

Last Chapter- The Death of Joshua

Joshua 24:15 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."

The choice here was not between the Lord and idols: Joshua assumed that the people had already decided against serving God. So he challenged them to choose between the gods which their ancestors had served in Mesopotamia and the gods of the Amorites that they had found in Canaan.

Joshua's noble decision for himself and his household has been an inspiration to succeeding generations of believers: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What can we learn from this statement?

Joshua 24:16 So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods;

Joshua 24:17 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. :18 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."

Joshua 24:19 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.

Joshua 24:20 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."

Idolatry seems to have been one of Israel's besetting sins.

Their earliest ancestors served other gods, as we have seen (v. 2). When Jacob and his family left Laban, it was Rachel who carried off her father's gods (Gen. 31:30–34).

But when they arrived in the land, Jacob ordered his household to put away these "strange gods," and he hid them under an oak tree that was by Shechem (Gen. 35:2, 4).

And in the same place Joshua urged his generation to put away the gods which their fathers served (v. 14).

Joshua 24:21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord!" What can we learn from this verse?

Joshua 24:22 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!"

Joshua 24:23 "Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel."

Joshua 24:24 And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!"

Joshua comes back at them one more time, reminding them that both they and he are witnesses to their heart covenant with God.

Again, the third time, they repeat, the Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. This triple affirmation is reminiscent of many Christians who rededicate their lives to the Lord over and over again, but who have never made a real heart covenant with their Lord in the first place.

It is also reminiscent of Jesus' triple inquiry of Peter and Peter's persistent claim of love for the Lord (Jn 21:15–19).

Joshua 24:25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. :26 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.

Convinced that Israel would little note nor long remember what she had affirmed at his farewell address, Joshua set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. This time it was in stone that Joshua made a covenant (Heb berīt, lit., “cut a covenant,” a common Hebrew, Greek, and Latin expression for the formation of a covenant which was accompanied by a sacrifice cut into pieces and offered to the deity).

The practice of chiseling a covenant in stone (like the tablets of the Mosaic law) was common in the ancient Near East.

Joshua set the great covenant stone under an oak as a witness unto us of what Israel had covenanted. With these precautions taken against idolatry, Joshua permitted the people to depart to their homes.

Joshua 24:27 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.”:28 So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

Joshua 24:29 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.

Joshua 24:30 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.

Joshua 24:31 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.

Joshua 24:32 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.

The respect given Joseph is again seen in the scrupulous fulfillment of his request to be buried in Shechem. Accordingly, his bones were brought from Egypt in the Exodus and were laid to rest in the parcel of ground (lit., “portion of the field,” see Gen 33:19) which Jacob bought from Hamor.

Joshua 24:33 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.

To close out the triple conclusion to the conquest of Promised Land, the death and burial of Eleazar (see Ex 6:23; 28:1; Josh 14:1) is recorded. He was buried in a hill that belonged to his son Phinehas.

With the passing of Joshua and Eleazar, an era in Israel’s history comes to a close. But also with the deaths of these stalwart servants of Jehovah, the children passed into a much darker period of history.

Introduction to Luke

Luke was a physician, probably a Greek (Col. 4:10–11, 14), the companion of Paul on some of his journeys. He wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–3), both of which are records of journeys: Christ’s journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51) and Paul’s journey to Rome. *Because Luke was a doctor, what might we expect to see in the Gospel of Luke?*

Dr. Luke wrote with the Greeks in mind and presented Jesus Christ as the perfect Son of man, the compassionate Savior (Luke 19:10).

He mentions women, children, and the poor often in his gospel; and joy and rejoicing are repeated many times.

There is also an emphasis on prayer and on God’s love for the whole world.

Luke addressed both books to Theophilus (“lover of God”), a Roman believer, possibly an official, who needed grounding in the faith.

Luke's approach is simple. He records our Lord's birth and early life (chaps. 1–2); His baptism and temptation (3:1–4:13); His ministry in Galilee (4:14–9:17); His ministry en route to Jerusalem (9:18–19:27); and His final week of ministry in Jerusalem (19:28–24:53).

As we read the gospel of Luke, you will come to love the compassionate Son of man who cares for those in need and wants His message of salvation to be taken to the whole world. Wiersbe