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**Lessons from the Book
and Life of Joshua
Chapter 23**

Review Scripture:

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Current Scripture:

Ephesians 1:18-19a I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Introduction: Joshua thanks the eastern tribes for their assistance in helping the other tribes fight for their promised land in the west. These tribes followed through on their promise to Moses and their fulfilled vow speaks to the oneness that existed within the nation of Israel. As a result of their faithfulness, Joshua pronounced a blessing over them that served as a pattern by which we should live our lives. We should first take care to hear God, to then give him our love and as a result of this we should walk in obedience. In order for any committed believer to have the strength to fulfil these commands, we must receive a blessing from God, which is what the eastern tribes received. Not only did they receive a blessing, but also an abundance of material possessions to take back to their loved ones who released them to fulfil their vow. On their return, the eastern tribes built an impressive altar that was to serve as a witness to their descendants of the unity of faith the tribes shared in worshipping the one true God. It was misunderstood by

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the western tribes at first to be another place of sacrifice. They confronted the opposing tribes and because it was done with directness but also in wisdom and love, the tribes avoided an unnecessary battle. It was a true picture of unity and understanding that we must apply to our lives, our churches and the spiritual communities we have joined.

- 1. Joshua 23:1-3** Joshua declares what the Lord has done.
 - a. Joshua remains the leader even though Israel was at rest from the wars of judgement and occupation in Canaan.
 - b. There is a common theme for the leaders of Israel to give deathbed testaments to the other leaders of Israel. He could reach all of Israel by communicating well to the leaders.
 - c. “You can picture the scene as the great old warrior addressed his people. Caleb would be among them. Phinehas the high priest would be there. Many who had shared every battle since the day they crossed the Jordan, and had stood with their leader through thick and thin, would be present. Others would be there also: the younger generation aspiring to leadership, eager to press on in life and conquest.” (Redpath)
 - d. His address begins, not his own accomplishments although impressive, but with glorifying God.
 - i. He encourages them, like all believers need to be, to keep their faith rooted in what God has done for them. To remember that all the battles and victories were a result of His fighting, and not your own.

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2. Joshua 23:4-5 The challenges that still remain.

- a. He reinforces what has been accomplished under his watch. Overall, the Canaanite military operation had been broken, but they still had to fully possess what was promised to each individual tribe.
- b. The Lord would drive out their enemies through their effort, their faith and their courage. It was a partnership.
- c. In order for Israel to be able to follow the command of the Lord and see their individual victories, they had to be courageous.
- d. They needed to be obedient to ALL that the Lord commanded and be careful to not be selective to the written instructions.
- e. The right hand or the left were dangerous extremes; either legalism on one hand or licentiousness on the other. Both are a trick of the enemy.

3. Joshua 23:6 Success through obedience.

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4. Joshua 23:7-8 Don't make peace with the enemy.

- a. A huge part of their obedience includes keeping away from all idolatry and false god worship. They shouldn't even say their names.
- b. They had to little by little drive out the enemies who stood in their way. It was a process that had been spoken over them in Exodus.
- c. The main way they were to stay away from other gods was to hold fast to the Lord their God. Focusing on Him, His ways, His commands would ensure that they would not be tricked into deception.

5. Joshua 23:9-13 The cost of blessings.

- a. As long as the children of Israel were faithful and trusted in the Lord, they would see God fighting on their behalf. It was a promise given as a result of obedience.
- b. In addition to obedience, they were called to couple that with love. It was an act of their will and a decision from their heart. They had to take heed to this command.
- c. "Everything else is assured if men love Jehovah. Failure to keep the law is always the outcome of failure in love to the Lawgiver. For such failure in love, men are responsible. In order that love may be maintained, they need to take heed to themselves." (Morgan)
- d. Deciding to remain in this love meant they had to keep themselves separate from the ungodly influences that could tarnish them.
 - i. Marrying

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- ii. Mixing
- iii. “As the fowler catcheth birds, and the hunter wild beasts in their snares and traps; so shall these Canaanites catch you by their familiarity and commerce, and draw you to participate in their sins and plagues.” (Trapp)

6. Joshua 23:14-16 The proving of faithfulness.

- a. Although Joshua’s life is coming to an end, the faithfulness of God remains and has never failed.
 - i. His faithfulness would remain in the blessing of the nation whose heart is turned toward him. All could testify to this, believers and enemies.
 - ii. His faithfulness would remain to follow through on the cursing of those who would be disobedient.
- b. “God’s faithfulness to his promises is proof positive that he will keep his threats as well. Israel should not suppose that being the recipients of God’s blessings made them immune to his judgment.” (Madvig)
- c. God’s people today relate to Him with a new and better covenant, by which Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law that the Israelites had to live by. Galatians 3:10-14.
 - i. We no longer will endure curses, rather we will receive the loving correction that comes from a Father when we stray and we will miss out on blessings and fruitfulness when we disconnect from Jesus. Hebrews 12:7.

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