



Bible Study

After the Sodom incident and the survival of Lot Abraham continues his journey. He passes through the Negev and arrives at Gerar.

It is here that he meets Abimelech the king of the region. He confronts an old problem which is the beauty of his wife Sarah and the danger of him being killed so that Abimelek can have her as his wife.

Judgement falls on Abimeleks house hold. Abimelek confronts Abraham and lets him go with many gifts.

Abraham's fear. V 1-2

Abraham knows the mentality of the people he stays with and has this strategy of how to deal with Sarah his wife in a place of great insecurity. He has faced this problem before and repeats the same strategy. He declares Sarah is his sister. He is not technically lying. Sarah is the daughter of his father but not his mother. However in the custom of the day he was able to legally marry Sarah.

Abimelek. V 3-10

He takes Sarah into his harem which would have offered some protection for her. As far as he knows, he is doing no wrong.

God speaks in a dream to Abimelek and tells him he is a dead man because he has taken a married woman into his care. He pleads for mercy saying in fact he had not touched the woman and that she claimed to be Abraham's brother and he had claimed she was his sister.

The sanctity of marriage.

God is clearly upholding the sanctity of marriage. He has kept Sarah from the possibility of a pregnancy. When she will conceive it will be through Abraham alone.

God's judgment is shown by the fact all of Abimelek's family suffer. The female slaves and his wife are unable to conceive. The blessing of marriage is often accompanied by the ability to have children and it was a curse when women were barren. Today we must exercise caution regarding women who cannot have children and not see it as a direct judgement of God. However the gift of children is always a wonderful blessing.

Gifts not death.

Abraham is blessed by Abimelek with many gifts. Sheep, cattle, male and female slaves. He also gives a thousand shekels of silver which would be about \$2000 and most important of all he gives Sarah back to Abraham..

Abraham feared that Abimelek had no regard for God at all but in fact Abimelek feared God so much he did everything to put matters right after discovering Sarah was Abraham's wife.

Abrahams Prayers.

Abraham had interceded for Lot and now he intercedes for Abimelek whose whole household is barren and God hears his prayer and fertility returns to the household.

This chapter is not easy to understand as the culture of the day is very different to what most of us experience. However we see how an ungodly man like Abimelek is chastened by God and how Abraham is blessed by God and prospers in adverse circumstances.

Points to consider.

Was Abraham's fear reasonable? How would we respond in a potential life threatening situation?

How resolute are we to uphold the covenant of marriage?

Do we believe God judges sin today?

The fear of God comes on Abimelek. Do we pray for people to fear God today?

God heard Abraham's prayers. Do we believe our intercessions can be effective today in our world?