

# INIQUITY IS NOT COMPLETE

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Sunday, 01 July 2012

## INIQUITY IS NOT YET COMPLETE

By Jim Jordal

When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. Now terror and great darkness fell on him. He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great wealth, but you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. In the fourth generation they will come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full."

Genesis 15:12-16, WEB

The Bible often uses the Hebrew experience of slavery in Egypt and deliverance by divine intervention (under Moses) as a metaphor for oppression of God's people later in history and their eventual freeing by a leader anointed by God. This little-known passage is in the form of a vision given by God to Abram (not yet named Abraham) that his people would endure slavery in a foreign land at some later date. It also predicts their eventual deliverance under Moses and their accumulation of great wealth from the defeated Egyptians. But Abram is also warned that the entrance of his people into the Promised Land some 500 years later would be delayed because the "iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

God judged the Egyptian oppressors during Moses's conversations with Pharaoh and the resulting plagues as Pharaoh refused to listen to entreaties for freedom. But another group of Israel's enemies remained to be judged: the Canaanites (referred to here in the generic name Amorites) who were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of Israel as she attempted to enter the Promised Land. So Abraham was warned that his people under Moses still would not achieve deliverance from oppression until the Amorites received God's judgment.

The historical record is replete with numerous episodes of enslavement and deliverance for God's people. The periods of oppression usually begin with their rejection of God and his law in some serious way. They end when God's people suffer enough to comprehend that perhaps God had something to do with their predicament, and that perhaps they might recover if they should return to him. This they do, and a new leader/deliverer arises. But the cycle repeats again as the wayward people return to various forms of idolatry and rejection of God.

I think these cycles of apostasy, repentance, deliverance, liberty, and renewed idolatry can enlighten us concerning America's plight today. With all the praying for deliverance and justice, why does deliverance not yet come? And when it does come (like after the Civil War or following the Great Depression or World War Two), why does it not persist?

It doesn't persist because we like sheep follow whatever perversion of entertainment, politics, economics, or even religion, comes along. Mainly, these deviations from God's way occur as money, power, and ego gratification seduce our civil and business leaders. They then take advantage of our national gullibility to lead us down perilous paths like militarism, domination, financial manipulation and all the other perversions of righteousness and justice you see daily.

The prophet Jeremiah put it this way: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23, WEB). When leaders are accustomed to doing evil in the form of denying justice to the people, then how can we expect them to do differently? That's why merely electing different people or different parties doesn't seem to do any good: their behavior is conditioned by years of learning values and allegiances that are greatly at odds with what the people need. Can they change? Not easily!

So the cup of evil is not yet full. The people of this nation have not yet understood that when they forget God bad things happen. The checkered history of God's people is again being played out in America: great blessings, growing apostasy and idolatry, enslavement by either people or conditions, repentance, deliverance, renewed freedom, and the cycle repeating all over again.

I think, however, that this time it's different. World political, economic, social, and ecological conditions indicate that we are now in a time of judgment. At the same time we see God moving people in new ways and in the formation of new groupings aimed at implementing a national return to the Lord. It can't happen soon enough for me.