

Joshua – Lesson 24

Joshua Chapter 24

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

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Introduction: In last week's lesson, Joshua called the leaders of the nation of Israel together for his last counsel. He went back and showed God's Grace through the earlier leaders of the nation including the great leader Moses. We read the verses last week where Moses' father in law, Jethro, told Moses to set certain men over thousands, some over hundreds and some groups of fifty, and only the hard issues were to be brought to Moses.

My comment was that this was a very good way to do things, that even in successful business we must do things this way. What I did not catch was that while this plan did sound and look good, it was the plan of man, and God rejected the plan. God's plan was to set 70 elders of the tribes over the people. It all sounded good from man's viewpoint, and I did not from the next verses catch the reality that the first way was rejected of God.

Exo 24:1 And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

Exo 24:2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

Exo 24:3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.

God rejected the first plan over in Numbers Chapter 11.

Num 11:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

Num 11:17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

God's plan was to take the spirit of Moses and place it upon the seventy elders. Jethro's plan sounded good, but it was not the way God wanted it done.

This week we conclude our study of the book of Joshua.

I. Joshua's Last Charge to Israel

Josh 24:1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of

Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Three places were of importance to Israel during their early years in the land of Canaan.

1. Gilgal - The Military Headquarters of the invasion
2. Shiloh - The Religious Center of the people
3. Shechem - The political center of the nation.

Gilgal was not only used by Joshua in the early days, but was used by Samuel many years later.

1 Sam 7:15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

1 Sam 7:16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

1 Sam 7:17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

We also find that the city of Gilgal was where Samuel slew Agag, the wicked king. (1 Sam 15:33)

You remember that Saul went down and had been commanded to kill them all, but he did not destroy the king nor the animals, but brought them back.

1 Sam 15:8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

1 Sam 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Samuel took it upon himself to kill the wicked king.

1 Sam 15:33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Young Samuel was given to the Lord at Shiloh, and served God there in his youth.

1 Sam 1:24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

1 Sam 1:25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

1 Sam 1:26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

1 Sam 1:27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

1 Sam 1:28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

At the close of Joshua's life, he calls all the tribes back again to Shechem, to present themselves there before the Lord. The tribes all came back and gathered there to say farewell to their leader and to listen to his last words of encouragement and admonition. Joshua, like so many of the great men of Israel, began his speech with a review of national history.

II. Joshua Speaks of Israel's Divine Call

Josh 24:2 And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

Josh 24:3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

God directed their minds to their ancestor Abraham. He was called from a land of idolatry, and this was to remind them of how much God hates idolatry. Thou shalt have no other God before thee is the first commandment. After the Tower of Babel, man totally departed from the Lord. No one served God, not even Terah, the father of Abraham. When God confused the language, and the people were scattered in every direction, they took with them a knowledge of the true and living God, which is perhaps the reason that even pagan tribes have a knowledge of the true God, even though they don't worship Him.

God could have judged the people and removed them off the face of the earth, but due to His mercy and kindness, He began by using one man. The man was Abraham, who must have had a desire in his heart to know the true and living God. The first thing Abraham had to do was to leave his father's land, a land full of idolatry. And from him, a great nation was formed that would someday through this lineage see the Messiah born.

God separated their fathers from those that served idols. Got Abraham away from the environment and the practice of serving idols. God wants you and I to be a separated people, not partaking in the things of the world that pull us away from God. The world today many times serves idols, it's normally not statues like in the past. But it may be green. Love of green money has turned many men and women away from serving the true and living God. It may be some type of ball, golf ball, basketball, football, soccer ball, name the sport, some serve it with a fervor that would embarrass many Christians in their service to God. But whatever it is that keeps you from serving God, it is an idol and a stumbling block that needs to be removed.

Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, a great political and religious center in which sin, the moon-god was worshipped. He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. You and I are to be like Abraham, just pilgrims passing through. "Hold things of this life loosely" was the advice of Corrie Ten Boom, that way if God pulls it out of your hand it won't hurt too much. Things should not control the child of God. Our service to our Lord should be number 1 in our lives.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling

*in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:
Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Heb 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

Heb 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Over in the book of Acts, Stephen gave an account of Israel's history from its earliest days to show how their rebellious spirit was against God. This attitude characterized Israel, a rebellion that reached its climax in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

*Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,
Acts 7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee.*

Acts 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

Acts 7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

Acts 7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

Acts 7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

Acts 7:31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

Acts 7:32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

Acts 7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

Acts 7:34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

Acts 7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Acts 7:36 He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain

*them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:
Acts 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

III. Israel Makes a Decision As to Whom They Will Serve

Josh 24:4 And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

Josh 24:5 I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.

Josh 24:6 And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

Josh 24:7 And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

Josh 24:8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.

Josh 24:9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:

Josh 24:10 But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.

Josh 24:11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.

Josh 24:12 And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.

Josh 24:13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

Josh 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

Josh 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

You know the more you learn about Joshua, the more you have to admire him. Through the years he has stood in the shadow of Moses. But believe this, Joshua was a man of great stature. God made no error in choosing Joshua to lead His people. Joshua asks the people to decide who they were going to serve. He said it may not seem good for them to serve God, but he and his family were going to. Each of us, every man, every woman, needs to make up our minds on this one. What is your decision this morning? Are you willing to give it all up, all the things of this life, the fleeting temporal things, to serve Jesus, the great Creator of the Universe. Joshua gave good advice... words of wisdom and knowledge. Remember when the rich young ruler came

asking Jesus what it took to enter into heaven.

Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Mark 10:19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Mark 10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Mark 10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

Note how that Jesus turned every thing back to the young man with a question. Why callest me good? None good but God. If Jesus was God, then He was good, but was the young man acknowledging this? No, he was coming with great pride in his works, his ability to keep the law. Jesus made him realize that his money was more important than his service to God. He had broken the very first commandment.

And it didn't say he gave it all up and turned to God, it says he went away grieving due to his great possessions. And nowhere do we have a record that he ever did accept Christ as Savior. How about you? What is most important in your life. Can you too, like Joshua say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

IV. Israel's Decision

Josh 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

Josh 24:17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

Josh 24:18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

The people said that God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. Down in verse 31 it says the nation served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua.

Josh 24:31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

After this generation died, there arose another generation after them that knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. I'm afraid we are living in a generation of people like this today. In our actions as a nation, we don't see many today that give the honor to God for their lives and all the blessings that He bestows upon them.

Judg 2:10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

Judg 2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

Somewhere along the way, the first generation failed to properly teach their children to serve the Lord. God help us to all realize how easy it is for God's people to fall away. We must fight the little sins so that we don't let Satan creep in and take over our lives. What is the least significant thing you do to serve God? Come to church on Wednesday night? Go to visitation? Read your bible? Visit the sick in the hospital? Whatever seems least significant will be what Satan will work on getting you to skip first. Once you start failing, it is easy to build upon those failures, and soon God is pushed way back on our agendas. God help us to put Him first, to do the things he would have us to do.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

I believe that if every generation would faithfully serve the Lord and obey the commandments of Moses, our children will not be ignorant of God. They will not fail to serve him. But we let the little things slip, and the little things bring down the whole.

We as mothers and fathers are obligated to teach the Word of God to our children.

Deu 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

V. Israel Called To Put Away Strange gods

Josh 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Josh 24:20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

Josh 24:21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

Josh 24:22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Josh 24:23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

It appears that at this time that the people already had other gods among them. There was a time in Jacob's life when he said these words.

Gen 35:2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Gen 35:3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

Gen 35:4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

The people did follow Joshua's advice. Joshua took the people at their word that they would put away the strange gods.

VI. A Covenant is Made

Josh 24:24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

Josh 24:25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

Josh 24:26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

Josh 24:27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

Josh 24:28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

A covenant is made with the people and Joshua writes it down in a book. Sometimes it is good to remember things by writing them down. It makes it stick with us in our minds.

Josh 24:29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

Josh 24:30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

Josh 24:31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

Here is the record of Joshua's death. As we read through the old testament in particular, there is a record of when men died and where they were buried. How this should teach us to live every day as if it were our last. We have several members of this church that are no longer with us this year that were here just a year ago, and several if you go back to the building of the church several years ago. Life is temporal, and we need to realize that it may go away just like

that vapor that is spoken of in the book of James. All of us will soon face death, or if not, we will be taken up in the rapture when Jesus returns before the beginning of the seven years of tribulation.

Josh 24:32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Josh 24:33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

The chapter concludes with the record of the bones of Joseph being buried. Several verses mention the fact that Joseph's bones were brought out of Egypt and buried in the promised land.

Gen 50:25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

Gen 50:26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Heb 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.