

“Time for Spiritual Renewal” – Joshua 8:30- 35

As I think about the spiritual climate of America and the great decline of the American church, one of the most noticeable things is the absence of certain words from our Christian vocabulary. Words such as repentance, revival, renewal, rededication and spiritual recommitment. These words may seem to belong to “days gone by” or to the generation of our grandparents. However, these words are Biblical words and words that we need to revisit in our present context.

Revival is the renewal of spiritual life and vitality often referred to as a “spiritual awakening”. Such awakening comes from the power of the Spirit of God, not man! (Psalm 119:159; Isa. 57:15; Hab. 3:2)

Renew or rededication means to bring back to an original condition of freshness and vigor: to renew one's enthusiasm. (Psalm 51:10; Lam. 5:21)

Repentance is produced by the Spirit and includes a brokenness over my sin, which brings a change of mind which produces a changed life. If there is no changed life, then repentance has not been experienced. (Jerm. 26:3; Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:1-5)

- **God calls His people to times of _____.** Once again Israel seemed to a mighty army, on the move! Now would seem the time to continue the campaign; yet Joshua takes the nation some 30 miles north to the valley near Shechem between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.

Point of reference: In John 4, Jesus encounters a woman at a well in Sychar and she said, “Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain”. Mt. Gerizim would become the place of worship for the Samaritans.

In the valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, Joshua read the Law to the people and they renewed their covenant and commitment to the God that had redeemed them.

- **God calls His people to _____ Him. (30-31)** The first act recorded in this passage was the building of an altar. The building of an altar in OT times represented sacrifice and worship. **The nation was being called to give glory to God!** This was no symbolic gesture, it was an actual working altar. An altar built according to divine instructions. It was to be a very primitive, unadorned, altar made of common uncut stones with no workmanship of man upon it.

Point to ponder: The way to God is not a man-made way! It is not found in prideful expressions of man-made religion! Man has a way of “mucking up” the simplicity of coming to God!

Two types of sacrifices were made: Burnt offerings and peace offerings. Israel was giving thanks to God for bringing them into the promised land and they worshipped Him!

Point to ponder: Even though our journey is filled with trials and difficulties; should we not stop often along the journey to give God praise and thanksgiving?

- **God calls His people to submit to His _____. (32-35)** In obedience to the instructions of Deuteronomy 27 & 28, Joshua divides the nation into two groups; one at Mt. Ebal and the other at Mt. Gerizim. He then reads the Law with all it's blessings and curses.

Point to ponder: Obedience to the Word, not just knowledge of the Word, brings blessings! The blessing and curse were conditioned upon obedience or disobedience.

Application: Have you truly repented and trusted Christ alone for your salvation? Man-made religion will not work! When you experience times of drifting away and growing cold, will you seek to renew yourself in the things of God? Worship and the Word!