

## LESSON 12. CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY

Joshua 23-24

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14).

### MAN’S FATE IS SEALED AT DEATH

The writer of Hebrews said, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). These inspired words remind us that no one will live on earth forever. Great men such as Moses and Joshua who had served God with all their hearts, died thousands of years ago. Death is in our future (unless we are alive when the Lord returns in the clouds). Once this life on earth is over, our eternal fate is sealed. Our spirits wait in Hades for the day of judgment that will come for all men, including Moses, Joshua and all the other faithful servants of the Lord. Also waiting will be the spirits of all who have murmured against God, those who have rebelled against His commands, and all who have refused to hear and obey His words. It is a serious matter that should be on our minds each day. The greatest possession we have is our own soul. We can save it by serving God, or we can destroy it eternally by choosing to live in sin.

### JOSHUA TOLD OF HIS IMPENDING DEATH

Joshua had served as Moses’ helper for about 40 years. He had learned well, and was God’s choice to lead the Israelites after Moses’ death. He continued to serve God in the same faithful way that Moses had. He led the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River and entered into the promised land. With God’s help they had defeated all their enemies. He had divided the land and given each tribe their inheritance as God had promised. But, he had grown old and he knew his work on earth would soon be finished.



Joshua wanted the people to continue to serve God. He called together the elders, family heads and judges and exhorted them to be courageous. If they continued to serve God, he said, then God would fight for them. Joshua told them, “this day I am going the way of all the earth” (Joshua 23:14). He reminded them that God had done everything He had promised. With God on their side, no one could defeat them.

### THE PEOPLE WERE WARNED ABOUT IDOLATRY

But Joshua also knew that there was a remnant of the Canaanites living in the land who worshiped false gods. He knew the temptations that would come from associating with these people. He warned the Israelites about the danger of marriage with these idol worshipers. If they turned to false gods, they would provoke God to anger. Then all the good things that God had given them would be lost, and their enemies would destroy them. Many of them had witnessed God’s anger when they had rebelled in the wilderness. The apostle Paul wrote that evil companions will corrupt those around them (1 Corinthians 15:33).

## **THE PEOPLE WERE TOLD TO OBEY GOD**

Joshua told the people to keep the law of Moses. They were to follow it exactly, turning neither to the right nor left. They were to do what God had commanded and not change or deviate in any way from His words. This was the same command God had given Moses at mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:32). Moses continued to emphasize this same message to the people (Deuteronomy 17:20). From the beginning of time God has always blessed those who obeyed Him and punished those who refused to heed His commands.

We do not follow the law of Moses today. That law was fulfilled and ended at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14). We live under the new covenant of Jesus. But the principle of following God's commands is the same for us today as it was for the Israelites. We are not to change God's Word by taking from it, or adding to it (Revelation 22:18, 19). We are to turn neither to the right hand nor the left, but heed God's Word and obey it. Many today try to worship God according to their own wishes and not according to God's will. They pervert (change) the gospel of Christ to make it more "relevant" to today's society, but God's Word cannot be changed. Jesus said such worship is vain or useless (Matthew 15:9). Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 to see what will happen to those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Christ.

## **JOSHUA CHALLENGED THE PEOPLE**

Just before his death, Joshua gathered the leaders together a second time. After recounting all that God had done for them, he told them that they had to make a choice. That choice was whether to serve the God who had done so much for them, or to serve the gods of the people in Canaan. His words should be memorized by all, **"...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"** (Exodus 24:15).

The people agreed that they too, would serve the Lord. Joshua took a great stone and set it under an oak tree near the sanctuary in Shechem. This stone was to be a witness to the people of all they had promised to do in serving the living God.

## **JOSHUA PROVED HIS GREATNESS**

Joshua was a man who served God with all his heart. His influence continued long after his death. Think about these remarkable words, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua" (Joshua 24:31). What a great tribute to his character! Like Abel, Joshua, "being dead, yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4).

Joshua was an ordinary man. Yet, he loved the Lord and did exactly what God said. His example should provide many lessons for us. He had great faith in God. He never doubted God's power or promises. He led the people as God commanded. He ruled his own house and committed it to serve God. He remained faithful even until his death. In God's hands, an ordinary man can have a great influence on those around him. Joshua served a Mighty God. That same God has made promises to you and me. If we obey God as Joshua did, we too can be great servants of our **Mighty God!**



### SCRAMBLED WORDS

- |                |       |                |       |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 1. s h o o c e | _____ | 2. v e s r e d | _____ |
| 3. t a f e     | _____ | 4. n a c a n a | _____ |
| 5. d h e t a   | _____ | 6. u j o s a h | _____ |
| 7. d a r n j o | _____ | 8. y i m g h t | _____ |

### TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Joshua had served as Moses' helper or minister for about 40 years.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Joshua tried, but never did get the land divided among the Israelites.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. When Joshua told the people to choose whom they were going to serve, they chose God.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Israel was faithful to God all the days of Joshua and of the elders that outlived him.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. After death we will have another chance to be saved and go to heaven.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. God had done everything He had promised the Israelite nation.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. Each one makes the choice as to whether he/she will serve God.

### SCRIPTURE SEARCH

1. "Now \_\_\_\_\_ is the substance of things \_\_\_\_\_ for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).
2. "And the \_\_\_\_\_ said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we \_\_\_\_\_, and his \_\_\_\_\_ will we obey" (Joshua 24:24).
3. "One man of you shall chase a \_\_\_\_\_: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath \_\_\_\_\_ you" (Joshua 23:10).
4. Joshua was the son of \_\_\_\_\_ and died at the age of \_\_\_\_\_ (Exodus 24:29).
5. Joshua set a stone in \_\_\_\_\_ as a witness unto the people (Joshua 24:25-27).
6. How can we be friends of Jesus? (John 14:15). \_\_\_\_\_

### IN YOUR OWN WORDS

1. What are three lessons we can learn from the example of Joshua? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why don't we follow the law of Moses today just as Joshua did? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think of Joshua's statement, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. How can the wrong friends affect us morally? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
5. What does it mean to not turn to the right or to the left as far as God's Word is concerned? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_