



WORKTALK WEEKLY

11 OCTOBER 2010

## Welcome to WORKTALKweekly

### In Between Times 17.2: Between Sleep and Awake: The Gerar King

#### Learning to avoid deception

How many times have you discovered that you have acted on incomplete or misleading information? In any work project there will be times when decisions have to be made on a best guess basis and in such cases experience can be invaluable. Taking calculated risks is a skill for which employers will pay highly if the risk taker has a good track record of being right.

Acting on partial information is one thing, but being deliberately deceived is another. This can lead you into a false sense of confidence, it can cause you to make unwise decisions, mistakes or even accidental, immoral actions. The results can be detrimental to you, your team or your business.

In today's hard-edged business world, there is a great deal of scepticism, cynicism, and even scorn for some of the more mysterious sides of life. We like clear lines of communication, bottom lines of profit, and agreed lines of authority. But there may be a place for blurred lines of experience in between sleep and awake, where another voice can be heard.

The king of a Middle Eastern region called Gerar was in charge of his people. He had real businesses, families and properties to manage. An immigrant named Abraham had moved into his region with his sister, Sarah. As was the king's right, he sent for Sarah and added her to his harem.

And this point, Abimelech, the king, is acting in good faith with a clear conscience, within his authority and honourably. He has been deceived, however, in that Sarah is Abraham's wife.

The turning point in the whole story is a dream, but the key to understanding the experience is not in its interpretation. It was not a complex, image-filled, unusual tableau, it was a clear conversation. The key is in how the process is described. Quite simply, we are told 'God came to Abimelech in a dream'.

This action served as an unmasking of Abraham's deception, a warning of danger and a prevention of mistakes. Abraham, unfortunately, tries to justify his deception as being partially true, but it is clear that he has been rumbled and disaster is averted.

How often might God have come to you in a dream and you did not realise? How many deceptions have you fallen prey to as a result? How many mistakes might you have made by not picking up the warnings?

What I am suggesting is that you take this aspect of life seriously enough to listen out. A major sign of the new era as outlined by Peter in the first Christian presentation is 'dreams and visions'. They are part of God's repertoire, His activity and His language.

However hard-nosed your business, you may like to learn to open yourself to this divine methodology. It could save you a lot of trouble.

**In between now and the next WORKTALKweekly, do feel free to email us your**

thoughts to [wtw@worktalk.gs](mailto:wtw@worktalk.gs) or leave a comment on our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) profile. You can also visit our [YouTube](#) channel - get inspired and share the Worktalk's vision with others.

Work well  
Geoff Shattock

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## BIBLE SECTION

### Genesis 20

1 Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, 2 and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman." 4 Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. 7 Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die." 8 Early the next morning Abimelech summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said, "What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done." 10 And Abimelech asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?" 11 Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' 12 Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'

14 Then Abimelech brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. 15 And Abimelech said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like." 16 To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offence against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated."

17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, 18 for the LORD had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

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