

March 12-18

## **Week 11**

This week we will finish the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, by completing Act 2, scene 3, which deals with covenant and law.

At the end of the week we will move into Act 2, scene 4, “The Land: God’s Place for His People.”

As you read the final chapters of Deuteronomy, watch for a continued emphasis on being committed to and living out the covenant with God and notice the transitions that begin to take place.

Then, as you begin the book of Joshua, watch for ways the beginning of this book both builds on and develops the story presented in the Pentateuch. Also look for new themes or emphases.

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**Day 1**

**Read Deuteronomy 16-19**

**Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 33**

Today's reading presents a variety of guidelines. We find instructions for special celebration times, avoiding idolatry, the appointment of a king, provisions for the Levites, dealing with occult practices, how to recognize a true prophet, cities of refuge, boundary markers, and witnesses in court. Continue to read in light of how these laws relate to settling in the land.

*Which one of these guidelines is most relevant for your life today?*

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**Day 2**

**Read Deuteronomy 20-23**

**Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 34**

Notice today the emphasis on fairness and justice. Remember that some of the dynamics in these chapters must be understood in their historical and cultural context of the ancient Near East. Penalties at times were very harsh, but God continued to emphasize being set apart as his unique people.

*How can you express fairness and justice toward people with whom you interact today?*

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**Day 3**

**Read Deuteronomy 24-27**

**Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 35**

As you read today, continue to watch for attributes that should characterize God's people: concern for the poor and disadvantaged, fairness in business practices, and thoughtfulness toward those who are going through transitions.

*How might you be involved in living out these principles today?*

A summary of the covenant begins in Deuteronomy 26:16 and continues through chapter 27 and beyond.

*How does the commitment to the covenant by the whole community reinforce the covenant in powerful ways?*

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**Day 4**

**Read Deuteronomy 28-30**

**Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 36**

We are drawing near to the end of Act 2, scene 3 on the covenant and the law. Today's reading describes a moment when Moses called for the people to renew the covenant. The section on the blessings and curses is powerful, graphic, and comprehensive. The underlying message is, "Faithfulness to the covenant with God is the only way to live, the only pattern of life that promises a future."

Notice that in Deuteronomy 29:4 Moses said the people didn't have "eyes to see, or ears to hear." Centuries later Jesus, the Author of a new covenant, often said, "Let anyone who has ears listen" (Matthew 11:15; 13:9).

*Are you listening to Jesus today?*

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**Day 5**

**Read Deuteronomy 31-34**

**Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 37**

With today's reading we come to the end of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Congratulations on finishing the first major section of Scripture.

Today notice again the strong emphasis on the word of God and the balance between promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

In Deuteronomy 34 the story of Moses, which started in Exodus 1, comes to a close. Carefully read the description given of this great leader in the final paragraph of the book.

*How can Moses be an example for you?*

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## **Scene 4**

### **The Land: God's place for his people**

If Moses is the great lawgiver, then Joshua is the great landgiver. God's promise of a land to Abraham and Sarah's descendants is splendidly fulfilled.

The book of Joshua is full of victories, from one battle to the next. Things seem to be fine, but as we know sin has a way of spoiling things wherever there are people. Thus the book of Judges is full of brokenness and defeat.

Once again God's grace intervenes with heroes such as Deborah, Samson, and Gideon. A brilliant ray of grace shines in the story of Ruth (a foreign woman), who becomes an ancestor of Israelite kings.

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## **Day 6**

### **Read Joshua 1-2; Psalm 105**

#### **Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 1**

Today we begin Act 2, scene 4, “The Land: God’s Place for His People.”

Joshua 1 focuses on the transition to Joshua as the leader of the Hebrew people, who would take them into the land. Certainly, Joshua must have been nervous when the people said, “We will obey you, just as we obeyed Moses in everything” (Joshua 1:17). Yet Joshua served as a great leader, guiding the people to settle the land of Canaan.

Joshua’s name means “The Lord is salvation,” and this is Jesus’s name in Hebrew.

Joshua 2 tells the story of Rahab. Notice especially verse 11 and Rahab’s confession of faith (see Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). Rahab, King David’s great-great-grandmother (see Matthew 1:5) and an ancestor of Jesus, portrays God’s grace.

Psalm 105 is a hymn about God’s faithfulness to his people. It culminates with a celebration of God’s giving the promised land to his people.

*What is the reason God gave the Israelites the land, mentioned at the very end of the psalm?*

*Use the words of Psalm 105 to worship God today.*

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**Day 7**

**Reading Summary for Week 11**

The sense of transition in this week's readings is overpowering. We've observed the end of the grand era of Moses's leadership and read his solemn song and blessing. We've joined with Israel in mourning Moses's death, but we've also celebrated the dawning of new leadership under Joshua. We're on the verge of seeing God fulfill his promise to give Abraham's descendants a permanent homeland. And finally, we've praised God's faithfulness over many generations as declared in Psalm 105.

**Prayer/Meditation**

I praise you for your faithfulness, generation after generation. As you were with Moses, so you were with Joshua. As you worked in the lives of our spiritual ancestors, so you work in my life. And you will keep working in the generations after me, even those yet unborn. Thank you for your faithfulness to your church down through the centuries. May I see your faithfulness to my own congregation in its past, in its present, and in its future. Amen.

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