

Covenant Relationship

Ponder: The importance of being in a covenant with God.

Scripture: “So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech” (Gen. 20:17a, NKJV).

Abraham told the Philistines at Gerar that the beautiful Sarah was his sister. While that was technically true (they had the same father but different mothers), he intended to mislead them into thinking Sarah wasn't his wife. And it worked! Abimelech, king of the city, assumed Sarah was unattached and took her into his harem.

God recognized that the king had done this “in the integrity of (his) heart” (Gen. 20:6). It was an honest mistake! Nevertheless He commanded Abimelech to return Sarah to her husband on pain of death. Then Abraham would pray for Abimelech (20:7).

Does that sound odd to you? Abraham was the one at fault here! Despite God's promises to protect him, he had feared the Philistines would kill him to take his wife (20:11). So why didn't God have Abimelech pray for Abraham rather than the other way around?

In short, Abraham was God's prophet (20:7). Imperfect though his faith was, Abraham was in a covenant with God (Gen. 17:1-2). Abimelech possessed no such relationship with the one true God. Philistines generally worshiped Dagon and other idols. Whether this king had any previous knowledge of the God of Abraham is an open question. Regardless, he didn't have the relationship with God that Abraham had.

If you have obeyed the gospel and are living faithfully, you are in a covenant with God through Christ. You can pray to the Father in the name of Jesus with the assurance of being heard. Like Abraham, you may occasionally stumble due to weak faith. A “good moral person” outside of Christ might even behave better than you! But being in a covenant relationship with God isn't a matter of how “good” you are. Faithfulness isn't flawlessness. Continue to trust and obey, and rejoice in your covenant relationship with God!

Hymn: “Step By Step”

Prayer: Righteous Heavenly Father, how blessed we are to be in a covenant with You through Jesus Christ! In no way do we deserve it, but we thank You in Jesus' name, Amen.