

## **APRIL 19**

Believe it or not, we're going to finish Joshua this week. It's time to get ready to celebrate. I know that the past few chapters of Joshua have been less than interesting, but some of what has been said is hinting ahead to Judges. Judges will be packed full of action, but what will keep you awake will be the shock of seeing those people, as compared to what we've heard in Deuteronomy and seen in Joshua.

### **Joshua 19-20**

#### Joshua 19

When reading repetitive stuff, it is interesting to take note of the editorial comments or names of cities that seem familiar. There are a few interesting comments in this section and some notable cities.

Vs. 1-9 Simeon's inheritance was in the middle of Judah's land. You'll notice that it says Ziklag belonged to Simeon, but it really belonged to Judah too. Eventually Simeon's land became absorbed into Judah, and the tribe of Simeon moved north. The same thing happened to the land belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin actually "owned" Jerusalem, but you never think of it as belonging to anyone other than the tribe of Judah.

Vs. 10-16 This is the inheritance of Zebulun. There isn't much to note here except that this "Bethlehem" is not the Bethlehem in Judah near Jerusalem where Jesus was born. Zebulun was included in the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2 regarding the coming of Jesus and the people who sat in darkness seeing a great light. Gabriel came to Mary in the city of Nazareth in the territory of Zebulun.

Vs. 17-23 This is the tribe of Issachar. If you read your one-year Bible year after year, the name Jezreel will seem to have a familiar ring. This is where Elijah became terrified for his life and fled from Jezebel. It is also where Naboth died, and where a group of dogs got indigestion. They ate something (somebody) bad.

Vs. 24-31 This is the tribe of Asher. You don't hear much of these people. Mt. Carmel should sound familiar, and at the dedication of the baby Jesus in Luke, the prophetess Anna, of the tribe of Asher, is on the scene.

Vs. 32-39 The territory of the tribe of Naphtali should sound familiar. Naphtali is also in the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2; and its cities, like Capernaum, figure prominently in Jesus' ministry around the Sea of Galilee.

Vs. 40-48 The territory of Dan figures tragically in the stories to follow. Verse 47 summarizes this history, but we'll get the rest of the story in Judges. Some of the cities mentioned here actually were in the list of those belonging to Judah. Dan never really settled in the land they were given. In Judges you'll see why they were driven from their inheritance.

Vs. 49-50 By command of the Lord, Israel gave Joshua his own city which he rebuilt. Old people need hobbies when they retire. That command was the same one that God gave concerning Caleb, that both men would have land where they had walked as spies. It is interesting that while Caleb was the first to be given his inheritance, Joshua waited to the very end. The leader was the last to be served.

#### Joshua 20

Vs. 1-6 These are the cities of refuge. The purpose of these cities was to insure there would be justice for accidental killing, so that the nation would not be guilty of spilling innocent blood. The fact that this law and these cities are mentioned so often should make us think of the importance God put on innocent blood. This goes back to God's curse on Cain for killing Abel.

Killing innocent unborn babies may be plausible in our culture, but it is not missed or dismissed by God.

Vs. 7-9 It is interesting that all of these cities will be mentioned tomorrow in another "grouping" of cities. Notable in this list are Hebron and Ramoth Gilead. Hebron will become the city where David reigns over Judah while directing the seven-year civil war against the loyalists of the house of King Saul. Ramoth Gilead is the city that King Ahab will try to win back from the Syrians with King Jehoshaphat's help. That event is where we will meet the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kings 22:15, in an episode that will make your hair stand on end.

### **Luke 19:28-48**

Vs. 28-40 We've read of the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem before. Note that the people who owned the colt either knew of Jesus and the Scriptures surrounding this event, or God gave them some supernatural flexibility to let some guys just walk up and take the colt. I get the feeling that the people were anticipating this event.

Vs. 39-40 Apparently the Pharisees were not expecting the people to be proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah. It is so ironic that the Pharisees thought that Jesus should have had the decency to correct the crowd. Can you imagine having missed this moment, standing next to Jesus, correcting Him? They know the truth now.

Except for the fact that there will be no condemnation in heaven, I wonder if we met an old-time saint in heaven and told him when we lived and what we have in Christ, if he'd say, "Wait. You had that, and that and that? And all you did with it was THAT?" Every generation takes for granted what it has been given.

Vs. 41-44 Jesus wept over Jerusalem and gave a near and far description of what would happen to Jerusalem. In the near future, that generation of Israel would be judged and Jerusalem would be destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. In the distant future, the city and the people will be nearly destroyed again during the Tribulation. Knowing what is happening here, it is eerie to have Jesus tell them that they missed the time of their visitation.

Vs. 45-46 This is the second time Jesus has cleansed the temple. The first time is recorded in John 2.

Vs. 47-48 I find it interesting that the leaders were afraid to arrest Jesus, because people listened to Him so intently. The irrationality of sin permeated the thinking and actions of these leaders. That irrationality is still operating today, even among God's people. Sin is still alive and well, if we don't take advantage of the Word and the Spirit. That's why we need our meds every day; that is, we need to be washed in the Word, keeping our hearts before the Lord, submitting our lives to Him, and following Him in the harvest.

### **Psalm 88**

What is so gripping about this psalm is that there is no "up side." I've never seen a psalm end so darkly. I would say it is inspired by God who tells us to keep seeking Him, even, when emotionally, there is no end in sight. It sounds like this guy is praying out of raw faith, with the sickness of heart mentioned in Proverbs 13:12.

It could be that this psalm is connected to the psalm for tomorrow. Psalm 89 might give the positive side of what is being expressed today.

According to 1 Chronicles 6:31, this writer might be one of the singers who David appointed to lead worship after the ark was brought to Jerusalem. Judging from some of the themes in this psalm, it seems like this guy might have put King David's personal sorrow to music. If this psalm was written by or in conjunction with David during his life, it could be that the situation being reflected here has to do with Absalom's rebellion.

Vs. 1-2 This crying out sounds like David.

Vs. 3-7 As David left Jerusalem with his followers, he was in total humiliation and in great danger. When you read the account, David would have been killed that night if Absalom had followed Ahithophel's advice in 2 Samuel 17:1.

Vs. 8-9 If that rebellion was the cause of this psalm, only David's most loyal followers stayed with him, yet he was stunned that some of his trusted friends left him. David actually lost the entire country, and his own son was trying to kill him.

Vs. 10-12 One of the constant promises David made to God was to proclaim His love and deliverance. You can understand David's logic here. If he were dead, how could he do that? I'm sure God wasn't sitting in heaven listening to this and then said, "You know, Gabriel, he has a point. If I kill him, then what?" In a backwards way, David is promising to proclaim God's grace if God will spare him.

Vs. 13-18 Although this is many years after David's actions with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, Absalom's rebellion and the betrayal of his friends goes back to that event. God was still punishing David as He had foretold. David knew he was still reaping what he had sown. Appealing to God's mercy was his only hope.

### **Proverbs 13:12-14**

It seems to me that what makes this trio of verses work is the middle verse about revering the Word and following the commandment. That middle verse's wisdom shapes our desires and expectations, and it shapes our concern and counsel to others. The Word is constantly telling us that our hope needs to be in the Lord, not in our expectations of what we think He should do. He is holy and sovereign and we are His servants. I think that when we become wise and teach others, that middle verse is what we will tell those following the Lord and it will keep them from falling into snares.