

Day 238 - SATURDAY: August 26th

Joshua 23 & 24

Joshua 23:1-16 NKJV

Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age. You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you. See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. 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, but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. 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. One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. 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. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the

LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

Joshua 24:1-33 NKJV

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt,

according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out. '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. So they cried out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand. Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow. I have given you a land for which you did

not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.' "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, 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. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 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. 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." But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do

you harm and consume you, after He has done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!" So Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses!" "Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then 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 oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. 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. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance. Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount

Gaash. Israel 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. The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, 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. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill belonging to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 23: The UCG reading plan for chapter 23 states: "Near the end of his life, Joshua summons Israel, especially the leaders, and admonishes them to remain faithful to God. In verse 8, he specifically exhorts them to "hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day." And in verses 12–13, he warns them of the consequences of "clinging" to the remnant of the Canaanites. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on verse 12: "The word translated *cling* is the same word translated *hold fast* in v. 8, bringing the different instances of clinging into sharp contrast. God

wanted His people to cling to Him, not to the Canaanites they were driving out. This required, among other things, that they not make marriages with unbelieving foreigners under any circumstances (Exodus 34:11–16; Deuteronomy 7:1–4). Years later Solomon ignored this command and proved how destructive the sin of intermarriage could be (1 Kings 3:1; 1 Kings 11:1–8; 2 Corinthians 6:14)."

Joshua concludes by telling the elders that rejection of God will exact a dire penalty: "You shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you" (verse 16). This, of course, happened in later years, when Israel was taken into captivity and deported by Assyria and Judah was carried away by Babylon. Yet rebellion was not long away, as it would dominate the period of the judges immediately following. Still, Joshua's warning may have done some good, as the elders seem to have remained faithful (Joshua 24:31)." [END]

Verse 2 – John Gill's commentary states: "the first and is supplied, and another word or words may be supplied, as "even", or "that is", or the like, and so explanative of all Israel, namely, "their elders", both in age and office, especially the latter, the seventy elders, or who composed

what in later times was called the great sanhedrim; and the "heads" of their tribes, the chief princes of every tribe; and their "judges" in their several cities, who heard and tried causes, and administered justice and judgment to the people; and their "officers", who attended on them to execute the judgment they pronounced:" [END]

Verse 12 - Notice that God promises to no longer be with them to drive out their enemies if they began intermarrying with those who did not believe and obey the true God.

Verse 15 - God had promised them blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Just as surely He had been providing the blessings for obedience, the same would be equally true if they did not obey.

Chapter 24:

For this final chapter of Joshua, the UCG reading plan states: "One last time, Joshua summons the elders, this time at Shechem, about 10-15 miles north of Shiloh. This was the place the blessings and curses had been pronounced more than two decades earlier (Joshua 8:30-35)—and perhaps Joshua chose it now for that reason. He rehearses Israel's history, much of which occurred within

the last two generations. The Exodus had occurred less than 70 years earlier, and Moses had died less than 30 years earlier. God had said He would send the hornet to drive out the inhabitants (Deuteronomy 7:20–23), and here it is related that this did indeed happen. The Israelites were able to take over the cities and orchards without having to start over.

We should notice here Joshua's words in verse 14: "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River [Euphrates, i.e., in Mesopotamia] and in Egypt." This closely parallels the apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 5: "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (verse 8)—that is, the same "sincerity and truth" mentioned by Joshua. The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the putting out of sin and coming out of the sinful ways of this world—coming out of Babylon and Egypt, as Joshua essentially put it, forsaking the following of all affections rivaling the true God—and replacing that with godly purity. And this is, of course, something we should always do throughout our Christian lives.

Then comes Joshua's declaration of his own direction despite what the people's might be: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (verse 15). "With his famous words, Joshua clearly and unambiguously took his stand on the side of the living God. Joshua modeled a perfect leader's actions. A leader must be willing to move ahead and commit himself to the truth regardless of the people's inclinations. Joshua's bold example undoubtedly encouraged many to follow with the affirmations of vv. 16–18" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 14–15).

Indeed, even after telling the people that they could not fulfill God's requirements on their own and the seriousness of the obligation they were entering into, Joshua still manages to extract from them strong assurances that they would never forsake God, after which he follows the common practice of setting up a "large stone" as a witness (verse 26; compare Genesis 31:44–52; Joshua 4). He also records these words in "the Book of the Law of God" at the tabernacle.

The book of Joshua concludes with the deaths and burials of Joshua and Eleazar the high priest, both in the land of Ephraim. While God could have inspired Joshua to write this, it is likely that He inspired someone else to add this

ending. This last section also records the final burial of Joseph, also in the land of Ephraim, whose bones had been carried out of Egypt at his request (compare Genesis 50:24–25; Exodus 13:19).

The book of Joshua began with the words: "After the death of *Moses the servant of the Lord*, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, *Moses' assistant*" (1:1). Now notice how the book ends: "Now it came to pass after these things that *Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord* died" (verse 29). "This first reference to Joshua as the servant of the Lord shows clearly how Joshua had 'grown into the job' that Moses had vacated. Now the book comes full circle, recalling the references in 1:1 to Moses as the servant of the Lord and to Joshua as merely Moses' assistant" (*Nelson*, note on verse 29). Joshua was more than just Moses' successor. He was himself a type of Christ, a hero of faith leading the people to conquer the Promised Land and thereby give them a home." [END]

Verse 13 – This was promised in Deuteronomy 6:10. God is always faithful!

Verse 15 – This word translated "evil" in the NKJV means figurately "to make good for nothing" (Strong's). In other

words, Joshua is saying, “if serving the Lord seems good for nothing to you (you don’t see the benefits it brings in your life), you choose today who you are going to serve.” Joshua had no doubt who he and his family would serve.

Verse 31 – This was one of the high points for Israel. They remained faithful during Joshua’s leadership and through the leadership of the elders that outlived him. What a great time for the nation!

This brings us to the end of another amazing book of the great God. May we all be strong and very courageous to faithfully and passionately follow the great God and to trust Him with our lives!