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Abraham and his Fear

In Genesis 12 Abraham leaves his land due to a great famine. He heads to Egypt during this time. Due to his wife Sarah, he fears losing his life because she is beautiful and he thinks that he would be killed for her by the Egyptians. He then tells his wife Sarah, “Say you are my sister.” (Gen 12:13 ESV). The reason for this is so she could be treated well and his life would be spared. When he enters Egypt the officials of the Pharaoh see Sarah and praise her to Pharaoh. He takes her for himself and he treats Abraham well because of her. God intervenes by inflicting diseases on Pharaoh and his household. Due to this Pharaoh hands Sarah back to Abraham. Pharaoh lets them go with everything they had and Abraham heads to Negev with everyone and everything.

In Genesis 20 we are not told why Abraham moved to Negav but in a similar fashion, he claims his wife Sarah to be his sister. Abimelech takes Sarah but God comes to him in a dream because of her. Abimelech tells God he is innocent because when he took Sarah he did it thinking she was Abraham's sister. Abimelech then gives Sarah back to Abraham. After that Abimelech goes to Abraham asking, “what did you see, that you did this thing”. (Gen 20:11 ESV). Abraham then gives him his reason. “I did it because I thought, ‘There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’ Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.” (Gen 20:13 ESV). When Abraham shared this, Abimelech took sheep and oxen, male and female servants to give to him. When Abimelech did this, Abraham prayed to God on

Abimelech's behalf. Abimelech and his family were healed, and his wife and female servants were able to give birth again because that was the affliction God had put on them.

Now, both stories do have a lot of similarities. We see that in both of these stories, Abraham leaves his land, and he enters another land to stay for a little while before going back. Due to the fear of losing his life because of his wife. Abraham decides to tell everyone in Egypt and Negev his wife Sarah is his sister. The kings take Sarah for themselves. We only see that Pharaoh takes Sarah as his wife in Gen 12. When both kings took Sarah, God afflicted both kings and their households. God's intervention causes both kings to give Sarah back to Abraham and due to this the affliction is taken away from both of them.

We do not see too many differences in both stories but only a few. One difference is that in Gen 12 we are told that he leaves his land due to a famine. In Gen 20 however, we are not told why, he just heads to Negev. We also see that Pharaoh takes Sarah as his wife. Abimelech however does not take Sarah to be his wife. He takes her but he does not do anything. God still intervenes by inflicting Abimelech and Pharaoh. We see that Abimelech's family can no longer give birth but Pharaoh's family is afflicted with diseases. And finally, when Sarah is returned to Abraham Pharaoh lets him go and he leaves for another land called Negev. Abimelech on the other hand allows Abraham to live anywhere on his land and he gives Abraham slaves and animals to keep.

I think Abraham rightfully feared for his life. I do not agree with his decision to lie about who Sarah is concerning him. The reason is that his decision leads to Pharaoh and Abimelech being afflicted with various diseases by God. Abraham does clarify in Genesis 20:12 that yes though Sarah is married to him, she is also his sister. Abraham did not completely lie but he also was not completely honest. The reason I believe that he was not right is because of the affliction caused to the families of Pharaoh and Abimelech. It would have been better for him to tell the truth in both situations. The reason is that we see God intervening in both situations. "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife". (Gen 20:3

ESV) . The fact that he did it a second time with the same fear even after God had helped him the first time is why I believe he did not do the right thing. This to me shows that he did not learn from his first experience.

We see that in Genesis 26 Isaac the son of Abraham has a similar situation happen to him. He enters a land that is not his own and he fears for his life while he is there because of his wife Rebekah. In his fear, he tells the men there that Rebekah is his sister and not his wife so that he would not be killed. Now, Abimelech, who was king, saw the two couples together and noticed that they were in fact married and confronted Isaac for his lie. We see in fact that Abimelech was not planning to take his wife, He instead puts out a warning to his people saying, “Whoever touches this man and his wife shall surely be put to death”. (Gen 26:11). Isaac then stayed in their land and became so powerful that he was kicked out and moved to the land of Gerar.

From the interactions that I see God in, He is just in his judgment towards people. I say this because in Genesis 20 God doesn't allow for Abimelech to sin against Abraham and God. When God puts his affliction on Abimelech he comes to him and warns him because of Sarah. In Genesis 20:6 we see that God is fully aware that Abimelech had a clear conscience about his situation and he offered him a way out.

I think for me one thing I am learning at least from the book of Genesis is that God truly is gracious and merciful towards sinners. We see that God intervenes all throughout Genesis dealing with mankind and their sins. He has every right to wipe us all away and completely start over but God still time and time again is kind and gives us a chance. But from these stories we see God intervening on behalf of Abraham. I can not say that for us it would happen exactly the same way, but God is always with us and all that happens in life.

Works Cited

The Holy Bible, ESV. 2016 ed., Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2016.

Gen 12:10-13:2, Gen 20:1-18, and Gen 26