

## Abimelech

[Ābīm'elēch] - father of the king.

1. *A king of Gerar in the time of Abraham (Gen. 20; 21:22-32; 26:1-16, 26-31).*

### The Man Who Rebuked Another for Lying

Abimelech would have taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, into his harem, but learning that she was the wife of another, returned her uninjured. Abraham appears here in a bad light. He deceived Abimelech, but when found out was justly rebuked by the God-restrained Abimelech. Certainly the righteous should rebuke the ungodly ( 1 Tim. 5:20), but how sad it is when the ungodly have just reason for rebuking the righteous. What a degradation it was for Abraham, then, to be rebuked by a heathen king! Abraham sought to palliate his deception by claiming that Sarah was actually his half sister, daughter of the same father but not the same mother (Gen. 20:12, 16).

*A lie if half a truth  
Is ever the worst of lies.*

Abraham was the more blameworthy because he had done the same thing before ( Gen. 12) and had suffered much in the same way as upon this occasion. How grateful Abimelech was for the dream warning him of his danger! The covenant made with Abraham is somewhat significant –

- I. It was proposed by Abimelech who, although knowing how Abraham had failed God, yet saw how favored he was of God (Gen. 21:22).
- II. It revealed certain distrust of Abraham. Abimelech requested Abraham not to be tempted to sin in such a direction again (Gen. 21:23).
- III. It was meant to secure Abraham's good will. The king desired the favor of the wandering pilgrim who had failed to act kingly. Abraham consented to the king's request (Gen. 21:24).

**IV. It gave Abraham the opportunity of rebuking Abimelech. The matter of the stolen well had to be put right. Wrong had to be repudiated before a covenant could be agreed upon (Gen. 20:9;21:23, 26).**

**V. It secured for Abraham the inheritance of Beer-sheba, "the well of oath," which possession the patriarch sanctified ( Gen. 21:27-33).**

**2. *The son of Gideon by a concubine in Shechem* who belonged to a leading Canaanite family (Judg. 8:30, 31; 9:10:1).**

### **The Man Who Was Bramble King**

**This Abimelech, who made the first attempt to set up a monarchy in Israel, is known as "The Bramble King." But his violent and ill-fated reign over Israel only lasted for three years. After the death of Gideon his father, Abimelech took seventy pieces of silver from his mother's people with which he hired vain and light persons to follow him. He slew seventy persons of his father's house. Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, who is also called Jerubbaal, hid himself and when Abimelech was proclaimed king by the men of Shechem, he revealed himself and warned the Shechemites against Abimelech in a parable about trees, from whence he received his nickname as "Bramble King." What a tragic death this would-be king of Israel suffered (Judg. 9:53, 54)! A fitting end, surely, for one who sowed a Biblical city with salt (Judg. 9:45).**

**3. *Son of Abiathar, the high priest in David's time* (1 Chron. 18:16). Also known as Ahimlech.**

**4. *A name given to Achish, King of Gath* (according to Ellicott), to whom David fled (1 Sam. 21:10).**