
Day 67 – March 8

Conquering the Land (1400 – 1100 BCE)
Transfer of Leadership to Joshua
A Song of Unfaithfulness

Readings: *Deuteronomy 31:1-8, 14-30; 31:1-47*

Reflections:

- Here is a key overarching verse in all of Scripture: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you, he will never leave you nor forsake you.” See Joshua 1:5; 1 Kings 5:57; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5. The notion of God's constant presence is a part of his perfect love casting out fear.
- Jesus real name was Joshua. We have called him Jesus because of how the Latin translated the name Joshua (just like Miriam became Mary, Judah became Jude, etc.). So Joshua is an important character to understand in the story of Israel. First, there is no major place that he falls or fails. This is completely uncharacteristic of the story of Israel and her leaders. This story delights in showing human failure. Also, he brings victory, although in a temporal way, to the physical kingdom of Israel even as Christ brought victory, in an eternal way, for God's ultimate spiritual kingdom.
- In the story of Israel songs were woven into community because they were an easy way for people to learn and remember the stories and truths of their community. The Psalms actually includes a few songs that capture their story too. Remember they didn't have books and only the priests would have a copy of the law to read out.
- Notice again how clearly the written record states at the very beginning that the people are going to fail. God knew from the beginning that the Law would not be the ultimate solution.
- God’s character and power and perfection are contrasted to our humanity. “Oh praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he!”
- Consider this verse: “In the desert land he found her, in a barren and howling waste land. He shielded her and cared for her; he guarded her as the apple of his eye, like an

eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. The Lord alone led her....” Here we see a beautiful maternal image of God. We know God as Father but we must also appreciate the fullness of his being, both masculine and feminine.

- The song underscores human failure and judgment and again gives us cause to be grateful for Jesus.
- Key concluding sentence: “They are not idle words for you - they are your life.” Hebrews 12:24 states that in Christ God spoke a better word. Through Jesus’ death his blood spoke a new word of forgiveness and complete atonement. The shedding of blood in the story of Israel starting with animals being killed to make a covering for Adam and Eve and with Cain killing Abel. The first words spoken by God are words of judgment that could not bring inner transformation. In Jesus we see revealed a higher truth. Jesus the innocent one’s blood is shed and through his death the way is opened to rescue us from all sin, judgment and death. Jesus is the Word made flesh (see John 1) and this better word reveals God’s mercy and grace. This better word now is revealed through the body of Christ as Christ-followers live and proclaim the grace and mercy of God from hearts that have been changed from the inside out.