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The hymn we have just sung, Great is Thy Faithfulness, is a wonderful reminder to us of the constancy of God's grace, constancy of His provision. It's one of the areas where we want to constantly remind ourselves of the invisible truth that is embodied in the concept. It is an easy thing to let slip, and this is what happens to Abram in the passage in Genesis where we find ourselves this morning.

For our scripture reading, in the light of this, turn with me to Psalm 42, where David contemplates his relationship with God. He says, The deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul too, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, Where is your God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to be with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, the multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I praise Him for the help of His countenance.

In that short section of Psalm 42, you have the concept of worship and of faith on God, and yet it seems as though there is a fan in the soul. David says, My soul thirsts for God. My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, Where is your God? It seems as though from the external view, God is not evident.

The vision, the grace, the presence of God are not in evidence. And when David remembers these things in verse 4, he says, I pour out my soul within me. I used to go to the place of worship.

I used to worship with the voice of joy and praise. Why are you cast down, O my soul? When adversity comes, why does depression set in? Why does panic or the need to make some sort of change, take some sort of action in one's own soul, why does that come about? Hope in God, I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. The question that this raises is how long can we last once we embark on the journey of faith? The attitude that we should have in time of distress is found over in Psalm 61.

Psalm 61, this is another Psalm of David. In a time of distress, this is a model response. Psalm 61, Hear my cry, O God.

Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth, I will cry to you. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me, a strong tower from the enemy.

I will abide in your tabernacle forever. I will trust in the shelter of your wings. For you, O God, have heard my vows.

You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. I will prolong the king's life, his years as many generations. He shall abide before God forever.

O, prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him. So I will sing praise to your name forever. May daily perform my vows.

That last verse is very interesting in this regard. He says, I will sing praise to your name forever so that I may daily perform my vows. This is the commitment of the believer to the plan of God, to cling to the promises of God, to seek the presence of God.

And the hope of future life with God in all eternity is the enabling motivation for performing one's daily duties, one's daily commitment, fulfilling the life of faith, motivated by hope of eternal life with God, even in the face of adversity. You turn back now to where we resume our study in Genesis 12. Abram has embarked on his journey of faith.

God has spoken to him and given him the promise of a land, a nation, a great name, a being of sin. So Abraham departed, left Haran, and comes to the land of promise. In verse of Genesis 12, Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the territory of Moreh.

The Canaanites were then in the land. There is going to be an environment into which Abram comes. God could have somehow preserved this land empty and perfect.

It could have been a land full of milk and honey that had no inhabitant, an undiscovered valley, an undiscovered place. Instead, there are people dwelling in the land, and God says, I have promised this land to you. I have given this land to you and to your descendants.

So there's to be some sort of a resolution of conflict among the people who are there. This is the problem that exists in the Middle East today. Israel was declared a nation in 1948, but people who are currently in the land are not willing to just give it up and go live somewhere else.

The Canaanites are not going to go quietly, though there is a further development necessary in the plan and the purpose of God before Abram and his descendants are going to be able to possess this land. The fact that the Canaanites are there signals this. But God appears to Abram.

This is the first of an appearance of God to someone in many chapters in Genesis. God has come down and looked at the Tower of Babel. God has communicated with Abraham and so forth.

But when Abram arrives in the land, rather than just receiving the Word of God, God appears to him, and he says to your descendants, I will give this land. So there he builds

an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. He moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.

There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. So everything seems to be going for Abram here. He has made the journey by faith.

He has arrived at the place of his heritage and his future. God has appeared to him here. He has built an altar to God and has called on the name of the Lord.

If we just had a period at the end of verse 8, and the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jacob and everything went on, that would be great. But in verse 9, Abram journeyed going on still toward the south, or toward the Neve, which is that desert area to the south of the land of Canaan that separates it from Egypt. Why did Abram journey? Why doesn't he stay in that place? That's the land of promise.

There are Canaanites in the land. For some reason, Abram is restless. He doesn't pitch his tent and dwell in the place of the appearance of God, the place where God has confirmed his promise and his presence.

And as Abram journeys, in verse 10, there's a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there. And we covered this last time. I'm not going to do an extensive review, but I would like to give you a few points of summary as far as the concepts that this story presents to us.

Our first point of summary, after traveling by faith to the land of promise, Abram visits it. Verse 10 tells us he went down to Egypt to dwell there. Why does Abram leave the land of promise? Because of famine.

Abram has trusted God for direction. He has trusted Him for his future. He has journeyed away from security and safety and the network of family and so forth to go to the land of promise.

It's a great step of faith. Abram believed for this promise. But now that he's arrived there, it's as though he's overshot it.

He can't stop there. The momentum of travel, he overshoots it. He's going to leave.

Why? Because of famine. Not because of the Canaanites. Not because of a word from God.

It's because of famine. What does famine represent when we think of our journey to the land of promise? This is a form of daily pressure, isn't it? Testing in the area of provision. We've trusted God for the big things.

We've trusted God for the fulfillment of His purpose and His plan. We've trusted Him for salvation. We've trusted Him for the major theme of our life.

We have set our foot on the narrow road. We want to enter the gate that leads to life. We want to walk the worthy walk and live a life that's pleasing in God.

We've committed ourselves to that. And because of faith in God, we arrive in the land of promise. This is the place where all the potential exists for the fulfillment of God's promises.

Now, they're not fulfilled yet in Abram's life. He doesn't yet have the son and the seed. He hasn't yet been made a nation.

He hasn't yet been a blessing to all the nations of the earth. But he has arrived at the place where that can all occur. He has to be in the land before any of these other things can take place.

And he's got to stay in the land. He's got to stick in the place of the presence of God, the appearance of God, and the reiteration of the promise of God, the place of worship and the place of communion. But he leaves, and the reason he leaves is because of famine.

His daily needs do not appear to be met. His flocks can't find pasture. They can't find water.

Generally, the reason there's a famine in the land is there is insufficient rain. We've recently had a drought here in Texas. And you drive from one town to another, one region to another in Texas, mile after mile of crisp, dry cornfields and fields of various kinds.

We haven't had the rain and all the crops withered and died. But how are you going to feed your livestock? How are you going to sustain yourself? And that raises an issue in the mind. Here is a problem.

What is the solution? The problem is real. Who controls the rain? Who controls the growth of crops and so forth? It's God. God has withheld the rain.

God has caused or allowed the famine in the land. Abram is in the land. There's probably a connection here.

This test for Abram. He's given evidence that he's in faith. He's made this big journey.

Now what's he going to do once the question of where provision will come from and how to solve this problem, what's he going to do? Well, there isn't apparently even a hesitation. There's a famine in the land, so Abram goes to Egypt to dwell there. He leaves the land of promise.

Circumstances in the land rob Abram of his fellowship. He leaves the place of contact with God, robs him of his promise because the place of fulfillment of promise is in the land, and it robs him of his hope. Abram apparently no longer has the confidence of

God's gracious provision, of God's protection, of the fulfillment of God's promise.

It's not in view in his mind. So circumstances in the land rob Abram of his fellowship, his promise, and his hope. When Abram loses sight of those three things, he loses sight of the value of fellowship with God, he loses sight of the value and the motivating power of the promise.

When he loses sight of the hope that God has placed before him, the hope that brought him to the land, when he loses sight of those three things, it's an easy step for him to depart, and that's exactly what he does. Second point of summary, God is prepared to perform the miraculous for Abram. We don't generally speculate on what might have happened if, but you can imagine from the pattern that we've seen throughout the Scriptures and the consistency with which God acts in the pages of Scripture, if Abram had remained in the land and turned to God, fallen on his face before God, gone back to the altar and said, O Lord, we're having a famine, you brought me to this place.

What happens when Israel leaves the land of Egypt to go to the promised land, isn't it? They get out there in the wilderness and they have no water, they have no food, and so forth. It's a test. Are you going to rely on the God that called you out for daily needs? And God will withhold those things to see what the depth of faith is.

God is prepared to perform the miraculous for Abram, just as he's going to do for Israel in the desert, just on the basis of the faith of Moses, God is going to provide for them. God is prepared to perform the miraculous for Abram, but Abram is not prepared to receive it. God is prepared to perform the miraculous, but Abram is not prepared to receive it.

He doesn't have the faith to trust God for the provision in a time of famine. In Abram's experience, when there's a famine, you've got to move to a place where there are provision. And so he falls back on his old habits and his old viewpoint.

And as a third point of summary, this tells us that more than obedience and more than worship is required. Abram has been obedient. Abram has paid attention to the voice of God.

He's built an altar in the name of the Lord. Abram has worshipped. But to be sustained in the land and to experience the blessing of God and the fulfillment of promise, more than obedience, more than worship is required.

This is the crux of the problem in a lot of our Christianity and a lot of our churches today. We have many people who are obedient to the moral code that's contained in the word of God, obedient in areas of function and so forth. We have obedience.

We have worship. And yet we lack power. We lack any sustaining grace in our Christian lives.

And why is that? What is the missing element? More than obedience, more than worship is required. We must have faith for daily provision. Faith in the daily walk is required.

And what is that? We say, well, you've just got to have faith. What is the substance of that faith? How do you exercise faith? It is confidence in the reality of the promise. What could Abram be trusting in that would enable him to stick it out there in the land during the famine? What word of God does he have to place his faith in? The power and the merit are in the object of the faith, not just the faith.

Right now, Abram's got faith that there's going to be grain down in Egypt. So he's trusting. He's moving his whole family down there because he is treating as reality the possibility of provision down south.

It's not having faith. It's what you place your faith in. What is it that is going to sustain Abram in the land? Faith for daily provision is based on the reality of the promise.

God has spoken to Abram. God has appeared to Abram and said, I will make you a great nation. You will have a seed.

Through you, all the nations will be blessed. I will give this to you and to your descendants. Well, if this is the land that's going to be given to Abram and to his descendants, that's a word from God.

If Abram treats it as reality, he can go to God with that and say, God, you brought me here. Remember what Moses prays over in Exodus? He says, Lord, you've brought the people out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Surely you're not going to let us starve.

You're not going to let us die of thirst now. And because of the application of that truth, God responds. And there's water from the rocks, manna from heaven.

And there is provision when those promises are claimed because it's a reality in Moses' mind and in the minds of the few others in Israel. And everyone in Israel is performed on the basis of the faith of just those few. So more than obedience and worship, when we look at our own lives, we can say, well, I've been obedient.

I've hewed to kindness in that area of life. I worship God. I make sure that I forsake not doing.

I try to expose myself to the teaching of the word of God and so forth. But looking at Abram, we're reminded that more than these things is required. It takes daily faith.

It takes faith in the face of adversity, faith that claims the reality of the promise. When things don't look like they're going that well. You remember, as we saw last time, that Abram here acts out of fear rather than faith.

He fears that he's going to lose his substance. He's going to lose his flocks and herds.

They're not going to survive the famine.

And so he leaves. And once he starts in this spirit of fear, he goes down to Egypt. The fear just seeps into other areas of his life.

So in verse 11, when they're entering Egypt, he says to Sarah, I know that you're a woman of beautiful countenance, but 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. So now Abram is trying to preserve himself.

He hasn't entered Egypt yet, has he? So in the area of potential, Abram has created a reality, and he's basing his policy, his priorities, and his ambitions on the basis of a reality created out of fear rather than a reality created out of faith. Nothing yet has happened. He hasn't seen the death and the famine, and he hasn't been killed by the Egyptians.

He can create the reality in his mind or recognize the reality in his mind based on the promise of God and act on that, or he can allow fear to create a reality in his mind and act on that, and he acts on the basis of fear rather than faith. Circumstances raised the issue of what Abraham is trusting in. As he departs the land, now it's not even circumstances, it's the potential of a circumstance that he hasn't even encountered yet.

So he's getting further and further away from the reality of God's promise. This reminds us of the parable of the soils that we studied a few years ago in the Gospel of Mark. Turn just quickly to Mark 4, where Jesus gives an illustration of the difference that takes place in our lives in terms of fruitfulness and in terms of production based on whether or not we function in faith.

In Mark 4, verse 3, Jesus tells this story. Listen. The sower went out to sow, and it happened as he sowed that some seed fell by the wayside.

The birds of the air came and devoured it. This is the word of God that isn't even acknowledged. It doesn't take any root.

It doesn't even reside there very long. If Abram had remained in err of the Chaldees, even God said, if you'll get up and go to the land, I will show you, I'll make of you a great nation. But Abram doesn't pay attention.

That would have been an illustration of a complete lack of reaction or lack of response to the word of God. Verse 5, some fell on stony ground and did not have much earth. Immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of root.

It brought about a result very quickly. You see the seed, and it hasn't sunk deep in, so it sprouts right away. And it has an initial response, initial result.

But in verse 6, when the sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away. Abram is in danger of having a lack of faith. He has had an initial reaction to the word of God, and there's a chance in his life.

The plant has sprung up. He leaves err. He leaves Haran.

He comes to the land. But now when the sun comes up, and there's a little bit of heat, his confidence withers. And he leaves the land.

He's going to be out of the land just as he was before the word of God ever came to him. So Abram is acting based on fear, not faith. That's our fourth point of summary.

Fifth point of summary, what is the result of departing the land? Abram departs the land. Verse 14, Abram came into Egypt. The Egyptians saw him.

She was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commanded her to Pharaoh. A woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.

The first result of Abram's entrance in the land is the loss of Sarah. Loss of Sarai. She is taken to Pharaoh's house.

Much of the fulfillment of God's promise depends on Sarah. All of it. She is Abram's wife.

Without Sarah, there is no possibility of the fulfillment of God's promise. She is the woman to whom will be born Isaac. Without her, without the conception and birth of Isaac, there will be no great nation.

There will be no blessing to all the ends of the earth. There will be no possession of the land by Abram's seed. The very first thing that happens is the potential for the fulfillment of God's promise in Abram's life is increasing.

First, he is out of the land of promise. Now, he has lost the wife through whom the promise is going to be fulfilled. The very first consequence is that the fulfillment of these promises of God becomes more and more distant.

Not only that, another result is in verse 16, Pharaoh treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. What was the problem that caused Abram to depart the land of promise? Famine.

Abram said, I'll go to Egypt and that problem will be solved. Has that problem been solved? Yes. Not only is he not in danger of famine, but he is prospering.

He is gaining material goods. So, it looks like this is a great solution. On the surface of things, well, Sarai is living in a different house at the moment.

But, not only are we not suffering from famine, look at all of the goods we're getting. I

had a question a week or two ago about the sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. Why are the female donkeys listed separately? What difference does that make? There are two separate Hebrew words that are used here for donkeys.

The first one, male donkeys, you trace its etymology back. It is a root that means to carry or bear. These are beasts of burden.

They're pack animals. Both of these types of donkeys were ridden and were used for transportation of your person. But, the male donkeys, or asses, literally, are the beasts of burden.

So, you could use these to move your stuff around. You had your own station wagon or van, so to speak, to move your goods. You could hire out these donkeys in the way that, later on, people would drive dragons.

Today, we have trucking companies and so forth. You can have your own trucks within a company, or you can actually hire yourself out to others. So, this is essential for commerce and to have a line of work where, because you own donkeys, which require upkeep and maintenance and so forth, but when you dwell in a land as overburdening as Abram is, how is he going to sustain himself? In addition to his own animals, where is he going to get grain? Because he doesn't own fields, he's not raising grain.

He's got to have some method of barter. And, among other things, one of the things he can do, rather than just spending silver or gold, is he can barter the use of his pack animals. So, the male donkeys are a great commodity to have because he can go anywhere and hire these out and receive in return grain and the use of wells and so forth.

The female donkeys, which is a different word, these were also ridden, but they are the producers. You can not only run this business, but as your animals age and become injured and die from disease in one thing or another, you sustain yourself with these. This gives you the potential to keep this going in the future.

Not only provision yourself with transportation and hire yourself out to others, but sustain this. You don't have to go to the outside to buy more donkeys when you suffer aggression. In order to sustain these, you have to have service.

You have to have an infrastructure to know how to care for and raise these. And so, it's a sign of great prosperity that not only does he own these, but that he has the means to produce them. It's the difference between owning one racehorse and that he'll win a race and make you some money and having a ranch where you raise feed horses and you can stud out your stallion.

You're in a much higher level of operation. So, these things, as I mentioned last time, are

a measure of the great prosperity that Abram enjoys. He doesn't just get a little money together and buy some servants.

He's got male and female servants. He's going to be able to raise families from which the next generations of servants are going to come. And he has the infrastructure to sustain them, to feed them.

So, these things indicate the tremendous level of Abram's prosperity, which is particularly unusual in the light of the fact that he's not settled. He's not in place. He's able to sustain all of this even while he's on the move.

So, again, as our fifth point of summary, the initial result of departing the land is, on the one hand, loss of Sarah and loss of his residence in the land. But the problem is solved. Now the famine is no longer an issue.

He has provision and he has gained even more prosperity. Pharaoh is treating him well and he has even more sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants. By the way, he's gaining male and female servants here and he's in the land of Egypt, right? If you know anything of the future history of Abram, you know that down the road a male servant from Egypt is going to figure prominently in Abram's life, isn't she? Remember Hagar? She's an Egyptian.

She's a servant. She is probably acquired at this time because this is Abram's only sojourn in Egypt and he's acquiring female servants. And we are somewhat surprised that, as we saw last time, after this episode ends and Abram leaves, he takes all of the stuff with him that Pharaoh gave him.

And we thought, well, you know, that doesn't seem so bad. I mean, he sort of messed up and he lost faith and so forth. But all the stuff he gained, I mean, he really came out ahead.

However, the seeds of future problems are sown when he gains these female servants' land. He is bringing back something that's a little ticking time bomb that's going to kind of haunt him later. But the immediate result, and this happens to us a lot of times when we have stepped out in faith and we've really tried to set the priority of pleasing God and walking the worthy walk, and then the pressure of the sun comes up on our little seed planted in the shallow soil.

We arrive at a problem and we look around for a solution, maybe a solution we used before. Rather than being consistent in our found walk of faith, we may actually solve the problem. But as we hear in Abram's life, just solving the circumstantial problem doesn't really solve the problem.

He goes out there and now there's no famine, he's gaining lots of goods, and all would be well except for one thing. Verse 17, there's a big adversative conjunction here. But

the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

You get the idea that if God had not acted here, all would have been well. Abram might have yearned indefinitely, Sarah might have wound up as a permanent part of Pharaoh's harem, and we don't know what would have happened. He would have been down there quite some time.

But this progressive departure away from the center of God's will and God's plan, now God acts, and God acts a unique way. If I was God, if you were God, what would you do? Abram has left the land, he's down there, he's in great fulfillment of the promise, he's imperiled because of where Sarah is. I would expect God to confront Abram.

That seems like the most direct route. God appears to Abram like he did there at Bethel and says, what do you think you're doing? God doesn't speak a word to Abram, doesn't appear to him, doesn't send a prophet. There's no communication between God and Abram.

What does God do? God plagues Pharaoh to resolve this crisis. So the environment to which Abram has fled and which initially seems to solve the problem and be very favorable and to enhance his prosperity, God causes that environment to be hostile. God creates hostility in the environment by plaguing Pharaoh.

So what Abram thought was going to be comfortable, God will not allow it to be comfortable. What Abram thought would be his place of provision, God permit to be the place of provision because it imperils the fulfillment of God's plan and God's promise. God does not speak to Abram, Pharaoh does.

And in this sense, God fulfills what he spoke up in chapter 12, verse 3. He says, I will bless the one who bless you and I will curse him who curses you. Now, Pharaoh has not said curse you, Abram, but the result is the same. If Pharaoh incorporates Sarah into his harem, that is a curse on Abram because it completely annihilates the possibility of the fulfillment of God's promises of blessing.

So God curses Abram's scheme because it threatens the fulfillment of God's plan. God will fulfill his purposes one way or another. We can either be on the blessing side or we can be on the discipline side, but the purposes of God will be fulfilled.

So God plagues Pharaoh. As a result, Pharaoh somehow discovers the source of these plagues. This word for plague, by the way, is the word that is commonly used for skin diseases.

It's a general word for plague, but it is often used in the case where the nature plague is skin disease. And Pharaoh and his house are plagued with great plagues because of Sarah, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh may have even gone to his diviners and said, Why are

we experiencing terrible stuff? And they, by one means or another, determined this.

So in verse 18, Pharaoh called them and said, What is this you have done to me? Now this question, what is this you have done, is a question we've seen before in Genesis. From the mouth of God, when he says to Eve in Genesis 3.13, after he confronts them in the garden. He said, I was naked, I hid myself.

Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree I told you not to eat from? The man says, The woman whom you gave me to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate. Then in 3.13 of Genesis, the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? It's the identical question with the addition of to me in the mouth of Pharaoh. Same thing happens in Genesis 4 and verse 10 after the murder of Abel by Cain.

The Lord said to Cain, Where is your brother? He said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? God said, What have you done? What is this you have done? Trying to stimulate some thinking on the part of the actor here. He doesn't just come out and say, Look at what you have done, and then stay and say, Can't you figure this out? Look at what you've done.

Trying to stimulate the conscience here. What is this you have done to me? In verse 18 of chapter 12, Why did you not tell me she was your wife? Why did you say she is my sister? And these are the questions that God might and probably is asking Abram indirectly through Pharaoh. Why did you do what you have done? This is the question we want to ask ourselves.

If we want to dwell in the land, if we want to experience the fulfillment of the promises of God and the purposes of God and have the glory of God reflected in our lives, we've got to constantly ask ourselves this question. Why are we doing what we're doing? Why did Abram not tell Pharaoh that she was his wife? Because he's living in fear rather than faith. He's reacting to circumstances.

His circumstances are more real to him than the promise of God. Why did you say she is my sister? It's a half-truth, literally a half-truth. If you go over to chapter 20 of Genesis, we'll be there before long.

In fact, we'll be there today. This is a truth. It is truth of a kind, but it is nevertheless a deception.

And then in verse 19, James translates it, I might have taken her as my wife. But let me give you a literal translation from Hebrew here because this is an interpretive translation trying to make sure that we don't think anything untoward happened between Pharaoh and Sarah. But in Hebrew, you have, Lamah amat echoteh hu.

Why did you say to me that she is your sister? And the next phrase is, Va'echak ota li la'isha. And you'll recognize that last part, he shoots the word for woman or wife. It's

prefixed with the Lamed, which is a preposition that means to or for.

Echak is from a word that means to take. So he literally says, For I have taken her to me, to wife. For I have taken her to me for wife.

And then the sentence continues, Va'ata hineh. And him is behold. Ata is you.

He says, And you, behold, your wife. Eesha ka. He says, And you, look, your wife.

And then he ends the sentence with a very powerful pair of words. He says, Ach v'lek. Ach is from the same word that he used earlier when he said, I have taken her.

He now uses the imperative of that same word. He says, Echak. Take.

V'lek. Lek, the imperative from halak, which means to walk or to go. He says, Take her and go.

He doesn't even use the word her. He just says, Take and go. He says, Behold, your wife.

Take and go. You can imagine the Pharaoh barking out these words in his fury at Abram. Ach v'lek.

And go. So it is unclear. The English here tries to tell us that there was only a potential.

We don't know how far Pharaoh got. But it greatly imperils the future of the covenant promises of God to Abram. So God assures that Abram does not remain in that hostile environment.

He plagues Pharaoh. And in verse 20, Pharaoh commanded, Concerning him, they sent him away with his wife and all that he had. All that he had, including the servants, including the animals, and so forth.

So Abram is spelled with all his goods. You remember that in those two previous instances where we saw that question, What is this you have done? When he asks this question of Eve, what follows? Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden. When he asks this question of Cain, What is this you have done? What's the result? Cain is expelled from the land from the association with his family.

Here, when Pharaoh asks the question of Abram, What is this you have done? He is expelled from the land of Egypt. And as he goes, he takes these possessions that he has received in Egypt with him. This foreshadows, in a way, something that occurs later.

You remember when Israel leaves Egypt after 430 years of slavery, they are also going to take with them great wealth from Egypt. You remember in Exodus 12, verse 5, Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the Lord had given the

people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested.

Thus plundered the Egyptians. So when Israel leaves Egypt, they take with them a lot of wealth from Egypt that is given voluntarily by the Egyptians. It's theirs for the asking and for the taking.

But that's sort of a mixed blessing, isn't it? What's going to happen with a lot of that wealth from the land of Egypt in just a few weeks in the future? You are going to have the golden calf being hammered out from those same gold ornaments and bracelets, and it's going to be ground to powder, and they are going to wind up drinking this metallic concoction that Moses makes out of it. So it's an interesting thing to contemplate. Because of oppression, because of disobedience, for whatever reason they end up in the land of Egypt and then are expelled out of the land of Egypt and take with them something from Egypt, that substance has the potential to either be good or ill.

Be a fulfillment of God's promise of blessing and prosperity. I will make your name great. You will prosper.

You will have a heritage to give to your descendants. Moses instructed the Israelites to ask these things of the Egyptians, to take with them. They are going to need it.

This is going to be something useful to them, and it can be a great blessing. It can also be a sin block. It can be something that will trip them up.

It isn't the substance itself, it's what they do with it that determines whether it is a blessing or a curse, these things that carry with them from the place of their expulsion. So Abram is expelled with all his goods, and he now goes up from Egypt in chapter 13, verse 1, he and his wife and all that he had and Lot with him. Lot has been present all the time, but this is a non-issue.

It hasn't even been mentioned in this previous episode, verses 10 through 20. And it says, to the south. Of course, this would sound like he's south out of Egypt, but the word south there is Negev, N-E-G-E-V, Hebrew, and it's the region that separates the land of promise from Egypt.

It's sort of the no man land there. And so he leaves Egypt and heads back into the Negev. What happens at Negev? We'll pause and take our break and come back and find out.