

98-12-06b

We're ready now to resume our study in Genesis chapter 15. We are in the middle of God's revelation to Abraham, or Abram at this time, about the way in which the promise that God has given him is going to be fulfilled. Initially, God told Abram, way back, get thee up out of thy kindred and nation and so forth into a land that I will show you.

I will make of you a great nation, in you all the nations of the earth will be blessed, and so forth. Now, we're bringing this up under a magnifying glass, and God says, well, there is some detail about how this promise is going to be fulfilled. And we find that this is true of many of God's promises.

God's promises often have conditions. They have a timing. They are fulfilled in accordance with the perfect plan of God.

And this sometimes is confusing. You can go over to Proverbs, and it says, if you're a good guy, you'll have a long, happy life. And you say, well, here's a good guy, and he had a short, seemingly unhappy life.

Is the word of God not true? And so, this gives us some insight into understanding how to construe and how to understand the promises of God. It's easy, as we talked about in the first hour, it's easy to go to a passage of Scripture. Fear thou not, for I am with thee.

Be strong and have a good courage. Be not dismayed. I am your God.

I'll be with you wherever you go. And we say, okay, that's my verse. I'm strong.

I'm courageous. God's with me wherever I go. Well, is He? There's an environment, there's a context for that promise.

And you can't just go grab some promise that God made to some person in a certain situation, under a certain set of conditions, and yank it out and say, that's my verse. God, where are you? You said you'd be with me. Well, did He really say that? So, we look more closely at the promises of God, and we try to understand their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, as they say theologically.

Which is the context? What's the environment where this promise is given? Can you just go do anything you want to do and claim the protection and provision of God? The answer is, no, you cannot. There are priorities in God's plan, just like there's priorities in life. I heard an illustration of this yesterday, when one of the girls asked if she could have some potato chips.

We had a bag of barbecue chips on the table. We were eating leftovers and so forth. And one of the girls said, Mom, may I please have some potato chips? And she said, sure, you can have as many as you want.

And, you know, my mind is convoluted. And it struck me at that time that I had just had a helping of potato chips out of the bag, and I knew that there was just a certain number left, not very many left. So when Mom says, you can have as many as you want, well, what if she wants more than are in the bag? Well, she, Patty's not going to take the time to explain.

Well, you can have as many as you want, as long as it doesn't exceed the total number of chips that are in the bag. And, you know, you may not go up and open a new bag out of the, you see what I mean? You can make a statement, and you have to understand the context and the spirit in which it's given to be sure you don't misconstrue it. Now, if Rebecca reached in and ate the 12 chips that were there and said, Mom, you said I could have as many chips as I wanted.

Well, where are they? And we have to make a run down to the store and buy another bag of that kind of chip to, you know, it's a ludicrous example maybe. But it points up the carelessness and the slipshod manner in which a lot of believers seize on and apply certain attractive parts of the Word of God. Well, it says right here, bring your tithe into the storehouse and the windows of heaven will open and all kinds of blessing are going to dump down.

I gave my 10%. Where's my windows of heaven blessing? We go to Proverbs and it says, well, you know, there's some principle about being righteous and no harm will come to you and no enemy will ever prevail. Well, it looks to me like I just got the rug pulled out from under my feet here, and I don't feel like I did anything wrong.

Well, we have to balance the statements of the Word of God against other information in the Word of God and be sure we have it understood in context. That we know the other things that also apply. People say, well, if you're a son of God, you're an heir.

So I'm expecting when I get to heaven, I'm going to have a big mansion in the sky and I'm going to have all these blessings of reigning and ruling and walking with Christ and having the white stone and the new name and the hidden manna and all the other things in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 that are promised to the overcomers. No, you're not. Because there are other principles that apply.

Yes, you are an heir. Yes, you are a son of God. But as an heir, you can forfeit your inheritance just like Esau.

Esau was the rightful heir of Isaac. He was the firstborn twin between Esau and Jacob. He came out first, tied a little string.

You know, sometimes when they had twins, they weren't sure which one was going to be born first. When Joseph had his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, one of them started to come out and they tied a scarlet thread on him, but then the other one came out. And so

he became the firstborn.

But then when Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, he crossed his hands. And he blessed the one that would have come out first but did not. There are ways of losing your inheritance.

Esau sold it for a mess of pottage. Is he the heir? Yes. Is he the firstborn son? Yes.

Did he inherit? No, he did not. Because there are ways that you can lose that inheritance. There are ways that you can forfeit the fulfillment of the promises of God.

And we've been anxious to seize on the positive side of what God communicates to us in his word. And we've been sort of reluctant to keep ourselves aware and informed of the other parts of God's word. Well, here Abram is getting a firsthand reminder that yes, God is his shield and his exceedingly great reward.

Yes, God is going to make of him a great nation. But it's not an unmixed bed of roses. It's not a big upward prosperity thing.

And boy, if you're a son of Abraham, your life is great. You have no enemies. You have no challenges.

You have no flaws or faults. You have no difficulties. And there is a revelation here that there's going to be some negative from a human point of view along with the positive.

God says, look, your descendants are going to be in bondage for 400 years. Four generations are going to serve as slaves in a land not their own. And it isn't until these four generations go by, this 400-year period goes by, that I'm going to begin to fulfill these promises that I've made to you.

Why? Well, this is where we left off in the first lesson. In the fourth generation, they shall return here. Why? For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

God says the reason for this, at least a part of the reason, is that there are other people involved besides you. Now, raise your hand, at least figuratively, if you know what an Amorite is. Well, he's a man from the land of Amor.

Land of Amor. He's a lover, not a fighter. He's an Amorite.

The Amorite is a term that was used in ancient days much the same way that Gentile is used with relation to Israel. But if you think about it, in Abraham's day, there weren't any Israelites because Israel hadn't even been born yet. His grandson of Abraham is Jacob, who's later renamed Israel.

So how do you refer to the non-God's people types? Well, in this day, the inhabitants of the land of Palestine, this is the Hivites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, and all these other

ites that dwell in the land, up to and including the Egyptians, are all collectively, the inhabitants of that region, are called the Amorites. They're the non-Abraham people. It's a term very similar to Gentile, if there were such a thing at this time.

The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. The word here for iniquity is helpful to us because this is the word Awon, A-W-O-N. We saw this word, although I'm virtually certain that you don't remember it, but we saw this word back in the account of Cain and Abel.

If you go back a few pages in Genesis to chapter 4, you have this thing. Cain rises up in the field, slays his brother Abel. God says in chapter 4, verse 10 of Genesis, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood. By the way, who was the firstborn son? Cain. Who is the heir of Adam and Eve? Who has the potential to be the son of promise and to be the great-great-great-grandfather of Noah and Abraham and so forth? Cain.

Cain is in line for that. He's the eldest and the firstborn. But through this act, he forfeits it all.

He gives it all away. Instead of the blessing of the firstborn, now he has the curse. You are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth. And Cain said to the Lord, what? In verse 13.

My punishment is greater than I can bear. Well, the word translated punishment here in the New King James, I think in the Old King James it may have been translated iniquity. My iniquity is greater than I can bear.

It's the word awon, A-W-O-N. There are several different words in Hebrew for sin, but this particular word talks about not only the sin, but its consequences. The two things are bound up together.

Another use of this word that's helpful to us is over in Exodus chapter 33, I believe it is, where God declares His own glory and He says, I'm sorry, it's Exodus chapter 20. Exodus 20 verse 5. The Lord, the Lord dispensing mercy to thousands and so forth, but visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the sons to the third and the fourth generation. Exodus 20 verse 5. That's very important to our passage because that word for iniquity is awon.

Visiting the consequences. If that's sin, and it doesn't mean the father went out and slew his neighbors, so now his sons and his grandsons and his great grandsons are all going to be cursed by God because great granddad did a bad thing. But this iniquity, if it is

perpetuated, if this sinfulness and lack of interest in the things of God is perpetuated in the son, God is watching this family.

And when you have four generations that all have the same attitude, God will cut that line off. That's what He's saying. Once you have a bad generation in a family or in a clan, God's marking.

And when He gets four tote marks on the board, well, the great granddad, the granddad, the father, and the son are all evil in my sight. You can see this in the history of the kings of Israel. We don't have time to go there.

But the Jeconiah curse is an example of this. You have four successive bad kings and God says this line is cut off and you're not going to have a descendant on the throne of Israel anymore. And it's a different line of David that winds up inheriting the throne.

Anyway, this is awon. So when God is talking about the iniquity of the Amorites, it's this idea of the four-generation curse. God says your descendants are going to be on a land not their own for four generations.

In four generations, the iniquity of the Amorites is going to be full. What does this tell us? These people that live in the land of Canaan, before Abram gets there, you've got all these lites that live there. You've got the Egyptians down in the land of Egypt.

There's a sense in which they're not accountable. We don't have any knowledge of them before Abram comes. We don't know anything about their history.

But Abram comes. He's a man of God. When he gets there and he has his battle with the kings and so forth, we find out that there's a priest of God in Salem, which will later be Jerusalem.

He's in the land. So that generation now has contact with people who know about God Most High, El Elyon, ruler of heaven and earth. Melchizedek calls him that.

Abram calls him that. Now these people with whom Abram certainly comes in contact with, the Egyptians, remember when he goes down to Egypt and the thing with Sarai and the Pharaoh and so forth, and they find out about God. So now they have knowledge of God.

This is the God of Abram. This is the God Most High, ruler of heaven and earth. Well, that generation doesn't respond with some exceptions.

The sons of Heth appear to have thrown in with Abram, but that's the first generation. God says the iniquity of these Amorites is going to be full when these next three generations pass. After four generations, if they haven't responded, their iniquity is full and I'm going to judge them.

So God is going to work a bad thing together for good, what we would consider a bad thing. Abram's descendants going to a land not their own and sojourning and actually serving as slaves, that isn't a cheery prospect. You don't write that at the bottom of the Christmas card.

We're in the festive holiday season here, but you don't say, oh, by the way, your kids and your grandkids and your great-grandkids are going to be living in a nuclear holocaust nightmare. Merry Christmas. It's not a happy thought.

But God says I'm going to work this together for good because when I deliver your descendants with my strong right hand, I'm going to wreak judgment on those that held them captive. I'm going to wreak judgment on these Amorites because now their iniquity is full. They've had their four generations.

They've had their chance. The knowledge of God is in the land and I'm going to give them 400 years to respond. And if they don't respond, the door of the ark is shutting and it's judgment time.

And to emphasize that, you have the presence of God passing between the pieces. See, all of this is helpful to us when we get down to the next verse because when it tells us in verse 17, it came to pass, remember this statement, the deep sleep falls on Abram and this statement is made by God, this prediction, as the sun is going down. Remember that in verse 12? As the sun, it's like twilight, it's at dusk.

It's a transition time from light to darkness. And this has symbolic overtones here. You're in the light and now you're going into darkness.

There's a horror and a fear that comes on Abram. It's the only time that Abram comes in contact with God where he is afraid in the Scriptures. He says, I'm going to afflict him.

He says all these things. Then in verse 17, when the sun went down and it was dark in the dead of night, then what happens? Behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch to pass between those pieces. What are we supposed to make of the smoking oven and the burning torch? We remember these half carcasses, these sides of beef and sides of sheep and so forth on each side.

Abram guarded it all day and drove the buzzards away. He falls asleep as the sun is going down because now the birds are not going to come settle on it. And God speaks these words to him.

And then he sort of raises up and he looks at the pieces and now the goal of all that patience and all that waiting is taking place. And the presence of God symbolized in the smoking oven and the burning torch passes between the pieces. What does this mean? Well, it helps us to understand the iniquity of the Amorites because the smoking furnace is a symbol of judgment.

It incinerates. It is the means of turning something to ashes. You can see this in Malachi.

I think it's in chapter 3. Turn with me over to Malachi because this is the only verse we're going to look at in connection with this smoking oven. There are some other uses of this word, just talking about somebody baking bread in an oven and so forth. If you go over to Malachi, it's either the end of chapter 3 or the beginning of chapter 4. In fact, I think it's both, actually.

Verse 19 of chapter 3 doesn't exist in the English, but it does in Hebrew. So, if you look at it in Hebrew, it's 3:19. If you look at it in English, it's 4:1. So, look at Malachi 4:1. I don't think you all have a Hebrew Bible with you.

Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly, will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts. It will leave them neither root nor branch.

But to you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet. On the day that I do this, says the Lord of hosts.

So, on the one hand, you have the furnace of judgment. On the other hand, in this passage, you have the sun, the burning light of day, that benefits and blesses Israel. The appearance of God on that great and terrible day is going to roast the wicked and bless the righteous, is what it boils down to.

Well, you have both of those ideas expressed back here in the presence of God in verse 17 of chapter 15 of Genesis, because you have the smoking oven symbolizing judgment on the Amorites, which includes the Egyptians. And all you have to do is think forward to Exodus and the 10 plagues. They got judged in a big way.

They were so decimated after the 10 plagues that the Hyksos pharaohs came in, which is actually the Amalekites. And if you read the account closely of Exodus, as Israel is leaving Egypt, the Amalekites, they encounter the Amalekites because Amalek has heard that Egypt is a wreck. And they come in and take over, and they become the Hyksos pharaohs, the foreign pharaohs.

Hyksos basically means shepherd kings because they were nomadic peoples. But Egypt was so devastated by the plagues that the Amalekites were able to come in and basically take them over and rule as the Hyksos pharaohs for many generations. So this is how badly the Amorites and the Egyptians are going to be judged after these 400 years.

But it's also a burning torch. And the burning torch, this is a good thing. The torch lights the way.

Psalms 119.105 and 119.11, it talks about the Word of God. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. The sun of righteousness rises and there's healing, there's benefit, there's blessing.

The torch is a good thing. The smoking furnace is a bad thing. Both of these images are combined at Mount Sinai.

You remember the Ten Commandments? Moses going up. The top of the mountain is covered in smoke and burning and so forth. Just like when they leave Egypt and you've got the pillar of fire at night and the pillar of cloud by day.

The cloud and the fire is a symbol of the presence of God. That presence can either be beneficial or it can be judgment. What makes the difference? Is the presence of God in your life going to be blessing or judgment? Well, it all depends on whether or not the beneficial promises of God are applicable to you and to me.

It depends on whether or not we can rightfully claim those promises. What's the condition? It's righteousness. How do you get that righteousness? Faith.

It's daily faith. The Israelites were saved. They all came out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover lamb, but they dropped in the wilderness.

Why? Those are the people to whom God gave His law, and the law is not for unbelievers. The law was for believers. God delivered them under the blood.

He brought them through the sea, a symbol of baptism, as Paul points out, but they all dropped in the wilderness. Why? Because the people of God can be judged, and they were judged for faithlessness. They did not trust the promises of God.

They didn't believe the Word of God. They desired other things, and they dropped. It's up to us whether the presence of God in our life is a burning torch of blessing and provision and guidance, or whether it is a smoking furnace, a furnace that incinerates and burns up.

This, of course, is not talking about loss of salvation. It's talking about incinerating the wood, hay, and stubble that our life produces when we're separate from God. It's a waste.

All of it goes up in smoke if it's apart from God. Whatever is not of faith is sin. So, you have this.

And the very interesting thing in verse 17, if you have any kind of grammatical sensitivity at all, you know that this sentence has two subjects, doesn't it? The verb is to pass. Something's going to pass between the pieces. How many subjects do you have here? How many things pass between the pieces? There's two.

The oven and the torch, those two things pass between the pieces. So, we ought to have a plural verb, right? The oven and the torch, they passed. Well, guess what? In Hebrew, it's a singular verb.

The smoking oven and the burning torch are one thing. And so, it's a singular verb. It's sort of like saying a smoking oven and a burning torch, it passed between the pieces.

That's how we would try to render it in English. They're one thing. They're two sides of the same presence.

Just like the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. Remember when Israel was backed up against the Red Sea before the waters parted? Pharaoh and his chariots is a great scene in Cecil B. DeMille, Ten Commandments. They all come around there and the presence of God comes down and you see that little animated pillar of fire coming.

Well, if you read the biblical account, it was smoke because it was a pillar of cloud by day. It was smoke on the Israelite side and it was fire on the Egyptian side. The Egyptians couldn't pass.

They couldn't get around it because it would roast them. But it wasn't this threatening pillar of fire on the Israelites side. It was still the pillar of cloud which was a marker.

A giant signpost that guided Israel in the way that it should go. I think I mentioned this a week or two ago but I was very impressed with an observation that my good friend Don Hargrove made on a lesson of his I was listening to a few weeks ago talking about that very time in Israel's history. These were believers, the Israelites, who came out of Egypt under the blood, who passed over the sea and God guided them with the pillar.

The pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night. These people, you know, a lot of times we're living along through life and we have decisions to make and we have options and challenges and we're not real sure what the best course might be and so forth and we say, boy, wouldn't it be great if I could just have five minutes of face-to-face time with God and ask Him these questions. Oh God, should I do A or B? Should I buy this or that? Should I invest my time and my energy in this or should I go this way? Just give me, if God would just have an angel or give me a pillar of cloud to guide me and show me, then my life would be great.

If I could just have a little red hotline to the throne room of God, I could pick up that phone and say, Lord, I've got a decision to make here. Which way should I go? A, B, or C? B. And then you take B and there you go. So, but this is the point Don made which is really good.

The Israelites had that. They had the personal presence of God. They had a pillar guiding them, showing them exactly where to go.

They had as much divine guidance as you could ask for. God speaking to them through Moses on a daily basis, solving little day-to-day problems, guiding them exactly where they're supposed to go and guess what? The whole generation dropped into wilderness because it's not how much guidance from God you have that determines the success of your life. And this is particularly important for those of us that prioritize understanding and knowing the Word of God.

It's not just having the guidance. You can have the knowledge and the guidance like Israel had and still drop into wilderness. The issue is faith.

What does it say over in Hebrews? The promises of God were not mixed with faith in them that heard it and were warned over and over again in Hebrews. Don't follow that example. They had the rock.

They had the water. They had the manna. They had the pillar.

What more could God do? He's in their midst and they dropped into the wilderness. We have that problem today as believers in many cases. We have the personal presence of God in our midst and we still drop into the wilderness because we lose sight of the fundamental importance of trusting God on a daily basis.

Being sure that what we do is first and foremost pleasing in His sight whatever it may involve on our side. So this is what we see with the smoking pot or the smoking oven and the burning torch that pass between those pieces. Another fascinating thing about this there are three parallels that are really close.

This is the first of three situations where you have some common elements. The first element here all of this is hinging on this verb to pass. The presence of God passes through the pieces here.

This verb for pass is as I said singular and there are two other occasions where the presence of God passes between something and it has a lot of these same elements. In this case here one of the first things is God proclaims His name. He says, I am the God who brought you out of earthy calamities.

Well, Abraham knows that. He's known that for years. But God makes a formal declaration of His identity.

He says, I am the God who brought you. Well, He does the same thing over in Exodus chapter 33. Turn over to Exodus 33 just for a moment.

Keep your finger in Genesis 15. Turn to Exodus 33 and look at verse down along verse 18. Moses prays and says, Please show me your glory.

He says, I will make my goodness pass before you. I will proclaim the name of the Lord

before you. I will be gracious to whom I have been gracious.

I will have compassion on whom I have had compassion. But he said, You cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live. The Lord said, Here is a place by me and you shall stand on the rock.

So it shall be while my glory passes by that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. Then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen. And this is where you get the whole he hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock.

He covers me there with his hand. And then you have the cutting here. Remember in Genesis, what do we have the cutting of? Something gets cut.

The animals get cut in half. And it's the word barat. And the noun barit, which is the noun for covenant in Hebrew, is from that.

It means you cut a covenant. That's how you make a covenant. It's called cutting a covenant.

Today they talk about this in accounting. Well, we're going to cut checks. Why do they say that? I don't know.

But you cut a covenant in Hebrew. And so here in chapter 34 of Exodus, the Lord said to Moses, cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Notice, unlike Cecil B. DeMille, you know in Cecil B. DeMille you've got that animated fire coming down and it writes thou shalt have and it does all but thou shalt not.

And then the little finger of fire cuts the tablets out of the rock, doesn't it? Moses just walks up and grabs them after they cool off. Well, that's not how it happened. Moses had to chisel the tablets out of the rock.

God said to Moses, you cut two tablets of stone. Cut two tablets. So he's got this rock, he cuts it out, cuts it in half.

He's got two pieces that he cut just like Abram with the animals. In each case, you have the declaration of the name of God. I am the Lord God who brought you up out of Ur of the Chaldees.

He says to Abram, I am the Lord God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, he says here. The other end of what he's telling Abram. In each case, the man involved has to do the cutting.

He cuts the animals. Moses cuts the tablets. And then you have the presence of God passing between the pieces of the animals.

Here you have the presence of God, the finger of God writing on these tablets and the presence of God passes by, passes between on these mountain heights and Moses is in the cleft of the rock. There is a third case that's very similar to this and that's when Israel finally does enter the land 40 years after they first tried with Joshua. And if you go over to Joshua chapter 3, it's really fascinating to see the similarities in that situation to these first two.

Joshua chapter 3, the Lord speaks to Israel and to Joshua particularly. Look at Joshua 3, verse 7. The Lord said to Joshua, this day, now understand, they're all on the east side of the Jordan River and they're getting ready to head west, cross the Jordan and actually seize and lay hold of the land of promise. So they're all camped there, they're fixing to go across and God is talking to Joshua here and he says, this day, I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

Verse 9, Joshua said to the children of Israel, come here, hear the words of the Lord God. Joshua said, by this you shall know that the living God is among you and that He will, without fail, drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites and the Jebusites. If there's anybody left out, it's covered under Amorites.

In each of these cases, God emphasizes that people need to know. He tells Abram, by this you will surely know. He tells Moses that you will know.

If you look in the context of Exodus 33 and 34 and that whole thing, He makes a statement so that Israel will know that I am your God. He says the same thing here in Joshua. I'm going to do this thing so that you will know that I'm going to fulfill this promise.

The very same promise He made to Abram. And the list of people to be driven out is repeated in each passage. Each passage lists the people that God is specifically going to vanquish on behalf of Israel.

In each case, the presence of God passes by. When you go to Joshua 3, look at verse 12. God tells Joshua these instructions and He passes them on to Israel.

Actually, in verse 11, Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. What is the ark? That's the dwelling place of the presence of God in Israel, isn't it? Joshua says, Look, people, the ark of God is going before you. It's going to go in front of you.

So therefore, take for yourselves, in verse 12, 12 men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe, will come to pass as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, kind of reminds you what Melchizedek

says, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut. Animals are cut. Tablets are cut.

Here, the waters of the Jordan are cut. The waters that come down from upstream and they shall stand as a heap. Now, this is important.

You would think, well, he could just make a little path like the Red Sea. But no, the waters are going to heap up. And there's a reason for this.

So it was, in verse 14, when the people set out from the camp to cross over Jordan, the priest bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, those who bore the ark came to the Jordan. The feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water. The Jordan was overflowing all of its banks because it was harvest time.

It was kind of like the Nile. It was really swelled with water. And what does this tell you? This tells you that it's the time of rain.

There's a lot of rain up in the hills. It's all washing down. And there's a lot of runoff that's feeding this river.

This is where all this water is coming from. So this is a raging torrent coming down the Jordan. It's not just a little trickle like some people tried to make out for the Red Sea.

Well, it was just two inches deep and they kind of splashed across. This is during the time of flood. It came to pass, verse 16, the waters which came down from upstream stood still and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan.

There are so many details we could go into on this and you could see what some of them are, like the name of that town. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed. That's the Dead Sea.

So you've got Adam on one side. You've got the Dead Sea, no life, no promise, no hope on the other side. Right in the middle, the waters are cut.

You can see the symbolic value here. The people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan.

All Israel crossed over on dry ground until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. So the parallels in this are just fascinating and there's a lot of development we can do on these. But here's the point.

The presence of God passes in the midst and in that presence is the certain knowledge that God is going to vanquish the enemies and bless. That's the substance of it, isn't it? Abram says, How do I know that you're going to do these things, Lord? God says, Know this. This is exactly how it's going to happen.

Here's my presence passing between the pieces of what you have cut. Here the priests tread on the water and the waters are cut. God could have just divided the waters before they got there.

Why did the priests have to touch it with their foot? Because it's the same idea as Abram cutting the animals. It's the same idea as Moses cutting the tablets. Obedience.

You have to do what the Lord says. If Abram hadn't cut the animals, there would have been no smoking furnace and burning torch. If Moses had not cut the tablets, there would have been no Ten Commandments.

At least not on that day. Moses would have probably been a small cinder on the mountain. And Joshua or somebody would have had to come up and cut the tablets.

But God requires obedience. And when that obedience is fulfilled, the presence of God comes in the midst. Victory over the enemies is guaranteed.

Protection, preservation, covenant promises are fulfilled. So, what does that mean for us? Well, it's fairly straightforward, isn't it? As we pointed out in the first lesson this morning, we look at these things and they're our example. These things were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages... If there was ever a time when this was important... You think it was important back in the days of the Exodus.

God killed people. He slaughtered them in the wilderness. He opened up the earth and swallowed them when they disobeyed, when they didn't catch on to this principle that it's really God's plan that counts.

It's God's purpose that's most important and everything else is fluff. It's going to turn to cinders if it's not a part of God's plan. When they didn't catch that, they dropped in the wilderness.

You go to Hebrews chapter 10 of how much more discipline are we going to be worthy if we neglect our so great salvation. This is the culmination age of God's plan. It was important back then.

It's even more important now. We are held to a higher standard. We're given greater opportunities.

We have the personal indwelling of God, the Holy Spirit. We have the complete and connected revelation of God in His Word. We have the promises, the principles, the doctrines.

We have the teaching and the unlocking of things that have been hidden for centuries all in God's Word. Now is the time. Now is the opportunity.

God says, cut those animals. Cut those tablets. Go step into the Jordan and watch the

presence of God come in.

Watch the opportunity for establishing and fulfilling covenant blessing and covenant promise. And watch out because there's also that other side. Along with the lighted torch, there's the smoking furnace.

Along with the great and mighty deliverance from Egypt, there is the plagues that were left behind. And anyone who disobeyed and didn't splash the blood on the lintels suffered with the pagans. Even if they were Israelites, if they didn't splash the blood on the doorposts, they were not delivered.

Even those that were delivered under the blood, when they didn't express faith in the wilderness, they dropped. And only two out of that generation had the faith to take them into the land. Caleb and Joshua.

That's the challenge that faces us. That's the call, the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus that we have. And it's vivid.

You can't find a better pictorial demonstration of how important this issue is than the vision that Abraham has, the experience that Moses has up on the mountain, and the experience of Israel crossing into the land of promise with the ark of the covenant leading the way. That's our great opportunity. And it's wonderful to focus on the positive side.

But we have to remember at the same time, there is the possibility of failure. That's why Paul says, these things were written for our admonition. The ends of the ages have come upon us.

A deep sleep fell on Abraham. The plagues fell on Egypt. The retribution of God fell on the Amorites in the land.

When Israel came across the Jordan, the next thing that happened is the walls of Jericho fell. The iniquity of the Amorites was full, and God's judgment began. And it was fulfilled down through the generations culminating in David when he finally drives the Amorites and their iniquity out of the land so that Solomon can construct the temple, the dwelling place of God.

And the prosperity and the widest expansion of Israel's borders that they've ever enjoyed was under the kingdom of Solomon because these things were fulfilled. It's our calling to keep the buzzards off the pieces. It's our calling to, by faith, go into the land and conquer the giants.

Conquer and drive out the Amorites whose iniquity is full. To be the people of God and not the people that God judges. It's our choice.

And it's so clearly demonstrated for us, for our encouragement, and also for our admonition. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the wonderful ways that you communicate to us in your Word.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will take these things and implant them in our souls and that through them we will be transformed and we will be brought closer to conformity, to the example of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at your right hand. We pray that through your power in our lives we will join Him in reflecting your glory, both now and in the age to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.