

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 9: Deuteronomy 28 — Joshua 17 (February 23 — March 1)

### **Summary:**

As we move into this final section of Deuteronomy, we find that God will set the mountains as places of testimony to his people. Once they cross over the Jordan, one side will be Mount Gerizim and on the other will be Mount Ebal. From Ebal the curses of disobedience are to be pronounced; from Gerizim blessings will be pronounced. The blessings are for preservation and abundance, the curses for want and destruction. How sad it is that we often choose destruction over blessing because of our fallen disobedience.

What follows the blessings and cursings is essentially a reminder of the covenant, that which speaks of God's deliverance and of the obligation of obedience to God by his people and their generations after them. In fact, Moses goes as far as to say that this covenant is not only for those present, but also for those not (yet) present...in other words for all the generations that will follow them (Deuteronomy 29:15). At the end of this covenant renewal, Joshua is officially commissioned to lead Israel after Moses.

Deuteronomy 32 begins with a psalm of Moses and then moves into a final set of discourses before he will travel up Mount Pisgah to view the promised land. The language of these pieces again focuses on that of obedience to a faithful God and that we as God's people need to be attentive to his Word, for his Word is our very life. In principle, the whole of the Pentateuch is being summarized here.

Sometimes people struggle with Moses' not being able to lead the people into the promised land, but two things should be noticed. The first is that Moses is not meant to be a total redeemer but is a type or foreshadow of Christ who will be the full package. Thus, neither the law nor a human mediator is sufficient to bring us to heaven (the true promised land). We need the God-Man and the grace he brings. The second thing to notice here is that God took Moses off on his own to bury him. Often this is rationalized as a way to guarantee the Israelites will not turn his body into a memorial totem or idol. And that may be true, but I think that it also speaks of the intimacy of the friendship between these two — Moses and God.

### Joshua:

Joshua begins the books known as the "Former Prophets" in the Hebrew Bible. While we know them as history books, from the Hebrew perspective, these books illustrate the faithfulness of God in light of the faithlessness of God's people. They stand as historical narratives but also as case evidence against the people which the Latter Prophets will use to illustrate God's case in a covenant lawsuit.

Joshua begins with a commissioning by God and instructions that the book of the Law should never leave his sight day or night. Such is the way with those God would have lead his people. Joshua 2 introduces us to the story of Rahab the prostitute who hides the Israelite spies in Jericho prior to their attack. Rahab's faith and willingness to choose the God of Israel over the gods of her people earn her and her family deliverance from the destruction of the city.

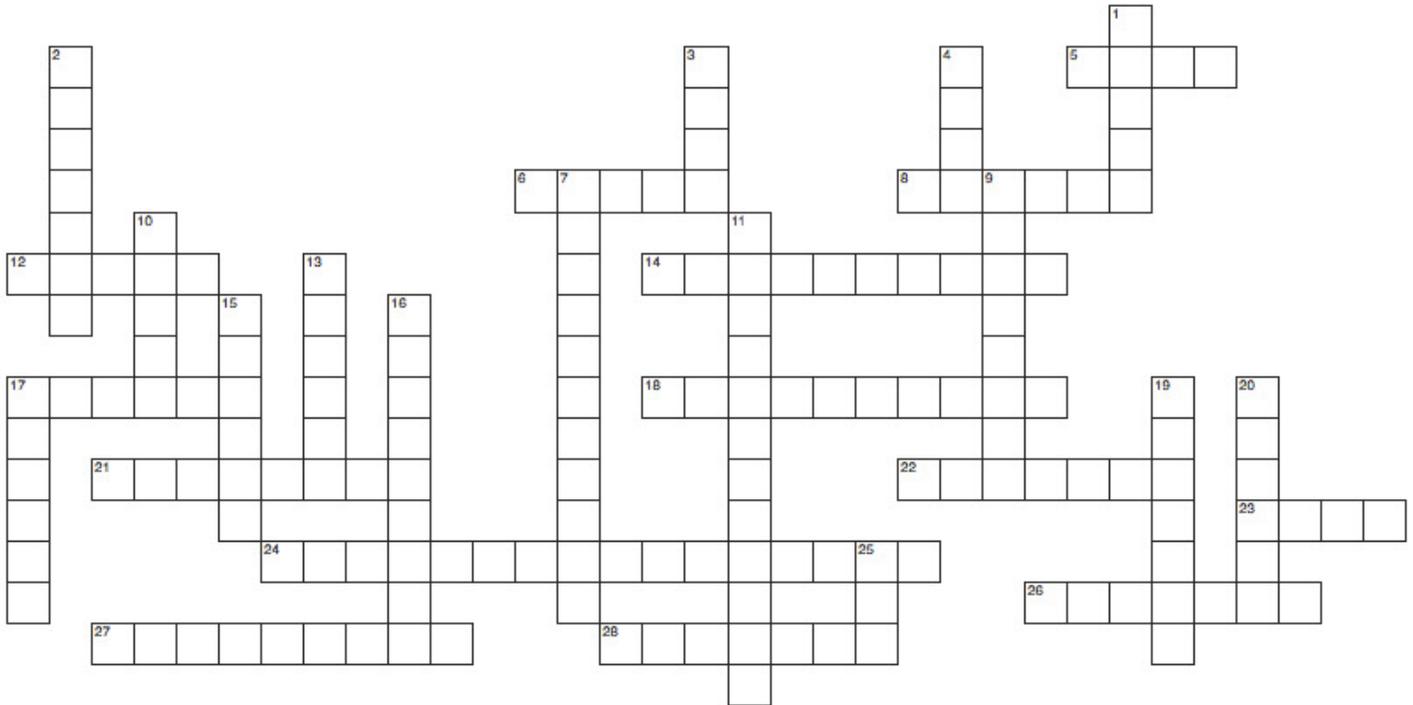
After the spies return, plans are made to cross the river Jordan, God separating the waters as he did with the Red Sea and the people passing through. The men are circumcised and then (once they healed) it was off to Jericho. Notice, though, that before the attack on Jericho, they celebrate the Passover. This not only helps us to mark the chronology of the Conquest of Canaan, but also it serves as a reminder of the preeminence of worship in the believer's life.

Jericho will fall on the seventh day by God's hand, which then leads them to the city of Ai, the fateful place where Achan takes wealth rather than destroying it and is ultimately stoned along with his whole family. And one after one, the tribes of the region are defeated leading us into a place where the people can rally and the inheritances in the land. Some of the land is still yet to be conquered and some of the pagans are still present; that will come to a head in the book of Judges. For now, this is the initial conquest.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- In John 4, Jesus meets a woman at a well in Samaria who speaks of worshipping on a mountain. The mountain of which she speaks is Gerizim. When the Samaritans were not permitted by the Jews to worship in Jerusalem, they built their own temple on Gerizim for worship — a temple that the Jewish armies would tear back down.
- When Moses warns the people of the price of disobedience, he speaks of a yoke of iron around their necks (Deuteronomy 28:48); notice how Jesus contrasts that by speaking of his own yoke as being easy (Matthew 11:30).
- Covenants in the Bible, we find, are not just made with individuals, but also with all of the generations that will follow. God is eternal, so we should expect that these covenant promises eternally apply to our households from generation to generation — one reason that we baptize infants into the covenant.
- There is an old Rabbinic parable that teaches of a young Rabbi who wants to study Greek Philosophy. He is soon pointed back to Joshua 1:8 and told to "find the hour that is neither day nor night and in that hour you may study Greek Philosophy."
- If you read the genealogies, you will find that Rahab is the mother of Boaz from the book of Ruth fame.
- In Joshua 5 we are introduced to "The Commander of the Lord's Army." Some have argued that this person is the pre-incarnate Christ as he speaks with the authority of God and even accepts worship, something no angel can do.
- With the fall of Jericho, it should be observed that despite the unusual approach to besieging the city, Joshua was not afraid to look foolish in the eyes of his enemies; how often we fear that God's ways will make us look foolish in the eyes of the enemies of God.

## Week 9 (Deuteronomy 28-Joshua 17)



### **ACROSS**

5. The leaders of Israel placed their feet on this body part of the five Amorite kings as a sign of victory.
6. The Israelites are defeated at Ai because of the sin of this man.
8. This region was given to Caleb as an inheritance.
12. She hides spies in Jericho.
14. Rahab's profession.
17. Joshua is tricked into allowing the people of this city (and its neighbors) to live.
18. This was the king of Jerusalem during Joshua's day.
21. God renewed the words of this on the plains of Moab.
22. "The secret things belong to God but that which has been revealed belong to us and our children \_\_\_\_\_."
23. "Therefore, choose \_\_\_\_\_ that you and your offspring may live."
24. When crossing the Jordan, the people were to stay 2,000 cubits from this.
26. This tribe had no inheritance in the Land.
27. In all, Joshua conquered this many kings (2 words)
28. While the sun stood still for Joshua at Gibeon, this is where the moon stood still.

### **DOWN**

1. On the seventh day, how many times did Israel march around Jericho?
2. You shall grope about as if in darkness, but it is only this time if you are disobedient.
3. For disobedience, the sky will be as bronze and the earth as \_\_\_\_\_.
4. This made out of iron will be placed on the neck of the disobedient.
7. Before attacking Jericho, the men had to be \_\_\_\_\_.
9. It is in the valley opposite of this place where God buries Moses.
10. The Holy Spirit is described as like this bird, hovering over its young.
11. This shall never depart from your eyes, day or night (4 words).
13. He succeeds Moses.
15. This pack animal shall be seized before your eyes as punishment for disobedience.
16. At the loss of one's \_\_\_\_\_ the foundation of Jericho will be restored.
17. It is while the Israelites are encamped here that the first Passover in the Promised Land is celebrated.
19. On this mountain the Levites read blessings of the Covenant.
20. This many memorial stones were placed in the Jordan.
25. Joshua's father's name.