

## **Genesis 12:10-20 – Abram's visit to Egypt**

Abram had been called out of his land, to go and be a stranger and pilgrim. He had been given great promises, but had now to wait and trust for God to bring about the fulfilment. He was a foreigner in the promised land, living by faith.

### **1. Faith tested (the visit to Egypt) – v10-13**

Abram came into the promised land of Canaan; but whilst there, he suffered a famine. God's people must not expect an easy and smooth life; God often tests his people with troubles; Christianity is the way of the cross before the crown. This was another test of Abram's faith; he had come from a place that was prosperous. He would be tempted to return there; but he did not. Instead he travelled down to Egypt, in the opposite direction to his homeland. In Egypt he faced a new danger; his wife Sarah, who was very beautiful (v14) might be desired and taken by the Egyptians. Abram feared for his life; but instead of relying upon God, he came up with his own plan – he would not let the Egyptians know that she was his wife. Had he forgotten the promise (12:3), that all those who opposed him would be cursed? It seems he doubted God's ability to fulfil it. He trusted his own wisdom to protect him.

### **2. Abram's plan does not work (Sarah taken) – v14-16**

The plan did not work. When we make our own plans and try to “help God” by bending the rules, it will not work. Sarah was seen, and taken to become Pharaoh's wife. In the East in those days, a ruler like Pharaoh would have many wives and would not seal his relationship with any until many months of rituals had been fulfilled (see Esther 2:12). Abram received many gifts from Pharaoh. These must have hurt Abram's conscience; they were not received through honesty. And yet they were also God's way of bringing blessing to Abram, and reminding him that he could be trusted. The Bible does not hide the faults of great men. Noah, Abram, David, Lot, Moses, Uzziah, Sarah and Jacob are all praised for their faith and love to God – and yet between them committed sins of drunkenness, pride, rebellion, murder, adultery and unbelief. The Bible has only one perfect man, Jesus Christ – and all else are sinners who need him.

### **3. The Lord's deliverance (Sarah released) – v17-20**

Even when we are unfaithful, God is faithful. Though Abram had walked in the flesh and not by faith, God would not forget his promises. God intervened and brought plagues on Pharaoh's household. God rebukes even kings for the sake of his people (Psalms 105:12-15). Pharaoh came to understand what had happened, and called Abram and rebuked him. It turned out that Pharaoh was a better man than Abram feared. Like the pagan ship captain in Jonah (1:6), he rightly rebuked a man of God. We should also be humble and ready to receive God's rebukes, even if they come from the mouth of a donkey (2 Peter 2:16). Abram left Egypt with his wife, safety and many gifts. God is a God of grace and mercy to us in Jesus; we deserve condemnation, but he mercifully delivers us.