

WEDNESDAY**Written on Stones [A Call to Covenant Renewal]**

- Torah/Pentateuch = collective five books written by Moses
 - known as = the **Law of Moses**
- Book of Deuteronomy—known as the **Book of the Law**
 - aka **Book of the Covenant** = Exodus 24:7
 - At heart = TEN COMMANDMENTS
 - Civil / social / ceremonial laws of OLD COVENANT = codified
 - God expanded terms = blessings/curses = Deut 29:21
 - had placed/side of ark = witness against them = Deut 31:26

Joshua 8:30–35 ³⁰Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, ³¹as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the **Book of the Law of Moses**: “an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³²And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the **law of Moses**, which he had written. ³³Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴And afterward he read all the **words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.**

³⁵There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

- High on Mount Ebal = Joshua paused / middle of military conquest
 - to do something / profoundly spiritual—renew/covenant
- Carved into stone = Book of the Law = memorial for forgetful people

- Testimony to seriousness of covenant/they had entered into w/ Lord
 - Mount Ebal— mentioned only here and Deuteronomy / along w/ Gerizim – site where covenant blessings /curses were to be recited
 - Twin peaks stood before = served as two living witnesses to path Israel could take = 1) blessing thru obedience; 2) curse thru rebellion
 - Strangely, altar/ built on **Mount Ebal – Mount of Curses**
 - Why not on Mount Gerizim = mount of *blessing*?
 - Because = this is/ gospel: **it was at / place of our failure that God offered His mercy = the Place of Grace**
 - There / where curses were declared = sacrificial blood was shed
 - Forgiveness was offered
 - Sacrifices on altar pointed to Jesus = who would come centuries later
 - take upon Himself all curses of Book of the Law = Old covenant
- Galatians 3:10** As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the **book of the law**, to do them.” **Dt 27:26**
- Galatians 3:13** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us...”
- Beauty of grace = we don’t meet God at Mount Gerizim / because of our goodness = we meet Him at Mount Ebal / in our brokenness
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”
 - Our altar / cross = our stone memorial / empty tomb
 - Our covenant is written = **2 Cor 3:3** = not on tablets of stone
 - but on tablets of human hearts = by Spirit of living God
 - Dramatic scene at Mount Ebal = more than just / historical event
 - Powerful spiritual message = to God’s people today
 - At heart of this moment = passionate appeal from God
 - **Remember My covenant = Choose life**
 - Joshua wrote covenant on large stones = not merely scroll placed in pocket on side of ark / where only priests would see it

- Covenant wasn't for priests alone = for farmers / soldiers / wives / children / strangers within the gates
- God's law was to be = central in life of His people
 - Engraved not only in stone/ but in their hearts
 - **Deuteronomy 6:6** These words which I command you today shall be in your heart.
 - **Psalms 119:11** Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.
- Why / necessary? **Our Greatest Temptation = Forgetting Lord**
- How easy it is / to rely on our own strength = when life is going well
 - In seasons of crisis = quick to call on the Lord
 - But in times of comfort = we often drift into self-sufficiency
- Deut/ repeatedly warns of forgetfulness (Deut. 4:31; 6:12; 8:11,14) "Take heed, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out..."
- Forgetting / not about losing **knowledge** = it's about losing **priority**
 - But God calls us back to = altar / covenant = to remember
- That's why He commanded Israel to write / Book of the Law / stone
- That's why He established Sabbath = **Ex. 20:8** = weekly reminder
- That's why we gather at Lord's table for communion = Jesus said
 - **Luke 22:19** "Do this in remembrance of Me"
- Writing on stone was not just about law = it was about love
 - Covenant of reciprocal love = preserved by remembrance
- **Josh 8:35** Whole community stood before Lord during ceremony
- Today = we too often see our faith as private /personal only
 - Covenant calls us to power of community = shared worldview
- Every Sabbath = weekly call to remembrance
- Every time Word of God opened before the people
 - It's as if = stones are being read again
- Every communion service = fresh opportunity
 - to renew our covenant commitment to Christ
- Just as Joshua renewed covenant = Jesus renewed covenant

- But, Christ took curses upon Himself = CROSS
- He who wrote law on stone/now writes Law of Love upon your heart
 - And His Spirit gives you power to live it
- Law still stands = not to condemn / but to guide
- Blood still speaks = not of wrath / but of redemption
- Stones still cry out = not to accuse / but to remind

CLOSING THOUGHT:

- God's everlasting covenant still stands today
- Call echoes from Mount Ebal
 - "Choose this day whom you will serve."
- Should ask ourselves:
 - Have I drifted from covenant relationship?
 - Have I forgotten what God has written for me?
 - Have I isolated my faith from my community?
- Then come to cross— true Mount Ebal where curse became blessing
 - Renew your covenant relationship w/Lord today