

## WEEK 9, DAY 1: TODAY'S READING: NUMBERS 33–36

### OVERVIEW:

A summary of Israel's 40 years in the wilderness; the dividing of the land of Canaan; the inheritance of the Levites; the cities of refuge; the laws concerning female inheritance within the patriarchal tribe.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In chapter 33, God provides us with a summary of Israel's journeys from Egypt to the Jordan. Note God's stern warning in 33:55: "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell." In the New Testament equivalent, God is picturing here the fact that living in the fullness of victory that He has designed in Christ (i.e. Canaan) is dependent upon us overcoming "every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." (Heb. 12:1) We must be sure we understand that any area of our flesh that we refuse to deal with will become pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides, and shall vex us in our walk with Christ!

In chapter 34, God caused the children of Israel to look ahead to the time when they would possess Canaan, as He assigned to each tribe the portion of their inheritance in the land. The Levites were also assigned their special cities—and perhaps most importantly, the cities of refuge are defined in chapter 35. We will talk further about the cities of refuge as we move into the Book of Joshua, but do note some beautiful pictures of Christ, to Whom we "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. 6:18)

Note some of the beautiful pictures of Christ seen in these cities:

#### 1) THEY WERE APPOINTED BY GOD, NOT MOSES.

Moses did not choose these cities, picturing the fact that the Law (Moses) cannot save anyone. Just as these cities were appointed by God to be a shelter or refuge from judgment as an act of His grace, so Christ, as an act of God's grace (John 3:16), was appointed by God to be our shelter of refuge from the judgment of sin. (John 1:29)

#### 2) THEY WERE ANNOUNCED BY GOD IN HIS WORD.

The six cities are specifically named in Joshua 20:7–8, and could never be changed. There were other cities that were larger and more prominent, but none of them could shelter the sinner. God has also specifically named Christ as the one and only shelter from sin, though many of the world's religions are larger or more prominent. Based on the authority of God's Word, God's "Refuge," Christ, will never change! (John 4:6; Acts 4:12)

#### 3) THEY WERE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL MEN.

The six cities were arranged by God so that no tribe was very far away from the place of safety. They were all very accessible. We are told by the rabbis that there were signposts that pointed the way to the cities of

refuge, and that the gates of these cities were never shut. God has made Christ accessible to all men, even children! (Matt. 18:3) The Holy Spirit is given to point men to Christ (John 16:13-14), and all who come will find His gates open wide! (John 6:37)

4) THE GUILTY HAD TO APPROPRIATE GOD'S PROVISION TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT.

It wasn't enough to know that the cities of refuge existed, or even to believe that they could provide refuge from judgment. The guilty had to actually enter into the city. So, it is not enough that a sinner believe that Christ, as God, existed, or even that they believe that He is God's Refuge from the judgment of sin—the sinner must be "IN CHRIST!" (2 Cor. 5:17)

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

In the PROMISED LAND — Numbers 33:50–54 (Note that the Promised Land was filled with abundance and protection for those who took God at His Word. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.")

In the CITIES OF REFUGE — Numbers 35 (Heb. 6:18–20 – Christ is our Refuge from the judgment of God and the curse of the Law.)

In the INHERITANCE of the children of Israel — Numbers 36:7 (Eph. 1:10–11)

## WEEK 9, DAY 2: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 1–4

### OVERVIEW:

Moses' history lesson: From the Ten Commandments to the spies; the wilderness; the nations avoided; the nations conquered; Joshua charged to be the next leader; the people compelled to heed God's Word.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

We have now made our way to the fifth Book of the Bible, the Book of Deuteronomy. "Deuteronomy" simply means "second law." But understand, that it's not actually "another law" that is being given in this Book, it's simply a "second giving of the law" that is being given for a generation that had not heard the "first giving of the law" at Sinai. And notice, however, that there is a marked difference between this second giving of the law and the first. When God gave the law the first time in the Book of Exodus, it was pretty much: "OBEY ME because I'm God—and because I SAID!" It was a RESPONSIBILITY—and that responsibility was connected to DUTY. But in the Book of Deuteronomy, when God gave the law the second time, it is beautifully associated with a different word. This time it's connected to LOVE! And for the first time, God talks about His LOVE for His PEOPLE... and the desire in His heart for His people to LOVE HIM! And God lets His people know in this Book, that yes, He wants us to OBEY Him, but He wants us to do it, NOT because we feel that it is our RESPONSIBILITY... NOT out of a sense of OBLIGATION or DUTY... NOT out of FEAR, or because of the CONSEQUENCES if we don't... but because of LOVE! Sure, it is a RESPONSIBILITY, but it is to fulfill the LAW of LOVE!

It should be noted that the Jews referred to the first five Books of the Bible as the Torah, meaning "teaching, doctrine or instruction." Christians commonly refer to these same Books as "the Pentateuch," which comes from a compound Greek word that means "five books." Jesus referred to these first five Books of the Old Testament in at least three ways:

- 1) As "the law." (Matt. 5:17, 18; 7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 22:40; Luke 10:26; 16:16; John 7:19)
- 2) As "the law of Moses." (Luke 24:44; John 7:23)
- 3) As "Moses." (Luke 16:29; John 5:45, 46)

It is also interesting to note that the New Testament writers quote the Book of Deuteronomy more than any Old Testament Book—at least 80 times! In our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, with each one, He quoted a verse relevant to the temptation, and interestingly enough, each of the three verses He quoted were from the Book of Deuteronomy! (Matt. 4:4/Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:7/Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:10/Deut. 6:13)

By comparing the LAST verse of the Book of Numbers with the FIRST verse of the Book of Deuteronomy, it helps us to contextualize and summarize God's intention through both of these Books. In short, the Book of Numbers is God's "commands and judgments" given through Moses while the children of Israel were in the plains of Moab—and the Book of Deuteronomy is a series of addresses Moses gave to the children of Israel as they prepared to enter into the land of promise in Canaan.

- 1) Moses' first address. (Deut. 1–4)
- 2) Moses' second address. (Deut. 5–26)
- 3) Moses' third address. (Deut. 27–30)
- 4) Moses' parting words. (Deut. 31–34)

The urgency and passion behind Moses' words in these addresses is more than apparent. He "preaches" as a man fully aware that his death is imminent. Oh, may we likewise preach as a dying man—to dying men!

It is believed that the date of the writing of this Book was sometime shortly AFTER delivering the addresses, and sometime shortly BEFORE his death (34:5) in approximately 1405 B.C. Obviously, the record of Moses' death and of what took place after it in Deuteronomy 34 is a divinely inspired appendix to the Book that was written by another author—most likely, his successor and longtime partner in ministry, Joshua.

Keep in mind that the children of Israel in the Old Testament are a picture of the individual believer in the New Testament. Just as has been pictured through the children of Israel in the Books of Exodus to Deuteronomy, AFTER being delivered out of the bondage of "Egypt" (our deliverance from our bondage to sin, Satan and self—i.e. the world)—BEFORE we can actually enter into the promised land of "Canaan" (the victorious Christian life... the life of fullness, fruit-bearing and abundance in Christ!), there is a WILDERNESS to go through! It is the part of our journey where we, like the children of Israel, must learn to submit our stubborn wills to the will of our Lord as it is revealed through His Word. None of us will enter into the life of abundance God intended our salvation to bring (John 10:10) without experiencing this absolute surrender of ourselves and our wills. It has been said that it took God approximately 40 HOURS to bring the children of Israel out of EGYPT—but it took approximately 40 YEARS to bring EGYPT out of the children of Israel! (And remember, it was only an 11 day journey through the wilderness—Deut. 1:2!)

Note in chapter 3 and verse 24 that Moses makes reference to God's wondrous works in Israel's exodus as only what He had "begun" to do to show Moses and the children of Israel His "greatness" and His "mighty hand." And so it is with our exodus! Paul said in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath BEGUN a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!" Yes, God did a mighty work in delivering us out of Egypt (the world/sin), but He has great and mighty works He still intends to perform in our lives in bringing us into the Promised Land (the life of abundance and fullness in Christ).

Take special note that Moses' words to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 4:29 are the words chosen as the theme verse to inspire us and direct us through the 52 Weeks of Pursuit. Obviously, this is a promise given specifically to the children of Israel, and yet, the general principle revealed in this verse is one that has application for people in every generation and in every dispensation. God has always desired that His people see Him through the revelation of His holy Word, and when our pursuit of Him is so passionate that it involves all of our heart and all of our soul, the reality is, we will find Him! May that continue to be our passionate pursuit in the remaining 43 weeks of our 52 Weeks of Pursuit!

Deuteronomy 4:30 is a very significant verse for our times. Many (most?) Christians from an "evangelical" persuasion (meaning, fundamentally sound regarding the need for and means of salvation) are now teaching that God is finished with the Jew, and that the church has replaced Israel. The ramifications and dangers of this teaching are huge. One of the strongest indictments in the entire New Testament is related to this very teaching! In dictating to John the letter to the church in Smyrna in Revelation 2, our Lord Jesus Christ said that those who say they are Jews when they are not (and as Gentile, church age believers, we most definitely are not!), make themselves of "the synagogue of Satan!" In other words, this is a satanically-inspired teaching! The most popular violator is, no doubt, the Roman Catholic Church who believes that their first, so-called "Pope," Peter, the Apostle to the Jews, was the one given the keys to the kingdom of heaven—which is the literal, physical, governmental kingdom promised to the Jews (the nation of Israel—Acts 1:7). But the teaching that the church has replaced Israel in God's program has now also made its way into most, quote-unquote, "evangelical" churches and institutions of higher learning. What usually

accompanies this teaching is that there will be no Rapture, and, subsequently, no Tribulation Period and Millennium. Way back in Deuteronomy 4:30–31, however, the Bible very clearly spells out something completely different! Verses 30 and 31 say, "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them." In other words, once the church has been removed at the Rapture, which then ushers in the Tribulation Period, God will fulfill His promises to the Nation of Israel! Please note that maintaining this distinction is vital to properly understand the Bible and to remain steadfast in sound doctrine.

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE – Deuteronomy 1:17 (2 Tim. 4:8)

As DELIVERER – Deuteronomy 1:30; 2:33; 3:3 (Rom. 8:21; Gal. 1:4)

As THE FAITHFUL ONE – Deuteronomy 2:9,12,19 (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 John 1:9)

As TEACHER – Deuteronomy 4:14 (John 8:28)

As THE ONE TRUE GOD – Deuteronomy 4:35,39 (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Col. 2:9)

As THE LOVER OF MEN – Deuteronomy 4:37 (John 15:13; Titus 3:4,5)

## WEEK 9, DAY 3: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 5–8

### OVERVIEW:

A recounting of the Ten Commandments; the Greatest Commandment; Instructions for new homes; Instruction for the new land; admonitions to remember the Lord.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As Moses begins his second address to the people in chapter 5 in preparation for their entrance into the land of Canaan, he reminds them of their responsibility to HEAR the Word of God... to LEARN it... to KEEP it... and to DO it! As we are pursuing God on a SPIRITUAL journey into the land of abundance and fruitfulness that He's designed for us "in Christ," may we heed these admonitions with the same fervor and passion we would expect the children of Israel to have had in anticipation of God leading them in their PHYSICAL journey into the land of promise. May we likewise be passionate to HEAR... LEARN... KEEP... and DO the Word of God!

Moses then reminds the children of Israel of the importance of them taking PERSONALLY the covenant God had made with them. He says in 5:3, "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." May Moses' words to the children of Israel serve as a great reminder that the covenant of grace and to which those of us who comprise His church have entered—are spiritual realities God intends for each of us to take very PERSONALLY—making certain we have made PERSONAL APPLICATION of all of His commands and promises. The promises of the new covenant God made aren't just intended for our forefathers... they are for US!

Moses then begins to recount to the people the infamous 10 Commandments that he had previously received. Deuteronomy 5:29 gives us a beautiful glimpse into the heart of God and the desire He has for His people: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Our Lord Jesus Christ expressed this same heart and sentiment in Matthew 23:37, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" May we always be certain that our HEARTS are set upon the Lord—to fear Him, and to ALWAYS keep ALL of His commandments.

In chapter 6:4–5, Moses gives what Jesus referred to as the "Great Commandment." It is simply this: that based off of our firm belief that the God of the Bible is the one and only God and Lord—we are to love Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our might.

Moses then instructs the people to make sure that they took responsibility for taking the words God was using him to speak to them that day—and teaching them to their children. Obviously, this screams to us the responsibility we have of teaching our children the Word of God. (Eph. 6:4) We must recognize, however, that the responsibility of teaching our children the Word of God does not simply mean taking them to church for someone else to teach them. It can certainly be a wonderful blessing to have others come alongside of us in this task, but we must understand that the responsibility to teach our children the Word of God was given solely to us as their parents! And notice in verse 7 chapter 6, we must not only "teach them" the Word of God, but "teach them DILIGENTLY!" We must not take this responsibility flippantly, or approach it haphazardly! He continues on in verse 7 to explain what it looks like in real life for us to "DILIGENTLY" teach our children. He tells us that it should include the times when we are simply sitting with them in our house; when we're with them on our way somewhere (walking or driving); when we're putting them to

bed at night; and in the morning when they wake up. Perhaps it shouldn't surprise us that it is these very times that the clamor of this world and the distractions of the devil have sought to take from us. Oh, may we seek to reclaim these special times for the Lord and our children!

But also recognize that this passage lets us know that it's not simply enough to "TELL" our children all the right stuff about God—and simply to "TELL" our children how to have a relationship with Him. This passage tells us that these things must be MODELED for them! Perhaps the most iMPORTANT instruction God gives to parents in this passage about how to instruct their children—is also the most OVERLOOKED instruction in this passage! God says to parents in verse 6, "And these words, which I command thee (parents) this day, (listen now!) SHALL BE IN THINE HEART!" You see, the fact is, many parents teach their children, and even "DILIGENTLY" teach their children, and yet, it ultimately "doesn't work," for the simple fact that the things they were teaching their children weren't, first and foremost, "IN THEIR HEART!" The right words were coming out of their LIPS—but the right words weren't being modeled through their LIFE! We must recognize the instruction God intends for our children to receive from us must not only be TAUGHT to them—it must also be CAUGHT by them! Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, God's Word must be in our HEARTS!

Notice also that God warns the children of Israel (and us!), of the tendency we have as humans to FORGET GOD. God warns that there is a danger that after struggling in our journey to get to the place God intends for us to be, that we will become COMFORTABLE and COMPLACENT, and forget God, and all HE did to bring us into the place where His promises are being fulfilled in our lives.

As Moses then points them toward the future, he also warns of the danger of making COMPROMISES with the enemy, and tells us that we must likewise instill this disdain for the enemy into our children. Oh parents, may we both TEACH verbally and MODEL practically for our children, God's instruction in 2 Corinthians 6:17–18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE EVERLASTING COVENANT – Deuteronomy 5:2 (Heb. 13:20,21; John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47)

As MEDIATOR – Deuteronomy 5:5 (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6)

As WELL-PLEASING – Deuteronomy 6:18 (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Luke 3:22)

As CALLED OUT OF EGYPT – Deuteronomy 6:21 (Matt. 2:13–15)

As ONE WHO WILL SMITE THE NATIONS – Deuteronomy 7:2 (Rev. 19:15)

As REDEEMER – Deuteronomy 7:8 (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12)

As ONE WHO WILL REPAY FACE TO FACE – Deuteronomy 7:10 (Rev. 1:7)

## WEEK 9, DAY 4: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 9–12

### OVERVIEW:

God's promises to the fathers; God's grace to the undeserving; Second tables of commandments; Love and obedience; Blessing and cursing; Ordinances

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we move into Deuteronomy 9 in today's reading, the big day has actually arrived! It has been 14,400 days since the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry land when God delivered them from their bondage in Egypt. According to Deuteronomy 1:2, the journey into the promised land has taken them 14,378 more days than it needed to! A simple 11 day journey has actually turned into 14,400 days! But in Deuteronomy 9:1, God told them, "Thou art to pass over Jordan this day." (Note: Their actual crossing of the Jordan and into the promised land won't be recorded until Joshua chapter 3.)

Sadly, in those 14,378 "unnecessary" days in the wilderness, an entire generation has died because of their failure to take God at His Word. Recognize that every single one of them died having never experienced the purpose God intended when He graciously delivered them from Egypt. Because you see, according to what we saw in yesterday's reading in Deuteronomy 6:23, the children of Israel's exodus out of Egypt was never intended by God to be an end in itself—it was simply a means to another end. Moses told them, "And he (God) brought us OUT from thence (Egypt), that he might bring us IN, to give us the land (Canaan) which he swear unto our fathers." May we, likewise, never forget that our deliverance out of the bondage of our sin—as glorious as that was and is—is not an end in itself! Just as with Israel, God brought us OUT, that He might bring us IN! We were delivered OUT of our sin so we could be brought IN to the life of fullness, abundance and fruit-bearing found in Christ—by taking Him at His Word by faith. As Paul recounts the story of Israel's victory in the exodus and their failure in the wilderness in 1 Corinthians 10, he pleads with us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to make sure that what happened to THEM after their PHYSICAL exodus, doesn't happen to US after our SPIRITUAL exodus! Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:6, "Now these things were our examples," and repeats it five verses later, "Now all these things happen unto THEM for ensamples: and they are written for OUR admonition." (10:11) Oh, may we have ears to hear that warning—and to heed it!

And yet, in Deuteronomy 9, before God brings the children of Israel into the land, there's still another danger of which He needs to warn them. God knew that because of how "stiffnecked" this people actually was, that after settling into this new land, they might have the tendency to think they had entered this land because of who they were, or something they had done. On three separate occasions in this chapter Moses tells them to make sure that after coming into the land of Canaan, they didn't get to thinking they had gotten there because they were just so good—or "righteous." In 9:4 he says, "Speak not thou in thine heart... For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me IN to possess their land." In 9:5 he says, "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land." In 9:6 he reiterates it yet again, "Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people." Oh my brothers and sisters, may we glean from the Book of Deuteronomy, that most Christians will die in the wilderness of life having never experienced God's purpose in their exodus—and for those who actually do enter the land, we must be on high alert that pride doesn't somehow creep in and cause us to think that we are experiencing the abundant life because of who we are or something we've done. Be it known, if we will experience the abundant life (Canaan), it will be because of the righteousness of Christ, and because of His matchless grace! Paul asks a beautifully pertinent

question in Romans 3:27: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

And just a few other things to have up on your radar in today's reading...

9:2–6...

In our quest to live in the reality of the abundant life found in Christ, there are many Anakims (or giants!) who will seek to intimidate us and/or defeat us. Our God, however is a "consuming fire"—and "he shall destroy them." (9:3) God tells us that this is a principle we must "understand!" The battle is the Lord's—and we simply stand in the victory He has wrought.

9:5–27...

Like the children of Israel, we must remember that God says that when He found us and delivered us out of our bondage, we were "unrighteous" (9:5), "stiffnecked" (9:6,13), "rebellious" (9:7,24), "corrupt" (9:12), "sinful" (9:16), "wicked" (9:18, 27) and "stubborn." (9:27) Wow! We were a mess!

10:12 and 11:13...

In these two verses, notice that once again, God reiterates and re-emphasizes the "Great Commandment." God wants us to LOVE Him, y'all!

10:18–19...

In these verses, the Lord introduces us to the biblical reality that He has great concern and interest in His heart for the fatherless (orphans), widows and strangers (aliens)—and that we should as well! (Jam. 1:27)

11:18–21...

The Lord reiterates the responsibility we have as parents to make certain that we bring our children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), and that we bring up "faithful children." (Titus 1:6) He tells us here that we are to teach them at all times, and through every possible means (11:19–20)—but once again, the Lord emphasizes that this instruction cannot simply come from our minds or our mouths—it must rise forth out of our hearts and our very souls, and be a part of the very fabric of who we are! (11:18)

11:13–17; 11:22–25...

Note that the promise of blessing in the new land was dependent upon their LOVE of God and their OBEDIENCE to Him.

11:26–28...

Notice that whether we live in the midst of the Lord's BLESSING (represented in Mount Gerizim—9:29) or the Lord's CURSING (represented in Mount Ebal—9:29)—the choice is ours. Obedience brings blessings. Disobedience brings cursing (or conflict).

12:1–32...

Notice in these verses that there is an important principle/phrase that begins to be repeated about there being "a place" in the promised land where "the Lord had chosen" as the place "for His name to dwell." (12:5,11,14,18,26.) Note also that Moses continues talking about this "place" in Deuteronomy 14:23,24,25; 15:20; and 16:2,6,7,15,16.) The word "dwell" is defined for us in 1 Kings 8:13 as a "settled place." Perhaps we could say it this way... God was looking for some place on this sinful planet where who He is in all of His glory was able to be "established" and "at

home." What just absolutely transcends human comprehension, however, is that for those of us who comprise the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "place" in which the Lord our God has now "chosen" as the place He intends for "His name to dwell"... that place where who He is in all of His glory is able to be "settled" and "at home"... is "IN" us! Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:16, "...ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Hallelujah!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE BURNT OFFERING — Deuteronomy 12:16 (Eph. 5:2, Heb. 10:10,12)

## WEEK 9, DAY 5: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 13–17

### OVERVIEW:

Warnings against following other gods; Clean and unclean animals; Seven year release; Bond servants; Three feasts; Civil judgments; Kings

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

If you've ever wondered just how JEALOUS our Lord is for the undivided ATTENTION of the MINDS of His people and the undivided AFFECTION of the HEARTS of His people—look no further than Deuteronomy 13! And if you've ever wondered just how ZEALOUS Satan is to divert the minds and hearts of God's people away from Him—again, we need not look further than Deuteronomy 13! This chapter lets us know that Satan will go to great lengths to counterfeit and falsify the Word of God through his own false prophets—in an attempt to move the hearts of God's people from solely loving, worshipping and obeying Him. Notice that God warns the children of Israel that this deception can arise from three main sources. (Note also that it is precisely these three deceptive sources for which God's people are vulnerable and need to be warned in the 21st century!)..

1. From someone performing signs and wonders. Historically and biblically, miracles, signs and wonders have had a place in the purposes of God. However, in and of themselves, they have never been the ultimate test of truth. (Exo. 7:11,22; 8:7) Keep in mind that after the rapture of the church, 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 explains that Satan, in the person of the Antichrist, will dazzle the world with "all all power and signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness!" (Also see Rev. 12:9; 16:14)
2. From someone using the intimacy of their relationship to draw people away from the Lord. (Such as a family member, a relative, or close friend.)
3. From being drawn away by a foreign philosophy of life and/or foreign practices of worship.

And recognize that this isn't just an Old Testament phenomenon. In the middle of the 1st century, the Apostle Paul was concerned that the people of the church in Colossae would be deceived by the enticing words and/or empty philosophies of men (Col 2:4–8), and that the people of the church in Corinth might likewise be beguiled by the subtlety of Satan through "his ministers." (2 Cor. 11:3,15a) And notice also, that this wasn't just a 1st century phenomenon either! Be it known that Satan's "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:15b) are also alive and well in the 21st century!

And just who might these "false prophets" be in our world today? Just who are these "ministers of Satan" who appear to be speaking for God, but in the process of their "ministry," are actually turning people to follow and serve other gods? One good place to begin looking are with those who "in the name of God," are turning people away from Him to serve the god of "money" (1 Tim. 6:10), the god of "self" (2 Tim. 3:2), the god of "pleasure" (2 Tim. 3:4) and/or the god of "this present evil world!" (2 Tim. 4:10; Gal. 1:4) There's a bunch of 'em, y'all!

Deuteronomy 13 also lets us know how unpermissive, incompassionate and vengeful God is toward any person Satan is able to use for such purposes—and/or any person who falls prey to their deception! Moses tells them that when they come into the promised land, if there is ever any person who is seeking to turn people away from loving and following the one true God, they are to be immediately killed—regardless of whether it be a family member, or a

friend with whom they were joined in the soul! Wow! I'd say God is pretty serious about how He feels about the divided allegiance and affection of His people!

God goes on to explain that once they came into the land, if there ever was a city that had hearkened unto one or more of these Satanic prophets and had begun serving other gods, the children of Israel were to come into that city and completely annihilate every person and every animal—and then gather together all of the contents and goods of the city into a big heap—burn them to the ground along with everything else in the city—and allow the ruins to forever be a reminder that there is one Lord in Israel, and Him only shalt thou serve! (Deut. 5:9) "Behold the...severity of God!" (Rom.11:22)

As we move into chapter 14, Moses reminds the children of Israel that as God's people, He intends for them to stand out from the other nations of the world because of their relentless surrender to personal holiness. (14:2) He gives clear instruction that they are not to worship like the rest of the world worships (14:1), and that even their dietary practices were to be different (peculiar) from the rest of the world. (14:3–21) The list of clean and unclean animals would separate the children of Israel from the other inhabitants of the land. Because the blood could not be removed from an animal that died of itself, the children of Israel were not to eat an animal that had already died. Notice that others could eat these animals, but not the chosen, separate people of Israel. And, once again, remember that they are a picture of the individual believer! We, too, are a chosen people who have been called to be separate and holy (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). There may be practices that are socially and culturally accepted, that have no place in the life of God's people.

The tithe in 14:22 is the second tithe that is commanded of the people. (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:26) This tithe is a tenth of the yearly increase of their fields. It was to be brought to the place of offering that the Lord had chosen. A portion was to be eaten with rejoicing to be a reminder that everything comes from the blessing of the Lord. Notice also, that at the end of this chapter, God also established a tithe that was to be collected once every three years to create what might be called a "welfare system" to support the fatherless, the widows, and the "strangers" (foreigners) who had no land upon which to grow food or derive an income.

Chapter 15 provides added instruction to the requirements regarding the infamous "seventh year" described in Exodus 23 and Leviticus 25. Not only was the land to rest in the seventh year, but debts were to be forgiven as well! God wanted to make sure that in this new theocratic nation (a nation whose Supreme Ruler is God!), the poor and the needy were never taken advantage of, or brought under the yoke of bondage to others. The Lord reminds the children of Israel of how they were in bondage in Egypt—and how He had released and redeemed them. When Israel came into the land of promise, God wanted to be sure that His treatment of Israel was to become the standard by which they treated others who were being oppressed. In 15:7–15, Moses lays out God's instruction concerning generosity to the poor. Oh, may we never forget our Lord Jesus Christ's generosity toward us when we were spiritually poor!

Chapter 15 ends with instruction concerning the consecration of the firstborn males of the herd or flock. Moses tells them that they were to be sanctified—or "set apart" for the Lord. Note, that if the animal was to be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord, it necessitated that it be completely "without blemish"—because it is an obvious picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who was "a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet. 1:19)

In chapter 16, God reminds the children of Israel to be sure they continued the observance of the Passover even after they came in to the land. The Passover served as a reminder to Israel that their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt was through the blood of the Passover lamb. It is the Old Testament equivalent of the memorial feast our

Lord instituted in the Upper Room with His disciples the night before His death. That memorial feast, that we now refer to as the Lord's Supper, serves as a reminder to us that our deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (sin and the world) was through the blood of the true Passover lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Cor. 5:7)

Note that there are actually three feasts that are described in chapter 16. The first is the Passover, followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The second is the Feast of Weeks (sometimes referred to as the Feast of Harvest—Exodus 23), later to be known as Pentecost. A freewill offering is to be given "according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." (16:10) The third feast is the Feast of Tabernacles (sometimes referred to as the Feast of Ingathering or Feast of Booths in Exodus 23; Leviticus 23; Numbers 29). This, again, is a time of giving and rejoicing. (16:15)

In 16:18–20, Moses provides instruction concerning the selection of judges and officers. Like God, judges were not to be a "respector of persons," nor were they to receive gifts from people. God wanted those holding these positions in Israel to be completely free to "judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24) The chapter concludes (16:21–22) with a further admonition concerning idolatrous worship—and specifically, taking up the pagan practices of idol worship in groves of trees. God didn't want any worldly/idolatrous practices anywhere near His altar of sacrifice and worship!

Chapter 17 gives statutes concerning the discovery and investigation of idol worship. (17:2–7) Those who were found guilty of worshipping and/or serving other gods were to be put to death. Implementing the death sentence, however, required the witness of two or more witnesses—and those witnesses must be the first ones to administer the punishment. At the end of 17:7, God explains that the reason for such harsh punishment was to rid Israel of evil.

In 17:14–20, God gives instructions for the selection of and duties of a king. At this time, God alone was Israel's King, but He knew that in time to come, they would want a physical, tangible king like the other nations of the world. (This prophecy would come to pass some 400 years after being in the land!) God said He would concede to their wishes for a king, but said He wanted to reserve the right to be the One to choose him. God further instructed that a king in Israel must be chosen from among the children of Israel (no foreigners!). He also commanded that kings refuse to multiply to themselves: horses, wives, silver and gold. And to insure that each king in Israel completely understood what God had written in His law, he was required to write his own copy of the law—and read it everyday of his life so that he would fear the Lord, keep His words, and do them; so his heart wouldn't be lifted up and so his days could be prolonged. Oh, if only Israel's kings would have heeded these admonitions! As those who have been made "kings" by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev.1:6; 5:10), we would do well to carefully consider the spirit of these instructions!

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICE – Deuteronomy 15:21 (1 Pet.1:19; 2 Cor. 5:21)

As THE PASSOVER LAMB – Deuteronomy 16:1 (John 1:29,36; Rev. 5:12)

As THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE – Deuteronomy 16:18; 17:8 (Rev. 19:11; Rom. 14:10)

## WEEK 10, DAY 1: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 18–22

### OVERVIEW:

Levites and Priests; Prophets; Cities of refuge; Civil statutes; Warfare; Unknown Murders; Family statutes; Civil statutes; Sexual sin.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As Moses continues his second address in chapter 18 of today's reading, he begins talking about the fact that when they came into the land, there would be no inheritance for those who comprised the Levitical priesthood. That almost sounds inconsiderate, disparaging, offensive and unfair until you find in verse 2, that the Lord had provided an inheritance for the Levites that was a 1000 times more blessed than mere territory on a map! Their inheritance was to be none other than the Lord Himself! Wow! In fact, as we discussed when we were coming through the Book of Leviticus, the word "Levite" means "joined to." The Levites were "joined to" the Lord in a spiritual relationship that was so much more significant and satisfying than any kind of earthly or physical proprietorship. As you consider these blessings of the Levitical priesthood, keep in mind that they are an Old Testament picture of us! We are now of the ones who are "joined to" the Lord... we are now the ones who comprise His "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10)... and we are the ones for which God now intends to find our inheritance solely "in Christ," not in the things of the earth. Colossians 3:1 and 2 tell us, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Verses 15–19 of chapter 18 provide one of the greatest prophecies in the entire Old Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. God reveals to His people that another "Prophet" like Moses will come! You'll remember that in the Gospel of John, there were numerous times during Christ's earthly ministry when He was asked if He was "that Prophet," or people made reference to the fact that He was, indeed, "that Prophet." The reality is, they had been anticipating this "Prophet" because of this very prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18. In fact, as Peter was preaching in Acts 3:22–23, he quoted this very passage in reference to Christ. As Stephen was preaching his infamous sermon presenting Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures regarding Israel's Messiah to the the ruling counsel in Israel in Acts 7:48, he, too, quoted this very passage. Sadly, nearly every person who was aware of this prophecy from Deuteronomy 18 missed Christ's fulfillment of it, even though it was staring them right in the face!

In 18:20–22, God lets us know that throughout history we will always be able to clearly identify the prophets through whom He is actually speaking. They always have one key distinguishing feature: they are always 100% accurate... 100% of the time!

As we come into chapter 19, God through Moses, continues the conversation once again about designating key cities in the new land as cities of refuge. As has been previously discussed, the cities of refuge are a picture of the refuge we have in Christ. In the same way the innocent manslayer would plead his case to the elders of the city, Psalm 62:8 tells us to pour out our heart to God, who is our Refuge. Hallelujah!

Note in 19:13, God begins the biblical teaching concerning the preciousness of the shedding of what He calls "innocent blood." This phrase is found at least 20 times in Scripture, and is obviously, dear to the heart of God because of His knowledge of the fact that His only Son would one day be the ultimate when it came to "innocent blood" being shed.

Chapter 19 concludes with several civil statutes. God reveals that moving a landmark is actually stealing land from your neighbor. He instructs that matters of law are to be established with a minimum of two witnesses, and preferably three. This principle is repeated in the New Testament in Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19 and Hebrews 10:28. We would do well to consider this principle! How many times have we established something in our own mind on the word of only one person? As God continues revealing His will regarding these practical civil matters, He details that in cases where the person who is suing another person for a specific amount in a false lawsuit, the false accuser would be required to pay that amount to the defendant. Wouldn't that limit a great number of lawsuits in our 21st century world?! Note that the commandment concerning fair and just judgments in the last verse of the chapter (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) is directed to the civil government, and not to individuals. Sadly, it was soon twisted (as it often is to this day!) to provide an excuse for personal vengeance—vengeance that is always reserved by and for the Lord. (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19)

As Moses continues his address in chapter 20, God let's Israel know that the army that would be utilized in the promised land would be different than any military power in the history of the world. This army would be led by priests who would simply address the children of Israel, reminding them that the strength of their army is found in placing their confidence in the fact that the Lord is with them, that He is the One who will fight the enemy, and that they will see Him grant the victory. (20:4) It is the biblical principle of Zechariah 4:6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It is also a picture of how the New Testament reveals that we are to do battle! Ephesians 6:10 says, "Finally, my brethren, be STRONG IN THE LORD, and in the POWER of HIS MIGHT."

It should be noted, however, that even though God intended to grant this army constant victory, God wanted to be certain that they were completely focused and fearless! In 20:5-9, God gives four reasons that young men in Israel could be excused from military duty: 1) If they had recently purchased a new house; 2) If they had recently planted a vineyard; 3) If they had recently taken a wife; and 4) If they were just plain afraid! God wanted His army free of distractions and deserters! In the warfare we face, may we likewise be focused and fearless!

As the children of Israel were approaching a city to overtake it, God tells them in 20:10–20 that they were to first seek to take it peacefully by allowing the inhabitants of the city to surrender, if they would agree to pay taxes to them, and to become their servants. If the city chose not to surrender, God told them to go into it and wipe out every male—sparing the women, children and animals—and then to go in and take the spoils of the city for themselves. For the six nations listed in 20:17, however, they were to go in to those places and wipe out anything that moved or breathed! It would appear that these peoples and cities were of such a demonic nature and possession that the only solution was extinction.

As we come into chapter 21, God gives further instruction concerning the shedding of "innocent blood." Note that there was a ceremonial washing (21:6) that was included in the whole process of being released from the guilt of shedding this "innocent blood." (21:6–9) In light of the principle established here, it becomes quite interesting to recognize that many centuries later on the day of Pentecost following the nation of Israel's guilt in shedding Christ's "innocent blood" on the cross (Acts 2:36), that when they asked Peter what they should do after because of their guilt in shedding the "blood" of the only "innocent" man who ever lived (not to mention their very own promised Messiah!)—that Peter's instruction to them utilizes the principle established here in Deuteronomy 21, and includes the "ceremonial washing" of baptism as a part of their repentance for crucifying the Lord of glory. (Acts 2:37–38) Note, that this baptism that Peter referenced in Acts 2:38 is not for acquiring New Testament salvation—but is exclusively the biblical requirement for removing Israel's guilt for being the ones responsible for shedding the "innocent blood" of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. (21:8-9)

After providing instructions for taking a wife from the captives of the new land (21:10–14), Moses then gives statutes for families. He lets Israel know that inheritances were to be divided by statutes—not emotions. Next, Moses explains that stubbornness and rebelliousness in a son was an offense worthy of death! Notice that there are three times in this passage where God references a stubborn and rebellious son not obeying or hearkening to the voice of his parents. We must recognize that our goal in bringing up our children is that OUR voice will control and instruct their little mind and body. As our children mature, the control and guidance is to constantly be directed and shifting to the LORD and His WORD. The biblical reality is, if they never learn to respond to the authority of OUR voice when they are children, they will not respond to the authority of GOD's voice when they are adults.

Chapter 22 gives statutes on many civil and family matters. It covers the whole gamut—from taking care of your brother's belongings, to clothing, construction, plowing, divorce, adultery, rape and incest. Over and over again the statutes and commandments are written to purify and sanctify a land in which the holy God of the universe would dwell with His people. Recognize that this had been a land of transvestites and homosexuals, a land of incest and adultery, and a land of selfishness and self-gratification. The Lord desired a pure and holy nation in completely undefiled land. It is the Old Testament picture of the New Testament instruction given to us in 2 Corinthians 6:17–18: "...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As PROPHET – Deuteronomy 18:15 (John 5:46; Acts 3:22,23)

As SIN BEARER – Deuteronomy 21:22, 23 (Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24)

## WEEK 10, DAY 2: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 23-26

### OVERVIEW:

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

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

By the time the children of Israel had heard all of the statutes, commandments and judgments in Moses' second address (Deut. 5–26) for what life was to be like in this new land God was preparing them to enter, they must have been thinking, "Man! How are we going to keep all of this stuff straight?!" The truth is, y'all, there were a lot of requirements, stipulations and specifications for the new lifestyle God had in mind for their new life in the new land! But lest we miss the purpose behind all of these seemingly rigorous and meticulous details, Moses concludes this section in today's reading by revealing the real intent of God's heart. (26:16–19) He tells the children of Israel that all of these instructions were given simply because God desired "to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayst be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken." (26:19) How awesome is that?!

And as we have constantly sought to remind ourselves through the [52 Weeks of Pursuit](#), we must always keep in mind that the children of Israel are a picture of the individual believer in the New Testament. God tells us in 1 Peter 2:9–10 that His intent and purpose for us is to make you and me "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." And again I say, how awesome is that?! The real desire of God's heart for His people has always been the same! That we might be a peculiar people because of the holy life we live in the midst of this dark world as we seek to glorify the holy name of our God!

Recognize, however, that one of the most blessed and marvelous differences between us and the children of Israel is that we have been made free from the EXTERNAL law of Moses, because we have been placed "in Christ," who Himself, fulfilled all of the stringent requirements of the Old Testament law! (Matt. 5:17) And He did that, so we might be free to live by the law of the Spirit who has taken up residence in us INTERNALLY! With that in mind, be blessed today by some of the key truths God has revealed to us as New Testament saints...

Romans 7:6...

"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Romans 8:1-4...

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Galatians 5:18

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Oh, may we never be moved, as Paul feared we might, from "the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3) And may we never be moved from "the simplicity" of the greatest commandment: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30–31) No, we are not bound to serve the law of Moses. We are free FROM the law of Moses, so we can be free to FULFILL the law of the Spirit... and to FULFILL the law of love. (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 5:13–14) Praise God for "the simplicity" of life "in Christ!"

But note in today's reading in chapter 23, that 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, etc.) they could not join the congregation of Israel. Again, the point is, the Lord desired a pure and holy congregation of peculiar people. The simple reality was, sin had lasting consequences! Moses reveals in chapter 23 that the reason holiness, cleanliness and purity had such an important place inside the congregation of Israel—was because the holy, clean and pure presence of the Lord was in their midst! (See 2 Cor. 6:16–18)

The last part of chapter 23 speaks of vows and generosity. Vows were/are sacred to God. Vows made to God were not to be made flippantly, and once they were made, were to be kept! God repeats this same truth in Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 where He lets us know that it is better not to vow a vow, than to vow a vow and not pay it. Verses 24 and 25 of Deuteronomy 23 tell the children of Israel that they are to be a generous people—while at the same time, being careful not to take advantage of the generosity of others.

Deuteronomy 24 is a very significant chapter because of its teaching regarding divorce. In Matthew 5 and 19, our Lord deals with the issue of divorce that is addressed here in Deuteronomy 24. Jesus emphatically lets us know that divorce was not God's plan from the beginning (Matt. 19:8)—but it was a concession made by God "because of the hardness of your hearts." Note in 24:2, the woman in a divorce situation is permitted become another man's wife, but verse 4 refers to her as being "defiled." There's no way around it, sin always has lasting consequences.

Once again, God reveals in chapter 24 the compassion of His heart for the poor, the fatherless, widows, and strangers. God wanted to make sure that the rich and powerful never took advantage of them—and that they were never able to oppress them. God wanted Israel to always remember that they had been slaves in Egypt, and wanted them to treat others in their affliction the way He had treated them. (The New Testament equivalent of this principle for us is found in Ephesians 4:31–32.) This new land and nation God was establishing was 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 loving and generous!

Chapter 25 gives instruction for those who would serve as judges in Israel, followed by detailed specifications for the Old Testament teaching regarding the kinsman-redeemer. A living example of this principle in operation is found in the Book of Ruth, as Ruth, a Gentile from a cursed race (the Moabites), is redeemed through the relationship she had with Boaz, her Jewish kinsman-redeemer from the city of Bethlehem. The principle of the kinsman-redeemer found here in Deuteronomy 25, as well as the living example found in Ruth 3–4, is a beautifully descriptive picture of our Lord Jesus Christ becoming our "kinsman" by taking on human flesh in Bethlehem, so He might "redeem" us Gentiles who are part of the cursed human race in taking us to be His lawfully wedded wife! The Bible is an amazing Book, y'all!

The chapter continues with statutes for honesty in business. In the commerce of that day, merchants would carry their own weights that would be placed on the scales when making transactions. Some determined that they would put a lesser weight on the scale when BUYING a certain commodity, and a heavier weight when SELLING a commodity. Practically speaking, it was a very deceptive and dishonest way of being able to "buy low and sell high." God lets them know that such practices were an "abomination" to Him. (25:16) Be reminded, our omniscient Lord knows of our honesty with people, and deals with us accordingly.

The offering of the first fruits in Chapter 26 was a special one-time gift that was to be offered to the Lord from the first harvest in the new land. This offering was to be a hallowed worship experience that included a time of remembrance, a time of rejoicing and a time of confession. Once the Lord brought them into the Promised Land, He wanted them to recognize that they would be living in houses they did not build, eating from crops and gardens they did not plant, living in abundance from the gracious hand of the Lord!

In 26:16–19, God wanted the children of Israel to make a confirmation of all that had been commanded them. He had commanded that all of His statutes, commandments and judgments be kept with all of their heart and soul. The people avouch that they will walk in His ways, and keep His commandments. The Lord avouches that they will be His peculiar people, holy to Him. And this concludes Moses second address in Deuteronomy.

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE GENEROUS ONE — Deuteronomy 24:19–21 (2 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 8:32)

As THE KINSMAN REDEEMER — Deuteronomy 5:5–6 (Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:13–14)

As THE FIRSTFRUIT OFFERING — Deuteronomy 26:10–11 (1 Cor. 15:20,23)

As THE DELIVERER — Deuteronomy 26:8 (Gal. 1:3–4)

## WEEK 10, DAY 3: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 27-30

### OVERVIEW:

The altar to be built; Blessing and cursing; the new covenant; Return to the Lord; The choice set before the children of Israel.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As chapter 27 begins, Moses instructs the children of Israel that when they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, the first thing God wanted them to do was to build a memorial of stones covered with plaster, upon which "all the words of this law" (the Ten Commandments) would be written. This instruction will actually be carried out by Joshua in Joshua 8:30–35. Note that the stones which displayed the "words of the law" was to be set upon Mount Ebal. Interestingly enough, this is the mountain associated in this passage with "cursing." God is screaming out the message to all that the Law can only bring a curse! Romans 3:20 tells us, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin!" Paul further clarifies that in Galatians 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them!"

Note also that an altar was to be built at the base of this mountain, where both the Burnt Offering and the Peace Offering was to be sacrificed. Recognize that both of these Old Testament offerings find their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Galatians 3:13 tells us, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The picture here in Deuteronomy 27 is that the Law condemns every man, and the ensuing curse of his sinfulness can only be remedied by the substitutionary death of Christ. Only through Christ is the "curse of sin" removed, and only through Christ can a condemned sinner find "peace with God!" Hallelujah! Romans 5:1–2 tells us, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God!"

In 27:11, Moses then instructs that the 12 tribes were to be divided between two mountains (six tribes on each mountain): Gerizim (representing BLESSING—verse 12) and Ebal (representing CURSING—verse 13). The valley between these two mountains forms a natural amphitheater about two miles wide providing a perfect arena for the Levites to be heard as they were commanded by God to speak to Israel (27:14), and the mountains on each side provided a perfect illustration of the message God was about to present to Israel of their choice of BLESSING or CURSING once they entered the land.

Notice that as God begins to speak through the Levites, the next 12 verses all begin with the same exact word: "CURSED!" (27:15–26) The word "blessed, blessed or blessing" is not to be found. Once again, the simple, but abundantly profound truth God is clearly communicating is that all the Law is capable of producing is CURSING!

In chapter 28, God tells Israel that once they came into the land—the choice between BLESSING and CURSING would be completely theirs. Quite simply, OBEDIENCE would bring "BLESSING"—and DISOBEDIENCE would bring "CURSING." Notice that the first word of verses 3, 4, 5 and 6 is "blessed," and that the promise of "blessing" is

found in verses 7–14. Notice also that the first word of verses 16, 17, 18 and 19 is "cursing," and that the promise of "cursing" is found in verses 20–68. That's 49 straight verses of nothing but the warning of "cursing!" God spells it out very simply: If the children of Israel will diligently hearken to the Lord and do His commandments, the Lord will set them on high (28:1). The Lord will bless them in their home, their work, their nation, and everything that has anything to do with their lives. (28:2–14) But, if they will not hearken (28:15), curses would be certain to come upon them and overtake them. They would be cursed in their body, their work, their home, their land and their nation. The rain would be dust. (28:24) In verse 30, three of the military exemptions (20:5–7) would be turned into curses. Without the Lord fighting for them, it was inevitable, they would be conquered.

Note that this chapter is not only a warning to Israel, but also a prophecy of the future of Israel. The blessings of the Lord that He talks about in this chapter will be seen repeatedly in the kingdom as they obey the Lord. The curses will likewise be seen in the conquests, the captivities and the famines throughout the rest of the Old Testament and beyond. Jeremiah cries in the Book of Lamentations as he looks out of his window and sees the people and the city destroyed as these very curses have unfolded.

Practically speaking, what are we to learn from these things?

- God does what He says He will do!
- The Lord works and moves in the physical realm of our world.
- The Lord can bring rain and stop rain.
- The Lord can physically heal.
- The Lord can cause a battle to be won.
- Our Lord does answer prayer!
- And we will all serve somebody! (28:47–48. See also Rom. 6:16)

Chapters 29 and 30 complete the third message from Moses. He begins chapter 29 with a reminder of the covenant God had made with them in Horeb—and their inability to keep it. Moses reminds them of the provision and protection of the Lord, the wrath of the Lord, and their unique relationship with Him. Once again, Moses reminds them that if they obey God they will be blessed, and if they disobey Him they will be cursed. God tells them that there are certain secret things that He had not revealed to them, but He lets them know in no uncertain terms that everything He had revealed to them, they were required to obey! (29:29)

As we come into chapter 30, our Lord is revealing that if Israel, after living under the curse of their disobedience, would return to Him, and once again begin to obey the things He had commanded through His Word, He would extend His grace and compassion to them, and allow them to live in His blessing. Wow! What a God! (See Psa. 111:4) Notice that this passage is not only a promise to Israel, but also a prophecy of the future of Israel. It looks forward to a time of renewal for the children of Israel in the last days, when they shall return unto the Lord and obey His voice.

In 30:11–20, Moses extends the invitation to the children of Israel. The words have been plain, not hidden, or out of reach. (30:11) It was all really very simple. God concises these four chapters (Deut. 27–30) into two simple verses. The first verse is 30:15: "See, I have set before thee this day LIFE and GOOD, and DEATH and EVIL." The choice was theirs: LIFE or DEATH... and GOOD or EVIL. Seems like it should have been the biggest no-brainer in the history of earth! The second verse is 30:19, where Moses says to the people: "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!" Again, how hard could that decision be?! And don't miss the fact that God presents that same choice to you and me today... and every day for the remainder of our lives. (Gal.6:7–8) It really is that simple, y'all!

I am reminded today of what I would consider one of the saddest and most tragic verses in the entire Bible. Jesus said in John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." May that not be true of us.

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE PEACE OFFERING — Deuteronomy 27:7 (John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20)

As THE BLESSING OF GOD — Deuteronomy 28:1–2 (Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3)

As LIFE — Deuteronomy 30:15 (John 11:25; 6:40)

## WEEK 10, DAY 4: TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 31-34

### OVERVIEW:

The transition of leadership to Joshua; the word from the Lord; the song of Moses; Moses' blessing upon the Tribes; the death of Moses; the succession of Joshua.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we move into Deuteronomy 31 today, one of the greatest men who ever lived is about to die. It's hard to imagine everything that must have been going through Moses' mind and heart at this moment. As he reflected on the past 40 years of his life...

#### **1. He, no doubt, had thoughts about WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN.**

Certainly his mind went back to that fateful five seconds when out of frustration with God's people, rather than simply speaking to the Rock as God had instructed him to do, he struck it twice. That one impulsive fleshly decision and action is what prompted God's decision to not allow him to be the human instrument He would use to bring His people into the abundant life He had designed for them in Canaan. From a practical standpoint, may we once again allow the Word of God to etch into our minds and hearts that though our God is full of grace, mercy, compassion and forgiveness (Psa. 86:5,15), it does not negate the fact that our sin always has consequences. (Gal. 6:7) May this tragedy in Moses' life also etch into our minds and hearts the necessity of always being filled with, controlled by and walking in the Spirit—not only on a daily basis... and not only on a hourly basis—but a moment by moment basis... even a second by second basis! Moses' failure teaches us that the entire course and direction of our life can be altered by one momentary impulsive action or reaction of our flesh. God help us!

One day we will all stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will walk back through every day of our lives from the moment we were saved until the moment we entered the Lord's presence—whether it be by death or by rapture. We will see our lives then, the way our Lord Jesus Christ sees them now. Oh, when the Lord allows us to reflect upon our lives much like Moses had the opportunity to do in today's reading, may our minds and hearts in that day, not be consumed with thoughts about WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN! May we walk each day of our lives in simple obedience, in the filling and power of the Holy Spirit, having no regrets at our final accounting at the Judgment Seat!

But not only must Moses have been reflecting on this day about WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN...

#### **2. He, no doubt, had thoughts about WHAT ACTUALLY WAS.**

Though Moses, no doubt, spent countless sleepless nights rehearsing the whole "striking-the-rock-twice incident"—wondering why God seemed to have such a knee-jerk reaction to his knee-jerk reaction—and wondering whether the punishment actually fit the crime... there's certainly none of that now. All of that was water under the bridge at this point.

You see, God's "Plan A" for Moses, was obviously, for him to FINISH WELL. Finishing well in "Plan A" meant obeying God—and being the one to lead God's people into the Promised Land. Because of Moses' failure in Numbers 20:7–13, however, God made clear to him that "Plan A" was an impossibility. It just wasn't going to happen.

But, in His grace, God also had a "Plan B" for Moses! And "Plan B," was, first and foremost, for Moses to "forget those things which were behind, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God!" (Phil. 3:13–14) In other words, to not sit around feeling sorry for himself, pouting about the failures of his past—but to begin from where he was, and seek to obey God in the course God had for him in "Plan B!"

Listen, you may be reading this today, and because of some kind of failure in your past, you very simply may have missed God's "Plan A" for your life. Okay, so what do you do now? Well, you can do what a lot of people do—you can choose to wallow around in self-pity for the rest of your life, rehearsing it all over and over in your mind, wishing you would have done something different, or had made better decisions! The fact is, though, that all of that rehearsing of it won't do a single thing to change what now is! All it does is bind you to the PAST, causing you to miss the incredible opportunities that are sitting right in front of you in the PRESENT, and insure that you will never tap into the glorious things God has deigned for you in the FUTURE! Oh, my brother or sister, learn from the life example of Moses—that God most definitely has a "Plan B" for your life, and there is most definitely a way for you to FINISH WELL in God's "Plan B!"

In Deuteronomy 31, Moses sees the big-picture. He knows that for him to finish well, the children of Israel didn't need to get all sentimental and preoccupied with sad emotions concerning his DEATH. I mean, they were on the very brink of entering into the very LIFE God had intended for them when He brought them out of Egypt! (Deut. 6:23) This was to be a time for forward thinking, jubilation, expectation and faith! Moses could have very easily played on the people's sympathies and made this whole ordeal of his death the people's focus—and fail in his responsibility to orchestrate the beautiful transfer of leadership to Joshua by making it all about him—but Moses is too much of a man of God and too much of a man of character for that! Moses realizes that for him to finish well in his "Plan B," how he prepares the people for entering the land, and how he coordinates the whole transition to Joshua is vital. It is apparent by Moses' attitude and demeanor that he is going to finish well. Moses' attitude toward Joshua at this moment is much like John the Baptist's attitude toward Jesus in John 3:30: "He must INCREASE, but I must DECREASE." Though God had already made the people aware that Joshua would succeed Moses as Israel's leader—Moses wanted to make sure that his final action on this planet caused this transfer of leadership to be handled with such grace and dignity that it would please the Lord—and at the same time, generate excitement and expectation in the hearts of God's people about their future with God in the land that He purposed to give them, under the leadership of Joshua.

Though today's chapters record Moses' PHYSICAL DEATH, may we not miss that they also record an even more significant death: his DEATH TO SELF! Oh, that more leaders would learn from Moses' example, and use their platform of leadership to advance the work of God, and aggrandize the glory of God. By God's grace, just as Moses did, may we get the focus off of ourselves and completely on the Lord Himself—and become passionate about Him receiving from our lives "the glory that is due His name!" (Psa. 29:2; 96:8) And, may we make certain that whether we're living in God's "Plan A" or "Plan B"—that in every remaining moment and detail of our lives, our passion is for the work of God, and the glory of God!

But not only were Moses' thoughts at the time of Deuteronomy 31 on WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN, and WHAT ACTUALLY WAS...

### **3. He, no doubt, had thoughts about WHAT WOULD BE.**

Of all people, Moses had a clear understanding of the purposes of God in the exodus. He realized that God was desiring, not first and foremost, to RESCUE the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt—but to RESCUE His

own name! Moses understood that everything that had taken place in the preceding 40 years was really all about God's name being rescued from how it was being polluted on the earth. A key chapter that provides incredible commentary of God's purpose and intention from the time of the exodus to their entrance into the land is found in Ezekiel 20. Several times in this chapter, God makes abundantly clear that the issue was HIM—not THEM (the children of Israel!) Sure, the children of Israel were most definitely the beneficiaries of the wonderful and powerful demonstration of God's deliverance—but the scripture is clear... God did what He did for His own name—not theirs! He says in Ezekiel 20:9, "But I wrought (worked) FOR MY NAME'S SAKE, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt." (God repeats this same intention in 20:14 and 20:22)

And in Deuteronomy 31, even as Moses is hours away from drawing his last breath on this planet, he has no thought whatsoever about his own name—his preoccupation is for the name of the One by whom he was called, and the only name that is worthy of glory!

May we always remember, that though we are most definitely the beneficiaries of the work of God through Christ's death, burial and resurrection, God did what He did in delivering us out of the bondage of our sin to rescue His own name from how it was being polluted all over this sinful world! And therefore, like Moses, may our lives reflect that we, too, give no thought whatsoever to our own name—but the name of the One by whom WE were called, and the only name on earth that is worthy of glory!

Note that God summons both Moses and Joshua into His holy presence in the Tabernacle before Moses' death to inform them that despite His incredible grace upon the children of Israel in all that He had done—they would rebel after getting into the land. My, oh my, what a travesty. May we learn from their horrific mistakes.

God gives Moses "inspiration" in writing a song that would be used for years to come in reminding Israel of their sin. The Book ends with Moses lovingly seeking to speak blessing on the tribes of Israel that were about to enter the Promised Land.

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

In JOSHUA – Deuteronomy 31:7 (John 1:17; Rom. 3:21–22; Acts 13:39)

In THE ROCK – Deuteronomy 32:4,31 (Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:8)

## WEEK 10, DAY 5: 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 crossed the Jordan River and claimed the inheritance that God had promised them. Before actually possessing the land, however, there were still many battles for them to fight—and many enemies they would need to defeat. And once again, we find that God is painting another incredible picture of the Christian life through His record of Israel's history. Because as we seek to take "possession" of our "inheritance in Canaan," we, likewise, have many battles to fight—and many enemies to overcome. Namely, the world, the devil, and these bodies of flesh we all live in. Note that 1 Thessalonians 4:4 tells us that we have been called to "possess our vessel in sanctification and honor." Just like the children of Israel in the Book of Joshua, for this to happen, we must allow our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, to lead us to victory in every battle, and against every enemy! (Eph. 6:10; 2 Cor. 10:4–5)

Be sure to keep in mind as we develop these pictures in the Book of Joshua, that Canaan is NOT a picture of heaven. We do not have to battle to gain our home in heaven—it is a gift! (Eph. 2:8–9) Rather, Canaan represents the abundant inheritance that God has for each of us "in Christ." We sometimes refer to this inheritance as "the victorious Christian life"—Jesus referred to it as the "abundant life." (John 10:10) It is very simply the life of fullness and fruit-bearing God designed all of us who have received Christ to "possess." Practically speaking, it is when the life of Christ in all of His fullness is what is being manifested through our bodies (2 Cor. 4:11), while at the same time, we are manifesting the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22–23), the "fruit of holiness" (Rom. 6:22), and the fruit of souls won to Christ. (Col. 1:6)

Notice that 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 simple but poignant fact is, the law could not give life or defeat sin! Romans 7:5 says, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Moses brought the children of Israel 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 allow God to raise us up to walk in newness of life on a daily basis! (Rom. 6:4,13)

Verse 8 of chapter 1 was certainly a key challenge for Joshua in terms of how God wanted him to approach His Word, and yet this verse has likewise been used to challenge every child of God ever since it was delivered personally to Joshua in this text! God told Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Josh. 1:8)

The simple reality for every person God has delivered from the bondage of sin and redeemed to Himself, is that He intends for His Word to be one of our "core values." You see, the reality is, everyone of us has a value system—and in our value system, there are certain things that are at the very core. Our "core values" are the things of life that are the MOST IMPORTANT to us. They are the things in our life that are our HIGHEST PRIORITY. The things in life that make us TICK... they MOTIVATE us... they are a PASSION to us... they are WHAT WE'RE REALLY ALL ABOUT!

In light of what God says to Joshua here, could you honestly say that the Word of God is one of your "core values?" And perhaps you're thinking right now, "Well, how would I know if it was or not?" Actually, Joshua 1:8 lets us know that there are two key "tell-tale" indicators...

1. Our core values are easily identifiable by what we TALK about.  
Without even trying or consciously recognizing we're doing it, the truth is, we TALK about what's IMPORTANT to us! Joshua 1:8 says, "... this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth..." If the Word of God is one of our core values, it will be identifiable in the fact that we are constantly TALKING about it! What would those who know you best say you constantly TALK about?
2. Our core values are easily identifiable by what we THINK about.  
Again, without even trying or attempting to make it happen, the reality is, we THINK about what's IMPORTANT to us. Joshua 1:8 goes on to say, "...but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Could you honestly say that the Word of God is something you constantly find yourself THINKING about?

Oh, may it be evident to God, to us and to others that the Word of God is one of our "core values!"

Chapter 2 deals with the Jewish men who were sent to spy out Jericho, and their subsequent covenant with Rahab the harlot. Don't miss the fact that Rahab's story graphically pictures the story of everyone of us who know Christ!

1. She was a sinner. (Rom. 3:23)  
Joshua 2:1 plainly states that she was a harlot.
2. She was under condemnation. (John 3:18)  
The city had already been declared condemned by God. And notice, just like with the people of the world today, the people of the city would be destroyed whether they "felt" condemned or not!
3. She heard the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17)  
The message she heard was a convicting message of judgment that caused her to recognize that the God of the children of Israel was the one true God and Lord! (Josh. 2:8–11; John 16:8)
4. She believed the Word. (Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8)  
Hebrews 11:31 states that Rahab believed and was saved by faith.
5. She sought to win others. (Mark 5:18–20)  
When a person trusts Christ, their first desire is to share Him with others, especially their own family. Rahab immediately shares her burden to see her family "saved." (Josh. 2:12–13)
6. She was delivered from judgment. (1 Thess. 4:13–18, 2 Thess. 1:7–9)  
Just like Rahab in Joshua 6:22–25, we, too, have been rescued from God's coming judgment upon this world.
7. She went to a wedding. (Matt. 1:5)  
Matthew 1:5 lets us know that Rahab married into the royal lineage of the Nation of Israel. And check this out... the Messiah actually came through her family lineage! 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 because of God's incredible grace! (Rev. 19:7-9,17-19)

In chapters 3 and 4, Israel follows Joshua and the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan River. Note in Joshua 3:16, that the water that flowed down from the city of Adam stood up and was stopped by the Ark. It is a beautiful picture of the fact that the effects of Adam's sin which flowed from Adam down to us (Rom. 5:12,17), are stopped by Jesus Christ when we "cross over the Jordan" in our lives, and take possession of the life of fullness found in Christ. (Rom. 6:14)

In chapter 5, all of the Jewish males were circumcised. Note that circumcision was a mark of a covenant relationship (Gen. 17:9-14) that provided EXTERNAL evidence of an INTERNAL reality. (Deut. 10:16) A perfect and discreet description of circumcision that captures both its physical and spiritual significance is that it is "the cutting away of the flesh that reveals the source of life." Note that God refers to the covenant relationship of our salvation in Colossians 2:11 as the "true circumcision." Practically speaking, 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 "Jehovah is salvation." He is the one who leads us to the promised land.

As Rahab's scarlet thread — Joshua 2:18.

(It is a type of the blood of Christ which brings about deliverance from judgment and safety from death.)

As Captain of the Host OF THE LORD — Joshua 5:14-15 (Heb. 2:10)

## WEEK 11, DAY 1: TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 6–10

### OVERVIEW:

The conquest and destruction of Jericho; the sin of Achan; the destruction of Ai; the deception of the Gibeonites and their subsequent covenant with Israel; Joshua leads Israel in victory after victory.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As Christians, we face many "Jerichos" in our lives. Like the spies at Kadesh, we, too, often want to give up at the sight of insurmountable odds. (Num. 13:28–33) But Joshua chapter 6 teaches us that no wall is too high, no barrier so impenetrable, and no sin so great that our Lord Jesus Christ cannot give us the victory. Take notice from Joshua 5:14 in yesterday's reading that the soldier who fights most powerfully and experiences the victories God intends—is the one who bows the lowest before battle! God is picturing for us the fact that the battles we face in the Christian life are won on our KNEES and on our FACES before the Lord! (Eph. 6:10–18; 1 Pet. 5:6–8)

Note also in today's reading that no man can take a city by himself. It is no small thing that Joshua had the loyal cooperation of the priests and the people, and that together they overcame the enemy! The Book of Hebrews commands us not to forsake assembling ourselves together, as so many in the last days are doing (You know, the old "You don't have to go to church to be spiritual" stuff!), but it tells us to exhort one another—and especially as we get closer to Christ's return! (Heb. 10:25) We all need the accountability and help that our brothers and sisters in our own local church provide in order to keep our enemies defeated so we can possess the fullness of what God intends for our lives. (1 Cor. 1:10) It is the only way we can live in victory. (Matt. 16:18)

In chapter 7, God reveals to us the consequences of secret sin. Achan had secretly taken some of the spoils from Jericho in direct disobedience to God's command. (Josh. 6:18–19) Because of this sin in Israel's camp, they suffered their first defeat. What is interesting, is that in Joshua 8:2, unlike in the battle with Jericho where all the spoils of the city were to be reserved to God alone, God now instructed the children of Israel to take the spoils from Ai unto themselves! Had Achan simply waited a few days, he would have had all the wealth he could have carried! (Matt. 6:33) How much like our FLESH—to prematurely TAKE what the SPIRIT is fully capable of and even planning to PROVIDE!

Note specifically in Joshua chapter 8 that Ai represents the daily battle we have against the flesh. (Gal.5:17) In 8:3, notice the wording—it says, "So Joshua arose," and thereby, led Israel to victory against Ai. Recognize that for New Testament believers, it pictures the fact that it is only through the power of Christ's resurrection that we can conquer and defeat the enemy of our flesh! In verse 6, we are told that "they will come out after us," picturing the fact that the members of our fleshly bodies will come out to fight against the Spirit until we receive our glorified bodies! (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30; Rom. 6:12–13; Col. 3:5) Notice also that the end of verse 9 says, "Joshua lodged that night among the people." We have this same promise, that our Joshua (Jesus), in this biblical "nighttime" in which we are presently living in the Church Age (Rom. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:4–9), that our Lord Jesus Christ "lodges" with us, as it were, by His Spirit, to provide our victory over the flesh. (Rom. 7:24–25; 8:9–14; Eph. 3:16)

Gibeon was the next city to be taken after the victories of Israel at Jericho and Ai. Notice that the Gibeonites used deceit as their tool to avoid destruction. In chapter 9, they posed themselves as ambassadors from a far country who wanted to be the servants of Israel. They succeeded in getting this agreement (or covenant) from the leaders of Israel

before their true identity was revealed. Oh, my brothers and sisters, may we beware! Like the Gibeonites, our flesh will do everything within its power to try to make deals with us—so it can escape death!

Note also that there is a lesson for us to learn by the timing of this whole ordeal with the Gibeonites! It is often after taking God at His Word in trusting Him for great spiritual victories that the next attack of our flesh will be to "work wily" (9:4) in agreeing to be the "servant" of the Spirit—so it doesn't have to die! We must learn that our flesh is as deceptive as Satan himself! We must, therefore, never let our guard down! The only answer to the flesh, folks, is DEATH! May we join Paul in saying, "I die daily!" (1 Cor. 15:31).

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

In the Ark of the Covenant – Joshua 6 (Like God's presence dwelt within Israel in the Ark, God's presence now dwells in us by the Spirit of Christ – I Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9).

Through Joshua – Joshua 8 and 10 (He is the only one who can lead us to daily victory over our flesh.)

## WEEK 11, DAY 2: TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 11–14

### OVERVIEW:

Joshua conquers kings and cities for Israel; the land is divided by lot among the tribes; Caleb requests and obtains the mountain of Hebron from Joshua.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Word has been spreading throughout the Promised Land of this weak nomadic people that have been transformed into powerful warriors— and their omnipotent God!

Notice as we move into Joshua 11 in today's reading, the kings throughout the land have been struck with fear—and are conspiring together to keep them from completely overtaking their cities. (11:1-5) Note: The word "king/kings" is found over 50 times in today's reading!

Knowing that these various kingdoms banding together might be intimidating to Joshua and his people, God reassures him that He, by His power, will slay the conspirators and grant victory to Israel just as He had done with the previous individual kings and their armies. (11:6-9)

Notice in 11:10, that Joshua defeats the king who was the head of the villainous kingdoms with "the sword," in the same way that our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ will defeat the "king" who is the head of the kingdom of darkness with "the sword" that proceeds out of His mouth. (2 Thess. 2:8 ; Rev. 19:15, 21)

Notice also, in 11:21, that Joshua not only utterly destroyed all of the kings and their cities, but also the giants— and their cities! (The Anakims were giants.) Have the kings from the kingdom of darkness been conspiring together against you? Are there giants that seem to be coming down out of the mountains against you? Trust in the sword of the Word of God that is in the possession of our Joshua! He's got this! By trusting the Word of God and the God of the Word against the enemy, in time, one by one, you will be able to list the kings and giants that have been defeated as you take possession of your possession, just as surely as Joshua's defeated foes are listed one- by-one in Joshua chapter 12!

As we begin chapter 13, the Lord reminds Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed," There are no doubt, many who are reading this today who feel the same way! But regardless of our age, I'm sure the Lord could speak these same words to each of us, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed!" May we passionately pursue possessing our possession!

In the remainder of chapter 13, God identifies the various places in the land that Joshua and the children of Israel still needed to possess. What is interesting, is that before they have actually taken physical possession of these various places (13:7), God goes ahead and has them divide the land as if it was already theirs. The fact is, it was as good as theirs because God had given His word in verse 6, saying, "Them will I drive out from before the children of Israel." The point is, to go ahead and divide the land as the inheritance to the various tribes required faith in God and His Word. That is the pathway to victory every time!

Chapter 14 is a significant chapter. It had been 45 years since Joshua and Caleb had gone with the other 10 leaders of the tribes of Israel to spy out the land that God has promised to them. When they were in the land, Caleb set his

eyes and his heart on a particular piece of property. Though he was now 85 years old, he never forgot it, and never waned in his desire that God would give it to him. Notice his words in 14:12, "Give me this mountain!" It was the mountain of Hebron. This is the same mountain that the 10 other spies saw and feared because of the giants that lived there in the "great and fenced" cities. (Josh. 14:12) Caleb received permission to go and conquer this mountain and the giants that lived there. Even in his old age, Caleb was anxious to claim the inheritance God had promised him. (Josh. 14:6-9) It is interesting to note that Hebron means "fellowship." It is the very thing that God desires from each of us. God has promised fellowship to us, but like Caleb, we must claim the promise of God that we are "more than conquerors" in defeating the giants in our lives that seek to keep us from it! (Rom. 8:37)

What mountain are you trusting the Lord to give you today? Have you possessed Hebron—the mountain of "fellowship?"

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

Through JOSHUA – Joshua 11–14 (As the One who conquers the "kings" and "giants" in our lives—Rom. 8:37, and as the One who gives us our "inheritance." Acts 20:32; Eph.1:11)

## WEEK 11, DAY 3: TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 15-18

### OVERVIEW:

The land of Canaan is divided among the tribes of Israel.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In Joshua 15, Caleb, the eternally strong warrior (a picture of God the Father—Josh. 14:11), decides to reward the man who conquers and takes the city of Kirjathsepher (the "city of the Book") with his daughter, Achsah, to wife. Othniel (whose name means "lion"), who "just happens" to be from the tribe of Judah, conquers and takes "the city of the Book" in order to obtain his bride. Achsah, which means "anklet," was given to Othniel as the promised reward for his accomplishments in battle. Her "anklet" was what distinguished her from other women. You see, during this time period, women were covered from head to toe with clothing, making it nearly impossible to tell one from the other. Othniel's bride, however, was clearly recognizable by her walk.

Those are the details of the story—but the question is, what is all of this actually picturing in the prophetic, or doctrinal application of scripture?

The picture here, is that God the Father gave the love-gift of the church to Christ, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, because of Christ's accomplishments in battle. Through His death, burial and resurrection, He fulfilled every prophecy in "the Book" of God (all three components of the gospel were all carried out precisely "according to the scriptures"—1 Cor. 15:3-4), and thereby, Christ purchased to Himself a bride. Like Achsah ("anklet"), Christ's bride, the church, is clearly recognizable by her "walk!" (Rom. 6:4; Eph.4:1,17; 5:2,8,15)

The picture continues in chapter 15:18-20, as Achsah (the Bride of Christ, who is known by her walk), "let's her request be made known" to her father. (Phil. 4:6) She humbles herself by getting off of her donkey, and pleads that her father might grant her a field. Jesus said in Matthew 13:38, "the field is the world!" But notice, that her request is not just for not any field! She desires a field that would be watered by springs. Water, biblically, is a picture of the Word of God. (Eph. 5:26) Her father grants her request—so she can produce "much fruit." As Christ's bride, we have been commissioned to take His Word to the world, that we might "bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain." (John 15:16) The Bible is an incredible Book, y'all!

There are several other observations we must make from today's reading to help us understand some of the key issues we face, as we, like Israel, seek to possess our inheritance. (Acts 20:32; Eph. 1:15-23)...

#### 1. **Some of the children of Israel chose to dwell "on this side of Jordan." (Num. 32)**

Like many believers today, they are indeed God's children—and are glad of it, but that's about it. They missed the point of their exodus. (Deut. 6:23) They are more interested in having the promise of going to God's home when they die, than they are allowing God to make them His home while they live. Notice that they were the first to fall to the enemy because they settled for less than God intended for them! (2 Kings 10)

#### 2. **Some were only "partial possessors." (Josh. 16:10)**

That is, they could have driven the enemies out, but rather, chose to put them under tribute instead. In the same way, many "partial possessors" today think they can "spiritualize" their flesh, and use it for "ministry" or some

other perceived benefit—rather than utterly destroying it on a daily basis.

3. **Some were conquerors and possessed all of their inheritance. (Josh. 8:26; 19:47)**

This is what Paul was praying we might allow God to do in us in Ephesians 1:18–20 when he said, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places!"

4. **One wanted more—Caleb in Joshua 15.**

In like fashion, Paul prayed in Philippians 3:10-14, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In terms of dealing with your flesh and taking possession of all that God intended your salvation to be, which of the four groups listed above do you think you presently fit into?

Notice also in today's reading, that the scriptures provide us with several action steps for beginning the process of "possessing our inheritance:"

1. **"Arise!" (Josh. 18:8a)**

In other words, get up out of your "safe" place! Sometimes we have to purposely and purposefully choose to get up out of our mediocrity and comfortability in order to take possession of our possession! (Phil. 3:14)

2. **"Go for a walk!" (Josh. 18:8b)**

"Walk" through every area of your life and allow the Lord to reveal to you areas of your life that you still haven't allowed Him to possess. (Psa. 139:23–24)

3. **"Tell Joshua (Jesus) what you see!" (Josh. 18:8c–9)**

Take what the Lord has shown you about where you are in your relationship with Him, and pour your heart out to Him about it! Allow Him to change you and to possess all of you today. The reality is, we will not live in the full possession of the spiritual inheritance God intended our salvation to provide, until our Lord Jesus Christ fully possesses all of us!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

Through Othniel – Joshua 15:17 (His name means "lion" and he is from the Tribe of Judah—Rev. 5:5).

As Shiloh – Joshua 18:1 (Shiloh means "peace," as in "rest from war"—See Gen. 49:10; Matt. 11:28 and Col. 3:15-16.)

## WEEK 11, DAY 4: TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 19-21

### OVERVIEW:

The remaining lots are divided among the tribes of Israel; the cities of refuge are designated; the 48 cities are given to the Levites from among the other tribe's inheritance.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we begin chapter 19 today, Simeon is given his inheritance from within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. (Josh. 19:1,9) This action actually fulfilled Jacob's deathbed prophecy in Genesis 49:7, when he said, "I will divide them (Simeon and Levi) in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This was the direct result of their over-the-top anger and wrath that was meted out by murdering in cold blood every male in the city of Shechem because the king's son had defiled Dinah, their sister. Once again, we are reminded of the biblical principle that sin bears great consequences, even when forgiveness has been granted. (Gal. 6:7-8) How many of God's people throughout history have suffered life-altering consequences because of the momentary lapse of reason caused by the uncontrolled passions of anger, wrath and/or lust. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "Don't sacrifice the PERMANENT on the altar of the TEMPORARY." May God help us!

In chapter 20, God appoints six cities to be a place of refuge for those who innocently killed somebody—meaning that it was the result of an accident, or unintentional—not a premeditated act. In the city of refuge, they were protected from the "avenger of blood" by the elders of the city—until the death of the high priest. Upon his death, they were free.

Once again, God has taken out His paintbrush and is painting an absolute masterpiece of His Son—and the incredible refuge we have found "in Him!"

### The Cities of Refuge:

1. They were appointed for those who were guilty of shedding innocent blood.
2. They were appointed to protect from the "avenger of blood."
3. A refugee was safe as long as they stayed in the city.
4. Only the death of the high priest set them free.
5. These cities were always readily accessible to all.
6. Knowing they existed wasn't enough to protect a person. You had to flee to them.
7. One seeking refuge had to leave everything (family, friends, possessions, etc) in order to come to the city.
8. The cities of refuge were the responsibility of the Levites. (Num. 35:6)

### The Lord Jesus Christ:

1. We were all responsible for shedding Christ's innocent blood. (1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4-12)
2. By turning to Christ as our Refuge, we are protected from the true "avenger of blood"—God the Father. (See Deut. 32:35,43)
3. Those who have found refuge "in Christ," are safe and secure. (Rom.8:31-39)
4. It is only through the death of our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 6:20), that we are able to be set free indeed from the penalty of our sin. (John 8:36)
5. Jesus is accessible to anyone, at anytime. (Rom. 10:13; 2 Pet. 3:9)

6. Just knowing what Jesus did and who He is doesn't save a person. One must flee to Him and trust Him with their life. (Eph. 1:12–13)
7. One must be willing to forsake family, friends, and possessions in order to come to Jesus. (Matt. 10:34–39; Luke 18:22)
8. As New Testament priests (Rev. 1:6), it is now our responsibility to lead others to the only true Refuge—the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:18)

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the cities of refuge — Joshua 20 (See Psa. 46:1)

## WEEK 11, DAY 5: TODAY'S READING: JOSHUA 22-24

### OVERVIEW:

The two and a half tribes who chose their inheritance on the other side of Jordan build an altar and call it Ed; Joshua exhorts Israel's leaders; Joshua exhorts all the people of Israel and brings them to a point of decision.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we came through Numbers 32, you'll remember that two and a half tribes (the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh) chose to live on "this side" of the Jordan River before they ever even saw what God had in store for them in the Land He specifically had chosen for them on the "other side." They live in infamy to this day as the classic biblical example of a people who willfully chose less than God's best for their lives. Sadly, many believers through the centuries have failed to learn from their tragic mistake. As the old saying goes, "If we don't learn from the mistakes of history, we are destined to repeat them!"

In chapter 22 in today's reading, Joshua allows these two and a half tribes to return to the land of their choosing. God in His grace allowed them to go, because He never forces anyone to "live close to Him." The practical reality was, they were leaving the fertile land of Shiloh (the place of "peace" and "rest"), for their chosen inheritance in Gilead (which means "stony place!"). As Jesus taught us in the Parable of the Seed and the Sower, it is impossible to "bear fruit" from stony ground. May we learn from the example of these two and a half tribes to never settle for anything less than God's absolute best for our lives! A life of "fruit bearing" requires the land of our inheritance in Canaan!

On their way back to their inheritance, these two and a half tribes built an altar they called "Ed" (meaning "witness") as a memorial to remind their children and the other tribes in Israel that they, too, were the people of God and worshipped the God of Israel. What it actually was, was an attempt to convince their children, along with the children of Israel, that they were "spiritual" and really loved the Lord, even though they willfully had chosen to live away from the presence of God as it was manifested in the Promised Land via the Ark of the Covenant.

Kids, however, aren't stupid. The children in these two and a half tribes, just like our children, were able to see through all of their parents rationalizations and justifications—while they tried to do things that bore "witness" of their true spirituality. The reality is, that altar didn't "witness" to anything other than their parents disobedience and compromise! It has been my observation through the years that children can put up with a whole lot of their parents faults, frailties and even failures—if they will own them! One thing kids just can't seem to be able to withstand, however, is hypocrisy. Or, in other words, their parents trying to give the appearance of spirituality when there is no reality. Perhaps we should stop and ask ourselves, are there any "Eds" we have built to try to give "witness" to our kids and to the other believers in our local church, that we are living closer to God than we actually do? An "Ed" in our 21st century world can be anything from going to church and praying before meals, to reading the Bible and/or acting interested in the things of the Lord—but not truly cultivating an intimate relationship with Him, or longing to have His presence close to us at all times. Are you settling for less than God's best on "this side" of the Jordan, or are you passionately pursuing the closeness of His holy presence on the "other side?"

In chapters 23 and 24, Joshua knows he's about to die. He begins to give the children of Israel a history lesson, walking them back through God's faithfulness to them as a people from their inception as a nation. On one hand, he is passionately PLEADING with them to love God and to continue to follow Him in obedience and faithfulness—and

on the other hand, he is passionately WARNING them of the consequences that would inevitably destroy them if they were not obedient and faithful to the Lord. He warns them that any co-mingling or any connection whatsoever with these nations they had previously destroyed would cause them to become snares and traps... along with being scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes, and ultimately, those nations would overtake them!

In 24:14-15, Joshua brings his address to a conclusion. What he's been moving toward is a time of decision. He draws a line in the sand, as it were, and asks the children of Israel to decide to either go all the way with the God who had delivered them from the gods their forefathers served in Egypt and on the other side of the flood—or to just forget serving the Lord, and go back and serve their false gods. Notice, God wanted His people to choose to go one way or the other. He wanted them to be cold or hot... but not to find a place of "lukewarmness" or compromise, somewhere in the middle. (Rev. 3:15–16)

In Joshua 24:24, "The people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice we will obey." Is that the decision of your heart today? If so, then tell your "Joshua" about it!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

Through JOSHUA (the prophet), ELEAZAR (the priest), and JOSEPH (the King) — Joshua 24:29-33  
(The Book of Joshua ends with three funerals: Joshua, Eleazar and Joseph. A prophet, priest and king were buried right there in the middle of Israel's inheritance—picturing that it is only through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Prophet, Priest and King, that we have access to our inheritance in Him.)

## WEEK 12, DAY 1: TODAY'S READING: JUDGES 1-4

### OVERVIEW:

Early victories and incomplete possession of the land by Israel; the forsaking of God to serve Baal and Ashtaroth; God raises up Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak as judges to deliver Israel from the oppression of their enemies four different times.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

To understand the Book of Judges we must understand the last sentence in the entire Book: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Mark those words! They are not only the key to this Book, they are also the key human nature. Notice that it says that every man did that which was "RIGHT" in his own eyes—not that which was "WRONG!" The tragedy is that man's idea of what is right is often the exact opposite of what God says it is! (Pro. 14:12) This will become evident as we read the Book of Judges—and find the following recurring expression: "And the children of Israel did EVIL in the sight of the Lord." (2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1)

The Book of Judges gives us incredible insight into how it is that the lives of once "sold out" believers can so spiral downward that they actually become, as Paul talked about in 2 Timothy 2:20, "vessels unto DISHONOR," or as Peter talked about in 2 Peter 1:9, how they can actually "forget that they were purged from their old sins." How unbelievably tragic! God forbid that it would ever be true of us! But the biblical reality is, we all have that potential. It is vital that we learn the practical spiritual lessons in the Book of Judges! (Rom. 15:4)

There are four keywords that actually summarize the repeated pattern of God's people in the Book of Judges:

1. Commitment
2. Complacency
3. Compromise
4. Corruption

It went like this...

The very first chapter lets us know that when Israel was strong (COMMITTED), they put their enemies to tribute. In other words, rather than "utterly drive them out" as God had clearly commanded (1:28)—they made them subservient to them (as in, they made them pay taxes to them). What had actually happened to them, is the children of Israel went from being COMMITTED—to COMPLACENT! And that COMPLACENCY is what led to their "incomplete obedience," or their COMPROMISE. (Jud. 1–3) And that COMPROMISE, then led to their "complete disobedience" (Jud. 3–16)—which, of course, is what led to their CORRUPTION, expressed in their utter rebellion and depraved behavior. (Jud. 17–21)

And as we try to remind you so often, the nation of Israel is a picture of an individual New Testament believer. The Book of Judges details for us that we must constantly be on guard to avoid this deadly downward cycle that spirals God's people away from HIM and His WORD! It is interesting to note that the previous Book in the Bible, the Book

of Joshua, starts with an exhortation to meditate in God's Word day and night. (Jos. 1:8) By the time we get to the Book of Judges, however, the words "book," "law," "commandments," "statutes," or "judgments" do not appear even once! This downward spiral of complacency, compromise, and corruption is clearly linked to NEGLECTING GOD'S WORD, and the refusal of His people to OBEY IT. Oh, my brothers and sisters, may we HEAR and HEED this graphic spiritual warning!

But there's another pretty scary pattern that we see repeated throughout the record of the Old Testament, that is also introduced to us in today's reading (Jud. 2:7–10)...

A believer's life with a "1st generation" encounter with God (meaning they didn't grow up in a Christian home and were, therefore, saved out of the clutches of Satan and his world's system) is typically marked by COMMITMENT. Their children's lives, however, with a "2nd generation" encounter with God, tend to be marked by COMPROMISE. And then, the lives of their children—the 3rd generation, tend to have NO encounter with God, and live lives characterized by CONFLICT.

It happens like this...

The 1st generation...

Knows GOD—and knows His WORKS. (Jos. 24:14–17, 31)

Live lives of COMMITMENT.

The 2nd generation...

Knows GOD—and knows ABOUT His works. (Jud. 2:7)

Live lives of COMPROMISE.

The 3rd generation...

DOESN'T know GOD—and DOESN'T know about His WORKS. (Jud.2:10)

Live lives of CONFLICT.

So much COULD be said about this pattern (and SHOULD be said about it!), but maybe our biggest take-away today is simply this: though our children and grandchildren will never have the dramatic rescue some of us "1st generation Christians" had from the clutches of Satan and his world's system, we must be certain that they are continuously witnessing and experiencing the mighty WORKS of GOD in OUR lives—and in their OWN lives! Judges 2:7 says it this way: "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel." Oh, may we lead our children and grandchildren to experience "1st generation" encounters with our God!

Chapter 3 records somewhat of a bizarre story. It is certainly historically accurate, but like most of the Old Testament, was recorded in such a way so that it pictures New Testament truth, so we can read it and be admonished by it. (1 Cor. 10:6,11) The story is of "a very fat man" (3:17) by the name of Eglon who was the king of Moab. He is a picture of a believer who has allowed their FLESH to overtake them—regardless of their actual physical girth. I think you're

aware, our flesh has an appetite for a whole lot more than food! Again, Eglon simply pictures a believer that has been overtaken by their flesh.

And notice how God deals with him. He sends a "judge" by the name of Ehud to deliver Israel from King Eglon and the Moabites. And as you might could predict, the way Ehud overcame this "very fat man" was with a dagger ("sword") that he had strategically "hidden" on his right side side. A "sword," by the way, that just happened to have "two edges!" (Jud. 3:16–17/Heb. 4:12) Ehud thrust the sword into Eglon's belly—and the passage says that the "dirt came out," and killed him. (Jud. 3:21–22)

So, did you catch all of that? God, the Master Teacher and Artist is teaching us that the way we are to deal with ("judge") the self-consumption of our "flesh" that continuously seeks to rule us—is by "hiding" a "two-edged sword" on our right side (Psa. 119:8; Heb. 4:12)—and thrusting it right into the "belly" of our flesh to reveal the "dirt" in our life, in the process of "mortifying" it (Col. 3:5)—or putting it death! What an incredible Book the Bible is!

Chapter 4 records another rather "bizarre " story. God uses a woman named Jael to defeat a man by the named Sisera, who was another oppressor of Israel. Jael was initially aligned with Sisera against Israel, but God changed her heart. In short, she got some "milk," took a "hammer" and a "nail," and killed Sisera while he was sleeping by putting the nail through his temple! Wow! Quite a story! Likewise, if we allow the "milk" (2 Pet. 2:2) and "hammer" (Jer. 23:29) of the Word of God to pierce our lives and renew our minds (Rom. 12:2), we, too, can "nail" our enemies (the world, the flesh and the devil)—and be free from their oppression! (Isa. 23:22; Eze. 9:8)

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

The Angel of the Lord – Judges 2:1–4

Through Othniel – Judges 3:1–11

(His name means "Lion from the Tribe of Judah." He delivered Israel from an oppressive enemy—Rev. 5:5)

Through Ehud – Judges 3:15–16

(The Judge with a two-edged sword—Heb. 4:12; Rev. 2:12)

## WEEK 12, DAY 2: TODAY'S READING: JUDGES 5-8

### OVERVIEW:

Deborah's song to the Lord; Gideon's call and deliverance of Israel from the oppression of the Midianites.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Deborah was one of the judges during this incredibly dark time in Israel's history. Chapter 5 records a song that she was "inspired" to write and to sing on the very day that Jael put Sisera to death, that we read about in yesterday's reading. Though the song has obvious reference to the things that were happening at that time historically, the song is actually prophetic in nature—because it will also be the song the redeemed will sing when the true King (the Lord Jesus Christ) takes His rightful throne, and the king of evil (Satan) is defeated. (Rev. 5:9; 14:3) Notice as the song comes to an end (Jud. 5:31), the Sun goes forth to reign in His might with those He loves, and there is rest in the land. It is the very thing that Malachi 4:2 and Revelation 19:14 says will take place in the very near future!

Chapters 6-8 deal with one of the most well-known heroes in the Book of Judges, Gideon. He is called by God to be the deliverer of Israel from the Midianites. Interestingly, the name Midian means "strife," or "contention." And note that Proverbs 13:10 teaches us that "only by pride cometh contention"—and 1 Corinthians 1:10–11 and 3:1–3 lets us know that the root of "strife" and "contention" is "CARNALITY," or FLESHLINESS!

And make sure you notice just what it was that the Midianites did to the children of Israel. They destroyed the fruit in the land, leaving them with nothing to eat. (Jud. 6:4) How incredibly ironic! I mean, here is Israel, starving, mind you, in the midst of a land flowing with milk and honey! Does that sound at all familiar to you? Many people who have received ETERNAL LIFE (Joh. 10:10a) are defeated by their FLESH—and therefore, are unable to eat the fruit of the ABUNDANT LIFE God intended their salvation to provide. (Joh. 10:10b) Listen, Midian's (or "strife's") ultimate target is the harvest! Are you starving spiritually? Are you struggling to be fruitful because of the contentious attitude of your heart and the selfish desires of your flesh? If so, pay close attention to what Gideon did to defeat the Midianites—so you can employ the same principles to your life!

God chose 300 men armed with nothing more than pitchers, lamps (lanterns) and trumpets to defeat a much larger and better equipped enemy. This was God's "strategy," so that when they got the victory, only God would get the glory. (Jud. 7:2) It is, of course, the New Testament principle that God teaches us in 1 Corinthians 1:27–29... "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise... that no flesh should glory in His presence!"

But, notice that battle plan once again. It really was very "simple." (2 Cor. 11:3) Shatter your pitcher, blow your trumpet, shine your lamp and stand fast in your place while God defeats the enemy! (Jud. 7:19–21) Listen, this is the only way "Midian" (pride, strife, contention — FLESH!) can be defeated in our lives as well! We must be BROKEN VESSELS (or, pitchers) for God to use (2 Tim. 2:21)... we must let our LIGHT SHINE (Mat. 5:16; Phil. 2:15–16)... we must use our MOUTHS as a TRUMPET to proclaim the gospel to the world (Eph. 6:9)... and finally, we must STAND FAST and watch God defeat the enemy with the SWORD! (Ephesians 6:10–14)

You may also want to note that Hebrews 11:32 puts Gideon at the head of the list of judges. Though he often wavered in doubt, he was still a "man of faith" who dared to trust the Word of God. When you realize that he was a "common man" (a farmer—Jud. 6:11), and not a trained warrior, you can see how wonderful his faith actually was!

As "common" men and women (Mar. 12:37b), in the midst of all of our doubts, fears and shortcomings, may we, like Gideon, dare to trust the Word of God!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As The Angel of the Lord – Judges 6:12–21

Through Barak, the son of Abinoam – Judges 5:12.

The name Barak means "Glittering Sword." (Joh. 1:1,14). The name Abinoam means "beautiful father." Barak, the glittering sword, was the son of a beautiful Father!

Through Gideon – Judges 6–8.

The deliverer who leads Israel to a most improbable victory.

## WEEK 12, DAY 3: TODAY'S READING: JUDGES 9-12

### OVERVIEW:

Abimelech's rise to power and his subsequent death; the oppression of the Ammonites; Jephthah's deliverance of Israel and vow to God.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Although Gideon's fame as a courageous judge of Israel is secured in biblical history (Heb. 11:32), the inviolable law of sowing and reaping enters the picture as we move into chapter 9 in today's reading. (Gal. 6:7–8) The seeds of rebellion and pride that we witnessed Gideon sow at the end of chapter 8 (8:27–31) are already beginning to bear some pretty nasty fruit. As we enter chapter 9, God details for us the consequences of what Proverbs 15:25 calls the "house of the proud." Abimelech, the son of Gideon by his concubine (8:31), is a proud, egotistical "self-monger" whose whole motive and purpose in life was to gain power! He is determined to set himself up as the king in the kingdom. (9:1–4)

Because the Bible tells us that one of the chief characteristics of those living in the last days will be a preoccupation with and love for "SELF" (2 Tim. 3:2), much like what is being revealed in Abimelech, we would do well to "examine ourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5) to see if there are any areas of our life where, we too, in our pride, might be being driven by the pursuit of prestige, power and/or position. In other words, are we somehow secretly striving to set ourselves up as a "king" in our own little "kingdom?" We may need to take an honest look at the motive behind our service for Christ to determine whether it is really for Him—or for ourselves. Prior to coming to Christ, we were all driven by our pride to the exaltation of SELF. (Mar. 8:34) Sadly, many have simply changed the arena from which they seek to exalt self. Whereas it used to be the world, now it is the church. (3 Joh. 9) God forbid!

Note also, that Gideon's sin at the end of chapter 8 also becomes a warning to all parents. The biblical principle that we witness in scripture is that whatever parents do in moderation, their children will typically do in excess. The "minor" exaltation of SELF manifest in Gideon in 8:27, becomes "major" in and through Abimelech. Abimelech is so enamored with SELF—that he actually murdered all of his next-of-kin... 70 of his own brethren! The only one that wasn't murdered was Jotham, and the only reason he escaped was because he hid himself! Oh, may we learn that sin is not to be trifled with! The remainder of chapter 9 simply chronicles the continuation of Abimelech's ravenous selfishness and self-centeredness. But notice, God always pays his debts and no sin goes unnoticed! By the end of the chapter, Abimelech is killed by a wise woman (Prov. 1:20–33)... who had taken shelter in a strong tower (Ps. 61:3)... using a Rock (1 Cor. 10:4) that she dropped on his big head!

In chapters 10-12, once again, we find Israel in one of their repeated cycles of sin. The real issue is that they were willing to serve any god who would make them happy. They wanted their own way, their desires fulfilled, and their ego boosted—and that, my friend, is a collision course for disaster! The choice to serve self is sin, and sin always leads to sorrow and death. (Jam. 1:15) It becomes increasingly difficult to understand, much less to tolerate, the blatant foolishness and rebellion of God's people Israel. How could they possibly experience all of His blessings, and repeatedly turn their backs on Him? And yet, how can we, who likewise, have been overly blessed by God, and have even seen the consequences of Israel's choices, do less than make a final end to our own flirting with the world, the flesh and the devil? We must, once and for all, make the decision that "It is ENOUGH! I am not my own, I have been bought by the blood of God's dear Son, and by God's grace and power, sin will no longer control me!" When we cry

out to God, broken by our sin, we can be sure that He will hear us, and deliver us from its dominion. (1 Joh. 5:14–15; Rom. 6:12–14)

In keeping with their pattern, in 10:10, Israel cries out to God again—and in keeping with His pattern, once again, God sends them a deliverer. This time it was Jephthah, another incredible picture of Jesus Christ. Jephthah was a mighty man of valor who was the son of an harlot (Jud. 11:1)... who was rejected by his brethren (Jud. 11:2–3)... and went away to live in the land of Tob (which means “blessing, joy, beautiful, and righteous”). While he was in Tob, he gathered vain (or “empty”) men unto himself, and was later called home by Israel during a time of tribulation to deliver them from their oppressors. He then came back as the captain of their salvation. (Jud. 11:6)

And just in case you weren't connecting all of those dots, check this out...

Jesus, too, was a Mighty Man of Valor who was accused of being the Son of a harlot (John 8:41)... He, too, was rejected by His brethren (Luke 19:14)... and He, too, went away to a place like Tob—a beautiful place of blessing, joy, and righteousness. (Ps. 48:2) While He is there, He continues to gather vain or “empty” men and women to Himself as worshippers, and He will come back at the end of the Great Tribulation to deliver Israel, and to be the Captain of their salvation! (Heb. 2:10; Rev. 19) And again I say, this Book is absolutely amazing, y'all!

Though to this point, Jephthah had been a beautiful type of Christ, the sad reality is, that like many of the Old Testament pictures of Christ, Jephthah found a way to totally get his life jacked up! He made a horrendous mistake by vowing a vow to God that resulted in him foolishly and sinfully burning his own daughter as a sacrifice—supposedly to God! (Jud. 11:34–40) Wow! Though Jephthah's “mistake” was certainly extreme, his mistake is very common throughout the history of God's people! You see, Jephthah thought there was something he could DO to EARN the blessing and/or favor of God. He thought that by vowing his vow, He could get God on his side. The crazy irony of it all was that God was already on his side! No human work or any accumulation of them can ever earn God's graciously given favor (Eph. 2:8-9), or make us the recipient of more of His power. (Acts 1:8) He gives it all to us FREELY! (1 Cor. 2:12) Oh, may Jephthah's horrific debacle teach us this invaluable lesson!

Though this is an incredibly sad chapter in Jephthah's life—(not to mention an incredibly sad chapter in the Bible!)—it is also a blessing in the fact that God has set His Book apart from every other book in the world because of His honesty regarding its heroes. (Other examples include Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, Elijah, et al!) God is a straight shooter, who simply tells it the way it is... or was! He doesn't sugarcoat or mask anything! The Bible is a real Book... about real people... people just like me and you! Hallelujah!

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As THE STRONG TOWER – Judges 9:51 (Psalm 18:2, 61:3)

Through JEPHTHAH – Judges 11–12 (see details in “Highlights and Insights” above)

## WEEK 12, DAY 4: TODAY'S READING: JUDGES 13-17

### OVERVIEW:

The birth of Samson; the life of Samson; the death of Samson; Micah and his mother's idolatrous religion.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In today's reading, we encounter one of the most popular judges in Israel's history—the infamous Samson. God had an unbelievable plan for how He wanted to use him—and yet, the tragedy is, Samson cashed it all in because he never could overcome the passions of his flesh. On one hand, we could refer to Samson as "The STRONGEST man who ever lived," and yet, on the other hand, we could refer to him as "The WEAKEST man who ever lived!" From a PHYSICAL standpoint, Samson's strength was beyond human comprehension. From a SPIRITUAL standpoint, however, he couldn't even muster the simple strength to tell his flesh "No!" He had the power to conquer every man on earth—except one... HIMSELF!

And what we learn from Judges 13–16, is that Samson was a man who had everything in the world going for him! God had blessed him beyond measure, and yet he squandered it all, because rather than serve God's purposes for his life, he chose to serve himself! Rather than becoming the champion God intended for him to become, he became a selfish, self-willed, self-absorbed, self-seeking, self-gratifying, self-loving, self-monger! And with that in mind, maybe we should remind ourselves that God tells us in 2 Timothy 3:1–2 that the number one characteristic that makes these "last days" so incredibly "perilous," is that we, too, are "lovers of our own SELVES!" Perhaps then, there just might be some things we can learn from Samson's life that can help us! Notice a few important things...

#### 1. Samson was the product of a SUPERNATURAL BIRTH.

Judges 13:2 lets us know that his mother was barren, and had absolutely no hope of bearing a child apart from the supernatural working of the "angel of the Lord" (an Old Testament appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ!), who appears to her in verse 3, and causes her to be able to conceive and bear Samson.

#### 2. Sampson had the privilege of being SET APART for the Lord's service from his very birth.

Judges 13:5 says, "For the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb." You see, that's what a Nazarite was, "one who was 'SANCTIFIED' or 'SET APART' for the Lord's service."

#### 3. Samson possessed the very POWER of the Holy Spirit of God upon his life.

Judges 13:25 says that Samson was "moved" by the "Spirit of the Lord." Judges 14:5–6 says he was empowered "mightily" by the "Spirit of the Lord" upon him to overcome a "roaring lion!" And Judges 15:14–16 says he was "mightily" empowered by the "Spirit of the Lord" to overcome his enemies—a thousand of them at one time!

#### 4. Sampson was provided a BEGINNING that was filled with unending promise and potential.

The last part of Judges 13:5 says, "... And he shall BEGIN to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." And I want you to notice, that what Sampson did with the "BEGINNING" God gave to him, was limited only by Samson's own choices, and his willingness to be surrendered to God's plans and purposes for him.

And yet, with all of these incredible realities and this unending potential in his life—because of pride, self-will, selfish ambition, and allowing himself to be overtaken by sensual lust, he forfeited the real impact God could have used him to have, and he squandered the potential glory his life could have brought to the Lord. He becomes for us, the classic biblical example of a WASTED LIFE!

And I'm not sure if you recognized it or not as we were overviewing Samson's life, but his story is actually unbelievably similar to ours! Because for all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, just like Samson...

### **1. We, too, were the product of a SUPERNATURAL BIRTH!**

No, not a physical one like Samson's, but a supernatural birth that we call "salvation," or being "born again!" Ephesians 2:12–13 says we were "without hope" until the "angel of the Lord," the Lord Jesus Christ, supernaturally drew us to Himself. And 1 Peter 1:23 says that we were "...born again, not of corruptible seed (physical seed/birth), but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

### **2. We, too, were given the privilege of being SET APART for the Lord's service from our very birth!**

And, of course, that would be referring, again, to our spiritual birth! 1 Corinthians 6:11 tells us that when the Holy Spirit of God "washed" us in Christ's blood and we received our "justification," or our "salvation" in Christ, that at that very moment, we were "SANCTIFIED," or, "SET APART" by the Holy Spirit of God for the Lord's service.

### **3. We, too, possess the very POWER of the Holy Spirit of God upon our lives!**

Acts 17:2 says that, "... in HIM we live and MOVE, and have our being." 2 Corinthians 6:16 says that in US, He LIVES and MOVES and has HIS being! And 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that though our enemy (or adversary) walks about like a "ROARING LION," 1 John 4:4 says that we have been given the POWER by the One who lives in us, to OVERCOME him! And not just him, but the enemy of sin that resides in the members of our body. Romans 6:13–14 says that through God's POWER in us, the enemy of sin no longer has dominion (or power) over us!

### **4. We, too, have been provided a BEGINNING that is filled with unending promise and potential.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that now that we are "in Christ," we are "new creatures," and that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!" Listen, that's the "BEGINNING" God gave to all of us! And just as in Samson's case, what we do with the "BEGINNING" God gives to us, is limited only by our own choices, and our willingness to be surrendered to His plans and purposes through us!

Do you see that unbelievable connection we have with Sampson? We, too, are those who have everything in the world going for us! Like Samson, God has blessed us beyond measure! And yet, the absolute tragedy and travesty is, many who have actually experienced a supernatural spiritual birth... many who have been set apart by that spiritual birth for the Lord's service... many who have been empowered by God's own Holy Spirit in them... and many who have been granted the unbelievable privilege and promise of a brand-new beginning with unlimited potential to bring God glory—just like Samson, forfeit the real impact God intends for their lives. And just like Samson, they squander their potential to glorify God, and their ultimate accounting at the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal that for all intents and purposes, they WASTED THEIR LIFE! For God's glory's sake, may that not be true of me—and may

it not be true of you! May we learn from the negative example of Samson's life to keep ourselves off of the path of self-love and self-destruction—and fulfill God's glorious purpose for our lives!

Notice that in the section that records the end of Samson's life (Jud. 16:29–31), he's buried beneath the rubble of his own self-destruction, and his brothers have come to pull him out of it—to at least give him a decent burial. Again, may it never be that our brothers have to come and pull us out of the rubble of our own self-destruction! Our God is worthy of so much more!

In chapter 17, we have an incredible picture of a false religious system that has...

- Robed priests (17:5—an "ephod" = a priestly garment)...
- Called "fathers" (17:10)...
- Who use idols (17:4–5—a "graven/molten image")...
- As aides in worship...
- In their "house of gods." (17:5)

Does that sound like any false religious system of which you have ever heard? This happens to be a perfect description of the false religious system that exists today, called the Roman Catholic Church!

Note in 17:10–13, that by taking this man who was younger than Micah to be his personal "priest" that he referred to as "father," he actually thought he was doing the "right thing"—and that the Lord would be pleased. (Compare this, however, with 17:6!) The sad reality is, Satan has always found a way to concoct some false religious system to put GOD'S name on—so he can give people a false sense of security as he is in the very process of damning their souls to Hell. And the whole reason this happened was because Micah neglected to consult God's Word on this matter! It is the same reason the Roman Catholic Church deceives so many into thinking they are right with God—they very simply neglect to consult God's Word on the matter! We must pray for the people trapped in this damnable false system of religion! Over a billion of the world's population are Roman Catholic.

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

Through SAMSON – Judges 13–16

He is the son of promise who was born to be set-apart for God in order to deliver Israel from her enemies.

## WEEK 12, DAY 5: TODAY'S READING: JUDGES 18-21

### OVERVIEW:

The corruption of the Tribe of Dan; the wickedness of the Gibeonites; the division between the Tribe of Benjamin and the rest of Israel; the destruction of the Tribe of Benjamin.

### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we finish the Book of Judges today, it's vital that we recall where we are at this point of Israel's history. After several years of complacency, summarized in chapters 1 and 2, Israel entered into a long period of compromise, found in chapters 3 through 16. During that time, God's people endured seven major cycles of oppression at the hands of those over whom the Lord had previously given victory. The final five chapters of the Book of Judges sadly describe for us the corruption that ultimately takes place when they forgot God and His Word! Some of the most bizarre and horrific stories in all of scripture appear in this final part of the Book of Judges. Remember, the key to understanding this whole book is found in the last verse of the final chapter.. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

In chapter 18, the Tribe of Dan convinces Micah's own personal priest, whom he called "father" (Jud. 17:10) to leave with them to be the priest of the entire tribe. (Jud. 18:19) This, of course, was very appealing to the priest because it was a pretty incredible "promotion," so to speak. He was so excited about this "promotion" that he stole Micah's ephod ("priestly garment"), his teraphim ("household idol"), and his "graven image" (Jud. 18:20) so he could perform his priestly duties for the Tribe of Dan. Micah was, of course, devastated—because what had actually happened is—not only did he lose his priest, but his entire religion had been stolen! (Jud. 18:24) The simple but profound lesson here is—beware of any "religion" that because of its external ritualism and idolatry—can be stolen! Notice in this passage, Micah's "religion" couldn't resist the weapons of warfare (18:11,16–17)... when push came to shove, his priest would not stand by him (18:18–20)... the congregation was powerless to do anything but cry out in despair with him (18:22–23)... and its' final end was nothing more than heartache and loss. (18:24–26) And do note, the beautiful reality is—you can't steal the "religion" of someone who has been truly born again, because, first of all, it's not based on EXTERNAL realities—but INTERNAL ones (Luk. 17:21), and in the final analysis, it's not actually even a "RELIGION!" It is an eternal "RELATIONSHIP," whereby the holy, omnipotent, Creator-God of the universe has become our Father, and we, His sons and daughters! (2 Cor. 6:18) You see, that's something, hallelujah, that can't be STOLEN! (Joh. 10:28)

In chapter 19, a Levite sets out on a long journey to recover his unfaithful concubine. He discovers, however, that she had been abused all night long until the dawning of the day, and had been divided into pieces by the sword. Although this isn't a perfect picture by any means, it is still a very sobering reminder of the fact that in the very near future, Jehovah God will come back in the morning (Mal. 4:2) after the biblical "nighttime" of the Church Age (Rom. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:2,5), to look for His unfaithful wife, the Nation of Israel, who has been abused all through this biblical nighttime, and has been spiritually dead to Him. Remember, we just happen to be in the Book of Judges—and at this point, there is no king in Israel, and Israel is "dead," as it were, to God. In the next Book of the Bible, the Book of Ruth, a Jewish kinsman-redeemer takes a gentile bride to himself, and then the Son of David (Solomon) will come back to give Israel life once again. This, too, points us to the glories that await Israel in the future!

Chapters 20 and 21 teach us the story of how Israel decides to deal with this despicable sin that happened within their borders (the abusing of the concubine by the men of Gibeah). There is a division between the men of Israel and

the Tribe of Benjamin over this issue though. Shockingly, Benjamin takes the side of the Gibeonites and decides to fight against Israel. It allows us to see the amazingly disgusting depths to which sin is capable of taking us! The Benjamites actually wanted to defend the unthinkable wickedness of the Gibeonites! What does that tell you about the moral state of this tribe at this time? The Tribe of Benjamin was defeated by Israel in the war and it appeared that the sin at Gibeah had been dealt with. The only problem is that history teaches us that they never truly repented, because once again, they returned to their sinful ways. (2 Cor. 7:10) All of chapter 21 is a counterfeit repentance that does nothing more than make them feel good about themselves for "confessing their sin." They were not, however, actually turning (repenting) from their sin, by "cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1) Like much of the confession of sin done by Christians in the 21st century, it is "worldly sorrow" which brings about "worldly repentance"—as opposed to "godly sorrow" that brings about "godly repentance!" (2 Cor. 7:8–11) We would do well to consider of what sort is our sorrow over and repentance of sin!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

Through THE HOUSE OF GOD – Judges 20:18

(God's dwelling place among His people Israel. Unfortunately, this corrupt time in Israel is much like the Laodicean church period (Rev. 3:14–22), where our Lord Jesus Christ is on the outside looking in, while all the people on the inside think He's in their midst!)

As the LEVITE – Judges 19:1 (See details in the "Highlights and Insights" above)