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**Lessons from the Book  
and Life of Joshua  
Chapter 24**

**Memorization 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.

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**Introduction:** Joshua has completed all the fighting for the promised land and is now at the end of his life, yet still leads the children of Israel with his ways and his words. He begins by glorifying God for the ways He has led the nation into victories and successes. Joshua doesn't boast about his own impressive accomplishments, rather teaches the leaders in his last days where the focus it meant to be kept. He reminds them that there are still challenges ahead of them, which will only be won by their obedience to written instructions that were commanded by God. In order to remain in obedience, the nations had to make sure they didn't make peace with the enemies in the land, keep false gods' name from their lips and stay away from practices like marrying and mixing with the culture that would tarnish them and cause them to stray away from their devotion to the one true God. Coupled with their obedience, Joshua commanded them to love the Lord their God. As a result, they would continue to receive the faithfulness of God. Failure to love and obey the law, would result in God being faithful to his judgement. As God's people today, we know that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, so we are no longer bound by the law of sin. We now live by the law of grace, which brings loving correction when we are outside of the will of God and draws us into repentance and change.

1. **Joshua 24:1** Last dramatic gathering.

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- a. “Shechem was an ancient city situated on the floor of a valley near its entrance, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal forming the respective walls. The contour of the land resulted in a natural amphitheater, the acoustics of which were so good that the human voice carried to exceptional distance.”- Pink
- b. This gathering was near these two mountains where Joshua spoke the blessings and curses speech years before. (Joshua 8:30-35)
- c. Shechem was a very important place of history for Israel.
  - i. Abraham came to the Promised land and first camped at Shechem. This is where God appeared to him and confirmed his promise. Abraham built an altar to the Lord. (Genesis 12:6-7)
  - ii. When Jacob came back to the Promised Land, he first camped at Shechem. He purchased land at Shechem and built an altar there, calling the place, *El Elohe Israel* (God, the God of Israel, Genesis 33:18-20)
  - iii. Jacob’s sons Simeon and Levi deceptively lured the men of Shechem into a massacre, murdering all the men of the city. (Genesis 34)
  - iv. Jacob recommits his life back to God and he is directed to go to Bethel. He took all the idols of his households and buried them at the terebinth tree near Shechem.
- d. At this historic place, all of the leaders of the nation present themselves to God the same way the children of Israel did under the leadership of Moses to receive the 10 commandments.

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- e. Where are the places you hold sacred to your faith? One that speaks of the generational faithfulness of God to your family.
- 2. God's faithfulness to the generations.**
- a. Joshua isn't normally thought of as a prophet, but he brings a direct word from the Lord to the people.
    - i. Prophecy can be a foretelling of the future.
    - ii. Prophecy can be direct and spontaneous word from the Lord.
  - b. Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, and the first Jew, was not born a Jew. He grew up in a pagan, idolatrous home.
  - c. Ur, the city where Abraham's father was born and Haran, the city where Abraham's was called by God, were both centers of moon worship. This was the heritage of the children of God.
  - d. God's goodness was shown at the very beginning of his dealings with Abraham and Abraham's descendants. These were humble and pagan beginnings.
  - e. The message was for them to see themselves in the proper light; as complete messes, who God chose to show amazing grace and love towards.
  - f. This is the same principle that should motivate us today.
- 3. Joshua 24:5-7a** His continued faithfulness in the escape from Egypt.

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- a. God did not leave the children of Israel in the bonds of slavery forever. He knew that when it was the right time, He would send a deliverer.
  - b. There were still many leaders who were children during the time of slavery, who actually witnessed with their own eyes the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.
  - c. It is never God's intention to leave us in brokenness, bondage and slavery. He needs for us to see that in the right time, His deliverance WILL come and we will see it with our own eyes.
- 4. Joshua 24:7a-10** His continued faithfulness in the wilderness.
- a. Through Joshua, the Lord summarized most of the Exodus journey with this one sentence, "Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time."
    - i. In this review through Joshua, God makes no mention of their sin, rebellion and multiple failures.
    - ii. The war that Balak made against Israel was spiritual as he tried to curse them and seduce and taint them by the Moabite women.
    - iii. Not all fights are ones you can see with your physical eyes, some you must be spiritually aware that the Lord is keeping curses and temptations from affecting you.
- 5. Joshua 24:11-13** His continued faithfulness in the land of Canaan.
- a. The Lord links their ancient history with their recent history. He just didn't deliver their forefathers, they have seen God's hand in their midst during their lifetime.

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- b. The Israelites are enjoying blessings that in some cases they didn't deserve.
  - i. Very sobering to know that all of these blessings happened at the hand of a righteous God, and that if they rejected Him, it could be their own fate.

**6. Joshua 24:14** The choice of covenant.

- a. This call wasn't a blind leap of faith, it was based on God's works and the children of Israel's experiences with His blessings.
- b. Shaeffer's commentary notes that Joshua contrasted God's great work for Israel with three sets of gods, associated with water.
  - i. Joshua 24:2-4 shows that on the other side of the Euphrates were the gods of Sumerian and Babylonian culture – *gods of heritage*.
  - ii. Joshua 24:5-7a shows that on the other side of the Red Sea were the gods of ancient Egypt – *gods of upbringing*.
  - iii. Joshua 24:7b-13 and Joshua 24:15 show that as they crossed the Jordan there were the gods of the Amorites – *gods of the culture*.
- c. This covenant is based on sincerity and truth.
  - i. "The real test of our faithfulness to God is in most cases our power to continue steadfastly in one course of conduct when the excitement of conflict is removed, and the enemies with which we have to contend are the insidious allurements of ease or custom amid the common place duties of life." -Lias.

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- ii. Joshua emphasizes the absolute need for a deep and true commitment to serving the Lord, especially after the battles are completed.

**7. Joshua 24:15** The challenge is made.

- a. Joshua recognizes that each of the children of Israel have free will to decide who they would follow and serve.
- b. What if some of them think that serving the Lord God was evil?
- c. What if some of them think that serving the gods of their fathers, on the other side of the river were the right choice?
- d. What if some of them think that serving the gods of Canaan, the land they are in now, were the right choice?
- e. Whichever choice, it is clear that we all serve some kind of deity, and they needed to decide.
- f. Disciples are faced with this challenge in John 6:68.
- g. Joshua lets the entire nation know what his choice was going to be.
  - i. In English, it is spoken in the future tense. But in Hebrew it has a fuller meaning of continuous action. “I have chosen, am choosing and will choose.”
    - 1. Joshua chose to fight against the Amalekites – choosing when it might have cost everything.
    - 2. Joshua chose to reject the golden calf – choosing when the flesh might have been satisfied.

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3. Joshua chose to serve the Lord by serving Moses – choosing a humble place.
  4. Joshua chose to believe God’s promise about the Promised Land – choosing against the majority.
  5. Joshua chose to recognize the leadership of the Captain of the Lord’s army – choosing surrender to God.
  6. Joshua chose to take leadership of Israel and lead them into the land – choosing faith instead of unbelief.
- ii. Not only would he continue to serve the Lord, but as the priest of his family, he was charged with the responsibility to lead his whole house into the right choice of serving the Lord.
- iii. BUT.
1. Joshua’s relationship with God wasn’t based on what anyone else thought or decided to do.
  2. Joshua’s decision was to live above the evil influences of the past or the present.
  3. Joshua’s words were spoken boldly and openly.
  4. Joshua’s actions in the past had shown he was earnestly carrying out this decision.
  5. His intent was to not only say, we will serve the Lord but that it meant we will serve the Lord ONLY.

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- 8. Joshua 24:16-18** Israel's response.
- a. As they thought about what God had done for them, how would they decide not to serve such a great God?
  - b. If serving God sometimes seems to hard, maybe you should just think of the alternatives.
- 9. Joshua 24:19-21** Joshua's warning.
- a. Joshua needed to warn the Children of Israel against a superficial commitment to following the Lord.
  - b. Jesus addresses this as well in Luke 14:25-33.
  - c. They finally said what Joshua was waiting to hear; we **WILL SERVE THE LORD**.
- 10. Joshua 24:22-28** A covenant renewed.
- a. Joshua requires that the covenant be confirmed by the testimony of two witnesses, the people and a stone.
  - b. Joshua requires them to act on their testimony by removing all idols and foreign gods that had crept into their lives.
    - i. "As you have promised to reform, begin instantly the work of reformation. A man's promise to serve God soon loses its moral hold of his conscience if he does not instantaneously begin to put it in practice. The grace that enables him to promise is that by the strength of which he is to begin the performance." (Clarke)
  - c. The covenant made that day insinuates that there was some sort of sacrifice offered for this occasion.



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- d. Joshua adds to the books written by Moses which had been accepted by the Children of Israel. A second generation of authority.

**11. Joshua 24:29-31** The death of Joshua.

- a. Joshua died at 110 years old and was buried in the land of his inheritance. His wish was to be known as the servant of the Lord.
- b. The children of Israel gave Joshua the greatest tribute they could have given to him; to serve the Lord under his amazing leadership for all of his days.

**12. Joshua 24:32** A fulfilled Promise.

- a. The burying of Joseph's bones was the fulfilment of the oath from Genesis 50:25.
- b. This faith of Joseph's is recorded in Hebrews 11:22.
- c. Your faithfulness is seen, marked and will be recorded.

**13. Joshua 24:33** The death and burial of Eleazar.

- a. Eleazar's death meant that another link with the wilderness generation had passed. Now Phinehas was high priest.
- b. As the generations pass, they are each challenged to conquer the land of blessing and promise that God has for them.
- c. The cycle of life continues to evolve as we must face our own giants, enemies and territories that God has placed in front of us, with our focus and loyalty on He who has delivered us, fought for us and positioned us in our places of promise.

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