

Faith Yields to Fear

Introduction and Review

- Abraham was hospitable to the Lord & angels in faith (Gen. 18:1-8).
- Abraham interceded for the inhabitants of Sodom in faith (Gen. 18:22-32a).
- Abraham received the Lord's answer in faith (Gen. 18:32b).
- Abraham observed the judgment & mercy of God in faith (**Gen. 19:27-29**). He enjoyed fellowship with the Lord (ch. 18) & saw the judgment of God (ch. 19) which should have strengthened his faith. But now his faith is going to be tested again in a different way & with different circumstances.

I. God Graciously Reveals Sin (Gen. 20:1-13).

A. Abraham's fear of man (v. 1-2a)

Abraham is a pilgrim who is making a journey to the land promised by the Lord (12:1). He journeyed from Mamre to Gerar (20:1). Abraham & Sarah agreed to a plan of deception out of fear rather than faith (20:2a). This is the 2nd occasion of this deception (12:11-13). Abraham coerced/pressured Sarah, but she still agreed to the lie.

B. Abimelech's fear of God (v. 2b-13)

Wife-stealing was common in this culture. Abimelech took Sarah as a presumed single woman (v. 2b). God interrupted Abimelech's marital plans & revealed the truth (v. 3-7). God rules over situations even when we sin & ensures His promise is kept (v. 6). God promised a blessing for obedience & death for disobedience (v. 7). Abimelech promptly obeyed God in fear & rebuked Abraham (v. 8-10). Abraham's confession is excuses & self-justification (v. 11-13) – more fear of man than fear of God. Unlike his nephew Lot, Abraham's deceptive action did not damage his testimony permanently [not a compromising lifestyle].

God is faithful to protect & deliver a believer even through times of fear & failure.

II. God Graciously Provides for Saints & Sinners (Gen. 20:14-18)

A. Abraham receives God's blessing (v. 14-16)

Abimelech made an offering of peace to the prophet of God (v. 14, 7a). The gift of land was an offer of friendship & acceptance in Gerar (v. 15). The gift of money revealed the value & purity of the bride (v. 16) – normally 50 shekels (20x). Everything was a gift of grace to Abraham (unmerited).

B. Abimelech receives God's blessing (v. 17-18)

"Then Abraham prayed to God" (v. 17a). Through prayer Abraham demonstrated: obedience to God, faith in God & love for his enemy (v. 17a; Mt. 5:43-45). God honored Abraham, revealed His power & showed mercy to Abimelech along with his household (v. 17b-18). Abraham was a prophet for God & intercessor for the Philistines. Everything was a gift of mercy to the Philistines.

God is faithful to provide the needs of the believer & the unbeliever (Mt. 5:43-45).