

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 12

In this chapter an account is given of the call of Abram to depart from his own country, with a promise of a divine blessing, (<sup><0120></sup>Genesis 12:1-3) of his obedience to it, (<sup><0120></sup>Genesis 12:4,5) of his journey through the land of Canaan, and of the Lord's appearance to him in it, and his promise of it to his seed, and of Abram's building altars in it, and calling on the name of the Lord, (<sup><0120></sup>Genesis 12:6-9) and of a famine there, which occasioned him to go into Egypt, (<sup><0120></sup>Genesis 12:10) where, through fear of being slain, he desired his wife to call herself his sister, (<sup><0121></sup>Genesis 12:11-13) and she being greatly admired by the Egyptians for her beauty, it went well with Abram for her sake, (<sup><0124></sup>Genesis 12:14-16) but the Egyptians were plagued because of her, who, when they understood she was Abram's wife, sent them both away, and all that belonged to them, (<sup><0127></sup>Genesis 12:17-20).

**Ver. 1.** *Now the Lord had said unto Abram*, etc.] In Ur of the Chaldees, before he came and dwelt in Charran, as seems from (<sup><402></sup>Acts 7:2) and so Aben Ezra interprets it; but Jarchi and others think, that what follows was said to him in Haran, and so the words may be more literally rendered <sup>f880</sup>, “and the Lord said unto Abram”; after the death of Terah, who died in Haran; and indeed it is highly probable there were two appearances of God to Abram, and that the same words, or very near the same, were spoken to him at two several times, first in Ur of the Chaldees, and then in Haran:

*get thee out of thy country*; the land of Chaldea, and the city of Ur, which was in it, or out of Mesopotamia, in which, when taken in a large sense, were both Ur and Haran; and this country was now become idolatrous, for though it was first inhabited and peopled by the posterity of Shem in the time of Arphaxad, yet these, in process of time, degenerated from the true religion, and fell into idolatry. The same Maimonides <sup>f881</sup> calls Zabaeans, in whose faith and religion, he says, Abram was brought up, and who asserted there was no other God but the sun, moon, and stars; and these Zabaeans, as he relates from their books and annals, say of Abram themselves, that he was educated in Cuthia, and dissented from the common people; and asserted, that besides the sun, there was another Creator; to whom they

objected, and so disputes arose among them on this subject: now Abram being convinced of idolatry, is called out from those people, and to have no fellowship with them; it is literally in the Hebrew text <sup>f882</sup>, “go to thee out of thy country”; for thy profit and good, as Jarchi interprets it; as it must be to quit all society with such an idolatrous and superstitious people:

*and from thy kindred*; as Nahor his brother, and his family, who are not mentioned, and seem to be left behind when Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; though it looks as if afterwards Nahor did follow them to Haran or Padanaram, which are the same, and where he continued, and therefore is called his city; (see <sup>-0240-</sup>Genesis 24:10) (<sup>-0250-</sup>Genesis 25:20 28:2,5,10 29:4,5) so with great propriety Abram might be called a second time to leave his kindred as well as his country; and certain it is, Haran, or Padanaram, as well as Ur of the Chaldees, is called by himself his country, and Nahor and his family his kindred, (<sup>-0244-</sup>Genesis 24:4)

*and from thy father's house*; or household, his family, which better agrees with the second call at Haran, than with the first at Ur; for, upon the first call, Terah and his family came along with Abram, and therefore this phrase is omitted by Stephen, who speaks of that call, (<sup>-407B-</sup>Acts 7:3) but Terah dying at Haran, his house or family went no further, but continued there with Nahor; only Abram and Lot, upon this second call, went from thence, as the following history makes it appear; and so Abram left, as he was bid, his father's house and family to go, as it follows:

*unto a land that I will show thee*; meaning the land of Canaan, though not mentioned, and seems to be omitted for the trial of Abram's faith; hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, (<sup>-810B-</sup>Hebrews 11:8) observes, that “he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went”; and yet it is said, that, when he and Terah came out of Ur of the Chaldees, “they went forth to go into the land of Canaan”, (<sup>-0113-</sup>Genesis 11:31) and, when he and Lot went first from Haran, the same is said of them, (<sup>-0125-</sup>Genesis 12:5) it is probable the case was this; there was no mention made at first what land he was to go to, and when he prepared for his journey he knew not where he was to go, but afterwards it was revealed to him that Canaan was the land, and therefore set out in order to go thither; and still, though he might know the place by name where he was to go, he might neither know the way to it, nor what sort of country it was for quality or quantity; and therefore God promises to show him the way, and direct his course right unto it, and

give him a view of it, that he might see what sort of a country, and how large it was, that he would give to his posterity. This call of Abram is an emblem of the call of men by the grace of God out of the world, and from among the men of it, and to renounce the things of it, and not be conformed unto it, and to forget their own people and their father's house, and to cleave to the Lord, and follow him whithersoever he directs them.

**Ver. 2.** *And I will make of thee a great nation*, etc.] In a literal sense, as the people of the Jews were that descended from him, and in a spiritual sense believers in all ages and of all nations, that walk in the steps of the faith of Abram, who are his children, and are blessed with him:

*and I will bless thee*; not only with temporal blessings, but principally with spiritual ones, since Abram in person had no share of the land of Canaan; even with the adoption of children and friendship with God; with justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, which blessedness came upon him when uncircumcised; with a large measure of faith, and every other grace; with the sanctification of the Spirit, and an increase of it until brought to perfection; and with eternal glory and happiness, a right, title, and meetness for it, and the full possession of it:

*and make thy name great*; as it was among the Jews his descendants, who boasted of having Abram for their father; and among the several nations of the world; his name is famous in profane history, and is in high esteem with the Mahometans to this day; and especially his name is great and famous, and the memory of him precious among all those who have obtained like precious faith with him, in every age and in every nation:

*and thou shall be a blessing*; to all that knew him and conversed with him, they receiving spiritual light and knowledge by means of his instruction, and to all that should hear and read of his faith and piety, being encouraged by his example: or, "shall be blessing"; blessing itself, that is, most blessed, exceedingly blessed; as a very wicked man may be called wickedness itself; as "scelus" for "scelestus" with the Latins; so a good man may be called blessing itself, extremely happy.

**Ver. 3.** *And I will bless them that bless thee*, etc.] Not the priests only that should bless his children, the children of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan, but all men of all nations, and of every age, that speak well of him, commend him for his faith and holiness, and tread in his steps, these are blessed with faithful Abraham, (~~GEN~~ Galatians 3:7,9).

*And curse him that curseth thee*; here is a change of numbers, before the plural, here the singular, denoting, it may be, that many would bless him, and but few curse him, and that every individual person that did curse him should be cursed himself: the Targum of Jonathan wrongly restrains this to Balaam's cursing Abraham's children, and was cursed by God; Maimonides<sup>f883</sup> thinks, there is no doubt to be made of it, that the Zabaeans, the idolatrous people Abram was brought up with, when he contradicted them, loaded him with curses and reproaches; and, because he bore them all patiently for the glory of God, as became him, therefore these words are said; but they, without question, respect future as well as present times, and regard all such, in every age and of every nation, that disapproves of, or rejects and reproaches Abram's God, his faith, his religion, and his people.

*And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*; that is, in his seed, as in (<sup>40218</sup>Genesis 22:18) and which is interpreted of Christ, (<sup>4025</sup>Acts 3:25 <sup>4028</sup>Galatians 3:8,16) meaning not every individual of all the families or nations of the earth; but that as many as believe in Christ, of all nations, are blessed in him; and that whoever of them are blessed, they are blessed and only blessed in him, and that they are blessed for his sake with all spiritual blessings; (see <sup>4013</sup>Ephesians 1:3) such as redemption, justification, remission of sins, sanctification, adoption, and eternal life.

**Ver. 4.** *So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him*, etc.] Or, "when the Lord had spoken to him", as Cocceius renders the words; when he had called him a second time, even when in Haran, immediately after the death of his father Terah; as soon as ever the words were spoken to him before recorded, he immediately prepared and got all things ready for his journey, and departed from Haran, as he had done before from Ur of the Chaldees:

*and Lot went with him*; of his own accord, and he only, besides his wife Sarai and his servants, for Terah was dead, and Nahor and his family stayed behind.

*And Abram was seventy five years old when he departed out of Haran*; by which it appears, as has been observed, that he was not Terah's eldest son, born when he was seventy years of age, (<sup>40126</sup>Genesis 11:26) for then he must have been at this time, one hundred and thirty five years old, since his father, who was just now dead, lived to be two hundred and five years old, (<sup>40132</sup>Genesis 11:32) so that Abram must be born in the one hundred and

thirtieth year of Terah: how many years before this time he was converted from idolatry cannot be said with any certainty; various are the accounts given by the Jewish writers; some say that at three years of age he knew his Creator; others at eight; others thirteen; others more probably when forty; others fifty one; others fifty two; and others say he was sixty years old when he began publicly to assert the unity of God in heaven<sup>f884</sup>: however, all agree it was before the age here mentioned, as it may well be concluded.

**Ver. 5.** *And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son,* etc.]

The son of Haran his brother, not against their wills, but with their full consent: Sarai went readily with him, not only as being his wife, and so obliged by the law of marriage and tie of relation, but on the score of religion; and Lot as being a good man, and so willing to go with him, as his near relation too, for the sake of religion.

*And all their substance that they had gathered;* either in Ur of the Chaldees, or in Haran, and indeed in both; which, as it was their own property, they had a right to take with them, and it was their wisdom so to do, both for the support of their families, and for the service of religion; and it appears from hence that they were not slothful, but industrious persons, and by the blessing of God were succeeded in their employments:

*and the souls that they had gotten in Haran;* the more excellent part of man being put for the whole; and the meaning is, either that were procreated<sup>f885</sup>, as some render it, or begotten by them; for, though Abram had no children, Lot had, and possibly some that might be begotten while there; and their servants might have children by their fellow servants, and to which Abram and Lot had a right, and therefore took them with them; or rather it means servants which they had bought with their money there, and so had gotten or obtained them as their own property: some understand it of the proselytes made during their stay there; and no doubt they were as industrious in spreading and propagating the true religion, as in acquiring substance and servants; and to this sense are the several Chaldee paraphrases; that of Onkelos is,

“and the souls which they made subject to the law in Haran;”

the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan are,

“and the souls of the proselytes, or which they proselyted in Haran;”

and with this agrees the note of Jarchi,

“which they brought under the wings of the Shechinah; Abram proselyted the men, and Sarai the women;”

though in the literal sense he takes it to be the acquiring of servants and handmaids; there might be of both sorts, both proselytes and servants bought with money, which made up the number of three hundred and eighteen trained servants, (<sup><0144></sup>Genesis 14:14) how long Abram stayed in Haran is not certain, it must be some time, to gather more substance, increase servants, and make proselytes; the Jews <sup>f886</sup> generally say he was there five years.

*And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came:* which last clause is very fitly added, since, when they came out of Ur, they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, (<sup><0113></sup>Genesis 11:31) but they did not then come into it, but stopped by the way at Haran; but now, when they went out from thence, they proceeded on in their journey, and made no stay any where of any length, until they came into the land of Canaan; which is reckoned to be three hundred miles from the one to the other, and by some four hundred to Sichem, and a troublesome way through the deserts of Palmyrene, and over the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon <sup>f887</sup>: of Ura, Pliny says <sup>f888</sup>, which seems to be the same with Ur, it is a place where, turning to the east, we leave the Palmyrene deserts of Syria, which belong to the city Petra, and the country called Arabia Felix; and, as it was at the northern part of Canaan they entered, they must come over Lebanon, which was the northern border of it.

**Ver. 6.** *And Abram passed through the land,* etc.] Entering the northern part of it, as appears by his going southward, (<sup><0112></sup>Genesis 12:9) he went on

*unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh;* the place afterwards called Shechem, from a prince of that name in the times of Jacob; and so it was called when Moses wrote, and therefore, by way of anticipation, calls it so here; it was about the middle of the land of Canaan, and the same with Sychar, a city of Samaria, in the times of Christ, (<sup><0305></sup>John 4:5). Moreh was the name of a man, from whence the plain took its name, which was near Sichem; some render it the oak of Moreh <sup>f889</sup>, perhaps the same with that in (<sup><0354></sup>Genesis 35:4) or a grove of oaks of that name; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it the oak of Mamre wrongly.

*And the Canaanite [was] then in the land;* in that part of the land where they were in Jacob's time, (see <sup>f838</sup>Genesis 34:30) this land belonged to the posterity of Shem, but Canaan's offspring seized upon it and held it, as they did in the times of Moses, but were then quickly to be removed from it; but now they were settled in it in Abram's time, which was a trial of his faith, in the promise of it to his seed, as well as it was troublesome and dangerous to be in a country where such wicked and irreligious persons lived.

**Ver. 7.** *And the Lord appeared unto Abram,* etc.] Perhaps in an human form, and so it was the Son of God; for whenever there was any visible appearance of a divine Person, under the former dispensation, it seems to be always of the essential Word, that was to be incarnate, and who spake with an articulate voice:

*and said, unto thy seed will I give this land;* the whole of it inhabited by Canaanites and others; and it was for this end chiefly that Abram was called out of Chaldea into Canaan, to be shown the land, and have the grant of it for his posterity:

*and there builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him:* by way of gratitude and thankfulness for his kind and gracious appearance, and for the gift of the land of Canaan to his offspring; for on this altar he no doubt offered sacrifice in a way of thanksgiving, as Noah did when he came out of the ark.

**Ver. 8.** *And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel,* etc.] As it was afterwards called by Jacob, which before and at this time had the name of Luz, (<sup>f889</sup>Genesis 28:19) now to the east of this place was a mountain, whither Abram removed his tent from Sichem, which was about twenty miles from it, as Sir Walter Raleigh <sup>f890</sup> observes, some say twenty eight <sup>f891</sup>:

*and pitched his tent;* that is, upon the mountain, as before upon the plain, fitly representing the state of the people of God, as sojourners in this world, living like Abram in tents and tabernacles, having no abiding place:

*having Bethel on the west,* or "on the sea" <sup>f892</sup>, the Mediterranean sea, which Aben Ezra calls the Spanish sea, and lay to the west of the land of Canaan:

*and Hai on the east*; the same which is called “Ai”, and said to be on the east side of Bethel, (<sup><0010></sup>Joshua 7:2) hard by this place, Rauwolff<sup>f893</sup> says, you shall still find some old ruins of old stones, where first Abraham the patriarch did build a tent, as you read in (<sup><0012></sup>Genesis 12:8) and he says that Bethel is still called to this day Bethisella, and is situated half a league further towards the west, at the foot of the hill, in a very fruitful country:

*and there he builded an altar unto the Lord*: as he had done at Sichem; for wherever he went he worshipped God, and offered sacrifice unto him:

*and called upon the name of the Lord*: prayed unto him for fresh mercies, as well as gave thanks for past ones; or, “he called in the name of the Lord”<sup>f894</sup>, he called upon Jehovah the Father, in the name of his Son, the glorious Mediator, who had appeared unto him, and whose day he saw and was glad.

**Ver. 9.** *And Abram journeyed*, etc.] He did not stay long in the mountain between Bethel and Hai, but moved from thence, and kept on journeying in the land of Canaan:

*going on still toward the south*; the southern part of the land of Canaan, which lay nearest Egypt, into which he is said to go next, the occasion of which follows.

**Ver. 10.** *And there was a famine in the land*, etc.] The land of Canaan, which was a very fruitful country, abounding with all kind of provisions usually; but now there was a scarcity of all; and which was both for the sins of the inhabitants of the land, and for the trial of Abram’s faith, who was brought out of his own country, where was bread enough and to spare, into one in which there was a famine; and this might be a temptation to Abram to return from whence he came, and to slight and despise the country that was given him:

*and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there*; not to dwell there, only till the famine was over; and rightly is he said to go down to Egypt, since that lay lower than the land of Canaan; and his going thither only to sojourn, and with an intention to return again to Canaan, shows the strength of his faith in the promise; and so far was he from going back to his own country, from whence he came, that he went directly the contrary, for Chaldee lay north east of Canaan, and Egypt south west: this country is in the Hebrew text called Mizraim, from the second son of Ham, (see <sup><0010></sup>Genesis 10:6) it had its name Egypt not from Aegyptus, one of its



kings, as some <sup>f895</sup> say, but from the blackish colour of its soil, and also of its river Nile, and of its inhabitants; which colour is by the Greeks called “aegyptios”, from “aegyptis”, a vulture, a bird of that colour: it is bounded on the south by the kingdom of Sennar, tributary to the king of Ethiopia, and the cataracts of the Nile; on the north by the Mediterranean sea; on the east by the Arabian Gulf, or Red sea, and the isthmus of Suez; and on the west by a region of Lybia, called Marmorica <sup>f896</sup>.

*For the famine was grievous in the land;* in the land of Canaan, and perhaps nowhere else; God ordering it so in his wise providence, that there should be plenty of food in one land, when there is a scarcity in another, that countries may be helpful to one another: of this famine, and of Abram’s going down to Egypt on account of it, mention is made by Heathen writers; Nicolaus of Damascus says <sup>f897</sup>, that Abram came out of Chaldee into Canaan, now called Judea, and a grievous famine being there, and understanding there was plenty in Egypt, he readily went thither, partly to partake of their plenty, and partly to hear what the priests would say of the gods; and Alexander Polyhistor relates, from Eupolemus <sup>f898</sup>, that Abram removed from the place of his nativity, Camarine, called by some Urie, and settled in Phoenicia, where being a famine, he went with all his family into Egypt, and dwelt there.

**Ver. 11.** *And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt,* etc.] Just entering into it, having travelled from the mountain between Bethel and Hai, two hundred and forty miles <sup>f899</sup>; or when he “caused to come near” <sup>f900</sup>, either his camp, as Aben Ezra supplies it, or his tent, or his family, as others:

*that he said unto Sarai his wife, behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon;* though sixty five years of age, being ten years younger than her husband, (see <sup><0177></sup>Genesis 17:17) who was now seventy five years old, (<sup><0124></sup>Genesis 12:4) yet might still be a fair woman, having a good complexion and comely features, and having never bore children, and especially she would be reckoned so among the Egyptians, whose women were of a blackish, sallow, swarthy complexion.

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee,* etc.] Who were a lustful people, and whose eyes would soon be fastened upon, and be taken with the beauty of Sarai:

*that they shall say, this is his wife*; this beautiful woman is such a man's wife:

*and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive*; so great a regard had they in those times, and even in Heathen countries, to the laws of marriage, that they chose rather to be guilty of murder than of adultery, though a lustful people; and therefore would, as Abram feared, take away his life, that it might be free and lawful for them to marry Sarai.

**Ver. 13.** *Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister*, etc.] Which though it was not putting a direct lie into her mouth, she being his sister in some sense, as appears from (<sup>f900</sup>Genesis 20:12) yet it was done to conceal truth, and to deceive the Egyptians, and tended to endanger his wife's chastity, as well as showed great timorousness in him, and distrust of the divine care and protection of him; and upon the whole it must be criminal in him, and shows that the best of men are liable to sin, and the strongest believer to fall, and that a saint may fail in the exercise of that grace for which he is most eminent, as Abram was for his faith, and yet fell into unbelief, and through that into other sins; this he said to his wife, and desired her to say on occasion, when she found it necessary:

*that it may be well with me for thy sake*; his life spared, as follows:

*and my soul shall live because of thee*; his life be safe and secure for her sake, being reckoned her brother, whereas he feared it would be in the utmost danger should it be known she was his wife.

**Ver. 14.** *And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt*, etc.] To the city of Heliopolis; for there it was that Abram had his abode, as Eupolemus<sup>f901</sup> says, when upon the famine he went into Egypt, and where he conversed with the Egyptian priests, and taught them astrology, and other things belonging to it; and of this descent of Abram into Egypt, and teaching astrology, Artapanus<sup>f902</sup>, another Heathen writer, speaks; Abram, he says, having learned the science of astrology, went first into Phoenicia and taught it the Phoenicians, and afterwards went into Egypt, and taught it there.

*[The] Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair*; Abram knew that Sarai was a fair woman; but in the eyes of the Egyptians she was very fair, exceeding fair, they not being used to see very beautiful women.

**Ver. 15.** *The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh*, etc.] The king of Egypt; so it seems by this, that Abram and Sarai were at the place where the court was kept, which the Arabic writers <sup>f903</sup> say was Mesr (or Memphis), the capital of the kingdom. And these princes were the king's courtiers, who taking notice of Sarai, and admiring her beauty, praised her for it to the king, and recommended her to be taken into the number of his wives or concubines, they understanding that she was a single woman and the sister of Abram: and this they did to gratify their king, and gain his favour:

*and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house*; or palace, as the Jerusalem Targum; his royal palace, as the Targum of Jonathan; very probably into that part of his palace where his women were kept, or to some apartment where she might be purified and prepared for him; and this requiring time, was the means of preserving her from the danger she was exposed unto, (see <sup><7788></sup> Esther 2:8-12). The kingdom of Egypt, according to the Jewish and Arabic writers <sup>f904</sup>, was set up in the times of Reu, about three hundred years before Abram was here; its first king was Mizraim, a son of Ham, the same with the Menes of Herodotus; by whom also mention is made of a king of Egypt, whose name was Pheron <sup>f905</sup>, which seems to bear some likeness to the name of this king, who by Artapanus <sup>f906</sup> is called Pharethone, and whom, he says, Abram taught astrology. It is generally thought that Pharaoh was a common name to the kings of Egypt, and continued to be so to the times of Ezekiel, as Ptolemy was some time after, and as Caesar with the Romans: whether this king was the first of the name is not certain, but probable; according to some <sup>f907</sup>, he was one of the Hycsi, or shepherd kings. Mr. Bedford <sup>f908</sup> calls him Janias, their fifth king, and this was about A. M. 2084, and before Christ 1920. A Jewish chronologer <sup>f909</sup> asserts, he was the first Pharaoh, who was in the times of Abram, and that his name was Totis, or Tutis, as the Arabic writers <sup>f910</sup>, one of which <sup>f911</sup> says, that in the times of Serug lived Apiphanus king of Egypt (the same with Apophis; who according to Bishop Usher <sup>f912</sup> was this Pharaoh); after him was Pharaoh, the son of Sancs, from whom they (the kings of Egypt) were called Pharaohs. The name of Pharaoh is derived by some <sup>f913</sup> from [rp, which signifies both to be free, and to revenge; and so kings were called, because free from laws themselves, and were revengers of them that do evil: but it rather seems to come from the Arabic word <sup>f914</sup>, which signifies to be above others, and rule over them; and so may be thought to be not the proper name of a man, but an appellative, or

the name of an office; or in other words, a king, (see <sup><0144></sup>Genesis 41:44) and so it may be always rendered, where it is used, as here, the king's courtiers saw her, and commended her to the king, and she was taken into the king's house; though to this may be objected, that Pharaoh is sometimes called Pharaoh king of Egypt, and then there would be a tautology; wherefore it may be better perhaps to take it in the former sense.

**Ver. 16.** *And he entreated Abram well for her sake*, etc.] Pharaoh was very complaisant to him, showed him great respect, and bestowed many favours on him on account of Sarai, whom he took to be his sister, and which were done, that he would consent that she might be his wife:

*and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels*; which were, some at least, if not all, the gifts of Pharaoh to him, or otherwise there seems to be no reason why they should be made mention of here. The Jews say <sup>f915</sup>, that Pharaoh, because of the love he had to Sarai, gave to her by writing all his substance, whether silver or gold, or servants or farms, and also the land of Goshen for an inheritance; and therefore the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Goshen, because it was Sarai our mother's, say they.

**Ver. 17.** *And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues*, etc.] Perhaps with the same sort that Abimelech and his servants were smote with on a like account, (<sup><0137></sup>Genesis 20:17,18). The Jews <sup>f916</sup> say they were smitten with ulcers; not only Pharaoh was plagued, but those of his household also, his courtiers and servants, who were accessory to the bringing of Sarai into his house; for all this was

*because of Sarai, Abram's wife*; or "upon the word of Sarai" <sup>f917</sup>, as it may be literally rendered: hence the Jews have a notion, that an angel stood by Sarai with a scourge in his hand, and when Sarai bid him smite Pharaoh, he smote him <sup>f918</sup>; but **rbd** signifies not a word only, but thing, matter and business: and so Onkelos renders it here: and the sense is, that Pharaoh and his courtiers were smitten, because of the affair and business of Sarai; because she was taken by them, and detained in Pharaoh's house, and designed to be made his wife or concubine; and thus for evil intentions was this punishment inflicted; so that evil designs, not brought into execution, are punishable; though the word of Sarai may mean what she was bid to say, and did.

**Ver. 18.** *And Pharaoh called Abram, and said,* etc.] Understanding how it was, that Sarai was his wife, which he came at the knowledge of, either by consulting his priests and diviners, as some say, on account of the plagues inflicted; or rather suspecting they were on the account of Sarai, from the nature of them, sent for her, and questioned her about this affair, who confessed the whole matter to him; unless it can be thought that he was warned of God in a dream, as Abimelech was on a like occasion; however he sent for Abram on what intelligence he had, and justly, though gently, reproved him:

*what is this that thou hast done unto me?* to impose upon me, and deceive me after this manner, by giving out that Sarai was thy sister, when she is thy wife; by which means I have been led to prepare to take her for my wife, and have brought plagues upon myself and family? and thus he resented it as an injury done him, as he well might:

*why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?* when he first took her into his house, and no doubt Abram was present then, and very often afterwards was in company with Pharaoh, and conversed with him, having respect for him for the sake of Sarai, he took to be his sister, and yet would never tell him she was his wife.

**Ver. 19.** *Why saidst thou, she is my sister?* etc.] He could not imagine what could be the reason of it, what could induce him to give out such a story as this; for he knew not the fears that Abram was possessed with, which led him to it, and which might be in a good measure groundless, or else Pharaoh might have guessed at the reason; or this he said as being willing to be satisfied of the true one;

*so I might have taken her to me to wife;* ignorantly, and without any scruple, supposing her to have been free; and so should have been guilty of taking another man's wife, and of depriving him of her; which with him were crimes he did not choose to commit, though polygamy was not accounted any by him, for no doubt he had a wife or wives when about to take Sarai for one:

*now therefore, behold thy wife, take [her], and go thy way;* Sarai it seems was present at this interview, who was delivered to her husband untouched, as his own property, and is ordered to depart the country, that so neither the king, nor any of his courtiers or subjects, might be under any temptation to do him an injury, by violating the chastity of his wife. The

whole of this affair is related by Eupolemus <sup>f919</sup>, an Heathen historian, in a few words, in great agreement with this account; only he represents Sarai as married to the king of Egypt; he says, that Abram, on account of a famine, went to Egypt, with all his family, and there dwelt, and that the king of the Egyptians married his wife, he saying she was his sister: he goes on to relate more at large, says Alexander Polyhistor that quotes him, that the king could not enjoy her, and that his people and family were infected with a plague, upon which he called his diviners or prophets together, who told him that the woman was not a widow; and when the king of the Egyptians so understood it, that she was the wife of Abram, he restored her to her husband.

**Ver. 20.** *And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him*, etc.] His courtiers and servants, not to do him any hurt or injury in his person or substance; who he might suppose would be enraged at hearing how the king and they had been imposed upon and deceived; he ordered a guard about him while he was there, and to conduct him, and all that belonged to him, safely out of his dominions, as appears by what follows: but Dr. Lightfoot <sup>f920</sup> is of opinion, that he gave charge to the Egyptians, making it as it were a law for the time to come, that they should not converse with Hebrews, nor with foreign shepherds, in any so near familiarity, as to eat or drink with them, which the Egyptians observed strictly ever after, (<sup>-0432</sup>Genesis 43:32 46:34)

*and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had*; they did not drive him out by force, or in any disgraceful manner, but being committed to a guard of men, appointed by the king, he had safe conduct out of the land, with his family, and all that he had; all that he brought with him, and all the increase he had made there, and all the gifts he had received of the king. The Jews <sup>f921</sup> interpret it of the writings and gifts he had given to Sarai; and they <sup>f922</sup> observe a great likeness between Abram's descent into Egypt, his being there, and departure out of it, and that of his posterity in later times; as that they both went thither on account of a famine; that they both went down to sojourn there; and that they both went out with great substance; with other particulars observed by them.