

09.14.25

Genesis

Chapter 14 - God's Gracious Deliverance

Deliver Us from Evil (vs. 1-12)

Genesis 14:1-12: And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, that they 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 (that is, Zoar). All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar. And the king of Sodom and the

king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim, against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed. They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

Well, just when you think everything's going okay, here comes trouble, from the north. And this passage is making reference to the fact that those that were coming were coming for the very purpose of attacking. It is an interesting picture of evil, and the question that we sometimes ask is, where in the world did evil come from? Well, as I search Scripture, I realize that you don't have to go far to find it. Because Jeremiah 17:9 says that the heart

of man is deceitful. It's desperately sick. So, you don't have to go too far to find it. It's within ourselves. God is doing a work even in the midst of this world that is plagued with evil. The hostility that comes from the north at this particular juncture is that which Scripture goes into some detail about the battle that is going to be fought. And as you read, if you were to read through the whole chapter, you realize that Abraham's very concerned about his nephew Lot, so he goes out to get him. Now, you have to understand that there are numerous kings that are involved in this, and they've been victorious everywhere they've gone. So, to go after them is really a suicide mission, especially with only 318 men, and that's exactly what Scripture tells us that he has. Though they were trained, still not enough. Nevertheless, he will go after them and he will win the battle. I guess in some ways you could read this particular passage and say, "Well, this is a passage about Abraham the warrior, how brave he was and how he went in great faith before God, and he won this great victory." But I don't think you can honestly say that. One, is we don't see any inference at all of God saying, "Abraham, go get him." And I think part of our

frustration is we don't understand what to do when evil does come. Our thought is, "Well, I've got to do something. I've got to save people. I've got to help people." And we go into that saving mode ourselves. What Abraham did, was that an erroneous act? Well, Scripture doesn't comment on it any more than Scripture doesn't comment on him trying to pass off his wife as his sister; any more than Scripture doesn't really comment on him trying to work through the whole concept of a famine and "Should I go down to Egypt?" You don't see the Word of God actually interjecting any thought in any of those things.

Why is that? Because God is beginning to show us man that longs to follow Him, that loves Him, working through his salvation. We don't think right, and it's quite a journey as we are born again in the household of God, that we realize that we're on this journey and the Lord is changing us. He is transforming us into the image of His Son. But change doesn't come easy. I think a certain way, you think a certain way, and we've been fed things in our minds and our heads. What we see Abraham doing is not

rebelliousness. It's weakness. And he's wrestling through things. And really, at the very beginning of his walk, beginning in Genesis 12, we see him strategizing, we see him compromising, and in some cases, he legitimizes and rationalizes his decisions that he makes by virtue of perhaps logic, perhaps just plain practical pragmatism. Nevertheless, what he begins to reap are things like rebuke and shame, which he actually receives from the Pharaoh. He begins to reap things like the damage of a relationship, because if you were to try to pass your wife off as your sister, and it's all about protecting you, you don't think that damages a relationship? How do you think she perceives those kind of things? And with his whole concept of bringing Lot around with him, though it was seemingly Lot's idea to go with Abram, he should have broken it off at the very beginning. Nevertheless, he takes him with him, and he finds strife with Lot. And he has to break it off in a less than amiable way. And he begins to reap things like sorrow and regret in the concept of all of these things. Does God lower the boom on him and say, "You should have never done that?" We don't see that in the text. However, "that which a man

sows is that which he will reap.” And what we're seeing Abraham reaping are the consequences of the decisions that he makes. And God is gracious in the midst of all these things because God is still heading him towards and directing him towards the blessing that He promised him. In spite of all that we do, in spite of the way that we go, in spite of our reasoning and logistics, God is still directing us into blessing. And that's very comforting to me when I see this. When you consider evil and the coming of evil upon our lives, you almost get into a fighting mode.

I think of that Psalm 139 in particular, in which the psalmist says, really at the beginning of it, “Nobody knows me like You.” I mean, if I could just summarize that particular chapter in the Psalms, “Nobody knows me like You. You know me better than I know myself. In my mother's womb, You were weaving me, so You were the one, and before there's a word in my mouth, You know what's there.” But as most of us have read through that particular Psalm, as you come towards the end, you realize why he's stating the things that he's stating, because he's angry. Yeah, he's angry. He's angry at the

wickedness that is in the world, and he's angry at those that are going against God, and those men, he actually uses the phrase, of bloodshed, and he wants them dead. He then turns to God at the very end of the Psalm, and he says, "But what I need You to do is search me and try me and see if there be any evil way in me." So quickly, we go into that particular mode.

And just to kind of give you an example of this, if you look in the Book of Habakkuk, if you look at the very beginning of this chapter, it is an oracle to Habakkuk, the prophet, who was concerned about his people more specifically, was angry towards his people because of the fact that they were demonstrating an evil in his midst. The word that he uses is he cries out, "violence".

The statement is, if you look in verse 2,

(Habakkuk 1:2) "How long, O LORD, will I call for help,

And You will not hear?

I cry out to You, "Violence!"

Yet You do not save."

You see the wickedness around us, and think, “Is God going to do something about this? When's God going to do something about this?”

Well, he goes on and says, “Why do I have to look at all this stuff?” Of course, I would say to most of us, just turn off your TV.

(Habakkuk 1:3) “Why do You make me see iniquity,
And cause me to look on wickedness?”

Yes, destruction and violence are before me;
Strife exists and contention arises.

(Habakkuk 1:4) Therefore the law is ignored
And justice is never upheld...”

I don't know if any of this sounds familiar, but sometimes it's the way we feel.

Of course, God answers fairly quickly, and He says, “Open your eyes. Listen. I'm sending Babylon from the north.”

The same area that we're actually seeing the army in Genesis 14 come from. It is actually the area of Iraq. The trouble is coming from Iraq, that's something new? But here trouble is coming, and it's coming down from Iraq

and from the north as it begins to permeate that particular land. Well, the same thing was actually happening years later during the time of Habakkuk, because God was going to use Babylon to discipline His own children. But if you look at this, wow, it is evil.

Because the way that it reads is, in verse 5,

(Habakkuk 1:5) “Look among the nations! Observe!
Be astonished! Wonder!

Because I am doing something in your days—
You would not believe if you were told.

(Habakkuk 1:6) “For behold, I am raising up the
Chaldeans,

That fierce and impetuous people

Who march throughout the earth

To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.

(Habakkuk 1:7) “They are dreaded and feared;

Their justice and authority originate with themselves.”

They don't care what you think. They're just going to slaughter you. You go, “Well, don't you know who I am?” They don't care.

(Habakkuk 1:8) “Their horses are swifter than leopards
And keener than wolves in the evening.

Their horsemen come galloping,

Their horsemen come from afar;

They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.

(Habakkuk 1:9) “All of them come for violence.

Their horde of faces moves forward.

They collect captives like sand.

(Habakkuk 1:10) “They mock at kings

And rulers are a laughing matter to them.

They laugh at every fortress

And heap up rubble to capture it.

(Habakkuk 1:11) “Then they will sweep through like the
wind and pass on.

But they will be held guilty,

They whose strength is their god.”

Interesting passage that really defines that evil that comes in. They don't care. Of course, Habakkuk was actually calling to God, going, “There's evil in my midst. You need to take care of it.” And God goes, “Okay, We'll take care of it. We'll just wipe them all out. Look from the

north, they're coming.” An interesting picture. I mean, does evil just get empowered accidentally? Is it just an arbitrary thing that begins to happen? Is there something that is kind of haphazard and evil just kind of gathers together and they say, “On this particular day, I'm going to attack and do something,” or is there a sovereign God that is controlling all these things? That's an interesting question, isn't it? But we know that there is a sovereign God, but we also know that there is only One who can save. And this is a key point, and I just want to lay down this foundation of theology at the very onset of what we're going to be talking about.

If you look with me in Isaiah 43, one thing that's clear in really much of the Book of Isaiah is that God is being described in ways that we would never know had there not been this wonderful Book of Isaiah. God has used this book in so many ways to clarify who He is and that there is truly no One like Him. We'll talk about His creation, and we'll talk about His great power, but we have absolutely no idea. Isaiah will come to that realization in Isaiah 6, in which he comes before the presence of God, and he just

goes, "I had no idea. I was talking about something I didn't know anything about." So, as we come to Isaiah 43, there is a verse that I want you just to mark, if you haven't, in your Bibles, because we so many times get off this particular thought.

(Isaiah 43:11) "I, even I, am the LORD,
And there is no savior besides Me."

Now, that's a pretty clear text. I mean, it doesn't leave room for any ambiguity. It doesn't leave room for any debate. There's only One who saves. That's God. It is to be noted that though Abraham will go in and he will rescue Lot and he will win the battle, that when he comes before Melchizedek, Melchizedek goes, "This is God that delivered you." We realize that clearly the battle is the Lord's, and clearly with the odds, and Scripture is going to let us know, the odds were just horrific in this battle. It had to be God that did it. Nevertheless, there is something inside of us, there are thoughts that we all have that we're somehow rescuing. And God, in His grace, allows us, in the sense, to learn what salvation is really about.

In this particular chapter, one thing that's repeated is that God is the One who saves through the waters. We think in terms of saving people from the waters.

The way that it reads in Isaiah 43:2,

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they will not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be
scorched...”

That clearly is God's way of dealing with things because it displays His great power no matter what.

If you look in verse 16,

(Isaiah 43:16) “Thus says the LORD,
Who makes a way through the sea...”

All of this to say that man finds a way to run from it and calls it salvation, but God takes us through and is declared the Savior, the only One.

We come into Genesis 14, and it is a time when evil begins to come from the north. We don't know right away why they're stirred up, but the text then begins to unfold and we begin to realize that the people of Sodom and

Gomorrah were paying some sort of tribute to the northern country or to the country of Iraq. We'll just kind of bunch them all together. And in that particular region, they were collecting the tribute from Sodom and Gomorrah. They finally had been doing this for a number of years, up to 12 years, and on the 13th year, they go, "Enough, we don't want to pay any more. We're not going to pay any more." It's sort of like you decide you're not going to pay taxes anymore; they're not going to pay their tribute anymore. So, they stop. Well, in the 14th year, then they start coming from the north and they go, "We're going to collect." Now, what the passage begins to tell us is that not only there's a particular place in which this is coming from, but it's also telling us that they have a reason for it, and it goes into some detail on how they begin to conquer. It begins to list the different cities and towns that they begin to conquer. To us, it's just a list of names. But if you do a little bit of investigation, what Scripture is letting us know is that God is using evil.

You see, where does evil come from? Well, God created it. You say, "I don't think you ought to say that." Well, I'm

sorry. I didn't say it. Scripture says it. Isaiah 45:7 is very clear that God is the one that creates calamity. It is the same word, "*ra'*," for evil within the text. He also goes on to say within that passage that He creates darkness. Now, the question is, for what purpose? And it is that we're going to be looking at specifically, because God has a purpose for it. Now, God has the initial purpose of evil in that He put it in the garden in the sense of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the middle of the garden with the tree of life, which is telling us that He wasn't hiding it. He had a purpose for it. And the question oftentimes is, "Well, what is the purpose?" Well, initially, it's very easy to ascertain that the first purpose that we understand for evil is for choice. God has given us a choice and you have to have a choice. In other words, would you rather have peace or war? Well, you have a choice. It's bizarre that man continually and categorically continues to make the wrong choice. I mean, you have something happen to you and your initial response is, "I'm going to love that person to death." No, I don't think that's your initial response. Your initial response is, "I'm going to get him, and I'm going to get even." The way that

we think is the opposite of what is good. If we had a choice between good and evil, we would normally choose what is evil. If we had a choice between life and death, strangely enough, as Moses comes before the people of Israel, he goes, “Okay, I placed before you life and death.” Guess what they consistently chose? It was death. They consistently chose it. I mean, you would think that if I had that kind of choice, and if I had a choice to build or destroy, I would clearly choose to build and if I had a choice in any way to comfort somebody or to give pain, I would always go the route of comforting. Evil is that interesting picture of that which is calamitous, that which is hurtful, that which is painful, that which is hard and harsh. That's what evil is. “God has a purpose of that?” Oh, He will, and He will use it, and we'll see Him use it even in this particular passage.

If you look with me, it starts off,

(Genesis 14:1) “And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar...”

Now, just to let you know where we are, the name Shinar actually means the place of two rivers, Tigris and

Euphrates. We're in the realm of Mesopotamia. Once again, we're in Iraq, as we know it in more modern days. So, this is the realm in which we are. It was the same place in which they began to build the tower of Babel, if you remember. You go back to the text, and it was in the land of Shinar. So, it's actually given us some sort of understanding where these people are coming from.

I just want to make mention off as a side note, Amraphel is oftentimes perceived to be Hammurabi. Have you ever heard of the Code of Hammurabi? However, I would disagree with that, and the reason why is that Hammurabi would not come until about 300 years later. So, we actually have somebody else that I have in mind as we come into the passage that we're going to see that had probably a greater effect than even the code of Hammurabi.

But if you go in the passage, it reads this way,

“And it came about in the days of Amraphel...”

Which, once again, seems to make reference to this person had some ability to conjure up. He was kind of a sayer of darkness, so to speak.

“And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch...”

I guess Disney was right, there was actually a lion king because that's his name, “Arioch” is “lion king”. So, I guess there was.

“... Arioch king of Ellasar...”

Now, underline the name “Ellasar,” because that's going to be very important to us. And the reason why it's very important to us is the location of it. When we're dealing with the various kings that are being mentioned within the passage, we're dealing with a large expanse of area in Iraq, and then it kind of goes down to Kuwait, which goes into the Persian Gulf. So, all of that is kind of taken in the thought of all of this. Nevertheless, this particular town is letting us know a pinpoint place, and Ellasar, this town, is actually 28 miles east of Ur. Now, Ur is Ur of the Chaldeans, and if you remember, that's where Abraham's from. That's where Lot is from. That's where Abraham's father is from. It was the Ur of the Chaldeans. So, what we have are people from his own homeland coming down from the north, collecting what they feel is due them in

this act of war. Because, once again, the people have stopped paying.

Then it mentions,

“... Chedorlaomer king of Elam...”

Once again, that kind of takes you all the way into the realm of the Persian Empire, but the outer skirts of Iraq.

“... and Tidal king of Goiim...”

Which “Goiim” is where we get our word “*gôy*,” which is kind of a conglomerate of all the other nations. So, there's a lot of people involved. Now, albeit, the earth at this time, perhaps didn't have a great population, but I would say that you're dealing with maybe tens, possibly hundreds of thousands of warriors.

It then reads,

(Genesis 14:2) “that they 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 (that is, Zoar).”

I guess one of the reasons why it mentions Zoar, “Zoar” is a name which just means “little” and sometimes

translated “insignificant”. As you follow the story, what you'll find is that Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed and Lot will turn and say to those that are warning him, “Can I go to Bela or can I go to this small town?” And the angel says, “Yes, you can go there.” Which now becomes and turns into the name of Zoar, which means it's a small town, it's a small place. So, that's the place that Lot will end up with his family to go away from Sodom and Gomorrah. Scripture in this parenthetical moment is just letting you know future things that are going to be happening. These are events that are going to be happening.

So, the list here in verse 2 is to be noted, and here again, I'm not going to go into too much detail of it. But when you look at king Bera, you see the very first king who was the king of Sodom? Sodom, we've already made reference to the fact, actually the name itself means “burning”. Gomorrah makes reference to “low down”. So, you have a bunch of low down people burning. But it's a great description of that particular region, because of their wickedness.

Now, we know that Sodom and Gomorrah was wicked. Why? Because if you back up into Genesis 13:12, as Lot chooses this particular region for himself, it says, (Genesis 13:12) “Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

(Genesis 13:13) Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.”

See the passage? There's no doubt about that. Now, what's to be noted is, and I'm not saying that we're dealing with angels here, but there's no text that says those that were in the region of Mesopotamia were wicked, wicked people. There's no text that says that. Now, we know that they were not believers of God. We know that even in the city of Ur, the moon god, Nanna, and often transliterated “Sin,” where we probably get the word “sin” because it's actually transliterated the word “sin,; but it was a moon god that was worshipped there. We know that Abram's father worshipped these gods. However, it is interesting that there was, and it was actually just recently discovered, I would say in the 1940s,

this cuneiform, which is basically a Sumerian language that is etched into clay tablets, they found what they called the Ur of Nammu code. Now, the only reason I bring this up is that they actually have translated this particular code. And the reason that I would bring it up as well is that this code was exactly during the time of Abram. Now, let me bring it back. Where was Abram born? Ur. Where is the code? Ur. Ur-Nammu code. So it's from Ur, it's Nammu who was the king at that time, and it just literally pinpoints the exact time that Abraham would have been there, which is telling us that there was a code of ethics, there was a code of morals. Now, the reason I bring this up, and actually I have a list of the ones that they had translated, but the list goes something like this, that if, in fact, you kill somebody, you need to be killed. If, in fact, you steal from somebody, you need to be killed. That was kind of their way of dealing with almost everything. If you committed adultery, you must be killed. That's interesting because you really have a code of ethics, a code of morality in Ur of the Chaldeans. Now, the reason I bring this up is that you'd have no code of ethics and morality in Sodom and Gomorrah. So, initially, our

thought is that you have these great powers that are coming from the north, and they're just evil, evil, evil people, and God goes, "Well, yes and no, not compared to Sodom and Gomorrah." This is not an arbitrary act. This is not an accidental happening. This is not something haphazardly orchestrated. This is God moving to clear the area and to discipline and to really subvert evil all the more. Did evil have in its mind, "Hey, you know what? I don't like those people being immoral." No. They didn't have that in mind at all. The mind of evil is, "They're not paying me money. So, I'm going to get them."

Nevertheless, God is using the evil for what purpose?

So, if you look at the passage, and let me just say this, verse 2 reads that you have Bera the king of Sodom.

"Bera," his name, actually means "son of evil".

If you go on, "Birsha" would be another way of saying, "with iniquity". So, someone who loves iniquity, who is the king of Gomorrah. And all of these listing of names, you begin to realize that it's a wicked place. It's an evil place. So, what's happening? Well, they're going to be attacked.

Now, it says,

(Genesis 14:3) “All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).”

Which God is kind of letting us know in the future what it's going to be called because of what's going to happen by virtue of Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed, which in a way God is saying, “We need to deal with these people so that there isn't more destruction in the future.”

The passage reads,

(Genesis 14:4) “Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled.”

Well, it shouldn't surprise us that a wicked city would rebel. And once again, I'm not saying it was a good thing that they had to pay the tribute. I'm just saying they're known for wickedness and now they're known for rebellion.

(Genesis 14:5) “In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated...”

Now, this is what Scripture wants you to know in verse 5, “... the Rephaim...”

That is the giants. So, we're kind of looking east of the Jordan, and there were these great giants, and they defeated them. Why is Scripture letting me know that? Well, who's living in the promised land? Abram. Who does God want to protect? Abram. So, what's He going to do? He's going to use evil to rid the particular region of the evil that's there because quite frankly, they're just visiting. They're just collecting money. They're not going to live there. But in the process of them coming, they're defeating the giants. They're defeating those that are going to someday be an influence of worshiping other gods, because there you have the Ashteroth within the text,

“... Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,
(Genesis 14:6) and the Horites...”

Who are going to be major problems to the Jews in the future.

“... in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran...”

Which actually takes you down to the Red Sea. Now, Scripture's letting us know that they just did this wide

sweep, and they were just getting everyone on the way, but they passed right by the region where Abram was, and they passed right by Sodom and Gomorrah. They haven't gone there yet. They're just getting all these other guys, which my thoughts are, it's God giving them fair warning. I mean, there's no way that you couldn't hear of these guys going and defeating all these people right next to you. All of these are right next door to you. So, all these are happening.

(Genesis 14:7) “Then they turned back...”

They had gone all the way down to the Red Sea. Now, they're coming back. And you say, “Well, now, they're going to go to Sodom and Gomorrah.” No.

“Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites...”

Well, those are major problems to the Jews.

“... who lived in Hazazon-tamar.”

Which is basically almost right next to the Dead Sea.

(Genesis 14:8) “And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out...”

And I like the way this is worded,

“... and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim,”

Oh boy, they're feeling pretty confident. They arranged themselves in order. You could just see them, “There's just no way they're going to beat us. The odds are in our favor.”

Genesis 14:9) “against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.”

Well, what happens? Well, now, the valley of Siddim doesn't seem like it's going to be a great battle.

(Genesis 14:10) “Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them...”

I thought you were ready for battle? I thought you were going to do this great warrior thing. But I don't know, did I

miss it? I didn't see any war there. The only thing I saw was that the kings just started running, and they fell into them.

“... But those who survived fled to the hill country.

(Genesis 14:11) Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.

(Genesis 14:12) They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.”

Scripture's wanting you to know where he was living.

Where was he living? Sodom. What is Sodom? The very wicked place. He was living there. Where is he living now? Not there. Is he dead? No, he's still alive. It says they took Lot. Where is he going to head back to? Where he was born. That's where they're from. Where is he from? If he goes all the way back to Ur, it's a place that has a code of ethics.

Now, as the passage will go on, Abram will go, “I've got to rescue him from this.” But what Abram doesn't know is that someday he'll have to be rescued from Sodom, not from these people. Nevertheless, Abram will do what he

does. He saves people. That's what he does. That's what's in his heart, and that's not a bad thing. God doesn't get after us because we want to save people. The problem is that when we save people in our own power, there is collateral damage. There are problems. Because when the Lord works and when the Lord gives blessing, He adds no sorrow to it. But when I create the blessing, when I do the saving, there's problems with it.

An example, I want to give it to you, it's found in Exodus 2. You're probably familiar with this guy named Moses. And in Exodus 2, we realize how he got the name, because his name actually means “to be drawn out of the water”. So, we have “*Mōšê*,” which is Moses, being drawn out of the water, and God had preserved him for a purpose. He grows up, and you know the story, he, as part of the Pharaoh’s family, recognizes that his brethren, and he knows where he's from, is being injured. He takes it upon himself to save him. Remember the story?

So, it reads this way,

(Exodus 2:11) “Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren

and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

(Exodus 2:12) So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian...

That's going to save him, right?

“... and hid him in the sand.

(Exodus 2:13) He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, “Why are you striking your companion?”

(Exodus 2:14) But he said, “Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and said, “Surely the matter has become known.”

(Exodus 2:15) When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled...

So, here's the hero. He's now afraid, and now he's running. And quite frankly, what he did in his saving was not very much appreciated by his brethren, was it? Moses will go in the land of Midian. Of course, he'll find these

women, the seven daughters of Midian, and they'll draw water and they're going to be attacked. Well, what's Moses' nature? "I'm going to save them."

It actually says in verse 17,

(Exodus 2:17) "Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them..."

And then they state in verse 19,

(Exodus 2:19) "So they said, "An Egyptian delivered us..."

What we know according to the passage is that Moses was a recipient of salvation, i.e. he was drawn out of the water. He was rescued. God preserved him, and he felt perhaps in some way obligated, but God had also placed in his heart this desire to save. God will use him to save. But it will be God that does the delivering, not Moses. He'll use him. And the same thing is going to be true with Abram. And the same thing is true in all of our lives. God desires to use us in saving. But it's got to be His way, and it's got to be God doing the saving, not us.

As I was going through this, one of the things that had really hit me is that how God uses evil to do good. And of

course, one of the great themes by the time you get to Joseph and his brothers selling him into slavery, it closes with this remark, "You meant this for evil. God has turned it into good." That's what God does. The question is, how does He do that? I just want to list a few things in closing on how God actually uses evil to do good. The first thing that God will do with evil is He'll demonstrate its inferiority. The reason why I want to emphasize this is that what we're going to see is that man will use evil to fight evil. But what you're going to find is that it never wins. Nobody ever wins. When evil fights evil, there are no winners. But God has to display this to men. And it's kind of what you see with David in particular. He's always fighting the warriors and he finally gets old and can't fight the warriors anymore. In fact, his own men pull him out of the game because they go, "The giants are too big for you." "I thought we got rid of the giants?" "Nope. They keep coming back." Because evil is insatiable. It continues to go. And your thought is, "Well, I'm going to eradicate evil by evil." God's going to say, "No, that's not going to happen. What's going to happen is that you're going to grow weak." And in many respects, this is representative

of the Law. Now, we know that God uses the Law to actually subdue evil. We know that. In fact, Paul will write to Timothy and go, “We know that the Law is good, and we know that the purpose of the Law is for those that are lawless.” So, what does law do? Well, it uses punishment. Well, that's evil. Punishment is evil. It's something that hurts somebody. You hurt somebody, we'll hurt you. And once again, it's the Code of Nammu. It's the Code of Hammurabi. Same code. “Eye for an eye” actually comes out of the Code of Hammurabi 300 years later. So, man realizes that one of the ways that you subdue evil is evil. That's called government.

If you look in Romans 13, it says that God uses the government. It says it bears a sword for a reason. What do you mean a sword? Well, He's going to use it because you do something wrong. So, God, even today, is using evil to subdue evil through the venue of those that are evil. Nevertheless, what God is also demonstrating is that the law is weak. And this is one of the things that really culminate into the Book of Romans in Chapter 7, as it goes on, “Who will set me free from this?” And he realizes

that he can't be set free by virtue of the Law because you tell me not to do something, it actually makes me want to do it more. So, it goes into Romans 8, and it says,

(Romans 8:3) “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was...”

And what it's telling us is that getting even, you know, retribution, all these things which are going to subdue evil, never win. It never wins. So, he's going to demonstrate that. And all the way through the Old Testament, you're going to see all these battles and all these wars, and you're going to go, “Okay, I think we're finally winning.” I mean, even when you consider the wars of David, great King David, it just made him harsh and hard and unforgiving, callous, detached, and able to do things that you would say, “I never would have thought David would have done such a thing. I never would have thought that he would have killed his best friend.” He's become hardened by those things. Evil doesn't win. So, God is going to prove that through the process of using evil.

The second thing that He's going to do is He's going to use evil in that process to suppress that evil, and it will ultimately humble the proud. It'll humble the proud. We don't have time to go through it, but if you were to read in Isaiah 10 and you go through 13 in particular, God says, "Okay, what I've done is I've raised up Assyria, and they're going to come and they're going to scare the "bejeebies" out of you. They're going to wipe out all your surrounding areas, and then they're going to come to your door and start knocking on your door, little Jerusalem. And I've sent them. Now, their thought is to completely wipe you out. But the only reason I've called them is to be a stick to just chase you to Me." So, God uses them.

Of course, as you go on to Chapter 13, then God says, "And I'm going to raise up another nation to discipline or to punish Assyria, which is Babylon. And then I'm going to raise up another nation, which are the Medes and the Persians, to punish."

So, you realize as you go through the process, in particular, Isaiah 33, He says, "Woe to the evil, because as soon as the evil is done doing the evil, I'm going to

destroy evil.” So, you realize that God is using evil to suppress that evil, but not only that, but to humble the proud. Then, God's going to use evil to do something that we wouldn't necessarily think is a bad thing, and that is to ignite a sense of involvement. You know, we have a tendency to be very passive, and as long as something's not bothering us, then no big deal. But God uses evil to begin to stir your hearts. And He says, “What are you sitting there for? What are you doing nothing for? Why aren't you caring for these people?” And as evil begins to knock on your door, then you begin to start caring more, and it actually strengthens you. In fact, without that push of evil, you would not grow in your faith. You would not grow in grace because, as Peter would say, it's these things that cause your behavior to start shining as excellence. And James would say, this actually strengthens you and causes you to endure. If you have nothing to push against, you have no endurance. So, what God begins to do in the midst of this is He begins to actually strengthen you and cause you to care about things that you wouldn't normally care about, all the way

through. I can give you numerous examples of that, but clearly Scripture gives evidence of that throughout.

And then the last thing that I would say within the passage is that God's going to use evil, and this is kind of a shocker, but oftentimes I mention this, to reveal the depth of love. John 15, so many times quoted, makes reference to the fact that Christ came to die for you. And His statement is, "There's not any greater love than this, than one lays down his life for his friend." Now, you would actually never know the depth of love from anyone had they not given their life. That's the greatest depth of love that is displayed. Well, that's evil that's taken your life. That's evil that's causing pain. The question is, even in our marriage vows, when you consider who you're marrying, "I'm marrying this person." "Are you going to stick with them?" "Well, yeah." How do I know? For better? Okay, just stop there. That's superficial love. For better or for worse. Worse is evil. In sickness, that's evil, and in health. It's the times of sickness; it's the times of hurt and pain and suffering that the greatest depth of love is shown. This is once again, as I've oftentimes

mentioned, that when you look at the cross, what you're looking at is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because what you're seeing is One that has been hated, abused on this tree. I mean, evil is so blatant on the cross that you can't miss it. But you can't miss the good that is shining forth, that says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That wonderful good that says, "I'm doing this because I love you." It's a necessary ingredient, and God's going to use it throughout. And we're going to see the fallacy of man. We're going to see how man tries to, in his own way, attack evil in his own strength. But ultimately, God will bring him to the point of surrender instead of taking it in his own hands. It wasn't an evil act by Abram taking it in his own hands. However, the consequences of his decision will prove to be difficult upon him.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask You to search our heart, try us, see if there be any evil way in us. You have called us to walk in the light of good. You have

certainly placed evil in the world, but it is there to strengthen us. It is there to increase our resolve. It is there to deepen our love for You as You will even tell us, "Take up your cross and follow Me." Father, we realize the necessity of these things, and that You're oftentimes doing a work through things that we don't see. You're doing a purging in the land, and You're doing a work that is literally invisible to us. In our heart, we grow passionate against pain and sorrow and hurt. But how wonderful it is to know that we have a sovereign God that is causing all things to work together for good.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what I'm asking you to do is not to embrace evil. Let God handle that one. God will use it as an operating tool in your life. Nevertheless, God has called us to good, and we believe that as we do good and trust in God, that He will actually defeat evil with good. We believe that. Trust Him today. Thank Him for His goodness. Thank Him for His deliverance because there is no Savior but God.