

98-09-20c

We're back now from our break. I would like to read you a few selected passages from Isaiah. You may think, "Well, Sam, it seems like you're kind of reaching a little bit here, imputing all of these bad ideas and false types of thinking to Abram."

Israel, as the people of Abraham, have this same sort of problem, and God has made the same sorts of promises to them. So, in this case, we're looking forward in time for an illustration of where Abram is, where most of the time we tend to look backward to earlier times. But, for example, in Isaiah chapter 41—and, of course, Isaiah is a great one for talking about the difference between where Israel is and where they ought to be.

Isaiah chapter 41, verse 8: "You, Israel, are My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, My friend. You, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away.'" All of these things apply directly to Abraham, don't they? He called him from a distant land and from a far region and said, "You're My servant, I've chosen you, I will not cast you away."

What is the promise of God? Many of us have memorized this verse: "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you."

"I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced. They shall be as nothing."

"And those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them, those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a non-existent thing."

"For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.' Fear not, you worm, Jacob, you men of Israel. I will help you," says the Lord, "and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

"Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth. You shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff. You shall winnow them."

"The winds shall carry them away, and the whirlwinds shall scatter them. You shall rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel. The poor and needy seek water, but there is none."

"Their tongues fail for thirst. I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."

"I will open rivers in desolate heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree."

"I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, that they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this and the Holy One of Israel has created it."

What's the purpose of having this desert experience? It's to create the opportunity for God to demonstrate who He is and how He fulfills His promises to those who live by faith. The purpose of having a famine is to see the mighty hand of God in provision.

We see a famine and we want to run away. We don't want to wait for the mighty hand of God. We want to go find the mighty hand of the Egyptians in the south, or the mighty hand of the first solution that occurs to our mind, or the solution that we used last time that seemed to work.

It doesn't mean that God never uses those methods. God will preserve His people in Egypt, won't He? There are times when they're in a famine and God says, "Go here. Don't be afraid. I will provide for you there." It's not that we use a particular solution or that we rely on a particular thing. It's why.

What are we thinking if we go to Egypt? What are we thinking if we look to a source of provision in a time of trial? It's all in what we think. It's all in why we do what we do. You can go to Egypt.

You remember last time we talked about Egypt? Isaac in chapter 26 of Genesis is going to go to Egypt. Joseph is going to be sent to Egypt as a slave. Is it God's will for Joseph to wind up in Egypt? Yes, it is.

Joseph tells his brothers near the end of the story, "You sold me into slavery. You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." God works Joseph's sojourn as a slave in Egypt into a great blessing that secures the future of the nation of Israel.

God tells Jacob in Genesis 46:3, "Do not fear to go to Egypt. I will sustain you there." There's nothing intrinsically wrong with going to Egypt. It's why you go. It's mentally how you get there that makes the difference.

Psalm 118, verse 9 encapsulates this principle of what it is you're thinking: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in princes. Why princes? Because princes have power.

They have resources. They have control and authority. They have answers to problems.

Are you going to go to the man who seems to have resources and answers, or are you going to trust in the Lord? It's why you do what you do. God may use a prince. Joseph is going to be a prince in Egypt, and he's going to be the means of deliverance.

But Jacob doesn't go there because he's looking for a prince to bail him out. Jacob goes because God says, "Don't fear to go to Egypt. I will be with you. I will bless you and make you a great nation there." It's why we do what we do.

There's nothing wrong for us in this day and age with trying to plan for our retirement, with trying to secure ourselves financially. There's nothing wrong with us seeking good circumstances and a good outcome as we navigate the various tasks and responsibilities of life. But why do we do what we do?

If your IRA or your 401k plan got wiped out tomorrow because of the Asian flu in the stock market, what would that do to your peace of mind? What would that do to your view of life and view of the future? Would it shake it? If whatever you've got in the bank—some of this is sort of a moot point. It's not like, you know, "Well, gosh, they got all \$47 I had in savings."

But whatever it is that we think is going to secure us, whether it's financial or relationship-wise or whatever it may be, we think we have security in our employment. We think we have security in some situation or some relationship or some possession that we have.

We can run ourselves through a little test. What if? What if that was wiped out? What if my spouse died in a sudden accident? Would I fall apart and unravel? Obviously, it would be unpleasant. But how would I function? Am I really basing my security and my optimism on this person? Would it be impossible for me to live without this person? Would I just go drive myself at high speed into a bridge piling?

If I had my material possessions wiped out tomorrow, what would that do to my view of the future? Why do we do what we do? We can see these things as means that God has provided to secure us and to meet our needs.

Or we can see them as security in and of themselves. It's how we view it that makes the difference. So there's nothing intrinsically wrong with going to Egypt.

But what does God say? We saw already in Isaiah 41. God has made promises. "I am your Redeemer.

"Don't fear. I will preserve. I will protect.

"I will give you victory. I will sustain you. Look to Me.

"Look to the rock from which you were hewn." You see this in Isaiah 43, verses 1 and 2: "Now thus says the Lord who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name.

“You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

“When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flames scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Sheba in your place.

“Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you. Therefore I will give men for you and people for your life. Fear not, for I am with you.

“I will bring your descendants from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up.’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back.’

“Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth. Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory, I have formed him. Yes, I have made him.”

Look down at verse 10. “You are My witnesses,” says the Lord, “and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He.” This is the reason God allowed them to be scattered in the first place.

This is the reason God allowed there to be any sort of threat to begin with: so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. “Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me.

“I, even I, am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Savior. I have declared and saved. I have proclaimed.

“And there was no foreign God among you. Therefore, you are My witnesses,” says the Lord, “that I am God. Indeed, before the day was, I am He.

“And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand. I work, and who will reverse it?”

You don't see this type of thinking in Abraham's mind, do you? When Abraham looks around and says, “Boy, the grass is getting a little thin. I believe I'll move south, try to find a place where there's a little more rainfall, a little more water, a little more pasturage.”

He gets to the south, and now there's a severe famine. Sort of a case where, as he moves south, things get worse instead of better. This can happen for us.

You start moving away from where we should be and how we ought to be and God's plan. Things start to get a little worse. It's designed to turn us. If Abraham had kind of done a U-turn and gone back to the north, called upon God and laid these problems before God, recognizing that God is He, there is no other; God is his Savior, God is his sustainer, God has made these promises—now this adversity accomplishes its purpose in Abraham's life.

It fosters and nurtures and builds up this growing relationship with God that Abraham is experiencing. Instead, by Abraham continuing to head south, this doesn't turn him. It doesn't remind him of who he is and why he's in the land, and he's heading out, and it just goes from bad to worse.

You can see this in many places in Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 48, verses 20 and 21. Constantly, God is reminding His people of their standing before Him. “Go forth from Babylon.

“Flee from the Chaldeans with a voice of singing. Declare and proclaim this. Utter it to the ends of the earth.

“Say, ‘The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob, and they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts. He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them. He also split the rock and the waters gushed out.’”

It's an opportunity for God to display His glory. It's an opportunity for God to demonstrate who He is in the lives of His people when adversity comes, when there is a famine, when there is a shortage of water. God does what only God can do. It's an opportunity.

But if we see it as simply something to run away from, that opportunity disappears. And that's why you have Isaiah 48:22: “There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.”

You don't get to experience the security. You don't get to experience and dwell in the place of peace when you miss claiming the promises of God.

In the next chapter, Isaiah 49, verses 8-12: "Thus says the Lord: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.

"I will preserve you and give you as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages.'" Abram looks around and says, "Well, this famine going on, this is a pretty desolate heritage that God has given me. I think I'll leave and go somewhere else."

God says He's going to restore the earth and cause them to inherit the desolate heritages. "That you may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' They shall feed along the roads, and their pasturages shall be—or pastures shall be—on all the desolate heights.

"They shall neither hunger nor thirst; neither heat nor sun shall strike them. For He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.

"I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar.

"Look, those from the north and west, and those from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people and will have mercy on His afflicted."

When we are in the place where we need mercy, when we find ourselves in affliction, this is not a problem to be escaped. It's an opportunity to be exploited. It's all in how we look at it. It's all in how we respond to it.

I could give you passage after passage. You can look in Isaiah chapter 51. You can look in Isaiah chapter 52 and see these same principles repeated. Adversity is opportunity. Challenge is the place where God reflects His glory and demonstrates who He is in the lives of His people.

Abram misses this opportunity in Genesis chapter 12, so he instead flees to the south. Now he is trying to solve his own problems. He's trying to preserve his own life. He doesn't see God as his salvation and his deliverance, his Redeemer, his rock. He simply sees that if he goes to Egypt, bad things are liable to happen to him.

He's not even all that concerned. He doesn't tell Sarai, "Oh, by the way, here's all the terrible things that will happen to you." The main point is, "I will be killed." This is what stands out in his mind.

But let me ask you something. He's going down to Egypt. He's already come to a foreign land, hasn't he? He came into the land of Canaan, and when he was up there near Ai, he didn't say, "Tell all the Canaanites that you are my sister so that they don't kill me and take you to wife," did he? He didn't have this worry up there.

It's when he goes to Egypt that this fear develops in his mind. Why is that? Well, you have this very loose organization of little cities and towns up in the land of Canaan. You don't have a centralized monarchy. You don't have a standing army. You don't have the power and the resources up in Canaan that are represented by the Pharaoh in Egypt.

Why is Abram going to Egypt? Because there's power and security and resources in Egypt from the human point of view that he doesn't find in the land of Canaan. There's no great Pharaoh up in Canaan that he can go to and say, "Can we subsist on the resources in your granaries? Can we dwell in your fertile pastures and so forth around your great river?"

He doesn't see from the human standpoint resources and power and provision, so he's running to that down in Egypt. At the same time, that very source of deliverance is a source of fear, because the Pharaoh has power, because he can do whatever he wants.

Now Abram has the idea—and apparently the Egyptians must have had some reputation for this wife—you just wonder, why does this occur to Abram? He doesn't say, "Well, they will kill us and take our flocks and herds." If I were the Pharaoh and saw this wealthy—if I was a wicked Pharaoh, I guess I should say—and I saw this

wealthy man with all these huge flocks and herds, you say, “I can kill this man and take all that he's got. I can convict him of some petty crime and execute him and aggrandize myself with all of this great wealth that he brings.”

But Abram says, “They will kill me on account of my wife.” What this tells us is a couple of things. First of all, you see the distance that Abraham's thinking has drifted from where it should be. Secondly, Sarai at this point must have been a very exceptional woman.

Abram is not worried about his maidservants or any of the other women in his household. He says, “When they see Sarai, they're going to want her bad enough to kill me.” If you do the math, Sarai is about 65 years of age at this point, and it's a reminder to us that the greater longevity took longer for people to age. She is apparently a regular paragon of feminine pulchritude at this point, and Abram has a real—and, as events show, a justified—belief that she's going to be desired by the men in Egypt.

But he doesn't have this problem up in Canaan, and you have to wonder why. And it is because the very thing that he is fleeing to is also that which is his greatest fear.

So it came to pass in verse 11, when he was close to entering Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”

Might just re-read that last portion: “Lie for me so that it will be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.” Another one of these preponderance of the first-person singular pronoun. Everything revolves around what happens to me.

Second, why does he get the idea to say that she is his sister? We've already said that, based on this, that Sarai was his half-sister. This is sort of true. It's literally a half-truth, and by omitting to tell the whole truth, you end up committing a deception. Many parallels to this type of thinking in our current time: people more interested in being well with them and not putting all of the truth forward.

This is a manifestation of a man whose thinking is not based on the Word of God, not trusting the promises of God, strictly self-preservation in view.

It's also very interesting. The Hurrian culture is what was in place up in Haran. Haran was a Hurrian city. In archaeology, in the last few hundred years, they've excavated a lot of libraries and different things. There are inscriptions up in this area from the Hurrian civilization, and in these they've learned a lot about the contemporary culture from the second millennium B.C., right around the time of Abram.

One of the things they have found is that there was a custom among the Hurrians where a man might marry a woman and have her as his wife, and then also adopt her as his sister. I won't go into all the gory details of it, but it had to do with property rights and relationship with the bride's family and one thing and another. And so they had this custom of adoption of the wife as the sister.

This was primarily in the high society types, those who had a lot of property, because this was a property-related type of thing. So Abram has brought with him some thinking that he has absorbed from the godless pagan culture that he lived in before he ever came to the land.

So he's come to the land and left all that behind, but now as he leaves the land these things are starting to come back. He's starting to think—he's starting to think and act like the people in the culture that he left to go to the land. There's just another element there.

“Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake.” This is going to backfire on Abram. Verse 14: “So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.”

The princes—now, this is what Abram did not count on. He knew that the people around there would see her, but he figures nobody is going to have the bride price because she's so beautiful, and I'm her brother, and I'm sort of her guardian in their view. And they find her attractive. Abram figures, since I'm the brother and she's so beautiful, any of these Egyptians that come and say, “Boy, she's so lovely, I'd like to marry her,” he's going to

be able to fend them off by saying, “Well, I don't think you can afford her dowry. We're pretty wealthy already, and she's an extraordinarily beautiful woman. Do you have the flocks and the herds necessary to engage her to wife?” And they won't.

So Abram's got this all mapped out in his mind. What he did not count on is what happens in verse 15: “The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.” Pharaoh does have—there's not a way that Abram is going to be able to fend off when the Pharaoh himself says, “This is a woman worthy of a king. Come on down to the harem.”

So he, in verse 16, treated Abram well for her sake. This fulfills Abram's words: “It will be well with me for your sake, and I will live because of you.” So Pharaoh sends the sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

Why are these things listed in this way? Sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. You have sort of a little chiasm. It communicates that this was an extraordinarily generous gift. This is why Pharaoh could engage Sarai to wife and the others could not. These things are listed separately and constructed in this way to indicate fullness and quantity. This is a huge amount of goods that Abram is acquiring.

But what is he losing in the bargain? From a—why did he leave Canaan? It was a famine. It endangered his goods. It endangered his life. He has come to Egypt to solve that problem. And on the surface, he has no more problem with dying. Here Pharaoh is treating me well. I'm multiplying my goods. I'm gaining everything that I was in danger of losing. So it seems to be a great solution.

What's the only thing, up to this point on the surface of it, that Abram has lost? Sarai. What is the basis of the fulfillment of the promise of God to Abram—to make him a great nation and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed and so forth? The key to the fulfillment of that promise is Sarai.

He has gained the whole world and lost the avenue of fulfillment of the promises of God, because Sarai has been taken to the house. You can do a lot of work on this phrase, “taken to the house of Pharaoh,” here, but there is a strong implication that this wasn't just a change of residence. It is possible in the language of this passage that Sarai actually consummated this marriage with Pharaoh.

You also see in verse 17 that God considers this to be quite an unconscionable development, because even though Abram is prospering, the Lord plagued Pharaoh. God has been silent ever since Bethel, hasn't He? Haven't seen or heard anything from God. He's sort of backed up and let Abram do what he's going to do. It's a test.

Now Abram has really painted himself into a corner, and he has endangered the fulfillment of the divine covenant, the divine promises. So now at this point God says, “Well, Abram, you've sunk just about as low as you can sink. You've basically sold your wife to preserve your life and solve your problems.” So now God steps in.

You think about the different options God has at this point. God could appear to Abram in a dream by night. God could thunder and lightning. Abram goes down on his face: “Abram, what are you doing?” God still doesn't say anything to Abram, does He?

Abram has chosen to leave the place of communication, the place of being face to face with God, so God does not force that back on him. God instead acts in circumstances, and He's going to actually humiliate Abram by showing that the pagan Egyptians are more honorable than he.

So God brings this about by plaguing the Egyptians, great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Verse 18: Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?”

So he has found this out. Apparently Abram never did fess up. But with these plagues, Pharaoh has said, “What's happening? What's going on here?” And they have searched around to say, well, it's just like when you're fixing your computer. When everything goes terribly wrong and it was okay, you look and say, “Well, what changed? Did I just install a program? Did I just add a device? What has changed most recently that might have caused this problem?”

Well, the most recent change in Pharaoh's household is he added Sarai. As soon as he added Sarai, he's enveloped in plagues. So he says, "Well, it must have to do with her." So he investigates this and finds out she is in fact Abram's wife.

"What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I have taken her as my wife." And this is how it comes out in the English, but it's more like, "I have taken her as my wife," in Hebrew.

"Now therefore, here is your wife. Take her and go your way." So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

So Pharaoh says, "Not only do I want you to leave, I'm going to escort you to my borders and make sure that you get clear away from me." Pharaoh is more responsive to the actions of God than Abram is. Pharaoh is more sensitive to what is required here as far as Abram and his marriage and his wife than Abram is.

And this is a huge—this is a more stinging rebuke perhaps than if God had appeared directly to Abram, because here is the Pharaoh that Abram knows. He thinks, "Well, this guy will kill me for my wife." He's got more integrity than Abram has.

Notice that the Pharaoh doesn't even take back the things that he has given to Abram. He doesn't say, "Give me back the dowry. I give you back my wife. We'll undo the deal." Pharaoh says, "You just take all the stuff and go. I don't want anything to do with you. I don't want anything that you've had. I'm getting you clear out of my borders."

Of course, there is some interesting foreshadowing here about plagues in Egypt leading to the departure of Israel later on in the Exodus. But you can see in chapter 13, verse 1, that Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the south. Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. He got a lot of this in Haran. He got a lot more of it in Egypt.

What do we conclude from all this? Abram, when he decided to leave the land and head to the south, and then he says, "We're going to go to Egypt," his thinking has deteriorated. Because when he goes down to the land to dwell there in verse 10, the verb that he uses there—we're going to stay there until the famine is over—this verb in Hebrew is *ger*. This is the word that means to dwell as an inhabitant.

He says, "We're going to go to Egypt and live there. We're going to dwell there a long time. We're going to take up residence in Egypt." He relied on the Word of God to come into the land of promise. He does not rely on the Word of God when he leaves. The test is, will you rely on God after you've arrived in the land? And he fails it miserably.

When he worships, he builds an altar to God. He calls on the name of the Lord. But apparently he's not listening for what God has to say while he's in the land. He got there by listening and heeding the Word of God, but that's not the pattern that he maintains. And this great failure is a result.

And he is ultimately rebuked in a very embarrassing way. God acts to drive him back to the place of promise. He's going to head back up to the Negev, and he'll eventually arrive back in the land.

It's important for us to remember who we are and why we're here. We have the opportunity to experience the indwelling of Jesus Christ, the indwelling of God the Father, on a daily basis—to not only respond to the call of God by faith to move toward blessing and production, but to remain there and to be strengthened and built up as we exercise our faith and our confidence in God and our orientation to God's plan in daily things.

The difficulty we have is remembering that. Just think about Abram up there, getting reports from his undershepherds and his overseers and so forth, and they come up and say, "You know, master, the grass is getting mighty thin on these hillsides." And he starts to move his flocks around, and he says, "You know, I think we're having a famine. Let's move."

He doesn't stop and think, "This is the land of promise. God has promised that I will live, that I will have offspring, that I will be blessed and be a blessing." He loses sight of who he is and why he's there.

This is what happens to us almost every day. We just get caught up in the affairs of this life, and we forget who we are and why we're here. This story hopefully will be a reminder to us and an encouragement to us that even in the seemingly insignificant tasks and chores and responsibilities of life, it's important to remember why we do what we do and what it is we rely on.

We've recently had great splashy national examples of people who are faced with a crisis and the potential of danger or risk of some sort, and so to try to stave that off or avoid it, they compromise their integrity. "Well, I can't just tell the truth here. That would be a disaster. I can't just do the right thing, because disaster will follow."

We have been called to escape that kind of thinking. If I do the right thing and it looks as though it will cost me, it looks as though it will imperil me, I'll just have to trust the Lord. It is more important to live and walk and decide in a way that is pleasing in His sight than to have the comfortable anticipation that everything will be okay.

Abram was called to go to a land that he could not see. Many times when we make the right decision, we don't know how we're going to survive. If I do the right thing here, it can be as simple as figuring your taxes. You get to figuring and going along, you say, "Oh my goodness, they didn't withhold enough. I'm going to have to send an additional X amount. I don't know where that's coming from. If I send that, how am I going to subsist until the end of the month? Can't I find a way to juggle the figures and not have to owe this refund?"

Or something along those lines, where we will find ourselves faced with this kind of decision. Do I do the right thing? Do I tell the truth? Do I refund this? Do I acknowledge that because it's the right thing to do and that's what's pleasing in God's sight? It looks as though it is going to create disaster. I may lose my job. I may lose this. I may lose that. I may lose this relationship or this opportunity or this future expectation.

Well, that's Abraham in the land. That's Abraham facing the famine. Are we going to go south? Are we going to head to Egypt? And if you think the expectation was bad in the land, wait until you leave the land and get outside the will of God.

We have the opportunity to learn from Abram's example and to be reminded on a daily basis that walking the worthy walk, relying on God, and continuing to exercise our faith after we recognize and move into the land of promise—that's the test. That's the opportunity. That's when God is going to reveal Himself and reflect His glory in our lives, and that's our goal. That's why we're here: for God to reveal Himself and reflect His glory in our lives.

He may do that because we stand up for what is right and suffer loss. So much the better. It would be a far better thing for us to lose the world and gain Christ than the reverse, than to fall from grace and be cut off from Christ the way the Galatians were, who gave into expediency, who gave into the convenient human viewpoint solution.

This is a reminder and a challenge to us. We stand in the land. We face famines. What are we going to do?

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for the examples and the clear teaching of Your Word, the divine power that is contained in Your Word. We have the gift of Your Spirit. We have the great calling, the great opportunity that pertains to us as believers in this age, as members of the body and bride of Christ. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take these things and sustain us and strengthen us and encourage us. We pray that we will have a strong sense of Your presence and Your provision and Your power in our lives so that we can fulfill our calling to be those through whom Your presence and Your glory is revealed. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.