

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 47 (November 13-19, 2016)

We will spend one more week studying the life of Joshua. He has already led his people into the Promised Land, and now he begins the process of removing the enemies from the territory promised to the Jews.

Sunday, November 13 (read Joshua 8:30-35)

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the aliens who lived among them. (Joshua 8:35)

After the men of Israel defeat the army of Ai (v. 1-29), Joshua builds an altar to God in accordance with the Word of God given to Moses (v. 30-31). Joshua carefully copies all the words from the law of Moses onto stones for permanent keeping. Everyone stands on opposite sides of the Ark of the Covenant, which is carried by the Levites (v. 33). Moses had commanded these events, which you will find recorded in Deuteronomy 27 & 28. Joshua reads **all** the words of the law to the entire assembly, including women, children and aliens, because **every** word of the Word of God is vital. He reads both the **blessings** and the **curses**, unlike many of today's preachers. Likewise, we also need to hear the positive and the negative as we move forward into God's ultimate Promised Land, Heaven itself!

Monday, November 14 (read Joshua 9:1-15)

The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. (Joshua 9:14)

Moses had commanded the Israelites not to make any treaty with the people who lived in the land where they were going (See Exodus 23:32-33). In today's text, the citizens of Gibeon trick Joshua and his leaders into making a treaty of peace with them. They **pretend** to be coming from a distant country, even though they are close neighbors. The Gibeonites have nothing to lose since they know they cannot defeat God's chosen people. The worn sandals, the old wineskins and the moldy bread are enough to deceive the Israelites (v. 3-6). I can't be too hard on Joshua, because I have approved people for leadership positions who tell me, "We have come a long way." I too have examined the provisions without inquiring of God (v. 14). It's a great lesson that we all need to inquire of the Lord before we make any major decision. We will see how Joshua resolves this problem in tomorrow's devotion.

Tuesday, November 15 (read Joshua 9:16-27)

Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. (Joshua 9:16)

The Old Testament often points out the wisdom that is learned in **three days**. It is a reminder that Christians need to take a three-day journey from the cross where they receive a Savior to the empty tomb where they receive a Lord. As always, the whole assembly knows exactly what the leaders **should have** done, so they grumble against them (v. 18). The leaders are obligated to let the Gibeonites live, but they will become the "woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community" (v. 21). Joshua demands an answer for the deception he has believed (v. 22-23). The people of Gibeon agree to the terms of the covenant and continue to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the Israelites (v. 24-27). Like Joshua, we must live up to the promises we make, but unlike Joshua, we must pray before we make those promises.

Wednesday, November 16 (read Joshua 10:1-15)

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. (Joshua 10:13b)

In today's text, Joshua fulfills his promise to protect the citizens of Gibeon. You saw his humanity when he was deceived by the Gibeonites, but now you see his powerful faith as he calls for the Lord's help in the battle. God does two amazing miracles to assist Israel: 1) He hurls huge hailstones upon the enemy (v. 11), and 2) He stops the sun from shining for a full day in response to Joshua's prayer so that the victory will be complete (v. 12-14). A lesser man would have allowed the five kings (v. 5) to destroy the people who had deceived him, but Joshua remains a man of his word and saves the men who will be serving the Israelites. This amazing story should remind you that God will do whatever is necessary for you to win your spiritual victories. All you need to do is to call on Him and trust His answer.

Thursday, November 17 (read Joshua 23:1-11)

One of you routs a thousand, because the Lord your God fights for you, just as He promised. (Joshua 23:10)

As we begin today's reading, Joshua has conquered the land of the Canaanites and divided it among the tribes of Israel. His final speeches will conclude our study of this great man of faith. He reminds his listeners that God has fought the battles for them so that they do not take pride in their own accomplishments (v. 1-3). There are still a few enemies left in the land, but the Israelites can trust God to defeat them as well (v. 4-5). Joshua reminds them to obey the Word of God fully so that future victories will be assured (v. 6-8). Finally, he reminds them that they were underdogs in the battles, but God has led them to victory (v. 9-10). They are to love the Lord with all their hearts as they live in the Promised Land (v. 11). As Christians, we are already citizens of the Promised Land (see Philippians 3:20-21), not because of our works, but because of His gift. Let's honor Him by the life we live on this earth!

Friday, November 18 (read Joshua 23:12-16)

Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. (Joshua 23:14)

Joshua reminds the people that God's blessing will continue only if they obey His Word and follow in His ways. They are forbidden to intermarry with the people of the land or to worship their gods (v. 12-13), because their gods of sight and sound and feelings will lead His people astray. At this time, Joshua, now an old man, reminds his people that God has been faithful to **all** of His promises (v. 14). On the flip side of the coin, he warns that God's promises to punish them for disobedience are also true (v. 15-16). Nothing has changed! God will still fight our battles and assure the victory for anyone who chooses to walk with Him and obey His commands. Can you trust Him to complete what He has begun in you?

Saturday, November 19 (read Joshua 24:14-15)

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15b)

Joshua reviews the victories the Lord has given them from Abraham's time all the way to the present day (v. 1-13). He then gives them one more command before giving them the choice that they (and you) have to make. They are to release their grip on the false gods that their forefathers worshipped (v. 14). Then they are to choose for themselves whom they will serve. The three choices are still available: 1) The gods of the past, 2) The gods of the politically correct crowds today, or 3) The One true God. Which choice will you make?