

Marianna Wrona

Dr. David Emanuel

BIB102 NA

20 February 2023

Abraham's Lack of Trust in God

The passages of Gen 12:10-13:2 and Gen 20:1-18 delineate similar accounts of Abraham's story. In both incidents, Abraham moves to a foreign land. There he introduces Sarah, his wife, as his sister to the authoritative figures of the land. In both scenarios, the foreign rulers take Sarah to be one of their wives as she is very beautiful. This goes against God's promise of giving Abraham many descendants. With that, God intervenes by pointing out the ruler's mistake. Then, they both question Abraham on his acts but, nonetheless, they restore Sarah to him. Full of richness, Abraham and Sarah leave the land.

Both stories have a plethora of similarities. Abraham introduces Sarah as his sister to kings in both situations, Pharaoh and Abimelech, respectively. Also, both kings take Sarah to be their wife (Gen 12:15 and 20:2). Abraham, also, gains plenty of blessings such as animals and servants from both kings (Gen 12:16 and 20:14). Pharaoh and Abimelech, the authoritative figures of the land, both suffer consequences from Abraham's lie (Gen 12:17 and 20:18). In both places, Abraham was afraid of dying, however, after being confronted about his lie, he is asked to leave from the foreign land with his wife and goods (Gen 12:12-20 and 20:11-15). Although there are striking similarities between both stories, these accounts have details that differentiate them.

The differences between the stories begin with the location where Abraham is arriving, the first one being Egypt while the second is Gerar. Although in both scenarios Abraham receives gifts, in chapter 12, Pharaoh gave him gifts before discovering that Sarah was his wife and not sister, while in chapter 20, Abimelech gave the gifts after discovering it. In addition to that, how God punishes these rulers is different. In Gen 12:17, God afflicts Pharaoh and his land with plagues while in Gen 20:18, God punishes Abimelech by inhibiting the women in his house to get pregnant. As the Pharaoh confronts Abraham, he expels Abraham from Egypt. On the other hand, Abimelech confronts Abraham, who explains himself and prays against the curse. With that, Abimelech allows Abraham to settle wherever he wishes. In a broader view, the episode in chapter 20 is longer and more detailed. In this incident, Abraham is more intensively confronted and his explanation was made public. Although both stories have very similar plots, these details differentiate them.

Based on the passages, I do not think Abraham was right in his actions. Due to his lack of trust in God's promises, he deceived others in fear for his safety. In the verse:

Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, / From your family / And from your father's house / To a land that I will show you. / I will make you a great nation; / I will bless you / And make your great; / And you shall be a blessing... (Gen 12:1-2, NKJV)

God promises Abraham many descendants and to make his nation great. However, in both of the passages analyzed, Abraham chooses to conceal the truth that Sarah is his wife because he is worried he would be killed since Sarah is beautiful (Gen 12:12). In verse 12 of chapter 20, "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.” (Gen 20:12, NKJV), Abraham tries to justify his actions by explaining that there is some truth to his statement. Still, a half-truth, even though it contains some validity, is a deceptive statement, which causes one to be deceived. Abraham was not right in his actions because he was deceiving. In addition to this, if Abraham had truly believed in God’s promises, he would have not felt the need to lie considering that these promises would not be fulfilled if Abraham was killed.

These stories also resonate with the incident detailed in Gen 26:1-16 as Isaac introduces Rebekah as his sister instead of his wife. Just as his father, Issac, in Gerar, told Abimelech that Rebekah was his sister as he feared for his personal safety. Abimelech discovers the truth by observing Isaac's interactions with Rebekah. The ruler confronts him which resulted in sending Isaac and his wife away from his land.

These texts demonstrate how despite the wrongdoing of humans, God is faithful to his promises. God guarantees the fulfillment of His covenant promises by ensuring that Sarah stays with Abraham. Despite the threats to God’s plan, He still is determined to keep His word. God takes care of Abraham faithfully, never leaving left behind even when he is faithless.

I believe that the biggest lesson that we can learn from both of these accounts is that God is faithful no matter what. Even when we are not faithful and we try to take matters into our own hands, God is gentle with us, He forgives us, and He still takes care of us. These passages are proof of how unworthy we are of Christ. God is everloving and everlasting. We can trust Him completely. Also, since we are humans, we are prone to fail and sometimes we will not put our complete trust in Him but His love for us overpowers our lack. We can apply this lesson in our lives by making a conscious effort of trusting God and being aware that there is no need to sin.