

A Day of Renewal

Joshua 8:30-35



Joshua stood watching as the city of Ai lay in ruins, still smoldering from the fire. He had experienced an easy victory and a hard one, and he had grown many years in a few days. He had learned that it was not a simple thing to lead a nation physically and spiritually at the same time. Standing as a middle-man between a holy God and a naturally compromising people, his task might have overwhelmed him.

Yet he was sure of one thing: if the people could be constantly reminded of their covenant relationship with the God of their fathers, they would live in blessing.

And so, remembering the words of Moses, his great mentor, Joshua turned his face to the north — to the holy place: Mt. Ebal.

- Follow the Instruction... (8:30-32)
- Assemble the People... (8:33)
- Read! (8:34-35)

What does it say?

What does it mean?

Joshua 8:30-35

³⁰ Then



Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, ³¹ 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. ³² There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had

The setting of this event is very important for understanding what is going on. Locate the geographical area on a map in a Bible dictionary or Bible atlas, or in the back of your Bible. Jot down any observations you can make about that area:

Here are some helpful insights:

"First, from the top of Mt. Ebal or Gerizim we can see a great deal of the promised land. Second, at one place a natural amphitheater exists and as we stand on the top or on the sides of these mountains, we can see and hear everything that is occurring on both of the mountains and in the valley below."

Francis Schaeffer

Regarding the "plaster" to be used on the stones of the altar (Deut. 27:2)...

"Stones were to be erected and were then to be prepared for writing by whitewashing; when the law was written on the stones, the white back-ground would make it clearly visible and easily read. The method of preparation and of writing described here is typically Egyptian in technique, rather than Palestinian or Mesopotamian."

P.C. Craigie, Deuteronomy

What does it say?

written.³³ All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing those who carried it -- the priests, who were Levites. 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 formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel.

³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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 aliens who lived among them.

What does it mean?

What specifications were made concerning how the altar was to be built?



Why do you think God required this?

The blessings were read from Mt. _____
and the curses from Mt. _____.

Can you think of any reason why the curses would be read from the same mountain that the altar was on?

The blessings & curses are found in Deuteronomy 27 & 28. List four of the sins that brought a curse, and four of the blessings that would come as a result of obedience:

Curses

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Blessings

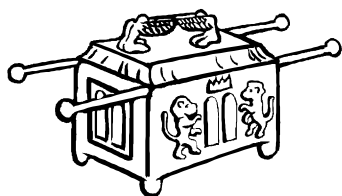
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What does it say?

What does it mean?

¹ Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. ² A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover.

Hebrews 9



According to verse 33, what object is noticeably central during this ceremony?

What does this object contain? (see Hebrews 9:4)

What does it symbolize? (see Numbers 10:33) ____

Was it intended to last forever? (see Jeremiah 3:16)

What will replace it? (see Jeremiah 3:17)

Verse 35 mentions “aliens,” who were evidently considered to be a part of Israel (see verse 33). Who was one of those aliens?

עֲשֵׂה מַעַל יְשׁוּעָה



**APPLICATION -
So What Does
This Mean in My
Life?**

1. A similar event for the New Testament believer would be the ceremony of the Lord's Supper. It is intended to remind us of God's truth, His covenant with us, and His ultimate sacrifice on the "altar" of the cross. It is also intended to renew our desire to live according to His Word and to please Him. Sometime soon, think of celebrating the Lord's Supper with a few friends, in the simplicity of your own home. It can be a tremendous blessing!

*"Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."
1 Corinthians 11:25*

2. Do the "blessings and curses" apply to the believer today? The nation of Israel was under the Law, but we are under grace (Romans 6:14). We have a "better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6), not of fear, but of love (Hebrews 12:18-24). What do you enjoy as a member of the new covenant that they did not yet know? (see Hebrews 4:16, 8:10 and 2 Corinthians 3: 3, 12, 17, 18).

3. In what ways does the reading and hearing of God's word change us?

4. How can we as churches or families put more emphasis on it?

