



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 19 2023

Scripture Story: Joshua 8.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 46.

first things first



Photo by Barrin Von Foregger

flashlight

“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” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 503).

keytext

“There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it.”

(Joshua 8:32, 33, NIV)

what do you think?

When was the last time that you sang your national anthem or repeated a national pledge of allegiance? Did you do it individually or did you do it with a group of other people? Finish the following statement by choosing from the list below: The reason why I sing my nation's national anthem and repeat its pledge is to:

- Prove that I know it, so my parents and teachers will not hassle me.
- Practice for the day when I join the military.
- Show my patriotism and my allegiance to laws and values of my nation.
- Show my government's leadership that I am willing to do anything they want me to do.

Does God have an anthem or pledge that He'd like us to recite? Briefly write what you think should be included in God's pledge:

did you know?

Joshua assembled the people of God in front of two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. They each had a very unique layout and terrain. The name Ebal means rocky, and this description is accurate. Gerizim, unlike Ebal, is lush and beautiful. Both had a significant role to play on the day that Joshua called the people to the mountains. Ebal represented the curses that would follow Israel if they forsook God, and Gerizim demonstrated the blessings that would attend God's people if they remained faithful.

formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel.

"Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. 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 foreigners who lived among them."

(Joshua 8:30-35, NIV)

INTO THE STORY

"Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites.

"He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. . . . Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had



OUT OF THE STORY

What huge battle took place prior to the assembly at Ebal and Gerizim? (See Joshua 8:1-29.)

What was especially significant about this battle?

Underline the verses of the passage printed here that show how much Joshua cared about God's laws.

What role is Moses playing in this ceremony? What is his unique contribution?

Circle all the people assembled on the mountain.

Why do you think God wanted all the children to be a part of this ceremony?

Does God still tell His people what blessings and curses will follow them depending on their choices? If so, how? Can you locate verses in the Bible that substantiate your answer?

Draw a *rectangle* around the sentence or sentences that are the core of this narrative.

punch lines

“**He himself bore** our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed’ ” (1 Peter 2:24, NIV).

“**Those who belong** to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24, NIV).

“**The LORD will fight** for you; you need only to be still” (Exodus 14:14, NIV).

“**I have told you** these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, NIV).

“**To the one who is victorious,** I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Revelation 3:21, NIV).

“**Now if you obey** me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine” (Exodus 19:5, NIV).

further insight

“**Let us place ourselves in right relation to Him who has loved us with amazing love. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His likeness.**”

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 22.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Joshua 8:32.

In the *What Do You Think?* exercise you were asked to write what you thought might be included in a pledge given by God to us, or an anthem that He would want us to sing. Why was Joshua so keen on getting all the words of the law written down?

We are told that Joshua called this holy assembly immediately after Israel conquered Ai. Why didn't Joshua let the people relax a bit before enshrining the law in stone? How important are God's commands in your life? Why not write a pledge of obedience to God right now?

Sunday

Read Joshua 8:30-35.

The Israelites were divided into two groups, each standing on one side of the ark and the priests who carried it. Why was the ark placed in the center, between the two groups of Israelites? The ark held God's law, the Ten Commandments.

What place do the Ten Commandments occupy in your life? When was the last time you read them?

Monday

Read Deuteronomy 27:1-8.

Look at this week's *Key Text*. It tells us that Joshua copied the law of Moses on tablets of stone as the people watched. Can you imagine how long this might have taken? We do not know all of the logistics surrounding Joshua's writing of the law, but Deuteronomy 27:1-8 tells us a little. Below, write what Joshua had to do to obey Moses' directive.

What do you think would have happened if

Joshua had decided to cut corners, to create the monument as cheaply and quickly as possible? What should be our attitude when we do things for God?

Tuesday

Read Deuteronomy 28.

Read this week's *Flashlight* section to shine a light on Satan and his schemes. Ellen White is careful to note that God is clear about His commands because Satan thrives when we either do not know what God expects of us and/or fail to obey God. Punishment is not God's objective in giving us commands. God is really out to save our lives.

God spoke through Moses and Joshua to warn His people about curses that would follow sin, and blessings that would come as a result of obedience. List four blessings and three curses God promised His people in today's reading.

Blessings for Obedience

Curses for Disobedience

Wednesday

Check out this week's *Punch Lines*. Focus on Galatians 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (NIV). In your own words, write what you think it means to "crucify the sinful nature with its passions and desires":

Read the other *Punch Lines* texts. What role does Jesus play in our struggle to obey God, to crucify the flesh? What role does God play? Finally, what can you do to cooperate with God's plan to save you?

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 1:8.

Living among the Israelites who crossed the Jordan were aliens, people who joined them on their journey to the Promised Land. Notice that they were not excused from the big gathering in front of Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. The blessings and curses applied to them also.

How do you share your faith with friends who do not know God? Do you hide it or let it shine?

Friday

Read Psalm 95:6.

Worship. Everyone does it, whether they attend a church or not, listen to a preacher or not, pay tithes or not, eat the right foods or not, etc. It happens in ballparks, during elections, in bars and clubs, in the movies, in small towns and big cities—everywhere. Everyone worships someone or something. God wants it, and so does Satan.

Have you ever stopped to think of the reason why you worship God? Reflect on these questions today: Why do I worship God? Is it because I'm scared of Him? Is it because I like the stuff He gives me? Is it because I love Him? And if I love Him, does He know it?

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 46.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URiHF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.