

March 2007—Our Guide to the Great Unknown

Part 3

As a new believer, I remember discovering a couple of N.T. verses that encouraged me to dig deeper and learn precious truths from the O.T. It was like finding a gold nugget when I first realized that the Old Testament would edify me in my walk with the Lord. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4). “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition . . .” (1 Cor 10:11).

While we’ve only scratched the surface, we are learning from past lessons (that’s a huge assumption on my part). From the account of the Ark of the Covenant, we learn about Jesus Christ and our relationship with Him.

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“... When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God . . . then ye shall remove from your place, and *go after it* . . . that ye may know the way by which ye must go: *for ye have not passed this way heretofore*” (Josh 3:3-4).

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In 2007, we will likely be required to walk some uncharted paths. I’ll review what should be our basis of confidence:

God will guide us through uncharted places (v. 4)

Remember, we are to walk by faith, not by sight! While this teaching runs throughout scripture, Habakkuk was the first to pointedly state this truth (Hab 2:4), then God repeats it three times (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). By faith, keep your eyes on the ark, which without a doubt is a picture of Jesus Christ.

God will grant us His unfailing promises (v. 7)

It was the ark of the “covenant”. And just as God was with Moses and Joshua, he will be with us! Even though we are missionaries (or should I say, “*especially because we are missionaries*”), we must still dig in to the Word, to better know the author of the promises! This is crucial as we develop an “I’ll move when he moves” paradigm.

God will guard us with His unfailing power (vv.9-17)

Let’s keep it simple; in Christ, you can pass through raging rivers of difficulty because of God’s power! He will see you through—victoriously! Isn’t the typology representing Jesus Christ beautiful! As we cultivate our relationship with Him, we will better understand *when* He moves, and we will move *with* Him.

Having discovered all that, I was somewhat perplexed by verse 4. They were to keep a distance of two thousand cubits between them and the ark. How, I wondered, does that fit in? This helped me: Heb. 12:2 teaches "looking unto Jesus." When I studied the phrase, I discovered that it means to *consider intently, to perceive, to take heed*. No surprise there. But the root of the word has to do with separation, departure or cessation. Hmm? Then I discovered that a Bible scholar translated it "off looking unto Jesus." I like it! The teaching is that we should look away from everything else (off looking), toward Jesus. It is the concept of the runner looking away from every distraction toward the goal. We are to look away from everything else toward our Savior.

If we are not careful, we can look so intently at the devil, or self, or difficulties, or circumstances, or people, or heartache, or even past failures, that we become improperly focused and miss the blessings and resources of our Savior. Use your peripheral vision only enough to know that you can't do it; that's enough! Then you should be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith". Some have called it *planned neglect*; planning to neglect everything else, then make the precious Savior our focal point.

In verse 5 there is another thought; they were to sanctify themselves. How do we sanctify ourselves? At the risk of oversimplification, we do that through faithfulness in the Word, prayer and repentance. We ought to be fired up by these valuable truths, for when we cultivate our relationship with Him, we will know *when He moves and can go after (with) Him!* What a delightful prospect as I face some of the uncertainties that will surely come my way.

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