

MZFABC Bible Study

Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

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VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



Moving Forward as a Growing Church:

Believing For It

The background features two prominent, wavy, white lines that sweep across the frame from left to right. The upper line is positioned above the text, and the lower line is positioned below it, creating a sense of movement and flow. The bottom portion of the image is a solid teal color, which transitions into the black background above the lower wavy line.

Abraham: **The Father of the Jews**

March 13, 2024

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

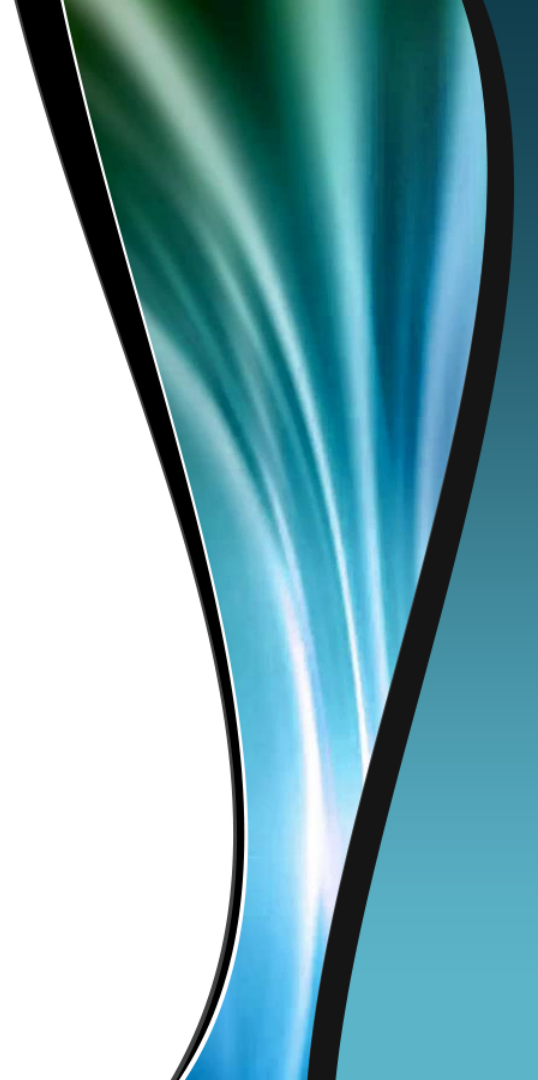
Sojourning In Egypt

GENESIS 12:10-13:4



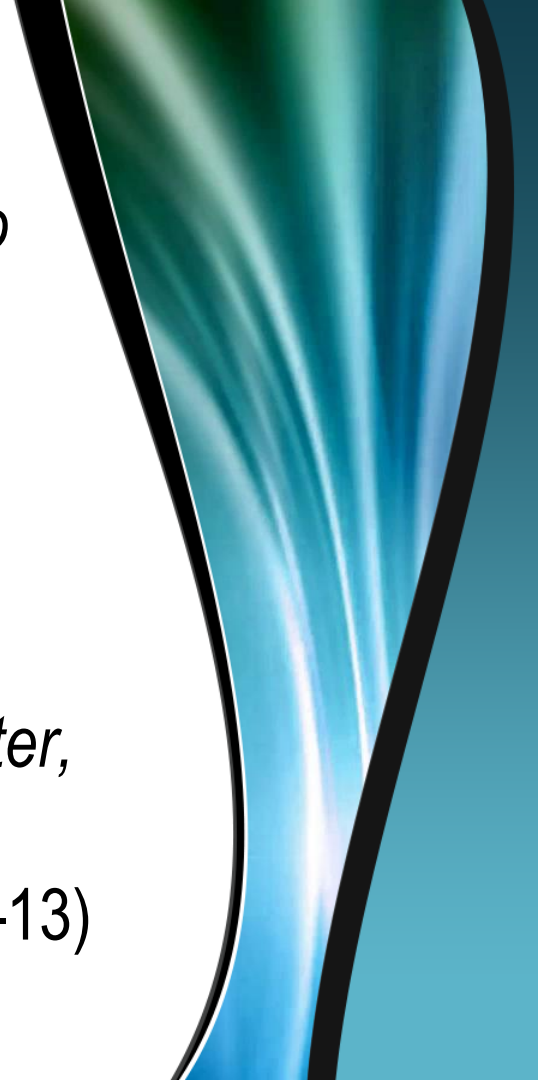
To study this sojourning experience in Abraham's life, we will consider:

- The famine in the land (12:10)
- The forsaking of the land (12:10),
- The folly out of the land (12:11–17)
- The flight back to the land (12:18–13:4)



THE FOLLY OUT OF THE LAND:

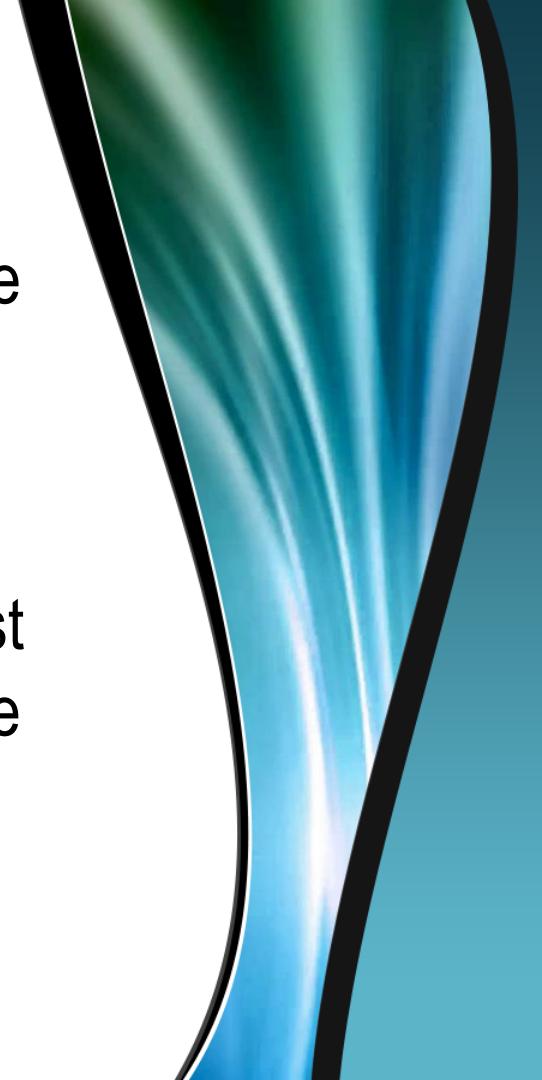
“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.” (Genesis 12:11–13)



What a very foolish thing Abraham did in Egypt regarding his wife. But Egypt was one place that really encouraged this evil conduct by Abraham. There are indeed some places in life that encourage us to sin. If we do not stay away from those places, as God commands, we will bring many headaches and heartaches into our lives. It is "*Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help*" (Isaiah 31:1) as the Prophet Isaiah said later, and this "Woe" can be said for many places in life.

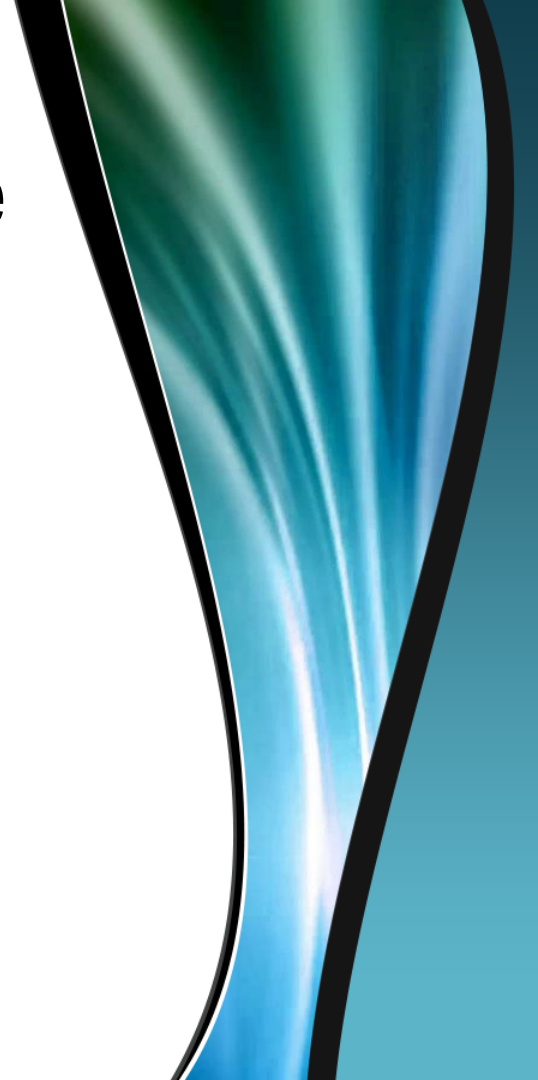


Folly begets folly! *The folly of forsaking the land leads to folly out of the land!* One sin results in/leads to another sin. When we start sinning, we get in deeper and deeper if we do not stop and repent. But how often folk ignore this truth and think such foolish and fatal thoughts as: just one drink will not hurt, changing the laws to permit just one form of gambling will not hurt, and just one lie will not hurt. But **“just one”** leads to another and another and another. So it was with Abraham, and so it will be with anyone.



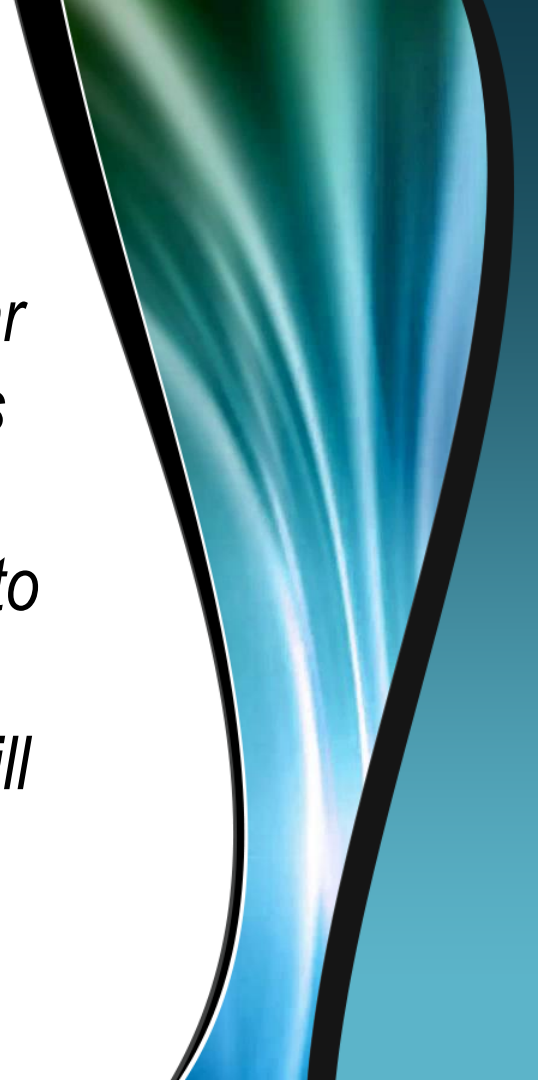
Let us note four evils involved in the folly of Abraham's action in Egypt regarding his wife. They are:

- ***Fearfulness***
- ***Selfishness***
- ***Deceitfulness***
- ***Injuriousness***

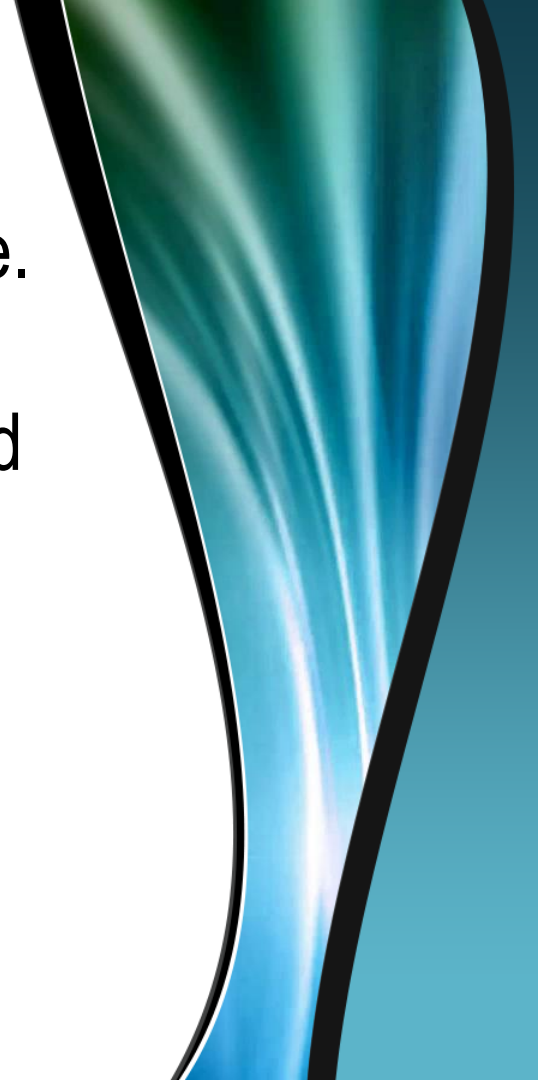


Fearfulness

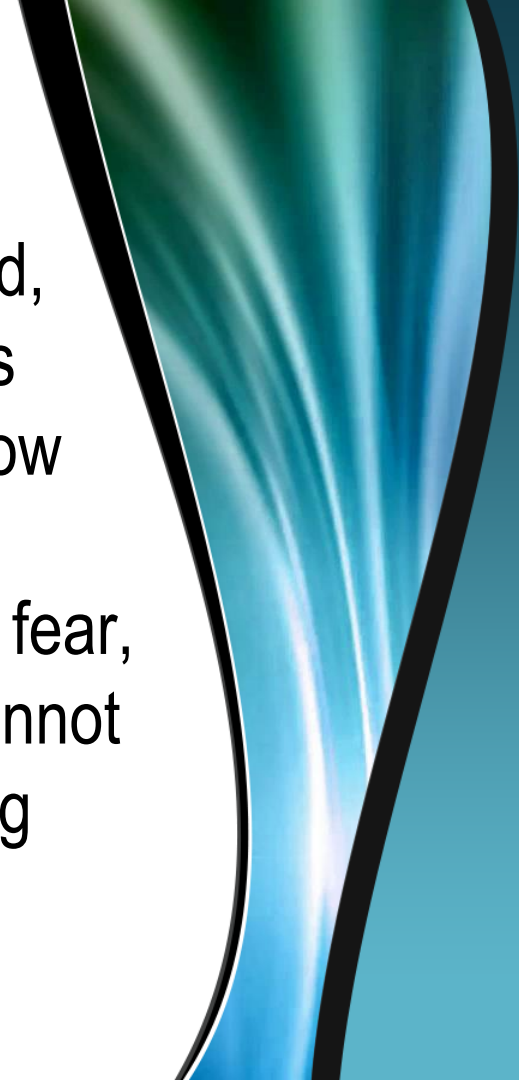
“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me...” (12:11, 12)



As soon as Abraham got to Egypt, fear possessed him. He was not filled with peace. Faith brings peace. But when we cease walking by faith, we lose peace and are filled with fear; so much so that we often fear our own shadow. Walking by faith brings us the sense of God's protection. Walking by the flesh does nothing of the sort, and so fear takes over.

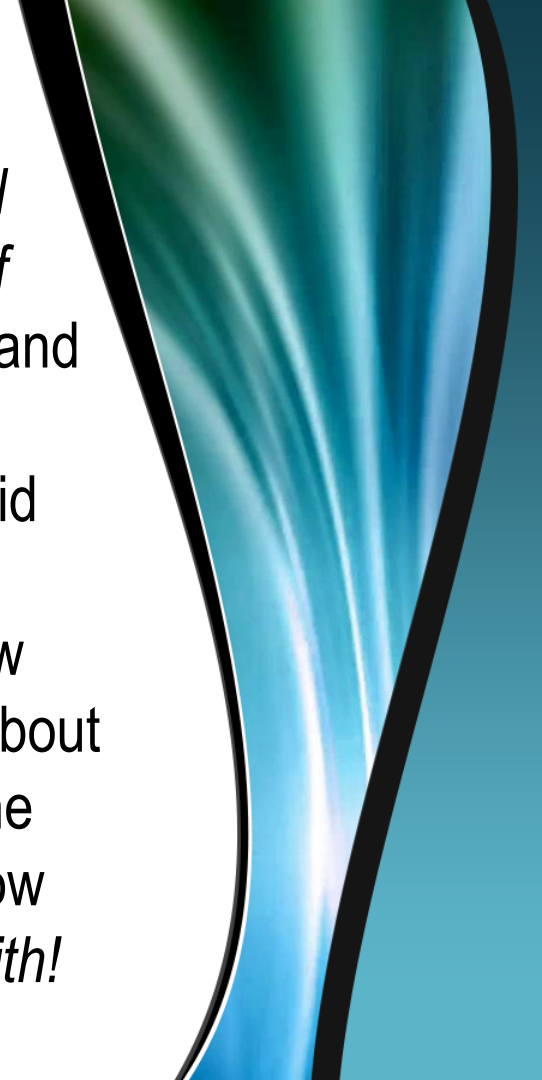


The world may seem so bold and macho, but deep down inside they are afraid. Without God, without Christ as Savior, without faith in God's Word, they have nothing to quell their fear. How different it is, however, with those walking obediently by faith in God's Word. Peace, not fear, possesses their souls. It is a peace money cannot buy. Do not throw it out the window by ditching faith as Abraham did here.



Selfishness

“Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.” (12:13). Spiritual decline promotes selfishness; and oh, what a selfish, base attitude Abraham had here. Abraham is looking out primarily for himself. He is afraid they will take Sarah away from him and kill him in the process. He does nothing to protect Sarah from the low moral conduct of others. Abraham is only concerned about saving his own skin. He is so selfish that he imperils the purity of others that he might survive and enjoy life. How very low Abraham stooped because of his *failure of faith!*



Selfishness is a major problem of the world today. This should not surprise us, for the world rejects walking by faith in favor of walking by the flesh. Selfish actions or motives lack consideration for others. Selfish behaviors are concerned chiefly with one's own personal gain, profit or pleasure. *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* (Philippians 2:3,4)

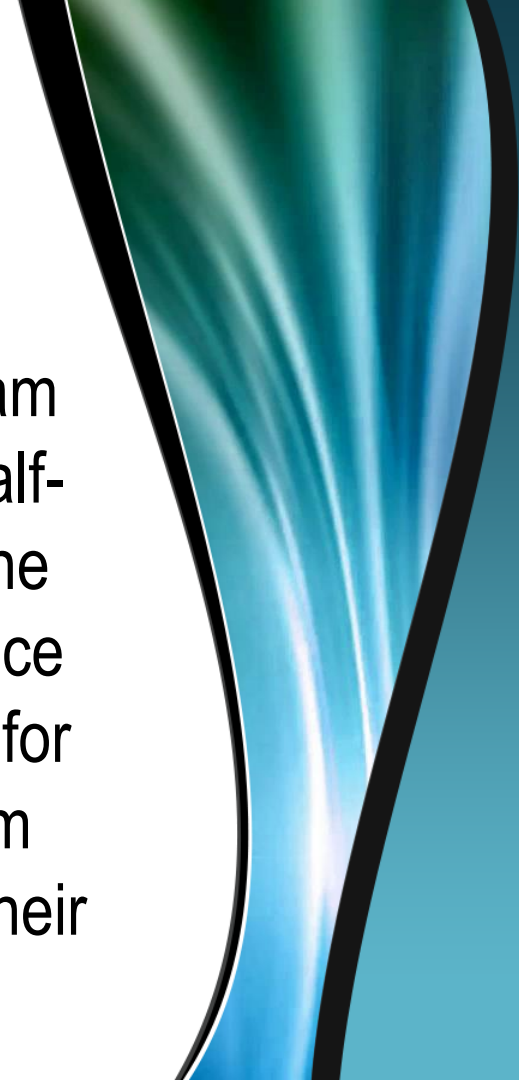


Deceitfulness

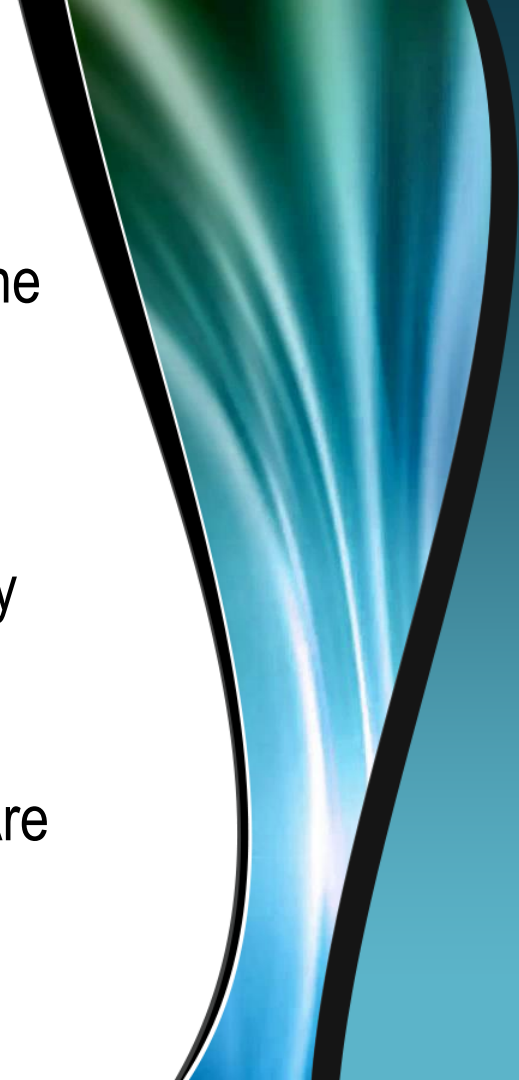
Abraham's scheme to save himself from being killed by the Egyptians—something he fears at this time more than he fears God—was to have Sarah lie. He told Sarah, *“Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me.”* (12:13) Some try to excuse Abraham here by saying that it is justified in this particular situation of self-preservation. That does not make the sin of lying acceptable. Abraham has no justification for lying. He is serving a true God, and his conduct ought to reflect truth!



Abraham's lie was a half-truth lie. Sarah was his half-sister (Genesis 20:12), but she was first and foremost his wife now—not to mention the merits/value of her as a human being! So Abraham is not exonerated here by the fact that it was a half-truth. A half-truth is still a whole lie. But whether he lied or did not lie in his speech makes no difference as to whether or not he is guilty of deceitfulness, for Abraham definitely intended to deceive. Abraham simply did not want Sarah to tell the truth about their husband–wife relationship.



Some console their consciences by the fact that they did not technically lie with the mouth. But they are still guilty of lying; for though they may speak nothing but the truth, it is spoken in such a way as to give a deceitful appearance. You can speak the truth and still be lying because of the intended effect. On the other hand, you may not speak the truth and still be honest, for you may not be aware that you are not speaking the truth about something—but think you are telling the truth about it. What is important are your intentions in your speech. Are you trying to give a true representation or a false one? God looks at our intentions when judging our speech.

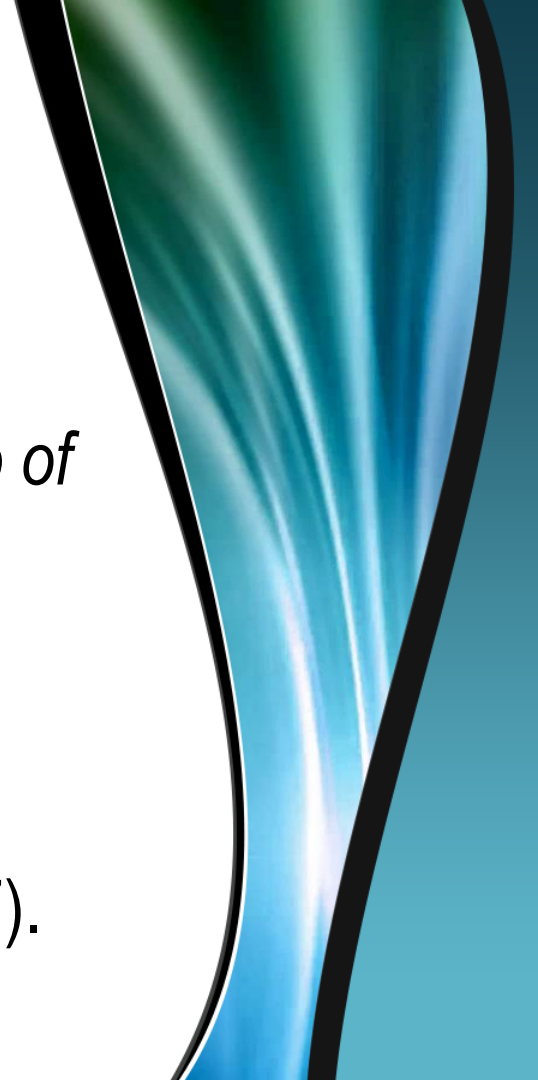


If what you are doing requires deceit, you are doing the wrong thing. Walking on the path of faith does not require dishonesty. Jesus said He was **“The Truth”** and those who follow Him ought to reflect truth in their lives. The believer’s strength is in truth, not lies. The world’s way is the way of deceit, but that is not God’s way!



Injuriousness

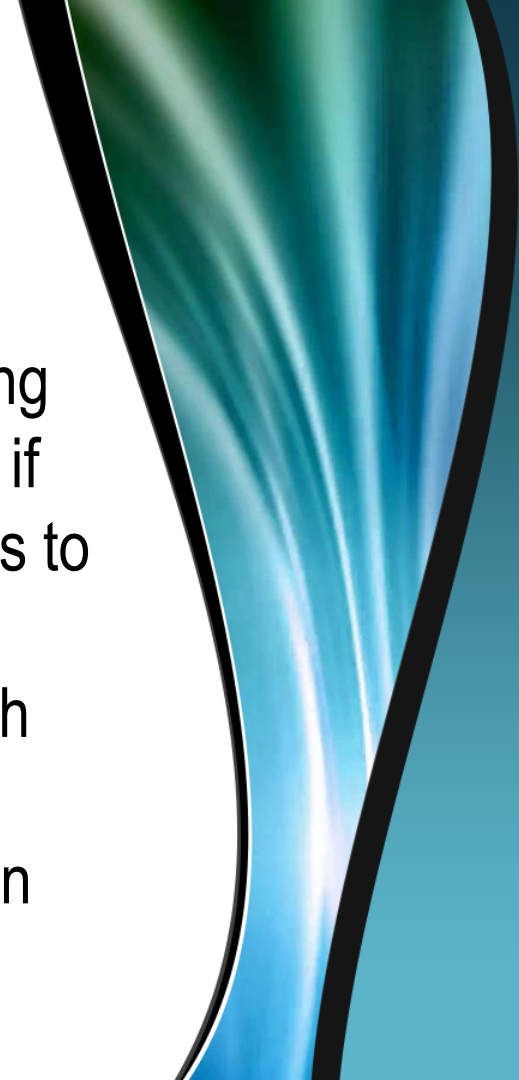
“And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house ... And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” (12:14, 15, 17).



One of the big problems in sinning is that one not only hurts oneself by his/her sin, but also greatly imperils a host of other people. Abraham's sinful ways eventually brought suffering to his wife plus the head of the Egyptian government and countless others in the government of Egypt.

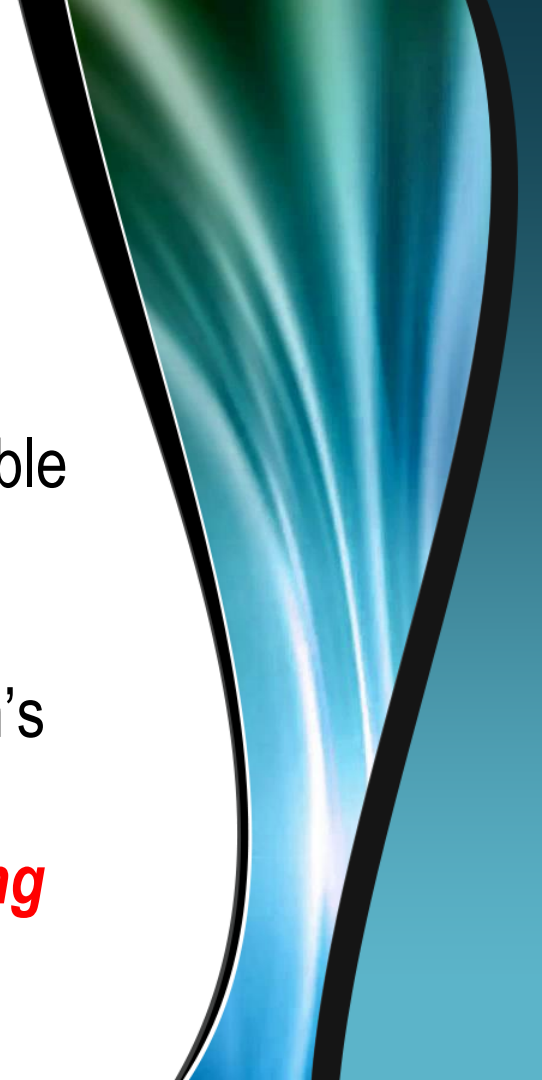


In the great summons God gave Abraham, He told Abraham he was to be a blessing to the world. (Genesis 12:2, 3) But here he is being a curse. He has put Sarah in a situation that could do nothing but bring great anxiety to her, plus ruin her morally if God does not intervene. He is also causing plagues to come upon Pharaoh and his household. That Abraham, one of God's own, should cause so much problems for others by *his* sin, reminds us that sometimes ***a saint out of fellowship with God*** can rival the devil in causing trouble!



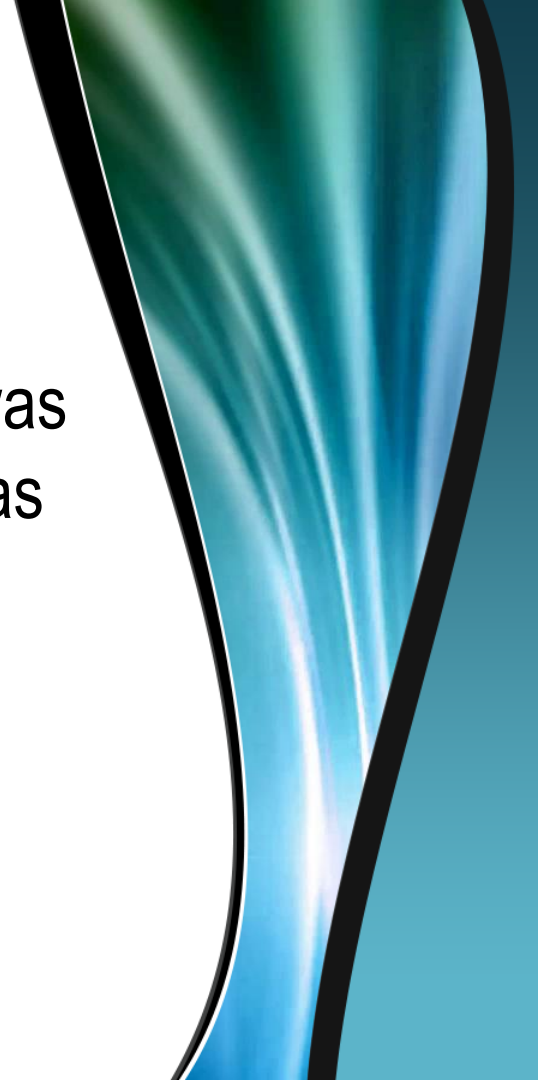
THE FLIGHT BACK TO THE LAND

Abraham needed to get out of Egypt and return to Canaan. He did not belong in Egypt and his sojourning there was causing many problems for others and was also getting himself into much trouble with man and God. How Abraham got out of Egypt and back to Canaan is a most interesting and instructive story. To examine this story of Abraham's return to Canaan, we will look at the ***reason, retribution, rebuke, riches, revival, and repeating*** involved in the return to Canaan.

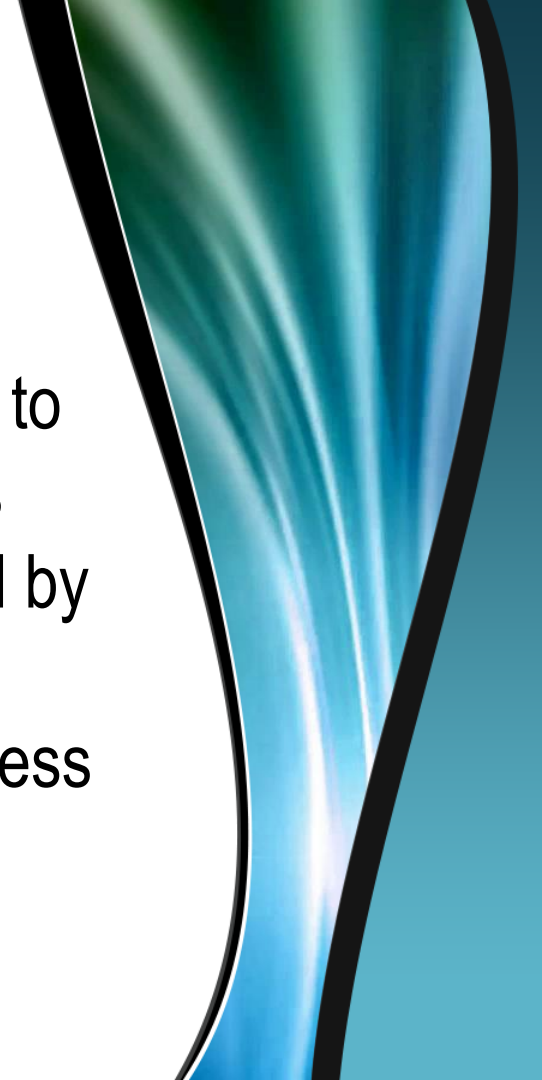


The Reason:

“And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife” (12:17). The main reason that Abraham was able to get out of Egypt and back to Canaan was God’s grace. God’s grace is always behind deliverances from troubles humankind get themselves into by disobeying God.



Abraham certainly did not deserve to be extracted from the snare he got himself into in Egypt: he had deliberately left the place where God wanted him to be, he had allowed his wife to be taken from him to become part of Pharaoh's harem, his personal conduct was characterized by fear and dishonesty and selfishness, he was a problem to society, and his worship of and witness for God were simply non-existent.



God would have been justified if He had left Abraham to die in his troubles in Egypt rather than seeing to it that he return to Canaan. But God did not do that. His grace ordered circumstances (*“plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues”*) to come about that would free Sarah and send Abraham and all that he had back to Canaan. Abraham could say what the Psalmist said centuries later and what we can also say, *“He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities”* (Psalm 103:10).

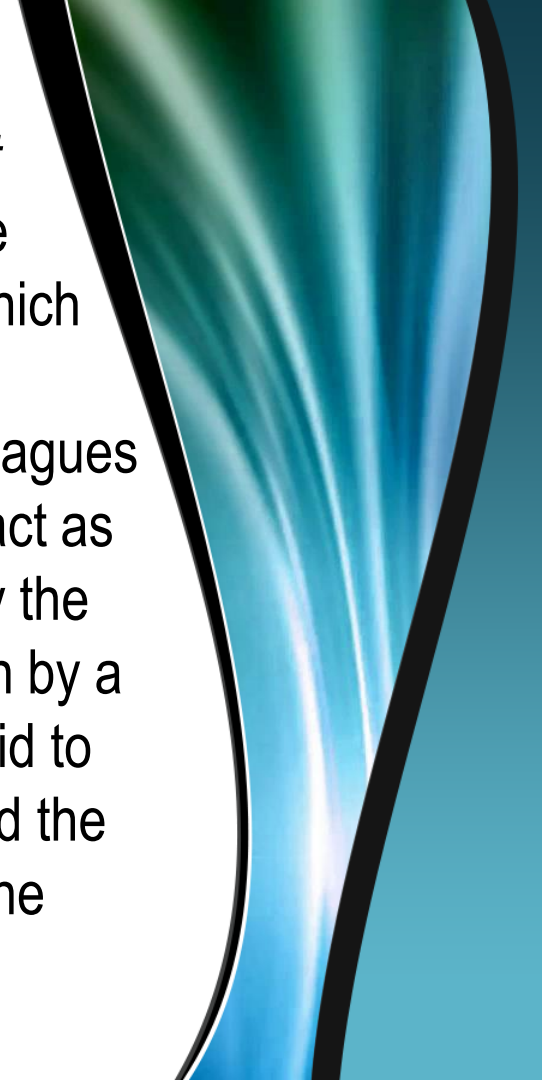


God's delivering of Abraham from Egypt and sending him back to Canaan is a good illustration of *compelling* grace. Pharaoh was moved providentially (*the plagues*) by God and, as a result, told Abraham to **"get!"** and Abraham **got!** This is like the grace that compelled folk into the Great Supper. *"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."* (Luke 14:23) In applying this (*compelling*) to soul salvation, someone (we do not know who) has said, *"Twas the same grace that spread the feast that gently forced me in, else I had refused to enter and perished in my sin."* But for God's compelling grace, none of us would be saved!



The Retribution:

“And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram’s wife.” (v. 17) It was the plagues that God used that moved things in the palace which eventually resulted in the rescue of Sarah from the evil situation in which Abraham’s failure had put her. These plagues were serious, or they would not have moved Pharaoh to act as he did. Some think Sarah sent word to Pharaoh as to why the plagues were coming. Others think God spoke to Pharaoh by a vision to inform him of the reason for the plagues as He did to Abimelech (20:3–7), when Abraham some years later tried the same lying act. Still others think his servants figured out the reason and told Pharaoh the reason.



But it really makes no difference how Pharaoh became informed of the true situation of Sarah; the fact is, he was informed; and when he was informed, he acted with firmness; for judgment was what inspired his actions. Pharaoh, unlike multitudes today, did not mock the idea that plagues on humankind were related to immoral behavior. He believed that moral defilement brings much trouble to society. And because he believed that fact, he was able to get the plagues stopped by correcting the moral problem God was upset about. It is such a simple thing; yet with all our boasted intelligence today, we still have not come to that obvious conclusion about the *plagues* that threaten humankind because of our immoral ways.

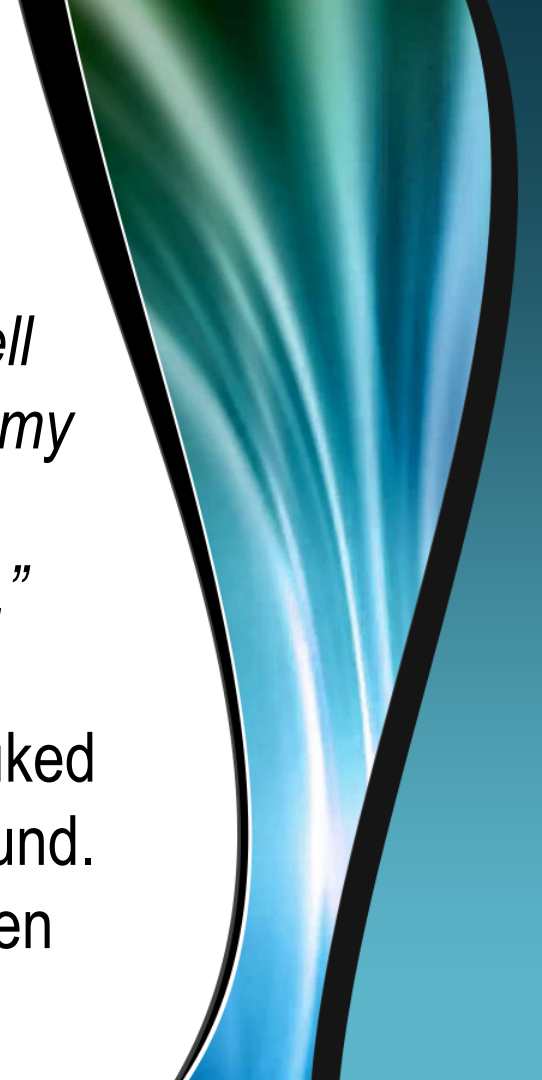


The Rebuke:

Pharaoh gave Abraham a very humbling rebuke.

“And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.”

(12:18, 19) Here is Abraham, a man who has been given a high calling from God, being justifiably rebuked by a heathen king. It ought to be the other way around. But, alas, when saints get out of the will of God, even the world acts better at times.



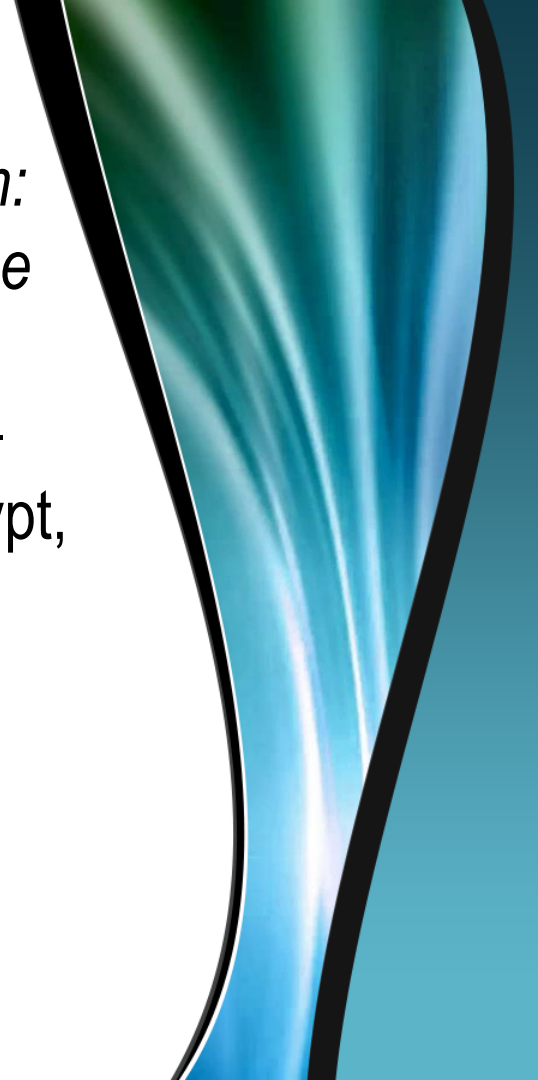
Theologian Joseph Parker said, “There are men today who make no profession of Christian faith, whose honor, straightforwardness, and generosity would put to shame many who claim a good standing in the Church.” One thing that has not helped this problem is that churches are too often obsessed with numbers rather than character.

Abraham’s deliverance was humbling. But it is always humbling when God delivers us from our sin. God’s deliverances never puff up the sinner with pride. Be it in salvation or in other rescues, we will always be humbled.

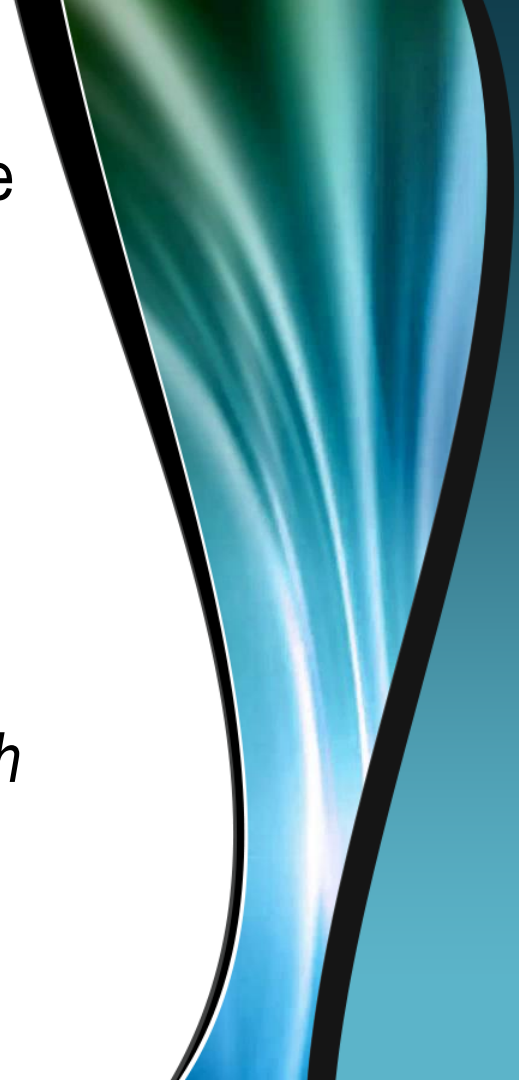


The Riches:

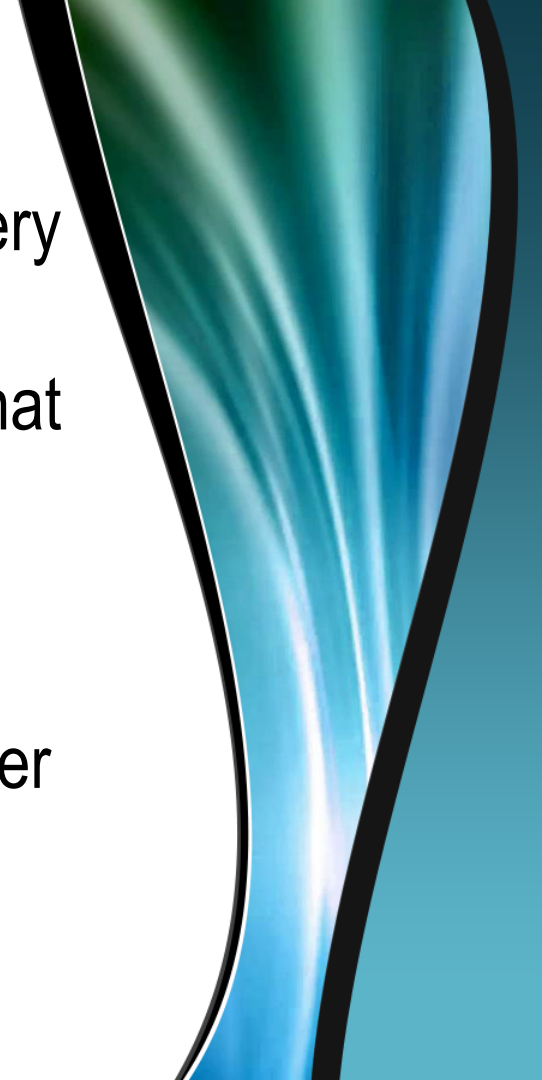
“And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him.” (12:20–13:1) When Abraham returned to Canaan from Egypt, he brought with him “all that he had” (12:20) which was no small amount of wealth; for in Egypt Abraham’s wealth had greatly increased.



The increase was chiefly a result of the abundance of things Pharaoh had given Abraham when Pharaoh had Sarah in his house. Pharaoh treated *“Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, male donkeys, and menservants, and maidservants, and female donkeys, and camels.”* (12:16) Abraham had fared so well in Egypt that when he returned to Canaan, *“Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.”* (13:2)



To some, this gain may seem to say that Abraham's unauthorized trip to Egypt was a very rewarding trip; for it paid handsome material dividends. He certainly would not have done that well in the famine in Canaan. But, before one gets excited about the great increase in riches and conclude that going to Egypt really wasn't such a bad thing after all, we must also consider the problems that Abraham had with all his increased gain.



All that glitters is not gold. The added gain he got in Egypt was nothing but trouble for Abraham for the rest of his life. The rewards of disobedience look so nice on the surface, but underneath they are not so pleasant! What were Abraham's troubles from his gains which he got in Egypt? Take notice of three of these troubles. They had to do with: ***his conscience, his clan, and his concubine.***

