

The Weekly Word

January 16-22, 2017

Happy middle week of January. Here are my thoughts and musings on God's Word for this week Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, January 16: Joshua 9- Spreading God's Fame...

It seems to me that a prime teaching of this chapter happens in verse 14 when the author records that the ~~Isrra~~elites Israelites did not inquire of the Lord, as a result, they made a poor treaty with the Gibeonites. I have mused and written on that in past years. So as I entered today's reading I asked the Lord for another insight. I found my heart drawn to verse 24:

They answered Joshua, "Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this (24).

Long before there were news syndications and modern modes of mass communication, the Lord had no trouble spreading His fame far and wide. The Gibeonites knew what the Lord was up to. ~~a-~~And, therefore, they knew that they were in real trouble.

I started thinking... the Magi of Christmas fame knew God was up to something and traveled to see the baby in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). Paul was introduced to Jesus through a vision (Acts 9:1). Cornelius was told directly by God to send for a man named Peter (Acts 10:1). Even Romans 1:20 explains that creation speaks God's fame. Still to this day I hear of dreams and visions among leading people to Jesus. A number of friends in Africa have told me stories of dreams and visions leading people to conversion.

There are times when God acts directly to spread His fame. He, after all, is God and can do whatever He pleases. But generally God works through His people. ~~E~~And even in those situations where He acts independently, His people come into play confirming and teaching the whole counsel of God's Word.

My thoughts drifted to God's Will of making disciples throughout the entire world. We, the people of God, remain God's primary mode of communication. In those rare instances where God has spread His name, independent of our efforts, we are needed to confirm and teach more fully the counsel of God.

Slowly the question formed in my thoughts, "Am I playing my part in spreading the fame of God's Name?" Are You?

Use me, Lord. I am willing to be transmission wires, or simply a pole to hold up your transmission wires. Use me in the best way You choose to spread Your fame in all the world. Through Jesus, and for the sake of His advancing Kingdom, I pray. Amen.

Tuesday, January 17: Joshua 10- God wins...

Today in my reading I was reminded that human alliances, no matter how strong they may be, will NEVER stand up against the Lord. When a battle happens, God wins. End of story.

I drifted from Joshua to Revelation where the armies opposed to the Lord. In this final battle God wins.

Next I drifted in my thoughts to Jesus word that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

God wins, God wins, God wins...

After writing these last words, I realized that God wins; not me, not any one person, but God wins. I am a foot soldier in the Lord's army. I might be asked to give my life for His cause... but it is a cause that we can be certain God will win.

As I sat priorities shifted within me... God is central and my role is to serve and honor Him. Joshua marched, not because he was some great man, but because the Lord said, "March." Joshua and Israel fought, not because they had some master plan to take over the Middle East, but because God said take the land.

The story, then and today, is not about any particular leader of God's people, it is about the Lord Himself... about the fame of the Lord spreading and people coming to love and serve and follow Him.

Perspective must be maintained. I live to serve the Lord...

To You, Oh-Lord, I pledge my life, my love, my all. In Jesus' name and for Your sake, Oh God, I live and pray. Amen.

Wednesday, January 18: Joshua 11- Ditto, Exclamation point!...

Sometimes God wants to put an exclamation mark on a lesson He is teaching. Today is an exclamation point day.

Yesterday's message was repeated for me on a grander scale. The northern kings banded together believing this was their best defense against God and His army. *They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore* (4). Describing the king's army as 'as numerous as the sand on the seashore' seems to be a deliberate play on the promise given to Abraham back in Genesis.

The message seems clear, even an army equal to or larger than God's people stands no chance. It is not God's people, but God Himself, through His people, who fights the battle and wins. The battle is summarized in few words... underlining that a battle against God is never truly a battle. The outcome is really never in doubt. The Lord wins... decisively!

The account pricks my heart in a couple of places.

First, God wins. A long time ago I heard an interview with Dr. Billy Graham. One of his lines has stuck with me since that day. Billy said something like this, "I have read the end of the Bible, God wins." How true that is. No matter what happens to me personally, God wins and all those in God's family will be with Him forever in His victorious kingdom.

Two, this leads to my second heart-prick: it is not about me; it is about the Lord. As much as I take solace in being on God's side—the winning side—life is not about me, it is about God's name and ultimate victory. I may die for the cause. I may be wounded. I may be part of the decisive winning battle. I don't know and it doesn't truly matter. What does matter is that I fulfill the role the Lord has for me and that I do my best in serving Him.

I live to serve the Lord. And this is the end of the matter...

Lord, God, I stand before You today, reporting for duty. Send me, Lord, to do Your bidding... I am Yours, Lord. I am Yours. Through Jesus, my Commander and Lord, I pray. Amen.

Thursday, January 19: Joshua 12—When God is on the move things happen...

Not a particularly exciting chapter, basically a list of defeated kings.

I thought, 'when God is on the move things happen.'

Hmmm, when God is on the move, things happen... my thoughts exploded with examples.

- Israel marches out of Egypt and the Red Sea parts.
- Israel enters the Promised Land and the Jordan River pauses.
- A shepherd boy walks out on to a plain with 5 smooth stones and defeats a gigantic warrior with a sling.
- A crusading Jewish 'want-to-be' is knocked off his horse and comes to faith in Jesus and becomes the great apostle Paul
- A wild living rhetoric professor comes to faith and grows to be one of the most influential Christian voices of all time, is set in his course –Augustine.
- A monk, Martin Luther, nails his 95 Thesis to the Wittenberg Door.
- A British statesman takes on the slave trade and within 70 years British slave trade is ended and the movement ripples across the Atlantic into abolition.
- Jonathan Edwards preaches 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' and a great awakening breaks out in New England.
- Mother Teresa, William Carey, Jim Elliot, names and deeds flood my thoughts...

When God is on the move things happen. And I haven't even touched upon smaller regional moves of God. A former missionary, Dave Phillips, accepts a call as Pastor and a small congregation of loving people begin to burn with the light of Jesus Christ.

I began to wonder, where do I see God on the move today? And even more importantly, what might I do to join God and His movements?

When God is on the move things happen... join the movement!

Lord, where can I join Your movement today? What would You have me do to help push Your kingdom forward. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, January 20: Joshua 13- Inheritance...

As a parent, one of my hopes is to be able to leave to my family/children some kind of inheritance. Emotionally I hope to leave them an example of faithfulness and fun in life that would inspire them to their own faithfulness to God and enjoyment of His world. I also hope to leave them a physical inheritance, some money, property and/or stuff that would give a boost and value to their lives.

With chapter 13 we begin to see God parceling out His inheritance of land to His family, Israel. This fulfills a promise God made to their forefather Abraham.

Two thoughts rush into my thoughts... God is a promise keeper and inheritance marks us as His.

God is a promise keeper. The Lord gave His Word to Abraham and then reiterated it to Isaac and Jacob. God watched over Israel during years in Egypt and even during the wilderness wanderings. Now God's time has arrived to parcel out His promised inheritance.

God keeps His Word.

When I think of the many promises still to come, among them eternity with God for all His people, I smile. God will keep His Word. I can stake my life and hope on that!!!

Inheritance marks us as His child. Israel received the Land. That prompted me to consider what we receive as inheritance. First of all we receive God, the Holy Spirit, as a guarantee of our inheritance (read Ephesians 1). God places in every Christ-follower the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of God Himself with us. What a gift!

And looking forward, all His children will receive an eternity of bliss and perfection with Him at the center in heaven. I won't collect on this portion of my inheritance until I pass from this world to the next, but it is as sure as Israel receiving the land because God keeps His Word!

So I sat and pondered these things as I watched and read about God drolling out the Land to His people.

Lord, pause this morning, thanking and blessing You... You keep Your Word. What You say You will do, You do! Thank You. You are the Rock on which I can and will build my life. You are ~~tr~~ied and true and secure. Praise be to You, Lord God!!!

You have also blessed me with Your Holy Spirit, You are with me every step of life. ~~T~~And the Spirit guarantees my inheritance to come in Your eternal kingdom. I am blessed and overjoyed. And I lift my hear to You. I am Yours... Through Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, January 21: Joshua 14- Faithfulness rewarded...

I need heroes, m-Men and women who stand firm on their convictions, who follow through when the tide is against them and who trust in the Lord with all their strength and will. I am particularly inspired by those who do this over a long haul. Long haul heroes inspire me far more than one-hit wonders.

Caleb is a hero... a long haul hero, c

aA recognized leader in Israel who gave a faith-filled report after being sent out on a stealth assignment to scope out the Land God was giving Israel. When his fellow spies caved, he remained strong and. ~~And then~~ for the next 40 year he held to his faithfulness.

Now as Israel is receiving their inheritance of Land, Caleb alone –the lone survivor of his generation, i might add –gets his reward, his pick of the Land.

The Lord rewards faithfulness. This is the message that shouts loud and clear to me this morning...

Lord, I desire to be a long-haul hero, someone who is faithful his full life. 40+ years I have now walked with You and. I don't know how many more years this side of eternity I have. My prayer is for strength, wisdom, tenacity, and faithfulness for the rest of my days.

Lord, I pledge anew my life to You. Right now with all the strength I can muster I say to You, I am Yours... I will go and do what You would have me go and do. And, Lord, on those days when I feel weak of heart, remind me of this prayer, rise up within me, O Holy Spirit, and spur me on to faithfulness and good works for Your kingdom sake. I pray this through the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sunday, January 22, 2017, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

[Click here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.