

“What Did You Expect?”

Genesis 12¹⁰⁻²⁰

Earlier in Genesis 12 the LORD appeared to Abraham and promised to make him “into a great nation” with a great reputation (“name”), with the gifts of blessing, land, and offspring. Based on these promises Abram uprooted himself and his immediate family and went to the place God had promised to eventually give him (v.6). As Abram surveyed the land he built two altars: the first one to commemorate the spot where the LORD re-appeared to him and renewed his earlier promise (v.7), and the second altar where Abram called on the name of the LORD (i.e. pray & worship).

But sometime after this Abram and Sarai encounter two unexpected obstacles that seem to call God’s fulfilment of His promises into question—first famine forces Abraham to move his family to Egypt and second, Sarah's beauty causes her to be abducted into Pharaoh's harem. What will they do when the going gets tough? What would you do?

Opening Question(s) – Choose one.

- a) Complete the sentence: “*When the going gets tough, I _____.*”
- b) What “white lie” do you recall telling (as a kid, or as an adult) and why? Did it “work”?

Study Questions

- 1) **Read Genesis 12:10-20.** How do you think Abram felt when he made the journey to the promised land, only to find a famine there? How might he feel about God’s promises? Why?
- 2) Genesis 20¹² tells us that Sarai was Abram’s half-sister. Does that justify Abram’s plan—especially when his plan seemed to be working—at least on one level (vv. 13, 16)?
- 3) Why do you think Sarai went along with Abram’s idea? What did she have to gain, or lose?
- 4) In what way did Abram’s plan make things worse? How does the Lord save Abram and Sarai from the mess (vv.17-20)?
- 5) What do think Abram & Sarai learned through the experience? How might they act differently in a future famine-like crisis?
- 6) Describe a time when you were tempted to take (or took) matters into your own hands instead of trusting in God’s way of resolving the crisis. What were the results for you and other involved?
- 7) What challenge, dilemma, obstacle or crisis are you facing that you would like prayer for?