

98-12-06a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me to Isaiah chapter 41. Isaiah chapter 41. We've been working together on doing some scripture memory and having memorized the first four verses of Psalm 91.

Does everybody remember Psalm 91? Does anybody want to attempt to say it with me? He who dwells in the secret place of the Almighty shall abide in the shadow of the Most High. Well now see, this is why we memorize them. He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

I knew that, I was just testing you. I will say, My God, You are my refuge and my shelter. My refuge and my fortress.

My God, in Him I will trust. Surely He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. Did you all ever see Rowan Atkinson when he's Mr. Bean? And they show him one time he goes to church and they're singing a hymn and he doesn't know any of the words except one part of the chorus and so he's kind of mumbling along and when he gets that part, then he's like, oh yeah, I know this.

And he sings this one little phrase and then he's just kind of mumbling and looking around for the rest of it. That's sort of how the progress we're making on our verse. Then verse 4, He will cover you with His feathers and under His wings you shall take refuge.

His truth shall be your shield and your buckler. Four words to that effect. Well, that was a tough one.

The ones that we're working on now are a little bit easier because they're just one verse long. We just kind of started with a challenge there in Psalm 91. But that's such a wonderful passage.

And a great thing to remember. But one of our two current memory verses is here in Isaiah 41. It's Isaiah 41.10. And this is a wonderful verse to have committed to memory.

In the Old King James, it has some vows and these in it. In the New King James, they've changed those to you. But other than that, it's very similar.

Isaiah 41.10, 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. I wanted to have Isaiah 41 as our scripture reading this morning because a lot of times, especially when we're picking memory verses, we find a verse like this that has a wonderful truth or a wonderful promise.

And we say, well, I'm going to memorize that and claim it for myself. But if you look at the context of this, these are words that are spoken to Israel. So can we legitimately claim this promise? Let's look at Isaiah 41 as our scripture reading this morning.

We'll read verses 1 through 16. And this will place our memory verse, Isaiah 41.10, in context. Isaiah 41.

Keep silence before me, O coastlands, and let the people renew their strength. Let them come near, then let them speak. Let us come near for judgment.

Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to his feet? Who gave the nations before him and made him rule over kings? Who gave them as dust to his sword, as driven stubble to his bow? Who pursued them and passed safely by the way that he had not gone with his feet? Who has performed and done it, calling generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last I am he. Now, what is this talking about? Well, this is a reference back to our study in Genesis, the life of Abram or Abraham. Where did he initially come from? He came from the east, from Ur of the Chaldees.

God called him from there, brought him to the promised land, and made of him a great nation. So, historically, God, speaking to Israel hundreds of years later, says, Who is it that raised this one up from the east? Who is it that in righteousness stood him on his feet, gave the nations before him, gave him military victory, gave them as the dust to his sword, as driven stubble to his bow? This, of course, is speaking of Israel as the nation coming from Abraham. Who pursued the enemies and passed safely by the way, and so forth? Who has performed all this? Who made Israel the nation that it is? God says, I, the Lord, am the first and the last.

I am he. Verse 5, The coast lands saw it and feared. The ends of the earth were afraid.

They drew near and came. Everyone helped his neighbor and said to his brother, Be of good courage. So, the pagans that see this mighty nation arising in Abraham, that see the mighty deliverance of God of Israel from Egypt, which is something we'll see predicted by God this morning, they see this and they say, Well, let's encourage each other.

Let's strengthen ourselves and try to oppose this new force in the region. So, in verse 7, The craftsmen encouraged the goldsmith. He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering.

He fastened it with pegs that it might not totter. This is idolatry. They're going to make an idol.

They're going to make a god. And this is going to be their strength. This will be their unifying force.

Verse 8, But 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.

Fear not, O Israel, if you will, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. So, we see that God says, Look, these pagans are rising up against you.

They're unifying themselves. And you know, some of these people didn't necessarily believe in idols. They didn't necessarily believe that the god of gold or god of clay or whatever it was had strength.

A lot of times this was sort of an icon or a unifying image. They would sort of put this picture on the flag and say, All of these nations, we're all of Baal or we are all of El, a Canaanite deity. This is what unites us.

They would find a religious unifying element because they did not have necessarily a cultural or a linguistic unifying element. They would say, Well, but we all serve Baal or we all serve El or we all serve Dagon. So, this was used politically where it started out being religious.

Well, so there's coalitions. There's opposition. Here's the people of God.

God has blessed them, brought them to a land, given them prosperity. Now, there's opposition. People are forming a coalition against them and saying, We're going to bring you down.

We're going to take back what God has given you. We feel like it's been taken from us and given to you. We want it back.

So, God speaks to the nation of Israel that he has raised up and that he's blessed up to this point. And he says, Fear not when you see all of these things happening around you. I am with you.

Don't be dismayed. I am your God. I wasn't hammered out of gold.

I wasn't pegged to a base and stood up. I'm not just a little political icon. Unfortunately, today, this is what a lot of people do with God in Christianity today.

A lot of times, people make God a rallying point for political ends or for monetary ends. They have an agenda. They have a conquest that they want to achieve.

They want to fill their bank account or they want to form a TV empire or something. And so, they'll put God's face on the flag, if you will, and try to use him as just a rallying point rather than recognizing his reality. But God says, Look, I'm the God that has accomplished these things.

I will help you. I will uphold you. I will strengthen you.

And it says, With my righteous right hand. This is a change, and you'll see this, by the way, at the end of Isaiah 41.10. Those of us that memorize this in the Old King James, Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee.

And then this last phrase is different. With the right hand of my righteousness. The NIV, the NASB, the New King James, the Amplified, everybody changes this and says, My righteous right hand.

Well, is there anybody who seriously thinks that God's right hand is not righteous? I mean, this is just sort of a redundancy to say, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. We don't have anything to hang on to. If you go back and look at the Hebrew, this says, Ba-Yamin.

Ba is in, by, or with. That's a preposition. It's the letter bait, or be, with.

And Yamin, you remember Benjamin was the last son that Rachel had to Jacob before she died. She had Joseph, and then she had Benjamin. He was the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob.

And Rachel died in childbirth, basically, with Benjamin. And she named him, as she's on her deathbed there, she names him Ben-Oni, which is the son of my pain. Son of my travail.

But Jacob says, no, that's no kind of a name for this son. I'm going to call him Ben-Yamin. Son of my right hand.

So, Yamin, Ben is son, and Yamin is right hand. Well, that's the word that's used here. And God says, I will uphold you, Ba, with Yamin, my right hand.

Actually, it says, with right hand. It doesn't have the my, there would be a little y on the end of this. Yamini would be my right hand.

So, he says, with the right hand. And then he says, of, he says, Sadiki. Sadiki is righteousness in Hebrew, and the my is on the word righteous.

With the right hand of my righteousness. So, the old King James is the only one that got it right. And so, feel free when you memorize this to correct that to the original form.

I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Now, that's a big linguistic point. What difference does it really make if it says, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand, or with the right hand of my righteousness? The difference is, the way it's translated in these later versions, it says, God has a righteous right hand, and he's going

to uphold you with it.

Well, the righteousness, we don't really see how that enters in. When it says, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness, God's righteousness is something we can possess. And it is a right hand.

The right hand is the symbol of strength. The right hand, you know, even, we've talked about this before in Latin, you had two names for the hands. The right hand was called dexter, and the left hand was called sinister.

And if you get into heraldry and family crests and so forth, they'll talk about, well, there are, you know, there's an eagle rampant, and three lions, dexter, and this, that, and the other. And they're talking about the left and right hand of the shield, where these symbols are. And they call it sinister and dexter.

That's about the only place where those are used in their original form today. But we talk about somebody having dexterity, or being dexterous at something that comes from dexter. And it's literally the right hand.

We're saying this is good. We talk about a criminal being sinister. Well, that means left hand.

And so right hand has been associated with good, positive things. Left hand has been associated. This is why left-handed people are all up in arms.

They form their own little club, you know, the club of the left-handed, and trying to, you know, promote equality and good feeling about left-handed people. But, you know, this goes way back. So this is the right hand of my righteousness.

The right hand is a symbol of strength. And God says that his righteousness is a strong right hand to uphold us. But this puts the ball more in our court, because we can possess God's righteousness.

How do we come to possess God's righteousness? It's by faith. When we trust God, we are declared righteous, just like Abraham. God's righteousness in our soul is a right hand that will uphold us.

So in the one picture, and, I mean, they're both valid. God is in his heaven, and he'll reach down with his right hand and support us. It's like most, you know, depending on how old you are, you'll remember the early TV ads for Allstate.

And they'd say, you're in good hands with Allstate. And they had these great big hands and a little picture of a house sitting right in those hands. You're in good hands with Allstate.

Well, I've always thought of that when I think about the hand of God, just like our Psalm

91 passage when he covers us with his feathers, and under his wings we take refuge. And it talks about he will cover us with his hand. There's a hymn, a wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, a wonderful Savior is he.

He hides my soul in the cleft of the rock, covers me there with his hand. You know, you get the idea of protection, safety, provision, and so forth from God. Well, how do we, what is the means? It's one thing to say, well, there's a great God in the sky with a giant hand to come down.

But how do we appropriate that? How does that become real for us? Well, it's the right hand of God's righteousness. We know the access to God's righteousness. It's our trust.

It's our confidence. It's our remembrance and active daily trusting in God that brings all of this to pass. Here's Israel in a situation where they're surrounded by people who are literally up in arms over their existence, their prosperity, and so forth.

And they say, we're going to gather together and we're going to beat you down. We're going to defeat you. We're going to rally around under this hammered idol that we're going to solder together and build on the anvil and we're going to come get you.

So it's a stress, it's a pressure situation. What's the answer? God says, look, here's my promise. I'm your God.

Don't fear. Don't be dismayed when you see bad things happening around you. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. How am I going to do it? I'm going to uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. If you possess the righteousness of God like Israel should, like Israel has been called to do, as we'll see a little later this morning, this is a promise you can claim.

And this is where we make the transition from observation that this is a principle or a promise applied to Israel to application to us. We learn from what takes place in the national history of Israel. And we apply these Old Testament truths to our lives.

So we have made a point over the course of our studies of trying to be careful about context, so not yank a promise out of context and say, oh, that applies to me. You know, there's an Old Testament promise that says bring your tithes into the storehouse and the windows of heaven will open and blessing will come down. Well, do we grab that and say, well, if I tithe, God will bless me? We look at the context and we see that that's not a principle that applies to us.

Why does this one apply and that one does not? Well, because you have the principle of the righteousness of God. And we can go to passage after passage where God honors the righteous, God blesses the righteous. The psalmist says, I've never seen the seed of

the righteous begging bread.

It's the possession of that righteousness that universalizes this promise. And that's why that last phrase is so important. And it's unfortunate that it's been changed in all the new English translations because that's really the key to claiming this promise.

We've talked before about the passages where we are an heir of God. If you are sons, you are heirs, heirs according to promise. But what are the conditions of the promise? We have to know when that promise applies to us and when it does not.

The promise says, if you seek, if you search, if you express faith in God, all these things will be added unto you. So this is the context in Isaiah 41 for one of our two memory verses. Next week we'll look at the context for our other memory verse that we're currently working on, which is Isaiah 26-3.

You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you. That's how it reads in the New King James, Isaiah 26-3. So we'll look at Isaiah 26 next week.

But it's important when we look at the Old Testament, some people say, well, I'm not an Old Testament person. I'm not under the law. I'm under grace.

I'm in the church. So I only read and study the New Testament. Turn with me just quickly to 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

1 Corinthians chapter 10. We have, of course, many examples in the New Testament that point us back to the old. You can think of Hebrews chapter 11, by faith, everybody did all of these different things.

You can think about Romans chapter 4 when Paul says, consider the example of our father Abraham. Here in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul, is another example where Paul does this. Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud.

All passed through the sea. This is the parting of the Red Sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

All ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. What Paul has done here in four verses is tell us that when you look back, there's no, when you go back to Exodus, you don't see any mention of Christ, do you? You see where there's a no water situation out in the wilderness and they go before God and God tells Moses go out and strike the rock.

He strikes the rock with the rod, water gushes forth and the entire multitude of Israel is

replenished with water. Well, Paul says when you look at that, you can see and he goes through the whole observation, interpretation, application step here in one fell swoop. He says that rock that followed them, that's Christ.

That's a picture of Christ. Well, this is an application for believers, New Testament church age believers in Corinth. He says look at this example of the Israelites in the wilderness and God's provision for them.

This is something that you can see God's provision in Christ for you. So he makes that sweeping statement of application of Old Testament truth for us. He says they all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ.

But with most of them, even though God provided for them and sustained their lives in the wilderness, with most of them God was not well pleased for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. They never entered the land of promise. They had an opportunity, God sustained them, God provided for them, God faced them with a choice.

And because when they came up to the river Jordan, you know, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, everybody remembers, before they went into the land of Canaan. But they came up to the Jordan River area just months after they left Egypt. If things had been different, there wouldn't have been a 40 year wait to go into the land.

But when they got there and they sent in the spies, the 12 spies went in, they said it is a good land flowing with milk and honey, look at this hunk of grapes. However, the inhabitants of the land are giants. We were like grasshoppers in their sight.

We don't stand a chance of taking this land. It is humanly impossible. And that was the way they were thinking.

Humanly speaking, this isn't going to happen with two exceptions, Caleb and Joshua. Well, because of their lack of faith, because they looked at their own strength instead of at God's promise, because from their perspective it couldn't be done, they turned back. God says you're not going to go into the land, you're not people of faith.

Because they weren't people of faith, they didn't have the righteousness of God. Because they didn't have the righteousness of God, these promises did not apply. And that generation dropped in the wilderness.

Verse 6, these things became our examples. This is an example for us. This is something we should learn from.

And what is the purpose of it? To the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. What did they want? Why did they turn back at the Jordan? They were concerned about their life. They didn't want to go in and die.

They kept saying let's go back to Egypt. Remember the leeks and garlicks of Egypt? We were more prosperous there than we are now. They had their eyes on all of the categories of subjectivity.

Remember the three categories of subjectivity? Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on things. That's the lust after evil things. Because as soon as we take our eyes off of Christ and we start looking at other people, what their influence may be, we start catering, we start compromising, we start doing things to please people.

We have our eyes on ourselves. I'm not getting what I deserve. We have eyes on circumstances.

This circumstance is too great for me to face. It's the giants in the land. I'm like a grasshopper in their sight.

As soon as we have our eyes on one of those three areas, eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on things, we're in the area of desiring evil things. And that's how you drop in the wilderness. So what does he say? Do not become idolaters as were some of them.

Remember Isaiah 41? The idolatry thing, rallying around human power, that's the pagan mode. That's what the enemies surrounding Israel are doing to try to accomplish their objectives. We think, well, I'm not going to go put a little plastic Mary on the mantle and bow down in front of it, or I'm not going to hammer out a little Dagon or put a little Buddha in the living room and become an idolater.

What does it mean in the New Testament when it says don't become an idolater? Don't put your faith in what the world puts its faith in. Idolatry is what non-Christian people put their faith in. Some people put it in sharp business practices.

Some people put it in their own efforts. They'll work a 20- or 22-hour day. I watched a program.

This guy that is the president of Virgin Records and has the balloon and he keeps trying to make a round-the-world balloon flight, they were talking, well, how do you have the leisure to do all this and so forth? He says, well, I got to where I am by working 20 and 22 hours a day, and that's the only way to get ahead. I've heard several others say that. Just in the recent past when these guys, there was a husband-and-wife team who founded Cisco, Cisco routers.

Routers connect the computers all over the world. Well, there was a husband-and-wife team that founded Cisco in their living room and figured out in the early days how to connect different computer systems that were scattered around a university campus, Princeton or someplace. Maybe it was out in California.

Anyway, they parlayed this into a business, and they were interviewing. They're divorced

now, but they were interviewing the wife and interviewing the husband and saying, well, how did you accomplish this? Well, they had no capital and so forth, but they had credit cards and they were doing, they got to the point as a husband-and-wife team that they were doing a quarter of a million dollars a month in business, but they were doing it on credit cards and they were working 20 and 22-hour days. And Cisco is a huge, I believe they said it's a \$60 billion corporation today.

But things went south for them, and that's a whole other story. But the point is people will put their faith in their efforts. People will put their faith in other people.

Well, I'll join this organization. It's a stable organization, and then it folds and disappears. People put their faith in their church.

People say, well, I'm a member of the such-and-such metropolitan church, and that's how I'm going to stand before God on the last day and say, well, Lord, look at all the great things my church did and ignore personal responsibility for faith in God. That's the point. So when it says, do not become idolaters as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Don't commit sexual immorality as did some of them, and in one day 23,000 fell. Nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. Don't complain as some of them also complained and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Look at verse 11. All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, our warning, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. This age in which we live is the culmination of God's plan.

God's expectations are the highest because we have the record of the experiences of everyone who has gone before us. We're held to a higher standard. I think theologically we're held to a higher standard in this age and in this time in the age than ever before because we stand on the shoulders of people who have been studying the Bible for centuries, and we have a responsibility to rightly divide the word of truth.

We have a responsibility as believers to look at the record of what God expects and the successes and failures of God's people in the past and be warned and be instructed and be guided in the right path. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. There is no temptation that overtakes you except such as is common to man.

But God is faithful, and this is the key. This is the key to righteousness. This is the key to all of the blessing promises, all of the provision promises, all of the protection promises of God.

They apply when we possess the righteousness of God, and we claim that righteousness by faith. So this is the context of our Scripture reading in Psalm 41, and it's also the context as we return now to our study in Genesis chapter 15 of the life of Abraham. This

is helpful background for us.

We saw Abraham and his great victory over the kings. We saw his encounter with Melchizedek. We saw him come to God in the beginning of chapter 15 after he turns down all of the booty from the king of Sodom, this great huge pile of wealth that he has in his possession by right of conquest.

He went out and defeated these five kings. It was a righteous thing. He delivered his nephew Lot.

He delivered all of the inhabitants that had been taken as slaves by this coalition of kings. Abram, with his little band of trusty servants and his allies from there, the sons of Heth, they went out there and against great odds, by faith, conquered these people, recovered the booty, and Abram's got all of this stuff. He gives it all back to the king of Sodom.

He says, I don't even want a shoelace from you, yet lest you say I have made Abram rich. Abram understands at this point the necessity and the plan of God that his prosperity reflect on God and not on the pagans. And so he gives it all back.

Well, so now he's walking home basically with what he started with. He's got his wayward nephew back who's going to go right back to live in Sodom. He goes back home up there in the area of Hebron.

And he just made a long excursion, did all this effort, delivered all these people, and all of the reward from it went back to the king of Sodom. However, that's from a human point of view. Because after he returns, after these things in chapter 15, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.

God comes and appears to Abram. He had a choice between a pile of stuff and the personal presence of God who comes and speaks promises to you and declares you righteous and so forth. This is a far greater reward.

So he says, do not be afraid. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. God says, I am your reward.

And it far outweighs the silver and gold he's returned to Sodom. Abram says, Lord God, you've made me these promises in the past that I'm going to have a progeny, a son. You're going to make a great nation out of me.

But I'm going childless. The heir of my house right now is one of my servants. So Abram says, look, you've given me no offspring in verse 3. Indeed, just a servant born in my house.

He's my heir. If I keel over tomorrow, Eliezer of Damascus is going to get all my stuff. So

God makes that great promise.

Look toward heaven. This is how your descendants will be. Abram believed God, and it is credited to him.

It is accounted to him for righteousness. Faith results in righteousness declared, granted by God. Now, he says in verse 7, I'm the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land to inherit it.

And look at verse 8, because we're going to be returning to this as we finish chapter 15. Abram says, Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it? How will I know? So he said to him, bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, three-year-old ram, and a turtle dove and a young pigeon. He brought all these to him, cut them in two down the middle, placed each piece opposite the other.

He did not cut the birds in two. This is standard practice when you go to Leviticus and so forth. The birds, the doves, and pigeons are broken but not separated.

When the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. This reminds us that this is an all-day-long process. Abram has to wait.

God comes to him at night and makes him this promise because he says, come outside the tent, look up in the heavens, do you see the stars? So it's nighttime. This is how multitudinous your descendants will be. Now Abram chops up these animals, divides them opposite each other, lays the birds opposite each other, and now the day is passing.

The vultures are swooping. They're daytime carrying birds. They're coming down trying to pick the meat apart, and Abram has to drive them away.

And then in verse 12, when the sun was going down, so he had to do this all day, God says, Abram, bring me these animals. So he did it. It might have been 8, 830 in the morning, and then he just sits, and he waits, and he waits.

You have to think, well, now what's going through Abram's mind? Kind of like Noah in the ark when he gets everything ready, and then he sits there for a week. He thinks, well, Lord, he's probably going back in his mind. Now, let's see.

He did say a three-year-old ram. He did say a three-year-old. I didn't leave anything out.

I got the birds. I chopped them in half. What's the delay here? This is a principle that we have seen throughout our studies in the Word of God.

You may remember those of you that went back when we were in 1 Samuel and studied the life of David. Remember when David is out with the sheep? He's the youngest son. Samuel comes out and looks over all the other sons.

He anoints David, and he says, you're going to be the next king. How long was it before David became king? It was years. He did the Goliath thing.

He became an officer in Saul's army. Saul is slain as thousands. David is 10,000.

Saul gets jealous and starts chasing David. David becomes a fugitive, lives for years in the caves and hills of Judea, goes down and lives with the Philistines a while. It's years and years and years and years.

And then even when David is crowned king, he's only crowned king over two tribes initially. He's the king in Judah and Benjamin, but the other ten tribes haven't acknowledged him. There's more time that passes.

There's another individual up there, a son of Saul, that's trying to be king. There's a long wait from the giving of the promise to the fulfillment of the promise. Israel, we've already seen, experienced a delay between the giving of the promise and the fulfillment of the promise.

There is a cleansing and a purging process that takes place in that waiting period. God tells David, you need to cleanse the land of the enemies before your son can build the temple. David says, I want to build the temple.

God says, no, you finish purging out the enemies. Then my presence will dwell in the capital city of Israel. So there's a responsibility in this waiting period for purging out the enemies, for purging out evil.

Here these buzzards carrying birds throughout the scripture are a symbol of evil. And when Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seed, the seed gets scattered on the hard-packed ground and the birds swoop down and carry it away. This is the forces of evil.

So, Abram has a responsibility to keep evil away from the things of God. And he has to do this all day long. Then, when the sun was going down, at the end of this long day, a deep sleep fell on Abram.

I didn't tell you this before, but this word for deep sleep is special. It's Tardema, T-A-R-D-E-M-A. Can you think of any places in Genesis where we've had a deep sleep fall on anyone? Adam, back in Genesis chapter 2. 221 of Genesis, God caused a deep sleep to fall on him.

And out of this, you have the R.I.P. episode and the help me and Eve comes about. Also, over in Judges chapter 4, if you remember the story of Deborah and Barak, remember Israel is in such a sad state that God rebukes them by calling up a woman prophetess. And in those days, it was a rebuke when women had to exercise the leadership.

This meant all the men were apathetic and indifferent and messed up. And so, Deborah is a prophetess. A lot of people today try to point to Deborah and say, Well, see, now God has used women in leadership, and so this is a good thing.

We want to have women in leadership. It's a rebuke to a nation when God has to use women in leadership. It's a rebuke to the men because they've failed their responsibility.

But you remember, the women do everything in that passage. You go to Judges chapter 4, and they're strong, they're capable. The men are weak and ineffective.

Barak won't go to battle unless Deborah goes with him. They chase the general of the opposing army, Sisera, and he gets away. And he finally runs out of gas, and he stops at a tent, and he says, Give me a glass of milk.

I'm really worn out. He lays down. And in Judges 4.21, a deep sleep falls on him.

It's this same pardema sleep. And then you have Jael, this wonderful Israelite woman, and she takes and pounds a tent peg through his head, and that's the end of Sisera. So, later on, when David is a fugitive and Saul is chasing him, and David keeps trying to say, Look, don't you understand? I'm not your enemy.

I'm not trying to kill you. I don't want to take your throne outside of God's timing. And Saul never believes him because Saul is twisted in his mind with jealousy and with fear of losing the little bit of stuff that he has as king.

And at one point, Saul and his armies who are chasing David are camped out, and they're asleep. And David sneaks into the camp and steals the water jug and the spear. And then the next morning, he stands up on the hill, and he says, Look, if I wanted to kill you, I would have done it.

Here, I got your spear. Here, I got your water jug. Don't you see? Can't you be objective here and tell that I'm not trying to usurp your throne? I'm not trying to kill you.

I'm not your enemy. And this works for a few weeks, and then Saul is back to his old ways. But it says in the Bible, when David sneaked into the camp there and took the water jug and the spear, that there was a deep sleep from the Lord that had fallen on Saul and on the camp.

And it's this tardamus sleep that's in 1 Samuel 26. Do you remember Jonah and the great fish? Jonah says, I'm going the other way. He gets in the boat.

Great storm. The sailors are throwing stuff overboard. But Jonah is tardamu-ed down in the boat.

He has this heavy sleep. And all of it, you know the racket. If you've ever been around a ship or even a small boat, if you're moving stuff around and throwing it out, it would

wake the dead nearly.

But it doesn't wake Jonah because he's in this tardamus sleep. Jonah chapter 1. Daniel, when he experiences some of his visions, Daniel chapter 8, Daniel chapter 10, it's this special, almost supernatural sleep that he's in, which is particularly applicable to our passage here because this is a deep sleep on Abram when he's going to have another conversation with God. This is also used as an illustration of apathy over in Proverbs.

It talks about how the fool falls into this heavy, almost a drunken stupor. Two places in Job, the tardamus sleep results in nighttime visions from the Lord. Job 4.13 and Job 33.15. The idea of visions coming during this sleep, just like in Daniel 8 and Daniel 10.

In Daniel 8, you have the vision where he sees the little horn, which is a prediction of the Antichrist. In Daniel 10, he sees this very brief vision of Jesus Christ. And it's identical in its details to Revelation chapter 1. But he sees this, he says, I was in a deep sleep on my face on the ground when I saw this.

And it's the tardamus sleep. So we know that something special is about to take place. God has spoken to Abram several times in the past, but not like this.

This is something different. And the tardamus sleep that falls on him and the horror that follows. Horror and great darkness fell upon him.

The deep sleep falls on him. This is the Hebrew verb nafal. And it's the same word for the great darkness.

The deep sleep falls on him. The great darkness falls on him. And then God says to Abram in verse 13, No, certainly.

Remember when I pointed your attention back to verse 8, where he says, Lord God, how shall I know? Well, here there's a special construction in Hebrew where you have the doubling of the verb. You have the finite verb and you have the infinitive absolute, which is kind of a strange construction in Hebrew. And it really draws attention.

The word for know here is doubled. And God says, You're asking me how you can know? Here's how you can know. You can know for a certainty.

It's a very emphatic statement in Hebrew. And God, after this horror of great darkness, Abram's probably wondering if he should ask this question or not. Because it sort of raises the idea, Well, God, are you really sure? I mean, look, you know, you promised this stuff and I don't see it happening.

And God says, Look, here's the horror. Here's the great darkness. Here's the Tardamus sleep.

Here's how you're going to know. Very, very emphatic. And I mean, if you can't imagine

Abram on his face in the dust, that's where he is, just like Daniel.

No, certainly. Your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs and will serve them and they will afflict them 400 years. Also the nation whom they serve, I will judge.

Afterward they will come out with great possessions. This is more detail than God has given before. He's always just talked about the blessing side.

But he says, Guess what, Abram? Just like all day when you were chasing these buzzards away, there's going to be a delay of 400 years before this promise even begins its fulfillment. As for you, yourself, you will go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried at a ripe old age.

Or a good old age. This phrase, by the way, of ripe old ages, is from the word *tov*. And it's used three times in the Scripture.

Three different people are said to have died at a good old age. Abraham is one of them in Genesis 25.8. Gideon is another one in Judges 8.32. And David is the third in 1 Chronicles 29.28. So Abraham, Gideon, and David are all stated in the Bible to have died at a ripe old age. And this bespeaks blessing, the fulfillment of the promises God makes to the righteous.

These three men are specifically marked out as having received those blessings by achieving this ripe old age. And there are fascinating comparisons between those three lives that we don't have time to go into this morning. But in verse 16, In the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

What is this all about, the iniquity of the Amorites? Well, this is a good place to pause and take our break. When we come back, we'll examine what God is talking about when He says the conditioning of the fulfillment of this promise is the fulfillment of the iniquity of the Amorites. But let's pause here and take our break.