

JOSHUA: READY FOR BATTLE
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA
Joshua 23-24

“WHY YOU CANNOT SERVE THE LORD”

INTRODUCTION: Every day we make choices that affect our lives. Some of them we will never remember, while others we will never forget. There have been times when we did not realize the impact a choice would have on the rest of our lives, especially when relationships are involved. Relationship choices may affect us for a lifetime. **The choices you make about your spiritual relationship with Christ will affect you forever.**

BACKGROUND: After each tribe was given their territory in the Promised Land, the 2 1/2 tribes returned east of the Jordan. Joshua gave farewell speeches to the leaders of Israel, and then he spoke to all of the people. He knew his time on earth was short, therefore he recognized the importance and significance of his final remarks. One of his statements was shocking! (Joshua 24:19) He told them they had to make a choice about who they were going to worship, because *all human beings worship something or someone.*

I. WE SHOULD SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND OURSELVES AND OTHERS OF THE MIGHTY WORKS OF GOD. EVERY CHANCE TO HEAR OR SPEAK ABOUT SALVATION AND DISCIPLESHIP COULD BE THE LAST ONE. (Joshua 23: 1-16)

A. Because Joshua knew his days on earth were coming to an end, he made sure he reminded the people of God's work in the past and His promises for their future. Whatever good we accomplish in life is because of God's work *in us and through us!* (Joshua 23:1-5)

B. We are to follow the Lord wholeheartedly never deviating from His commands for our lives. The same God who promises us good outcomes when we walk with Him will also keep His promises to bring consequences to those who disobey. If we do not love the Lord, we will love a world and its idols that will destroy us. (Joshua 23: 6-15)

II. JUST AS THE LORD ALLOWED ISRAEL TO EXPERIENCE HIS POWER TO DELIVER AGAINST ALL ODDS, WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET HOW HE BROUGHT US FROM SLAVERY IN SIN TO VICTORY IN CHRIST. (Joshua 24:1-13)

A. Abraham was called out of a pagan environment to follow Christ. The Lord promised to make him fruitful beyond his wildest imagination. Abraham's story should remind us of our own rescue from the darkness that surrounded us to being surrounded by the love of God. (Genesis 12) (Joshua 24:1-5)

B. Notice how important it is to remember with thanksgiving the many times the Lord fought on your behalf. He gave victory in otherwise hopeless situations. For Joshua's audience, it was:

1. The Exodus, parting of the Red Sea, and drowning the mighty Egyptian army
2. The supernatural provisions during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness
3. Defeating the armies that opposed them and being given their territories
4. Turning potential cursing into blessing when Balaam, the "prophet for profit" came to them
5. Crossing the Jordan, victory at Jericho, and defeating every army in Canaan
6. Land, houses, vineyards and olive groves they did not have to buy, build, or plant

“ WHAT'S ON YOUR LIST OF REMEMBRANCE, OR 'WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET' ?”

III. YOU HAVE TO MAKE CHOICES AND LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE CHOICES. YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE WHO (OR WHAT) YOU WILL WORSHIP. BASED UPON THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED, WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE? (Joshua 24:14-15)

A. When the evidence is examined, the only wise choice is to reverence and fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and truth, and distance yourself from everything that competes with your allegiance to Christ or hinders you from worshipping Him.

B. *The people of Israel had to make a decisive choice to separate themselves from all of the false gods, idols, and demonic powers that had impacted them for generations.* Their history included the worship of false gods in Egypt, Ur of the Chaldees (same area as Babylon or Iraq) and the gods that were worshipped by the Canaanites. *Is your generational history causing you to struggle with being totally committed to Christ?* (Joshua 24: 15)

C. We can give others the *information* they need to make right choices, but ultimately they must choose for themselves. We should be able to say the same words as Joshua: “AS FOR ME, AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD!” (Joshua 24:15) We make a once for all decision that leads to salvation, and *we continue to choose Jesus every day of our lives.*

IV. THERE IS ONE PRIMARY REASON WHY MANY PEOPLE CANNOT SERVE THE LORD, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE FOOLED THEMSELVES INTO THINKING THEY CAN! (Joshua 24: 16- 33)

A. The people of Israel gave a perfect verbal response to the words of Joshua when they acknowledged God’s works among them. They recognized Him as their Creator and LORD who had a covenant relationship with them. However, Joshua knew something was not right! (Joshua 24: 16-18)

B. If someone opened their Bible and read Joshua 24:19 without context, they would be shocked and perhaps feel hopeless. However, the message in context is clear, that no person can serve a **HOLY GOD** without giving full allegiance to Him! WHY NOT???

1. *No man can serve two masters.* (Matthew 6:24) (Luke 6:46)

2. *God is Jealous for you.* (Exodus 23:20-24)(Exodus 34:10-17) He passionately pursues us!

3. *God will not forgive anyone who does not come to Him on His terms.* He will not forgive transgressions (intentional acts of sin) or other sins (missing the mark even with good intentions) if you are not serious about your relationship with Him. (Joshua 24:19-20) (1st John 1: 8-10)

4. *The same God who can save you and bless every aspect of your life, can also make your life miserable if you turn away His love.* (Joshua 24:20)

C. As the people affirmed their commitment to the LORD, Joshua commanded them to put away their idols. This means that some were still trying to hold onto their idols and worship the LORD *at the same time.* **Does that describe your worship of the LORD?** (Joshua 24:21-24) (Genesis 34:22-42) (Genesis 35:1-4)

D. Joshua made a covenant with the people using a stone similar to the witness when they crossed the Jordan. It was to serve as a visible reminder of their commitment to devote themselves to the LORD. This ceremony took place at Shechem- the same place where Jacob rid his family of idols, and where Joshua had previously made a covenant with the people. (Joshua 8:30-35) (Genesis 12:7)

JOSHUA’S FINAL WORDS TO THE PEOPLE WERE A CHALLENGE FOR THEM TO SERVE THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY, BECAUSE HE IS A HOLY GOD. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE CHOICES OF OTHERS WOULD NOT STOP HIM AND HIS FAMILY FROM WORSHIPPING THE LORD. WILL YOU SERVE HIM? IF THE GOD YOU ARE SERVING IS NOT HOLY, YOU ARE IN ETERNAL DANGER.

CHOOSE THIS DAY TO SERVE THE HOLY ONE WHO LOVES YOU AND WANTS TO SAVE YOU.

Dr. Ronald J. Morrison, February 5, 2023

