

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Ultimate Loyalty: Worship in a War Zone – 8-14 Nov 2025

Christ would have us serve God even in a war zone. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). As the Lesson writer rightly observes, “in our busy lives, we tend to give attention to the urgencies that life throws at us. Very often we neglect to carve out quality time to renew our commitment to God and to pause and express our thankfulness for what He has done and daily continue to do for us.” Many professed Adventists are preoccupied with business and confining religion to few Sabbath hours. The idea of a distinction between religion and business is a great mistake. Every man is brought into the world for the purpose of serving God. That is his business. Time is given him in order that He may prepare for eternity. To do that is of far more importance than everything else. Men who make religion a matter merely of church relationship, do not know what Christianity is. Nowhere is true religion more productive of results upon unbelievers than in business. God never puts a person in any place, even for a moment, where he cannot serve Him. Religion is man’s business, always; “business,” in the worldly sense of the term, is only an incident. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Sunday: Covenant First – Read Joshua 5:1-9; why did the Lord command Josuah to circumcise the second generation of Israelites at this particular time of the conquest? In order to see the full force of this ceremony at this time we must recall the significance of circumcision, and must also know what is meant by “the reproach of Egypt.” Circumcision signified righteousness by faith (Romans 4:11); true circumcision, whose praise is not of men, but of God, is obedience to the law, through the Spirit (Romans 2:25-29); it is complete distrust of self, and confidence and rejoicing in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:3). In the instance before us we see that God Himself commanded the people to be circumcised, a positive proof that He Himself accepted them as righteous. As with Abraham, so with them, their faith was counted to them for righteousness. “Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Sin was “the reproach of Egypt,” and it was this that was rolled away from the children of Israel; for the true circumcision of the heart, which alone is all that God counts as circumcision, is “the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:11). “Thus saith the Lord God: In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up Mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up Mine hand unto them, saying, I am the Lord your God;...then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Eypgt” (Ezekiel 20:58).

It was because they would not forsake the idols of Egypt, that the men who left that country with Moses did not enter into the promised land. A people cannot at one and the same time be both free and in bondage. The bondage of Egypt – “the reproach of Egypt” – was not merely the physical labour which the people were forced to do without reward, but was the abominable idolatry of Egypt, into which they had fallen. It was from this that God would deliver His people, when He said to Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” This freedom the people had at last obtained. God Himself declared that the bondage, the sin, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away from them. Then could it be sung, “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in” (Isaiah 26:2).

For forty years in the wilderness Israel had broken the covenant. “The suspension of the rite of circumcision since the rebellion at Kadesh had been a constant witness to Israel that their covenant with God, of which it was the appointed symbol, had been broken. And the discontinuance of the Passover, the memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, had been an evidence of the Lord’s displeasure at their desire to return to the land of bondage. Now, however, the years of rejection were ended. Once more God acknowledged Israel as His people, and the sign of the covenant was restored. The rite of circumcision was performed upon all the people who had been born in the wilderness. And the Lord declared to Joshua,

"This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you," and in allusion to this the place of their encampment was called Gilgal, "a rolling away," or "rolling off." {PP 485.2}.

Monday: Passover – Read Joshua 5:10; how did Israel keep the Passover? Often we do not realise that those who kept the Passover, did so by faith. In the first Passover as they left Egypt, they were commanded to take a lamb without blemish, keep it until the fourteenth day of the month, killing it in the evening (Exodus 12:7, 11-13). There was a destroying angel in the land of Egypt. Death and destruction were determined from the Lord. So, in this day in which we live there is destruction determined upon the whole land, "a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth" (Isaiah 28:22). We read in Hebrews the eleventh chapter that by faith they kept the Passover, and so it is by faith that we must keep it. Christ our Passover is slain for us. It is His blood that averts the destruction that would come upon us. He was slain for their deliverance as well as for ours. There was no virtue in the blood of a lamb, which they sprinkled on the door post; it was simply a token of their faith in the blood of Christ, who was their real Passover, as He is ours. There was no other way than by faith that the Israelites could keep the Passover, even as Christ can be received only by faith.

Tuesday: Altars of Renewal – Read Joshua 8:30-31; what was the significance of altar of whole stones? We are told: "According to the directions given by Moses, a monument of great stones was erected upon Mount Ebal. Upon these stones, previously prepared by a covering of plaster, the law was inscribed – not only the ten precepts spoken from Sinai and engraved on the tables of stone, but the laws communicated to Moses, and by him written in a book. Beside this monument was built an altar of unhewn stone, upon which sacrifices were offered unto the Lord. The fact that the altar was set up on Mount Ebal, the mountain upon which the curse was put, was significant, denoting that because of their transgressions of God's law, Israel had justly incurred His wrath, and that it would be at once visited, but for the atonement of Christ, represented by the altar of sacrifice" – Ellen White {PP 500.2}.

Wednesday: Written on Stones – Read Joshua 8:32-35; what was the significance of writing a copy of the law on the whole stones? We are told: "Israel had received the law directly from the mouth of God at Sinai; and its sacred precepts, written by His own hand, were still preserved in the ark. Now it had been again written where all could read it. All had the privilege of seeing for themselves the conditions of the covenant under which they were to hold possession of Canaan. All were to signify their acceptance of the terms of the covenant and give their assent to the blessings or curses for its observance or neglect. The law was not only written upon the memorial stones, but was read by Joshua himself in the hearing of all Israel. It had not been many weeks since Moses gave the whole book of Deuteronomy in discourses to the people, yet now Joshua read the law again" {PP 500.4}.

Thursday: Longing for His Presence – Read Joshua 18:1-2, what lessons do we learn from the moving the tabernacle from Gilgal to Shiloh? We are told: "Heretofore Gilgal had been the headquarters of the nation and the seat of the tabernacle. But now the tabernacle was to be removed to the place chosen for its permanent location. This was Shiloh, a little town in the lot of Ephraim. It was near the center of the land, and was easy of access to all the tribes. Here a portion of country had been thoroughly subdued, so that the worshipers would not be molested. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there." The tribes that were still encamped when the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal followed it, and pitched near Shiloh. Here these tribes remained until they dispersed to their possessions" {PP 514.3}.

"The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli's house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never returned to the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally transferred to the temple at Jerusalem, and Shiloh fell into insignificance. There are only ruins to mark the spot where it once stood. Long afterward its fate was made use of as a warning to Jerusalem. "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh," the Lord declared by the prophet Jeremiah, "where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.... Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." Jeremiah 7:12-14" {PP 514.4}. May we not put sin in our hearts, as they did in Shiloh, to drive the Lord out.