

**EVERY PROMISE FULFILLED** Joshua, Chapters 23 & 24 November 12, 2009

The book of Joshua concludes with some of the same themes we have seen throughout the book – as well as throughout the Bible as a whole.

What are the primary themes of Joshua?

We begin with a charge and a warning:

*NIV Joshua 23:1 After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then old and well advanced in years, 2 summoned all Israel-- their elders, leaders, judges and officials-- and said to them: "I am old and well advanced in years.*

*3 You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; .....*

*5 The LORD your God himself will drive them out of your way. ...and you will take possession of their land,.... 6 "Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left.*

*7 Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them.*

*8 But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now.*

*9 "The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations;*

What has God done for them? What will He do? What are they to do? What are they not to do?

*11 So be very careful to love the LORD your God.*

*12 "But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them,*

*13 then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, **they will become** snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you.*

- a. Snares and traps
- b. Whips on your backs
- c. Thorns in your eyes
- d. Until you perish from this good land

*NIV Joshua 24:1 Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. 2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, ... lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. 3 But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.*

A review of God's dealings with the nation follows this – what points are being made here about Abraham? Thinking about what God has done for Israel up to this point, how would this review encourage them to be faithful to God?

*14 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.*

*15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

What choices is Joshua giving the people? How many choices are there really?

*16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!*

*17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.*

*18 And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."*

What do you see as the constant theme, or reason for allegiance to God?

We see then, from Joshua, a somewhat shocking response to their declaration –

*19 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.*

*20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."*

*21 But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD."*

*2 Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.*

What actually happened after the death of the leaders of this generation? Is it a kindness to give a stern warning to a person who is likely to depart from the commands of the Lord?

Are any of us able to obey God? Genesis 6:5 says "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." Is an unsaved person any different today? How is it different for a believer?

*23 "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."*

Does it sound like they still had foreign gods among them? Do we?

29 After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten.....31 Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

32 And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.

How did Joseph's bones get to Egypt? What does the whole story of Joseph, including this reference, tell you about God's faithfulness to His own in all circumstances?