

Joshua 24

v1

“they presented themselves before God.”

- We are to note that they did not come to present themselves before Joshua. They came before God! This conversation was had in the presence of The Lord. It was a holy gathering not merely political.

v3-13

“I took your father Abraham”

“And I have given you a land for which you did not labour, and cities which you built not, and you live in them”

- The Lord has done all of this!

- The Lord recounts His tender mercies and loving kindnesses; His blessings and goodness towards them; His provision and victories...

- When we stop to remember/consider what The Lord has done for us... Oh how wonderfully Good our Shepherd is! How precious is our Heavenly Father! He is truly merciful, long suffering, kind and loving.

- *Psalm 103:8-10 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and loving-kindness. [9] He will not always chide or be contending, neither will He keep His anger forever or hold a grudge. [10] He has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

- Truly we are worthy of wrath, punishment and cursing; Truly we are undeserving of blessing, grace and life... Oh how precious are His tender mercies towards us.

v14

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served”

- Being mindful of all that God is and all that He has done for you, live accordingly and in gratitude and praise.

- *Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].*

- It is only “reasonable”. Our lives have been preserved, established, enriched... saved and redeemed by God. He is worthy and deserving of all of our time, all of our service, all of our effort, all of our affection and seeking. All of our lives given over to His glory is our “reasonable” service. Do not think that it is anything excessive or admirable. It is merely reasonable!

- May we be careful not to be so proud that we don’t consider the gods in our own life that must be put away. There are things in our lives that ought not to be there! Let us be diligent and prayerful to acknowledge, confess and remove these things that we look at before God!

v15

“choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”

- Each individual and people must choose for themselves. It is a choice, a free will... an offering. Communion/fellowship with The Lord is conditional. His blessing/favour is conditional upon obedience and coming unto Him.

- You can very well and freely choose to serve your self and your own god(s)... But let it be clear that you will then be at their mercy and be completely dependent upon your own choice. We will see how that plays out for you.

- *Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

“but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

- Consider the resolve and resolute nature of Joshua. He is unmoved, unwavering, determined and decided... The Lord God (Jehovah) is his God and there is no doubt or question about it.

- It didn’t matter to Joshua at all what the people would choose. They had no influence or held bias in his heart. Joshua was wholly devoted to God.

- Joshua determined that his house would serve The Lord. Others could choose, they were free to go their own way... But those who were under his roof would serve The Lord. Joshua’s house would be a Godly, Holy one. Oh for men who would determine that their houses/homes would be Godly!

- Joshua declared this to the people. He would be held accountable to such a claim. It was a confession and declaration, not a quiet desire to “try” but a clear and public proclamation.

v19

“You cannot serve the LORD: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God;”.

- *GILL: which he said not to discourage or deter them from serving the Lord, since it was his principal view, through the whole of this conversation with them, to engage them in it, but to observe to them their own inability and insufficiency of themselves to perform service acceptable to God; and therefore it became them to implore grace and strength from the Lord to assist them in it, and to depend upon that and not to lean to and trust in their own strength; as also to observe to them, that they could not serve him perfectly without any defect and failure in their service, for there is no man that does good and sins not; and therefore when a man has done all he can, he must not depend upon it for his justification before God; or consider it as his justifying righteousness, which was what that people were always prone to; some supply it, “you cannot serve the Lord with your images, or along with them, so Vatablus:*

- As you are, in this state, with your false gods, with your unfaithful hearts, with your pride of life and dependence on self effort... You cannot at all serve The Lord!

v20

“If you forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that He has done you good.”

- God has not changed! His nature is eternal and consistent through every age!

- If only God’s people would understand and keep such a thought/truth in mind. Truly our God is long suffering, patient, slow to anger and of great mercy but blessing can only come from obedience. There is a curse that is promised to disobedience and to those who turn back.

- It is not good enough to be an "Israelite". Circumcision in the flesh was no promise of blessing/salvation. It is a circumcision of an obedient, loving and continuing heart that The Lord desires!

- Salvation is not a one time event/decision and there is nowhere in scripture that we see this idea taught as a principle. Circumcision was never introduced as a means to Salvation. The application of the blood was not enough if you were outside the house! Crossing the Red Sea was no guarantee of being brought into the promise... Only obedience can/will be blessed.

v16-18,21-22,24

"therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God."

- The people are emphatic. They repeat this multiple times and make their choice clear.

- It is quite a thought that they also declared publicly and confessed their commitment to serve The Lord. It is perhaps something to consider doing even today. Will we declare before our brothers and sisters, before our friends and colleagues that we will serve The Lord? Will we be held accountable to our word? Will we be witnesses against ourselves that we will live such a way.

v25-26

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

- They promised not just for today, not just for the next few weeks... But a covenant that was to be recorded as a testament against them for their lives. They promised and committed their lives unto God!!

- These people were covenanted into God and all that passed this way would see and know and be reminded of such a holy oath and agreement with God.

- The promise was public. It was a declaration to the world. An outward show of an intimate promise; a holy consecration and dedication.

v26-27

"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"

- A witness/marker was raised. A testament and a witness that would stand for generations as a reminder of their pledge/covenant.

- A stone of witness against their words. This stone heard them. This is an interesting thought/phrase to consider.

- The stone was a testament, not a testimony. This stone was the reminder of a promise p, a beginning point... The testimony must be lived out!

v31

"And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua"

- A promise/testament was made and the promise was kept. This is a testimony. A precious and wonderful testimony.

- What an age this must have been to live in. A people given to serving The Lord in fear and gratitude. A people conscious of God's power, holiness and love.

- What a beautiful way to finish the book and testimony of Joshua... Not to glorify the man but to see what The Lord can accomplish through a man who will love Him, cling to Him and obey/serve Him. We are not all called to be Joshua's, we are not all called to be on the front lines with names so well known... But we can all know God as intimately and be used as effectively for the glory of His name! Oh may we not limit what The Lord can accomplish through a willing vessel. We may not see the fruit of our labours but the joy is in the serving!! Hallelujah!!!! We CAN serve!!!