



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 22



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

SODOM'S STANDING BEFORE THE LORD

Gen 13:13 "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. ¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: ¹⁵ For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. ¹⁶ And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. ¹⁸ Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD. ^{4:1} And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; ² That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. ³ All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. ⁴ Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, ⁶ And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. ⁷ And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar. ⁸ And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; ⁹ With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. ¹⁰ And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. ¹¹ And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. ¹² And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. ¹³ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. ¹⁴ And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. ¹⁵ And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. ¹⁶ And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. ¹⁷ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." (Genesis 13:13-4:17)

Sodom is the first city described as exceedingly wicked sinners before the Lord. Now begins the record of God's response to this – Given O. Blakely

INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ THE MEN OF SODOM WERE EXCEEDINGLY WICKED AND SINNERS (13:13)
- ▶ MORE REVELATION GIVEN TO ABRAM (13:14-15)
- ▶ MULTITUDINOUS SEED PROMISED TO ABRAM (13:16)
- ▶ WALK THROUGH THE LAND (13:17)
- ▶ ABRAM MOVES TO MAMRE AND BUILDS ANOTHER ALTAR (13:18)
- ▶ INTRODUCTION TO THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN (14:1-3)
- ▶ THE REIGN OF CHEDORLAOMER (14:4-7)
- ▶ FIVE KINGS AGAINST FOUR (14:8-10)
- ▶ THE KINGS OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH FALL (14:11-12)
- ▶ LOT'S CAPTURE IS REPORTED TO ABRAM (14:13)
- ▶ ABRAM ARMS HIS TRAINED SERVANTS (14:14-15)
- ▶ ABRAM BRINGS BACK ALL OF THE GOODS AND ALL OF THE PEOPLE (14:16)
- ▶ THE KING OF SODOM GOES OUT TO MEET ABRAM (14:17)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

In the beginning, Adam and Eve sinned. Then Cain killed Abel. Then Lamech killed two men. Then the world became so corrupt that men continually thought wickedly, and God destroyed *"the world that then was"* with a flood. Sin spread rapidly and deeply, confirming that death did, indeed, follow the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree.

The flood, although it was universal, with only eight people surviving, did not resolve the matter of sin. Now, in our text a city surfaces that was exceedingly wicked and sinful.

It's inhabitants descended into the lower regions of immorality, exceeding the ordinary boundaries of iniquity. However, the city is duly noted, even while God is making a covenant-promise to Abram. **Mention is made of this city in order to alert us to the environment in which the promise of God would be fulfilled.** It would be in a world dominated by sin, whose god was the devil (2 Cor 4:4). This would make it appear as though what the Lord had promised would not be able to be done.

THE DIVINE MANNER

I want to underscore that this is the Divine manner – **to execute His purpose under, what appears to be, impossible circumstances.** Every act of salvation or deliverance was wrought under these kinds of conditions. Noah was saved in the midst of an overwhelming global flood. Moses survived during a time when male Jewish children were being slaughtered. Israel was delivered although they were aggressively pursued by the most powerful army in the world. Isaac will be born under impossible circumstances, as well as Isaac and Jacob. Daniel will be delivered in a lion's den, and Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego in a fiery furnace. The harbinger of Jesus, John the Baptist, was born in spite of impossible circumstances, as was Jesus Himself. We ourselves were

sins, and are being kept while in a vile body within a wicked world.

In God's Kingdom men are made strong out of weakness (Heb 11:4), and their strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9). Those who ask why good people suffer do not understand that this is the way God works. By doing so, He receives the glory for what is done.

A KING RISES TO PROMINENCE

In our text, a king arises to great prominence, running roughshod over other nations. Several kings rebelled against him, and gathered to do battle against him and his confederates. They did not succeed, but were overcome. In the process, Lot and his family were captured, together with other citizens of Sodom. On the surface, it looks as though all is hopeless.

However, there is a man who is under the care of God, and he will accomplish what other kings were not able to do. Abram arms his trained servants, and in a brilliant military strategy overcomes the kings and their armies, and rescues Lot and all he has, together with others that were taken captive.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind the scenes, Satan is working to draw Abram into a conflict in which he would appear inferior.

Owing to his utterly depraved nature, he can only seek to do evil, and always works in contradiction of God's purpose. He can fill the hearts of men, as he did in the case of Ananias and Sapphira

raised from death in trespasses and

Satan is not omniscient but doubtless

knows what God has promised men – such as the promises delivered to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and others. **Owing to his utterly depraved nature, he can only seek to do evil, and always works in contradiction of God’s purpose.** He can fill the hearts of men, as he did in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3).

Those who are unacquainted with

th Divine manner, may wonder why the king mentioned in our text became prominent in the general area of Abram. His military exploits were like a miniature flood, sent out to carry A b r a m away, and thus thwart the revealed purpose of God. That was from Satan’s perspective. From heaven’s view, it was both a test of Abram, and a means

of glorifying God.

As our text will confirm, Satan cannot overturn the purpose of God, or stop His promises from being fulfilled. The Lord will always make His people equal to the challenges hurled at them by the adversary. In this instance, His servant will fight – and he will win, recovering all that the enemy had taken.

THE MEN OF SODOM WERE EXCEEDINGLY WICKED AND SINNERS

Gen 13:13 ***“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.”***

THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED AND SINNERS

“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners . . . exceedingly.” Other versions read, ***“exceedingly wicked and sinful,”*** ^{NKJV} ***“wicked and were sinning greatly,”*** ^{NIV} ***“were wicked, great sinners,”*** ^{NRSV} ***“were evil, committing great sins,”*** ^{CJB} ***“very wicked. They committed serious sins,”*** ^{GWN} ***“are***

his flocks herds. **However, at that time, he did not see the character of the people living in Sodom, toward which his tent was pitched.**

The Men Were Unusually Wicked

There is a contemporary view of sin that places it all on the same level. For example, men are sometimes heard to say that overeating is as bad as murder or adultery. That would mean that the sin of Judas was no worse than the disciples being unable to cast out a demon because of their unbelief (Matt

not of the same weight, although it is of the same nature. That ought to be clear to any student of Scripture.

Now, the Spirit states that the men of Sodom were ***“wicked and exceeding great sinners.”*** ^{AMPLIFIED} The word ***“sinners”*** is thus enhanced by the words ***“wicked”*** and ***“exceeding.”*** The word ***“wicked”*** is taken from a word that is defined as follows: **אָרָר** {RAH} **MEANING:** ADJ 1) BAD, EVIL 1A) BAD, DISAGREEABLE, **MALIGNANT** 1B) BAD, UNPLEASANT, EVIL (GIVING PAIN, UNHAPPINESS, MISERY) 1C) EVIL, DISPLEASING 1D) BAD (OF ITS KIND - LAND, WATER, ETC) 1E) BAD (OF VALUE) 1F) **WORSE THAN, WORST** (COMPARISON) 1G) SAD, UNHAPPY 1H) EVIL (HURTFUL) 1I) BAD, UNKIND (**VICIOUS IN DISPOSITION**) 1J) BAD, EVIL, WICKED (ETHICALLY) 1J1) IN GENERAL, OF PERSONS, OF THOUGHTS 1J2) DEEDS, ACTIONS N M 2) EVIL, DISTRESS, MISERY, INJURY, CALAMITY 2A) EVIL, DISTRESS, ADVERSITY 2B) EVIL, INJURY, WRONG 2C) EVIL (ETHICAL) N F 3) EVIL, MISERY, DISTRESS, INJURY 3A) EVIL, MISERY, DISTRESS 3B) EVIL, INJURY, WRONG 3C) EVIL (ETHICAL). **This is not merely a class of men, but a category, if you will, of sinners.**

All sin is not of the same weight, although it is of the same nature. That ought to be clear to any student of Scripture.

evil, and sinners,” ^{YLT} ***“unusually wicked, and sinned greatly,”*** ^{LIVING} ***“were evil, and sinned terribly,”*** ^{CEV} ***and “were evil – flagrant sinners,”*** ^{MESSAGE}

A Difference in What Was Seen

Here we see the difference between what is seen with the eye of men, and what is seen by the Lord. When Lot looked upon the area he chose, he saw ***“it was well watered everywhere,”*** and his tent was pitched ***“toward Sodom.”*** He saw provisions for

17:20). However, Jesus said of Judas, ***“good were it for that man if he had never been born”*** (Mk 14:21). That is not what He said to the disciples when they asked why they could not cast out the a demon from a son who was brought to them by his father (Matt 17:16). There is also a ***“sin unto death”*** for which prayers will not be heard (1 John 5:16-17). Jesus spoke to Pilate about a ***“greater sin”*** (John 19:11), and a sin ***“that hath never forgiveness”*** (Mk 3:29). David spoke of ***“the great transgression”*** (Psa 19:13). **All sin is**

The word ***“exceedingly”*** comes from a word that means, **מְּעֹד** {MEH-ODE'} **MEANING:** ADV 1) EXCEEDINGLY, **MUCH** SUBST 2) MIGHT, FORCE, **ABUNDANCE** N M 3) **MUCHNESS, FORCE, ABUNDANCE, EXCEEDINGLY** 3A) FORCE, MIGHT 3B) EXCEEDINGLY, **GREATLY, VERY** (IDIOMS SHOWING MAGNITUDE OR DEGREE) 3B1) EXCEEDINGLY 3B2) UP TO ABUNDANCE, **TO A GREAT DEGREE. There is a sin, then, that extends beyond normal moral boundaries, going**

further than other transgressions, spreading more defilement, and making the individual more reprehensible to God. This is a condition that could not exist if all sin was viewed alike by God. That view has been put forth by the devil himself in order to salve the conscience of those who choose to live at a distance from God.

BEFORE THE LORD

“ . . . before the Lord . . . ” Other versions read, “against the Lord,” ^{NKJV} “against Jehovah,” ^{LIVING} “The Lord knew,” ^{ERV} The expression “before the

Lord” emphasizes that He saw the sin, and even focused upon it, determining to do something about it. Even though this sin of reference was committed during a time God is said to have “winked” at sin (Acts 17:30), He did not “wink” at this sin, just as He did not “wink” at the sin of Adam and Eve, Cain, and the whole world of Noah’s day.

Some versions read that the sinners were “against the Lord.” **While it is true that sin is against the Lord, the stress here is God’s view of the sin, and not**

the committing of the sin. It was “against the Lord” in that it violated the purpose for which man was created and placed in the world – to seek the Lord aggressively and consistently (Acts 17:26-27).

This sentence is introduced here to prepare us for the revelation of the later actions of God. In this way we will know that the judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah was only after a considerable amount of unusual and reprehensible involvement in sins that were of a more gross nature.

MORE REVELATION GIVEN TO ABRAM

“ ¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: ¹⁵ For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.”

THE LORD SAID UNTO ABRAM, AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him.”

The close association Abram had with Lot was a good and profitable one, but it was not intended to be a permanent one. It was a productive relationship from Ur to Haran, and from Haran to Schecum. It was helpful on the way to Egypt, and while he was in Egypt, as well as on the way back to Canaan from Egypt. **Now, however, his relationship with the Lord would call for a concentration in life that would not include the fellowship of Lot.**

An Application

There does come a time to those who live by faith, when former associations are no longer allowed. It is

not that they were necessarily sinful, but that they inhibit what God has called the person to do. This is demonstrated in the life of Abram, as our text affirms. It is also found a number of places in Scripture.

➡ Moses had to leave Egypt (Heb 11:26-27).

➡ Amos had to leave his occupation (Amos 7:14-15).

➡ John the Baptist had to leave his family (Luke 1:80).

➡ James and John had to leave the family business (Matt 4:21-22).

➡ Peter and Andrew had to leave their business (Matt 4:18-20).

While every person has to work this matter out for himself, the more a man receives from God, the less involvement there must be in the affairs of this life.

➡ Joseph had to leave his family (Psa 105:16-25).

➡ Elisha had to leave his occupation (1 Kgs 19:-21).

➡ Samuel was separated from his family (1 Sam 1:28; 3:1).

➡ Matthew had to leave his job (Matt 9:9).

Some cannot receive this kind of calling. For them, it is too much to ask. This does not mean they are necessarily sinning. **It does mean there is a kind of limit in what the Lord will call them to do.** For example, not all men were

called to be Prophets or Apostles. Those offices, however, required that there not be unnecessary encumbrances of the flesh. Paul, for example, is an example of a man given the gift of celibacy in order to fulfill his assignment in the Kingdom (1 Cor 7:7).

While every person has to work this matter out for himself, the more a man receives from God, the less involvement there must be in the affairs of this life. Paul referred to this when he wrote to Timothy, *“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier”* (2 Tim 2:3-4).

Those who claim to be preparing young men and women for *“Christian service,”* do well to inform them of this requirement. But this is ordinarily not the case. I think you will find that would-be servants of the Lord are being told to culture worldly relationships in order make them better at doing the will of the Lord. Such a view is pure foolishness. When Paul wrote, *“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”* (1 Cor 9:22), he meant that he did not offend *“the weak”* by doing something their conscience did not allow. **He was not speaking of culturing close friendships.**

This principle is lived out in our text. **This is why the Spirit makes a point of noting that this more expansive word was delivered to Abram only after he had separated from Lot.**

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

“Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. . . .” Other versions read, *“From this place where you are,”* ^{BBE} *“from the place wherein thou now art,”* ^{DOUAY} *“from where you are,”* ^{NAB} *“from the place where you*

stand.” ^{NET} Although some versions omit the words *“from the place where thou art.”* (GWN, NIB, NLT), **Abram was to view the land from where he was at that time.**

The place where he was at the time is referred to *“the place of the altar”* (Gen 13:4). It was located in a *“mountain”* (Gen 12:8). Thus, much like Moses, Abram viewed the promised land from a mountain (Deut 34:1-2). It is obvious that more can be seen from a high vantage point.

An Application



There are several ways that we can look at the provisions of salvation. These are lower areas from which not much can really be perceived. They include attempting to see things while living in sin, and with an aim to obtain some kind of temporary relief. This can be called the *“self-interest”* view. Life in this world is accented, and life in the body is the focus. This includes the *“how-can-I-obtain-a-lot-of-this-world”* view that thinks in terms of health and wealth alone. There is also the *“what-is-the-minimal-requirements”* view, that seeks to obtain Divine benefits with little personal involvement. Some want to know what they have to do to heal their marriage, or stabilize their finances. This might be called the *“religious-interests”* view.

These are all low-land views, and

do not allow the individual to see much of God’s great salvation.

Spiritually speaking, the highest vantage point from which to view God’s great salvation is the place of the cross – the place where Jesus died. This is consistently set forth as a central consideration when it comes to the salvation of God. It is the place where self is forced into the background, and the will of God comes into the foreground.

The things that are associated with the cross, or with the death of Christ, are fundamental realities that bear upon eternity.

- ➔ **A PROPITIATION FOR SIN.** *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”* (Rom 3:25).
- ➔ **JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION FROM WRATH.** *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him”* (Rom 5:9).
- ➔ **THE POWER OF GOD.** *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”* (1 Cor 1:18).
- ➔ **SEVERED OUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD.** *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (Gal 6:14).
- ➔ **REDEMPTION AND FORGIVENESS.** *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”* (Eph 1:7).
- ➔ **BROUGHT NEAR TO GOD.** *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the*

blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13).

➔ **THE ENMITY SLAIN.** *"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph 2:16).*

➔ **THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.** *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8).*

➔ **PEACE MADE.** *"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col 1:20).*

➔ **THE HANDWRITING OR ORDINANCES BLOTTED OUT.** *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col 2:14).*

➔ **THE PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE.** *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14).*

➔ **REDEEMED FROM VAIN RELIGION.** *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet 1:18-19).*

You see the marvelous spectrum of salvation – what is covered by it, and what is delivered through it. However, these realities do not impact upon the soul of those who are not able to see them. If the beholders stay in the lowlands of personal earthly interests, they will not be able to see what Jesus has procured for them. Consequently, they will live at a starvation level. If this is

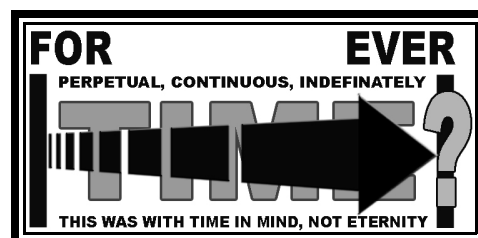
not resolved, they will eventually die spiritually. **Spiritual life is not maintained procedurally, or by any means that does not absolutely require faith and the constant involvement of the one being saved.**

Let me once again emphasize that more can be seen from the cross of Christ. There is where the world loses its luster, and glory begins to shine more brightly.

In regard to our text, Abram's interest in the promised land will increase all the more now that has seen it from *"the place of the altar."*

I WILL GIVE YOU THIS LAND
"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Other versions read, *"I give to you and your descendants forever,"* ^{NKJV} *"I will give it to you and your offspring forever,"* ^{NIV} *"for an indefinite period of time,"* ^{GWN} *"as a permanent possession,"* ^{NLT} *"to the age,"* ^{YLT} *"unto the eon,"* ^{ABP} and *"always."* ^{LITV}

Abram and his descendants would be given what he could see. That is a most remarkable promise! The duration of the possession is said to be *"for ever"* – two words, not one. The word *"for"* is translated from a word meaning, "AS FAR AS, EVEN TO, UNTIL, UP TO, WHILE, AS FAR AS 1A) OF SPACE 1A1) AS FAR AS, UP TO, EVEN TO 1B) IN COMBINATION 1B1) FROM...AS FAR AS, BOTH...AND (WITH 'MIN' - FROM) 1C) OF TIME 1C1) EVEN TO, UNTIL, UNTO, TILL . . ." ^{STRONG'S} The word *"ever"* is translated from a word meaning, "LONG DURATION, ANTIQUITY, FUTURITY, FOR EVER, EVER, EVERLASTING, EVERMORE, PERPETUAL, OLD, ANCIENT, WORLD 1A) ANCIENT TIME, LONG TIME (OF PAST) 1B) (OF FUTURE) 1B1) FOR EVER, ALWAYS 1B2) CONTINUOUS EXISTENCE, PERPETUAL 1B3) EVERLASTING, INDEFINITE OR UNENDING FUTURE. ^{STRONG'S}



Keep in mind that at this time the concept of *"everlasting"* or *"eternal,"* as we know it, had not yet been introduced to humanity. The word *"everlasting"* was used to describe the covenant God made with Noah (Gen 9:16). However, this was not the same type of expression as *"everlasting covenant"* (Heb 13:20). Now that *"eternal life"* has been revealed, expressions like *"everlasting"* and *"eternal"* are with the passing of heaven and earth in mind, and the consequent *"ages to come."* But that is not a perspective familiar to Abram, and it is not the sense in which God spoke to him. It was more like the expression delivered to Noah: *"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"* (Gen 8:22).

There was no doubt more to this statement than Abram was able to realize. Considering that he never did inherit so much as a portion of the ground for a single foot (Acts 7:5), he will no doubt inherit the land in the new heavens and the new earth. While the earth will be recreated, it is quite possible that it will in some way reflect the locations on it during the time of its demise. The subject cannot really be investigated beyond this somewhat vague line of demarcation. **My point is that the perceptions of eternity that holy men possessed during the beginning of God's work were not to be compared with what is known at this time.** However, there was enough known to take hold of the fact that this was a permanent arrangement that would reach further than Abram dared to imagine.

Something of Faith Is Seen Here

Something of the nature of faith is seen here. **Faith actually reaches into the unknown, and rests in God while doing so.** Even though details are not known, yet there is a confidence that sustains the soul. The statements made concerning Abraham's faith confirm that this is the case.

➡ *“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that,*

what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Rom 4:17-21).

➡ *“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:8-10).*

➡ *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that*

had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb 11:17-19).

This is how faith reacts to the promises of God, even when a lot of seemingly relevant details are not revealed. Faith never asks “Why?” It seizes upon the word of God and acts accordingly. Where this does not take place, unbelief is on the throne, and disobedience is mandated. In such a case, obedience is not possible.

MULTITUDINOUS SEED PROMISED TO ABRAM

“¹⁶ And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.”

While a single Seed, or offspring, was the focus, God promises that Abraham will have a staggering number of progeny. **This would serve to confuse the devil, who did not know the precise identity of the promised Seed through whom the world would be blessed.** Having such a large number of offspring, spread over a lengthy period of time, would also prove to be a primary means through which God made Himself more fully known.

Later, God will again emphasize the staggering number of seed Abram will have: *“And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be” (Gen 15:5).* Notice the promises made to Abram regarding his seed.

➡ *“I will make of thee a great nation”*

(Gen 12:2).

➡ *“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Gen 13:16).*

➡ *“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude” (Gen 16:10).*

➡ *“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Gen 22:17).*

The Lord made the same promise to Jacob: *“And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen*

28:14).

This Promise Was Generally Known among the Israelites

This promise was faithfully passed along to Abraham’s progeny. In fact, several centuries later, when Moses was interceding for wayward Israel on Mount Sinai, he appealed to this very promise: *“Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever” (Ex 32:13).*

This promise also has regard to the last days, when the veil shall be lifted from the eyes of the Jews, and they shall see that Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah (2 Cor 3:16). Prophesying of those days Hosea (living several hundred years after the time of our text) confirmed that although Israel for forsaken for a time, God would still remember his promise to Abraham. *“Then said God, Call his name Loamm:*

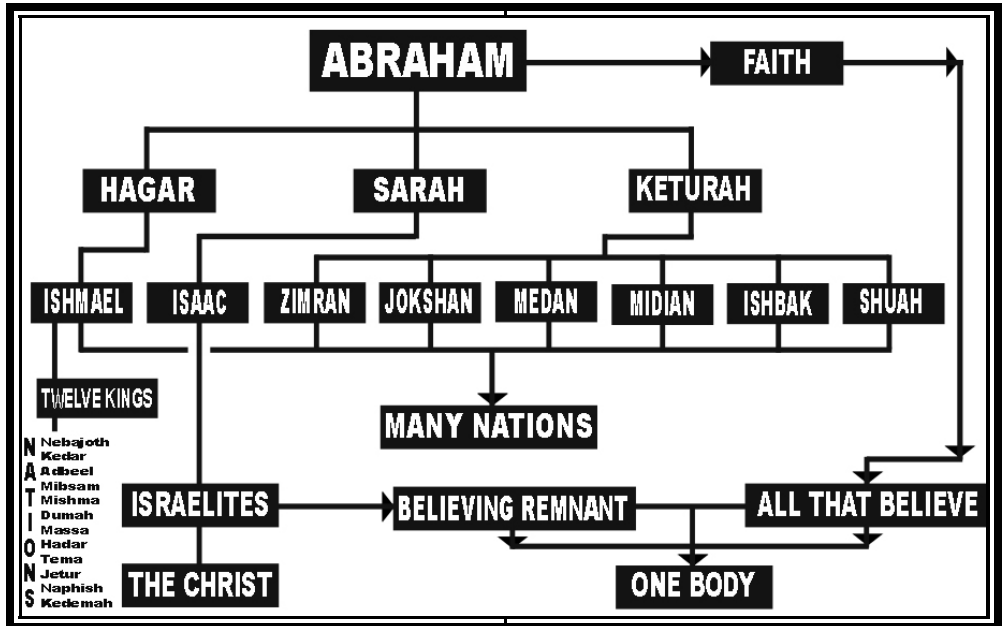
for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. **Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered;** and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, **there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.** Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel” (Hosea 1:9-11).

Other Fleshly Nations from Abraham

The Jewish nation was not the only nation that came from Abraham. God promised him, “*thou shalt be the father of **many nations** . . . a father of **many nations** have I made thee . . . I will make **nations** of thee*” (Gen 17:4-6). It was also said of Sarah, “*And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a **mother of nations**; kings of people shall be of her*” (Gen 17:16).

Fleshly nations descending from Abraham came through Ishmael, Isaac, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

After spending considerable time attempting to identify the nations coming from Abraham, I have concluded it is probably not possible. A number of writers have discussed these nations, but I have not come across any who have been able to name them. However, we have the word of God on the matter, that **many** nations came from Abraham. Only a few of them are mentioned further in the Scriptural narrative, with the emphasis placed



upon Israel as the flesh lineage, and all who believe as the spiritual lineage.

The Spiritual Seed

In addition the seed that would come from his own bowels, there was also a massive spiritual generation that would be called his “seed” or “children.” It is therefore said of those who are in Christ Jesus:

- ➔ “*And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but **who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham**, which he had being yet uncircumcised*” (Rom 4:12).
- ➔ “*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also **which is***

of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all” (Rom 4:16).

- ➔ “*Know ye therefore that **they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham***” (Gal 3:7).
- ➔ “*And if ye be **Christ's**, then are ye **Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise*” (Gal 3:29).

Although it is quite arresting to consider, **those who do not have the faith of Abraham, are not really related to him.** Those whose faith does not parallel that of Abraham have no affiliation with him. That narrows down to the fact that those whose faith is not harmonious with that of Abraham are not saved, regardless of their profession. If this is not so, then the passages just quoted (Rom 4:12,15; Gal 3:7,29) cannot possibly be true. Ultimately, a vital association with Abraham is through faith.

WALK THROUGH THE LAND

“¹⁷ **Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it;** for I will give it unto thee.”

WALK THROUGH THE LAND
“Arise, walk through the land in the

length of it and in the breadth of it . . .” Other versions read, *“Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land,”* ^{NIV} *“Come, go through all the land from one end to the other,”* ^{BBE} *“Go! Walk back and forth across the entire land,”* ^{GWN} *“On your feet! Travel the length and breadth of the country,”* ^{NJB} *“Go and walk through the land in every direction,”* ^{NLT} *“Hike in all directions and explore the new possessions,”* ^{LIVING} *“So go. Walk through your land,”* ^{ERV} *“Now, go and look over the whole land,”* ^{GNB} and *“So--on your feet, get moving! Walk through the country, its length and breadth.”* ^{MESSAGE}

When Lot was with Abram, looking for adequate pasture was the primary thing. Now, however, that circumstance no longer exists. There is an additional factor – now the Lord has

its resources, its wells, its fertile land, and the abundance of crops that were growing there. They did, indeed, see the abundance of the land. They told Moses and Aaron, *“We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it”* (Num 13:27). **But that is not all they saw.** Instead of recalling the promise of the Lord, they looked at the circumstance: *“Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan”* (Num 13:29). Even though Joshua and Caleb *“stilled the people before Moses,”* and said,

Not only does God want His people to behold and consider what He has given them, **He demands that they appropriate what they see, entering in and possessing the land, so to speak.** If men choose not to do this, we have the example of Israel repeatedly set before us to confirm the necessity of faith (1 Cor 10:1-12; Heb 3:7-19; 4:1-11).

God will not tolerate a people who refuse to appropriate what He has provided. There is no acceptable excuse for an impoverished church, living beneath its privileges, and not obtaining what the Lord has given to them.

One of the great sins of the modern church is that of not appropriating what God has provided for them in Christ Jesus. Unless that situation changes, they will be excluded from the company that will forever be with the Lord. **I know of no other conclusion if we are to take seriously what the above texts affirm** (1 Cor 10:1-12; Heb 3:7-19; 4:1-11). Further, purported leaders who have failed to present the case as Joshua and Caleb did, will suffer the most severe punishment, just as the unfaithful spies did. They were punished before Israel began its 40-year death-walk: *“Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD”* (Num 14:37).

Walk about Zion

During the days of the Psalmist, when Israel was in the land, and Jerusalem and the Temple were standing, the word came from heaven: *“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death”* (Psa 48:12-14). The NIV reads, *“Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even to the*

As a result of their unbelief, God did not allow that generation to enter into the promised land, but consigned them to die in the wilderness during the next forty years

told Abram, *“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever”* (Gen 13:15). **This changes how Abram can look at the land.** It is one thing to search the land when supplies are short, and pasture is needed for your cattle. It is quite another to look at the land as an appointed owner.

There is a principle to be seen here: **God insists that we see, or know, what He has given to us.** Several centuries later, God will challenge the Israelites to search out the land of Canaan, beholding what has been given to them (Num 13:2). Ten of the twelve men sent to search out the land *“brought an evil report of the land”* (Num 13:32). They had been told to search the land that was to be given to them. **That should have constrained them to look at**

“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Num 13:30), the people refused to believe them, replying, *“We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight”* (Num 13:29-33). **As a result of their unbelief, God did not allow that generation to enter into the promised land, but consigned them to die in the wilderness during the next forty years** (Num 14:29,33-34).

end.”

Ponder what was to be “marked,” or considered.

- ➔ FOR VISION. The **towers**, or elevated and high places, where much can be seen.
- ➔ FOR PROTECTION. The **bulwarks**, or ramparts, or fortresses for protection – referring to the outer wall around Jerusalem.
- ➔ PLACES OF PRIVILEGE. The **palaces**, or citadels and houses for the nobles, which stood above the ramparts, or bulwarks.

There are similar provisions in the great salvation of God – things that are to be considered and pondered as we survey the land of grace.

- ➔ VISION: CONSIDER WHAT CAN BE SEEN. No other religion, regardless of its antiquity, contains such concepts as “*understanding*” (1 Cor 14:15,20; Eph 1:18; 3:4; 5:17; Col 1:9; 2:2; 2 Tim 2:7; Heb 11:3; 1 John 5:20), “*discernment*” (1 Cor 2:14; Heb 5:14), “*comprehension*” (Eph 3:18), “*perception*” (1 John 3:16), and “*knowing*” (Rom 3:19-20; 5:3; 6:6,9,16; 7:1,14,18; 8:22,28; 13:11; 15:14; 1 Cor 1:5; 1 Cor 2:12; 6:2-3,9,15-16,19; 12:2; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6,14; 5:1, 6,11,16; 8:9; 10:5; 13:5-6; Gal 2:16; 3:7; Eph 1:17-18; 3:19; 4:13; 5:5; 6:8-9; Phil 3:8,10; Col 1:9,10; 2:3,3:10,24; 4:1,6,8; 1 Thess 4:4; 5:2; 1 Tim 1:8,9; 2:4; 3:15; 2 Tim 2:23; 3:1; Heb 8:11; 10:26,30,34; 12:17; James 1:3; 3:1,13; 4:4; 5:20; 1 Pet 1:18; 3:9; 5:9; 2 Pet 1:2-3,5-8; 2 Pet 1:12, 20; 2:20; 3:3,17-18; 1 John 2:3-5,18,20-21,29; 3:1-2,5,14-15,19-20,24; 4:2,6-7,13; 5:2,13,15,18-20). **Come now, believer, walk about Zion and behold her towers!** Survey the land that has been given to you in Christ Jesus.

- ➔ PROTECTION: CONSIDER HOW WE ARE KEPT. Ponder how we are “*kept by the*

power of God through faith” (1 Pet 1:5). Think on how the Lord can “*make*” us stand (Rom 14:4), and “*keep*” us “*from falling*” (Jude 1:24). Meditate upon the fact that no man can “*pluck*” us out of Jesus’ hand, or that of the Father (John 10:28-29). Look at how our hearts and minds can be “*kept*” (Phil 4:7). Consider how every temptation comes with a “*way of escape*” (1 Cor 10:13), and how we can always “*obtain grace to help in the time of need*” (Heb 4:16). Consider how Jesus intercedes for us (Heb 7:25), and the Holy spirit does us well (Rom 8:26-27). Think of our Savior as

Tim 2:12). Muse upon your appointment to judge the world and angels (1 Cor 6:2-3), and sit with Jesus in His throne (Rev 3:21). Meditate upon “*the crown of life*” (James 1:12), “*the crown of righteousness*” (2 Tim 4:18), and a “*crown of glory*” (1 Pet 5:4). **Come now, follower of Jesus, walk about Zion and behold her Palaces, places of Divine exaltation!** Survey the land that has been given to you in Christ Jesus.

Of course, all of this postulates that the people of God have some kind of knowledge of what they have received in Christ. It is my observation

Salvation is itself calculated to provide everything that is necessary to maintain it and make advancement in the Lord. What is supplied to us in salvation strengthens faith and fuels hope. However, those provisions must be inventoried and examined to advantage the believer.

“an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa 32:2). **Come now, saint of God, walk about Zion and behold her bulwarks, and how she is protected!** Survey the land that has been given to you in Christ Jesus.

- ➔ PRIVILEGE: CONSIDER WHAT LOFTY PLACES CAN BE OCCUPIED. Let your mind often peruse where we have been placed in Christ Jesus – in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), in the light (Col 1:13; 1 Pet 2:9). Ponder how we have been made “*kings and priests unto God*” (Rev 1:6), joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17), and appointed to reign with Jesus (2

that this kind of understanding is exceedingly rare in the professed church – at least, here in America. The problem is enhanced by the fact that religious perspectives of America are being exported to other countries. Those who do speak about benefits often limit them to fleshly advantages like health and wealth – two qualities that have nowhere been promised to those who are in Christ Jesus. Salvation primarily consists of benefits that prepare men for an “*eternal inheritance*” (Heb 9:15), sitting with Jesus in His throne (Rev 3:21, and reigning forever with Him (2 Tim 2:12). Salvation readies its recipients for two inevitable things: death, and judgment (Heb 9:27). Neither health nor wealth have any bearing at all on those inevitabilities. Neither can avoid death, or prepare men

for it; nor can they give men an advantage on the day of judgment.

Salvation is itself calculated to provide everything that is necessary to maintain it and make advancement in the Lord. What is supplied to us in salvation strengthens faith and fuels hope. However, those provisions must be inventoried and examined to advantage the believer. They should be the subjects of both declaration and exposition. While it is important to let the disciples know it is possible to fall away or depart from the faith, it should also be declared that it is possible NOT to do so – **yea, salvation is designed so it will only take place if one lives in the lively awareness of what is received in Christ Jesus.**

The Responsibility of Walking Through the Land

In the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, there is a responsibility to become acquainted with the provisions within that salvation. This requires a spiritual walk that is quite similar to that of Abram. These are things that are to be “known.” Here are a few of them.

➔ *“The hope of His calling”* (Eph

us of God” (1 Cor 2:12).

➔ *“The love of Christ which passeth all knowledge”* (Eph 3:19).

➔ *“That ye have eternal life”* (1 John 5:13).

➔ That all things are yours – *“Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours”* (1 Cor 3:22).

➔ That we have *“boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him”* (Eph 3:12).

➔ That *“neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom 8:38-39).

➔ *“We have peace with God”* (Rom 5:1).

➔ *“ . . . we have a building of God,*

Frequently walk about the land of redemption, beholding the marvelous things that have been given to us, and the glories of what is to come.

Until you see what has been given to you, you will not be able to enjoy its benefits. Just as with Abram, the Lord promised to give him what he could see.

I WILL GIVE IT UNTO THEE

“ . . . for I will give it unto thee.”

Other versions read, *“I give it to you,”* NKJV *“I will give it to you.”* NASB

And what is it that God will “give” to the patriarch? It is “all the land which he saw – that is, all the land which he saw *“from the place”* where he was NKJV – Northward, southward, eastward, and westward (Gen 13:14-15).

There were at least two reasons for looking at the land. (1) To see the extent of his inheritance, and (2) to know where he was to walk when he surveyed it.

The Principle to Be Seen

Understanding that God’s eternal purpose is woven throughout the history of His historical dealings with individuals and Israel, **we should be able to make the transition to the realities that are made available in the New Covenant.**

First of all, **what you can see, or perceive is critical, for that forms the boundary of what you can possess.** First, God enables a person to see a portion of the inheritance because that is what he intends for the person to possess. Second, the perception itself whets the appetite, and empowers the seer to strive to *“lay hold on eternal life”* (1 Tim 6:12).

This means that something of what we are going to possess must be perceived while we remain in the world. That is why certain central matters have been revealed. As it is written,

Until you see what has been given to you, you will not be able to enjoy its benefits. Just as with Abram, the Lord promised to give him what he could see.

1:18a).

➔ *“The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* (Eph 1:a8b).

➔ *“The exceeding greatness of the power that is to us-ward who believe”* (Eph 1:19).

➔ *“The things that are freely given to*

an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 5:1).

➔ *“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* (Eph 1:7).

➔ We *“have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet 1:1).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor 2:12).

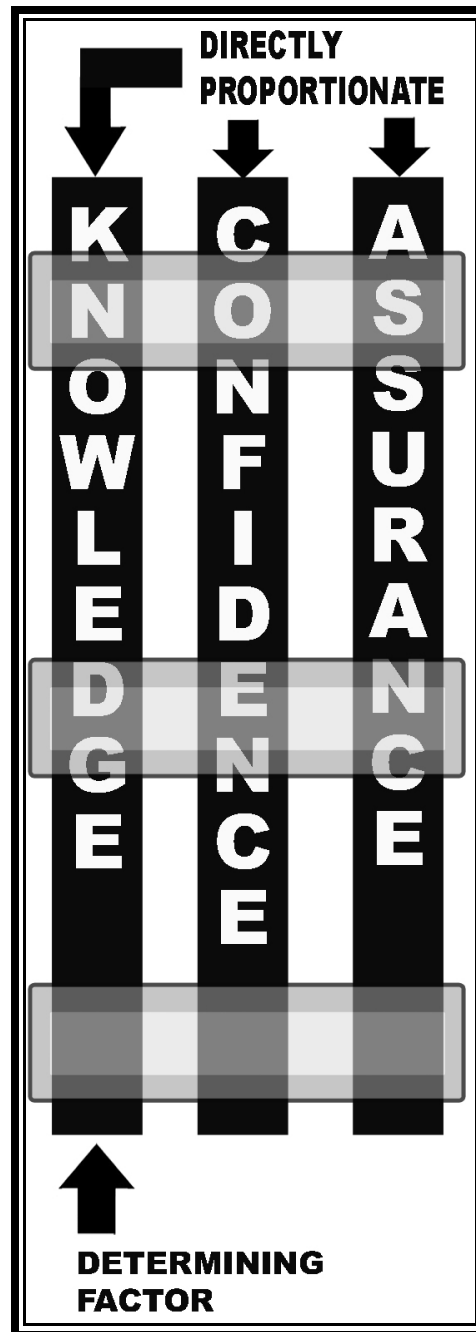
If God has taken special measures to ensure that men know *"the things that are freely given"* to them, what legitimate reason can be cited for being ignorant of them? **How serious is it to withhold information God has revealed, or to allow a competing message to upstage such a proclamation?**

As seen in Abraham, it is God's nature to show His people what He has purposed for them – what they have been called to possess.

The Strong Suggestion

Being given the promise of receiving what has been seen is a pictorial way of emphasizing confidence and assurance – two requisites for a faithful life. **The role of confidence is seen in the fact that it is linked with access to God:** *"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him"* (Eph 3:12). It is also associated with *"the rejoicing of the hope,"* which marks those who are members of Christ's household (Heb 3:6), and with being made *"partakers of Christ"* (Heb 3:14).

Assurance is linked with understanding: *"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ"* (Col 2:2). Assurance of also linked with



"hope," by which we are saved (Heb 6:11).

The point here is that confidence and assurance cannot accompany being in a state of ignorance concerning what God has given us in Christ Jesus. The confidence and assurance announced in the apostles' doctrine is directly related to the proportion of our knowledge and understanding of *"the things freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor 2:12).

Those who are fundamentally

ignorant of the extent and provision of salvation cannot walk through life with great confidence in the Lord, a strong hope, and an unwavering faith. If eternal life is *"knowing God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent"* (John 17:3), this ought to be apparent. One cannot have confidence in a God he does not know, and God cannot be known independently of what He is done – particularly what He has done in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is affirmed that we have received the Holy Spirit in order that we might *"know the things that are freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor 2:11). So far as the apostles themselves are concerned, they were given to perceive and announce these things to the household of faith. However, they were not the only ones who received the Holy Spirit. He has also been sent into the hearts of those who are in Christ Jesus (Gal 4:6). **By virtue of that gracious gift, they now have the capacity to know these things that were announced by the apostles.** The Holy Spirit will teach them of *"all things,"* as is affirmed in First John 2:20,27).

Now, under these circumstances, the prolonged ignorance of the things God has given to us is inexcusable. Just as surely as Abram became more acquainted with the land he had received as he walked through it, those who are in Christ Jesus become more familiar with what they have received as they move about in the land.

Where confidence and assurance are not possessed, the people have not been, so to speak, walking through the land. They have not been seeing and pondering what the Lord has given them. This is owing to one of at least two reasons. Either they are not aware that salvation includes being given *"all things that pertain to life and godliness,"* or they have quenched the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 5:19).

When the modern church chooses to meet infrequently, and with very little

communication of the truth of God, their profitable exposure to the things of God has been significantly reduced. When what they do hear majors on the various experiences of life in this world, with its intended challenges, their knowledge of the gifts of grace are reduced even further.

This is a most serious circumstance! **If what I have just said is true, then many church gatherings**

actually result in producing a state where the people ate less likely to have confidence and assurance, and thus are greatly hindered in life. What is said to them may have been technically correct, but it did not address the life that is maintained by faith. It would be like giving a teaspoon of high quality cough syrup to a person who is being eaten up with cancer. Although it may be medicine, it is the wrong kind, and

cannot resolve the health problem.

Although it is difficult to say it, a lot of preaching is as pointless as giving the wrong medicine to a patient. There is no way to adequately express how serious such a matter is. To have people placed in the promised land, yet find them **remaining** unacquainted with the land, is something God simply will not condone!

ABRAM MOVES TO MAMRE, AND BUILDS ANOTHER ALTAR

"¹⁸ Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD."

ABRAM MOVES TO THE PLAIN OF MAMRE, WHICH IS HEBRON

"Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron . . ."

God had spoken to Abram while he was on a mountain, located between Bethel and Ai (Gen 12:18; 13:3). From this high vantage point he had surveyed the land as God had told him. Now, however, he prepared himself to *"walk through the land,"* beholding its details from a closer proximity. If Abram is going to move about through the land, he must locate in the land itself, establishing a place from which he can more freely move in and out.

Later, Abram is known as one who *"dwelt in the plain of Mamre"* (Gen 14:13), which suggests this was the base of his operation. The Lord will also appear to Abram in *"the plains of Mamre,"* where he will make known the destruction of Sodom and the imminent birth of Isaac (Gen 18:1). This would also be the general area where he would bury Sarah (Gen 23:19). He himself would be buried by Ishmael and Isaac in the same place (Gen 25:9).

Isaac also lived in Mamre (Gen 35:27). Isaac and Rebekah were both buried there as well (Gen 49:30). Jacob was also buried there (Gen 50:13).

Remember, this was the place where Abram moved when he first received the understanding that the land in which he was sojourning would be given to him. **Consequently, the recollection of the promise was more**

consideration that parallels this text.

Just as Abram moved to a place that was more conducive to walking through the land, **so the believer must so order his life as to make it convenient to peruse the things of God.** It is possible to so encumber one's life that it is always difficult to make room for godly consideration and contemplation. **When the direction in**

Just as Abram moved to a place that was more conducive to walking through the land, so the believer must so order his life as to make it convenient to peruse the things of God.

easily recalled in this place. By living there, he was kept in a continual remembrance that the land through which he was walking belonged to him by Divine appointment.

An Application

While this is an area in which one person cannot legislate to another, it seems to me that in working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12), there is a practical

which a person is living causes activities related to the spiritual culturing of the soul to be an interruption, growing up into Christ (Eph 4:15) is less likely to occur.

Living *"unto Him"* who died for us, and rose again (2 Cor 5:15) requires a constant consciousness of the Lord.

ABRAM BUILDS AN ALTAR TO THE LORD

“ . . . and built there an altar unto the LORD.”

This is the third altar Abram is said to have built. (Gen 12:7,8; 13:18).

- ➔ The first altar was built after he had arrived in the land of Canaan, and God had appeared to him, promising to give the land to his seed. *“And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded **he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him**”* (Gen 12:7).
- ➔ Abram built the second altar after moving to a mountain, and in the fresh awareness of the promise God had made to give this land to his seed. *“And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.”* (Gen 12:8). This time he *“called upon the name of the Lord.”*
- ➔ Now Abram builds the third altar, preparing to walk through the land,

beholding his inheritance. *“Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.”* (Gen 13:18).

Therefore, in acts of thankfulness and praise, Abram built an altar upon arriving in he promised land, and hearing the general promises, that it would be given to his seen. Then, in the recollection of the promise, Abram went to higher ground and built an altar. But this time he *“called upon the name of the Lord,” calling out in faith in and reliance upon the One who made the Promise.* The third time, after hearing the promised personalized – that he would be given the land that he saw – the patriarch builds a third altar.

The Art of Dedication

To this point, the record of the total life of Abram revolves around his calling from God. It commenced when he was called in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen 12:1), continued with him departing from Ur en route to an unknown land (Gen 11:31; ; 15:7), and waiting for further direction in Haran (Gen 11:32-12:4-5). The record then

shows that he arrived in Canaan, built two altars, and went to Egypt upon finding a famine in Canaan (Gen 12:10-14). He then left Egypt after the famine, returning to Canaan to *“the place of the altar”*(Gen 13:1-4). **He chose to remain in the land when the place in which he and Lot were located was inadequate to provide for both of their herds** (Gen 13:1-12). Upon hearing from the Lord, he moved his tent to a location conducive to walking through the land, as the Lord commanded him to do (Gen 13:14-18).

You see how Abram’s calling impacted his entire life. It changed where he lived, the expectation of his life, as well as its manner. If you are acquainted with the Scriptures, you know this is a common description of everyone who was called of God, beginning with Noah, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, the Prophets, John the Baptist, and the apostles. It was also true of the Israelites as a whole, and now of the church, which is the body of Christ. God being who He is, and man being who he is, this is the proper affectation of the call of God – to live wholly for the Lord.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

“ 4:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; ² That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. ³ All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.”

A war is launched against the cities of the plain – the *“plain”* which Lot chose as his dwelling place. The cities were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah,

Zeboim, and Zoar. Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim will be destroyed by God in a fiery holocaust (Deut 29:23). Zoar will be spared for the sake of Lot, to give him a place in which he can escape the wrath of God (Gen 19:22-23).

This territory covered by these cities was mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis, where account of the distribution of people was given. *“And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto **Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and***

Zeboim, even unto Lasha” (Gen 10:19).

The confrontation took place in *“the vale of Siddim,”* which, writes Moses, *“is the Salt Sea”* (Num 34:3,12; Deut 3:17). There is no record of its existence prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. At the time of our text, it was a valley in which was fought. But at the time Moses wrote the record, it was no longer a valley, but was a sea of Salt.

None-Biblical writers refer to this sea as *“the Dead Sea,”* because there is no life in it. It is at the southern part of

Canaan, and the Jordan River empties into it. Because this body of water has only an inlet, and no outlet, the waters stagnant, with evaporation being the only means of recycling the water. Therefore, with a buildup of salt, they are not suitable for life.

A Type of Spiritual Life

The Dead Sea, located in the promised land, was a type of Israel itself, as well as great portions of the professing church. The Jordan River, which produced a fertile and luxurious valley, emptied into the Salt Sea. However, because it had no outlet to allow for adequate circulation, the waters stagnated, and salt crystals formed within it to an intolerable measure. Life could not be sustained in such an environment.

So it is with spiritual life. When the fresh water if life is poured, as it were, into the soul of a man, yet has no outlet of expression, what was conducive to life stagnates, and only death resides in the person. Jesus alluded to the necessity of expression when He cried out, *“He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because*

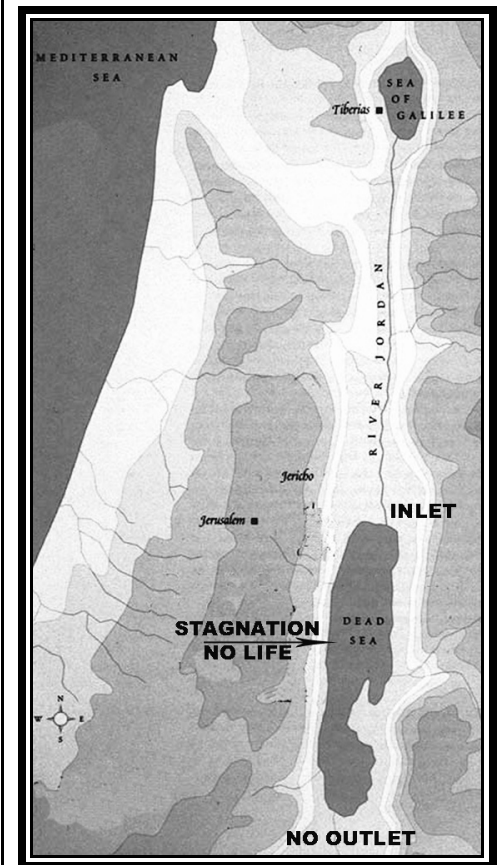
that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:38-39).

The body of Christ provides an environment in which the life given by the Spirit can flow out. The measure of that flow is determined by the gift that is given to the individual members. While the believers are a testimony and a light in the world, it is nothing to compare with what they are in the assembly of the righteous, where edification, exhortation, admonition, and comfort are intended to abound (1 Cor 11:3; 14:26; Rom 15:14; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:11). **This body is a place of mutual exchange.**

However, if a religious institutional approach is taken where such expressions are subdued, a spiritual S a i l t Sea is produced that will not be able to sustain spiritual life. When sin becomes disproportionate in the church, the problem is the lack of legitimate outlets within the assembly itself. Some assemblies may appear to be avoiding moral failures, but their spiritual pulse is so weak it can scarcely be detected.

Let those with understanding learn the “flow-out-of-the-belly” view of spiritual life. It is essential for our survival. If the river the Lord pours into

our hearts does not flow out, it will eventually bring no benefit. **It must be emphasized that witnessing to the lost does not thoroughly provide for the**



output of life for which salvation equips us. The body of Christ is to be fed.

THE REIGN OF CHEDORLAOMER

“⁴ Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.⁵ And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,⁶ And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.⁷ And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.”

TWELVE YEARS OF SERVICE

“Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer. . .”

After the kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and “the nations” soundly defeated the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, Chedorlaomer rose to prominence. The defeated nations served him for twelve years. The word “served” means that they paid tribute, or taxes, to Chedorlaomer. This was the manner when one group conquered another. The subdued people were required to

pay tribute to the one who conquered them. Thus, at the time of Jesus, the Jews were paying tribute to Caesar (Matt 22:17; Lk 23:2).

The significance of this record is seen in the fact that Chedorlaomer, who ruled Elam, was a descendant of Shem who beget Elam, father of the Elamites (Gen 10:22), while the kings of Sodom and the other cities were descendants of Ham. This being true, the prophecy of Noah was beginning to come true, with the descendants of Canaan being servants to Shem (Gen

9:26).

THE THIRTEENTH YEAR
, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled."

That is, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, refused to submit any longer to Chedorlaomer. This was probably done

STOCK, BEING GIVEN DIFFERENT NAMES BY THE DIFFERENT TRIBES WHO CAME IN CONTACT WITH THEM. ^{ISBE}

➔ **The Zuzims:** The word means "strong nations." So JEROME IN QUAEST. HEBR.: GENRES FORTES): A PEOPLE CONQUERED BY CHEDORLAOMER (GENESIS 14:5). THEY DWELT IN HAM, A REGION NOT OTHERWISE KNOWN BUT, FROM THE CONNECTION, INFERRED TO BE

IS GIVEN, WHO AFTERWARD MIXED WITH THE INVADING EDMITES. ^{ISBE}

➔ **The Amalekites:** A TRIBE DWELLING ORIGINALLY IN THE REGION SOUTH OF JUDAH, THE WILDERNESS OF ET-TIH WHERE THE ISRAELITES CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH THEM. THEY WERE NOMADS AS A PEOPLE DWELLING IN THAT TRACT WOULD NATURALLY BE. WHEN THEY JOINED THE MIDIANITES TO INVADE ISRAEL THEY CAME "WITH THEIR CATTLE AND THEIR TENTS" (JUDGES 6:3-5). THEY ARE NOT TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU (GENESIS 36:12,16) BECAUSE THEY ARE MENTIONED EARLIER, IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE INVASION OF CHEDORLAOMER (GENESIS 14:7) AND IN BALAAM'S PROPHECY (NUMBERS 24:20) AMALEK IS CALLED "THE FIRST OF THE NATIONS," WHICH SEEMS TO REFER TO AN EARLY EXISTENCE. WE ARE UNCERTAIN OF THEIR ORIGIN, FOR THEY DO NOT APPEAR IN THE LIST OF NATIONS FOUND IN GENESIS 10. THEY DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE HAD ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL, SAVE AS, WE MAY SURMISE, SOME OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE TRIBE. IT IS PROBABLE THAT THEY WERE OF SEMITIC STOCK THOUGH WE HAVE NO PROOF OF IT. ^{ISBE}

Scripture confirms that it is God's manner to purge Satan's children from the scene from time to time, lest they overrun the earth – that was not made for them in the first place.

by refusing to pay tribute, or taxes, to him. **The stage is now being set for the involvement of Abram, to whom the land will be given.**

EAST OF THE JORDAN. IT MAY ALSO BE INFERRED THAT THEY WERE A RACE OF GIANTS. THEY WERE PERHAPS TO

THE FOURTEENTH YEAR
" . . . And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, ⁶ And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. ⁷ And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar."

Chedorlaomer now squelches the rebellions, defeating several of the nations, including:

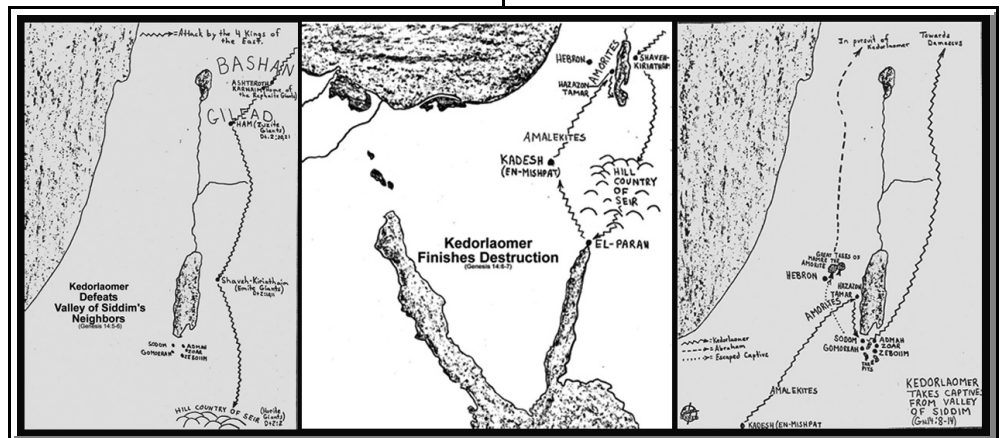
➔ **The Rephaims:** The word "Rephaims" means "*giant*." A RACE OF ABORIGINAL OR EARLY INHABITANTS EAST OF THE JORDAN IN ASHTEROTHKARNAIM (GENESIS 14:5) AND IN THE VALLEY OF REPHAIM SOUTHWEST OF JERUSALEM (JOSHUA 15:8). THEY ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER GIANT RACES, AS THE EMIM AND ANAKIM (DEUTERONOMY 2:10,11) AND THE ZAMZUMMIM (DEUTERONOMY 2:20). IT IS PROBABLE THAT THEY WERE ALL OF THE SAME

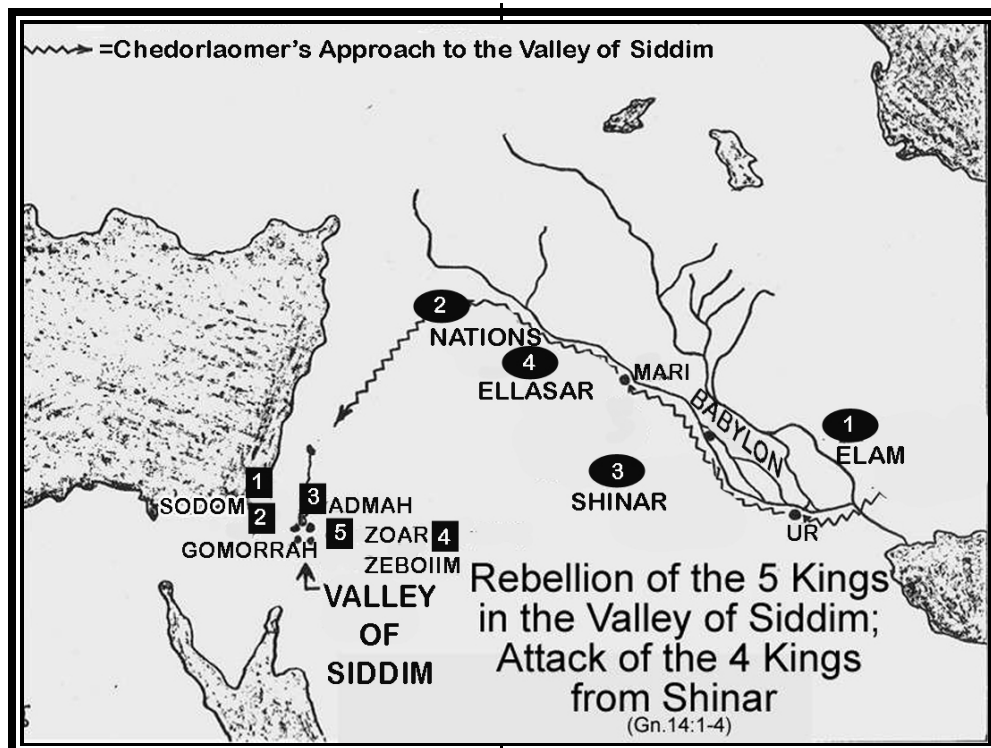
BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ZAMZUMMIM. ^{ISBE}

➔ **The Emims:** STATED TO HAVE BEEN THE EARLIER INHABITANTS OF MOAB (DEUTERONOMY 2:10,11), AND TO HAVE BEEN OF TALL STATURE, AND HENCE, "ACCOUNTED REPHAIM (OR GIANTS) AS THE ANAKIM" OR THE ZAMZUMMIM OF AMMON (DEUTERONOMY 2:20). ^{ISBE}

➔ **The Horites:** DENOTED THE INHABITANTS OF MT. SEIR BEFORE ITS OCCUPATION BY THE EDMITES (DEUTERONOMY 2:12). SEIR IS ACCORDINGLY CALLED HORITE IN GENESIS 36:20,30, WHERE A LIST OF HIS DESCENDANTS

➔ **The Amorites:** THE AMORITE KINGDOM WAS OF GREAT ANTIQUITY. ABOUT 2500 BC IT EMBRACED THE LARGER PART OF MESOPOTAMIA AND SYRIA, WITH ITS CAPITAL PROBABLY AT HARRAN, AND A FEW CENTURIES LATER NORTHERN BABYLONIA WAS OCCUPIED BY AN "AMORITE" DYNASTY OF KINGS WHO TRACED THEFT DESCENT FROM SAMU OR SUMU (THE BIBLICAL SHEM), AND MADE BABYLON THEIR CAPITAL. TO THIS DYNASTY BELONGED KHAMMU-RABI, THE AMRAPHEL OF GENESIS 14:1. IN THE ASTROLOGICAL DOCUMENTS OF THE PERIOD FREQUENT REFERENCE IS MADE TO "THE KING OF THE AMORITES." ^{ISBE}





These formidable opponents accent the strength of Chedorlaomer – used to conquer nations that would later prove to be an obstacle to Abram’s seed, who were promised the land.

WHY IS THIS ACCOUNT MENTIONED?

It may appear as though this account has little to do with Abram and the inheritance of Canaan by his seed, and by himself. However, there is more

to this than meets the eye. Later, after Israel has been delivered from Egypt, the Lord spoke to Israel concerning the land to which they were going. *“And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite”* (Ex 33:2). This would involve the Israelites driving the nations out, destroying all of their idols and their

places the Lord being with them (Num 33:52-33).

Israel actually came into the land, a little less than 500 years AFTER God had confirmed the land would be given to him and his seed. At the time our text, the nations to be driven out of the land were already settled into the land. They could develop significantly in a period of five hundred years, making the task of driving them out formidable.

In order neutralize their power, however, God moves Chedorlaomer to defeat these nations soundly, neutralizing their power, and setting them back. Scripture confirms that it is God’s manner to purge Satan’s children from the scene from time to time, lest they overrun the earth – that was not made for them in the first place. Examples of this kind of pairing include the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the thinning of Israel’s ranks from time to time, the collapse of Babylon and other world empires, etc.

Seen In Spiritual Life

If we can see it, this same principle is found in the lives of the saints. From time to time, by persecution, sufferings, and various other methods, God keeps the flesh from growing to prominence. Well ought we to give thanks for this.

FIVE KINGS AGAINST FOUR

“⁸ And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; ⁹ With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. ¹⁰ And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits . . .”

The kings who opposed Chedorlaomer were over the cities of the plain that would be targeted for total destruction later. Only Zoar, to which Lot would flee, would be spared (Deut 29:23).

The battle was joined in the valley of Siddim, which I said to have been *“full of slime pits,”* or *“full of asphalt.”* NKJV *“tar pits,”* NASB or *“bitumen pits.”* NIV This was the sticky substance the

proposed builders of the city and tower in Shinar were going to use for mortar (Gen 11:3). I would think this would be a treacherous environment in which to fight a battle. The battle proved too much for the confederation of rebel governments, and they were soundly defeated. Even though they had joined together, five kings against four, their cause failed. Thus was the saying of Solomon fulfilled, *“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be*

unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered” (Prov 11:21). Battles are monitored and managed from above, for the Lord is “the Governor among the nations” (Prov 11:21).

THE KINGS OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

“ . . . and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.” Other versions read, “Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them [the slime pits], and

the rest fled to the mountain,” ^{NRSV} and “and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell (were overthrown) there and the remainder [of the kings] fled to the mountain.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

The point seems to be that as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into the slim pits, while the other kings managed to escape to the mountains. I take it that falling into the slime pits was not an accident for these kings, but like falling upon their sword out of fear of the enemy. **There are circumstances that cause the ungodly not to desire to live any longer.**

It is not by accident that this incident is noted. It is sandwiched between the announcement that “the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Gen 13:13), and the determination to destroy those cities (Gen 18:20-21). This incident prepares us for that judgment. It also confirms they were hardened in heart, for this overthrow did not cause them to repent of their wickedness, as Nineveh did. There are some situations that cannot be remedied, as Solomon well stated (Prov 29:1).

THE KINGS OF SODOM ANDS GOMORRAH FALL

“ ¹¹ And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. ¹² And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”

We will now see why this brief interlude is recorded. It is because it relates to Abram and Lot in general, and Abram in particular. This also is a Divine manner throughout Scripture. As something impacts upon the people of God, heaven is called into action, and certain victories and deliverances are realized. **The truth of the matter is that the world is being governed with God's people in mind.** Admittedly, this is not always apparent. That is why these records are given to us, to convince us of the care God has for those He has identified with Himself.

THEY TOOK THE GOODS AND VICTUALS OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

“ ¹¹ And they took **all** the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and **all** their victuals, and went their way . . . ” Other versions read, “all the goods . . . and all their possessions,” ^{NKJV} “all their goods . . . and all their food supply,” ^{NASB} “all

When, for example, a person has accumulated some measure of spiritual inventory, and then turns to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, Satan moves in to carry off his goods – like the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah were carried off.

their goods . . . and all their food,” ^{NIV} and “[The victors] took all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah and all the supply of provisions and departed.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

The invading armies did not burn the conquered cities, nor did they move into them. They just removed everything of any value from them: possessions, food, flocks, herds, etc. In other words, they took everything that made the cities a suitable habitat.

It is important to note that this incident is mentioned only as a context for the capture of Lot. On that matter, the invaders made a serious error.

The Manner of the Devil

Jesus said that the enemy, likened to a “thief,” comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10). This is an obvious reference to the devil and his hordes. Of particular interest is his manner to “steal” – or take that which belongs to another. This is what is called “plunder,” “sacking,” or “pillaging.” It happens in spiritual warfare as well as in warfare in the flesh. **Those who do not “resist the devil” (James 4:7) will be plundered by him.** That is in addition to being captured by him to do his will. When, for example, a person has accumulated some measure of spiritual inventory, and then turns to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, Satan

moves in to carry off his goods – like the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah were carried off. **This may include such things as joy, peace, understanding, and a host of other things that are essential to the maintenance of spiritual life.** Satan cannot do this at will, but only when the individual fails to resist him. Many a poor soul has witnessed the dissipation of their spiritual goods, not knowing that it occurred because they did not put on the whole armor of God, so the could stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph 6:10-18).

THEY TOOK LOT AND HIS GOODS

“And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”

We do not know how many others who dwelt in Sodom were taken – but they took Lot and all that he had. Whatever reason might have been cited, it was because he was dwelling in Sodom.

Something to Be Learned

When we are dwelling in a place

that is either being judged by God, or pillaged by the enemy, we should expect to lose some things – and maybe ourselves as well. **Enough cannot be said concerning the necessity of dwelling in a place that is protected and defended by the Lord – a place where spiritual life can be sustained.** It is quite true that sometimes ignorance is involved, causing us to be where it is not best. However, as we grow in the Lord, that ignorance will be dissipated, and safety will increase. God’s people must choose to dwell in correct places.

LOT’S CAPTURE IS REPORTED TO ABRAM

“¹³ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.”

THERE CAME ONE THAT ESCAPED

“And there came one that had escaped . . .”

The meaning is that someone from Sodom escaped when Chedorlaomer and company pillaged the city and carried the goods and Lot away. This escape was owing to the working of the Lord, and was not the result of an oversight by the invading armies.

ABRAM THE HEBREW

“...and told Abram the Hebrew...”

This is the first time the word “Hebrew” is used in Scripture. The literal translation of the word is “Eberite” ^{STRONG’S} – i.e. a descendant of Eber, whose lineage was traceable back to Shem, the post flood progenitor of the Messianic lineage. As it is written, *“Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber . . .”* (Gen 10:21).

It is interesting that the association

of Lot with Abram was known by several. **Although they had separated, their affiliation with each other had not ended.** The circumstance was much like that of the parting of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-39).

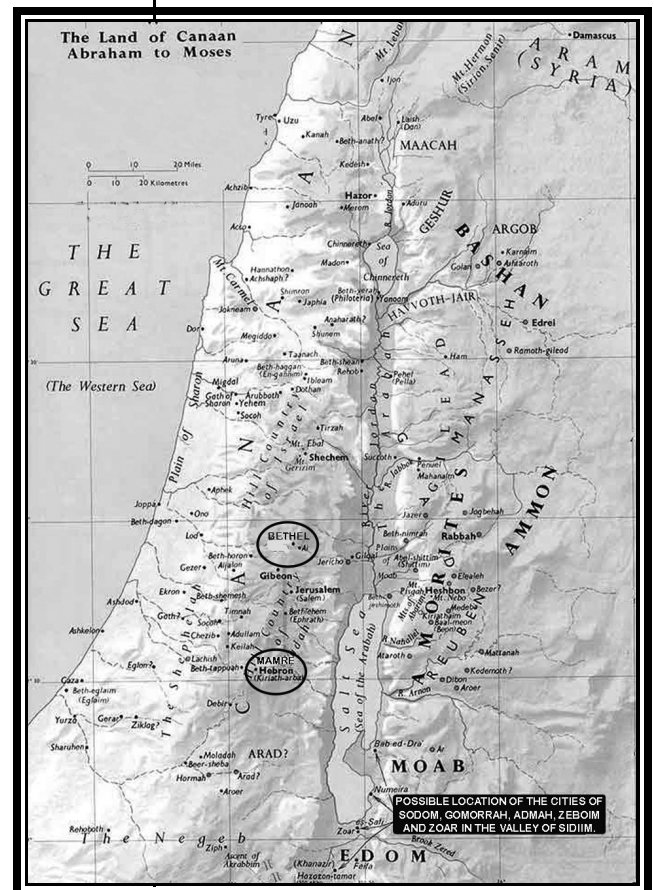
THESE WERE CONFEDERATE WITH ABRAM

“ . . . for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.”

The “he” of reference, who was living in “the plain of Mamre,” was Abram. Earlier, it was stated that Abram “dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron.” This was directly south of where he had pitched his tent in Bethel. And closer to the area of conflict – about forty miles from Sodom. ^{JOHN GILL}

“Mamre the Amorite” was the “brother of

Eschol,” and brother of Aner. The names of Eschol and Anere, when applied to people, are only mentioned two times in Scripture – and that is in regard to this incident (Gen 14:13,34).



The only reason they are mentioned is because they were “*confederate with Abram.*” Other versions read, “*allies with Abram,*” ^{NKJV} “*friends of Abram,*” ^{BBE} “*bound by a treaty with Abram,*” ^{CSB} “*had made league with Abram.*” ^{DOUAY}

The word translated “*confederate*” is translated from a word having the following meaning: “*בְּרִית*” ^{BERIYTH} {BER-EETH¹} **MEANING:** 1) COVENANT, ALLIANCE, PLEDGE 1A) BETWEEN MEN 1A1) TREATY, ALLIANCE, LEAGUE (MAN TO MAN) 1A2) CONSTITUTION, ORDINANCE (MONARCH TO SUBJECTS) 1A3) AGREEMENT, PLEDGE (MAN TO MAN) 1A4) ALLIANCE (OF FRIENDSHIP).

This confederacy was doubtless a pledge to defend one another, look of out each other’s interests. Later in

Israel’s history, they were forbidden to make any agreement with the Canaanites. The proscription was very specific: “*When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt*

thou take unto thy son” (Deut 7:1-3).

A novice might take it upon himself to be critical of Abram for making any kind of alliance with the inhabitants of Canaan. However, this would be an unwarranted and hasty judgment. **The Mosaic was conditioned by the clause, “and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.”** After the Lord delivered these nations into their hands, they were to destroy them and, at that time, make no covenant with them. Abram, then, did not violate that word from the Lord.

ABRAM ARMS HIS TRAINED SERVANTS

¹⁴ *And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and*

nephew, ^{NRSV} “*his kinsman,*” ^{RSV} “*his brother’s son,*” ^{BBE} “*Lot.*” ^{ABP/ERV}

The Hebrew word translated

intended to always reflect strict fleshly relationships. Earlier, when the dispute between the herdmen of Abram and Lot broke out, he referred to himself and Lot as “*brethren:*” “*And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren*” (Gen 13:8). That is the sense in which this verse is to be understood.

There was a sense in which all of the Jews were brethren. Moses uses the word “brethren” to refer to the people at large – “your brethren the children of Israel” (Lev 25:46). Addressing all of the people, Moses referred to the Levites as “your brethren the Levites”

pursued them unto Dan. ¹⁵ *And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.”*

WHEN ABRAM HEARD

“*And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive . . .*” Other versions read, “*his relative,*” ^{NASB} “*his*

“*brother*” has the following lexical meaning: “*אָח*” ^{AWKH} {AWKH} **MEANING:** 1) BROTHER 1A) BROTHER OF SAME PARENTS 1B) HALF-BROTHER (SAME FATHER) 1C) RELATIVE, KINSHIP, **SAME** **TRIBE** 1D) EACH TO THE OTHER (RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP) 1E) (FIG.) OF RESEMBLANCE.

As you can see, based on the manner in which this word is used in Scripture (Gen 9:5,25), it is not

Something to be Considered

There was a sense in which all of the Jews were brethren. Moses uses the word “*brethren*” to refer to the people at large – “*your brethren the children of Israel*” (Lev 25:46). Addressing all of the people, Moses referred to the Levites as “*your brethren the Levites*” (Num 18:6). Disputes among the people of Israel were referred to as “*causes between your brethren*” (Deut 1:16).

Their close affiliation, as with the nation of Israel later, revolved around their association with God. Therefore,

the word “brother” was used in a more broad sense. This carried over into the New Covenant era as well.

HE ARMED HIS TRAINED SERVANTS

“ . . . he armed his **trained servants**, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen . . .” Other versions read, “well appointed,” ^{DOUAY} “armed his 318 trained men,” ^{GWN} “his own home-born servants,” ^{SEPTUAGINT} “his retainers,” ^{NAB} “trained domestics,” ^{YLT} “the men born into his household,” ^{LIVING} “native-born servants,” ^{ABP} “fighting men,” ^{CEV} and “trained soldiers.” ^{ERV}

The word “trained,” as used in this text, means “TRAINED, INSTRUCTED, TRAINED SERVANT, TRIED, EXPERIENCED.” ^{STRONG’S} Considering the mission for which they were selected, it ought to be obvious the training of reference had to do with entering into a military conflict. Some versions suggest that this applied to all of the servants born in his household.

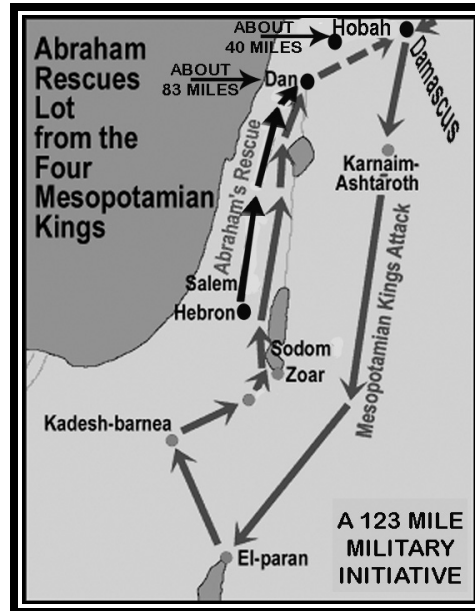
Although numbering over three hundred, these were not all of Abram’s servants. They were only the specially trained ones that had been born in his house. Albert Barnes notes, “ABRAM HAD NOW A COMPANY OF THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN TRAINED MEN, BORN IN HIS OWN HOUSE; WHICH IMPLIES A FOLLOWING OF MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN. HIS FLOCKS AND HERDS MUST HAVE CORRESPONDED IN EXTENT TO SUCH AN ESTABLISHMENT.” ^{ALBERT BARNES}

HE PURSUED THEM UNTO DAN

“ . . . and pursued them unto Dan.”

The pursuit was approximately eighty-three miles. Whether it was on foot, or on camels we do not know. Abram did have “camels” (Gen 12:16), so I do not doubt that is how they navigated to Dan.

Keep in mind that Abram is pursuing four kings and their armies – Chedorlaomer, Tidal, Amraphel, and Arioch – and doing so with three hundred and eighteen men, besides himself.



HE SMOTE THEM AND PURSUED THEM

Being in the vicinity of eighty years of age, one might not have thought of Abram, a man with flocks and herds and a vast household, as possessing military prowess. **However, this is a man who has been living for God, and giving careful heed to every syllable spoken to him.** We should not expect a man like that to come up short on any task to which he gives himself.

He Divided Himself Against Them

“ . . . And he divided himself against them, he and his servants . . .” Other versions read, “he divided his forces against them,” ^{NASB} “he divided his men to attack them.” ^{NIV}

Having fewer men than the four kings against whom they were aligned, Abram divided his men into companies. The word “divided” means apportioned, or an intelligent and strategic grouping of the men. They would not all rush forward attacking the kings from the front. They would attack in such a manner as to leave the impression there was a lot of them. They would come with a sudden simultaneous strike. Add to this the fact that God is for them, and can put fear in the hearts of the enemy soldiers, and you have a recipe for victory.

He Attacked them at Night

“ . . . by night . . .” Abram determined to also strike at night, knowing the armies had been traveling after having several skirmishes with five other kings. Abram and his servants had been traveling also – pursuing the enemy. But they had also been waiting upon the Lord, and thus their strength was renewed.

He Pursued them to Hobah

“ . . . and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.” Other versions read, “he and his servants attacked them and pursued them,” ^{NKJV} “defeated them and pursued them,” ^{NASB} “routed them, pursuing them,” ^{NIV} “putting them to flight, and going after them,” ^{BBE} “Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them,” ^{NLT} “attacked and routed them, and pursued them.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

What a devastating attack it was. The armies fled in fear, while Abram continued to pursue them for another forty miles. He would not stop until he had retrieved Lot and all of his possessions.

The Virtue of Determination

In this day of spiritual vacillation and cowardice, men have lost a sense of the virtue of determination. Some have referred to not as stick-to-it-iveness. Paul was a man of determination. He wrote, “For I **determined** not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). Again he wrote to the Corinthians, “But I **determined** this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness” (2 Cor 2:1). When it came to the building of the great Temple, it is written that “And Solomon **determined** to build an house for the name of the LORD” (2 Chron 2:1).

Determination involves decision, resolve, purpose, firmness, and aggressiveness. It requires the marshaling of all of our forces, and

directing them toward a noble objective. For those in Christ it requires a strong faith, good hope, and everlasting consolation.

This kind of posture is required to cast off the sin and the weight that does so easily beset us (Heb. 12:1-2).

It is required to run the race with endurance that has been set out before us (Heb 12:1-2). You will need this kind of attitude to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13), and to appropriate grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16). When it comes to living by faith, a casual spirit is a

damaging one.

A lot of professing believers fail because they quit too soon. They do not press far enough. They do not linger in the presence of the Lord long enough. But the faith of Abraham will overcome all such obstacles!

ABRAM BRINGS BACK ALL THE GOODS, AND ALL THE PEOPLE

¹⁶ And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

It certainly required a lot of stamina to pursue Chedorlaomer and those aligned with him. It required toughness to battle through the night until the foe was defeated and routed. It required staying power to continue to pursue the enemy for another forty miles. Yet, on top of all of that, he had to garner all that had been stolen, and return it to its rightful place.

HE BROUGHT BACK ALL THE GOODS

"And he brought back all the goods . . ." Other versions read, *"all the property,"* ^{DARBY} *"all the substance,"* ^{DOUAY} *"all the possessions,"* ^{ESV} *"all the stolen property,"* ^{NET} and *"the whole of the substance,"* ^{YLT} *"the loot that had been taken."* ^{LIVING}

The things that had been stolen are defined in the eleventh verse: *"And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way"* (Gen 14:11). *"Goods"* involved possessions, property, livestock, silver, gold, jewels, etc. *"Victuals"* included food of all kinds, flour and other raw materials, drink, etc. It took four kings and their armies to carry this booty away. Abram now brings it back. He had to have it gathered, packed, livestock grouped in herds, appropriate wagons to carry the goods, etc. This was no small task.

HE BROUGHT BACK LOT AND HIS GOODS

" . . . and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods. . ."

The return of Abram with his 318 trained servants, now has a staggering addition of both goods, animals, and people. A trip o around 200 or more miles is involved, for they are going

Then there was Lot – who was rich, having “flocks, and herds, and tents.” They were in such abundance, that the land could not sustain him and Abraham. Yet, all of his possessions were brought back as well.

Then there was Lot – who was rich, having *"flocks, and herds, and tents."* They were in such abundance, that the land could not sustain him and Abraham. **Yet, all of his possessions were brought back as well.** His massive flocks had to be herded, together with all of the other substance, well over 120 miles!

HE BROUGHT BACK THE WOMAN ALSO, AND THE PEOPLE

" . . . and the women also, and the people."

Then there were *"the women, and the other people."* We have no idea how many of these there were. The record of the sacking of Sodom did not mention the taking of these people. It appears as though they may very well have emptied the city.

back to Sodom, which was South of Mamre a considerable distance.

Yet, all of this will be accomplished in an orderly and proficient manner, with no apparent outbreaks among the people, and no attacks from other lurking enemies.

And to what are we to attribute the success of this hasty mission? **It is that the Lord was with Abram, who was cleansing the land that was given to him.** He is the One who strengthened Abraham, gave him the required wisdom and insight, and sustained him in the work. There is no way to account for what was accomplished apart from the Lord Himself.

In addition to this, Sodom now has no excuse for continuing in its sin, after

experiencing such a marvelous display of mercy. As we proceed through Genesis, we should not be surprised that Sodom gives no evidence of repenting of its ways – even though space was given to them to do so.

THE KING OF SODOM GOES OUT TO MEET ABRAM

“¹⁷ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.”

THE KING OF SODOM

“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him . . .” At the time of Sodom's overthrow at the hands of Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, Bera was the king of Sodom (Gen 14:2). In that defeat, it is written that *“the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there,”* in the slim pits that filled the area (Gen 14:8). I conclude, therefore, that this was Bera's replacement, and that in some providential way he had learned of Abram's rescue mission. Perhaps he knew that Abram had apparently gone out to rescue Lot. Yet, when he returned, he came with a multitude of both people and possessions. Some do feel that this was the same king, and that he escaped from the mountains and returned to Sodom (John Gill). That does not blend well with the account of the victory of Chedorlaomer.

THE SLAUGHTER OF CHEDORLAOMER AND THE KINGS THAT WERE WITH HIM

“ . . . after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him . . . ”

It is of interest that the Spirit refers to *“the **slaughter** of Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him.”* Other versions read, *“the defeat,”* ^{NKJV} *“putting to flight,”* ^{BBE} *“smiting,”* ^{DARBY} *“his victory over,”* ^{NAB} *“his strike against,”* ^{LIVING} and *“the defeat and slaying of.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The dumbing down of the term to *“defeat,” “victory,” “put to flight,”* etc. cannot be justified. The word translated *“slaughter”* is a very strong word, and has contains the following ideas: “TO STRIKE, SMITE, HIT, BEAT, SLAY, KILL 1A) (NIPHAL) TO BE STRICKEN OR SMITTEN 1B) (PUAL) TO BE STRICKEN OR SMITTEN 1C) (HIPHIL) 1C1) TO SMITE, STRIKE, BEAT, SCOURGE, CLAP, APPLAUD, GIVE A THRUST 1C2) TO SMITE, KILL, SLAY (MAN OR BEAST) 1C3) TO SMITE, ATTACK, ATTACK AND DESTROY, CONQUER, SUBJUGATE, RAVAGE 1C4) TO SMITE, CHASTISE, SEND JUDGMENT UPON, PUNISH, DESTROY 1D) (HOPHAL) TO BE SMITTEN 1D1) TO RECEIVE A BLOW 1D2) TO BE WOUNDED 1D3) TO BE BEATEN 1D4) TO BE (FATALLY) SMITTEN, BE KILLED, BE SLAIN 1D5) TO BE ATTACKED AND CAPTURED

1D6) TO BE SMITTEN (WITH DISEASE) 1D7) TO BE BLIGHTED (OF PLANTS).” ^{STRONG'S}

While the definition does include such words as “attack,” “subjugate,” etc, **the emphasis seems to be on a violent act.** This is not something to raise to the status of an issue. I find it difficult to believe, however that any kind of surrender was negotiated, or that Chedorlaomer and the kings with him made their way back home in peace and comfort.

AT THE VALLEY OF SHAVEH

“ . . . at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.”

This is the place where the king of Sodom met Abram. It is believed by some to have been located south of Jerusalem (Josephus). Sodom, however, is a considerable distance from the area of Jerusalem. I find it difficult to believe the king of Sodom would travel that distance to meet with Abram. I prefer to accept the idea that this was a dale, or valley, that was for the pleasure and retreat of the king of Sodom. I am not alone in this persuasion.

CONCLUSION

We are at the point in the book of Genesis where the thrust of the book has been changed.

Prior to this, the bulk of the information pertained to the judgment of sinners:

➡ In Adam and Eve being expelled

from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-24).

➡ The judgment of Cain (Gen 4:5-16).

➡ The judgment of the world in the flood (Gen 6:11-8:15).

➡ The judgment of the builders in Shinar (Gen 11:1-9).

Now the text is focusing on a single individual and the events pertaining to him – beginning when he was seventy-five years of age (Gen 12:4). When compared with the details of others to this point, there is no

comparison. Having established the nature of the flesh, and the fallen condition of man, God is shining the light upon the Divine remedy for sin. It will come through a Man – the “Seed” of the woman, and “the Seed” of Abraham as well. It will involve the development of a race to whom the details his coming salvation will be made known. The race itself will be nurtured by the Lord for the reception of a Son who will be given through and to it (Isa 9:6-7). The progenitor of this race is Abram, and him and his seed are the thrust of all Scripture from his time forward.

Thus far we have been given the following information about Abram.

➡ The identity of his father

- ➡ The identity of his brothers
- ➡ The name of his nephew
- ➡ The name of his wife
- ➡ His initial calling by God
- ➡ The initiation of his journey to Canaan
- ➡ The death of his brother
- ➡ The death of his father
- ➡ His stay in Haran, and the increase of his goods
- ➡ The age at which he left Haran for Canaan
- ➡ His arrival in Canaan
- ➡ The first altar he built
- ➡ God’s appearance to him, and the promise that his seed would inherit the land
- ➡ The famine in Canaan at the time of his arrival ()
- ➡ His journey to Egypt during the famine

- ➡ His experience with Pharaoh, when his wife was taken by the king ()
- ➡ His expulsion from Egypt
- ➡ Lot’s continuance with him
- ➡ The separation of him and Lot because of the inadequacy of the land to support their flocks and herds
- ➡ The capture of Lot by Chedorlaomer’s forces
- ➡ Abram’s rescue of Lot

Compare these details with what is known of Adam, Cain, Abel, Lamech, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and Nimrod. Is there really any comparison?

The Lord is beginning to reveal more of Himself and His purpose. That is the point of it all.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/18/11. We will continue our series of lessons on the book of Genesis. The twenty-third lesson will cover verses 18 through verse 24 of chapter Fourteen: “ABRAM, MELCHIZEDEK, AND THE KING OF SODOM.” After Abram’s defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him. Melchizedek, priest of the most high God, brought bread and wine to Abram, and blessed him. The king of Sodom requested that Abram give him the persons taken captive, and told him to take the goods for himself. The patriarch refused to take anything from the king of Sodom, except for some nourishing food for those who had been with him. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.