

Joshua Chapter 24

Verses 1-5

Joshua reviewed the history recorded (in Gen. chapter 11 to Exodus chapter 15).

Joshua 24:1 "And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God."

Joshua's public farewell takes place at "Shechem".

Probably the choice of Shechem was motivated by its important covenantal associations with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-7), rich spiritual heritage (compare Gen. 33:18-20; 37:12-14; Deut. 27:11 – 28:68 with Joshua 8:30-35), and social prominence (20:7).

Joshua's call for the "heads" of Israel is essentially a challenge for Israel to renew its basic covenant with God" (compare verse 25).

This was a place of memories for the children of Israel: Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, where the people gathered for the responsive reading of the blessings and curses (in chapter 8), bordered the Valley of Shechem.

This is where Abraham pitched his tent for the first time and built an altar (Gen. 12:6-7). Abraham's grandson, Jacob, had built an altar here as well (Gen. 35:1-5).

This is also where Joseph went to look for his brothers (Gen. 37:12-14).

This gathering before the LORD called by Joshua, seemed to be even more serious than the one in the previous chapter.

Verses 2-27

The essential trustworthiness of the scriptural account has been reinforced in recent years by the suggestion that as to its literary form the chapter bears the marks of a second millennium B.C. treaty between a lord and his vassal:

- (1) Preamble (verse 2) :
- (2) Historias prologue (verses 2-3) :
- (3) Covenant stipulations (verses 14-15) :
- (4) Covenant ratification (verses 16-25) :
- (5) Covenant deposition (verse 26) :

(6) Covenantal witnesses (verse 27) : and

(7) Covenant sanctions (implicit in verses 19-20).

In verses 2-13 Joshua began by reciting the amazing spiritual history of the children of Israel, reminding them of all God had done for them through the years

They had a tremendous spiritual heritage that they must not abandon.

Perhaps the most striking detail here concerns Abraham's past.

He was simply another pagan living in the ancient Near East when Yahweh took him from beyond the Euphrates River and "led him" to the "land of Canaan".

Salvation is solely a gift of grace (Eph. 2:1-10).

Just as He did with Abraham, God breaks into a person's pagan way of life, saves him or her, and blesses that person with a life of victory.

Joshua 24:2 "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, [even] Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods."

"The flood":

The Euphrates, where Abraham's family had lived.

It is clear here that God's calling of Abraham out to Himself was also a call out of idolatry, as He does with others (compare 1 Thess. 1:9).

This is speaking of the fact that Abraham's father was not a worshipper of the One True God.

"LORD God of Israel":

Is Jehovah, the God of Israel.

This is just explaining that God had chosen them, while they were still worshippers of false gods.

Joshua 24:3 "And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac."

The river Euphrates, as before.

Or "your father, to wit, Abraham", as Noldius.

He took him not only in a providential way, and brought him from the other side of the Euphrates, out of an idolatrous country and family, but he apprehended him by his grace.

And called and converted him by it, and brought him to a spiritual knowledge of himself.

And of the Messiah that should spring from his seed, and of the Covenant of grace.

And of the blessings of it, and of his interest therein, which was a peculiar and distinguishing favor.

"And led him throughout all the land of Canaan":

From the northern to the southern part of it.

He led him as far as Shechem, where Israel was now assembled.

And then to Beth-el, and still onward to the south (Gen. 12:6).

That he might have a view of the land his posterity was to inherit.

And, by treading on it and walking through it, take as it were, a kind of possession of it.

"And multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac":

He multiplied his seed by Hagar, by whom he had Ishmael, who begat twelve princes.

And by Keturah, from whose sons several nations sprung (see (Gen. 17:20).

And by Sarah, who bore him Isaac in old age, in whom his seed was called.

And from whom, in the line of Jacob, sprung the twelve tribes of Israel.

And which seed may be chiefly meant.

And the sense is that he multiplied his posterity after he had given him Isaac.

And by him a numerous seed; so Vatablus.

Ishmael is not mentioned, because, as Kimchi observes, he was born of a handmaid.

But Abarbanal thinks only such are mentioned, who were born in a miraculous manner, when their parents were barren, as in this and also in the next instance.

God saved Abraham because of his great faith.

God did the same thing for him He does for all of us.

While he was yet in sin, the LORD saved him.

God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees to follow Him.

He wandered in search of a city whose maker was God.

God promised the seed of Abraham would be as the sand of the sea.

He had Isaac in his and Sarah's old age.

He was the son God had promised him.

The seed as the sand of the sea is speaking of the believers in Christ.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Joshua 24:4 "And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt."

When Rebekah was barren, so that the children appeared the more to be the gift of God.

Though Esau perhaps is mentioned, for the sake of what follows.

"And I gave unto Esau Mount Seir, to possess it":

That Jacob and his posterity alone might inherit Canaan, and Esau and his seed make no pretension to it.

"But Jacob and his children went down into Egypt":

Where they continued many years, and great part of the time in bondage and misery, which is here taken no notice of.

And this was in order to their being brought into the land of Canaan, and that the power and goodness of God might be the more conspicuous in it.

All of this is a basis for these Israelites, to realize where they came from.

Esau was the eldest son, but he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.

Jacob received the birthright.

Jacob and his sons went into Egypt, because there was a famine in their land.

Joshua 24:5 "I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out."

To demand Israel's dismissing of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to be the deliverers of them.

"And I plagued Egypt according to that which I did amongst them":

Inflicting ten plagues upon them for refusing to let Israel go.

"And afterward I brought you out":

That is, out of Egypt, with a high hand, and outstretched arm.

God sent Moses and Aaron to bring the family of Jacob out of Egypt.

God sent 10 plagues on Egypt to get the Pharaoh to release them.

The family of Jacob went into Egypt.

The nation of Israel came out of Egypt.

This is up to date.

God promised them a land of promise.

Verses 6-13

Joshua reviewed the history recorded (in Exodus chapter 12 to Joshua chapter 22).

Joshua 24:6 "And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea."

Which more fully expresses the sense of the last clause of (Joshua 24:5).

"And you came unto the sea":

Which respects some senior persons then present.

For, besides Caleb and Joshua, there were many at this time alive who came to and passed through the Red sea, at their coming out of Egypt.

For those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were such as were more than twenty years of age at their coming out from Egypt, and who were the murmurers in the wilderness.

And it may be reasonably supposed that many of those who were under twenty years of age at that time were now living.

"And the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen, into the Red sea":

Of the number of their chariots and horsemen (see Exodus 14:7).

With these they pursued the Israelites, not only unto, but into the Red sea, following them into it.

The reason of which strange action is given in (Joshua 24:7).

This message is touching on the highlights of their release.

The sea of course, is the Red Sea where God opened the sea and allowed the children of Israel to walk across on dry land.

Then Pharaoh's army with horses and chariots followed them into the sea and were drowned.

Joshua 24:7 "And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season."

That is, the Israelites, being in the utmost distress.

The sea before them, Pharaoh's large host behind them, and the rocks on each side of them (see Exodus 14:10).

"He put darkness between you and the Egyptians":

The pillar of cloud, the dark side of which was turned to the Egyptians, and which was the reason of their following the Israelites into the sea.

For not being able to see their way, knew not where they were (see Exodus 14:20).

"And brought the sea upon them, and covered them":

Or "upon him, and covered him".

On Pharaoh, as Kimchi; or on Egypt": That is, the Egyptians or on every one of them, as Jarchi, none escaped (see Exodus 14:26).

"And your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt":

What signs and wonders were wrought there, before they were brought out of it.

And what he had done to and upon the Egyptians at the Red sea.

Some then present had been eyewitnesses of them.

"And ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season":

Forty years, where they had the law given them.

They were preserved from many evils and enemies, and were fed with manna.

They were supplied with the necessities of life, were led about and instructed, and at length brought out of it.

Joshua is re-capping this, to show the divine undertaking of God on their behalf.

The miracles in Egypt, the crossing of the Red sea, and the miracles during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, should let them not doubt the hand of God in their activities.

They were even fed with no effort on their own for the 40 years.

Manna fell from heaven to feed them.

The miracle of their shoes not wearing out in 40 years was almost unbelievable.

There is no question they belong to God.

Verses 8 and 15

Sometimes this is used as a general term for the entire pagan populace (compare verse 11), in Canaan, as elsewhere (Gen. 15:16; Judges 1:34-35).

At other times, the name has a narrower reference to people of the hill country (Num. 13:29), distinct from others.

Joshua 24:8 "And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you."

The kingdoms of Sihon and Og. And they fought with you; the two kings of them, and their armies.

"And I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land":

And which was now possessed by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

"And I destroyed them from before you":

The kings, their forces, and the inhabitants of their countries.

The history of which see in (Num. 21:10).

The destruction of the Amorites was more recent.

Even the young should be able to remember that.

They were strong and fierce fighters, but God subdued them for Israel.

Verses 9-10

(See note on Joshua 13:22), about the unsavory nature of Balaam (in Numbers chapters 21-25).

Joshua 24:9 "Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:"

Being alarmed with what Israel had done to the two kings of the Amorites.

And by their near approach to the borders of his kingdom.

"And warred against Israel":

He fully designed it, and purpose is put for action, as Kimchi.

He made use of stratagems and wiles, and magical arts.

To hurt them, and sent for Balaam to curse them.

That they both together might smite the Israelites, and drive them out of the land (Num. 22:6).

So his fighting is interpreted by the next clause.

"And sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you":

By which means he hoped to prevail in battle, and get the victory over them".

But not being able to bring this about, does not engage in battle with them.

Joshua 24:10 "But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand."

Who was very solicitous to get leave of the LORD to curse Israel, which he knew he could not do without.

He had a goodwill to it but could not accomplish it.

"Therefore he blessed you still":

Went on blessing Israel to the last, when Balak hoped every time he would have cursed them.

And Balaam himself was very desirous of doing it; but could not, being overruled by the LORD, and under his restraint.

Which shows his power over evil spirits, and their agents.

"So I delivered you out of his hands":

Both out of the hand of Balak, who was intimidated from bringing his forces against them.

And out of the hand of Balaam, who was not suffered to curse them.

God delivered them from Balak and from Balaam.

Joshua seems to be relating this, as if God is speaking to the people.

All of these accounts seem to be in the order in which they happened as well.

Joshua 24:11 "And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand."

In a miraculous manner, the waters parting to make way for the host of Israel.

"And came unto Jericho":

The first city of any size and strength in the land.

Which was about seven or eight miles from Jordan (see Num. 22:1).

"And the men of Jericho fought against you":

By endeavoring to intercept their spies, and cut them off. By shutting up the gates of their city against Israel.

And it may be throwing darts, arrows, and stones, from off the walls of it at them.

Kimchi thinks that some of the great men of Jericho went out from there, to give notice and warning to the kings of Canaan of the approach of the Israelites.

And in the meantime, the city was taken.

And that these afterwards joined with the kings in fighting against Joshua and the people of Israel.

"The Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites":

The seven nations of Canaan.

This they did at different times, and in different places.

"And I delivered them into your hand":

These nations and their kings.

Notice Joshua deliberately leaves out the fact, that he led them over on dry land at the parting of the Jordan River.

This is because he is a humble man.

All of these people fell to the mighty hand of God.

Joshua 24:12 "And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, [even] the two kings of the Amorites; [but] not with thy sword, nor with thy bow."

"The hornet" is most likely a figurative expression for the terror that God strikes in the hearts of His enemies (Exodus 23:27-28).

Although some take it literally, "hornet" is probably a figurative term referring to the terrifying panic that gripped the hearts of the Canaanites who awaited with fear the arrival of the invading Israelites (compare Exodus 23:27-28; Deut. 2:25; 7:20-23; Joshua 2:9, 11; 5:1).

"I sent the hornet before you":

This description, as also (in Exodus 23:28), is a picturesque figure (compare also 23:13), portraying God's own fighting to assist Israel (23:3, 5, 10, 18).

This awesome force put the enemy to flight, as the feared hornets literally can do (Deut. 7:20-21).

It really does not matter whether these were literal hornets, or whether they were more of a spiritual nature.

The important thing is that they drove the people out at the command of God.

Joshua 24:13 "And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat."

Or, in which, by manuring and cultivating it.

By dunging, ploughing and sowing.

"And cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them":

Neither built the houses in them, nor the walls and fortifications about them. In which now they dwelt safely, and at ease. And which had been promised them as well as what follows (see Deut. 6:10).

"Of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not, do ye eat":

Thus far, an account is given of the many mercies they had been and were favored with.

And thus far, are the words of the LORD by Joshua.

Next follow the use and improvement Joshua made of them.

The cities were already built when the Israelites came to this land.

The vineyards had already been planted as well.

They were gifts to the Israelites from God.

They were taken from a people who did not know God and given to God's people.

Verses 14-15

The challenge to resolve to serve God is built upon the foundation of what God had already done ("Now therefore").

At first, the alternatives Joshua offered seemed shocking.

He challenged the people to choose between serving the old "gods" that their ancestors "served on the other side of the flood" or the new god "of the Amorites", where they were dwelling.

But this is sarcasm meant to jolt the people into seeing the foolishness of serving anyone but Yahweh.

May Joshua's stirring affirmation, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD", be true for all of God's children.

Joshua 24:14 "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD."

Since he has done such great and good things.

Fear the LORD and his goodness, fear him for his goodness sake.

Nothing so influences fear, or a reverential affection for God, as a sense of his goodness.

This engages men sensible of it to fear the LORD.

That is, to worship him both internally and externally in the exercise of every grace, and in the performance of every duty.

"And serve him in sincerity and in truth":

In the uprightness of their souls, without hypocrisy and deceit.

And according to the truth of his word, and of his mind and will revealed in it.

Without any mixture of superstition and will worship, or of the commands and inventions of men.

"And put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt": That is, express an abhorrence of them, and keep at a distance from them.

And show that you are far from giving in to such idolatries your ancestors were guilty of, when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates, in Chaldea.

Or when they were sojourners in Egypt.

For it cannot be thought that the Israelites were at this time guilty of such gross idolatry.

At least openly, since Joshua had borne such a testimony of them, that they had cleaved to the LORD unto that day (Joshua 23:8).

And their zeal against the two tribes and a half, on suspicion of idolatry.

Or of going into it, is a proof of it also.

"And serve ye the LORD":

And him only.

They must fear the LORD and worship Him alone.

They will be able to keep their inheritance, as long as they are faithful to the LORD and keep His commandments.

To worship false gods is spiritual adultery and will bring destruction to them.

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

“Choose ... this day whom ye will serve”:

Joshua’s fatherly model (reminiscent of Abraham’s, Gen. 18:19), was for himself and his family to serve the LORD, not false gods.

He called others in Israel to this, and they committed themselves to serve the LORD also (verses 21, 24).

Joshua’s closing testimony demonstrates that he is yet faithful to his divine call and charge (see verse 1:6-9).

Each person has his own free will and he can worship and serve whomever he will.

He must be ready and willing to accept the consequences of his decision, however.

Joshua has no doubt in his own mind who he will serve.

He and his family will worship the LORD.

Joshua 24:16 "And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;"

To Joshua, upon his proposal to them, the option he gave them was to serve the LORD or idols, and which was only done to try them.

"God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods":

They speak with the utmost abhorrence of idolatry.

As a thing far from their hearts and thoughts, as the most abominable and execrable that could be thought or spoken of.

To forsake the word, worship, and ordinances of God, to serve the idols of the Gentiles.

Strange gods, whether more ancient or more recent.

Such as their fathers worshipped in former times, or the inhabitants of the land they now dwelt in, for which they were spewed out of it.

This is the very statement they should have made.

The important thing is to continue believing what they have stated here.

There is no other god.

God is God, and He alone.

Joshua 24:17 "For the LORD our God, he [it is] that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:"

When Pharaoh, the king of it, refused to let them go.

Yet he wrought such wonders in it and inflicted such plagues on it, as obliged Pharaoh and his people to dismiss them.

"From the house of bondage":

Where they were held in the greatest deplorable conditions and slavery, and their lives made bitter and miserable.

"And which did those great signs in our sight":

Meaning the wonders and marvelous things wrought before Pharaoh and his people, and in the sight of Israel (Psalm 78:11).

Though Abarbanal is of opinion it refers to what had been done in their sight of late in the land of Canaan, as the dividing of the waters of Jordan, the fall of the walls of Jericho, the standing still of the sun in Gibeon.

But this seems not so well to agree with what follows.

"And preserved us in all the way wherein we went":

In the wilderness from serpents and scorpions, and beasts of prey, and from all dangers from every quarter.

"And among all the people through whom we passed":

Through whose borders they passed, as the Edomites, Moabites, and Amorites.

Though the above writer seems to understand it of preservation from the dangers of their enemies in the land of Canaan.

They are not only confessing God, but His wonders as well.

They are admitting to Joshua that all they are, is because God made them.

The signs, like the Manna, left no doubt where they came from.

Joshua 24:18 "And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: [therefore] will we also serve the LORD; for he [is] our God."

This population joined Joshua in claiming total commitment to serve the LORD (compare Exodus 19:8).

It seems they are replying to the things Joshua has brought before them.

They are agreeing that this is of God.

Verses 19-28

Joshua issued two final warnings to the people.

He wanted to be sure they had counted the cost of serving God (Exodus 20:5; 23:21; Lev. 19:2), and then committed themselves to following God.

Renewing the covenant and setting the "great stone" served as public declarations of their internal decision to live for Him.

This set stone was the seventh monument erected by Joshua.

Joshua 24:19 "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye 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's reminder is that no man or people serves God solely in his own strength, for God demands the believer's total commitment to Him.

God will be their God as long as they are faithful to Him.

God will not share His people with any false god.

Joshua is reminding them of the importance of living holy before their LORD.

He not only is jealous, but His name is Jealous.

Exodus 34:14 "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God:"

Joshua 24:20 "If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good."

Joshua knew the proneness of these people to idolatry, and therefore expresses his jealousy of them.

That they would not be able to continue in the service of God, and would be apt to be carried away after idols.

And therefore, to make them the more cautious and watchful, he represents to them the danger they were in.

And what would befall them should they forsake the LORD they now promised to serve.

And follow after other gods, which their fathers worshipped before they were called out of their estate of Heathenism.

Or which the Canaanites, or Egyptians worshipped, whose examples they were too ready to imitate.

"Then he will turn and do you hurt":

Not that there is properly any change in God, either of his counsel or covenant, or of love and affection to his people.

But of his providential dealings, or outward manner of acting towards men.

Or the sense is, he will again do you hurt, bring evils and calamities upon you again and again.

As frequently as you revolt from him, such as the sword, pestilence, famine, and captivity.

Which these people had experienced when they fell into idolatry.

"And consume you":

By these his sore judgments.

"After that he hath done you good":

By bringing you into such a good land, and bestowing so many good things upon you, natural, civil, and religious.

And yet, notwithstanding, being disobedient to him, and especially in the instances mentioned.

They are made to expect his resentment, and the effects of it.

The blessings of the LORD will continue in their lives as long as they are faithful to God.

If they play the harlot and go after false gods, the LORD will turn on them and destroy them.

Joshua 24:21 "And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD."

We will not serve strange gods.

“But we will serve the LORD”:

According to his revealed will, and him only.

At the time they make this statement, they really do believe that they will serve the LORD.

Their intentions are to serve the LORD.

Temptations have a way of changing some people.

Joshua 24:22 "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye [are] witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, [We are] witnesses."

In reply to their answer and resolution.

“Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him”:

That is, should they, after this choice of him, which they had so publicly declared.

Desert his service, and go into idolatry, their testimony would rise up against them, and they would, be self-condemned.

“And they said, We are witnesses”:

Should we ever apostatize from the LORD and his worship.

We are content to have this our witness produced against us.

Joshua has given them the facts of what will happen to them either way.

It was their decision to make.

They are full of good intentions and actually believe they will do this.

The pressure to sin has not come before them at this time.

They will be without excuse if they turn from God.

Joshua 24:23 "Now therefore put away, [said he], the strange gods which [are] among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel."

Which last words are rightly supplied, for they are the words of Joshua.

“The strange gods which are among you”:

Not their private notions and secret sentiments that some of them had imbibed in favor of idols, and the worship of them, as Ben Gersom thinks.

But, as the Targum expresses it, "the idols of the Gentiles".

Things such as they had brought out of Egypt, or had found among the plunder of the Canaanites, and had secretly retained.

Or, as others think, their household gods, they had privately kept and worshipped.

Such as those that were in Jacob's family, which he caused to be delivered to him, and which he hid under an oak in this place where Israel were now assembled (Gen. 35:2).

And which Joshua by a prophetic discerning spirit perceived were now among them.

“And incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel”:

To love, fear, and serve him.

That is, pray that your hearts may be inclined thereunto.

And make use of all means that may tend to direct your hearts to him, and his service.

So the Targum, "to the worship of the LORD God of Israel".

They had sinned with strange gods all the way on the 40-year journey and even now.

The people of Canaan, they have left alive worship false gods.

They must be loyal to God in their hearts, as well as with their mouth.

Joshua 24:24 "And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

A third time, that as by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is confirmed.

So by three testimonies of the same persons.

“The LORD our God will we serve”:

As they had before declared, and to which they add.

“And his voice will we obey”:

Or his word, as the Targum, not only his word of command, but his essential Word, the Son of God.

They have agreed to the terms set down by God through Joshua.

They have made their decision to serve God.

They must continue in this faith to be blessed of God.

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

Proposing to them what was most eligible, and their duty to do.

And they agreeing to it, this formally constituted a covenant, of which they themselves were both parties and witnesses.

“And set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem”:

Either made this covenant to have the nature of a statute and ordinance binding upon them.

Or repeated and renewed the laws of Moses, both moral and ceremonial, which had been delivered at Mount Sinai.

And now, upon this repetition in Shechem, might be called a statute and ordinance there.

A covenant is an agreement that cannot be broken, without terrible consequences.

The statutes and ordinances were unbreakable.

Verses 26-27

The “sanctuary” probably was a special precinct that had sacred associations (compare Gen. 12:6; 35:4).

Ceremonies were often commemorated by the erection of a “stone” (Gen. 28:18; 1 Sam. 7:12), or heap of stones (4:5-9).

Joshua 24:26 "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that [was] by the sanctuary of the LORD."

“Book of the law”:

Joshua expands the first 5 books of Moses, as the canon of revealed Scripture develops.

“By the sanctuary” God’s tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, was at Shiloh (21:2).

The stone of witness by the holy place (sanctuary), here was at Shechem (24:1).

This holy place is not a formal tent or building, but a sacred place by a tree (compare Gen. 12:6; 35:4), as other places had significance in the past for worship to God (Gen. 21:33).

This is in addition to the Law of Moses.

This is like signing an agreement to keep the Law of Moses.

The stone was the seal of the agreement.

Joshua 24:27 "And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

The chief of them now gathered together, and who represented the whole body.

“Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us”:

Of the covenant now made, and the agreement entered into, as the heap of stones were between Jacob and Laban (Gen. 31:45).

“For it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us”:

This is said by a figure called " prosopopoeia", frequent in Scripture, by which inanimate creatures are represented as hearing, seeing, and speaking.

And may signify, that should the Israelites break this covenant, and disobey the commands of the LORD they had promised to keep, they would be as stupid and senseless as this stone.

Or more so, which would rise in judgment against them.

Nachmanides, a Jewish commentator, interprets this stone of the Messiah (the same as in Genesis 49:24).

“It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God”:

For a memorial and testimony to prevent them from going into atheism.

A denying of the true God, or into apostasy from him, and into idolatry and false worship.

The Targum of which is, "behold, this stone shall be to us as the two tables of stone of the covenant.

For we made it for a testimony; for the words which are written upon it are the sum of all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us.

And it shall be unto you for a memorial, and for a testimony, lest ye lie before the LORD."

To deny God means to declare that He does not exist.

It is as if the stone can speak, as a witness against those who do not believe.

Joshua 24:28 "So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance."

Dismissed them, and took his final leave and farewell of them, dying soon after; upon which they returned to the possessions and inheritances assigned by lot to the several tribes, of which they were the heads and princes.

Joshua let them leave, full of the words of God he had brought them.

They went back, each man to his own land.

Verses 29-33

“Joshua ... Eleazar”: Three prominent leaders were buried as the conquering generation was passing on: Joseph, Joshua, and the High-Priest Eleazar.

The report of three burials and Israel’s faithfulness during Joshua’s life and after his death provide a satisfying ending.

These items underscore the truth that Yahweh keeps His promises; thus, it is wise to obey Him.

Like the ancient Israelites, people today have to choose how to spend their lives.

The only choice that makes sense is the choice to serve God.

Joshua 24:29 "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, [being] a hundred and ten years old."

“A hundred and ten years old”:

This was ca. 1383 B.C. (compare 14:7-10).

Joshua lived 110 years on the earth.

He was only concerned with doing the will of God.

He tried to do the commands of God to the fullest.

Joshua 24:30 "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which [is] in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash."

In a field belonging to his estate, for they buried not in towns and cities in those times.

The Greek version adds, "and they put into the tomb, in which he was buried, the stone knives with which he circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, when he brought them out of Egypt".

And an Arabic writer affirms the same, but without any foundation.

“In Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim”:

Which was his city, and where he dwelt.

And of which (see Joshua 19:50).

And his grave was near the city, where, his father Nun, and Caleb also were buried.

“On the north side of the hill of Gaash”:

Of the brooks or valleys of Gnash mention is made in (2 Sam. 23:30); which very probably was at the bottom of this hill.

Joshua was buried not in prominence, but among his people.

He, like Moses and Aaron, was buried on a mountain.

Joshua 24:31 "And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel."

Faithfulness to God extended only one generation (compare Judges 2:6-13).

Joshua had been a great influence on these people, and on their leaders. As long as Joshua was there to lead them, and the elders that Joshua had taught were alive, they followed God's commandments.

Joshua 24:32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

"The bones of Joseph":

These had been carried by the Israelites in the Exodus (Exodus 13:19), as Joseph had made them promise (Gen. 50:25).

He wanted his remains to lie in the Land of covenant pledge.

So now his people laid them to rest at Shechem, in the Land God had guaranteed (Gen. 12:7).

Joseph had requested that he be buried here in the Promised Land.

He died in Egypt, but they brought his bones and buried them in the land of promise.

Genesis 33:19 "And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money."

Genesis 50:25 "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

Exodus 13:19 "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

Joshua 24:33 "And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill [that pertained to] Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim."

Very probably in a short time after Joshua.

And according to the Samaritan Chronicle, he died as Joshua did.

Gathered the chief men of the children of Israel a little before his death, and enjoined them strict obedience to the commands of God, and took his leave of them.

And then stripped himself of his holy garments, and clothed Phinehas his son with them.

What his age was is not said.

“And they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son”:

Or in the hill of Phinehas.

Which was so called from him, and might have the name given it by his father.

Who might possess it before him, and what adjoined to it.

The Jews in the above treatise say, that at Avarua was a school of Phinehas in a temple of the Gentiles.

That Eleazar was buried upon the hill, and Joshua below the village among the olives.

And on this hill, is said to be a school or village of Phinehas.

“Which was given him in Mount Ephraim”:

Either to Eleazar, that he might be near to Shiloh, where the tabernacle then was.

As though the Jews say, as Jarchi and Kimchi relate, that Phinehas might come into the possession of that place through his wife.

Or it might fall to him as being a devoted field.

But it is most likely it was given to his father by the children of Ephraim, for the reason before observed.

This land had been part of the cities given to the priestly family.

When Eleazar dies, they bury him in the area that had been allotted to his son Phinehas.

There are many lessons we can learn from this lesson.

The most outstanding lesson for me in this is the necessity of walking in the salvation we have received.

Salvation is free, but should be guarded as if it is the most expensive thing we own.

It is by far the most precious thing we possess.

Joshua Chapter 24 Questions

1. Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to _____.

2. Joshua said unto the people, thus _____ the _____.
3. Abraham's father was not a worshipper of the _____ _____ _____.
4. "LORD God of Israel" is who?
5. God saved Abraham, because of his great _____.
6. Where did Abraham live, when God called him?
7. He wandered in search of what?
8. What was unusual about Abraham and Sarah having Isaac?
9. Who were Isaac's sons?
10. Who got the birthright?
11. Why did Jacob take his sons to Egypt?
12. Who did God send to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?
13. How many plagues did God send on Pharaoh?
14. What happened at the Red sea?
15. Why is Joshua re-capping their trip to the Promised Land?
16. What were some of the miracles God did for them?
17. Joshua is speaking, as if it is _____ speaking?
18. Why did Joshua deliberately leave out about the crossing of the Jordan?
19. What did God send against their enemies?
20. What good advice did Joshua give them in verse 14?
21. How long can they keep their inheritance?
22. What statement did they make to Joshua?
23. Who did God drive out, to give this land to Israel?
24. What will God do, if they worship the false gods?
25. Put away the strange _____ among you.
26. What is a covenant?

27. What unusual thing was to be a witness?
28. How old was Joshua, when he died?
29. Where did they bury him?
30. Whose bones had they brought and buried here?
31. Where was Eleazar buried?
32. What lesson can Christians learn from this lesson?