

the Purpose *and* Promises of God

God's Purpose and Fear

Summary

In Genesis 20 we see God show up again. Abraham feared the people of Gerar and lied about Sarah being his wife. This not only led to danger for Sarah but also created a predicament for the covenant line of God's people. However, God was faithful even when Abraham was faithless. He rebuked Abimelech and brought about a reversal of the problem. He protected Sarah and preserved the covenant line of his people.

Outline

Introduction

In this chapter we learn much about God. He is sovereign and interjects himself at will to ensure his purpose and his promises are fulfilled. Genesis 20 also points to two kinds of fear: the fear of people vs. the fear of God. One is misguided and the other is holy and right.

Overview: Knowing and Fearing God

	God	Fear
Conversation 1 (vs 1-7)	3: God revealed himself and judged justly 6: God knows the heart; he prevented sin, protected Sarah, and preserved the covenant line 7: God gave commands he expected to be obeyed	2: Abraham feared people and dishonored his wife Sarah
Conversation 2 (vs 8)		8: Abimelech & his servants feared God after the revelation
Conversation 3 (vs 9-13)	13: God initiated a covenant relationship with Abraham	11: Abraham feared people instead of fearing God
Conversation 4 (vs 14-18)	17: God punished Abimelech (and those with him) and then healed them in answer to Abraham's prayer	14: Abimelech feared God & obeyed him by returning Sarah



Notes:

Personal Application

Review

Reflect

Reframe

1. As you reflect on the nature of God (the middle column in the chart above) what strikes you the most? Why? What else in the chapter about God sticks out to you?
2. Why do you think Abraham repeated this same error of lying about Sarah (see Genesis 12)?
3. In what ways do you fear people or other things in a way that prevents you from trusting God? Share an example.
4. How would you explain what it means to fear God?
5. Review Isaiah 51.12-13. How does reflecting on the nature and promises of God help you grow in fearing God? What other promises do you hold onto that encourage you to trust and fear God?
6. It is interesting that Abraham was certain that the people of Gerar didn't fear God and yet he is the one who shows himself as lacking a proper fear of God. How have you misjudged people's view of God in your own life?
7. A main point in Genesis 20 is the perseveration of God's covenant people, namely that God would not allow anyone to disrupt his promise that Isaac would soon be born to Abraham and Sarah. It reveals God's priority and his commitment to his promise to eventually bring Jesus Christ into this world to fulfill his purpose. Where in your life do you fail to keep Christ as your priority?
8. Review Philippians 4.8-14 and spend time in prayer together regarding your own prioritization of the glory of Christ in your life.