



Lesson 51 – The Blessings and the Curses

based on Joshua 8.

After the execution of the sentence upon Achan, Joshua was commanded to marshal all the men of war and again advance against Ai. The power of God was with His people, and they were soon in possession of the city.

1) What did Joshua do after the conquest of Ai?

Joshua 8:30-31 Then Joshua built an _____ unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon _____ offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

Joshua 8:32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the _____ of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

Military operations were now suspended, that all Israel might engage in a solemn religious service. The people were eager to obtain a settlement in Canaan; as yet they had not homes or lands for their families, and in order to gain these they must drive out the Canaanites; but this important work must be deferred, for a higher duty demanded their first attention.

2) What did they do?

Joshua 8:33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; _____ of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should _____ the people of Israel.

Joshua 8:34-35 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the _____ and _____, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before _____ the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

In obedience to these injunctions the whole people, not only men, but “the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them” left their camp at Gilgal, and marched through the country of their enemies, to the vale of Shechem, near the center of the land. Though surrounded by unconquered foes, they were safe under the protection of God as long as they were faithful to Him.

3) Why?

Genesis 35:5 And they journeyed: and the _____ of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

The spot chosen was one of the most beautiful in all Palestine, and worthy to be the theater where this grand and impressive scene was to be enacted. The lovely valley, its green fields dotted with olive groves, watered with brooks from living fountains, and gemmed with wild flowers, spread out invitingly between the barren hills. Ebal and Gerizim, upon opposite sides of the valley, nearly approach each other, their lower spurs seeming to form a natural pulpit, every word spoken on one being distinctly audible on the other, while the mountainsides, receding, afford space for a vast assemblage.



Six of the tribes, all descended from Leah and Rachel, were stationed upon Mount Gerizim; while those that descended from the handmaids, together with Reuben and Zebulun, took their position on Ebal, the priests with the ark occupying the valley between them. Silence was proclaimed by the sound of the signal trumpet; and then in the deep stillness, and in the presence of this vast assembly, Joshua, standing beside the sacred ark, read the blessings that were to follow obedience to God's law. All the tribes on Gerizim responded by an Amen.

He then read the curses, and the tribes on Ebal in like manner gave their assent, thousands upon thousands of voices uniting as the voice of one man in the solemn response. Following this came the reading of the law of God, together with the statutes and judgments that had been delivered to them by Moses.

4) What was the law that was read to them?

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no _____ before me.

Exodus 20:4-6 Thou shalt not make unto thee any _____, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not _____ the _____ of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the _____ day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any _____, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and _____ the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy _____ and thy _____: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not _____.

Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt not commit _____.

Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt not _____.

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear _____ against thy neighbour.

Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not _____ thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Israel had received the law directly from the mouth of God at Sinai; and its sacred precepts, written by His own hand, were still preserved in the ark. Now it had been again written where all could read it. All had the privilege of seeing for themselves the conditions of the covenant under which they were to hold possession of Canaan. All were to signify their acceptance of the terms of the covenant and give their assent to the blessings or curses for its observance or neglect. The law was not only written upon the memorial stones, but was read by Joshua himself in the hearing of all Israel. It had not been many weeks since Moses gave the whole book of Deuteronomy in discourses to the people, yet now Joshua read the law again.

5) What were they to do with God's Word?

Deuteronomy 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your _____ and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.



Deuteronomy 11:19 And ye shall teach them your _____, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Deuteronomy 11:20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine _____, and upon thy gates:

Deuteronomy 11:21 That your _____ may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

- 6) How often was the whole law to be read before everyone at the Feast of Tabernacles?

Deuteronomy 31:10-11 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every _____ years, in the solemnity of the year of _____, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

- 7) Who was expected to listen?

Deuteronomy 31:12-13 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy _____ that is within thy gates, that they may _____, and that they may _____, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

Satan is ever at work endeavoring to pervert what God has spoken, to blind the mind and darken the understanding, and thus lead men into sin. This is why the Lord is so explicit, making His requirements so very plain that none need err. God is constantly seeking to draw men close under His protection, that Satan may not practice his cruel, deceptive power upon them. He has condescended to speak to them with His own voice, to write with His own hand the living oracles. And these blessed words, all instinct with life and luminous with truth, are committed to men as a perfect guide. Because Satan is so ready to catch away the mind and divert the affections from the Lord's promises and requirements, the greater diligence is needed to fix them in the mind and impress them upon the heart.

Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men. We should bind its precepts as signs upon our hands and as frontlets between our eyes. If studied and obeyed, it would lead God's people, as the Israelites were led, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Can you see God means what He says?

Would you like God to be your defender?

When is it time to walk in His blessings?