



# Biblical Manhood

Remembering Our Legacy, Fulfilling Our Destiny  
March/April, 2019

## Renewing Your Dependence

What now? Israel has avenged its defeat at Ai. It has conquered the city. Now, what's the next step? Joshua had no doubt about what to do (**Joshua 8:30-35**). He led Israel twenty miles north from Ai to Shechem. He would lead the people there to worship God and to renew the covenant with God.

Why did Joshua do this? It's because he knew the Word of God. God had commanded this worship service in **Deuteronomy 27:1-8**. God through Moses instructed Israel to go to Shechem and renew their covenant with Him. Joshua knew this and led Israel there in obedience to God's Word.

**Joshua 8:30-35** is not about breathing space after two initial victories. It's about Israel renewing its dependence on God. They took a break in order to worship. They needed to reestablish in their minds that the Lord is their covenant God; they could have victory in Canaan only as they depended on Him. In the midst of the war, they renewed their commitment to depend on the Lord.

We need the same thing in our lives. The Christian life is a war. We are constantly battling Satan, the world, and

the flesh. The Christian life is busy. We are wrapped up with earthly and spiritual responsibilities. However, we need to reestablish our dependence on the Lord even in the midst of the war and service we have for the Lord. How can we renew our dependence on the Lord?

### **Acknowledge God's sacrificial provision.**

Joshua and Israel marches from Ai to Shechem. Shechem was in a two-mile wide valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. In obedience to God's Word, Joshua builds an altar to the Lord on Mt. Ebal (**8:30**). Then he offers sacrifices to the Lord on those stones (**8:31**).

Why did they need to have an altar and sacrifices? They needed to be reminded of the fact that the Lord and the Lord alone has forgiven them and covered their sin. They had not done anything to merit or earn this forgiveness. It was extended to them by the Lord through the gracious provision of sacrifices. Only through the blood of sacrifice could Israel have a right relationship to God.

It's interesting that God commanded that this altar was to be made of uncut stones, "an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron" (8:31). They contributed nothing to their forgiveness. They could not attribute anything they did to earn God's forgiveness and mercy toward them.

Why is that important? It's all about dependence. These sacrifices and altar point to the fact that they were utterly dependent on God. They could offer nothing to make themselves right with God. They could contribute nothing to be acceptable to God. God provided sacrifices in order to cover their sin and to bless them. This sacrifice was a reminder that they needed the Lord – that they were completely dependent on Him.

We need to acknowledge God's provision for us. It's not the sacrifice of animals; it's about the sacrifice of God's own Son Jesus Christ. If our only hope of forgiveness is through Jesus, this means that we are utterly dependent on God. The Cross is a reminder of our need to depend on the Lord. We need to stay focused on God's provision in Christ because it constantly teaches our need to rest in the Lord and to depend on Him daily.

## **Reaffirm the necessity of God's Word**

In obedience to God's Word, Joshua wrote the law on these stones, "And he

wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel" (8:32). They had to stop the war and listen to the Word of God. This was the most urgent and pressing need for Israel at this point.

Why was this so crucial? Obedience to God's Word had priority over military victories. Israel's success did not depend on defeating the Canaanites but in submission to God's Word. They would have victory only as they depended on and submitted to God's Word. Israel was not left to its own wisdom or insight. God had revealed His Word to them and they were to accept and obey it.

They needed to reaffirm the Word of God as His Word to them. It was to shape everything they did. Everyone was to hear and obey the Word, "And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges . . . as well as the stranger, as he that was born among them" (8:33; **notice also 8:35**). No one was exempt. All Israel was to live in dependence on God's Word/

The same is true in our walk with the Lord. We need to reaffirm the necessity of God's Word. It is God's Word to us. It has been given to shape what we believe and how we live. God has not left us to depend on our own wisdom and insight. He has made Himself and His will known in the Word. His Word is a lively, personal Word shaping all of our lives, for both our believing and living. This is why we need daily times of private reading and study along with corporate

study and hearing the preached Word of God.

## **Remember the consequences**

According to **Deuteronomy 27**, the twelve tribes were to be divided and stand on the two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim (**8:33**). He then read the law (the curses found in **Deuteronomy 27-28**) to the people (**8:34**). The natural acoustics of these mountains and the valley would facilitate this. This was a natural amphitheatre.

Mt. Ebal was barren and rocky. Mt. Gerizim was wooded and fruitful. The natural characteristics of the landscape would only reinforce the message of the law. If the people obeyed, they could expect blessing – emphasized by the beauty and fruitfulness of Mt. Gerizim. If the people disobeyed God, they could expect defeat and judgment – emphasized by the rocky, barren Mt. Ebal. It was a powerful object lesson!

The point is that Israel needed a vivid reminder of the consequences – the consequences of obedience and disobedience. And so do we. As we walk with the Lord, we need to remember that both have consequences. If we obey the Lord, we can expect blessing and joy. If we disobey Him, we can expect chastisement and sorrow.

We all need the reminder that our choices do have real consequences in our lives. When we choose to obey, we can

trust God for blessing and help. When we choose to disobey, we can expect disappointment and pain. This should drive us up to dependence on the Lord. It is only when we see the certainty of consequences that we will call on Him and seek His help to obey.

## **Trust that the Lord is with you**

The Bible tells us that the ark of the covenant was in the midst of the people (**8:33**). The ark was a symbol of God's presence with His people. It reminded the people that God was powerfully present with them. As they worshiped, sacrificed, and heard the Word, God was there. He was in their midst.

This was important for Israel. Many more battles lay ahead. There was still much to do. They could not do it by themselves. The Lord alone could enable them to wage and win this war. They had to know that He was with them. This whole worship service was a reminder to them that He was with them, ready and willing to help them.

The same is true in our walk with the Lord. We need to know that He is with us. Unfortunately, most of us live as "practical atheists." We confess our belief in God, but we live as if there is no God. As believers, we must remember that He is with us. He will not forsake or leave us. This is why prayer, the Word, and worship are so important. These help us focus on the fact that He is with us. As we

walk with Him and fight the battles of this life, we can have confidence that He is with us. Our covenant Lord is powerfully present, ready to help, bless, and empower us.

## World Prayer Calendar

### May

- 1-Hungary-The Lost
  - 2-Iceland
  - 3-India-The Church
  - 4-India-Spiritual Warfare
  - 5-India-Mission Efforts
  - 6-India-Bible Translation \ Distribution
  - 7-India-Massive Conversions
- States of India:
- 8-Andhra Pradesh; Arunachal Pradesh
  - 9-Assam
  - 10-Bihar; Goa; Gujarat
  - 11-Haryana; Himachal Pradesh
  - 12-Jaamu; Kashmir; Karnatara
  - 13-Kerala; Madhya Pradesh
  - 14-Maharastra
  - 15-Manipur; Meghalaya
  - 16-Mizoram; Nagaland
  - 17-Orissa; Punjab
  - 18-Rajasthan; Sikkim
  - 19-Tamil Nadu; Tripura
  - 20-Uttar Pradesh
  - 21-West Bengal
  - 22-The Seven Union Territories
  - 23-Indonesia-The Church/Revival
  - 24-Indonesia-Government
  - 25-Indonesia-Lost/Mission Efforts
  - 26-Indonesia-Young People
  - 27-Iran-The Church
  - 28-Iran-The Lost
  - 29-Iraq-The Church
  - 30-Iraq-The Lost
  - 31-Ireland

### June

- 1-Israel-Mission Efforts
- 2-Israel-Peace
- 3-Italy-The Church
- 4-Italy-The Lost
- 5-Italy-Spiritual Awakening
- 6-Jamaica
- 7-Japan-The Church
- 8-Japan-The Lost
- 9-Johnston Island
- 10-Jordan
- 11-Kazakhstan-The Church
- 12-Kazakhstan-Mission Efforts
- 13-Kenya
- 14-Kiribait
- 15-North Korea-The Church
- 16-North Korea- Open Doors For Gospel
- 17-North Korea-The Lost
- 18-South Korea-The Church
- 19-South Korea-Continued Revival
- 20-Kuwait
- 21-Kyrgystan-The Church
- 22-Kyrgystan-Mission Efforts
- 23-Laos
- 24-Latvia
- 25-Lebanon
- 26-Lesotho
- 27-Liberia
- 28-Libya
- 29-Liechtenstein
- 30-Lithuania

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