

## **The Promise in Jeopardy: Abraham & Sarah in Gerar**

*Gen. 20:1-18*

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### **I. The Importance of Story**

If we miss the story God is telling, we set ourselves up for a rude awakening. If we buy into the American dream, for instance, we set ourselves up for disappointment when our actions fail to bring about the promised 'dream'. Reality will hit and you'll wonder where God is. This is true of other false stories as well. They end in disappointment and foster resentment, bitterness, and ultimately unbelief.

The story we read in the Bible, however, is meant to give us our grounding. It is the extensive root structure for the Church. It discloses to us what God has done, what He will do, and what He *is* doing. It is for us to carefully pay attention, get our bearings, and play our role.

### **II. The Text — Gen. 20:1-18**

*... 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." ...*

### **III. Abraham & Sarah in Gerar**

The Lord is mindful of preserving \_\_\_\_\_. It is one thing for Sodom and Gomorrah to bring hell upon themselves by unwittingly trying to abuse angels. That was sinning with their eyes wide open—even if they were unaware that their hoped-for victims had the power to blind those eyes and then destroy them. But in our chapter, God is kind in keeping Abimelech from walking into this sin unwittingly and so bring disaster upon himself and his kingdom—God preserved him. But this doesn't mean he's off the hook.

The more significant thing to take notice of is, however, how God also preserves His \_\_\_\_\_. He was mindful not only of Abraham's \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with Sarah, but also of *His* covenant with Abraham and Sarah. He was mindful of it when it was in jeopardy. The Lord in preserving Abimelech and his kingdom was in fact preserving the promise He made to Abraham and Sarah.

God made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, that kings would come from him, that God would establish His covenant between Him and Abraham and Abraham's descendants after him in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to him and his descendants after him. Now, this covenant is to be established with the son Sarah his wife would bear him (Gen. 17:19, 21). So when Sarah goes into the harem of Abimelech, this is not a merely human tragedy in the making, it is a \_\_\_\_\_ tragedy in the making. Not only is the redemption of the world is at stake, but God's \_\_\_\_\_ is at stake. The promise is at risk, and, what is more, Abraham cannot do anything about it.

#### **IV.    *The Story***

When the promises of God appear to us to be in jeopardy so that we lift up our eyes and can only see darkness all around, when we wonder to ourselves, “How in the world is God going to get us out of this one?” then the hour of \_\_\_\_\_ draws near. It is at this point that God delights to show His mighty hand, and deliver His people, secure His covenant promises, and bring His people out with an abundance. This is *the* story God tells over and over again (e.g., Gen. 12, 20, 26; Exodus; Ezra).

By telling this story over and over again it prepared the people of old to hear what God would speak to all men in Jesus Christ because this is the story of Jesus Christ. It was Jesus who laid in death’s strong bands, who was brought into the tyrant’s den. But what happened? God did not let His anointed see \_\_\_\_\_. By the mighty hand of God, Jesus was raised from the dead, and came out bearing riches for all who would turn to Him in faith.

God tells this story over and over again throughout the Old Testament, because it is the story of the new humanity with Christ as our head, and in hearing it, we behold the strength and mercy and faithfulness—the \_\_\_\_\_—of our God. And as we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are strengthened with faith, with joy, with awe and gratitude. We are strengthened in order to face the dangers appointed for us in \_\_\_\_\_ day. For this is the same plot we are in.

Our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the same God who would not let Jesus see corruption; who would not let Sarah be defiled, but brought her out of Abimelech’s harem with an abundance. This is our God. He is our Keeper. And as we suffer with Jesus, so we shall have that same end. God’s people will weather every storm. The Church will endure through every danger. The Church will outlive every tyrant—even the tyrant of the grave. Why? Because God remains faithful—He cannot deny Himself. He has sworn by Himself a covenant promise to His people, confirmed and sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and that cannot be changed. He will see us through.

#### **V.     **God Over All****

When we lift up our eyes and look around at whatever towering forces we face, we need to see God over all, towering above it all. We need to call to mind God, the Keeper of His people, visiting our enemies at night, taking care of business. We need to recall God splitting the Red Sea and throwing into it Pharaoh and his army. We need to remember God turning the hearts of kings, having them publish decrees to rebuild Christendom. We need to behold God visiting the grave and robbing it of its Prey.

We need to remember our God, and then, we need to compose ourselves like \_\_\_\_\_ did. We need to, like Jesus, run with endurance the race set before us (Heb. 12:1-2). It should be our aim and our prayer to act like Him in the midst of it. We all must suffer with Christ, and we should, therefore, desire to suffer *like* Christ. We do so by keeping God in view, and the happy resolution He has written.

#### **VI.    **Conclusion****