

# Meditations of the Heart - Reflections on the Scriptures

Psalm 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

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## God's Faithfulness Trumps Abram's Lack of Faith - Act 1

### Genesis 12:10-20

**10** Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. **11** When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, **12** and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. **13** Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." **14** When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. **15** And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. **16** And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. **17** But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. **18** So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? **19** Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." **20** And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

As we looked at this passage this past Sunday, what I did not have time to elaborate on (and what I will touch on briefly this coming Sunday) is that scene with Pharaoh and Abram would not be the last time that an Egyptian Pharaoh would suffer afflictions from God and demand that Hebrews leave his country.... There are some fascinating parallels between the Genesis 12 passage and the story of the Hebrews Exodus out of Egypt.

**1) Abram goes to Egypt because of famine.** About 150 years later, another severe famine would grip the area and Abram's grandson, Jacob, would find it necessary to send his sons to Egypt and eventually to go there himself. As we will soon see from the book of Genesis, even though God had promised the land of Canaan to Abram and his descendants, this venture into Egypt was not a surprise to God. Indeed, it was a part of His plan. **Therefore, just as the patriarch Abram went to Egypt, so the patriarch Jacob goes to Egypt in the midst of a famine.**

**2) Abram fears that he would be killed but expects that his wife would be spared.** This would be painfully reminiscent to the Hebrews who had been in slavery in Egypt. **These ancient Hebrews had seen their infant boys be put to death by the Egyptians while their infant girls were spared.**

**3)** Because of Pharaoh's adultery with Sarai, **"the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues"**. Such affliction would prompt Pharaoh to send Abram, his wife and all that he had away – to literally expel Abram from the country. *Heavensent plagues and expulsion seem to go hand in hand in Egypt when it comes to Abram and his descendants.* The Lord sent a series of ten plagues, with the last one being so severe that **"there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. 31 Then he [Pharaoh] summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. 32 Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!" (Exodus 12:30b-32)**

**4) Upon his expulsion, Abram took out of Egypt more than he brought with him.** This was, of course, due in large part to the fact that, because of Sarai, Pharaoh **"dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels."** Upon sending Abram and Sarai out of Egypt, it is noteworthy that Pharaoh (out of fear for Abram's God) did not demand any of the gifts back. And so it was that Abram, upon returning to Canaan from Egypt, was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold – a likely connection to what Pharaoh had given him.

Meanwhile, the Israelites who had just come out of Egypt were carrying an extra suitcase or two themselves. Exodus 12:33-36 tells us why: **33 The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." 34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. 35 The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. 36 And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.**

If we try to see these parallels through the eyes of the Hebrews, what we might be able to recognize is that Moses wants them to see that God dealt with, protected, and blessed their father Abraham in way that was very similar to how He was blessing the Hebrews. This was significant because, as we'll see this Sunday from Genesis 13, Abram begins to trust in an even deeper way than before. Indeed, out of the ashes of his failure to trust God in Egypt, Abraham emerges with a newfound trust in God as is demonstrated in Genesis 13.

That is significant for the Hebrews because they seemed to want to trust in anything but God. They revered their father Abraham, but they seemed reluctant to trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses is teaching the Israelites that God is worthy of their trust. As commentator Gordon Wenham suggests, this is a story about the invincibility of the divine promises of God.

This is why, when God gives the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites, God prefaces the imperative with an indicative: **2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.** Before God ever tells the Israelites what to do as His people, He tells them what He has done for them and who they are in relation to Him. He is their redeemer and their God by His initiative and faithfulness. The same applies to us today. As Paul wrote to the Galatian church:

#### **Galatians 3:5-14**

**5 "Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.**

Source: Wenham, Gordon, [Word Biblical Commentary - Genesis 1-15](#), Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, TN, 1987, pp. 283-292.

