

“THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES”

Genesis 15 records the story of a covenant made between the patriarch Abraham and the LORD. Part of that covenant included a prophecy uttered by God concerning Abraham’s descendants, in which He said,

“Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs (and will serve them, and they will afflict them) four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete” (v13-16).

Let’s now examine closely this often misunderstood prophecy in order to grasp its vital significance. First, the prophecy did not directly affect Abraham, but rather his descendants. The 400-years would only begin following his death, when Abraham’s descendants (Isaac and Jacob) would be strangers in Canaan for 115 years, until Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, where they continued to live as strangers for 71 more years until the death of Joseph.

Still more years passed until a Pharaoh ascended the throne “who did not know Joseph” (Ex. 1:8), and who instituted the slavery. The four generations would be Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses (Ex. 6:16-20). So the Israelites’ slavery did not last 400 years as many believe, but rather, probably less than 200 years. It was Abraham’s descendants who would live as “strangers” for 400 years. The prophecy was fulfilled 400 years following the death of Abraham when Joshua concluded the conquest of Canaan.

The land of Canaan was named for the progenitor of most of its inhabitants, Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. His sons are listed in Genesis 10:15-19, and their names correspond with the “seven nations” that were to be “cast out” of Canaan by the Israelites (Deut. 7:1,2). Among them were the Amorites, who for unknown reasons came to be representative of all the inhabitants of Canaan. Perhaps the Amorites were the largest nation, or the most formidable. After all, they are described as a race of giants (Amos 2:9), who were the first Canaanites to be conquered under Joshua.

So the “iniquity of the Amorites” is expanded to refer to the immoral degeneration to which the inhabitants of Canaan had descended after 400 years. Some of their sinful culture is described in Leviticus 18, and it includes incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality. By the time of Joshua, the sins of these people were “complete”—so rife and particularly grotesque and perverse that God considered the unrepentant Canaanites irredeemable as human beings.

This circumstance had happened before. Prior to the Flood mankind had become completely “corrupt” and the “earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11-13). So God gave man 120 years in which to repent (v3), while Noah built an ark and preached about righteousness (II Pet. 2:5). Centuries following the Flood, the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were completely given over to the “grievous” sin of homosexuality (Gen. 18:20). We know what happened to them, and centuries later in the time of Joshua, their brethren should have remembered.

Millennia have passed since these kinds of judgments have been meted out by God. The world considers them mere fables anyway. The apostle Peter wrote about “scoffers...in the last days, walking according to their own lusts [who] willfully forget” the lesson of the Flood (II Pet. 3:3-6). Throughout the Christian age God has been “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all

should come to repentance” (v9). Meanwhile the vast majority of mankind has been rushing pell-mell to complete the iniquity of the Amorites.

Are we there yet, are we even close? Why, we are certainly not into child sacrifice like the ancient pagans were, you say. Oh, yes we are! Every year an estimated 40-50 **million** babies are aborted and sacrificed on the altar of women’s reproductive rights, otherwise called “walking according to their own lusts.” The sins of the Amorites pale when contrasted with the child sacrifice of today!

Heterosexual immorality, either before or outside of a marriage has long since ceased to raise eyebrows. Vows of chastity before marriage are viewed with wonderment as quaint and old fashioned, even in the churches. Sex between a man and woman beginning only within the sanctity of marriage is a rare thing in today’s world, because most prefer “walking according to their own lusts.”

Homosexuality has been around at least since Canaan raped his grandfather, Noah, after the Flood. And so it is the **degree** with which this perverseness is accepted today as an “alternative lifestyle,” again, even in the churches, which makes it so grievous.

The iniquity of the Amorites is fast ripening to completion in today’s world, and this time God says to the scoffers, “But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (II Pet. 3:7). Following a lengthy list of the iniquity of the modern Amorites (Rom. 1:18-32), the apostle Paul continued, “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (2:5).

Alarming, many Christians are being swallowed up by these sins. We are the light of the world, but too many are allowing the darkness to extinguish their light. We are the salt of the world, but too many are allowing the world to water down and dilute their savor. The world hates faithful Christians (Jn. 15:18,19). Do not fear that hatred as you stand up against the iniquity of the Amorites!