

Joshua 07-06-01b

We pick up our study now in Joshua chapter 8 by way of Deuteronomy chapter 11. We're looking at the initial command which Joshua and the elders of Israel are fulfilling in the latter part of chapter 8 as it is recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 11. We have seen that the Lord God, through Moses, makes an issue of obedience as a condition.

There are a lot of people, especially in your Calvinist, Reformed tradition, who think you don't really have to worry about obedience because God is at work in you to will and to do His good purpose. It's just kind of going to happen or it's not. You pee in the tulip scenario, perseverance of the saints.

If you're really a saint, you'll persevere and you're on the upward, you know, I'm heading on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day. That's automatic because that's what God has ordained and He is the one that is at work. And if you're not, well, God just didn't ordain that.

God didn't predestine you to be victorious that day or that week or that month or that year. And it's a nice little convenient out because if you're apathetic and indifferent, you say, you know, I'm not the Billy Graham type. I'm not the missionary in Africa type.

God just didn't ordain that for me and you don't take any personal responsibility. Look at the Word of God. We are accountable.

We are responsible for what God has given us. And it is all about choice. Life is about choice.

You are what you think. You determine the eternal future. And it's a proxy from God.

God determines the future, right? But God has delegated the determination of our future to us. God has said, I'm going to give you the map. If you walk according to the map, it's wide open.

It's unlimited. You can share the blessings of Jesus Christ Himself. He can be the firstborn among many brethren who share in that inheritance.

You can share His choosing, His election. You can share His priesthood. You can share His sonship.

You can share all of those privileges as His bride. The great thing about being the bride is if the groom is rich, you're rich. And if the groom is poor, then you're poor.

That's how it works. So no man shall be able to stand against you, God tells Israel. The Lord your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

They're beaten before they start. Now, think about this in the reverse. God doesn't present it in the reverse.

But notice, He doesn't say God will overwhelmingly supply you with swords and spears, does He? God will just multiply your men at arms, and God will give you artillery and air support and smart bombs. What does He say? Why are they going to prevail? Because the hearts of the enemy will melt. It doesn't matter.

You know how they always say it's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog. It doesn't matter how strong you are. If you don't think you can win, you're beat.

You're defeated. You can't win if you haven't got a heart to win. And God says, I'm going to take away their confidence.

I'm going to take away their motivation. They're going to dread meeting you. I will never forget when I learned this particular principle, because I was new.

I had been in a series of schools. We had moved. My dad was being stationed hither and yon overseas and back, and I'd been in a couple of different schools.

And then we moved to Oklahoma, and I was in a new school. I was in the fifth grade. And once again, I didn't know anybody.

And it's always kind of uncertain. And the bullies in a class will try to size you up and see if you're going to cave and that sort of thing. And some kind of way, I was kind of feeling picked on.

But there was a shrumpy guy in my class. His name was Guy Doherty. And his whole family was small, and he was a small guy.

And well, I got cross ways with him, and I don't remember why. But I thought, well, here's at least one guy that I can put in his place. These guys are trying to put me in my place, and it's kind of an uncertain thing.

I haven't been beat up, but I haven't exactly come away shining either. They mocked me, and I'm looking bad. Well, here's this old guy, and he was sitting behind me in class, and he said something I didn't like.

And I turned around and told him to shut up. He said, make me. And I said, you better be quiet, or I will make you.

And I thought, here's a guy I can take. He's a shrimp. And even I can take him.

Au contraire, mon frere, because Guy Doherty was a vicious, biting, kicking, screaming, Tasmanian devil maniac in a fight. I didn't know that. Everybody else in the class knew

that.

And so when I stood up and said, cut it out, or I'm going to make it, and he stood up and said, go ahead and try. And I took a swing, and the next thing I knew, it was like somebody had let loose the boot factory, fist factory, windmill on steroids. The guy was just pummeling me to death.

And I was like, stop, stop, stop. And he was just, he just, and I'm telling you, he absolutely surprised the daylights out of me. And ever after, we became friends, and it was fine afterwards.

But I'll tell you one thing, I never even gave a thought to picking on, you know, I think shrimpy guys just learn early. You know, you've got to beat the crap out of somebody the first time they bug you, or you're going to beat the stuffing out of somebody, I should say, or it's going to be no end of trouble. And he had learned that lesson early.

And I'm telling you, you can instill dread in somebody. If there's enough fight in you, it doesn't matter how big you are. People just don't want to mess with you because it costs too much.

It's too painful. Well, God is telling Israel, look, don't worry about counting your numbers. Don't worry about getting an inventory of the swords and spears.

When you go into the land, I'm going to put dread in their hearts. They're going to flee from you. They may be 10 foot tall.

They may be Goliath and his brothers. They're still going to melt. What happened when Goliath fell? David put that one rock between his running lights.

The entire Philistine army turned around and fled. God put, but conditioned on obedience. David said, look, you're defining the army as a living God.

Wash. This is our land, not yours. And it's over.

Obedience. That's the key. I set before you today, verse 26, a blessing and a curse.

People wonder where Monk got that. It's a blessing and a curse. It's biblical.

I set before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. What are the other gods for us today? Conventional wisdom.

What's the wisdom of the day? Well, take your pick. Choose your area. Tune in.

See what Oprah's saying. See what Dr. Phil is saying. See what the flavor of the month is in the published media.

How to keep your man when you're 30. It's ridiculous. People think, oh, or how to please your woman as time goes on.

There's all of this conventional wisdom floating around. These are the gods of the land. Who do secular, materialistic Americans turn to? What do they rely on for wisdom? Those are the gods of the land.

God says, look, it's my way or curse. Blessing attends God's way. Cursing attends any other way that we turn to.

The curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord. As goes the nation of Israel, so goes the individual believer. Do not be deceived.

This is a true principle. Cursing comes into the lives of believers who ought to know better and don't. Who ought to do better and don't.

God's word is clear. God's grace is available. And a lot of people think, well, I'm not really the motivated.

I just want to be in the middle of the pack. There's a big comfortable crowd and I just want to be a face. I don't want to excel and I don't think I'm bad enough to be lagging behind.

I just want to be in the comfortable, anonymous middle. Just in the thick of it. Make no mark, but I don't get marked out for blessing or for cursing.

I'm just in average. No, there is no such thing as average. There is growing, narrow way believer, and there's cursing.

There is no middle. You are succeeding or you are failing. You are advancing or you are going off the cliff right behind the wide gate at the end of the broad way.

There is no middle. There is no comfortable, well, I'm just kind of happy. No, you're alive or you're dead.

You are blessed or you're cursed. God doesn't say, I said before you, blessing, the comfortable middle and cursing. Does he? I said before you, great happiness and prosperity and wonderful achievement or average ability or you can really get hammered.

There are not three choices here, right? Think about it. There are not three choices. There are two.

You are blessed or you are cursed. There is no middle. There is no hiding place.

Very simple. Obedience leads to blessing. Disobedience leads to cursing.

Now it shall be, verse 29, this pertains to our passage in Joshua chapter 8. Now it shall be when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. First time in the Bible these places are mentioned. Why does God pick these places? I ask myself.

Why did God pick these two mountains? Why not Mount Nebo and Mount Seir or something else? Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives or why didn't he put it at Jerusalem and have them up on the hill over Jerusalem and up on the Mount of Olives and congregate around there? You can imagine a whole bunch of future symbolism going on there. No, no. It's Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim and I say, why? Given by name.

Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, verse 30, toward the setting sun in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal beside what? What does it say? What are they beside? What are Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal beside? The terebinth trees of Moriah. Now what do you remember about the terebinth trees of Moriah? Genesis, chapter 12. You remember the first two chapters of Genesis, creation, chapter 3, the failure in the garden and the curse.

You've got chapter 4, 5, 6, you've got these are the generations, Genesis 6, you've got the sons of God and the daughters of men, Genesis 7, 8, 9, you've got Noah, the flood, the vineyard, the curse of Canaan, etc. Genesis 9, you've got some more begats, Genesis 10, and then what happens? Abraham, the story of Abraham begins. And early, early, early in the story of Abraham, Genesis chapter 12, the word of the Lord came to Abraham, get thee up out of thy kindred, etc.

Look at this, Genesis 12, 6, and what does it say? This is after he's gone and there's Terah and Nahor and it's stalled out north of the land and so on. Then he finally comes down into the land, Genesis 12, 6, and it says that when he departed after his father died, Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken, Lot went with him. Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran, remember up north, that's where Jacob's going to have to go to find his wives.

Abraham took Sarai's wife, Lot, his brother's son, all the possessions they had gathered and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan at long last. That's what he was supposed to do when he left Ur, but he stalled out because of his father. They came to the land of Canaan, Abraham passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Morah, and the Canaanites were then in the land.

The Lord appeared to Abraham and said, now notice, this is the first thing God says to Abraham when he finally achieves, capital O, B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E, Abraham has finally obeyed. Get thee up out of your father's kindred and go to the land which I will show you. Now he's there.

The first thing God says once he arrives in the midst of the Canaanites is, to your descendants, actually to your seed in Hebrew, I will give this land. And there Abraham built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. Then he goes from there to the mountain east of Bethel and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.

What has Joshua done with the people? He's gone from the area where you've got Bethel and Ai and has retraced Abraham's steps to where? The very first altar Abraham built in the land. The first altar of obedience. The terebinth tree of Morah.

That's why that place is so important. It's the place of Abraham's first obedience. The first altar he built as an obedient believer in God in the land of promise.

This is where Joshua is going to build an altar. On the very spot where Abraham did so many hundreds of years before. They have retraced their patriarch's steps exactly.

They've gone in reverse. Abraham came south, they've gone north 30 miles to the place where Abraham built his very first altar. That's why this place is specified in Deuteronomy 11.

That's why it's specified in Deuteronomy 28. That's why it happened in Joshua 8. It's all about Abraham. It's all about obedience.

This is the fulfillment of the promise. What is the first thing God said to Abraham at that altar, at that place? I will give this land. You're standing here in the midst of the Canaanites.

I'm telling you right now, I'm giving this land to your seed. Abraham's seed has come back to that very spot where God first affirmed that promise in the midst of the Canaanites. And guess what? Why is it that they've only defeated Jericho and Ai right now? They're up there doing what? Standing in the midst of the Canaanites.

Just like Abraham did. And they've got to have the same faith in the promise that Abraham had. They've got to achieve the same level of obedience that Abraham did.

To seize and lay hold of that promise. That's why they're there. So now, as you go forward to Deuteronomy chapter, I think I said 28 earlier, chapter 27, in the day that you've crossed the Jordan, you've crossed over and entered the land, it shall be, verse 4, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, you shall whitewash them with lime.

There you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones, no iron tool. You shall build with whole stones an altar to the Lord your God, offer burnt offerings, peace offerings, and so on. Right on the stones, the words of this law.

Why set up a copy of the law on these whitewashed stones? Seems like it would be more convenient to keep the portable version. Right? Because the issue is obedience. There is a visible, whitewashed monument of the law at the place of the altar.

The altar, the place, the ritual is all about obedience. Now, we say, well, of course, I'm going to try to not break any of the major commandments and so on. What is obedience for us? Well, what are our commands? If we were going to set up a whitewashed stone in our front yard and write the commands that we're supposed to be keeping, what are they? We are not subject to the law written on tables of stone, are we? There are timeless moral principles that survive and pertain regardless of the setting aside of the ritual code for Israel.

Right? Thou shalt not murder is still a command. Honor the Lord your God is still a command. All of those things, the principles are timeless, that most of them are repeated explicitly in the New Testament.

But what else? What is the command? What would you say if you were going to find one New Testament passage, what really sums up the law? Love the Lord your God, love your neighbor as yourself. There's another expression of that in Romans chapter 12. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you do what? Present your bodies a living sacrifice.

That is what happened on this altar. Burnt offerings, peace offerings. We offer that offering.

This is your reasonable service. And what does it go on to say in Romans 12 too? What is the obedience part of that sacrifice? Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, sanctified, cleansed. This is what Israel has just done, purging out the sin of Achan, achieving the victory by God's grace, right? Holy and acceptable, this is your reasonable service.

And Romans 12 too. By the way, this ought to be our next set of verse cards. Verse 2, and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.

That's our obedience. Don't conform to the world. Don't do it the way the secular, humanist, card-carrying atheist does it.

Anything the world can do is not the Christian way of life. Anything an unbeliever can do is not God's grace and God's power, is it? Anything an unbeliever can do, if we do it by that means and that power, how is God going to be glorified? Your Buddhist neighbor could have done that. Your Muslim down at the end of the block could have done that.

Your tree-hugging nature-spirit reincarnationist pagan down the block could have done it that way. Anything an unbeliever can do is not the power of God, by definition, right? Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Nothing can renew the human mind.

Nothing can renew the human soul but the Spirit of God and the Word of God, nothing. There is no technique. There is no procedure.

There is no environmental thing that you can do to make that happen. So that's the principle. Now, I say all of that to say this.

Why Ebal and Gerizim? We say, well, they're next to the cherubim of Morah, and that's the Abraham thing, yes. But, here's something interesting to me, anyway. Because I'm still asking myself, why didn't he just say, go to the cherubim of Morah? Why did he say it about Ebal and Gerizim? Why did they split up? Why is there one mountain of blessing and one mountain of cursing? I ask myself.

Well, I look, as is so often the case, at the Hebrew names of these places. Which one is the... let's go back to Deuteronomy 27. It says that you're going to go to these two mountains, and one of them is going to have an altar on it.

Which mountain has the altar on? Mount Ebal or Mount Gerizim? It's Mount Ebal. Which mountain is the mountain of cursing? Mount Ebal. Why don't we have the altar on the mountain of blessing? The altar is on the mountain of cursing.

Think about it. Sacrifice is required to obviate the curse. To handle, to deal with, to offset.

You don't need to sacrifice in the place of blessing, right? Mount Ebal is the place of cursing. So, then I ask myself, well, where does the name Ebal come from anyway? And so I look in the lexicon. The lexicon says, we don't really know.

We can't figure it out. The root is dubious. Perhaps it comes from the same root as Abel.

Abel's name. And that's a possibility. What do we know about Abel? He's the first guy to get murdered.

He's the first murder victim in history. His blood hit the ground. And what happened? Curse falls on his brother, Cain.

Cursed is Cain, right? So, that's a possibility. However, what I find more interesting is the actual name. You have to play a little game with the consonants to get Abel and Ebal to be the same.

Because there's a Y in there. It's actually A-E-Y-B-A-L. And the yode is a consonant.

And it's in the original. Abel doesn't have a yode in it. So, it's Abel.

And I say, well, maybe it's something about A, as in, and then Bel. No, nobody knows where it came from. So, why would God make such a big deal out of a mountain that has a name that you can't make heads or tails out of? Well, if you keep looking in the Word of God, you find that there was a man by this name.

Way back in Genesis. And here's how it works. When Jacob and Esau split up.

And you can look this up. I'm only going to tell you because I don't have time. I'll never finish.

Esau goes one way. Jacob goes the other, right? Esau was the firstborn son, but he missed it, right? Esau goes and he becomes the father of what people? Edom. Edomites, right? Esau, Edomites.

But remember when they were born, Esau came out. And one of the reasons he got his name is because he was red and hairy. Later on, when Isaac is going to get the blessing, Jacob tells his mother, we're never going to fool Pop because I'm smooth and he's hairy.

The word for hairy all over is Seir. S-E-I-R. And you find that this is also a place name.

And actually Esau goes and dwells over in the vicinity of Mount Seir. Well, Mount Seir gets its name from a guy named Seir. And the Edomites, Esau's descendants, intermarried with the people of Seir.

And that's why when you look at the genealogy, these are the generations of Esau. And it says chief Jobob and chief this guy and chief that. Seriously, there's a Jobob who's descended from Esau.

It's not J-O-E, it's J-O-B-A-B. Jobob, chief Jobob, chief this, chief that, chief the other. These are the descendants.

These Edomite chiefs are descendants. But they intermarried with the people of Seir. Well, now watch this because otherwise I'm going to lose my whole train of thought.

Esau and Seir, they're contemporaries. And they're kids intermarried. So one of the first sons of Esau is Jobob.

He's got Jobob and Shobob and several other Bobs. But it's Jobob that I'm interested in because here's Esau and Seir. That's the first generation, right? Shobob is the second generation.

Intermarrying with the Seirites. The third generation down, one of the sons of Shobob is, I'm sorry, not Shobob, Shobal. It's Shobal, S-H-O-B-A-L.

Shobal is the son of Esau. And a son of Shobal is Ebal. You remember a little thing called the three generation curse? If in the third generation of those that hate me, God says, I

will cut them off.

Seir and Esau, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I what? Hated. Shobal is the second generation. He's an Edomite.

He doesn't come over and say, where's the God of Israel? Can I join up with my cousins? Shobal's son, third generation, is Ebal. Third generation. It's the only other place in the Bible, until you get to Chronicles, where the name Ebal even occurs.

And it's spelled exactly the same as the name of this mountain. Exactly. So, I'm thinking, curse on Mount Ebal.

Altar on Mount Ebal. Third generation guy here, down from Esau. Three strikes and you're out.

Ebal. I think that's why this mountain has that name. And the Israelites know this.

Moses has written down the book of Genesis. They know the names of their cousins. They know their near kin folks who are in the land.

And they know all about the Edomites. They've been on that side of the Jordan, haven't they? They came up through that area, Moab and Ammon and Edom, to get to the land. So, if there was any doubt, and they say, well, who are these people? Moses says, hey, here's who we're talking about.

Not that many generations back. So, Mount Ebal. Now, how about Mount Gerizim? Mount Gerizim is the mountain of blessing.

By the way, when you go to the Samaritan Pentateuch, guess which mountain is the mountain of blessing? They just changed it. They just changed the name of the mountain. Because they want that altar to be a place of blessing.

And they want it to be a place of worship. This is what Jesus and the woman talk about at the well. Anyway, on Mount Ebal, you set them up and so on.

Mount Gerizim is the mountain of blessing. And half the Israelites, God even specifies which tribes are going to stand in front of what mountain. Guess who's the first tribe listed to stand in front of the mountain of cursing? Mount Ebal.

What's the first tribe in Israel? Reuben. Who lost the blessing, just like Esau did. Just like Cain did.

Just like so many firstborn sons have. Reuben. Reuben is the first tribe mentioned to stand in front of the mountain of cursing.

That's where they have to stand. It's like, come on guys, get with it. Gerizim comes from

a root.

And as you would expect, it's Garaz. G-A-R-A-Z You know, I-M is a plural. Just like Shemayim or Mayim and all of the other im words that you have.

Elohim. It's a plural of magnitude. But you know what Garaz means? Garaz means to divide.

To separate. And let's say that you have Amar or some other word. And when you put Im on the end, it's kind of like putting a Mayim in front.

If you want to talk about people who are characterized by this action, you put Im on the end and they are the divided ones. They are the separated ones. Garaz, to separate, to divide, to split off, to come out from among them and be separate.

Gerizim, it takes on a noun. This is the mount of the divided out ones, the separated ones. That's why Gerizim is the mount of blessing.

And Ebal, third generation down from Esau and Seir, is the mount of cursing, I think. And between them is this plain. Between them is Shechem.

Between them is the terebinth of Morad. How many times does God say this? Joshua eventually is going to say, you know, you've got a choice. Choose you this day whom you will serve.

Moses told the people back when, I said before you this day, blessing and cursing, good and evil, life and death. That's where Abraham built his altar. What are you going to choose? It's all about volition.

There's a big plus on Mount Gerizim. There's a big minus on Mount Ebal. It's a 50-50 split of the nation.

Half are standing in front of one, half are standing in front of the other. And the great thing is that, by the way, still today you can see this, that area makes a great natural amphitheater. Joshua could stand in the middle.

The tabernacle sits in the middle. And you can hear up the slopes on either side everything that is being said. And after Joshua would read these commands, when Joshua read the curses, all the people on the Mount of Cursing would say, Amen.

And if you do this and so and thus and so, here comes the curse, Amen. And if you do this and so and thus and so, here comes the curse, Amen. Then he would read the blessings.

The people on the other mountain would say the same thing. So that's what's going on here. It's a huge... Look at the trouble and the pain that God has gone through, to set up

this picture, to invest it with meaning, to invest it with application.

Because every day of our lives, we're going to wake up tomorrow morning, it's going to be a Saturday, and we are in that valley between those mountains. And we choose. Is it going to be obedience and blessing? Or is it going to be disobedience and cursing? The altar is there.

Sacrifice is available. If we have gone the way of cursing, God has a remedy. The altar is on that mountain.

Make the sacrifice. Present yourself a living sacrifice. Holy.

Acceptable to God. Avail yourself of Psalm 51. Avail yourself of 1 John 1, 7-9.

Be cleansed. Be sanctified by the washing of water and the Word. Having your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Having your body washed with pure water. There's no reason to persist in a state of uncleanness. God has made provision.

The altar is on the mountain of cursing. It doesn't stop you. But there's a choice.

There is a choice. You can be Achan, or you can be Rahab. You can be given everything and lose it, or you can start with nothing and gain everything.

You can start as an Israelite and end up under a pile of stones. You can start out living in a pile of stones that crumbles, and end up being the grandmother of the king. It all depends on choice.

It all depends on obedience. It all depends on respecting God and who He is. So that's what's going on here.

So now back to Joshua chapter 8. And with that as background, just as the people in Israel had it, having seen sort of the best and the worst, victory and defeat, life and death, they make this 30 mile march up to this historic spot where their father Abram first stood, first sacrificed to God, and Joshua builds the altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded. And it's the right kind of altar. And notice, all Israel with their elders and their officers and their judges.

Three different kinds of leadership. Kind of reminds you of the three parts of our government. We have the judicial branch.

We have the legislative branch. We have the executive branch. Well, you've kind of got those same concentrations.

The judges here, those are the ones who adjudicate, who decide cases, who settle

disputes. You've got the elders. Those are the patriarchs of the clans.

And they provide leadership within the tribes for the families and so on. And then you've got the officers. And these are your tactical military types.

These are going to be involved in the exercise of taking out the armies and so on. Stood on either side of the ark before the priests and the Levites. There you have that extra element in a theocracy, which is the priesthood, formerly a part of the civil government.

Stranger as well as he who is born among them. Half of them in front of Mount Gerizim, half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. And, of course, this goes back to 2712 of Deuteronomy.

In front of Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. Simeon and Levi. Notice your priest is there.

Judah is there. And those are the two tribes that the Lord Jesus Christ represents. We know that his family, his mother Mary, was related to Elizabeth and Zacharias.

And he's a priest. John the Baptist is a priest. And he's apparently a cousin to the Lord.

He's got Levites in his background. And he's from the tribe of Judah. And, of course, Mary has lineage in the tribe of Judah as well, going all the way back to David.

So, both Levi and Judah are there, as well as Simeon, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. Joseph is significant. They don't mention Joseph by name.

Why? Joseph is a great type of Christ, just as Judah, in dealing with Joseph, with Benjamin, was a great type of Christ. Substitute. Keep me.

Let my brother go. There's a lot going on here that we don't really have time to delve into in great detail. So, that's one half.

And then you've got the others, as I said. Reuben and the other tribes are Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, the dregs of... We didn't even make it into the list in Revelation. Dan gets so corrupt.

And Naphtali. But Ephraim and Manasseh, the two, are made one in Joseph. And oftentimes, when you get a list of tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh are mentioned separately.

But here, they are made one in the tribe called Joseph, which is very unusual. Why is it done? What does Paul talk about in the New Testament? The Jews and Gentiles are all made one in Christ. You know, Ephraim and Manasseh, the elder shall serve the younger.

Jacob crossed his hands when he blessed them. All of that is here. So, again, half on one

mountain, half in front of the other, that they can bless the people of Israel.

Afterward, he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings. There was not a word which Joshua did not read to all the assembly, with the women, the little ones, and the aliens who were living among them. And this is important because when Abram came to the land, and the Canaanites were dwelling there, who was the alien? Who was the alien in the land? Abram was the alien.

That is why it is mentioned specifically in Genesis 12, that the Canaanite was in the land. Abram is the alien. He is the stranger and the sojourner.

These people are coming in, and they are much like Abram was. But, it is like one of these Russian doll things, within Israel are the aliens. In the camp of Israel, you have got the alien, and there are aliens within the aliens, who are within the Canaanites.

And God cares for them. God makes special provision, all through the law, for the stranger and the sojourner among them. Because He says, you were once strangers and aliens, and you need to look out for the strangers and aliens in your midst.

And this is a common thing through the word of God, that we remember Jesus' parable, of the unjust servant, the master forgives him a great deal, and he has got an underling servant, and we are forgiven as we forgive. You were once strangers and sojourners, so you need to treat your strangers and sojourners well. And that idea, that principle is there.

And this is the kind of thing, again, if we want to be transformed, if we want our mind renewed, in the calm times, in our time of devotions, or meditation, or whatever, we concentrate on cultivating our point of view, our values, and our goals, and our priorities, and we set those up, and we become a different kind of person. You know, you look at someone and you say, well, they're just really happy all the time, and you can hardly ruffle their feathers, nothing seems to get under their skin. Well, that's the kind of person they are.

We have the great gift from God of becoming a different kind of person. And we can be patient when we're not built to be patient. We can be forgiving when we tend to want to bear a grudge.

We can be a lot of things because the Word of God and the Spirit of God can renew our mind. So, the key to the besetting sin is become something different. And without any conscious effort on our part, that besetting sin just starts to kind of fall away because we're a different kind of person.

We're just not the impatient type anymore. And it's a wonderful thing for God to turn us from the alien and the stranger into the landowner, and the possessor, and the victor, and the conqueror of that land. Well, there's a lot more for us coming up in chapter 9 of

Joshua.

We're going to have this great episode with the Gibeonites, and we'll see what that means in terms of interpretation and application when we resume our study in the book of Joshua next week. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your Word.

Thank you for the bright light that shines on our path, illuminating our experience and our opportunities in the time that remains to us before the Lord Jesus returns. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts, help us to see clearly the work and the will and the plan that you have for us individually and collectively in the days and weeks ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.