

The Lord Saw Abram Sin in Egypt

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why it was so important to Abram to worship God and enjoy fellowship with Him. However, that did not mean Abram was perfect, but he knew that he was forgiven for sin. In this topic, we will see how Abram sinned in Egypt.

After Abram had been in the land of Canaan for a period of time, they experienced a famine in the land. The word translated “famine” means *hunger or famine*. In the time of the Old Testament, there was no way to preserve food and it was not easy to transport food from one place to another. As a result, when the land of Canaan did not get much rain for a year or two, there would be a severe shortage of food which resulted in much hunger. This was a severe famine, so it probably meant that the land had gone for more than a year without rain. As a result, Abram decided to move to Egypt where there would be enough food for the cattle and sheep, as well as the people, near the Nile River.

Genesis 12:10-13 says, “Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, ‘Indeed I know that you *are a* woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, “This *is* his wife”; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.’” When they got close to Egypt, we see that Abram made a request of his wife, Sarai. By this request, Abram put his wife in danger to protect himself.

Abram recognized that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. Abram realized the Egyptians would recognize that she was beautiful. This caused Abram to have a fear of what the Egyptians might do. Here, we see that Abram was driven by his own fear instead of being led by the love of God. He feared that the Egyptians would kill him, if they knew he was the husband, so one of the Egyptians could take Sarai as his wife. Later, God told husbands in Ephesians 5:25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” Here, we see that husbands are to protect and care for their wives.

As a result, Abram asked Sarai to, “Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.” Here, we see that Abram was only thinking to protect himself instead of taking the responsibility to protect his wife. This meant that Sarai would be in danger of being forced to become the wife of another man. Later, Abram did this a second time to Sarai and then tried to justify himself to Abimelech. Genesis 20:10-12 says, “Then Abimelech said to Abraham, ‘What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?’ And Abraham said, ‘Because I thought, surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. But indeed *she* is truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.’” Abram was telling a lie that was a half-

truth in order to protect himself, regardless of what happened to his wife.

Due to this lie, the very thing that Abram feared happened. Genesis 12:14-16 says, “So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s house. He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.” Abram was right about the beauty of Sarai. The Egyptians saw Sarai and saw that she was very beautiful. In fact, the princes of Pharaoh thought she was so beautiful that they went and told Pharaoh about her beauty. Then, Sarai was taken into the house of Pharaoh. Pharaoh planned to make her a part of his harem once she had passed the time of purification required by many rulers in that day.

We see that Pharaoh gave Abram a large dowry when he took Sarai into his household. Pharaoh gave Abram sheep and oxen. He also gave Abram male and female donkeys and some camels. In addition, Pharaoh also gave both male and female servants to Abram. In his efforts to protect himself, Abram was even willing to receive the gifts of Pharaoh so Pharaoh would not know he was taking the wife of another man into his harem. However, God was not going to allow Abram to hide his sin. Galatians 6:7-8 warns, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” Since Abram was a follower of God, He chose to expose the sin of Abram since Abram would not experience eternal judgment. This is a reminder that we cannot hide our sin from God even though we might hide it from other people.

In His mercy, God did choose to protect Sarai even though Abram had failed to protect her. We go on to read in Genesis 12:17-20, “But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, ‘What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? Why did you say, ‘She *is* my sister’? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way.’ So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.” Here, we see that God protected Sarai by bringing great plagues on the house of Pharaoh.

The word translated “plagues” means *to touch or to plague*. Here, we see that God touched Pharaoh and all those in his household with great plagues because of Sarai being taken into the household of Pharaoh. The next place this word is used in the Old Testament is in Exodus 11:1, where we read, “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets *you* go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether.’” This was a different Pharaoh about six hundred years later. However, the plague that came on Egypt six hundred years later was the death of the oldest child in each Egyptian household. Although we do not know exactly how God touched the Pharaoh in the time of Abram, we see that the things that happened are called great plagues. Pharaoh immediately called Abram once Pharaoh knew that these plagues were happening because he had taken Sarai into his household.

We see that Pharaoh gave Abram a very strong rebuke. Pharaoh made it very clear to Abram that he was at fault for what was happening to Pharaoh and to his household. Instead of Abram bringing glory to God by being able to help Pharaoh and the people of Egypt learn about the true and living

God, Abram was rebuked for his sin. This is an example of the fact that our sins cannot bring glory to God. That is why 1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” This is a negative example and shows us that God allows the sins of His followers to be revealed here on the earth even though it hurts the work of God. This is why we need to make it our goal to bring glory to God by all that we say or do.

Pharaoh used three questions to help Abram realize his sin. The first question, “What is this you have done to me?” spoke of the fact that Abram had personally sinned against the Pharaoh. He and his whole household had endured much suffering because of the failure of Abram to tell the truth. The second question, “Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?” spoke of the fact that Abram had sinned against his wife by not protecting her. The third question, “Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” made it clear that Abram was guilty of sin because he had told a lie. Sometimes, when followers of God sin, they do not think of how their sin will affect others, how it will affect their own family, or how it will affect their own character. Pharaoh pointed out all three of these things by his questions to Abram.

Then, Pharaoh gave Sarai back to Abram and told him, “Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way.” Pharaoh did not want to see Abram again after the plagues Abram had caused to happen to him and his family. As a result, Pharaoh told Abram to take his wife and leave. Here, we see that one of the consequences of his lie was that Abram was no longer welcome in the land of Egypt. This is a reminder that sin always has consequences. We also see that Pharaoh gave a command to his men regarding Abram. We see that it was the men of Pharaoh who actually made certain that Abram left their land. This meant that neither Pharaoh, nor the men who served him, learned to respect Abram or the true and living God because of the poor example Abram provided. This is a reminder that our sins become a negative testimony about the Lord because others see that our lives and our words do not agree.

As a result, Abram and Sarai left the land of Egypt and took all that they had. He realized that he needed to get back to the place where he had built an altar at first. Genesis 13:4 tells us that Abram went “to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.” This is an important lesson that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children. When we realize we have sinned, we need to confess that sin and quickly get back to the place where we are able to enjoy fellowship with the Lord again. Our children will learn that lesson best by the example we provide for them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to quickly restore their fellowship with the Lord.