

THE MAN OF FAITH WHO WAS FAITHLESS | GENESIS 12:8-10

As we saw previously, Abram's journey to the Promised Land wasn't as "crystal clear" as we may have expected. As he arrived, He heard God...and kept going. There was a **famine in the land** (v. 10), and it seems Abram did not trust that God could provide *that land* as a land of promise, so he made his way to Egypt. But it appears he knew that Egypt was also not the land of promise, since **he went down to Egypt to sojourn there** (v. 10). The word **sojourn** implies a temporary dwelling.

What has happened that the Patriarch of faith seems so...faithless? It is likely that this famine was the Satanic work to keep the promises of God from coming true. Would God have healed the land if Abram had shown faith? We can only speculate.

THE FAITHLESS ACT AND ITS IMMEDIATE BENEFIT | GENESIS 12:11-16

In the early sermons of this series, we talked about Abram's deep family ties and commitments. But by Genesis 12:11-16, his family values seem severely lacking. It is not uncommon for *faithlessness* to lead to greater *faithlessness*. And here Abram displays faithfulness to the degree that he risks his wife's wellbeing to save his own skin (see v. 12).

In verse 11, Abram says to Sarai that she is **a fair woman to look upon**. In fact, many Jewish scholars believe that she was the most beautiful woman of all the Bible. So beautiful was she, in fact, that Abram was afraid that the Egyptians **will kill me, but save thee** (v. 12). The Egyptians indeed *did* notice the beauty of Sarai (v. 14) and she **was taken into Pharaoh's house** (v. 14). The words of verse 14 should not imply that they were married (as we shall see).

It is possible that Abram presented Sarai as his sister (she was his half-sister – see Gen. 20:12) because he would have authority to give her as a bride to a suitable groom. Perhaps Abram was "buying time" by not telling the whole truth. And the plot appeared to be working. Abram was not only *not killed* but also blessed with much wealth (v. 16, compare with Gen. 13:1-2).

THINGS TURNS SOUTH, ABRAM GOES NORTH | GENESIS 12:17-20

As time went by, **the LORD plagued Pharaoh...because of Sarai Abram's wife** (v. 17). We are not told more about the plagues, nor how Pharaoh came to understand their reason and source. But Pharaoh soon comes to understand the

truth of the situation and he rebukes Abram and sends Sarai back to where she belongs. He also **sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had** (v. 20). When things "went south," Abram made his way *north* into the *south* of the Promised Land (Gen. 13:1).

Did Pharaoh take Sarai as his wife? Did they consummate the "marriage?" In verse 19 Pharaoh complains to Abram, **Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife....** But in the modern versions say, "I took her for my wife" (ESV, as all modern versions). I found no Jewish scholars who believe that Pharaoh "took her" for his wife. Rather, they all insist, by grammar and tradition, that the plagues immediately came upon the household, and the plagues were so associated with Sarai that there was no doubt as to what had happened.

A POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN EGYPT AND HAGER | GENESIS 16:1

The "Egyptian episode" of Genesis 12 is intriguing on several levels. But one area of intrigue comes up later, when we are introduced to Hagar in Genesis 16. Hagar is first introduced to the reader as **an Egyptian** (Gen. 16:1). In Genesis 12:16 we are told that Pharaoh blessed Abram with much wealth, including **maidservants**.

This brings us to speculate whether Hagar, who would bring such trouble into the "first family," came home with Abram and Sarai from this Egyptian episode. In fact, though the position is not commonly held among Christian theologians, virtually every Jewish and Islamic scholar contends that *Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh* and given to Sarai prior to the wedding that never happened. It should be noted that Christian theologians have not rejected the idea, they are largely seemingly unaware of the idea.

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM

As we've seen in several sermons, it is helpful to see again that *even the heroes of the faith had huge moments of faithless failure*. Can our faith be strengthened by Abram's failures? Even though Abram lived in a different dispensation than we do, his life can help us to learn from history. If we can avoid mistakes by learning from the mistakes of Scripture, our lives can be immeasurably better.

In Abram's failure, we see not only short-term consequences, but in our next sermon we will see long-term consequences. Indeed, consequences that likely affect the geo-political and religious world situation even today.