

GENESIS

THE ABIMELECH AFFAIR VSS.1-18

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Chapter 20 finds its full disclosure of doctrinal teaching only by comparison to chapter 19.
2. That as back-to-back records of two believers guilty of sin fear, Lot and now **Abraham**.
3. This more specifically as it pertains to Lot the negative reversionist compared to **Abraham** the positive adjusted believer.
4. While both acts of sin are of the ISTA and include lack of faith-rest, there are distinct differences:
 - A. Lot's fear was perpetuated operating under God's permissive will geographically (19:18-20,30) resulting in a life manipulated by STA's (two daughters) indicative of leading to SUD.
 - B. As we will observe, Abraham's sin is not in violation of God's geographical will; he acknowledges his sin (vss.11-13) and remains as a witness resulting in blessing to others.
5. Chapter 20 is designed to illustrate the differences of sin in the life as it pertains to perpetual sinning in reversionism versus incidental sinning experienced by even the positive adjusted believer and God's attitude towards said believers.
6. Lot's experience only finds blessing by association (19:29) and God is conspicuously vacant from the rest of his life (19:30ff), while **Abraham** continually enjoys God's intercession on his behalf throughout his sinful ordeal (chtr.20) and after the fact (21:1ff).
7. Chapter 20 makes clear that "*there is not a righteous man on earth that continually does good and does not sin*", Ecc.7:20.
8. The fact is, +V believers are victims of their own STA's and that often on a repetitive basis. Cp.Rom.7:15
9. This explains in part why Genesis records two parallel incidents of Abraham's sin regarding **Sarah** finding herself in the harem of two different rulers on two different occasions.
10. **Abraham** had his STA weaknesses in life affecting decisions less than righteous, yet remained under God's geographical and directive will continuing to enjoy God's blessings.
11. Only by understanding the distinction between reversionism and incidental sinning can the student of the WOG recognize how and why God can show favor to one believer and not another with both guilty of personal sin in the life and even the same kind of sin (e.g. fear).
12. For one it is sin perpetuated remiss of spiritual advance and orientation, the other it is simply an isolated "stumbling" on the glory road. Jam.3:2
13. *Review the Doctrine of Reversionism.*

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SARAH ENDS UP IN ANOTHER HAREM

EXEGESIS VERSES 1 – 2:

וַיֵּסַע וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין־קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיֵּגֵר בְּגֵרָר: ^{WTT} Genesis 20:1

^{NAS} Genesis 20:1 Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, (וַיֵּסַע וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין־קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיֵּגֵר בְּגֵרָר) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: nasa-; "and setting out/journey"; + prep: min + adv: sham; "from there"; + proper n: "Abraham"; + n/com/f/s/constr: 'erets + d.a. + proper n: negeb; "to the land of the South/Negev"] and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. (וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין־קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיֵּגֵר בְּגֵרָר) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: yashab; "and he settled/dwelt"; + prep: bayin; "between"; + proper n: qadesh {lit. set apart/sacred}; "Kadesh"; + waw conj. + prep: bayin + proper n: shur {lit. wall}; "and between Shur"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: gur; "and he sojourned"; + prep: bet + proper n: gerar {lit. a weight}; "in Gerar")

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחֹתִי הִיא וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבִּימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גֵּרָר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרָה: ^{WTT} Genesis 20:2

^{NAS} Genesis 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." (וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחֹתִי הִיא) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + proper n: 'abraham; "and he said, Abraham"; + prep: 'el + proper n: sarah + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ishshah; "to Sarah, his wife"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'achoth; "my sister"; + pro/3fs: hiy; "is she"] So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. (וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבִּימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גֵּרָר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרָה) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: shalach; "and he sent"; + proper n: 'abiymelek {lit. father is king}; "Abimelech"; + n/com/m/s/constr: melek; "the king of"; + proper n: "Gerar"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: laqach; "and he took"; + sign of d.o. + proper n: "Sarah"]

ANALYSIS VERSES 1 – 2:

1. After witnessing God's destruction of the Jordanian valley (19:28), **Abraham** decides for a change in scenery for himself.
2. That he “**journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev...then he sojourned**” is reminiscent of a parallel incident in 12:9,10.
3. The passages employ the same two verbs “**journeyed/set out/nasa-**” and “**sojourned/gur**”.
4. On the previous occasion, **Abraham** went well over the border of Canaan into Egypt (12:10).

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5. On this occasion, he remains in God's geographical will along the southern border of Canaan **between Kadesh-Barnea and Shur** and **then** taking a side trip north to **Gerar** (10:19).
6. That he remains geographically oriented at least implies a spiritual advance from the preceding incident recognizing the importance to adhere to the basic tenants of Covenant (12:1-2; 13:14-18).
7. His remaining in Canaan is indicative to what we would consider to be his MPR (most pressing responsibility).
8. The phrase "**from there**/min sham" means he left Mamre (18:1).
9. He first relocated his livestock and estate as seen by the verb "**settled**/yashab" before he **sojourned in Gerar**.
10. "**The land of the Negev**" was remote and provided the open spaces to feed his herds and the area provided water for all (cp.16:7).
11. He **then** takes a side trip to **Gerar** that was a more populated area occupied by the Philistines (cf.26:1).
12. The Philistines were the descendants of Pathrusim and Casluhim the sons of Mizraim (Egypt). Cp.Gen.10:13-14
13. It was an area destined for conquest under Joshua. Cf.Jos.13:2
14. Without the earlier Egyptian account of 12:11-20, verse 2 would be cryptic as the narrator hastens on to focus on Abimelech's dream and subsequent discussion with **Abraham**.
15. **Abraham** resorts to his human viewpoint scheme of presenting **Sarah his wife** as his "**sister**/'achoth" in fear for his life while in **Gerar** just as when in Egypt (cf.12:13).
16. While the verses remain silent as to what spurred his fear in this region, it is not a stretch to consider that its inhabitants had quite a reputation as aggressive and warlike putting **Abraham** on the defensive. Cp.Exo.13:17
17. Curiously **Abimelech** is a Canaanite name meaning "My father is king", even though the territory was Philistine.
18. It is quite possible that **Abimelech** was the royal title rather than the personal name since in the title of Psa.34 we find it applied to the king of Gath elsewhere known by his personal name (cf.1Sam.27:2,3).
19. It is probably his son also called **Abimelech** that is the contemporary to Isaac in Gen.26:1ff.
20. It is interesting to note that Isaac had his father's STA trend in a similar occurrence recognizing the STA gene being passed down through the father (26:8-11).
21. **Abimelech** is also the name of Gideon's son (Judg.8:31) and Israelite priest (1Chr.18:16).
22. Sarah's beauty was still outstanding at the age of 90 having been maintained and possibly rejuvenated via the miracle of restored sexual vigor.
23. She was not yet pregnant, but she was vulnerable.
24. Like Pharaoh 24 years earlier (1871-1847), **Abimelech** is informed of Sarah's beauty and sends for her.
25. He is smitten by her beauty and brings her into his harem.
26. While overt beauty of one's **wife** is generally desired and considered an asset to the relationship, for Abraham's STA trend, it becomes a liability.
27. This illustrates that the STA refuses to be satiated and will find ways to compromise that considered good/normal otherwise.
28. **Abraham** tells a half-truth out of fear just to protect his own skin.
29. The episode is almost dumbfounding.

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30. It seems incredible that **Abraham** should make the same dreadful mistake again.
31. In chapter 12 we might cut him some slack as at the stage he had much less experience of God's providential care; now years later and richer in experiences of deliverance from danger he fears for his life in **Gerar**.
32. The righteous man that pleaded for the city of Sodom is now found to be less than perfect in his trust in God's safekeeping.
33. This is further extenuated by the fact that while he resided in Mamre he was promised an heir by **Sarah** within the year.
34. All of this came right after the momentous events of chapters 18 and 19 that were designed to strengthen his faith.
35. Yet here we have him acting like someone that had no experience of divine deliverance and was unfamiliar with the promises of God.
36. This episode serves to demonstrate that even the greatest of believers can act totally out of character when confronted with some threat, perceived or real.
37. The doctrine that made up the covenant clearly specified that:
 - A. God would bless **Abraham** all the way to the grave. Cf.15:15
 - B. God would provide him with a descendant named Isaac within one year. Cf.17:19,21
38. Yet, in the face of an unknown situation he totally capitulates to his STA in the face of what would turn out to be a nonexistent threat, as the **king of Gerar** was a righteous man.

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ABIMELECH'S DREAM

EXEGESIS VERSES 3 – 7:

וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלוֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנֵּנִי מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהוּא בְּעֵלְתָּ בְּעַל:

WTT Genesis 20:3

^{NAS} Genesis 20:3 **But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him,** (**לֹא אָמַר וְלַיְלָה הַחֲלוֹם הַבְּאִימֶלֶךְ אֶל אֱלֹהִים בּוֹא** [*waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: bo' + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "But He came, God"; + prep: 'el + proper n: "to Abimelech"; + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: chalom; "in the dream"; + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: layelah; "the night"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + prep. w/3ms suff: lamed; "and said to him"])*

"Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." (**הִנֵּה בְּעַל בְּעַל הִיא וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה הִיא עַל מוֹת הַנְּהָה**) [*interj.part. w/2ms suff: hinneh; "behold you!"; + v/qal/ptc/m/s/abs: muth; "are going to die/a dead man"; + prep: -al; "over/because"; + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'ishshah; "the woman"; + rel.pro: 'asher; "whom"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: laqach; "you have taken"; + waw conj. + pro/3fs: hiy'; "and/for she"; + v/qal/pass/ptc/f/s/constr: ba-al; "having been married of/is owned"; + n/com/m/s/abs: ba-al; "by an owner/husband"])*

וְאַבְיִמֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הַגּוֹי גַּם-צְדִיק תִּהְרַג:

WTT Genesis 20:4

^{NAS} Genesis 20:4 **Now Abimelech had not come near her;** (**אֶל קָרַב לֹא אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ וְ**) [*waw conj. + proper n: "Now Abimelech"; + neg.part: lo' + v/qal/PF/3ms: qarab; "had not approached/come near"; + prep. w/3fs suff: 'el; "to her"])*

and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?" (**הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה אֲדֹנָי אָמַר וְ**) [*waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar; "and he said"; + proper n: 'adonay; "Lord"; + interr.part. ha + n/com/m/s/abs: goy; "a nation"; + conj: gam; "even"; + adj/m/s/abs: tsadiyq; "blameless"; + v/qal/IPF/2ms: harag; "will You kill/slay?"])*

הֲלֹא הוּא אָמַר-לִי אֲחֹתִי הוּא וְהִיא-גַּם-הוּא אָמְרָה אֲחִי הוּא בְּתַם-לִבִּי וּבְנִקְוֹן פִּי עֲשִׂיתִי זֹאת:

WTT Genesis 20:5

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^{NAS} Genesis 20:5 "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister '? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' (הָאָח אָמַר הִיא גַם הִיא וְהִיא אָחֹת לִי אָמַר הִיא לֹא הִיא הִיא) [interr.part: ha + neg.part: lo' + pro/3ms: hu' + v/qal/PF/3ms: 'amar + + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "did not he himself say to me?"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'achoth; "my sister"; + pro/3fs: hiy; "is she"; + waw conj. + pro.3fs: hiy + conj: gam; "and she herself also"; + pro/3fs: hiy + v/qal/PF/3fs: 'amar; "she herself said"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'ach; "my brother"; + pro/3ms: hu'; "is he""]

In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this. (בְּחַלְמוֹת לִבִּי וּבְטָהוֹרַת יָדַי עָשִׂיתִי אֵת זֶה) [prep: bet + n/com/m/s/constr: tom; "in the integrity of"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/1cs suff: lebab; "my heart"; + waw conj. + prep: bet; "and in"; + n/com/m/s/constr: niqqayon; "the innocence of"; + n/com/f/dual/constr. w/1cs suff: kaph; "my hands"; + v/qal/PF/1cs: -asah + adj/f/s: zo'th; "I have done this""]

^{WTT} Genesis 20:6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים בְּחַלְמוֹת גַּם אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי בְּתַם-לִבְבְּךָ עָשִׂיתָ אֵת וְאַחֲשֶׂךָ גַם-אֲנֹכִי אֶתְּךָ מִחַטֹּאתַי עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיךָ לְנֹגַע אֵלֶיהָ:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:6 **Then God said to him in the dream,** (וַיֹּאמֶר ה' בְּחַלְמוֹתַי) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + prep. w/3ms suff: 'el + d.a. + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohiym; "and He said to him, the God"; + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: chalom; "in the dream""]

"Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, (בְּכִי יָדַע אֲנֹכִי גַם) [conj: gam; "Indeed/Yes"; + pro.1cs: 'anokiy; "I Myself"; + v/qal/PF/1cs: yada-; "know"; + conj: kiy; "that"; + prep: bet + n/com/m/s/constr: tom; "in the integrity of"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: lebab; "your heart"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: -asah + adj/f/s: zo'th; "you have done this""]

and I also kept you from sinning against Me; (וְגַם חָשַׁקְתִּי אֶתְךָ מִן אֵת אֲנֹכִי גַם חָשַׁקְתִּי) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/1cs: chasak; "and I kept in check/restrained"; + conj: gam; "also"; + pro/1cs: 'anokiy; "I Myself"; + sign of d.o. w/2ms suff: 'eth; "you"; + prep: min + v/qal/inf/constr: chatha'; "from sinning"; + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "against Me""]

therefore I did not let you touch her. (אֲלֵךְ לֹא נָתַן לְךָ לְנֹגַע אֵלֶיהָ) [prep: -al + prep: ken; "upon thus/therefore"; + neg.part: lo' + v/qal/PF/1cs w/2ms suff: nathan; "I did not give/let you"; + prep: lamed w.v/qal/inf/constr: naga- "for touching"; + prep. w/3fs suff: 'el; "towards her""]

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13. The phrase “**for she is married**” specifies the legality of the indictment.
14. The Hebrew phraseology is literally, “**she is owned by an owner**/hiy’ ba-al ba-al”.
15. The only other use of the phrase “ba-al ba-al” is Deu.22:22: “*If a man is found lying with a married woman (ba-al ba-al), then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel*”.
16. The wife is seen as the sacred property of the husband.
17. She is also his *alter ego* and one flesh with him (cf.2:18-24).
18. She is her husband’s most precious possession and to take her is the worst kind of theft.
19. As part of Abimelech’s defense in vs.4, the narrator adds the important note that the defendant “**had not come near her**/lo’ qarab ‘el”.
20. This serves as crucial circumstantial evidence to support Abimelech’s oral defense.
21. The Law demands proof that a man has lain with someone else’s wife for death to be administered. Cf.Deu.17:6; 19:15
22. **Abimelech** then addresses Deity using the general term of deference as “**Lord**/’adonay”.
23. What catches our attention is Abimelech’s understanding of the indictment extending to his subjects of rule, “**Will You slay a nation, even though blameless**/ha goy gam tsadiyq harag?”
24. He takes for granted that the sin(s) of a leader can bring judgment on the entire populace and not just their leader.
25. This idea is supported in vss.7,8 and 9.
26. It adds a layer contextually extending death from the perspective of individual to corporate.
27. The news of Sodom and Gomorrah’s judgment is obviously fresh on Abimelech’s mind knowing the power of **God** to wipe out entire populations at will.
28. It shows how serious he took his position as king knowing that he represented the **nation** and his decisions and actions put his people at risk.
29. His opening question is rhetorical expecting a negative answer and doctrinally sound paralleling Abraham’s opening arguments of 18:23ff.
30. The gist is “How could a just **God** spill innocent blood?” via the terms “**slay/murder**/harag” (cf.4:8,14,15,23,25; 12:12) and “**blameless**/tsadiyq”.
31. In vs.5, **Abimelech** doesn’t deny his action but gives the reason of why he is not guilty.
32. That was he was misled and acted in total ignorance of the true situation.
33. Both Abraham and Sarah said they were **sister and brother**.
34. Here we find out that Sarah was complicit in the scheme.
35. The double use of the personal pronoun for Sarah’s response in the phrase , “**she herself said**” is literally in the Hebrew, “**she also, she herself, she said**/hiy gam hiy ‘amar”.
36. It is language that indicates that Sarah was adamant in her claim of being Abraham’s **sister** and at least by inference was unattached to Abraham by marriage.
37. **Abimelech** therefore acted with “**integrity/forthright**/tom” and “**innocence**/niqqayon”.
38. He claims virtuousness both in thought and action (**heart**/lebab **and hands**/kaph).
39. The Divine reply in vs.6 repeats verbatim part of Abimelech’s words in confirmation of his sincerity.
40. That is that he had no mal-intent of **heart**; **God** read his “tape”.
41. This was seen in that he obviously scrutinized both parties questioning their relationship.
42. It is interesting to note that Moses records twice that when **God** spoke to **Abimelech**, it was while he was in a dream state (vss.3a,6).

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43. The second reference to “**the dream**” in vs.6 following Abimelech’s words of vs.4-5 gives the sense that **Abimelech** was in a state of flux between dreaming when **God** spoke and consciously awake when he spoke to **God**.
44. This so **Abimelech** could ascertain that this wasn’t all “just a **dream**”.
45. Even though in a **dream** state, all occurred real as though awake and consciously aware.
46. While **God** confirmed Abimelech’s intentions, He goes on to add something that was not in Abimelech’s frame of reference, nor could it have been, “**I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her**”.
47. Some interpreters suggest that even though **Abimelech** took Sarah in ignorance, he was still guilty of sinning, since she was married, albeit a sin of omission.
48. God’s words “**I kept you from sinning against Me/’anokiy ‘eth min chatha lamed**” refutes that hint of legalism.
49. The sin would not have occurred until the act of adultery.
50. Both Divine omniscience and omnipotence are featured in the exoneration of **Abimelech** and the protection of Sarah and the plan of salvation.
51. **God** also protected an otherwise unsuspecting innocent man from “**sinning against/chatha’ lamed**” Him.
52. He makes clear that while **Abimelech** showed intellectual honesty, he only avoided **sinning** because of Divine intervention.
53. This suggests that freedom from sin is only possible through Divine involvement. Cp.Rom.8:2
54. Intellectual honesty within and Divine intervention are necessary ingredients for salvation.
55. Had **Abimelech** had relations with Sarah he would have sinned even though he was oblivious to the circumstances.
56. **God** protected the integrity of His plan even though Abraham, Sarah and **Abimelech** posed a threat to the Covenant promise of an heir.
57. How **God** prevented **Abimelech** from sexually approaching Sarah is not at this point in the episode made known to the reader.
58. What we can surmise reading ahead is that Abimelech’s illness was at least in part responsible (cf.17-18).
59. What is important is that **Abimelech** himself knew.
60. The real test of Abimelech’s sincerity is seen in the conditional sentencing that would spare him from death in vs.7.
61. The requirement: “**Return the man’s wife**”; reason why: “**for he is a prophet**”.
62. So to escape death (deliverance) is based on **Abimelech** choosing to obey **God**.
63. The added “**he is a prophet/nabiy’ hu**” was to clue **Abimelech** that Abraham was a communicator for **God** and had understanding of the POG.
64. This fact was not ever lost on **Abimelech** as 21:22 makes clear.
65. This is the first use of *nabiy’* in the Bible.
66. Apart from Elohim’s revelation, the king would have never guessed Abraham was a man of **God** based on his preceding conduct being less than honorable.
67. God’s proclamation to **Abimelech** put him on notice that Abraham served a special purpose on behalf of **God**, a point added for emphasis on the importance for the return of Sarah.
68. We can observe that the majority of people that encounter +V believers do not have a clue regarding their position with **God** or their place in His plan.

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69. Because Abraham stood in such a unique position with **God**, he would then provide the antidote for Abimelech's illness via prayer and his life would be spared (vs.7b).
70. His function as a **prophet** was fulfilled via communication with **God** interceding on behalf of **Abimelech** securing his deliverance from death.
71. This shadows the role of Messiah, "The Prophet" (Deu.18:15,18 cf.Mat.21:11; Joh.6:14; Act.3:22) making provision for the salvation of men in the POG. Cf.Joh.17 "The Lord's Prayer"
72. To make sure **Abimelech** understood God's condition, He then reiterates that failure to return Sarah would mean certain death not only for him, but also his subjects (**you and all who are yours**).
73. The verdict of certain death "**you will surely die**" is literally in the Hebrew "**dying you will die**" (qal inf.: muth + qal IPF: muth) indicating 2 deaths.
74. While one might surmise Abimelech's illness as the cause leading to death being that in view, the language makes the deaths conditional upon failure to return Sarah.
75. This is clue to a spiritual undertone embedded in these verses.
76. The Hebrew phrase is reminiscent of Gen.2:17 looking to spiritual death followed by physical death.
77. The verdict is that disobedience to **God** brings about certain death.
78. The point made is that spiritual death (eternal or temporal) leads to SUD with certainty.
79. The words point to the gravity of failure to return Sarah as it has a direct impact on spiritual and physical death.
80. It is tantamount to thwarting the POG as to the coming Messiah (the promised heir through Sarah).
81. **God** in no uncertain terms says He is not going to allow that to happen.
82. Hence the Divine intervention mentioned in vs.6b and any future intervention necessary to include wiping out the entire nation, even the unsuspecting innocent.
83. The primary teaching is that **God** will not allow anything or one to thwart His plan for man and His provision for salvation.
84. Secondly, the passage has the ingredients we might expect to facilitate the Gospel message:
 - A. It demands intellectual honesty with **God** reading the **heart** (vs.6a). Cp.Act.15:8
 - B. It is further dependent upon Divine intervention regarding sin (vs.6b). Cp.Joh.3:16
 - C. The condition/choice is to obey (vs.7a). Cp.Joh.3:36
 - D. Key is the prophetic role of the communicator in time interceding on behalf of others with **God** pointing to the object of fulfillment in "The Prophet".
 - E. Failure to obey results in spiritual death leading to SUD (eternal death for the unbeliever; Joh.3:36).
85. Failure on Abimelech's part first and foremost would invoke God's overruling will to destroy him and his kingdom to preserve the POG.
86. Implicit is evangelizing that would mean salvation for **Abimelech** and his household in obedience (cf.Act.16:30-31) and the converse in rejection (vs.7b).
87. This suggests that **Abimelech** was evangelized through this whole ordeal and accounts for the extreme **God** will go to ensure the gospel for +V just as the extreme He will go to protect His plan of salvation. Cp.Rom.8:29-30

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ABIMELECH INTERROGATES ABRAHAM

EXEGESIS VERSES 8 – 10:

וַיִּשְׁכֹּם אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל־עֲבָדָיו
וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מְאֹד:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:8 So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened. (שָׁכַם וְ) בְּ אֵלֶּה הֵ דְבָר הֵ כָל אֵת דְּבַר וְ עֶבֶד כָּל ל קָרָא וְ בֹקֶר הֵ בְ אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ

[waw consec. + v/Hiphil/IPF/3ms: shakam; "and he arose early"; + proper n: "Abimelech"; + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: boqer; "in the morning"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: qara'; "and he called"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/3ms suff: -ebed; "for all his servants"; + waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3ms: dabar; "and he spoke of/told"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + d.a. + n/com/m/pl/abs: dabar; "all of the things/matters"; + adj/pl/b: 'elleh; "these"; + prep: bet + n/com/f/dual/constr. w/3mpl suff: 'ozen {lit. ear}; "in their hearing"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: yara'; "and they feared"; + d.a. + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'ish + adv: me'od; "the men very much"])

וַיִּקְרָא אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַה־עָשִׂיתָ
לָנוּ וּמַה־חָטָאתָ לָךְ כִּי־הִבַּאתָ עָלַי וְעַל־מַמְלַכְתִּי חַטָּאת
גְּדוֹלָה מְעֻשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲשׂוּ עֲשִׂיתָ עִמָּדַי:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, (לְ אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ קָרָא וְ) לְ אַבְרָהָם
לְ אֵמַר וְ [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: qara' + proper n: 'abiymelech + prep: lamed + proper n: 'abraham + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + prep. w/3ms suff: lamed; "then he called, Abimelech, to Abraham, and said to him"])

"What have you done to us? (לְ עָשָׂה מָה) [interr.pro: mah; "what?"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: -asah + prep. w/1cpl suff: lamed; "have you done to us"])

And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? (וְ עַל בּוֹא כִי לְ חַטָּאת מָה וְ) גְּדוֹל חַטָּאת מַמְלַכָּה עָלַי וְ עַל בּוֹא כִי לְ חַטָּאת מָה וְ [waw conj. + interr.pro: mah; "and how?"; + v/qal/PF/1cs: chatha'; "have I sinned"; + prep. w/2fs suff: lamed; "against you"; + conj: kiy; "that"; + v/Hiphil/PF/2ms: bo'; "you have caused to bring"; + prep. w/1cs suff: -al; "upon me"; + waw conj. + prep: -al; "and upon"; + n/c/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: mamelakah; "my kingdom/dominion"; + n/com/f/s/abs: chatha'ah; "a sin"; + adj/f/s/abs: gadol; "a great one"])

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You have done to me things that ought not to be done. (עֲשָׂה עֲשָׂה לֹא אֲשֶׁר מֵעֲשָׂה) עֲשָׂה [n/com/m/pl/abs: ma-aseh; "works/deeds/things"; + rel.pro: 'asher; "which"; + neg.part: lo' + v/Niphal/IPF/3mp; -asah; "should not be done"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: -asah; "you have done"; + prep. w/1cs suff: -imma; "against me"])

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי
עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:10 **And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?"** (וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל אַבְרָהָם מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + proper n: 'abimelech + prep: 'el + proper n: 'abraham; "and he said, Abimelech, to Abraham"; + interr.pro: mah; "what?"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: ra'ah; "have you seen/encountered"; + conj: kiy; "that/giving cause to"; + v/qal/PF/2ms: -asah; "you have done"; + sign of d.o. + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: dabar + d.a. + adj/m/s: zeh; "the thing/matter, this one"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 8 – 10:

1. The impact of the dream moves **Abimelech** to action.
2. He first summons a royal council to deal with the matter.
3. He does this promptly as he “**arose early in the morning**/shakam bet ha boqer”.
4. The impact upon his subjects was, “**the men were very much afraid**/yara’ ha ‘ish me’od”.
5. So much for Abraham’s concern that there was no fear of God in Gerar (cf.vs.11).
6. In the assembly of Abimelech’s **servants** (-ebed), **Abimelech** himself evangelizes passing on the doctrine to others.
7. The language denotes the issue of “**hearing**/lit. “*ear*’/ozen” followed with the response of righteous fear.
8. We see two more ingredients for successful evangelizing. Cp.Joh.5:24 cp.8:43; Rev.2:7,11,17; Psa.66:16; Pro.1:7; 2:5; Act.10:35; 13:26
9. The dialogue between **Abimelech and Abraham** starts off similar to the speech of Pharaoh in 12:18-19.
10. Both ask, “**What have you done...?**/mah –asah...” echoing 3:13 and 4:10.
11. The question in all 4 instances is rhetorical assuming the guilt of the accused.
12. But beyond this, the speeches and actions of Pharaoh vs. **Abimelech** deviate markedly.
13. Pharaoh censures **Abraham** with contempt not allowing any guilt on his part to be explored.
14. **Abimelech** opens himself for critique in the situation.
15. Pharaoh gave **Abraham** no chance to respond; **Abimelech** does.
16. Pharaoh expelled **Abraham** from Egypt immediately; **Abimelech** lets him stay and offers him the pick of the land to graze his livestock (cf.vs.15).
17. Pharaoh only bestows prosperity upon **Abraham** for personal benefit and only before Divine intervention realizing Abraham’s scheme; **Abimelech** bestows blessing after the fact.

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18. The contrasts between the two rulers points to a distinct difference in character and attitude towards God in similar situations.
19. Pharaoh wants no further dealings with God; **Abimelech** honors God's intervention acknowledging **Abraham** as a prophet evidenced by seeking out the truth.
20. Seeking is an ingredient looked for in evangelizing +V. Cp.Heb.11:6
21. While Abimelech's first question looks to the actions of **Abraham** towards **Abimelech** and kingdom, the second question, also rhetorical looks to any part of guilt from **Abimelech**.
22. The question, "**how have I sinned against you**/mah chatha' lamed" expects a negative answer, but remains open to appeal in adjudication.
23. The intent of the question is as to a sin that would place upon **Abimelech** and his entire **kingdom** a guilt before God deserving of death.
24. His accusation is that Abraham's actions have endangered their very lives.
25. What is left unspoken is that in spite of said actions, there is remedy that leads to a deliverance from death (cf.vs.7).
26. On the surface, Abimelech's words, "**You have done to me things that ought not to be done**" is correct.
27. However, again what is omitted is the fact that God allowed all of this to occur for a particular reason (cf.vs.6 flexing of omniscience and omnipotence).
28. This continues to support the assertion that **God** is using the situation to ultimately evangelize **Abimelech** and **kingdom** (cf.notes vss.3-7).
29. The **Abimelech** affair illustrates that in spite of the positive believer's failures in life, God does and still uses them to impart His plan to others illustrated by **Abraham**.
30. **Abimelech** himself becomes circumstantial evidence to that fact complimenting the author's use of circumstantial evidence regarding Abimelech's innocence in vs.4a.
31. Both share as a witness.
32. In other words, **Abimelech** ultimately becomes for **Abraham** what Moses is to **Abimelech** i.e., a witness removed from the immediate situation (after the fact) defending the accused (God accusing **Abimelech** vs.3; **Abimelech** accusing **Abraham** vs.9).
33. Abimelech's role confirms Abraham's role as prophet in spite of Abraham's failings.
34. In vs.10, **Abimelech** closes argument with a final question inviting **Abraham** to provide explanation, "**What have you encountered/seen** (ra'ah), **that you have done this thing?**"
35. That the King of Gerar was willing to moderate towards this foreigner allowing his free defense in light of thinking himself aggrieved speaks volumes as to his fear of God and respect for **Abraham** as a man of God (prophet).
36. He epitomizes one of humility set to be exalted by God. Cp.Prov.22:4; Mat.23:12; Luk.1:52; 1Pet.5:6
37. He perfectly illustrates one ready to receive God's grace. Cp.Jam.4:6; 1Pet.5:5
38. The irony of Abimelech's question for **Abraham** is that what **Abraham** thought he would encounter under fear turns out to be righteous fear by others primed for saving grace.
39. What **Abimelech** himself will ultimately come to recognize from his question is that it was what God saw in Gerar that mattered (+V) and He used **Abraham** to facilitate His Divine will, "*God is with you in all that you do...*" (21:22).
40. By chapter 21 **Abimelech** shows that in spite of Abraham's sin, it was incidental and spiritually he remained a spokesman for God producing a partnership between two God fearers (21:22ff).

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rel.pro: 'asher; "which"; + v/Hiphil/PF/3cpl: ta-ah; "He {They} caused to wander"; + sign of d.o. w/1cs suff: 'eth; "me"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "God"; + prep: min + n/com/m/s/constr: bayith + n/com/m/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'ab; "from the house of my father"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/1cs: 'amar + prep. w/3fs suff: lamed; "that I said to her"])

'This is the kindness which you will show to me: (הַיְהִי עֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר דִּקְדָּד [adj/m/s: zeh; "this"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2fs suff: chesed; "is your loyal love/kindness"; + rel.pro: 'asher + v/qal/IPF/2fs: -asah; "which you will show"; + prep. w/1cs suff: -immad; "with/to me"])

everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'''' (שָׁם בּוֹא אֲשֶׁר מִקּוֹם הַ כָּל אֵל לְ אֲמַר [prep: 'el + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: maqom: 'to all of the places/everywhere"; + rel.pro: 'asher + v/qal/IPF/1cpl: bo'; "which we go"; + adv: sham; "there"; + v/qal/imp/f/s: 'amar; "say"; + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "for me"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'ach + pro/3ms: hu'; "my brother is he"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 11 – 13:

1. Commentators in bulk regard Abraham's response as lame manifesting a weak character.
2. Yet, his defense is nothing less than forthright and honest exposing true humility.
3. It reflects the kind of intellectual honesty expected from +V when confronted with facing failures in life.
4. No matter how **Abraham** failed on this occasion, he now steps up to the plate as a true prophet of **God** by delivering the truth to Abimelech.
5. It is his acknowledging of the truth before Abimelech (rather than give excuses or try to weasel out of it) that will have the desired effect to stimulate honesty found in +V Abimelech may possess.
6. This for Abimelech to consider for himself why **God** has permitted the whole situation with this particular man to become involved in his life and his kingdom.
7. Further, it will give him cause to reexamine himself as to his claim of absolute blamelessness and innocence in the sphere of works before **God** (vss.4b,5b).
8. Abraham's honesty opens the doors for any further communication needed for evangelizing to ring true.
9. That this premise is embedded in this scenario is strongly suggested in 21:23 whereas Abimelech only requires Abraham's word for a future close partnership to be formed.
10. The events of 21:22ff assume forgiveness has become part of Abimelech's attitude towards **Abraham** providing another ingredient theologically revolving around salvation both positionally and experientially.
11. Abraham's response, if nothing else, will serve as a foundation of trust between the two men.
12. In vs.11, **Abraham** confesses the sin that motivated his actions of deceit i.e., Fear, "**and they will kill me because of my wife**".
13. This highlights the ultimate STA manifestation bringing about the need for R_B.
14. He also confesses he prejudged the kingdom whose territory he entered into, "**Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place**".

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15. The fact he mentions his misjudgment of the Philistines in Gerar first points to what must be avoided in the process of evangelizing.
16. You never know where +V might exist in spite of reputations otherwise (ex.Jonah/Ninevites).
17. That **Abraham** didn't faith-rest his ministry as a prophet in this respect resulted in sin fear on his part that **God** would protect him in his geographical itineraries.
18. So this confession documents the human viewpoint failure of the STA bringing about the manifestation of fear for his life (human viewpoint leads to sin in the life).
19. There was a healthy "**fear of God**/yare-ah 'elohim" in that **place** after all.
20. While the phrase "**fear of God**" could imply these were believers already (e.g.,Exo.18:21), near context suggests the kind of volition leading to **God** (e.g.Psa.36:1; 64:9; Luk.23:39-43).
21. In vs.12, **Abraham** divulges the whole truth about his wife Sarah.
22. He says that she is his half-sister.
23. The purpose for deeper revelation into his relationship with Sarah was probably to underscore that in spite of his STA failing, it wasn't to make Abimelech look foolish as a sort of twisted humor.
24. It reveals a kernel of truth in his previous claim providing impetus for both **Abraham** and Sarah to play their role seriously i.e., it really was all motivated by fear.
25. This too would answer why **Abraham** goes on to explain vs.13 that it was a scheme inserted as part of standard operating procedures in their travels.
26. It is here that the reader becomes informed that the couple were prepared to employ this scheme ever since Terah died and **Abraham** left for Canaan in 12:4.
27. Further we learn that Sarah was on board with this ploy.
28. It suggests a piece of immature STA baggage that both carried with them for much of their life.
29. If other cases of operation, "She is my sister/**He is my brother**", was attempted by the two other than here and in Egypt, it is not recorded.
30. However, by informing Abimelech of this fact, **Abraham** in the briefest of terms tells of his divine call to be a wanderer in the land.
31. This would fit the itinerary as a prophet (vs.7) confirming the truth of **God** in the dream.
32. Obviously, no matter Abraham's excuse, the confession doesn't dilute the sin of lying.
33. It makes him appear as a man of little faith that often tried to save himself by misrepresenting the situation and placing his wife in harm's way.
34. But this narrow minded view of the patriarch fails miserably to take into account what a great man of faith he actually was in God's eyes.
35. All Scripture bears witness to his faith. Cf.Heb.11:8-19
36. In this area of his life he simply failed and God's grace took up the slack.
37. Most importantly, it shows that his incidental failures did not disqualify his ministry or destroy opportunity to evangelize otherwise.
38. It's up to Abimelech to inquire further, as he was given ample evidence that this couple placing him and his people in so much peril was something to be reckoned with and make further inquiry as part of the **fear of God** factor.
39. Both Pharaoh and Abimelech were tested volitionally; the differences are noted.

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ABIMELECH'S ORIENTATION; ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION

EXEGESIS VERSES 14 – 18:

וַיִּקַּח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צֹאן וּבָקָר וְעֶבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחֹת וַיִּתֵּן
לְאַבְרָהָם וַיָּשֵׁב לוֹ אֶת שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. (וַיִּקַּח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְקַח ו) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: laqach; "and he took"; + proper n: "Abimelech"; + n/com/b/s/abs: tso'n; "sheep"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/s/abs: baqar; "cattle/oxen"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/pl/abs: ebed; "and servants"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/pl/abs: shiphechah; "and maids/female servants"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: nathan; "and he gave"; + prep: lamed + proper n: "to Abraham"; + waw consec. + v/Hiphil/IPF/3ms: shub; "and returned/restored"; + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed; "to him"; + sign of d.o. + proper n: "Sarah"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: ishshah; "his wife"])

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ הֲנֵה אֶרְצִי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטוֹב
בְּעֵינֶיךָ שֵׁב:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." (וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אָמַר ו) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + proper n: "and he said, Abimelech"; + interj.part: hinneh; "behold"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'erets; "my land"; + prep: lamed + n/com/b/pl/constr. w/2ms suff: paneh; "is before your face"; + prep: bet + d.a. + adj/m/s/abs: tob; "in the good/whatever is pleasing"; + prep: bet + n/com/b/dual/constr. w/2ms suff: -ayin; "in your eyes"; + v/qal/imp/m/s: yashab: "settle/dwell/inhabit"])

וּלְשָׂרָה אָמַר הֲנֵה נָתַתִּי אֵלַי כֶּסֶף לְאַחֶיךָ
הֲנֵה הוּא־לְךָ כְּסוּת עֵינַיִם לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּךְ וְאֵת כָּל וְנִכְחַת:

^{NAS} Genesis 20:16 And to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; (וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְשָׂרָה ו) [waw conj. + prep: lamed + proper n: sarah + v/qal/PF/3ms: 'amar; "and to Sarah he said"; + interj.part: hinneh; "behold"; + v/qal/PF/1cs: nathan; "I gave"; + adj/m/s/abs: 'eleph; "a thousand"; + n/com/m/s/abs: keseph; "silver"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2fs suff: 'ach; "to your brother"])

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behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." (וַיִּבְרַח אֱלֹהִים לְעַיְנֵי כָּסוּת לְהוֹיָא הַנְּהָה) [interj.part: hinneh; "behold"; + pro/3ms: hu'; "it" {ref. silver}; + prep. w/2fs suff; lamed; "is for you"; + n/com/f/s/constr: kesuth {lit. a covering for; used 8x}; "vindication"; + n/com/b/dual/abs: -ayin; "the eyes"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/abs: kol; "to all"; + rel.pro: 'asher + prep. w/2fs suff: 'eth; "who are with you"; + waw conj. + v/Niphal/ptc/f/s/abs: yakach; "even judging/deciding/cleared"])

וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֲבִרְהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאִמָּהֶתָּיו וַיֵּלְדוּ: ^{WTT} Genesis 20:17

^{NAS} Genesis 20:17 **And Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children.** (וַיִּרְפָּא וְ אֱלֹהִים הָ אֵל אֲבִרְהָם פֶּלֶל ו) [waw consec. + v/Hithpael/IPF/3ms: phalal; "and he himself prayed"; + proper n: "Abraham"; + prep: 'el + d.a. + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "to God"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: rapha'; "and he healed"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "God"; + sign of d.o. + proper n: "Abimelech"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ishshah; "and his wife"; + waw conj. + n/c/f/pl/constr. w/3ms suff: 'amah; "and his female slaves"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: yalad; "and they bore/begat children"])

כִּי־עָצַר עָצַר יְהוָה בְּעַד כָּל־רַחֲם לְבַיִת
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲבִרְהָם: ס ^{WTT} Genesis 20:18

^{NAS} Genesis 20:18 **For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** (לְ רַחֲם כָּל בְּעַד יְהוָה עָצַר עָצַר כִּי) [conj: kiy; "because"; + v/qal/inf/abs: -atsar; "restraining/closing"; + v/qal/PF/3ms: -atsar; "he closed"; + proper n: yahweh; "the Lord"; + prep: ba-ad; "on behalf of"; + n/com/m/s/constr: kol; "all of"; + n/com/m/s/abs: rechem; "wombs"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr: bayith; "to the house of"; + proper n: "Abimelech"; + prep: -al + n/com/m/s/constr: dabar; "upon the matter of"; + proper n: "Sarah"; + n/com/f/s/constr: 'ishshah; "the wife of"; + proper n: "Abraham"; selah)]

ANALYSIS VERSES 14 – 18:

1. The singular requirement for **Abimelech** to be delivered from certain death was to “**restore/return/shub**” **Sarah to Abraham** (cf.vs.7).
2. He goes over and beyond.

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3. The extraneous efforts on the part of **Abimelech** reveals he has given the whole situation much thought.
4. His actions supplant his previous interrogation and shows how serious he considers the situation approaching **Abraham** in a more positive light.
5. **Abimelech** begins by first compensating **Abraham** with **sheep, oxen and male and female servants** with the return of **Sarah**.
6. Pharaoh's gifts were a bridal price; Abimelech's gifts are remuneration implying a wrong done to **Abraham**.
7. This indicates **Abimelech** is considering he is less than perfect in the ordeal illustrating humility.
8. Inadvertently or not, he has trespassed God's plan.
9. It at least implies on Abimelech's part that his innocence proclaimed earlier in some way could be held in contempt (cf.vss.4,5).
10. He could easily come to this conclusion with further consideration of the fact that only by God's power he avoided sin (cf.vs.6).
11. He then extends an invitation to **Abraham** in vs.15 that his kingdom is open to him to "**settle wherever you please**/bet ha tob bet –ayin yashab".
12. **Abimelech** obviously is open to having a permanent relationship with the prophet of **God**.
13. This illustrates the attraction of +V with +V one might expect in an evangelizing process.
14. In vs.16, **Abimelech** then addresses **Sarah** specifically.
15. That the focus turns to **Sarah** reveals Abimelech's consideration of her importance in the scheme of things.
16. In addition to real property he gave **Abraham**, he informs **Sarah** that there was also a monetary gift of **a thousand pieces of silver** having a special purpose on her behalf.
17. That as "**vindication/covering**" clearing **Sarah** of any guilt of sexual or other impropriety in "**judging (cleared)**/yakach" by her constituents and **all** others that were aware of the situation.
18. A "**covering for the eyes**/kesuth –ayin" is a Hebrew idiom for being oblivious to one's surroundings silencing any criticism or suspicion.
19. The eyes of any of Sarah's acquaintances are not to view in judgment any sexual misconduct on her part.
20. Further, **Abimelech** absolves **Sarah** from any wrong otherwise in this situation.
21. While some commentators see the gift as vindication, others see it as a rebuke (cf.KJV vs.16: "...*thus she was reproved*").
22. This in the fact that **Abimelech** refers to **Abraham** as "**your brother**/'ach".
23. This parting shot of referring to **Abraham** as her brother rather than husband certainly appears as a rebuke for Sarah's role.
24. Was she not otherwise equally responsible for the deceit employed by her husband?
25. However, if indeed **Abimelech** is the discerning man we are suggesting, it may be a "tongue in cheek" rebuke "fishing" for further answers.
26. In other words it serves as reproof, but also indicates deeper insight that **God** has interceded on behalf of a marriage built on an ancestral relationship (half-brother/half-sister cf.vs.12).
27. Intended or not, his remark ironically is just shy from the real issue at hand i.e., the Covenant promise advancing the ancestral/familial line of Christ.

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28. From Sarah's womb will come the singular genetic line from Terah producing the Hebrew race and their Messiah (both **Abraham and Sarah** are directly from the Messianic line).
29. With a future explanation to **Abimelech** of this Covenant promise, a gospel presentation is a given.
30. **Abimelech** starts off in the scenario as the one with the moral high ground and **Abraham** the sinner.
31. Now the roles are reversed with **Abraham** assuming the position for Abimelech's deliverance.
32. No matter how innocent **Abimelech** may have initially appeared, he was still held in contempt by **God**.
33. **God** made clear that the sin was directed to His Person in vs.6, "*kept you from sinning against Me*".
34. The lesson for **Abimelech** is that he is guilty before **God** no matter how innocent and blameless he may think of himself otherwise or be in any singular situation.
35. He must come to recognize that all men are sinners before **God**, whether apparent or not, unintended or not, and therefore all are in need of salvation. Rom.3:23
36. Only by direct Divine intervention and obedience to **God** can man avoid the penalty of sin, death (cf.vs.6b,7).
37. Further irony is that **God** uses sinners (**Abraham and Sarah**) to illustrate this reality.
38. **Abimelech** must come to recognize that righteousness (*blameless/tsadiq* vs.4) before **God** is not determined by one's "innocent acts/*niqqaoyyn kaph* vs.5) i.e., works of avoiding sin or being good. Cf.Isa.64:6
39. With the correct gospel message he would learn it is only through a system of faith by grace. Eph.2:8
40. Having fulfilled God's requirement to be delivered with the return of **Sarah**, "**Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children**".
41. **Abimelech** had fallen ill right after he took **Sarah** and that was why he had not approached her in a sexual manner.
42. Furthermore, vs.18 indicates that the **Lord** had closed the wombs of the entire household so that none of the women could conceive.
43. Again we see the use of the Hebrew phraseology using the same word to describe an act of certainty, "*closing, He closed/-atsar -atsar*".
44. The difference from previous uses is that the Qal infinitive is followed with the Qal Perfect, rather than followed with the Qal Imperfect (cp.Gen.2:17; etc).
45. The language suggests that not only were the women rendered infertile, but physical penetration for conception was made impossible.
46. Whatever malady **God** placed upon this household, He made certain that any sexual activity necessary for conception was impossible, hence their infertility is viewed as a forgone conclusion (Hebrew Perfect tense is a past tense).
47. Abimelech's illness first and foremost makes certain that the promised heir to be (Isaac) was not conceived during Sarah's stay at the royal residence.
48. This further suggests **Sarah** was fertile at this stage (or why the extreme measures?).
49. The closing **fast** of all the wombs was secondary to the situation.

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50. This ensured that any future life extending from **Abimelech** and household via offspring would be cut off i.e., no future heritage of life.
51. This parallels the entire scenario that without the promised heir of Covenant, there is no eternal heritage of life.
52. Hence the immediate issue at hand in chapter 20 both on a physical and spiritual level, individually and corporately.
53. That vs.18 closes with the reference to “**the Lord/Yahweh**” on behalf of “**Sarah, Abraham’s wife**” further points to the issue of **God** the Son relevant both in Person and message.
54. **God** truly ensures that nothing will thwart His plan for salvation on behalf of +V.