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Old Testament Literature (BIB 102 NA)

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Compare and Contrast of Gen 12:10-13:2 and Gen 20:1-18

There are two key chapters in the book of Genesis: Gen 12:10-13:2 and Gen 20:1-18, which discuss the journey of Abraham and his wife Sarah. Both chapters share certain parallels and contrasts. In Gen 12:10-13:2, Abram went to Egypt to live with his wife Sarai, who was a beautiful woman. When Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her and she was taken into his palace. Abram acquired sheep and cattle, donkeys, male and female servants, and camels, but the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household. Pharaoh summoned Abram and asked him why he had taken Sarai to be his wife. In Gen 20:1-18, Abraham moved to the region of Negev and stayed in Gerar, where he said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Abimelech, king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her, but God came to him in a dream and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken." He said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation?" God said, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. Return the man's wife and he will pray for you and you will live."

Both texts have several similarities which have shed light on my understanding of this book. The first similarity is that, "Sarah was given over to two Kings as their wife." (Gen 12:15 and Gen 20:2). Another parallel that I have observed is that, "Abraham and Sarah lied about only being brothers and sisters." (Gen 12:13 and Gen 20:2). Another similarity is that, "Abraham feared in both texts that he would get killed if both kings found out that Sarah is his

wife.” (Gen 12:12 and Gen 20:11). The fourth similarity that I discovered was that, “Both texts talk about Abraham acquiring sheep, male and female servants.” (Gen 12:16 and Gen 20:14). Another example of similarity in both texts is that, “ God punished both Kings and their kingdoms because of Abraham’s wife Sarah.” (Gen 12:17 and Gen 20:17-18). The final similarity that I discovered was that “ Abraham gained the same amount of wealth from both Kings after they found out that Sarah is his wife.” (Gen 12:16 and Gen 20:14-16).

On the other hand in these texts, some differences define the full understanding of both occurrences. The first difference that I have identified is that, “ Both incidents occurred in two different places; one in Egypt and the other in Gerar between Kadesh and Shur.” (Gen 12:10 and Gen 20:1). Another contrast that I saw was that, “ Abraham was able to obtain land from Abimelech and none from Pharaoh.” (Gen 12:16 and Gen 20:15). Another difference is that, “ The first recorded healing in the Bible, which did not take place in the first text, is depicted in the second text by God acting through man.” (Gen 20:17). The Fourth difference that I have discovered is that, “ Abraham in the second passage explains to Abimelech why he told him Sarah was merely his sister and not his wife.” (Gen 20:11). The final difference that I saw was that, “ In the first text Abraham was referred to as Abram and his wife Sarah was referred to as Sarai.” (Gen 12:10-11 and Gen 20:2).

I think Abraham erred in judgment because he lacked confidence and trust in God. Even though Abraham disobeyed God, I think God still watched out for him to make sure he got the prosperity he was promised. If I had been Abraham, I would have awaited the Lord’s blessing. When we stay close to God, he is still there, even when it looks as though he has forgotten about us. Sometimes we will miss what God has in store for us since God’s timing is never off. God will bless us at the perfect moment, no matter how long it takes.

There are no other instances in Genesis that correspond to the current incident with Abraham and his wife Sarah in Gen 12:10-13:2 and Genesis 20:1-18. After reading these narratives, I can see that God is a faithful God who never abandons us. God will allow events to occur to bring himself glory even though he knows that dread is inherent in human nature. After saving Abraham from Pharaoh and Abimelech, God also used Abraham's circumstances to give him the confidence to put greater faith in Abraham. God's creation demonstrates that he had to bring a flood on the Earth to put an end to many of man's forbidden desires.

Based on the two texts, I have learned to put God first and to have faith in him even when things get worse because he always chooses the best time. Never leave your wife for anything, I would add. I think that until God himself commands you to sacrifice one another, husband and wife should do things together. I also discovered how crucial it is to have faith in God because losing it might cause us to wander off. Never question God since he is a God of the past, present, and future.

In conclusion, by lying about his wife Sarah, Abraham amasses wealth in both texts. He was worried that he would pass away. Abraham neglected the fact that God was his rock and shield, the one who would protect him and favor him. Abraham was allowed to execute the first healing by God through him, and God used his situation to his glory. Abraham would have realized that nothing could harm him until he had received all of the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant if he had believed in God. Sometimes, God makes good out of bad circumstances. In my research, I found that the two accounts were more similar than different. These texts have a significant impact overall.