

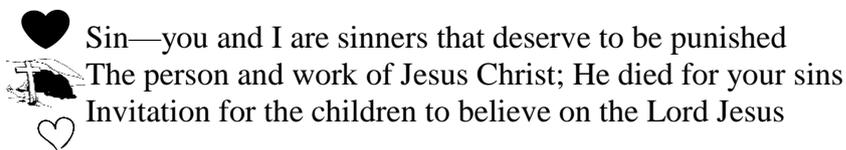
Lesson Two

Abram Travels to Egypt

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 12:6-13:4; 15:1-6

Lesson Aim for Unsaved Children: That they would understand the Gospel and respond in saving faith (as Abram did).

Gospel truths for unsaved children are included in this lesson. Symbols are placed in the text and outline to show where the following truths can be taught:



Lesson Aim for the Saved Children: That they will appreciate the necessity of always speaking the truth. To emphasize this truth, a *main truth statement* has been included in the text for you to repeat throughout the lesson at appropriate places in the text. This statement is **“God expects you to always tell the truth.”** At times you will be encouraged to let the children say the memory verse as you are explaining and applying the main truth to their lives.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:25

Review Game Questions:

1. What are the 3 main promises God gave to Abram in the covenant He made with him?
(*Land, descendants, blessings*)
2. What were the Canaanites like (the people who lived in the land of Canaan when Abram arrived)? (*Very wicked; worshipped many idols*)
3. Name two of the three cities or areas that Abram traveled to in the land God promised.
(*Shechem, Bethel and Ai, the Negev*)
4. Why did Abram want to go to Egypt when there was a famine in Canaan?
(*The Nile River always gave plenty of water and crops in Egypt*)
5. Why was it wrong for Abram to lie about Sarai to save his life? (*God always expects Believers to tell the truth. He should have trusted God to protect him as He promised*)
6. Who can quote our memory verse from today? (*Ephesians 4:25*)
7. What went wrong with Abram’s plan to save his own life?
(*Pharaoh didn’t have to bargain. He could give anything to Abram for Sarai, and he could not be refused by Abram*)
8. How was Sarai saved from becoming Pharaoh’s wife?
(*God gave Pharaoh’s house a serious sickness until he let Sarai go*)
9. Ask a question from one of the songs you sang today.
10. Why couldn’t Abram witness to Pharaoh about his God? (*Because he had been a liar. It would be hard for Pharaoh to believe Abram’s God was better than his when he had been more honest than Abram*)
11. Name 5 things Abram took back to Canaan that had been given by Pharaoh.
(*Gold, silver, oxen, sheep, men servants, women servants, donkeys, and camels*).
[Explain how we’ll learn about one of these women servants in next week’s lesson]
12. How do you know that God did not end His covenant with Abram because he failed to do his responsibility to tell Pharaoh about Him? (*Because He reconfirmed it to him and declared him to be righteous for his faith*)

Lesson Two Outline Abram Travels to Egypt

Introduction: David won a prize—a beautiful parrot. But he soon found out that with this gift came new responsibilities (get a cage, buy food, clean the cage, etc.). In our lesson today, Abram too begins learning more about the responsibilities that come with the gifts and blessings God had given him.

Scene 1: Abram Travels Throughout the Promised Land (Gen. 12:6-8)

- A. Abram’s life now characterized by a tent and altar
- B. The Canaanites still lived in this land
- C. Abram builds an altar where he travels



Scene 2: Abram Travels South (Gen. 12:8-9)

- ➡ A. Abram kept traveling south
- B. Abram travels to the Negev
- C. Abram travels to Egypt because of a famine

Scene 3: Abram Schemes to Save His Life (Genesis 12:11-13)

- A. The closer Abram gets to Egypt, the more he fears for his life
- ➡ B. Abram plans to lie to save his life
- C. Abram convinces Sarai to lie for him too

Scene 4: Pharaoh Takes Sarai to be His Wife (Genesis 12:14-16)

- A. The Egyptians recognize and talk of Sarai’s beauty (to Pharaoh)
- ➡ B. Pharaoh takes Sarai to be his wife

Scene 5: God Intervenes and Rescues Sarai (Genesis 12:17-19)

- A. God strikes Pharaoh’s house with a serious sickness
- B. Pharaoh learns this plague is because he has taken Sarai to be his wife

Scene 6: Pharaoh Sends Abram Out of Egypt (Genesis 12:20-13:4)

- A. Pharaoh was angry with Abram for lying
- B. Pharaoh had Abram put out of Egypt with all his possessions

Climax: Abram returned to his altar between Bethel and Ai, once again proclaiming the truth of the God of Glory to those who passed by.

Conclusion: God continued to protect and provide for Abram. he again reconfirmed His covenant with Abram. Abram believed and was declared to be righteous.



Invitation: Romans 3:22

➡ **Challenge:** Ephesians 4:25 “God expects you to always speak the truth.”

Abram Travels to Egypt

Introduction: David was very excited. He had just received a call from a nearby store that told him he had won a special prize. It was their opening day and they were giving prizes to those who had visited their new store that day. David's name had been drawn out of the box by the manager, so now he was to receive a beautiful parrot! But when he went to the store to claim his prize he began to learn that with this gift came more responsibilities than he had thought of. First of all, he learned that he needed to buy a cage for the parrot to live in. Next he realized he had to buy special seeds to feed the bird each day. After a couple of days, he also learned that he needed to clean out the cage often. It was a wonderful gift that he did enjoy, but with it came responsibilities that he had to do if he were to continue enjoying it.

This reminds me of Abram's story that we studied in our last class. He had received some wonderful promises as a gift from God. He would definitely enjoy and appreciate them for the rest of his life. But in our lesson today he will learn more about some of the responsibilities that came with them.

Scene 1: Abram Travels Throughout the Promised Land (Gen. 12:6-8)

A. Abram's life was now characterized by an altar and a tent.

Abram's life had changed a lot since Jehovah, the God of glory, had appeared to him in the city of Ur at least ten years earlier. He had given up life in the big city and learned to live as a Bedouin. Now he moved from place to place living in a tent instead of a large two-story house. Also, instead of worshipping Nannar, the moon God, and other such idols, he worshipped and sacrificed to the God of the Bible. It's true that his life may have become a little less comfortable, but it's also true that it was a lot more exciting. Why? Because God had made some very special promises to Abram—promises that he was powerful enough to keep no matter what happened. Do you remember what they were? God promised to:

1. Give him land. Abram gave up any land he and his father owned when they left Ur. Now he had no land of his own to live on. He had to live as a nomad (Bedouin), setting up his tents and letting his sheep and other animals eat grass wherever they could find it.
2. Make him a nation. Yes, God would cause him to have so many children and grandchildren that he would become a nation. There would be thousands and thousands of people born to Abram's family. This was encouraging to a man who didn't have any children yet, even though he was 75 years old.
3. Bless him. This meant that God promised to do some wonderful things for Abram. One blessing was that He was going to make Abram's name great. Many people would know who he was during his lifetime and even during our time today. It also meant that God would provide the things he needed to live—like food, water, protection, and places to let his sheep and cattle eat. God would be watching over and caring for Abram and his family.

Abram was just now beginning to see how great these promises were as he began traveling in the land God would give him. He had traveled around 300 miles from Haran before entering this land. Then he traveled many more miles before setting up his camp near the oak of Moreh, by the city of Shechem (close to modern day Nablus).¹ The observation he made from his travels was that "Now the Canaanite was then in the land" (12:6).

B. The Canaanites still lived in the land

The people who lived when this statement was written would have realized how important this statement was because they knew what the Canaanite people were like at that time. They are named after one who started their nation, Canaan, the grandson of Noah. Although Noah and his sons had believed in and followed the God of glory that had appeared to Abram, it wasn't long until some of the people in the nations they started began turning away from worshipping God. Instead they started worshipping idols. By the time Abram came to this land, they were some of the most wicked people in the world. The idol they worshipped most was named Baal, the god of thunder and rain.² They thought he was the one who provided the rain that helped the grass and food crops to grow. They did many sinful things during their worship of this idol. How sad Abram must have been when he saw and heard of such awful things. He knew the God of glory called this sin and would have to punish them for it. The Bible is very clear about what this punishment for sin is:

Ezekiel 18:4 – The soul who sins will die



Ez. 18:4

That was the punishment for sin in Abram's time, and it is still the punishment for sin today. Unfortunately, the Bible says every person in the world has sinned and so will have to be punished by death some day. Even one sin, no matter how small you think it is, deserves this punishment. Maybe you said some bad words to someone at school. Or, maybe you didn't clean your room like your mother asked. Or, maybe you got angry at your friend or brother when they beat you in a game so you thought something bad about them. You hated them or wished something bad would happen to them. Even though these things are not as bad as what the Canaanites did, the only way to avoid this punishment is to learn how to be forgiven by God.

C. Abram builds an altar wherever he travels

Abram began to understand better his responsibilities that came with all those promises from God. God had commanded him to "be a blessing" to others. In order to do this, he would have to speak the truth to these Canaanites about the one true God. He had done this in Haran, for when he left there he took others with him who also had believed.³ I am sure that this is one reason why we see him building an altar when he got to Shechem. This altar was made from large stones placed one upon another. Sticks were gathered and placed on top of the stones to burn up the animal that was killed and placed on top.⁴ Why did an animal have to be killed and placed on the altar? Because "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). The punishment for sin is death. The sacrificed animal took the place of the person who sinned. So wherever Abram built an altar, he would be telling those passing by about the one way God offered forgiveness of sin—through a blood sacrifice. Of course, the reason we don't have to build altars and sacrifice animals today when we sin is because later Jesus Christ came to earth and offered Himself on the cross as a once-for-all sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 10:12). But in Abram's time, since Jesus had not come yet, Abram and those around him would have to offer a sacrifice.



Heb. 9:22

Scene 2: Abram Travels South (Genesis 12:8-9)

A. Abram kept traveling south, telling the people about God.

As he traveled south into this land, Abram knew it was his responsibility to tell the people about the one true God and how to worship Him. He camped next between the cities of Bethel and Ai. There he once again built an altar and began preaching about Jehovah, the eternal God of glory.⁵ As a stranger in the land, it would not have been easy to do. Nevertheless, Abram began telling these idol worshippers the truth about God. If you have become a follower of the God of Abram, **you too need to always speak the truth**, even if others won't like what you say. It may be truth about our God, or it may be truth about



what you did or didn't do. Or, it may even be the truth about what someone else has done or needs to do. As a Believer, **you must always speak the truth**, just as Abram did here.

B. Abram travels to the Negev (desert) and experiences a famine

We're not sure why, but Abram kept moving south in the land God was going to give him. Maybe he wanted to see as much of the land as possible, then pick out an area to settle in. Maybe he was just trying to find more water or pastures for his animals, or maybe he was trying to avoid some of the fighting going on in the land during this time when there was no one ruler to keep the peace. For whatever reason, Abram went to the southern most part of Canaan. It's called the Negev and it is a big area (3,600 square miles). [*Have a student find it on a map.*] Although it was drier and more desert-like, this place was often used as a place for grazing animals.

C. Abram travels to Egypt because of a famine

While he was in this area, he got news that there was a famine coming. A famine is when there is no food for people to eat. The cause of a famine is a lack of rain. The amount of rain Canaan usually gets in a year is not very much--only a few inches a year. But in this year, there was hardly any rain. It might have seemed strange that God would allow a famine in the land he called Abram to. Now Abram had to decide what he should do to stay alive during this famine.

Both Ur and Haran, where he had lived before, were close to the great river Euphrates (1,800 miles long). [*Point to it on the map.*] There was always enough water for the pastures and farmlands in these areas. But in Canaan there was no great river like that. However, Abram had heard about the country of Egypt. Every year the 4,000 mile Nile River would flow and give enough water for crops to grow, even when Canaan had a famine. [*Let someone find the Nile River on the map.*] That sounded like the best place to go during this famine, so he packed up and headed to Egypt. The Bible says that he wasn't planning to stay there permanently, only to go there during this time of trouble (that's the meaning of "sojourn").

Scene 3: Abram Schemes to Save His Life (Genesis 12:11-13)

A. The closer Abram gets to Egypt, the more he fears for his life

During this time, there were many villages and settlements on the way to Egypt. They were known for showing kindness and hospitality to travelers who were suffering from famines in Canaan.⁶ The closer Abram got to Egypt, the more he was able to find out about their land and customs. For sure Abram would have heard about and seen the great pyramids, for they were already at least 400 years old by then.⁷ But there was something he heard about Egypt which began to trouble him. He heard that if an Egyptian man wanted to marry or live with the wife of any one visiting, he would kill her husband. Only when the husband was dead could he take the wife for himself. Even though Sarai (which means "Princess") was 65 years old, the Bible says she was still very beautiful.⁸ That's why Abram was afraid for his own life.

B. Abram plans to lie to save his life

As Abram thought about the possibility of someone killing him in order to marry Sarai, he came up with a plan. He decided to tell them he was Sarai's brother. The Bible does tell us that this was partially true. Abram and Sarai both had Terah as a father, but they had different mothers (Gen. 20:12). Sarai was Abram's step-sister, but she was also his wife. So this "half truth" was really a lie to deceive others in order to save his life.

He was thinking like many people think today—it’s okay to do something wrong if in the end things work out for good. After all, how could God keep His promises to Abram about having children if he was dead. But Abram’s way of thinking was not right. **God expects you to always say the truth.** Do you remember our memory verse? Ephesians 4:25 says:

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth,
each one of you with his neighbor.

That means you are to always tell the truth. You should speak the truth about our God—that He is loving, holy, and He wants to save people from their sins. You must also tell the truth to your parents and teachers, even if it means getting in trouble. Telling the truth also means that you will do what you say. If you promise to do a job, visit a friend, or pray for someone—you must do it. **God expects you to always speak the truth,** just as he was expecting Abram to do. He was big enough to protect Abram. But Abram decided to lie instead, and now he wanted to talk Sarai into lying too.

C. Abram convinces Sarai to lie for him too

Abram explained his scheme to Sarai. He said that if she claimed she was his sister that things would “go well with him.” In Abram’s time, marriages were arranged between families. When someone found the person they wanted to marry, they made some kind of agreement. After bargaining they decided on how much the family of the bride would be paid by the family of the groom in return for their daughter. If the family of the groom could not give the other family what they wanted, there would be no marriage. Perhaps Abram thought that in being the older brother of Sarai, he could always demand more money or animals than the man could pay. That way he could still keep Sarai and stay alive until he could return to Canaan after the famine. So this is the story they started telling everyone in Egypt.

Scene 4: Pharaoh Takes Sarai to be His Wife (Genesis 12:14-16)

A. The Egyptians recognize and talk of Sarai’s beauty—even to Pharaoh

The Egyptians did recognize and comment on Sarai’s beauty just as Abram predicted, even though she was 65 years old. He may have even had several offers of marriage for Sarai. We don’t know how many offers he got for Sarai as they traveled, but suddenly something happened that he never expected. When some of the government officials saw Sarai, they told Pharaoh (the King of Egypt) about her beauty.

B. Pharaoh takes Sarai to be his wife

Then before Abram realized what had happened, they were taken before Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh had decided to take this beautiful woman to be his wife. He didn’t have to bargain for Sarai. He could give whatever Abram asked for since he was one of the richest rulers in the world.⁹ In fact, it appears that Pharaoh made Abram one of the wealthiest people around by giving him flocks of sheep, oxen (cattle), donkeys, camels, and both men and women servants (12:16). As the ruler of Egypt, Abram could not refuse his request for Sarai, his “sister”.

Now Abram didn’t know what to do. His deceit (lie) had gotten him into more trouble than he knew how to get out of. This is another reason why, if you are a true Christian, **God expects you to tell the truth all the time.** There is always a negative consequence when you lie. The Bible does say, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). It may look like Abram was doing better because he lied, but he put himself and Sarai in the dangerous position of losing out on the special blessings God promised in His covenant with Abram. He could not have any children if he lost his wife to Pharaoh. He would never become the nation God said he would become. He could then never be the blessing to all families

of the world that God designed him to be. It looked like all of this might not happen because Abram decided to trust in his scheme of lying rather than to trust in God. He had failed God. He had failed himself, and he had failed his wife.

Now Sarai was taken off to Pharaoh's palace to be prepared to become his wife. This preparation might take months. I'm sure she wondered if she would ever see Abram again. This must have been one of the darkest and scariest times in both their lives.

Scene 5: God Intervenes and Rescues Sarai (Genesis 12:17-19)

A. God strikes the house of Pharaoh with a serious sickness

Just when all hope seemed to be gone, they began to get a better understanding of just how great our God really is. Just when Pharaoh thought he had gotten the most beautiful lady to marry, he got reports from throughout the palace that something was very wrong. There was a great sickness in the household that the royal doctors didn't know how to cure. We're not sure exactly what the plague was, but we do know three things about it [*read Genesis 12:17 or have a student read it. The active learner will enjoy this involvement*]. We know that:

1. The Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with this plague
2. We know it was a *great* plague (serious)
3. It affected all of Pharaoh's house (except Sarai?)

B. Pharaoh knows this plague is because he has taken Sarai to become his wife

Somehow Pharaoh was able to determine that this sickness was the result of trying to take Sarai for a wife. Maybe it was because the sickness came soon after he started preparing her to be queen. Maybe it was because Sarai was the only one in the palace not affected by it, or maybe God Himself warned Pharaoh. Once he realized the cause, Pharaoh took quick action. He immediately called for Abram.

Scene 6: Pharaoh Sends Abram Out of Egypt (Genesis 12:20-13:4)

A. Pharaoh was angry at Abram for lying

I'm sure Pharaoh was very angry as he looked at Abram and asked, "Why did you lie to me?" He blamed Abram for the pain he and those in his palace were now having. Pharaoh never would have tried to marry Sarai if he had known she was already married. Even their laws forbade this. How sad it was to see that this idol-worshipping king had a higher respect for telling the truth than Abram had. He realized that Abram's lie almost caused him to commit a great sin of adultery (living with a woman who is married to someone else).

B. Pharaoh had Abram put out of Egypt

Pharaoh commanded that Abram now take his wife and leave Egypt. Here he was, probably the only true Believer in God in the whole country, and he was being expelled for lying. Pharaoh sent some of his men to go with them until they were completely out of his country. He wanted to make sure they left. Abram left Egypt a very rich man. He took with him the oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, men and women servants, along with silver and gold. These were the gifts Pharaoh had given him for Sarai, and Pharaoh had let him keep them all. But Abram also left a sad man. He could not tell Pharaoh about the true God of glory because of his poor example. How sad it was to lose this great opportunity to witness to one of

the greatest rulers of his day. Abram failed Pharaoh. He failed to point him to the truth about who God was.¹⁰

God was disappointed in Abram's behavior. He had failed to do his responsibility to build altars and tell others about Him (Pharaoh and the Egyptians). Was God finished with him? Would He end his covenant with Abram? No! After leaving Egypt, we find Abram back where he was near the beginning of our lesson.

Climax: Abram returned to his altar between Ai and Bethel, once again proclaiming the truth of the God of glory to those who passed by.

Conclusion: God continued to take care of Abram through this famine, wars, and other difficulties (Genesis 13:1-14:14). Once again God reconfirmed His covenant with Abram and promised him a son that would be the heir of all the promises he had received from the Lord God. And once again Abram believed all that God told him.

♡ **Invitation:** The Bible said when Abram "believed in the Lord, and He reckoned (counted) it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). This shows that the relationship between God and Abram was based on his faith in God, not his works. God declared Abram to be righteous—or completely forgiven and right before God—because Abram chose to put his faith in God. Some of you here today may need to do the same thing. God still works the same way. He says:

The righteousness (purity, forgiveness) of God (is) through faith in
Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Romans 3:22)

This means God is ready to forgive your sins and replace them with His righteousness (purity). He'll give you a new nature, or the ability to do right things. When will He do this? When you put your faith/trust in Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for your sins. Are you willing to do this?

Please bow your heads and close your eyes. If you have never done this before but would like to do it now, I want you to open your eyes and look straight at me. No one should have their eyes open except those who want to receive the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus. Looking at me will not give you this righteousness, but it will show me that you want to talk or pray with me about this. Is there anyone? (Pause) Let's pray.

Those who looked at me, please come up to me after the class to know how you can receive God's righteousness today.

➡ **Challenge:** For those of you who have already done this, remember, **God expects you to always speak the truth.** This means telling others the truth about their sinfulness and how God can save them from it. It also means keeping your word. When you tell someone you will do something—do it! (Visit others, call them, help them with a task, pray for them, etc.). It also means not lying to get out of trouble. It means admitting when you make a mistake, or admitting that you are a Believer (even if others laugh). It means not pretending to be someone you aren't. Remember our verse? Can we say it together? (Say it). **God expects you to tell the truth.** Will you? Don't fail to keep this responsibility you have as a Believer.

¹ See note in The Ryrie Study Bible for Genesis 12:6. Charles C. Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible (NASB) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), p. 24.

² Baal was said to be the son of “El”, the chief of all gods they worshipped. He was described as being immoral, one who dethroned his father, murdered his favorite son, and cut the head off of his daughter. Other gods were Mot (death); Reshep (god of pestilence); Shulman (god of health); with Anath, Astarte and Ashera being goddesses of sex and war. Canaanite worship was “utterly immoral, decadent, and corrupt,” with both male and female prostitutes available for temple worship. See Merrill Unger, “Canaan, Canaanites,” in The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, edited by R.K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), pp. 202-203.

³ The Hebrew word translated “people” in Genesis 12:5 as “nepes” which could more literally be translated “souls”. I agree with Ross who points out that this “probably does not refer to the acquisition of slaves, for the Hebrew word “nepes” would not likely be used for that. And it certainly does not refer to their children because Sarai was barren until Isaac’s birth (21:1-7). Cassuto argues that this expression probably refers to proselytes. . . . The narrative implies that, already in Haran, Abram had been sharing his faith in the Lord. See Allen P. Ross, Creation and Blessing (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 265.

⁴ Although the Bible does not specifically mention the fact that Abraham offered a sacrifice on this altar, it is implied because the Hebrew word for altar is literally “place of slaughter.” See F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), p. 258.

⁵ The Hebrew word for “called” in Genesis 12:8 can also be translated “proclaimed” or “preached.” As Ross states, “This expression, first used in Genesis 4:26, refers to the public proclamation of faith in the Lord (Jehovah).” Martin Luther translated it “preached” in his translation, which is “a good rendering.” See Ross, p. 267.

⁶ The rainfall in the Negev is limited even in good years to some four inches. Thus, it was common for dwellers of the Negev to seek relief in Egypt during times of little or no rain. Irrigation of farmlands in Egypt from annual flooding of the Nile made for ample water for crops. See Hoerth, p. 77. There is an interesting autobiography by a man named Si-Nuhe. He was an Egyptian who lived near the time of Abram. He writes that “the messenger who went north or who went to the south to the Residence City (Egyptian Capital) stopped over with me, (for) I used to make everybody stop over. I gave water to the thirsty. I put him who had strayed (back) on the road. I rescued him who had been robbed.” See James Pritchard, editor, Ancient Near Eastern Texts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 20.

⁷ See Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 35.

⁸ The word used of Sarah has the idea of “very beautiful.” See Paul Gilchrist, “yapeh” in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. I, R. Harris, G. Archer, B. Waltke, editors (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 391.

⁹ Merrill thinks that this Pharaoh was Wahkare Achthoes III who ruled from about 2120-2070 BC. The year this even happened would have been around 2091 BC. Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, p. 35. Although he notes that this dynasty was in decline compared to the 5th dynasty that gave us the great pyramids, Pharaoh was still wealthy and powerful.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the above Pharaoh did write some advice to his son and successor, King Meri-Ka-Re. In this letter he warns his son of the treachery of the “wretched” Asiatics (what he would have known Abram to be). Could he have had Abram in mind when writing? This is a sobering thought about the affect our testimony has on others; either for the good or bad. See “The Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re,” in James Pritchard, ANET, pp. 414-418.