

Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-23—Deut. 21-Joshua 1

We closed our last lesson saying that we would start this lesson with Deut. 21:10. Here we are told that if in the conduct of war, a soldier sees a beautiful woman and has the thought that he would like to have her for a wife, God says that if he brings her home as a captive, she is to put off the raiment of her captivity, shave her head and trim her nails and then mourn her father and mother for one month. Then the soldier who brought her can go into her and have her as his wife. Keep in mind that this does not apply to their war with the Canaanites as they were to completely destroy all flesh. If it turns out that the man doesn't find the woman to be a good wife, he is to release her, but he cannot sell her or make merchandise of her.

The next few chapters reiterate some of the laws that we have already dealt with. We won't deal with them again with the exception that I would like for us to read Deut. 24:1-4. This is the law of divorce. We need to have this law in mind as we will soon be dealing with God divorcing Israel and we need to have the law in mind so that we can see that He does in strict accordance with His law.

(Read Deut. 27) Moses is making final arrangements for the crossing of the Jordan River going into the land of Canaan. (Read Deut. 28:1-14) These, of course are the blessings for diligently keeping the laws that God has given them once they are in the new land. (Read Deut. 28:15-68) As we read these curses for disobedience and then look at what is happening in our nation today, I think it would be well for us to consider the possible source of many of our problems. Correction of our problems does not come from more taxes, health care legislation, gun control, welfare programs, a larger military, or the many other attempts that are being made to correct our many problems, but rather simply obedience to our God. We are no different today than the Israelites were when they moved into the land of Canaan. As we continue our study, we'll see that they had many of the problems we have today simply because of their disobedience.

(Read Deut. 29-30) After reading the blessings and curses that would come on Israel, depending on their obedience or disobedience, Moses tells all of Israel that even though they have seen the miracles that God has done for them, yet, he says in Deut. 29:4, **“the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.”** It is time for them to understand. Moses gives them examples of what God has done such as their clothes not wearing out, their not eating bread or drinking wine, the defeats they have rendered to their enemies, etc. that they might know that He is the LORD their God. The list of curses and blessings are given by God as a covenant, something that would continue to be their guide. This was not something that would be difficult for them to know, Moses says in Deut. 30:14, **“But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”**

In Deut. 31, we're told that Moses was 120 years old. He tells the people that he cannot go over the Jordan with them but encourages the people and Joshua in particular. He wrote out all of the law and commanded that it was to be read to all the people in the year of release, i.e. every seventh year, at the Feast of Tabernacles.

God then had Moses present himself and Joshua in the tabernacle. God told Moses, when he and Joshua had presented themselves, that the day would come when this people would reject Him and go whoring after other gods and break their covenant with Him. He says that when that happens, He will hide His face from them and he gave Moses a song that he was to write that would be a witness

against the people in that day. God then charged Joshua to be of good courage for He would be with him as they moved into the land. Moses was to write all of the law into a book and it was to be put inside the Ark of the Covenant that it might always be a witness against the people, for they are a stiff necked people God says. Moses wrote the song and the law and did as God had directed him.

Moses spoke the song in the ears of the people in Deut. 32, which according to Ferrar Fenton is his twelfth speech while they are in Moab in preparation for moving into the land of Canaan. Because Ferrar Fenton sees much of the Bible in a poetical sense, I would like to read Moses' song from the Ferrar Fenton translation along with the stanza titles that Mr. Fenton gives each stanza. I have enclosed a copy of it in this lesson. To me this helps me understand Moses' song a little better. (Read)

In chapter 33, Moses blesses each of the tribes. (Read verse 2) Notice that Moses refers to God's law as a fiery law. God has appeared first to Moses as fire at the burning bush and then to the people as a whole when He spoke the Ten Commandments to them. Unfortunately, primarily because of a misunderstanding of some New Testament Scriptures, most people associate fire with hell and a devil which often precludes them from understanding that fire is more often associated with God. Fire is quite often associated with cleansing. This will be important to remember when we find the apostle John in the book of Revelation speaking of the lake of fire. Fire, as a cleansing agent and as God's law, is from God, not a devil or Satan. It is a good thing, not a bad thing as it is often portrayed.

The blessings begin in verse 6. (Read Deut. 33:6-25) We get some of the pictorial standards that the Israelites had on their flags from these blessings, and the blessings that Jacob gave his sons in Gen. 49. Moses then blesses Israel as a whole.

(Read Deut. 34) This chapter was written by someone else, probably Joshua or Eleazar the priest. Though Moses was 120 years old, he was still younger at his death than many of his kindred. Levi, his grandfather died at the age of 137, Amram, his father, died at the age of 137, Aaron at 123 and Miriam at 126 or older. However, it is interesting that the author of this last book of Deuteronomy says that his eye had not dimmed nor had his natural strength abated. This prophet, statesman, soldier, and shepherd was quite a man, yet he was one of the humblest we will encounter as we study through the Bible, but, though he didn't think so, was one of the greatest leaders we have record of in Scripture from every aspect of leadership.

This closes the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, the books of the law. With the exception of this 34th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses is considered the author of these books.

The next section of the Bible, at least as we have it in the King James Bible beginning with the book of Joshua, is considered the "historical" section of the Bible. In a sense, this presents a bit of a problem when we get into the prophets if one doesn't take the time to place the prophets back into their respective times in this historical section. Dealing with the prophets without doing this can cause considerable unnecessary confusion. We will continue our study as outlined in the King James, but when we get to the prophets, we will take the time to place them in their respective places in the history.

JOSHUA

There is considerable speculation on who wrote the book of Joshua. Most of the sources that I consulted would name someone, but then would detail why that couldn't be so. However, Mr. Ferrar Fenton has an interesting commentary on who he thinks wrote the book. I would like to read a portion of his commentary and am enclosing a copy of this first page of his commentary for your records. (Read) Mr. Fenton goes on several more pages to justify his reasoning not only as to his claim that Isaiah wrote the book of Joshua, but that he wrote Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, and I & II Kings as well and how and why he wrote them as he did. What he says makes good sense to me, so I am going to consider that Isaiah did indeed write these books.

(Read Joshua 1:1-9) Moses is now dead and the burden of leadership of this people has now fallen fully on the shoulders of Joshua. God encourages Joshua to be strong and courageous as He will be with him in the great job that is before him of moving the people into the land, driving out and destroying the current inhabitants and equitably dividing the land. The boundaries of the land, Lebanon on the north, the desert on the south, the Euphrates River on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, was not fully claimed until David became king. Joshua was to concentrate primarily on the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and Lebanon and the desert.

(Read Joshua 1:10-11) Joshua then commanded the officers of the people to prepare the people to be ready to move within three days. (Read Joshua 1:12-18) If you recall, Moses made the people of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh promise that they would go with the rest of Israel until the land was conquered and all the people had their inheritance in return for them keeping and occupying the land on the east side of the river that Israel had taken. Joshua reminded the people of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh of their promise to which they told Joshua that whatever he told them, they would do. Joshua put them at the head of people as they prepared to move.

We will continue our study starting with the second chapter of Joshua in our next lesson. The taking of the land includes some very interesting and exciting stories that begin in this chapter. JRL