

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

JN. 5:39



Jn. 5:39 “**Search the scriptures....they are they which testify of me.**”

Genesis 20:1-18

We began in Genesis with the beginnings of the human race.

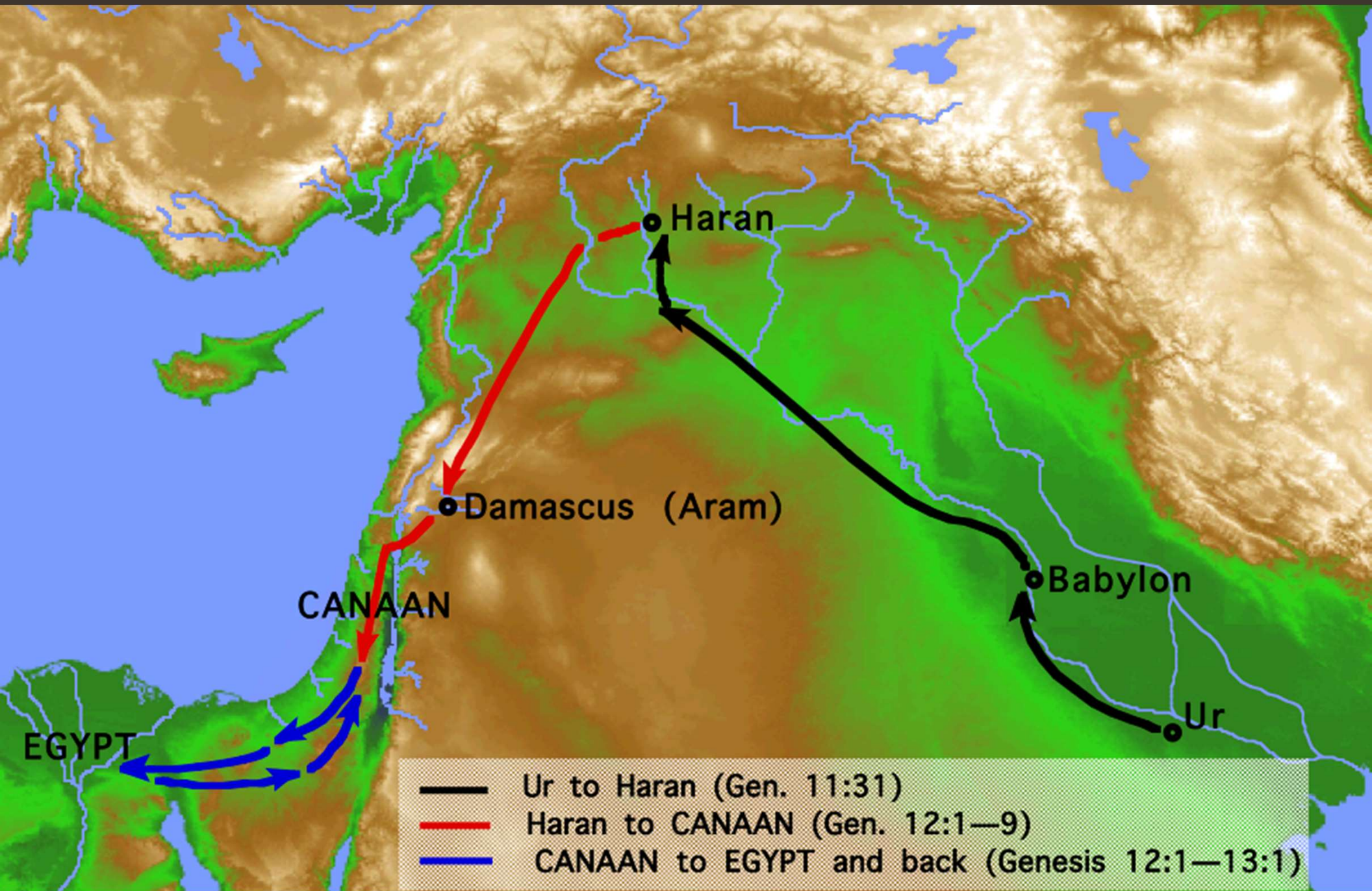
I. THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY: BEGINNINGS OF THE HUMAN RACE, 1:1—11:32

II. PATRIARCHAL HISTORY: BEGINNINGS OF THE HEBREW RACE, 12:1—50:26

A. The Progenitor: Abraham, 12:1—25:11

1. The Path of Faith, 12:1-20
2. The Price of Faith, 13:1-18
3. The Power of Faith, 14:1-24
4. The Pledge of Faith, 15:1-21
5. The Pawning of Faith, 16:1-16
6. The Potential of Faith, 17:1-27
7. The Perplexing of Faith, 18:1-33
8. The Position of Faith, 19:1-38
 - a. The Spiritual Deviance Revealed, 19:1-3
 - b. The Sexual Debauchery Revealed, 19:4-11
 - c. The Special Directions Revealed, 19:12-26
 - d. The Specific Decision Revealed, 19:27-29
 - e. The Societal Depravity Revealed, 19:30-38

Tonight, we will observe “*the Perils of Faith.*” Though Abraham was a great man of faith, when he faced Abimelech, he sensed danger and the fear of that peril caused him to falter.

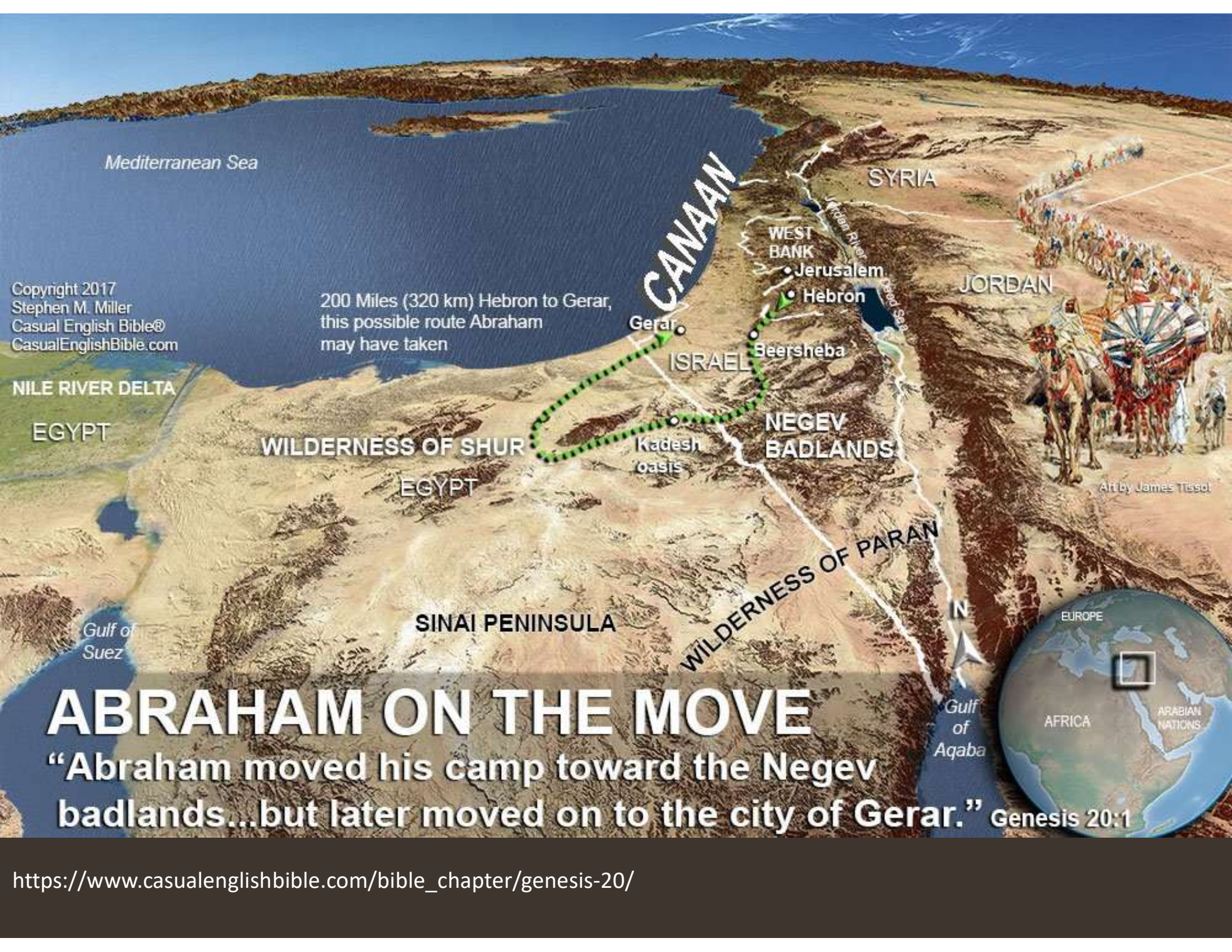


9. The Perils of Faith, 20:1-18

a. The Move and Its Challenges, 20:1-8

(1) A Foreign Land, 20:1

Gen. 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.



Mediterranean Sea

Copyright 2017
Stephen M. Miller
Casual English Bible®
CasualEnglishBible.com

200 Miles (320 km) Hebron to Gerar,
this possible route Abraham
may have taken

CANAAN

SYRIA

JORDAN

WEST BANK

Jerusalem

Hebron

Gerar

Beersheba

ISRAEL

NEGEV
BADLANDS

Kadesh
oasis

WILDERNESS OF SHUR

EGYPT

SINAI PENINSULA

WILDERNESS OF PARAN

Art by James Tissot

NILE RIVER DELTA

EGYPT

Gulf of
Suez

N
Gulf of
Aqaba



ABRAHAM ON THE MOVE

“Abraham moved his camp toward the Negev badlands...but later moved on to the city of Gerar.” Genesis 20:1

(2) A Faithless Lie, 20:2-8

Gen. 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, **Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she *is* a man's wife.**

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister? and she, **even she herself said, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.**

6 And God said unto him in a dream, **Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me:** therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and **if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.**

8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

❖ Abraham, a great man of faith, exhibited the weakness of being human.

Eph. 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

❖ Abraham's lie caused a potential tragedy for Abimelech, his family, and for Sarah.

❖ Though a polygamist, Abimelech was indicted by God, signifying that adultery with Sarah was "...sinning against me..." (v. 6.)

- ❖ In verse seven, the first time the word “prophet” is used – not a good testimony to Abimelech.
- ❖ God intervened and gave Abimelech an opportunity to correct the matter.
- ❖ Abimelech called a meeting and explained the peril that Abraham had initiated.

b. The Message and Confrontation. 20:9-13

Gen. 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, **What hast thou done unto us?** and what have I offended thee, that **thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?** thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

11 And Abraham said, **Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.**

12 And yet indeed *she is* my sister; *she is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.

- ❖ Abimelech, a heathen king, understand the consequences of sin – “...thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom **a great sin**?...”
- ❖ Fear is a great motivator for lying.

Prov. 29:25 **The fear of man bringeth a snare:** but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

(See Sarah – Gen. 18:15, the Gibeonites – Josh. 9:24, and David – 1 Sam. 21:12)

- ❖ Abraham was wrong in his thinking – “...Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place...” and therefore wrong in justifying his decision to lie to Abimelech.
- ❖ In essence, Abraham accuses God of his challenge – “...when God caused me to wander...” – Abraham was told to “walk through the land” – he was obeying God.

Gen. 13:17 Arise, **walk through the land** in the length of it and in the breadth of it; **for I will give it unto thee.**

❖ An overview of the Old Testament reveals that it is replete with sexual improprieties.

Gen 12:14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

Gen. 16:4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

2 Sam. 13:14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

❖ Technically, Abraham and Sarah didn't lie, but practically they deceived Abimelech.

Gen. 20:12 And yet indeed *she is* my sister; *she is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

❖ Abimelech's response to the dream reveals how God works within the conscience of the heathen.

Gen. 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that **thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?** thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

Rom. 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, **are a law** unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law **written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness**, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

❖ Abimelech exhibited a submissive heart toward God and gracious generosity toward Sarah and Abraham.

c. The Mending and Cooperation, 20:14-18

Gen. 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: **dwell where it pleaseth thee.**

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given **thy brother** a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: **thus she was reproved.**

17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare *children*.

18 For **the LORD** had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, **because of Sarah Abraham's wife.**

- ❖ Genuine repentance is exhibited by a changed heart and life, submissive to God's will.
- ❖ Abimelech offered Abraham an opportunity to dwell wherever he wanted.
- ❖ Abimelech reproved Sarah (20:16) for her role in the brother/sister scheme.
- ❖ Abraham was the intercessor for Abimelech, his wife, and household, praying for restored health and fruitfulness.
- ❖ How long did it take to learn about the condition of being barren? The time factor and Sarah's pregnancy is excluded in the narrative.

Conclusion

- ❖ Abraham made a decision regarding a relocation of his family, but with no mention of prayer, seeking God's will.
- ❖ Being afraid, he deceived Abimelech and created many problems for many people.
- ❖ Yet, the Lord was still with him – interceding in Abimelech's dream.

Heb. 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***