

11/30/03

Joshua 23-24

What we have in these last two chapters in the book of Joshua is the farewell speech of Joshua to the nation of Israel.

Chapter twenty-three is Joshua's personal testimony to the leaders about God's faithfulness and his own, with instruction and warnings against apostasy.

Chapter twenty-four is God's witness of His faithfulness throughout their history and the renewed covenant by Joshua and the people.

* It is a reminder of what they already knew.

Moses did the same in the book of Deuteronomy.
Deut. 12-26

The last words of Joshua to the leaders, reminding them about the faithfulness of God, as well as warning them against apostasy. Josh. 23:1-16

23:1-5 **The proclamation by Joshua to the leaders.**

23:1-2 The occasion for the witness.

- 1) The occasion took place a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies. Vs. 1a-b
* The location is not disclosed, so probably it's at Shiloh.
- 2) The condition of Joshua was that he was old and advanced in age. Vs. 1c
* Maybe at this time it was about twenty-five years after entering the land, since he died at 110 years old. Josh. 24:29
- 3) The one who called them assembly together was Joshua. Vs. 2
 - a) All of Israel, included their elders, their heads, their judges and their officers. Vs. 2a-e
 - b) Joshua said to them: "I am old, advanced in age." Vs. 2f-h
- 4) Paul the apostle spoke to the Ephesians elders. Acts 20:19-38
 - a) He gave his witness of his service to God, sinners and the church.
 - b) His dependence on the Holy Spirit to accomplish the things of God.
 - c) He gave to them the entire council of God's word.
 - d) He warned the elders of caring for the people, pride and lording over the church.
 - e) He commended them to the word of God.

f) He declared his integrity and passion.

23:3-5 The partnership in the witness.

- 1) God had been the One had brought victory against the nations by their own witness. Vs. 3
 - a) They had seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for their sakes. Vs. 3a
 - b) They had seen the LORD their God had fought for them. Vs. 3b
 - * Rest is the theme of the book, though small battle remained.
- 2) Joshua had divided the land. Vs. 4
 - a) They has seen the division of the nations that remained by lot. Vs. 4a-b
 - b) They had received these division a an inheritance for their tribes, along with all the nations Joshua had cut off. Vs. 4c-f
 - * From the Jordan, as far as the Great Sea westward.
- 3) God would fulfill His promise completely. Vs. 5
 - a) And the LORD their God would expel them from before them and drive them out of their sight. Vs. 5a
 - b) And they were to possess the land themselves, according to the promise. Vs. 5b-c

* Moses had told them beforehand
Ex. 23:23-33, Deut. 6:5, 10, 12

23:6-11 **The exhortation to abide in the blessings by Joshua to the leaders.**

- 23:6-8** The exhortation for ongoing blessing by way of warning.
- 1) Te reasonable request, “Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Vs. 6a
 - 2) The reasons for the request are several. Vs. 6b-7
 - a) *Maintaining stability*, “Lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left.” Vs. 6b
 - * The lust of the flesh, from within!
 - b) *Mingling and tempting themselves*, “Lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. Vs. 7a-b
 - * The lust of the eye, from without!
 - c) *Meddling to their own hurt*, “You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them. Vs. 7c-d
 - * The pride of life, from the spirit of vain boasting! 1Jn. 2:15-17

* Ex. 20, 23:13, Deut. 5, 8:19-20, 10:20, 13:1-15

- 3) The right thing to do, “But you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.” Vs. 8
 - a) This is what God told Joshua at his commission. Josh. 1:7-9, 18
 - b) This is what God expected for life!
 - c) The phrase “hold fast” in Hebrew “dabaq” is used for the intimate binding of husband and wife in Genesis. Gen. 2:24
- 4) Peter admonishes the elders in their responsibility. 1Pet. 5:1-4

23:9-11 The exhortation for ongoing blessings is by way of promise.

- 1) The past promises have been fulfilled by God, “For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.” Vs. 9
- 2) The future promises will equally be fulfilled by God, “One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.” Vs. 10
* Deut. 28:7, 32:30, Lev. 26:7-8
- 3) The present promises are conditional on their relationship to God, “Therefore take

careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.” Vs. 11

- a) The relationship must be maintained at all cost, quoted word for word. Deut. 4:15
- b) The consequences can not be escaped but will come at a high price.
- 4) Jesus warned the Scribes and the Pharisees, “Woe to you”. Matt. 23

23:12-16 **The admonishment regarding future disobedience to the leaders.**

23:12-13 The promise regarding their disobedience.

- 1) The warning to not make marriages with the people of the land. Vs. 12
 - a) It is denounced as “going back”. Vs. 12a-b
 - b) It is declared as “clinging to the remnant of the nations”. Vs. 12c
 - c) It is described as “to go in to them and they to you”. Vs. 12f
* This is in reference to intermarriages, which is the first time it is mentioned in the book, which were strictly prohibited. Ex. 34:12-16, Deut. 7:1-6, 1Kings 11:1-8
- 2) The consequences are not to be taken lightly. Vs. 13

- a) They were to know for certain that the LORD their God would no longer drive out these nations from before them. Vs. 13a
 * Moses had stated the same thing. Ex. 23:30-33, 34:11-12, Num. 33:55
- b) Rather, they would be snares and traps to them, scourges on their sides and thorns in their eyes. Vs. 13b-c, Num. 33:55
 * “Why has this people slidden back, Jerusalem, in a perpetual **backsliding**? They hold fast to deceit, They refuse to return.” Jer. 8:5
- c) They would bring their own downfall, “Until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.” Vs. 13d
 * “Your own wickedness will correct you, And your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing That you have forsaken the LORD your God, And the fear of Me is not in you," Says the Lord GOD of hosts.” Jer. 2:19

23:14-16 The prophecy regarding their disobedience.

- 1) The urgency is marked by the nearness of the death of Joshua. Vs. 14
 * Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. Vs. 14a
- 2) The accountability is by personal knowledge. Vs. 14b-d
 * And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.
- 3) The ultimate destruction will be their own doing. Vs. 15
 a) Just as God kept His word to bless them. Vs. 15a-b
 b) So the LORD would bring upon them all harmful things, until He destroyed them from the good land the LORD your God has given to them. Vs. 15c-d
- 4) The sin of idolatry would take them into captivity. Vs. 16
 a) By transgressing the covenant of the LORD your God, in going and serving other gods, and bowed down to them.” Vs. 16a-d
 b) By bringing upon themselves the anger of the LORD to burn against them, to perish quickly from the good

land which He had given them. Vs. 16e-f

- 4) The entire land was filled with debased idolatry, confirmed by the Ras Shamra (Ugaritic) tablets and the extant relics of fertility cult practices unearthed at Bethshen, Megiddo, etc..
 - a) El was the supreme deity, described as a bloody and cruel tyrant, of uncontrolled lust.
 - b) Baal was the son of El and his successor, he dominated the Canaanites groups and considered “Lord of heaven.”, the god of rain and vegetation.
 - c) Anath was sister of Baal and one of three goddesses who were patronesses of sex and war, with sacred prostitutes and child slaughter.
 - d) Ashtoreth Astarte or Asherah were also consorts of Baal and goddesses of sex and war.
 - e) Molech and Milcom were Ammonite gods of orgy as Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites.

The last words of God to the people, reminding them about his faithfulness throughout their history and the renewed covenant by Joshua and the people. Josh. 24:1-33

24:1-14 The reminder by God of His faithfulness to deliver the people and bring them into the promise land.

- 24:1** The assembly of all Israel gathered.
- 1) The gathering once again is by the hand of Joshua.
 - 2) The place was Shechem, in the center of the land, in the vicinity where they had built an altar and recited the blessing and the cursings, on Mount Ebal and Gerizim. Deut. 11:29, 27:4, 13, Josh. 8:30, 33
 - a) Shechem was where God had first promised the land to Abraham and he built an altar. Gen. 12:6-7
 - b) Here Jacob had built an altar also and had the people put away their idols. Gen. 33:20, 35:1-4
 - c) It was one of the cities of refuge in the hill country of Ephraim.
 - 3) The elders of Israel, their heads, their judges, and their officers; all presented themselves before God.
 - a) The reference to “before God” could refer to the tabernacle, if so, very possibly it had been moved from Shiloh at this time and then returned?
 - b) This gathering is specifically declared to be order by Yahweh.

24:2-13 The rehearsing of their history from Abraham to Joshua.

* This is common to a suzerainty treaty.

1) Abraham. Vs. 2-3

a) God told them that Abraham and his father, Terah were idolaters and served other gods. Vs. 2

1)) Terah's name may be derived from a Hebrew word meaning "moon", that was the patron deity of Ur.

2)) The other side of the River Euphrates, at Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. 11:31, -12:1-3

b) God took Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. Vs. 3

* Abraham was old and Sarah was barren. Gen.

2) Isaac. Vs. 4

a) God gave Isaac Jacob and Esau.

b) God gave to Esau the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

* All by the hand of God!

3) Moses. Vs. 5-10

a) God sent Moses and Aaron, and plagued Egypt, and afterward I brought you out. Vs. 5

b) God then brought them out of Egypt, bringing them across the Red Sea; as the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. Vs. 6

c) God heard their cries and He placed darkness between them and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them and destroyed them, they witnessed this and they dwelt in the wilderness a long time. Vs. 7

d) God brought them into the land of the Amorites, on the east side of the Jordan, and God gave them into their hand, to possess their land, destroying them from before them. Vs. 8

* Num. 21, Deut. 2-3

e) God delivered them from Balak the king of Moab, who arose to make war against Israel, and hired Balaam to curse them by not listening to Balaam and had him bless them. Vs. 9-10

* Num. 22-24, Deut. 23:4-5, 2Pet. 2:15, Rev. 2:14

4) Joshua. Vs. 11-13

a) God had them cross the Jordan and God delivered into their hand the men of Jericho, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Vs. 11

- b) God sent the hornet before them which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, not with their sword or with bow. Vs. 12
* Ex. 23:28, Deut. 7:20
- c) God had given them a land for which they did not labor, and cities which they did not build, and they dwell in them; eat of the vineyards and olive groves which they did not plant. Vs. 13
* Moses warned them of forgetting God. Deut. 6:10-15

24:14 The reality of their present idolatry versus their present repentance by invitation, in view of their future.

- 1) Joshua exhorted them to repent.
 - a) By fearing God. Prov. 1:7, 9:10
 - b) By serving God.
 - 1)) Fourteen times the word “serve” appears in the book of Joshua.
 - 2)) Once in chapter 22 and once in 23, twelve in 24.
 - 3)) Five times “served”, one in 23, four times in 24.
 - 4)) In is in reference to sincere and committed service out of love, not compulsion!

- 2) Joshua states the manner, in sincerity and truth.
 - a) With a complete heart.
 - b) That is lined up with the truth of God’s revelation.
- 3) Joshua is specific in their sin.
 - a) By putting away the gods of their fathers, which they worshipped on the other side of the Euphrates Rive and Egypt.
 - b) They were not to continue to their old ways.

24:15-28 **The renewed covenant with the people by Joshua, to continue to follow God.**

24:15 The reflection and examination by personal choice in the present.

- 1) The choice must be made by every person, individually. Vs. 15a-d
 - a) The urgency is in view of sin and eternity, “If it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.” Vs. 15a-b
 - b) The utmost comparisons is in view of reality, “Whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.” Vs. 15c-d

* Six-hundred years later, Elijah gave the same choice to the prophets of Baal, on Mount Carmel. 1Kngs 18:21

- 2) The choice of Joshua was already made. Vs. 15e-f
- a) The decision is uncompromising and publicly, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
- * Whoever confesses Me before men, him will I confess...Matt. 10:32-33
- b) Not because he made them but most likely because they had seen his life of faith and agreed with him.
- * Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation”. 2Cor. 6:2

24:16-18 The response of outrageous from the people.

- 1) The people were ad emit, “So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods.” Vs. 16
- a) They were sincere but sincerely resting on their own goodness.
- b) Never say never. 1Cor. 10:12
- 2) The people were admitting their responsibility and accountability to God, “For the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the

land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed.” Vs. 17

- 3) The people were acknowledging their commitment, “And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He [is] our God.” Vs. 18

24:19-24 The witness of the people to serve God.

- 1) Joshua reemphasizes the impossibility of serving Yahweh and idles. Vs. 19
- a) “But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD. Vs. 19a-b
- * A life of duplicity is very dangerous that leads to destruction.
- b) For He is a holy God. Vs. 19c
- * He is of purer eyes than to behold evil with condones. Hab. 1:13
- c) He is a jealous God. Vs. 19d
- 1)) He will not tolerated disloyalty, “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” Deut. 4:24
- 2)) He will not allow any rivals, “You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your

- God, am a **jealous** God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.” Deut. 5:9
- 3)) He will not be appeased, “(for the LORD your God is a **jealous** God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.” Deut. 6:15
- 4)) He will not be one with idolatry, “They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger.” Deut. 32:16
- 5)) He will not allow unfaithfulness, “For I am **jealous** for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2Cor. 11:2
- 6)) He is very possessive, “Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?” Jas 4:5
- d) He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. Vs. 19e
* Ex. 20:5, 34:14, Deut. 5:9
- 1)) That is if they persist in their sin and there is no repentance.

- 2)) The warning implies danger in two ways; in not repenting or in seeking repentance too late, like Achan.
- 2) Joshua reemphasizes the warning. Vs. 20
- a) If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you. Vs. 20a
- b) After He has done you good. Vs. 20b
- 3) The people are unmoved. Vs. 21
* And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the LORD!”
- 4) Joshua placed them under an oath. Vs. 22
- a) So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him.” Vs. 22a-c
- b) And they said, “We are witnesses!” Vs. 22d-e
- 5) Joshua called the people to give tangible evidence of their repentance. Vs. 23
- a) Now therefore, he said, “put away the foreign gods which are among you.” Vs. 23a-c
- 1) This is not slander but direct accusation.
- 2) Faith and works. Ja. 2:22, 24, 26
- b) And incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel. Vs. 23d
* They had left their first love. Rev. 2:4

- 6) The people declared their fidelity and loyalty to God. Vs. 24
- a) And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve,
- b) And His voice we will obey!
- * The word of God, alone prepares people to be men and women of God. 2Tim. 3:16-17

24:25-28 The covenant performed by the people.

- 1) The covenant was made near the sight of the setting up of the Law when the first entered the land, at Shechem. Vs. 25
- a) It was made that very day.
- b) It was a re-commitment to what they had always known.
- c) The word covenant "berith" , literally means to cut or divide, as Abraham did to the sacrifice. Gen. 15:10
- 2) Joshua recorded everything. Vs. 26
- a) Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. Vs. 26a
- b) Joshua took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. Vs. 26b-c
- 3) Joshua declared their accountability to God. Vs. 27-28
- a) And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of

the LORD which He spoke to us". Vs. 27a-b

- b) It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God. Vs. 27c-e
- * Two witnesses, the third was God!
- c) So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance. Vs. 28

24:29-31 **The reverential death and burial of Joshua, Joseph and Eleazar.**

24:29 The death of Joshua.

- 1) Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years old.
- a) If he were like Caleb in age, eighty-five, seven years after the conquest, the time would be about thirty-two year from entering the land. Josh. 14:10
- b) Regardless of the time, Joshua lived to see God work in some incredible ways, though ten years younger than Moses.
- 2) Joshua the son of Nun, is called the servant of the LORD.
- * He was introduced at the beginning of the book as the minister of Moses. Josh. 1:1

24:30 The burial of Joshua.

- 1) They buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah. Vs. 30a
- 2) The land marking are given, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. Vs. 30b

24:31 The unfaithfulness of Israel to the covenant of Joshua.

- 1) The book closes with the fickleness of the people, who served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Judges 2:10-15
- 2) But they failed to transmit their faith to their children, as the book of Judges continues the history of “every man doing what was right in his own eyes, because there was no king on the throne of Israel”. Judges 17:6, 21:25

24:32-33 The burial of Joseph and Eleazar.

- 1) The reverence given to Joseph is evident by the carrying of the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt. Vs. 32a-b
* Joseph had given strict orders for his body to be taken. Gen. 50:25, Ex. 13:19, Heb. 11:22
- 2) They buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the

sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph. Vs. 32c-e

- a) Some believe that the burial took place earlier and now recorded?
- b) The purchase was more than five-hundred years before. Gen. 33:19
- 3) The death and burial of Eleazar the son of Aaron died is also recorded. Vs. 33
 - a) Eleazar had served under Moses and Joshua as High Priest, after his father death, Aaron. Num. 3:32, 20:28
 - b) They buried him in a hill belonging to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.
 - c) Certainly, most likely, Phinehas is the one who recorded these two last chapters, since Joshua and Eleazar died.