

Sunday – March 5, 2017

Preparation

This week will take us on an amazing journey through the conclusion of the Book of Deuteronomy and into the Book of Joshua. Israel will experience deep sorrow with the loss of Moses, yet, they will fall under the leadership of Joshua of whom the Bible tells us, “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Deuteronomy 34:9)

On a practical note concerning Moses and Joshua, pay special attention to how this transition takes place. In Deuteronomy 34:7 the Bible tells us “And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.” How incredible! We can derive that Moses was in full strength and health at the moment God took him. Of course, we can understand from previous chapters that Moses would never enter into the promised land of Canaan because of His outburst of disobedience toward God (Numbers 20:12). That being said, it’s still amazing how God designed this plan for Moses to be taken out of the way, yet, Joshua was prepared to take charge in leading the nation of Israel into that new land. It’s clear that Moses was influential in the life of Joshua. Furthermore, it’s also clear that God’s idea of “discipleship” has carried on for centuries.

As we prepare for this week of reading, let’s again spend some time in prayer tuning our hearts and minds to what we will read and the truths that we’ll find in the chapters we read. Perhaps you have fallen behind; don’t let that be a hindrance to picking up tomorrow’s devotional and continuing this journey with us. Understand that the devil would love nothing more than to see all of us fail on this journey. Don’t let it be you, because far too much is riding on our relationship with this Book.

TODAY’S READING: Deuteronomy 18 - 22

OVERVIEW:

Levites and Priests; Prophets; Cities of refuge; Civil statutes; Warfare; Unknown Murders; Family statutes; Civil statutes; Adultery

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

If Moses walked onto our platform to speak tonight, he could use the first 14 verses as his text. His instructions and warnings speak to today’s issues. The first section deals with the compensation of spiritual leaders and the second addresses nine issues of the occult. The Apostle Paul writes about these same matters in I Corinthians 9:13, 14; 10:21, 22 and Galatians 5:19-21.

Verses 15 through 19 give one of the greatest prophecies of our Lord Jesus Christ. Another prophet like Moses will come! Throughout the Gospels, Jesus was asked if He was that prophet. John the Baptist announced: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John 1:11-12 says: “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” The people that knew this verse from Deuteronomy missed the fulfillment.

Cities of refuge are described again in Chapter 19. As in our study on Day 55, the cities picture the refuge we have in Christ. As the innocent manslayer would tell his story to the elders of the city, Psalm 62:8 tells us to pour out our heart to God, who is our refuge.

The chapter concludes with several civil statutes. Moving a landmark is stealing land from your neighbor. Matters of law are established with two or more witnesses. (How many times have we established something in our own mind on the word of only one person?) The person who sued for some amount in a false lawsuit, would be required to pay that amount to the defendant. Wouldn’t that limit today’s lawsuits? The commandment of fair and just judgments of the last verse is to the civil government. Sadly, it is soon twisted to provide an excuse for personal vengeance, vengeance that is always reserved by and for the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19).

Israel is going to have an unusual army! Instead of a general, a priest is going to

speak to the troops. But that is not surprising; verse 4 reminds them that their strength and victory is the Lord. Four reasons are given that excuse a man from fighting: a new house, a new vineyard, a new wife or just afraid. The children of Israel are to seek peace when possible except for the six nations listed in Deuteronomy 20:17. These nations have been listed repeatedly as the nations that must be completely destroyed. If they survive, they will bring false gods and worship to Israel and be thorns in their sides continually.

In chapter 21, after dealing with the offering to cleanse the land for an unsolved murder and instructions for taking a wife from the captives of the new land, Moses gives statutes for families. Inheritances are to be divided by statutes and not emotions. Stubbornness and rebelliousness lead to death. Look carefully. Three times it is written that the son will not obey or hearken to the voice of the parents. Our goal in raising a child is that our voice will control and instruct their little body and mind. As our child matures, the control and guidance is moved to the Lord and His Word.

Chapter 22 gives statutes on many civil and family matters from taking care of your brother's belongings, to clothing, to construction, to plowing, to divorce, to adultery. Over and over again the statutes and commandments are written to purify and sanctify a land that God would dwell in with His people. This had been a land of transvestites, a land of incest and adultery, a land of selfishness and self-involvement. The Lord desired a pure and holy nation in an undefiled land. II Corinthians 6:16, 17 tell us to come out from the evil of the land and be a separated people to our Lord!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As PROPHET – Deut. 18:15 (John 5:46; Acts 3:22, 23) As SIN BEARER – Deut. 21:22, 23 (Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24)

Tuesday – March 7, 2017

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 23-26

OVERVIEW:

Requirements to be in the congregation; Cleanliness; Civil statutes; Divorce; Civil statutes; First offering; Charge to hear and obey

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

When you see all of the statutes the nation of Israel were given, aren't you glad that Christ fulfilled the Law for us? Don't you love "the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3), as we hear Him say that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and that the second is like it, to love thy neighbor as thyself? (Mark 12:30-31)

Certain people were not to be admitted into the citizenship of the children of Israel. They could reside in the area, but due to impurities (mutilation, illegitimacy, ancestry) they could not join the congregation of Israel. The Lord desired a pure congregation of His people. Sins had a lasting consequence. Inside the congregation, purity and cleanliness had an important place; the statutes in chapter 23 reminded the people that the Lord was in their midst. (See II Cor. 6:16-18)

The last of chapter 23 speaks of vows and generosity. As in Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5, do not delay to pay vows; it is better not to vow than to not pay the vow. Verses 24 and 25 tell the children of Israel that they are to be a generous people while reminding them not to take advantage of the generosity of others.

In Matthew 5 and 19, the Lord deals with the issue of divorce from Deuteronomy 24. Divorce was not God's plan from the beginning (Matthew 19:8); Christ says divorce is here "*because of the hardness of your hearts.*" In verse 2, the woman is permitted to go and be another man's wife. But in verse 4, she is referred to as being defiled. Once again, sin has a lasting consequence.

Workers, servants and the poor are to be treated fairly. The rich and powerful are not to oppress. The stranger, the fatherless and the widow have a special place in God's economy. God wanted Israel to always remember that they had been slaves in Egypt, and wanted them to treat others in their affliction the way God had treated them (See Eph. 4:31-32). This new land and nation is to be a nation of abundant generosity and care for others. If the children of God are to be a reflection of their Father, they (we) must be abundantly generous!

Chapter 25 gives direction to the judges and then describes the special relationship of the kinsman redeemer, another incredible revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Ruth (especially the fourth chapter), gives the story of Boaz performing the statutes found here in verses 5 and 6. Boaz is the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ redeeming a Gentile bride for Himself. What an amazing Book!

The chapter continues with statutes for honesty in business. In the commerce of that day, merchants would carry balances with their own weights for transactions. Some determined that they could have weights for buying and different weights for selling; I mean, who would know the difference? The omniscient Lord knows of our honesty with people, and deals with us accordingly.

The offering of the first fruits in Chapter 26 is a special one time offering for the first harvest in the new land. There is a time of remembrance, a time of rejoicing and a time of confession (verses 13- 15). They will be in houses that they did not build, eating from crops and gardens that they did not plant. They will be living in beauty and abundance from the hand of the Lord. They will have been brought into the Promised Land!

Verses 16 through 18 are a confirmation of all that has been commanded. The Lord has commanded that these things are to be kept with all the heart and soul. The people have answered and agreed that they will walk in His ways, and keep His commandments. The Lord promises that they will be His peculiar people, holy to Him. The second sermon of Moses in Deuteronomy is ended. My, can that boy preach!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE GENEROUS ONE – Deut. 24:19-21 (II Corinthians 8:9; Romans 8:32)As
THE KINSMAN REDEEMER – Deut. 25:5-6 (Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:13, 14)
As FIRSTFRUIT OFFERING – Deut. 26:10-11 (I Corinthians 15:20, 23)As THE
DELIVERER – Deut. 26:8 (Galatians 1:3, 4)

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 27-30

OVERVIEW:

Altar to be built; Blessing and cursing; New covenant; Return to the Lord; Choice set before the children of Israel

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Moses instructs the children of Israel to set up an altar with the words of the Law written on them. This is done by Joshua (Joshua 8:30-35). The stones of the altar are to be built on two mountains. One is mountain of blessing; the other is the mountain of cursing. The Levites will then speak to all of the people. It is interesting that all that is spoken are curses; there are no blessings. The Law can only bring a curse. Romans 3:20 says there is no justification by the deeds of the law.

Chapter 28 is the chapter of blessing and cursing. If the children of Israel will diligently hearken to the Lord and do His commandments the Lord will set them on high (verse 1). The Lord will bless them in their home, their work, their nation, everything that pertains to them.

But if they will not hearken (verse 15), curses will come on them and overtake them. They will be cursed in their body, their work, their home, their land and their nation. The rain will be dust. In verse 30, the three military exemptions (Deuteronomy 20:5-7) are turned into curses. Without the Lord fighting for them, they will be conquered.

This chapter is a prophecy of the future of Israel. The blessings of the Lord will be seen repeatedly in the kingdom as they obey the Lord. The curses will be seen in the conquests, captivities and the famines throughout the rest of the Old Testament and beyond. Jeremiah cries in the book of Lamentations as he looks out his window and sees the people and the city destroyed.

What can we learn? Immediately we can see that God does what He says He will do! The Lord works and moves in the physical realm of our world. He can bring rain and stop rain; He can physically heal; He can cause a battle to be won. In Daniel, the Babylonians say there are gods, but they don't operate here (Daniel 2:11). Our Lord can answer prayers! Also, verses 47 and 48 (likewise Romans 6:16) remind us that we will serve someone. Will it be the Lord or the enemy?

Chapters 29 and 30 complete the third message from Moses. The covenant and their blindness and inability to keep it begins the chapter. Moses reminds them of the provision and protection of the Lord, the wrath of the Lord and their unique relationship with the Lord. God has revealed secret things to them (verse 29). Chapter 30 looks forward to a time of renewal for the children of Israel; they shall return unto the Lord and obey His voice. The Lord is full of compassion (Psalm 111:4) and will turn their captivity and will bless them again.

Deuteronomy 30 verses 11 through 20 are the invitation to the children of Israel. The words have been plain, not hidden. The choice is upon them. Verse 14 says the choice is in their heart. Life and good or death and evil are their choice. It is our choice. We choose whether or not to obey. Moses closes with: *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life."*

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE PEACE OFFERING – Deut. 27:7 (John 14:27; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20) As THE BLESSING OF GOD – Deut.28:1, 2 (Ephesians 1:3; I Peter 1:3)As LIFE – Deut. 30:15 (John 11:25; 6:40)

Thursday – March 9, 2017

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 31-34

OVERVIEW:

The selection of Joshua; the word from the Lord; the song of Moses; the blessing of the Tribes; the death of Moses; the succession of Joshua.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

A man like no other in all of history prepares to finish his work and die. In Moses' case, you couldn't say he was going to meet the Lord; he already had! He had met Him and been with Him for years. Now he is preparing to move where He is. The new leader will be Joshua, who had been selected to lead in Numbers 27. Moses now charges him and encourages him in the sight of all Israel. Moses had heard face to face from the Lord in Exodus 33 that the Lord would be with him. Moses confirms this presence of the Lord to Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31:9 leaves no question as to who wrote this law. After Moses wrote it, he gave it to the priests to preserve and to read it to the people every seven years. God wants us to know that His Word is for us, y'all, the common people of the land. (See Mark 12:37)

The Lord now calls Moses and Joshua to the tabernacle where He appears in a pillar of a cloud. With this appearance, the children of Israel knew that the Lord had chosen Joshua. The Lord tells Moses that when Israel enters the land and is filled with its goodness, they will turn from Him and serve other gods. Moses is to write a song and teach it to the children of Israel as a witness against them.

Chapter 32 is the song of Moses. God's message is to the whole world, even the universe (verse 1). Not only does Israel need to hear and learn from this song, all men for all of time need to hear of the goodness and the wrath of the Lord. He is true and righteous and His work is perfect (James 1:17). He found Israel and blessed him, but when Israel forsook the Lord, judgment came. In verse 29, Moses wishes that they would understand and consider the results of their deeds. But sin deceives and blinds us; we have an incredibly difficult time seeing its end (James 1:14, 15).

The song continues and reminds both us and the children of Israel that vengeance belongs to the Lord. He has reserved vengeance for Himself. Romans 12:19 says: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Only the Lord knows the thoughts and intents of the heart and can rightly deliver

vengeance; it is never ours to deliver.

The song concludes, Moses teaches it to the children of Israel and the Lord speaks to Moses. It is time for Moses to come up the mountain to die. But we are reminded, as the Lord uses the phrase “gathered unto your people,” that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:32)! Moses will now see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ones to whom the promises of a nation, land, and blessings had been made.

Chapter 33 records the blessing of the tribes by Moses. God’s love is once again remembered in verse 3. It’s interesting to note that no sins of any tribes are recorded. Moses prays for blessings on each tribe. The blessings begin and end with the glory of the Lord.

In the final chapter of the book, Moses climbs to the top of the mountain where he will see the Promised Land, but he will not enter in. Moses dies according to the word of the Lord and God buries him in a valley where nobody knows. Joshua is full of the spirit of wisdom to lead the children of Israel, but there is not another prophet in Israel like Moses.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In JOSHUA – Deut. 31:7 (John 1:17; Romans 3:21, 22; Acts 13:39) In THE ROCK – Deut. 32:4, 31 (Romans 9:33; I Corinthians 10:4; I Peter 2:8)

TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 1-5

OVERVIEW:

The commission of Joshua; the covenant with Rahab; crossing the Jordan river into the promised land; the memorial of the twelve stones; the circumcision of God's people at Gilgal.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Book of Joshua is the story of how Israel crosses the Jordan River and claims the inheritance that God had given them. It took fighting many battles and defeating many enemies in order to actually possess this land. Once again, as only God could, He is painting another incredible picture of the Christian life through His record of Israel's history. Keep in mind as we see God develop these pictures, that Canaan is not a picture of heaven, because we do not have to battle to gain our home in heaven (it is a gift - Eph. 2:8-9). Canaan represents the inheritance that God has for each of us. We have been called to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor (I Thess. 4:4) in order to live the victorious Christian life. For this to happen, we must battle the flesh (Gal. 5:17, II Cor. 10:4-5) and let our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, lead us to victory in every battle, and against every enemy!

The Book of Joshua begins with the ending of a life... "*Moses my servant is dead*" (Josh. 1:2). Moses was the lawgiver, and the law could not give life or defeat sin. Moses brought them to the edge, but Joshua (Jesus) must take them in and give them the victory! Verse 2 continues with... "*now therefore arise*". We must die to ourselves and our self-righteousness (Phil. 3:4-9) and let God raise us up to walk in newness of life every day!

Chapter 2 deals with the Jewish men who were sent to spy out Jericho, and their subsequent covenant with Rahab the harlot. Rahab just happens to be a picture of the spiritual history of every believer in Jesus Christ:

1. She was a sinner – Joshua 2:1 states plainly that she was a harlot (Rom. 3:23).
2. She was under condemnation (John 3:18) – The city had already been declared condemned by God. The city would be destroyed whether or not the people "felt" condemned or not, just like the world today.

3. She heard the Word of God (Josh. 2:8-11) – It was a message of judgment. Note that she calls God "The Lord" in her conversation.
4. She believed the Word – Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Hebrews 11:31 states that Rahab was saved by faith. She obviously had assurance from the Word when she says, "*I KNOW that the Lord hath given to you the land*" (Josh. 2:9).
5. She sought to win others (Josh. 2:12-13) – When a person trusts Christ, their first desire is to share Him with others, especially their own family (Mark 5:18-20).
6. She was delivered from judgment (Josh. 6:22-25) – We, too, have been rescued from God's coming judgment upon this world (I Thess. 4:13-18, II Thess. 1:7-9).
7. She went to a wedding – In Matthew 1:5 we find that Rahab married into the royal lineage of the Nation of Israel. Therefore, the Messiah came through her family. How gracious is our God to take a harlot and make her the mother of the royal family through which Messiah came! We, too, have a wedding and a marriage feast to look forward to (see Rev. 19:7-9, 17-19) because of God's incredible grace!

In chapters 3 and 4, Israel follows Joshua and the Ark of the Covenant across the river Jordan. Note in Joshua 3:16 that the water that flowed down from the city of Adam stood up and was stopped by the Ark. The effects of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12, 17), which flowed from Adam down to us, is stopped by Jesus Christ when we cross over the Jordan and possess our vessel (I Thess 4:4).

In chapter 5, all Jewish males were circumcised. It was a mark of ownership (Gen. 17:1-14) to give external evidence of an internal truth (Deut. 10:16). Circumcision is the cutting away of the flesh that reveals the source of life. If the flesh isn't cut away in our lives, we will not reproduce spiritual life!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through JOSHUA – Joshua 1

Note: His very name means "savior". He is the one who leads us to the promised land.

As RAHAB'S SCARLET THREAD – Joshua 2:18; a type of the blood of Christ which brings about deliverance from judgment, and safety from death.

As CAPTAIN OF THE HOST – Joshua 5:14-15 (Heb. 2:10)

Saturday – March 11, 2017

Reflection

This week brought us to the end of a generation with the end of the Books of Moses, as well as the death of Moses. Through the Book of Deuteronomy, God emphasized, and then re-emphasized, his demand for holiness and cleanliness in His chosen people. Perhaps by the end of our year reading through the word together, we'll all have 1 John 1:5 committed to memory, and even further applying it in our daily lives for, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God, in 1 John 1:6, goes further in telling us, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" With our understanding of how the nation of Israel and their journey through the wilderness is a picture of the believer and his walk through this Christian life, these passages in 1 John relate so well to what we find in Deuteronomy.

In our reading, God presented a choice for the nation of Israel: life and death, blessing and cursing. God, of course, makes the case for the people to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). In comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we could compare this to our lives with what we find in Romans 8. God, through Paul, pens this chapter presenting a "choice" for the child of God, a choice we all face each and every day. Romans 8:5 tells us, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." Quite frankly, the result of the choice we make is much like the nation of Israel faced. It truly is a life or death decision (Romans 8:13). Perhaps the reason that we have so many problems with sin is the fact that we don't emphasize this point enough. It falls directly in line with Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

We closed out the week looking into the transition between Moses and Joshua. Moses, despite his downfalls, had an incredible testimony before God (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). Again, as God designed it, Moses had poured his life into Joshua; therefore the transition in leadership seemed seamless. Ultimately, what made the transition so smooth was Joshua's dedication to the "book of the law". Maybe, as we read through the Book of Joshua and learn of His relationship with God, we'll all be provoked to "meditate therein day and night."

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Deuteronomy 19:20 "And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you."

Deuteronomy 23:14 “For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.”

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

Deuteronomy 33:26 “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.”

Joshua 1:9 “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”