech that Sarah is his sister, leaving out the full truth that they are actually married.

Abimelech wants to know what he has ever done to Abraham.

It's a question asked by a reasonable person: Did I do something to deserve this terrible treatment from you?

Unlike the Pharaoh, Abimelech also identifies this near-adultery as a great sin with consequences for himself and his whole kingdom.

He seems to agree with God that adultery is wrong. He says clearly to Abraham: You shouldn't have done this.

It is sad to see that Abimelech – the pagan king – was in the right, and Abraham – the man of God – was in the wrong, and Abimelech told Abraham so.)

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### GEN 20: 10

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And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

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Abimelech genuinely wants to know why Abraham lied and said that Sarah was his sister.

More specifically, Abimelech asks what Abraham has seen or encountered that would motivate this kind of deception. Abimelech honestly doesn't get it.

It is interesting that here is a prophet of God being rebuked by a Pagan king. It completely destroys his witness before Abimelech.

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### GEN 20: 11-12

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And Abraham said,

(The best excuse he could make for his conduct, which in *this* instance is far from defensible.)

Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister;

(I have not told a lie so he says; I have suppressed only a part of the truth.

In this place it may be proper to ask, *What is a lie?*

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It is any action done or word spoken, whether true or false in itself, which the doer or speaker wishes the observer or hearer to take in a *contrary* sense to that which he knows to be true.

It is, in a word, any action done or speech delivered with *the intention to deceive*, though both may be absolutely true and right in themselves.

As such a half-truth, said with intent to deceive, is always a whole lie.)

she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

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Terah first married *Yona*, by whom he had Abraham; afterwards he married *Tehevita*, by whom he had Sarah. Thus she was the sister of Abraham, being the daughter of the same father by a different mother.

So Abraham tries to lamely explain his actions which stems from the fear of his own life.

God had said He was going to give him a son. The son was not yet born, so why would Abraham fear for his life? Surely he should realize that the word of God is going to be fulfilled.

God's word cannot fail. Abraham's faith did develop and grow as we will see as we read further in Genesis.

It is interesting that oftentimes these places of failure are also places of growth. God, in His love and grace towards us, reveals to us those areas of weakness in our lives; only, for the purpose that He might make us strong.

God so often when revealing the fleshly areas that are displeasing to Him, doesn't show them in a condemning way; but, he shows them in a way to reveal the next area where God will work in my life.

Whenever God makes me aware of a displeasing area in my life, I look at it as God putting up "under construction" signs. That's the place where he is going to be working next.

As He puts me through the test, it is to develop my trust in Him and take away the confidence in my flesh. It is to cause me to trust only in His work, because in myself I am going to fail.

We so often get in God's way as He is trying to work in our lives. We want to get some of the glory when we get the victory.

The tests and failures are to cause us to rely completely on the Lord, because in our flesh dwells no good thing.

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**GEN 20: 13**

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And it came to pass, when God (*Elohim*) caused me to wander from my father's house,

(This was an indirect way of blaming God for the problem. Abraham claimed that God sent him out on this dangerous journey upon which Abraham had to protect himself.

There is a terrible meaning in this verb *wander* which Abraham uses.

The Hebrew word occurs exactly 50 times in Scripture and never in a good sense. It is used of animals going astray, of a drunken man reeling, or staggering, of sinful seduction, of a prophet's lies causing the people to err, of the path of a lying heart.

Six other words are translated *wander*, any one of which Abraham might have used, but he used the worst word available.

Abraham should have said:

Forgive me, Abimelech, for dishonoring both you and my God. My selfish cowardice overwhelmed me, and I denied my God by fearing that He who called me could not take care of me.

He is not as your gods of wood and stone. He is the God of glory. He is the living God, the Creator, the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. He told me He would be my shield and my exceeding great reward, and supplier of all my needs...

In sinning against Him, I sinned against you. Forgive me, Abimelech.)

that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, he is my brother.

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Abraham's failure started back in Babylon before he ever walked with God. He had already figured this is the area where he would fail so he was programmed, back in Babylon, for failure.

It's possible for us to program failure into our lives. In the same way that you program failure, you can program victory.

*"I know that I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."*

If you learn to just trust in the Lord, you can be victorious over every circumstance of life.

It's important that you have certain foundational truths upon which you stand. When everything is shakey and trembling, you stand upon these truths:

- God loves me,
  - God will take care of me,
  - He who neither slumbers or sleeps will watch over me,
  - He will preserve me and cause me to come forth triumphant.
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Look at what Paul the Apostle went through, Why? Because, he knew in whom he believed.

He was able to go through the stonings, the shipwrecks, the beatings and all the experiences that he had, coming forth more than a conqueror; because his trust was in the living God.

Here Abraham, the opposite, preprogrammed defeat and it happened to him and caught him in that moment of weakness.

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## GEN 20: 14

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And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and women servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

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In showing such generosity to Abraham, Abimelech was essentially heaping coals of fire on Abraham's head (as in Romans 12:20).

This was somewhat backwards; Abraham should have given gifts to Abimelech because Abraham was in the wrong.

Also, it is interesting to see that Abraham *accepted* these gifts when he had refused gifts from a pagan king previously in Genesis 14:21-24, because he wanted no one to think a man had made him rich.

Here, because of Abraham's compromise, he found it hard to reclaim the same high moral ground.

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## GEN 20: 15-16

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And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee; dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver;

(SHEKELS are very probably meant here, and so the Targum understands it.

The Septuagint has a thousand didrachma, no doubt meaning *shekels*; for in Genesis 23:15-16.

As *shakal* signifies literally *to weigh*, and the shekel was a coin of such a weight, and as such this was the origin of our word *scale*, the instrument to *weigh* with.

The shekel of the sanctuary weighed *twenty* gerahs in Exodus 30:13.

And according to the Jews, the *gerah* weighed *sixteen* grains of barley. After the captivity the *shekel* was increased to *three hundred and eighty-four* grains or barley-corns.

On the subject of ancient weights and measures, very little that is satisfactory is known.)

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behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other;

(The *one thousand shekels* was to procure her a veil to conceal her beauty *unto all that are with her, and with all other* from all her own kindred and *acquaintance*, and from all *strangers*, that none, seeing her as she's another man's wife.)

thus she was reproved.

(The ancient Hebrew word for **rebuked** is *yakach*. It has the idea of "set right," so it is debatable if Sarah was *set right* by Abimelech's rebuke, or if she was *found to be right* because of her humble submission in this occasion. In a sense, both were true.)

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### GEN 20: 17-18

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So Abraham prayed unto God:

(This was the prime office of the נביא *nabi* or prophet; in Genesis 20:7.)

Why did God require the middle step of another person's prayer before taking action?

God often works that way, especially through his prophets in the Old Testament and in the church today.

God stands ready to exercise His power in response to the prayers of His people. He wants us to ask; He acts when we do in James 5:17–18)

and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

(Probably by means of some *disease* with which he had smitten them, hence it is said *they were healed* at Abraham's intercession; and this seems necessarily to imply that they had been afflicted by some disease that rendered it impossible for them to have children till it was removed.

And possibly this disease had afflicted Abimelech, and by this he was withheld, Genesis 20:6, from defiling Abraham's bed.

Now this establishes two points that are important when interpreting this incident.

First, Sarah must have been in Abimelech's household for a while before God appeared to him in the dream.

She had to be there long enough for it to become apparent that the women of the household could not bear children. That's not something one can realize in a few short days, or even weeks.

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Second, this shows us once again that God exercises complete control over fertility, giving and withholding children as He sees fit.

Psalm 127:3 indicates that children are a gift from the Lord. He sometimes withholds them in judgment, as He did here, or until the time is right, as will happen with the birth of Isaac in the following chapter.

At still other times, He withholds children without explanation or condemnation.

In all cases, His people are called to trust the Father's timing, His grace, and His love.)

We will start from Chapter 21 next week ...

## **IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW**

- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
- But right now I repent of my sins
- I make you my Lord
- I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
- I need you, Jesus
- Be my savior
- So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

## **LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING**

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
- May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
- May your heart be filled with his love
- May you walk in the spirit

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- May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
  - May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
  - And may God increase your faith and your trust
  - May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he natures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
  - May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
  - And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
  - Amen
-