

# Genesis 12:14-17

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*Pharaoh learned of Sarai's beauty and treated Abram well by giving him gifts and servants. But God sent plagues to Pharaoh because Sarai was Abram's wife.*

*The Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful as Abram had foreseen. The woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. We do not know whether Sarai became a member of Pharaoh's harem or whether she was actually with the king himself. Some think that because plagues were sent, this would seem to indicate that Pharaoh did actually commit adultery. But it could be that God sent the plagues to protect Sarai.*

It is worth noting that Sarai was still beautiful. She was ten years younger than Abram ([Genesis 17:17](#)) meaning she was sixty-five. At this point in human history human life spans were decaying from what they had been prior to the flood, but still long compared to the 70-year norm where they would soon level out. Noah lived 350 years after the flood. Abram's father Terah lived to be 205. Abram lived to be 175. So perhaps Sarai is sixty-five and looks like a woman might appear in her thirties today, a little less than a third of her life might have been lived at that point. By the time of King David, roughly 500 years later, he only lives to age 70, which is the expected life span by that time, according to [Psalm 90:10](#). We are not told why this is, but it seems likely to be a combination of change in environment and genetic decay.

Abram was not killed, in fact, he was *treated well for her sake*. He prospered in wealth because of the gifts that Pharaoh gave to him. Perhaps his ruse worked, and Pharaoh assumed he was her brother and caretaker, and would therefore be the one to negotiate for Sarai. Livestock was an important measure of wealth in ancient times. The gifts bestowed on Abram could have represented some sort of payment, although they may have simply been a gesture of Pharaoh's goodwill toward Sarai's "brother."

Pharaoh's taking of Sarai brings divine punishment on him and his house, *The Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues*. God's intervention will save Sarai and preserved their marriage to fulfill the covenant promise.

## **Biblical Text:**

**<sup>14</sup> It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup> Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup> Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. <sup>17</sup> But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.**