

Monday - Week Fourteen

Lesson Thirty-nine: The Last Days of Moses

Read: Number 27:12-23; Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Dt 31-34

Summary: Moses bid farewell to the Israelites and then died. God allowed Moses to see the Promised Land before he died.

Background and Comments

- Numbers 27:20 tells us that at first Moses gave Joshua some of his authority. God was providing a smooth transition of power.
- Deuteronomy 18:15 states: *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.* This passage is a reference to all the Old Testament prophets who told the Israelites what God said. The prophecy especially refers to Jesus (cf Acts 3:22-23; Acts 7:37). Jesus was like Moses (authoritative, sent by God) but was much more than Moses; Jesus was the Son of God who had come to proclaim the Gospel.
- Jude 9 says, *But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"* The Bible doesn't tell us nearly as much as we would like to know about Moses' death. Why did the devil want Moses' dead body? What was the result? Was Moses' body glorified in some way (he appeared with Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. Elijah had ascended into heaven without dying)? These are questions we won't be able to answer this side of heaven.

Lessons for Today

- Deuteronomy 31:16-20 is very interesting. Moses prophesied that the Israelites would become materialistic and idolatrous soon after they took possession of Canaan. He told them that God would chastise them to wake them out of their spiritual slumber. If we would have been Moses we might have given up all hope at this point. Yet Moses preached on; he knew that God's grace was forgiving and powerful. We often find ourselves in seemingly hopeless situations; God wants us to continue to trust in Him.

Read: Psalm 66; 1 Corinthians 6.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for faithful leaders like Moses. Richly bless Your church with these kind of leaders. Make my pastors fearless and faithful as they proclaim Your Word to our church family. Give a rich measure of Your Holy Spirit to our council and elders. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Fourteen

Lesson Forty: Israel entering Canaan

Read: Joshua 1-5

Summary: The time of Joshua's leadership is one of Israel's bright spots (one of the few in the OT); for once the people obeyed God and watched God bless them in amazing ways.

Background and Comments

- Joshua only sent two spies to check out Jericho. When they reported back they reported directly to Joshua. 40 years earlier Joshua had been a spy in the land of Canaan; that spy mission ended in disaster as ten of the spies frightened the hearts of the Israelites. This time Joshua took no chances; this small group reported to him.
- The spies were shrewd when they hid in the home of a prostitute. They knew that the sight of strangers entering that home would not arouse much suspicion.

Lessons for Today

- Imagine how Joshua must have felt after taking the leadership of millions of people who were about to invade a foreign country! In one of the most powerful passages in the Bible we read: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*" (Joshua 1:9) The heart of this passage is the promise of God's presence in Joshua's life. Slowly reread this passage; what strength can you gain from these golden words?
- Rahab the prostitute became a hero of the faith (she is memorialized in the list of heroes in Hebrews 11). She even became one of David and Jesus' ancestors. Rahab is a living example of God's grace in action.
- What was Joshua's first order of business when he crossed the Jordan and prepared to battle the Canaanites? He had the men circumcised! Talk about a stupid thing to do in military terms. His whole army was in pain for days. Joshua knew that everything depended on obedience to God, not military preparedness.

Read: Psalm 67; 1 Corinthians 7.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, whenever I become discouraged remind me that You are at my side. Fill my heart with Your promises ... just as You filled Joshua's heart with Your promise. Let Your promises become a touchstone in my life so I can go back to them again and again. With You I can do all things. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

Wednesday - Week Fourteen

Catechism Review

Read Questions 87-98

1. How would you respond? "My girlfriend and I don't need a piece of paper (marriage certificate); we love each other and are living together"

How about this? "My girlfriend and I are going to get married in a few years. We are living together to save money until then."

2. Will homosexual individuals go to hell? Explain.

3. What are the roles (jobs) that God has given to men and women in marriage?

4. Respond: "I can have sex before I get married. How dare you tell me what I can and cannot do with my body." (Hint: 1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

5. How can husbands and wives grow in their love for one another?

Read: Psalm 68; 1 Corinthians 8.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, bless the families in our congregation. Bless our young people as they face increasing temptations to sin against the sixth commandment. Focus us on Your loving will for our lives. Amen.

Thursday - Week Fourteen

Lesson Forty-one: The Conquest of the land

Read: Joshua 6-10

Summary: As Israel began the conquest of the land God showed them that He would fight for them. Their only job was to obey Him.

Background and Comments

- Joshua 6:2 serves as a theme for the whole book of Joshua; *Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.* The siege of Jericho was designed to bring out two truths:
 1. It was God who would fight against Jericho.
 2. God was so powerful that He didn't need the Israelites to use conventional warfare.
- It seems that Achan was sorry for his sins (7:20). God ordered him to be stoned as a result of his sin (and as a warning to the rest of the Israelites). It is entirely possible that Achan went to heaven.
- The Gibeonites impress us because of their ingenuity and because of their great foresight. They knew that God would lead the Israelites to conquer the whole land.

Lessons for Today

- When the people of Ai defeated the Israelites Joshua followed Moses' example perfectly: he prayed. And how did God respond? Joshua 7:10 makes us smile: *The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?* There is a time for prayer and there is a time for action. The same is true today. When you have put things in the Lord's hands, boldly do what the Lord wants you to (and trust that God will work through you).
- At the end of chapter 8 we again see a glimpse of Joshua's faith. He took time out of the military campaign to review and renew God's covenant with them. Joshua impresses us a godly leader. Have you taken time out lately for "covenant renewal" with God?

Read: Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 9.

Prayer: Dear Lord, You made the sun stand still so that Your people could finish their job. Give me the strength to finish what You want me to do. Also give me the wisdom to know what those things are. I pray in the name of Jesus, remembering that I am a forgiven child of God because of what Jesus did for me on the cross. Amen.

Friday - Week Fourteen

Life Questions

Topic/Question: How does God want me to spend my money? Do I have to feel guilty about spending money on recreation? How much should I give to church?

Bible References and Considerations

- It is very important that we ask these questions. Some Christians mistakenly think that how they spend their money has nothing to do with their faith. How wrong they are! The way we spend our money is a reflection of what is in our heart.
- Perhaps the place to start is to remember that we don't really spend our money at all (Psalm 24:1). God has allowed us to use the money (and possessions) that He has given us. The question then is how God wants us to use this money.
- God has given us money so that we can serve others. God wants us to provide for our family (1 Timothy 5:8), give to those in need (1 John 3:17), pay our taxes (Romans 13:6,7) and support our congregation (1 Corinthians 16:2). God has given us money to serve others.

Practically Speaking

- We need to be careful that we do not fall for the world's attitude of "keeping up with the Jones". We might say that such an attitude never enters our minds - but slick advertising and our own sinful nature make this temptation so strong that we sometimes don't even realize that we have fallen into it.
- Is it wrong to spend money on recreation and entertainment? Certainly not; such things are wonderful blessings from God. Yet we need to keep our priorities in order. Perhaps we need to consider the amount we give to the Lord and to others as we plan our recreation budget.
- God wants us to give the first and best portion of our income to Him. One excellent spiritual discipline is to give a certain percentage of every paycheck to the Lord in your offerings. In the Old Testament God commanded the Israelites to give 10%; God has given us no regulations about how much we should give. Someone once said, "That's great that I don't have to give 10%. I can give more!" Perhaps a place to start is to figure out what percentage of your income you are giving to the Lord right now. Pray that God will work a greater spirit of generosity and discipline so you can raise that percentage level.

Read: Psalm 70; 1 Corinthians 10.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give me discipline in this area of my life. Amen.