

## APRIL 22

In a way, we're all going to miss Joshua. He is one of the most "sterling" followers of God in the Old Testament. Of course God has only given us a little information about Joshua, so he looks a little one-dimensional, but we will have all eternity to get to know him. This chapter will show us something of his heart. This morning I was reading about Jesus saying, *whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave* (Matt. 20:26-27). So...Joshua 24:29 says that Joshua was a great man.

Another reason we will miss Joshua is that Judges introduces us to the power of sin in Israel.

### Joshua 24

Vs. 1-5 The focus here is on the covenant to Abraham and how it flowed through Abe to Isaac and to Esau and Jacob. Moses became the continuation of the promise to Abraham.

V. 1 This location had a lot of significance. Shechem was where God met with Abraham and promised his descendants the land. If you do a word search, you'll find this place mentioned often. Now, neither you nor I would know this, if not for helps like the [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), but Shechem is between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, from Joshua 8:30-35. This is where Joshua set up the stones upon which he wrote the law. The people were on the mountains opposite each other pronouncing the blessing and the curses involved with obeying or disobeying God's law. So, this is a pretty important place.

Note also that it says they presented themselves before God. This was to be a renewal of the covenant.

V. 2 It is interesting that Joshua speaks in the 1st person as God, or it is God speaking through him.

Note that God refers back to Abraham's father, Terah, that those men served other gods. Noah was still alive during this time. Noah didn't serve other gods, but sin in man creates an incredible impulse in man to stray from God. Rebellion in us because of the power of sin is almost irresistible. I think Abe was chosen because he learned from Noah (Abe might have known Noah or Noah's son Shem). We wonder why Abraham was different than his father and his culture. I'd bet it was because of his association with a man like Noah or Shem who didn't worship other gods, but rather the true God. It's interesting to think of that possible connection between Noah, Shem and Abe in terms of discipleship. The mission of redemption was kept alive in the heart of this one disciple.

Vs. 6-13 All of these references to God's protection also reflect the inability of the false gods to stand against God. These peoples, particularly Egypt, were known for their gods. Balaam's inability to work against Israel, again, shows that Israel's God is the only God, and He's for them.

In giving Israel what it didn't build or plant, there is not only a reference to blessing, but also a reference to God's judgment of the Canaanites. Their worship before God was sick and their culture was terminal. The Canaanites lost everything because of their sin. Now it belonged to Israel. Notice v. 22 in today's reading of Proverbs.

Vs. 14-15 This seems pretty strong and you notice that Joshua is pushing them to a point of commitment. It seems to me, that Israel was already straying and he knew it. The last part of v. 15 would make a good wall plaque and song.

Vs. 16-18 Notice the interaction between Joshua and the people. The people seem committed and emotional in their acknowledgement of God's help and power in all they have experienced. They declare that they too will *serve the Lord*.

Vs. 19-20 Joshua was not to be swayed by their emotion. We read that God is a jealous God, but we cannot emotionally enter into the idea of Him being jealous. Jealousy is an awesome emotion that brings everything to a standstill. Just as "a little unfaithfulness" would destroy most marriages, God's blessing would halt if they were unfaithful. In fact, God would work to take away the good He had given them. In our day and age, we don't think this applies to us in the church, but I think we will have a rude awakening when the Lord helps us understand the influence our culture and society has had on His church and His followers.

Vs. 21-22 It is interesting that the people are insistent and call their own words to witness against themselves.

V. 23 I think both Joshua and God are telling the people to investigate their lives closer. Apparently there were already idols among them. Whatever it was, it must have been semi-secret or revolved around some gray area. The people had no problem moving against 2.5 tribes when the issues seemed clear-cut. And, Joshua doesn't seem like the kind of guy to sit still if there was open, blatant idolatry. But something was going on and the root of infection and destruction was already there.

V. 24 And the people were not able to grasp what he was saying. Maybe they were in denial. In any case they are saying they are true to the Lord.

Vs. 25-28 The *covenant* in v. 25 is followed very strongly by Joshua setting up a monument and writing out the details of this meeting and covenant. Sadly, Joshua was right.

We never think of idols and worshipping falsely today, especially in the church. Paul accused the Corinthians of idolatry in 1 Corinthians 10, and Paul redefined covetousness as idolatry in Ephesians 5. Israel gathered pretty looking stuff, some of which was used in foreign worship before they acquired it. Maybe they kept the precious figurines saying there was no God but Yahweh. It was simply art of value. I wonder if that stuff began to entice them. I wonder if the stuff that we have has taken such importance in our lives, that without realizing it, we are no longer devoted to Christ.

I was reading this morning where Jesus says, *whoever loves father and mother, ...son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me*. I wonder if we have lost our affection for Him and we don't realize it.

Vs. 29-33 The book of Joshua ends with three burials. Sounds like a movie, "A Covenant and Three Burials." It is interesting that they mention the burial of the bones of Joseph. The land was Israel's so now it was time to bury them. I wonder, since they were buried at Shechem, if Joshua did this at the end of that ceremony.

V. 29 Notice that Joshua is called *the servant of the Lord*, and in v. 31 his legacy is that *Israel served the Lord*. Joshua's influence was great. This sounds like what the Lord has asked us to do. We become disciples of Jesus whose legacy is that we make disciples who follow Jesus and make disciples.

### **Luke 21:1-28**

Vs. 1-4 There is an interesting connection between this event and what Jesus has been saying. Jesus has just condemned the rich scribes and now He is contrasting them to this simple, but fully devout, woman. The fact that Luke was a missionary who traveled with Paul adds to the impact of this story. Jesus' disciples were told to give everything in order to work in the harvest.

Vs. 5-10 Up to v. 10 the two signs given, false Messiahs and wars, will come before the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and before Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation. Interestingly, in talking about the Tribulation alone, it never talks about that temple being destroyed. Since there is no temple today in Jerusalem it means it would have to be rebuilt, but that could happen easily during the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation when there is a peace

treaty with Israel. The temple needs no electricity, plumbing or windows, and the foundation is already there. I'll bet "Extreme Makeover: Temple Edition" could put it up in a week.

Vs. 11-19 These verses seem to be more focused on the future Tribulation of Israel. Much of what is said here, the disciples have heard before when Jesus sent out the Twelve. The same things will be true for His future disciples during those seven years on earth.

Vs. 13-15 Jesus is telling them to expect that God will use His sovereignty to put His followers into positions where they will give testimony. The Spirit will speak through them. Then, some might remain on earth, but probably most will appear in the presence of God, honored and safe.

V. 18 To understand this, read what Paul says just before his death in 2 Timothy 4:18. Paul speaks of rescue, meaning the rescue of leaving his body and appearing before the Lord in heaven.

V. 19 The call for *endurance*, in my thinking, means "salvation" from the fear and emotional terror of those times. See 1 Timothy 4:16.

Vs. 20-24 This description was as valid for the past onslaught of the Romans on the temple and Jerusalem, as it is valid for the future persecution of the Jews at the midway point of the Tribulation.

Vs. 25-28 Of course this time won't be all fun and games and killing God's people.

V. 25 This seems to describe the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation. The universe will be out of whack and it will show on the earth, especially in the oceans. These disasters will create mass terror and fear (and probably ruin a lot of good vacation spots), but not for those who understand that it is all exactly as God has planned. In essence, the planet will become much more primitive as the world tries to deal with unprecedented natural disasters. This will make it easier for God's people and followers to hide during the second half of the Tribulation. There will still be destruction in the final 3.5 years of the Tribulation, but most of the destruction in the first 3.5 years will be called down on the earth by the two witnesses who will be like Moses and Aaron in Egypt.

V. 27 However this is to happen, it will be a world event and visible to all. Everyone will be commenting on that sign in the heavens and everyone around Jerusalem will be talking about those strange clouds.

V. 28 Those followers of Christ will be weighed down, working undercover and praying. But like Jesus in those last challenges by the Pharisees, these disciples will have boldness to risk everything to bring one more disciple into the kingdom. For us in the harvest, now is the time to cut loose and go for it.

### **Psalm 89:38-52**

The psalmist is asking God to look down and have mercy on David.

Vs. 38-45 Notice the word *You*. For a time, David had to leave Jerusalem. He and his kingdom were in ruins. God was letting this happen to David as punishment for his taking of Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah.

Vs. 46-48 David's sin had been years earlier. The guilt and the sin still hounded David. David's family had been ruined; his conscience was damaged; and now Absalom was dishonoring his father's wives and throne.

Vs. 49-52 Once again, God's *steadfast love* and *faithfulness* are appealed to. Verse 51 could be referring to how David was mocked and humiliated by Shimei when He fled from Jerusalem. If you're interested, read 2 Samuel 16:5-23 and you'll get the sense of what is being said here.

### **Proverbs 13:20-23**

For the first three verses I'd just say, "Amen, amen and amen!" But, then you have v. 23. Maybe it is somehow saying that the byproduct of having the righteous in the land is that they protect the poor from injustice. In a land of righteous people, the poor would have plenty.