

# Genesis 20: God's Prophet

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To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, "**here we go again!**"

"We are here returning to the story of Abraham; yet that part of it which is here recorded is not to his honour. . . . The scripture . . . is impartial in relating the blemishes even of its most celebrated characters." —*Matthew Henry*

Abraham fears the wrong **King** in this passage.

Ironically, in this passage Abimelech demonstrates more **integrity** than Abraham. (Gen 20:5)

This chapter is the only time in Genesis that we encounter the word **prophet** (*nabiy*). (Gen 20:7)  
What is the irony in this particular instance? What later confrontation does this remind us of?

Why do you suppose Abimelech and all his court were scared out of their wits by the dream?

In this passage we see an example of how God restrains **sin** even among unbelievers. (Gen 20:6)

Abraham's deception was a form of **betrayal** of the king—Abraham owed him the truth, even though he was a pagan that might do harm to Abraham on account of Sarah.

When speaking to God, Abimelech makes a similar **appeal** as Abraham did in Gen 18:23: "Will you kill an innocent people?" (Gen 20:4)

Notice that if Abimelech had sinned, it would have brought judgment against Gerar. But Abraham brought judgment against the kingdom by virtue of his deception (compare to Gen 12). There is a spillover effect of both **sin** and **grace**.

Abimelech's rebuke is both **truthful** and **kind**—he does not use the opportunity to mock Abraham for his hypocrisy.

Abraham gives a classic rationalization for his deception:

- There is no fear of God here
- You will kill me in order to take Sarah
- Sarah really is my sister—she was my sister before she was my wife
- We worked this out about 25 years ago—"this is the *kindness* you must do me"

Abraham is guilty of playing the **blame** game with Abimelech.

It is interesting to note that Abraham never really comes clean about his wrongdoing. He seems to get away without so much as an apology—both times!

Sarah is publicly **vindicated** to demonstrate that no wrong was done against her.

How is grace illustrated in the gifts that Abraham and Sarah receive from Abimelech? How does this foreshadow the Exodus? (refer also to Gen 12)

Here we see Abraham in his threefold office: **prophet**, **priest**, and **patriarch**.

Abraham's prayer is used by God to aid in the **restoration** of his relationship with Abimelech.

How does this passage warn us about the importance of integrity for leaders?