

Joshua 07-05-18b

Let's resume our study now in Joshua chapter 8. Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Now, you might read this and think that it's just sort of a euphemism for he pressed the attack, he kept giving orders and so on, but I think, based on the analog over in Exodus, that he literally kept his hand in the air. And it doesn't mention that there was any support for this, as there was at Amalek, because there is a difference here.

It's very fruitful to compare and contrast the battle with Amalek and the battle with Ai, because there is human weakness apparent at Amalek. Moses needs help. Who helps him? The priest.

Yeshua holds up his own hand. He doesn't need anybody's help. Now, whether there actually was help or not, in the biblical account, it is not mentioned, and that's significant.

He did not withdraw his hand, and in the account, it is as though Joshua held up his hand all through the battle until it was completely won. And this is what the Lord Jesus Christ is going to do. Because it's interesting to see these parallels and these connections and the foreshadowings that go on, and the harking backward and harking forward.

But it really doesn't matter unless it makes a difference to you and me when we leave here and go back to doing what we do. We have jobs. We have student responsibilities.

We have families. We have people with whom we talk. We have things to get done.

We have lives to live. And when we look at something like this in the Word of God, there ought to be something in it that gives us some guidance, that changes the way we do things, compared to somebody who's just a rank, secular, humanist, godless, communist infidel. Well, seriously, there ought to be a difference.

Why would you spend the time coming to Bible class if your Christian faith does not make a difference? If it doesn't make a difference, time is being wasted. The whole point of being a Christian is to be transformed, to have our minds renewed. And so what is it in these stories, what is it in what we've seen here that is of a transformational nature, something that gives us something to go on, something to think about, something to alter the way we might prioritize, the way we might set our goals, the way we might approach situations in the future? Well, historically, and certainly in this country over the last two or three hundred years, there has been a great struggle between what we call, it's been characterized a lot of different ways, but I'm just going to use the old-fashioned terminology of legalism versus grace.

Legalism says you live your life by rules. There are rules that you follow. They used to

have the cardinal sins, probably, I assume they still do in the Catholic Church, and some of those are kind of surprising because a lot of them are mental attitude sins and things you would think would be on the list are not.

But they had things, even in the Protestant churches in our country, don't smoke, don't drink, don't gamble, don't play with dice. I've told you before that when I was a little boy, I went over one Sunday afternoon to visit a family that we went to church with in this little church in Chelsea. And instead of going home, back out to the sticks, we went over to these people's house.

I think we had some lunch and the grown-ups were visiting and the kids, I was 12 or so, 11 maybe, we were going to play a game. So they broke out the Monopoly. Well, you roll dice in Monopoly as I recall.

Well, no dice. Dice are forbidden. Dice are of the devil.

You can't use dice. So how are you going to play Monopoly with no dice? So they had a spinner. And instead of rolling two dice, you had to flick the arrow on the spinner.

You know what a spinner is. Numbers all around, it's like a clock face with numbers, 1 through 6, and little pie wedges of different colors. And you spin the little arrow until it stops, like Wheel of Fortune, and that's your number.

Well, you had to flick this little arrow two times to get your two numbers, which would be the equivalent of rolling the dice in the game. Now what is the functional difference between rolling two little square things with dots and flicking an arrow? You get a random type of number each time, right? But dice are evil. Spinners are okay.

This is legalism. Legalism says you're righteous if you follow the rules, and you're sinful and evil if you break the rules. Now, certainly we have a great respect for rules.

Rules are good. Following the rules is generally great. But to think that your righteousness before God is established by the rules that you keep is erroneous.

It is a scriptural statement that by the works of the law, the law, the Old Testament law, was basically a set of rules. Six days you labor and do your work, on the seventh you rest. Don't steal, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness, don't covet.

Remember the Lord your God, honor Him, no graven images, and so on. Don't take His name in vain. Rules.

Right? By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Any unbeliever can summon up the willpower to adhere to a set of rules. That doesn't make you righteous before God.

Now, it can be a good thing. I think it's great when you have a set of rules, like drive on

the right side of the road, stop at stop signs, slow down at yellow lights, don't speed up, stop at red lights, stop at red lights, if it's going to be red before you get through the intersection, you should have stopped. That's the rule.

In Texas, if you can make it all the way to the far side of the intersection while the light is still yellow, you're okay. This is my personal interpretation of the law. But if you can't get through the intersection before the light turns red, and this is generally what police will use as a criteria, if the light turns red and you're still in the intersection, you have run a red light.

And if they're sitting there, you are likely to get a ticket. But it's a rule. Rules are good.

We like rules. Rules keep us from killing each other on the highways and streets. Rules are generally good.

And it eases the function of a society and so on. That's all great. It enables, especially if you have decent rules and enforcement thereof, you can actually operate a public school.

But, rule abiding is what is expected. Anybody has the ability to follow rules. It requires no regeneration, it requires no relationship with God, it requires no dynamic, no grace, no compassion, no inner power from God, no knowledge of the Word of God.

All you have to do is know the rules and decide to keep them. Righteousness, justification before God, being pleasing in God's sight requires faith. Why? Remember our memory verse in Hebrews 11.6? Without faith it is impossible to please Him.

He becomes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Why is faith required to please God? Because through faith comes righteousness. Righteousness is credited to us, it is given to us, it is dropped on our heads without any effort on our part based on the criteria of faith.

When you trust God, like right now I've given you information about the Word of God, and I am telling you from the Word of God that AI was a real place, Joshua was a real man, there was a real victory there. These words that we have read from Joshua chapter 8 are true. When you believe that, and when I show you the comparison between Moses at the battle with the Amalekites, and Joshua at the battle of the Aites, and looking forward to the Lord Jesus, the latter day Yeshua on the cross, and when we make that connection and talk about application, and you believe that, and you take that to heart, and you say, you know, that's something I really want to try to implement in my thinking.

That's faith. You have believed what God says, and you have made a commitment in your own mind to try to live in the light of it. You want it to make a difference, don't you? Do you want the Word of God to make a difference in your life? If you don't, why are you listening to me? It's Friday night, you ought to be out doing something stimulating,

because that's all the more benefits you are going to get out of your time.

But if you are listening to the Word of God, if you want to be pleasing in God's sight, if you want to live by faith, and you want these things to make a difference, you will not only accept them, you will not only believe them, but you will make a commitment in your mind to try to let it make a difference, for it to be available for the Holy Spirit to cycle into practice. Right? It's not that hard. It's no big deal to do that.

It's not like climbing a mountain or making a pilgrimage to Mecca. It's just, you know, I want these things to make a difference in my life. I want to remember the work of the Lord Jesus when He was lifted up on the cross, and although it looked like a defeat, it ended up being a victory.

Many times things in my life look like a defeat, but it turns out in retrospect they were a victory, because God was in it, and God was working. Some of the jobs I've lost, I thought at the time this was a tragedy, and it turned out to be one of the biggest blessings God ever brought, because He had something better in store. We have to have faith.

We have to believe that even when seemingly negative things come along, these 36 men died, and Joshua fell on his face. He said, Oh Lord, what has happened? Well, it was a wake-up call. For the whole rest of the seven-year campaign in Canaan, Joshua is going to be careful to seek out the Lord.

He's not going to forget. He's had a wake-up. Those 36 men created a false sense of confidence among the people of Ai and the people of Bethel, and it became a key factor in springing the ambush and winning the victory, because their overconfidence got used against them.

That setback turns out to be an advantage. God works all things together for good to those who love Him, to those who are the called, according to His purpose. So it ought to make a difference.

It has to be the object of faith. Otherwise, it's a waste of time. So, when we look at these things, there is an application.

Now, to find the application, we have to think about it a little bit. You remember Psalm 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. This is what you don't do.

A lot of people say, I'm following the rules. Legalism. I don't do the prohibited things.

Don't drink, don't smoke, don't chew, don't go with girls who do, don't gamble, don't spit on the sidewalk, don't walk on the grass. I follow the rules. That's half of the battle.

But unbelievers can do that half. Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the

ungodly, does not stand in the way of sinners, does not sit in the seat of the scornful, doesn't have those bad attitudes. But, what's the positive side? His delight is in the law of the Lord.

And in that law does he meditate day and night. If you want to live by faith, if you want to have a life that's pleasing to God, you do have to make an effort to carve out some time, early in the morning, late at night, during lunch, whatever time you can kind of eliminate distractions and spend at least a few minutes. You get 24 hours in a day, you can give God 4 or 5 minutes.

And think back. What was the Bible class we had last Sunday? What were we looking at? What book were we in? The Gospel of John. What chapter were we in? Well, it was chapter 6. What was going on in that chapter? Well, those people had followed Jesus around the lake after they ate the bread, and He was talking to them about the bread, and about who He was, and about whether they would accept Him or not.

Try to call it back to mind. And think, am I like that? Do I accept the provision of God, but I don't really put faith in His Word? Is God trying to tell me something and I don't see it? And then I turn around and blame God because my life isn't better? These people are blaming Jesus because God hasn't fulfilled His promise. And they're misidentifying Jesus, and they're misattributing.

They're saying, well, you're the son of Joseph. How can you try to make yourself out like you came from God? We know where you came from. And missing the point.

Do I do that? You know, application doesn't just drop on you like an anvil out of the sky. You have to sort of think about it. You spend maybe a total of an hour and a half on Sunday, and an hour and a half on Friday night listening to the teaching of the Word of God.

Parlay that time. Multiply that investment of your time by thinking about it later. Because it's a waste of time if you don't think about it.

The man who is blessed is the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and he meditates on it. It doesn't say he listens to it taught day and night. He meditates on it day and night.

That doesn't mean all day long and all night long thinking holy thoughts and reciting verses to oneself. But sometime during the day, sometime during the evening, things get a little quiet. You have a moment.

You're stuck in traffic. Instead of sitting there cursing physics and people's bad decisions and road engineers. I can think of a whole litany of things to get mad at when I'm stuck in traffic.

I tried to send a birthday present to my boss this afternoon, and the messenger got stuck in traffic and it didn't make it. It was very frustrating. I spent several hours getting everything ready, but by the time I got it ready and got it packed off to go, traffic got in the way.

It just makes me want to invest in some kind of personal helicopter technology to just soar over that and solve the transportation problem. But instead, what can we do? You've got some time. You're sitting in a waiting room.

What do you do with your time? Do you go look for the magazine rack? Let me see what Britney Spears is up to lately. Let me find out if Paris Hilton is out of jail yet. What do you do with your spare time? Do you plug in? Have you ever noticed how nobody can deal with silence anymore? You look at runners on the trail, they've all got earphones.

You look at people doing anything, walking around the mall. I see people now, they've got those little Bluetooth things for their phone stuck to their head and can't go anywhere without talking to somebody. Something's in your ear.

It used to be you could go off by yourself and be at peace with your own company and enjoy your own thoughts. But now there's a lot of people, boy, they've got to be listening to or plugged into something all the time. Where's my PDA? Where's my MP3 player? Where's my phone? Where's my Bluetooth? Where's the nearest screen I can look at? Listen, take those times.

If you get the chance to go on a run, if you have to wait for something, look at it as an opportunity. You've got an enforced period of do-nothing. Meditate.

Listen, you're a Christian. You have got a nuclear reactor of divine power in your soul. It is energy.

It is guidance. It parlays into treasure in eternity. But we've got to turn it on.

We've got to know how to use that power. And learning things from the Word of God, whether it's the Gospel of John or the Book of Joshua, in our recent studies, isn't going to do you any good if you don't think about it. So, watch for those opportunities.

God will give you opportunities to think. He will make you wait. And you're sitting there saying, where is that doctor? Why is he making me wait so long? How come this traffic is in my way? How come I'm stuck here and can't do anything? I'll tell you why.

God is giving you an opportunity and later on when you stand at the judgment, He's going to say, what do you mean you had no time to meditate? I stuck you in traffic. I made you wait in the waiting room. I gave you time after time after time.

And what did you do with it? You blew it. You stuck earphones in your head. You watched

TV.

Bubble gum for the brain. Chewing gum for the mind. You wasted, you wasted, you wasted when there was indispensable, eternal truth just waiting to be metabolized, waiting to be synthesized, waiting to be incorporated into your thought life so that when that next test came along, you could pass it and store up for yourself treasure in heaven.

Pass your tests. Produce the fruit of the Spirit. Be like Christ.

There is no greater accomplishment. No professional accomplishment. No student accomplishment.

No relationship accomplishment as great as being like Christ. How did Jesus do it? Crowds pestered Him all day long. Disciples asking Him all kinds of inane questions.

He waited until it got dark and it was quiet and He would go off by Himself. Stay up to pray and commune with His Father and think through the Old Testament Scriptures. You know how Jesus knew what to do for the vast majority of His ministry? He figured it out because He meditated on the Old Testament Scriptures that predicted what He would do when He came.

The manual for being the Messiah was over in Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel. Jesus figured out in His humanity what He was to do. He figured out that His own people were going to reject Him because He saw it in the Old Testament Scriptures.

He knew that He had to go to Jerusalem. He knew that He had to be delivered into the hands of men because Isaiah said He is despised and rejected. He has no form or comeliness that we should desire Him.

He is wounded for our iniquities. He is bruised for our transgressions. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all and by His stripes we are healed.

Jesus figured that out. Listen, you can figure things out in your life. You can figure out where to go and what to do and how to do it and what to say and what not to say.

You're going to get in situations that when you find yourself confused and baffled and unable to come to a decision, guess what? You didn't use your meditation time to get ready for that test. You had the time, you didn't use it. You stuck something in your ear, put something in your face and didn't meditate.

We are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been commissioned to fight the spiritual conflict. Don't drop your weapons.

Don't let your pack slip to the ground. Don't take your helmet off and try to find entertainment. Believe me, there's nothing wrong with entertainment.

I love it as well as the next person. But in its place, in balance, and secondary to our primary responsibility which is to be good and faithful servants, to be spiritual warriors, to keep our armor on, to quench the darts of the wicked one, to advance, to take the high ground. That's why we're here.

Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves according to the word of the Lord which he had commanded Joshua in the heat of the battle, in the froth, in the melee, in the dust, in the lowing of the cattle and people running up saying, Joshua, look at this thing. Who would have thought that in Ai they had these riches. Look at this.

Look at this. Joshua remembered what God had commanded and he followed the rules. Nothing wrong with following the rules, following the commands.

But Joshua has a heart for obedience. He has a heart to please God. Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day.

That's the day that the book was written. This is after the destruction of Ai and well before the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Listen.

They try to say that the Pentateuch and Joshua and these books were written by the exiles. Ai was an occupied city in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. And in the time of the writing of this, it was a heap and a desolation.

The king of Ai, he hanged on a tree until evening. Now this seems pretty cruel. Did you catch this? Remember earlier? It says back in verse 22, they came out of the city, they caught in the middle of Israel some on one side, some on the other.

They struck them down, let none of them remain or escape. They caught the ones that were fleeing. They killed everybody.

But the king of Ai they took alive and brought him to Joshua. This guy's alive. He's a POW.

So what did Joshua do with him? Did he sit him down and say, well, we're going to incarcerate you, we're going to rehabilitate you, we're going to integrate you, we're going to... What did he do? He hanged him. Hanged him on a tree. Executed him.

Now, this does not seem like good POW behavior. Do you capture a guy and then execute him? Seems kind of merciless, doesn't it? Why is the king of Ai hanged on a tree? This is my question. It reminds me of a later story that we have studied in the book of Esther.

Remember when Haman got mad at Mordecai and wanted to kill him? So he constructed a gallows that he was going to hang him on? But to cut a long story short, Haman

himself ends up getting hanged on the gallows that he prepared for Mordecai. Remember that story? The people in the land of Canaan are under criminal penalty of death from God. God has tried them.

God has found them guilty. The iniquity of the Amorites is full. God told Abraham 400 years earlier, these people are evil.

But I'm going to let them go until they have fully played out their hand. And then I'm going to give the land back to you. And I will judge them through you.

And that's what happens here. So Joshua, this is not a war crime. This is the execution of a judicial sentence.

Now, in Numbers chapter 25, we had a similar instance. There was harlotry with the Moabites. Remember the whole thing with Balaam suggesting how they could get Israel off the track? Israel was in the Acacia Grove.

The people began to commit harlotry. This is Numbers 25. With the women of Moab, they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods.

The people ate and bowed down to their gods. And Israel was joined to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.

Then the Lord said to Moses, take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel. So Moses said to the judges of Israel, every one of you is to kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor. Indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses, in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

When Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand. Phineas, with a javelin in his hand, the very same weapon Joshua has brandished at Ai. Phineas took a javelin and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust through both of them, the man of Israel and the woman, through her body.

And you know that they were, shall we say, in an embrace when he did this because one thrust killed them both. They weren't sitting there drinking tea across the table from one another. They were doing what was forbidden by God.

And so he thrust them both through and the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. Those who died in the plague were 24 elephs. Now, take the leaders, hang the offenders before the Lord out in the sun.

Hang the leaders. It is a warning. It is an emblem.

It is a negative sort of monument. This is why we used to have public executions in the United States, public hangings, public electrocutions because it is a deterrent. And you can read all kinds of studies where they say, oh, it's not a deterrent.

This is like saying spanking doesn't work for children. That's because people don't know how to do it. Trust me.

If you put me in charge of death row and let me do some public executions, and you will see the crime rate drop. Because about the time some guy decides he's going to mug somebody in an alley, he's going to have a visual graphic picture of somebody's neck getting scratched and his eyes bugging out and his purple tongue swelling out of his mouth, and he's going to say, you know, maybe I could just get a job. It is a deterrent.

The biblical principle is public execution. Why do you think God had Israel stone its offenders? Because everybody has to be there and everybody has to help. And they see it, and it's a deterrent.

Why does God say take the leaders and hang them? Hang them high? Everybody sees it. It's a graphic, memorable... Now, should it be a party? You know, Judge Roy Bean and some of this, and they used to make kind of a circus out of it, and to me that was a failure of law enforcement where they're having sort of a carnival and people are laughing and joking. It should be a serious and a somber occasion, not a circus, not a Roman Christians and Lions type of thing.

But parents ought to be making their kids watch, and it ought to be sober, and it ought to be done with a recognition that it's a serious thing to take a human life, and there's a serious reason for doing it and for witnessing it. Well, this is why Joshua takes the king of Ai and hangs him on a tree until evening. Now, why only until evening? Remember we were talking about meditating on the law of the Lord, remembering what God has said? Joshua not only remembers way back in Numbers when those leaders of the people were hung before the Lord as a token and as a communication and as a deterrent, he also remembers Deuteronomy 21, 22 and 23.

If a man has committed a sin deserving of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree. But you shall surely bury him that day so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance. For he who is hanged is accursed of God.

Deuteronomy 21, 22 and 23. Joshua remembers. Not only does Joshua have faith, not only does Joshua have a heart for the Lord, but Joshua follows the rules.

So, after the man is hanged, after he is taken down, his corpse is cast at the entrance of the gate of the city, and a great heap of stones is raised over it. He is buried, as it were. But they didn't dig a hole under him.

They piled stones on top. Anybody who passes by the gates of Ai, well, you can't get in because there's a big mountain of stones and the king of Ai is underneath it. This struck fear into the hearts of all of the surrounding little feudal city-state things.

Did you hear what happened? I mean, we heard what happened at Jericho, but that could have been a fluke. Maybe it was a fortunate earthquake. But the king of Ai, those Bethelites and those Ai-ites got destroyed to the last man.

And the king of Ai is under a big heap of stones. So now, in verse 30, Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the children of Israel. This was way back in Deuteronomy 27, verses 4 through 8. Therefore it shall be when you have crossed over the Jordan that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones which I command you today and you shall whitewash them with lime and you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones.

You shall not use any iron tool on them. You shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your God and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. You shall offer peace offerings and shall eat there and rejoice before the Lord your God and you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.

Now, wake up. Remember Jericho? I said there were two altars. There were two memorials.

We had the memorial of stones, the twelve stones that came out of the river. And then you had the heap of stones that used to be the walls of Jericho. And then you had the heap of stones over Achan.

Now we have the heap of stones over the king of Ai. Now we have another heap of stones. And again, it's going to be twelve stones.

Just like the stones that were taken out of the Jordan. The first memorial in the land were those stones taken out of the Jordan riverbed and piled up as a memorial. When your children ask you where do these stones come from? You tell them how God parted the water and let you into the land.

Now, Joshua builds an altar. And the instructions for building this altar are to take twelve stones and pile them up. You don't work the stones.

You don't flatten them. You don't shape them with an iron tool. You pile them into an altar.

As it is written in the book of the law of Moses, Joshua chapter 8, verse 31. Altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool. And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings.

And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses which he had written. Now, remember I told you that Joshua was Moses' apprentice for forty years. Moses taught him all of the principles of military warfare.

You know what else Moses taught Joshua? What does it say in this verse? Look at this verse. What did Joshua learn from Moses? Joshua started out as a slave, the son of slaves, didn't he? How much education did he have out there in the clay-mashing, brick-making business? What does this verse say about Joshua? What did he do? Verse 32. Look at it.

You got a Bible? What does it say? In the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote. He wrote. What did Joshua learn to write? Moses taught him.

He had forty years to become literate. And when Moses put that instruction down from God in Deuteronomy, he knew somebody's going to have to know how to write so that this book of the law can be copied because that's the will of God. That's the command of the Lord.

Joshua is prepared. He might have thought it was tedious. He might have thought it was boring.

What do I need to write for? You've written the book of the law down. You went up there in the mountain. I didn't go.

I sat halfway up. I've been here at the door of the tabernacle. You're doing all the writing.

You've got it all written down. I suppose maybe I might need to learn to read. Since you've got it written down and you're the only literate guy in Israel, somebody else needs to be able to read what Moses wrote, right? Joshua learns to read and write.

Even though he starts out as a Hebrew slave, he ends up as a scribe. So, he wrote. Now, how long is the Pentateuch? If you were here for our 50-chapter study of the book of Genesis and our 24-chapter study of the book of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, that's a long bunch of stuff.

These books have been fleshed out. I do not think that Joshua wrote on rocks everything found in the book of Genesis, everything found. That group has been called the law, but this is specifically the law of Sinai.

The law of Sinai, the regulations, the entole, the commandments, were written down. Not just the Ten Commandments, but all of the regulations that God gave at Sinai. The core of the law, the civil law, the worship law, was written on these rocks.

And somewhere in the area of Mount Ebal, there ought to be a big deposit of whitewash, a big deposit of white lime that has washed off the rocks that Joshua prepared when he

wrote this law down. I'm sure it's all eroded away, probably eroded away within the decades after he wrote it. But on that day, when Israel recommitted themselves to the covenant of God, it was all written down.

Everybody could see it. Anybody who could read and write. And believe me, Joshua wasn't the only one.

Remember the tabernacle artisans? All of the things that were stamped holy to the Lord, they had to learn how to write. So it was there for people to read to one another. All Israel, with their elders and their officers and their judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them.

Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. Now again, this is in the vicinity of Deuteronomy 28-30.

These are the blessings and the curses. Do you remember it? Do you remember it? If you don't, you can go back and review it. When you get a chance to meditate on Bible class in coming days, go back and read the latter part of Deuteronomy.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel. Notice, it doesn't say not a word of all that Moses had written. That would include the book of Genesis.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded. This is the Sinai law, the statutes, the ordinances, commandments, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them. This is sort of an argument for a combined Bible class.

You put your adults and your kids all together. They didn't say, well, nursery will be provided while Moses' law is read by Joshua on the mountain. Please come a half hour early and drop your child off and get a pass.

You can pick them up later. Please bring your own pampers. None of that.

The women and the little ones and the strangers who lived among them. Already there are outsiders who have recognized that there is a God in Israel and they want to be counted among the number of His people. And they have joined with them and they travel with them and they have intermarried with them, the strangers who dwell in their midst.

And they listen to the words of the law. Now it gets read to them once and they're going

to have to remember it a long time, right? We have the advantage of being able to refresh our knowledge and our information time and again. But everybody hears it.

Everybody can talk about it. One can fill in another's lapses of memory. Well, what did it say about the priest's daughter goes astray and is she stoned? Oh no, she's burned with fire.

Well, I wonder why that is. And there are discussions and there's a wide corporate knowledge of the law because everybody has heard it. They say, well, I just find that shocking that a teenager would be stoned for sassing his parents.

Well, just be sure all your parents communicate that to their teenagers and it won't ever be an issue. So, it is circulated, it is read, everyone is aware of it. And there is an application in that as well.

We need to refresh ourselves. They had all heard the law of Moses back in the wilderness, but it's been a while. So what did they do? Review.

They had a review. They read it again. They went back over it, the entire thing.

All over again. I try not to repeat myself verbatim, but review can be good. It's a refresher.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read. And you can bet that the elders and the judges and the leaders in Israel have been in an education system and have learned to read and write. It is important for us, it is important for you, to have the skills to understand God's word.

This is why I give you a little bit of Hebrew. This is why I give you a little bit of Greek. This is why I give you a little bit of history and a little bit of archaeology and a little bit of cultural background.

Because you need to be familiar. You need to be conversant with the sharp sword, the offensive weapon of God's word. You need to be able to handle it.

You need to know your way around in it. What's in the book of Isaiah? What's the structure of that book? You should know. What's the love chapter? What's the faith chapter? Where's the Sermon on the Mount? Where are the letters to the seven churches? And what does Jesus say in them? What's the difference between the age of the church and the age of Israel? You should know these things.

This is your life. This is what you are going to get through this life and into the next with. So, that concludes chapter 8. Chapter 9 is where we will begin next time.

But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word and the truth that is contained therein. Thank you for your spirit and his ministry to us and leading us

into all truth and bringing to our minds what we need to remember at the appropriate place and time.

For putting the words into our hearts and into our mouths at the time that we should speak. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and the opportunity he has given to us to achieve the victory and enjoy the spoils of that victory both now and in the ages to come. We pray that these things will be impressed in our hearts in such a way that we will produce the fruit of the spirit and live in a way that is pleasing in your sight.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.