

Watching Daily At My Gates

March 11 Read Joshua 11

Notice the last verse again. “The land rested from war.” The last words of Scripture about the Promised Land before Israel went to captivity in Babylon also concern the land. One of the reasons for the captivity was that the land had to receive her sabbaths. This land was typical of the land that the church will receive. That land is heaven. Now we must fight. We will be the church militant until Christ comes again. But when Jesus (Joshua) comes on the clouds of glory, he will reign as the Prince of Peace. Let us fight the battles of faith, knowing that we will receive the promised rest. Sing Psalter 262.

March 12 Read Joshua 12

In this chapter we have a summary of the work of conquering the land of Israel. There is a listing of all the battles and the lands captured. This is preliminary to the dividing of that land to the children of Israel. Each of them would have an inheritance and a possession in the Land of Promise. This chapter is more than just history. It is a typical reminder of what would be God’s people including the church of today when the conquering King returns to take us unto himself. Sing Psalter 27.

March 13 Read Joshua 13

We might look at this chapter and others like it as not useful to the church today. Some might say it is not as interesting reading as the victories won in battle. Others may say that these names make no sense. But the child of God must not dismiss these chapters so lightly. First of all, the division of the land helps us to understand some of the history of the land in later years. Secondly, we see that the Levites were not given land. This shows to us Christ and the way of our salvation. Finally, we see what was done to Baalam for the grievous evil that he did to God’s people. Let us take the time to read this history carefully and see what the Spirit says to the church. Sing Psalter 215.

March 14 Read Joshua 14

Israel still made their headquarters at Gilgal. Joshua is carrying out the work of dividing the land by lot as God has commanded him. Then there is an interruption. Joshua’s companion in the spying out of the land, Caleb, reminds his friend of the command of Moses. Caleb has a claim on a certain piece of land that he spotted as he went through the land at Moses’s and God’s command. Joshua grants his friend’s

request, as he must. Caleb is to be rewarded for his faithfulness in not only carrying out God's command but also believing that God would give them the land. Let us be faithful and let us believe that our inheritance in the New Canaan will be given to us. Sing Psalter 33.

March 15 Read Joshua 15

Here we have an accounting of the division of the tribe of Judah's land. Judah would receive a very hilly country in the southern part of Canaan. Parts of it were dry as we see in the request of his daughter. Caleb had made a promise to the man who helped him drive out the wicked in his possession. In keeping that promise he gave to his daughter a piece of land that was dry in nature; therefore, she asked for another piece of land. This was granted. Our possession in God's kingdom is not dry. We have the upper and nether springs of his Word which will water our spiritual lands now and for eternity as the spring of living water resides in heaven. Sing Psalter 164.

March 16 Read Joshua 16

In this chapter we see that the promise of two parts of Jacob's inheritance is given to Joseph through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. God's promises are always true and will always come to pass. Of this we have no doubt. As we hear God's promises in marriage, in baptism, and in confession of faith, we can rest assured that he will keep those promises. We can know that he will care for us now and through eternity. Sing Psalter 241.

March 17 Read Joshua 17

The book of Joshua continues to describe the inheritance that each tribe received. In some cases, as we see recorded in this chapter, individual families are recognized. Look at verse four once more. The daughters of a man by the name of Zelophehad were promised an inheritance by Moses. As Zelophehad had no sons, his daughters were promised the inheritance. They wanted to make sure that their father's name was continued in Israel. What is significant about the request is that Joshua gave the inheritance as God had promised. This work of dividing the land was God's just as the work of inheriting heaven is God's. May we never fall prey to the evil of man-centered salvation. Sing Psalter 359.

March 18 Read Joshua 18

As Israel continues to work to possess Canaan, Joshua gives orders that the tabernacle be set up in Shiloh. This, too, is typical, for Shiloh means rest. This was not Joshua's nor the people's selection, as we read elsewhere in Scripture that God chose this

place. Seven of the tribes could not find rest there as they were slack concerning the instructions to occupy the land. Joshua chides them for their slackness and then gives order how they were to busy themselves with their appointed work. Are we slack concerning the work God has given us to do in his kingdom? If we are, we, too, will find no rest in that way. Sing Psalter 367.

March 19 Read Joshua 19

In this chapter we find Israel finishing the work of dividing the Promised Land by lot even as Jehovah had commanded. Just as their places in that land were determined by God's hand as Proverbs says: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Proverbs 16:33. Then at the end Joshua receives his reward for faithful service. This reward, like that of Caleb, had been promised at the end of the spying trip. May we be faithful in our calling no matter what it might be. Sing Psalter 106.

March 20 Read Joshua 20

One by one Joshua carried out the commands that God had given to Moses. One by one he fulfilled the promises made to Abraham and those that followed him as he set up society in Canaan. These cities of refuge were made for the protection of the innocent. Quite often the innocent have a hard time of it in this world. Because of the passions of the moment, justice is forgotten and facts are glossed over. All of God's people have a refuge. That refuge is in Jehovah God. May we give thanks for this, and may we flee to him in whom all refuge is found. Sing Psalter 253.

March 21 Read Joshua 21

First of all we see that those ministers of the Lord are provided for in the establishment of forty-eight cities and the land around them for the Levites. The church should always see that the workers in God's kingdom are provided for. Of special note in the chapter are the last three verses. First of all, God gave to his people rest in the land of Canaan. Secondly, all the promises that he had made unto them were now fulfilled. We have no reason to doubt the promises of Jehovah. He will keep them and us until the day that his Son returns on the clouds of heaven to take us unto himself. Sing Psalter 242.

March 22 Read Joshua 22

As the fighting had now ceased the three tribes who had been given residence east of the Jordan River were released from their service and now prepared to return home. Joshua recognized their faithfulness and reminds them to serve Jehovah always. Then

follows the incident concerning the altar built by those three tribes. The building of that altar caused Joshua and those with him to jump to a wrong conclusion. How often does this happen to us? We must be careful to deal with our brothers in love and to not imagine sin where it does not exist. In this way the church will be strengthened and God's people will be blessed. Sing Psalter 239.

March 23 Read Joshua 23

As his life is about to come to an end, Joshua calls Israel together to give them a farewell address. This address is not about him as many addresses of "great" men today are. This address is about God and all the wonderful works he has done for Israel. Joshua recounts those works and recounts the promises that God has made to them. Then he reminds them of the key attribute that they must have. That attribute is courage in Jehovah. With courage they can finish the task of taking the Promised Land. With that courage we can live our lives on this earth until we are taken to the Promised Land of heaven. Sing Psalter 175.

March 24 Read Joshua 24

Joshua continues his farewell address in Shechem. He reminds Israel of a choice they had made. He had reminded them that they chose to serve Jehovah. He holds them to this choice. This is an active part of "working out our salvation." This is the walk of sanctification in our lives. Then the chapter recounts the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar, the high priest. The final verse shows how God's promises are fulfilled as they bury the bones of Joseph there in Shechem. Let us hold to the promises God has given to us and serve him every day. Sing Psalter 400.

March 25 Read Judges 1

The next chapter of Israel's history is begun in chapter 1 of Judges. After Joshua's death the tribes begin the final work of driving out the inhabitants of the land. Judah takes the leader's role as was prophesied by Jacob. They worked diligently at driving out the heathen. The other tribes were not so diligent, and it would show, as later they would fall prey to the idol worship of the people they left in the land. May we be diligent daily in the work that God has set for us to do in his church. This work may be that of an officebearer, or it may be as that of a parent. It is God's work and must be done to his honor and glory. Sing Psalter 360.

March 26 Read Judges 2

This chapter serves as a bridge between the events of the book of Joshua and the events of Judges. Israel had already fallen into idolatry. God sent the angel of the

Lord, the Old Testament Christ, to warn them of the folly of their way. While they repented for a time, that repentance was short lived. The chapter then describes the cycle that is repeated many times in the book of Judges. Israel would fall into sin; God would send an enemy to rebuke them. Israel would cry to God. God would send a deliverer to help them. Israel would serve God as long as this deliverer was alive. When he died, Israel would fall away once more. Sing Psalter 146.

March 27 Read Judges 3

This chapter recounts the history of the first three judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Each of them, with God's help carried out a mighty deliverance for God's people. We might wonder why they did not learn. If we wonder about that sentiment, then we need to look into the mirror of our soul. Are we any better than Israel? God has sent to us "The Deliverer" Christ Jesus. What is our response? Sing Psalter 103.

March 28 Read Judges 4

Some times in the churches' weakness, God will use extraordinary means of deliverance. That is what we see in this chapter. The men did not show the courage Joshua had ordered them to exhibit in the face of the king of the Canaanites. God used Deborah and Jael to deliver them from this wicked king. As the cycle of the Judges shows, God is merciful towards his people. Are we observing? Are we learning? Are we fighting the battles of faith in the callings that he has placed upon us? Sing Psalter 281.

March 29 Read Judges 5

Here we have a song recounting God's faithfulness in the victory of the preceding chapter. Take some time to examine the various elements of the song. Some might say it is a song of praise of Deborah and Jael, but then reread the last verse. It is a prayer to God that his enemies might perish, and that his people may prosper in the way that he has led them. May we remember that all things are in God's hand and are done to the honor and glory of his name. In this way we will find rest now and especially in eternity. Sing Psalter 271.

March 30 Read Judges 6

Backsliding Israel is chastised once more. They become so afraid that they take to hiding in the caves and dens that pockmark the landscape. God sends a prophet to remind them of the wondrous work he has done for them. The prophet and his message are ignored. God then calls Gideon to do the work of a judge. Gideon is hesitant and requires at least two signs that he is really the one for the job. While we

might say he has little faith we must consider two things. First of all, are we any different? Secondly, God calls him a man of faith in the roll call of faith found in Hebrews 11. Sing Psalter 252.

March 31 Read Judges 7

There are two poignant picture stories in this chapter of deliverance. First there is Gideon's test. Are we watchful like the three hundred, or do we consider our own comforts more important than zealously fighting the battles God has placed before us? Then you have the account of Gideon and his servant spying on the camp of the enemy. Are we ready to bear the sword of Gideon, no matter how foolish it may seem, in Jehovah's battles? Are we willing to expose ourselves to ridicule daily by using God's Word in our daily lives? Let us be courageous to fight the battles of faith knowing that God will give to us the victory by his name. Sing Psalter 248.

April 1 Read Judges 8

Nothing causes trouble in God's church like jealousy. When we are jealous of another, we are really angry with God for giving to that person what we wish was ours. Jealousy leads to a multitude of sins. We can and do commit many if not all the sins in the second table of the law when our passions are ruled by jealousy. We see that this is so in the words of this chapter. Even God's courageous fighter Gideon fell prey to evil because of jealousy in the church. Israel could find no rest when they walked in this way, and neither will we. Let us pray daily for God to deliver us from such a sin. Sing Psalter 348.

April 2 Read Judges 9

What a mess God's people had gotten themselves into because they did not obey his laws. Trouble upon trouble was multiplied unto them. They committed sin upon sin. This Abimelech whose name, by the way, is a Philistine name, was determined to kill all of his brothers so that he could rule Israel. His brother Jotham escaped the murderer and spoke the fable that portrayed the folly happening in Israel. Let us renew our efforts to obey God and walk in his laws. In this way we will receive his blessing and also receive it for our families. Sing Psalter 41.

April 3 Read Judges 10

God's patience, as it were, seemed to be waning with his covenant people. He had given them two more judges to deliver them. When they died, Israel went right back into sin. Now, God brings another enemy against them. Israel cries to him, and his lack of patience seems to show itself when he reminds them of all that he had done for

them since they left Egypt. Is God ever less than patient with his people? Does his loving kindness toward them ever wane? The answer is “of course not.” God cares for us even when we do not deserve it at all. Sometimes he deals with us in such a way that we despair of his mercy. God is always patient with his people; otherwise, he would have destroyed them all. That was true during the time of history of which we are reading, and this is true today. Sing Psalter 187.

April 4 Read Judges 11

Here in this chapter we have the account of the usually misunderstood vow of Jephthah. Jephthah did not make a rash vow. He did not make a vow which he wished he had not said. He was faithful to his vow and to the God to whom he had vowed that vow. Check Hebrews 11 if you are not sure about this. May we be faithful to all the vows that we have made in our lives. Young people, you vow at the occasion of your confession of faith. Are you determined to pay that vow? Sing Psalter 207.

April 5 Read Judges 12

Once again jealousy reared its ugly head in Israel. Relatives of Jephthah are angered at his supposed failure to include them in the battle plans against the Ammonites. It appears that what they want, which sometimes drives our desires, is the glory that falls to the victor in a battle. We also see in this chapter God’s continuing care for his church when they do not deserve it through three more judges. Israel did not change; it would be God who would change them as he prepared them for the Savior. Are we prepared to meet the returning Savior? Sing Psalter 371.

April 6 Read Judges 13

God’s people are to be a separate, holy people living an antithetical walk in this world. Sometimes God has to give to us reminders of this calling. Samson was such a reminder for Israel. Samson was one of the Nazarites that God gave to Israel to remind them of the life that they were called to live. In his very appearance they knew that they were to be different than the world around them. By the Nazarite lifestyle the people were to see their calling. We have the same calling. Are we living holy, separated lives unto God? Sing Psalter 353.

April 7 Read Judges 14

Sometimes even those called to special offices make poor choices in their lives. Samson, even though he was marked to show holiness, made many wrong choices. His choice of a wife was for all the wrong reasons. He chose a wife because she pleased him, not because that choice would please God. Because of this error, God

chastised him even when he used such chastisement for his people's good. We must be careful how we justify our actions. We must measure them against the standard of doing all to the glory of God and his name. Sing Psalter 83.

April 8 Read Judges 15

Even though Samson continued to walk in a way that glorified himself and not God, God turned it for his own good. The miracles recounted in this chapter show only God's glory and not Samson's. Israel undoubtedly heard of Samson's feats. By them they were called to walk in a right way. They were judged by Samson and God even when they did not want such judgements. Let us pay attention to the goings on in the world around us. Do we see God in those actions? Do we acknowledge him as our God and deliverer in those actions? This must we do aided by his help in his Word. Sing Psalter 328.

April 9 Read Judges 16

The events of this chapter fill us with wonder. First of all we wonder at Samson's failure to learn that his walk of life was not pleasing to God and was causing great distress to fall upon him. Secondly, we see the insolence of the heathen as they shake their fists at the Creator in their heathen worship. Finally, we wonder about Samson's end and the meaning of it. What we must not wonder about is that God's name was vindicated. The heathen were not allowed to continue in their dishonor of God's name. The faithful in Israel were helped by Samson's judging of Philistia. God will care for his church; of that there is no doubt. Sing Psalter 312.

April 10 Read Judges 17

This chapter seems to be a summary of the evil of idolatry that had fermented in Israel since the time of Joshua's death. As we read these words we might be found shaking our heads at the folly exhibited by this man. Then we get to the final verse and wonder at his conclusion. We might say, "How could a man grown up in the church make such a statement?" Then, as James says, we must look into the mirror of God's Word. What do we see? Are we any better than this man? Let us daily go to God in prayer to be delivered from such sins that affect our lives. Sing Psalter 308.