

Joshua

Lesson #18, Chapter 24

1. As Joshua makes his final address, he gathers all Israel together at Shechem. What significant history does Shechem hold for the nation? See Gen. 12:6-7; 33:18-20; 35:1-4; Josh. 8:30-35; cf. Deut. 11:29-30.
2. Before Israel makes a renewal of their covenant with God, He reminds them of some important moments in their history. From verses 2-13 list all the verbs that describe God's deliverance and protection of Israel. For example: *I took your father, Nahor; I gave to Esau.*
3. What is the significance of the history lesson given in verses 2-13? Why is God reminding them of all these things at this time?
4. There are two things to note here: 1) hindsight reveals the *active intervention* of God in His children's lives and 2) He wants us *to know* of His intervention in our lives. How would recognizing those two facts give you encouragement?
5. Another thing to note in this section is the slowness of God's clock. Isaac wasn't born until 25 years after the promise to Abraham. Isaac and Rebekah were married some 20 years before Jacob and Esau were born. Later, God sent Jacob's family to Egypt for 430 years; afterward, they wandered in the desert for 40 more years before the promises given to Abraham were fulfilled.

God keeps His promises, faithfully performing all He says He will do. Yet His timing is His own, not rushed or pushed into action by clock, calendar, or our own agenda. When it appears that God will bring about His plan on His timetable, how you can you foster a

patient and trusting spirit? How does the picture of God's faithful and persistent accomplishing of His plans encourage you?

6. What command is given in verse 14?

7. In verse 14 the word *therefore* serves to connect the previous section with the command to fear and serve the Lord (verse 14). How is the previous section a motivator for the command?

8. Define what it means to *fear* or *reverence* God. What does this look like in your life?

9. How are we to serve the Lord (verse 14)? Note how many times the word *serve* appears in this chapter, especially verses 14-15.

10. In verse 14 Joshua calls the people to a deeper commitment, by urging them to *put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord*. The people had been carrying around idols all the years of their wilderness wanderings and now wanted to carry them into the Promised Land. Isn't that just like us, carrying around things from our past that distract, interrupt, and isolate us from the Lord. What have you been carrying that you need to put away, so that you might serve the Lord more faithfully and wholeheartedly? See 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:16-24; Eph. 4:17-24; Col. 3:1-11; Titus 3:1-7.

11. In verses 14-15, what choices are presented?

12. How do the people respond to Joshua's challenge (verses 16-18)? What reasons do they cite for following the Lord? *Why* do you follow the Lord?

13. While they give a proper and right answer, Joshua is not totally convinced of their sincerity. How does he impress upon them the seriousness of their commitment (verses 19-20)?

14. Because we know God is forgiving, what did Joshua mean when he said, *He will not forgive your transgressions or sins*. See Ps. 51:17; 66:18; 86:1-5. What heart attitude must be present for forgiveness to occur?

15. In verses 15-22, Joshua presses the people for a decision to follow the Lord and requires that they consider the cost of following Him. Matthew Henry, commenting on this verse, says, "Joshua thus urges on them the seeming discouragements which lay in their way, that he might sharpen their resolutions, and draw from them a promise yet more express and solemn that they would continue faithful to God and their religion." Joshua does not want a lightly made, emotional response from them, but a convinced, determined commitment. Why is this a necessary and good thing to do?

16. Eager Beaver: Compare Jesus' call to commitment in Luke 14:25-35 with Joshua's here in these verses. What do you learn?

17. What does it mean to *incline your hearts to the Lord God* in verse 23? See I Kings 8:57-58; Ps. 119:36; 141:4 to gain further insight.

18. As in a marriage ceremony when the pastor requires the couple to keep the vows they have made “before God and these witnesses,” so here Joshua has witnesses to attest to the commitment Israel has made. Who are the witnesses (verses 22, 26-27)? What purpose do the witnesses serve (verses 22, 26-27 and in the illustration of the marriage ceremony)?

19. How is the covenant ceremony in this chapter *at Shechem under the oak tree* significant in light of Gen. 12:6-7 and 35:2, 4?

20. Verses 29-33 record three burials, not only indicating the close of the book of Joshua, but the end of an era. These men were the recipients of God’s faithfulness and now they are laid to rest in the Land of Rest. What title is given to Joshua (verse 29) that is a fitting epitaph for his life?

21. Verse 31 records the influence of Joshua and the effect of God’s workings. What is it?

22. What kind of influence are you seeking to effect upon the people in your life? What steps are you taking (or need to take) to bring about the desired result?

23. Verse 32 records the final chapter of Joseph's life. How is this final act the capstone upon Joseph's life of faith and trust? See also Gen. 50:24-26; Ex. 13:19; Heb. 11:22.

24. Verse 33 speaks of Eleazar's death. What role did he play in Israel's history? See Josh. 14:1; 19:51.

25. Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar are all buried in the Promised Land. All three men throughout their lifetimes made the choice to serve the Lord. They lived well and they finished well. How has your study of the book of Joshua encouraged you to be faithful until the end? What lessons have you learned about steadfastness and perseverance?

26. Write a paragraph describing the things you have learned through your study in this book, as well as some of the resolves you have made to follow the Lord more fully.