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JOSHUA 24

SERVE

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¹ Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God.

Joshua 24:1 (ESV)

SHECHEM: located 40 miles north of [Jerusalem](#) in the fertile valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. IN GENESIS 12 THIS IS WHERE YHWH CONFIRMED THE LAND TO ABRAM. ABRAM BUILT AN ALTAR THERE, SO DID JACOB (GENESIS 33). JACOB BOUGHT LAND HERE IN ANTICIPATION. IT IS ALSO WHERE DINAH WAS RAPED BY SHECHEM (NAMESAKE). ONE MORE IMPORTANT THING HAPPENS AT SHECHEM IN GENESIS 35. IN THE NT JESUS MEETS WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN NEAR SHECHEM.

² And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and **they served other gods**.³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.⁴ And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.⁵ And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out.⁶ “Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.⁷ And **when they cried to the LORD**, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness a long time.⁸ Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan. They fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and **you took possession of their land**, and I destroyed them before you.⁹ Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you,¹⁰ but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand.¹¹ And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand.¹² And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow.¹³ I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.’

Joshua 24:2–13 (ESV)

¹⁴ “Now therefore fear the LORD and **serve** him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers **served** beyond the River and in Egypt, and **serve** the LORD. ¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to **serve** the LORD, choose this day whom you will **serve**, whether the gods your fathers **served** in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will **serve** the LORD.”

Joshua 24:14–15 (ESV)

עָבַד *‘abad* (“serve”) IS THE DRIVING VERB IN THE STORY. AFTER IT IS INTRODUCED IN VERSE 2 WE GET TWO GROUPINGS OF SEVEN (VS. 14-15, 16-24) IT IS THE UNIFYING ELEMENT OF THE TORAH. ISRAEL IS FORMED TO SERVE YHWH. ISRAEL IS REDEEMED OUT OF EGYPT TO SERVE YHWH. ISRAEL IS GRANTED VICTORY IN CONQUEST AND GIVEN THE LAND TO SERVE YHWH.

¹⁶ Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to **serve** other gods, ¹⁷ for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will **serve** the LORD, for he is our God.”

Joshua 24:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to **serve** the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and **serve** foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.” ²¹ And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will **serve** the LORD.” ²² Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to **serve** him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” ²³ He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

Joshua 24:19–23 (ESV)

² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. ³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” ⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

Genesis 35:2–4 (ESV)

²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will **serve**, and his voice we will obey.”

²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. ²⁶ And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.” ²⁸ So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

Joshua 24:24–28 (ESV)

STONES ARE ERECTED THROUGHOUT JOSHUA. IN CHAPTER 4 WHEN THE CROSS THE JORDAN, IN CHAPTER 7 OVER ACHAN AND THEN IN CHAPTERS 8 AND 10 OVER THE CONQUERED KINGS. IN CHAPTER 8 STONES WERE ERECTED AT MOUNTS EBAL AND GERIZIM IN COVENANT RENEWAL. THEY ARE WITNESSES NOT ONLY OF WHAT YHWH HAS DONE BUT OF WHAT ISRAEL HAS PROMISED.

²⁹ After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being 110 years old.

³⁰ And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-erah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. ³¹ Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel. ³² As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. ³³ And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of Phinehas his son, which had been given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Joshua 24:29–33 (ESV)

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:1–10 (ESV)