

Joshua—Joshua 23

Joshua Warns Against Foreign Nations

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

1. Verse 3... **“For the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you** - There is much both of piety and modesty in this address. It was natural for the Israelites to look on their veteran, worn-out general, who had led them on from conquest to conquest, with profound respect; and to be ready to say, “Had we not had such a commander, we had never got possession of this good land.” Joshua corrects this opinion, and shows them that all their enemies had been defeated, because the Lord their God had fought for them. That the battle was the Lord’s, and not his; and that God alone should have the glory” [Clarke].
2. Verse 6... Cf., [Deu 5:32](#), [Deu 12:32](#), [Deu 17:20](#), [Deu 28:14](#); [Pro 4:26](#), [Pro 4:27](#)
3. Verse 7... **“That ye come:** Have no civil or social contacts with them, as these will infallibly lead to spiritual affinities, in consequence of which, ye will make honourable “mention of the name of their gods,” “swear by them” “and serve” them in their abominable rites; and “bow yourselves unto them,” as your creators and preservers. All this will follow by simply coming among them. He who walks in the counsel of the ungodly, will soon stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of scorners. [Jos 23:12](#); [Exo 23:33](#); [Deu 7:2](#), [Deu 7:3](#); [Pro 4:14](#); [1Co 15:33](#); [2Co 6:14-17](#); [Eph 5:11](#)” [TSK].
4. Verses 7-8... “The dangers from being incomplete about possessing all the Land included that of intermingling with the godless, as in marriages (v. 12), and committing to their gods, thus drifting from worshiping the true God. The Canaanites would become snares, traps, scourges, and thorns, causing Israelites to eventually lose the land (vv. 13-15)” [*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 331].
5. Verses 15-16—cf., 2 Kings 24-25, i.e., the Babylonian Exile. /// “The reverses, that later came to Israel were not an indication of the Lord’s inability to help them, but, ‘They were judgments on the rebelliousness of his people’” [Coffman].
6. Verses 6-13... “These verses indicate that the Promised Land was to belong to Israel only so long as the people were faithful to God. Failing in that faithfulness, God here, through Joshua, promised that Israel should “perish from off this good land.” People who believe that God gave Israel a permanent title to Palestine regardless of what Israel did are grossly mistaken. God actually did dispel Israel from Palestine, and despite the fact that a remnant returned from Babylon, that was only a temporary measure that was necessary until the Messiah should be born. After the birth of Christ Israel (in the secular sense) lost all further right to Palestine, nor do they have any such right today” [Coffman].

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Period of the Conquest.**

“A long time after that the Lord had given rest - This is supposed to have been in the last or one hundred and tenth year of the life of Joshua, about thirteen or fourteen years after the conquest of Canaan, and seven after the division of the land among the tribes.” [Clarke].

III. Summary.

In the time of Joshua’s old age his desire is to address the people through their elders, heads, judges, and officers. His message is to look back at what God had done for them. He takes no personal credit for the victories they had enjoyed, but rather would have the people to remember that it was God who gave them the victories. He cries out for the people to have the necessary courage faithfully to continue serving the Lord and obeying His commandments. There is a strong call for separation from the remaining heathen people. Joshua knew that if there were marriages between Israel and the heathen people, or even any kind of cleaving to the nations, the result would be that Israel would be influenced to “make mention of the name of their gods.” Joshua gives the strong warning against inter-mingling with the nations by saying that God will make them snares, traps, and thorns in their eyes, causing them to perish from off this good land. He continues the point by reminding Israel that God had kept all of His promises AND since the people had seen the promises that God had made kept, just so they can depend upon the fact that there will be judgment against them if they transgress the covenant.

IV. Outline.

1. Aged Joshua calls for an assembly (Josh 23:1-2).
2. Look at what God has done for you (Josh 23:3-5).
3. Therefore keep the covenant and remain separated (Josh 23:6-11).
4. A strong warning against intermingling with the nations (Josh 23:12-16).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The Promised Land belonged to Israel unconditionally.
02. _____ Joshua was a young man when he made the speech in this chapter.
03. _____ Joshua talked about the great victories he had given the people.
04. _____ Joshua said: “a thousand men shall chase you.”
05. _____ Joshua warned against: snares, traps, scourges, and thorns.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ God’s anger would be kindled by: (a) Israel bowing to other gods; (b) Israel leaving the Promised Land; (c) Israel anointing Joshua as king.
07. _____ Which of the following bodies of water were NOT used to describe boundaries in this chapter: (a) Great Sea; (b) Jordan River; (c) Sea of Galilee.
08. _____ Keeping and doing the law involved not turning aside: (a) to the right; (b) to the left; (c) a & b; (d) none of these.
09. _____ Which of the following would cause the nations to become snares, traps, scourges, and thorns: (a) marrying from among the nations; (b) making agreements with the nations; (c) a & b; (d) none of these.
10. _____ By breaking the covenant with the Lord, the Lord would bring evil things upon Israel AS: (a) fierce vengeance; (b) He had blessed them with good things; (c) instruction.

Fill in the Blanks

11. In this chapter Joshua had waxed old and was _____ in age.

12. "...then shall the anger of the Lord be _____ against you, and ye shall _____ quickly from off the good _____..."
13. Joshua told the people to be very _____.
14. "...for the Lord your God, He it is that _____ for you..."
15. "...I am going the _____ of all the _____."

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Lesson 01-81 ... [01—False, Josh 20:3-4; 02—True, Josh 21:43-45; 03—True, Josh 20:4-6; 04—True, Josh 21; 05—True, Josh 20:8; 06—c, Josh 20:3; 07—c, Josh 21:45; 08—b, Josh 20:7-8; 09—a, Josh 21:32; 10—c, Josh 21:33; 11—commanded, Moses, cities, Josh 21:2; 12—Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Josh 20:7; 13—stood, before, congregation, Josh 20:9; 14—Kohathites, Josh 21; 15—Gad, Josh 21:38; 20:8.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...Joshua waxed old and stricken in age ... called for all Israel** (Josh 23:1-2). It is always of special interest what a man's thoughts turn to at the time he nears death. For the great "replacement leader," Joshua, his thoughts turn to the future of this people he has been leading these many years. His concern was that they would be faithful to the Lord and continue to receive His blessings. It is a similar time to that which we read in the life of Paul as he writes the Book of 2 Timothy (e.g., 2 Tim 1:6; 1:8; 1:13-14; 2:1-3; 2:8; 2:11-14; 2:15; 2:22; 2:23; 3:14; 4:1-2; 4:15). Paul's thoughts go to his young son in the faith and his strongest desire is that Timothy will remain faithful to the Lord. Great men such as Joshua and Paul have great thoughts and they center on the salvation of the souls they love. Let us learn from these examples the things that are really important and let us think on these things continually even unto the time of death.
2. **And ye have seen...** (Josh 23:3). Part of Joshua's farewell involves reminding the Israelites of that which they have seen. Keeping this in memory will go a long way toward keeping them faithful and it is a strong part of Joshua's exhortation. Peter wrote his epistle for the purpose of stirring up pure minds by way of remembrance (2 Pet 3:1).
3. **Be ye therefore very courageous...** (Josh 23:6). Just as Joshua had been urged to be courageous (Josh 1:6), he is well aware that it will require tremendous courage to maintain their faithfulness to the Lord. This is true in any time and place in that the faithful ones will be in the MINORITY (Mt 7:13-14).
4. **That ye come not among these nations,...** (Josh 23:7). The greatest peril that faced Israel was not heeding the warning that Joshua now gives. Joshua makes plain in this verse that they will have to be ESPECIALLY WARY of making any sociable contact with the heathen people because such will lead to worshiping and serving their gods. Certainly one of the great threats to the church (called out ones) is WORLDLINESS. When we become like the world we have lost our inheritance (1 Jn 2:15-18; Js 4:4).
5. **Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God** (Josh 23:11). Here is an important key that might be easily overlooked. I remember hearing brother Chuck Northrop once say that one of THE MOST IMPORTANT things to teach students in preaching school is to love God. He spoke from his own experience in training preachers in Ukraine.
6. **...ye shall perish quickly from off the good land...** (Josh 23:16). Here Joshua, in his FAREWELL SPEECH, stresses the conditional nature of the promises of God! Does Israel still have right to the land of Palestine or any land anywhere??? NO!

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

P O I U Y T R E W Q L K J H G F D S A M
 N B V C X Z L K J H G F P E R I S H D S
 A P O I U Y T N R E S G N I H T L I V E
 G O O D W Q L O K J G H G F D S A M N B
 C O V E N A N T B V C O X Z L K J H S G
 F D S A P O I O U Y T R D E W Q M N S B
 D V C X Z L J N G F D S A S P O I U A Y
 E Y T R E W Q E B L K J H G P F D S P A
 S M N B V C X T Z O L K J H G A F D O D
 S A P O I U S H T R W E W Q L K K J T H
 E H G F D T S I A M N E N B V C X E E Z
 R L K J R H G N F D S A D D P O I U M Y
 G T R A E W Q G L K J H G N F D D S O A
 S M E D E L I A F N B V C A X Z L J C H
 N H G F D S A O I P Y T R L E H W Q A S
 A L K J H G F D S A M N B D V C T X Z P
 R O I U Y T R E W J H G F O D S A R M N
 T B V C D E S T R O Y E D O X Z L K A H
 G F D S A O I U T P R E W G C V F R T E
 Y R E G N A K I N D L E D H N M J D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Joshua 23:14-16--¹⁴And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the **earth**: and ye know in all your **hearts** and in all your souls, that **not one thing** hath **failed** of all the **good** things which the LORD your **God spake** concerning you; all are **come to pass** unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof. ¹⁵Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all **evil things**, until he have **destroyed** you from off this **good land** which the LORD your God hath given you. ¹⁶When ye have **transgressed** the **covenant** of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and **bowed** yourselves to them; then shall the **anger** of the LORD be **kindled** against you, and ye shall **perish** quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.