

JOSHUA 24

The Covenant of Joshua

1 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people,

Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel,

Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his seed (זָרַע) many. I gave him Isaac. 4 And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

5 And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out. 6 Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 And when they cried to Yahweh, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness a long time. 8 Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived on the other side of the Jordan. They fought with you, I gave them into your hand, you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. 9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand.

11 And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand. 12 And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites. It was not by your sword or by your bow. 13 I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.

14 Now therefore fear Yahweh and serve him in perfection (תְּמִים) and in truth (אֱמֻנָה). Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.

16 Then the people answered,

Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods, 17 for it is Yahweh our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed. 18 And Yahweh drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve Yahweh, for he is our God.

19 But Joshua said to the people,

You are not able to serve Yahweh, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your offenses or your sins. 20 If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, then he will turn, do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.

21 And the people said to Joshua,

No, but we will serve Yahweh.

22 Then Joshua said to the people,

You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Yahweh, to serve him.

And they said,

We are witnesses.

23 He said,

Then put away the foreign gods that are among you and incline your heart to Yahweh, the God of Israel.

24 And the people said to Joshua,

Yahweh our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh. 27 And Joshua said to all the people,

Behold, this stone (אֲבִיבִים) shall be a witness (עֵד) against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness (עֵד) against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.

28 So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance (גַּזְלָהּ).

The Deaths of Joshua and Eleazar

29 After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being 110 years old. 30 And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. 31 Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that Yahweh did for Israel. 32 As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. 33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of Phinehas his son, which had been given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Biblical Worldview

1. It is the job of church leaders to gather/summon believers for official presentation to God.
 - a. **Joshua 24:1** 1 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God.
2. It is the job of church leaders to remind believers where they've been and where they're going.
 - a. **Joshua 24:2** 2 And Joshua said to all the people, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, Long ago, your fathers....
3. Abraham came from a family of idol-worshippers to be the father of God's people.
 - a. **Joshua 24:2-3** 2 ...Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River....
4. It is important for Israel to remember the distinct stages of God's faithfulness to her.
 - a. Bringing Abraham into the land of Canaan and giving him Isaac, Jacob, and Esau.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:3-4** 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his seed (אֲרָע) many. I gave him Isaac. 4 And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau.
 - b. Separating Jacob from Esau and bringing Jacob into Egypt.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:4** 4 And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.
 - c. Bringing Israel out of Egypt through Moses and Aaron.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:5-7** 5 And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out. 6 Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 And when they cried to Yahweh, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt.
 - d. Bringing Israel through the wilderness and to the east of the Jordan.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:7-10** And you lived in the wilderness a long time. 8 Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived on the other side of the Jordan. They fought with you, I gave them into your hand, you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. 9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand.
 - e. Crossing the Jordan and conquering the land of Canaan.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:11-12** 11 And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand. 12 And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out

- before you, the two kings of the Amorites. It was not by your sword or by your bow.
- f. Dwelling in the land of Canaan, a land of blessing and prosperity.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:13** 13 I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.
 5. Just as God gave Israel the land of Canaan, so he gave Esau the land of Seir.
 - a. **Joshua 24:4** 4 And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess....
 6. To continue enjoying the blessing and rest of God, believers must:
 - a. Fear him.
 - b. Serve him in perfection and in truth.
 - c. Put away false gods that he or she use to worship.
 - d. **Joshua 24:14** 14 Now therefore fear Yahweh and serve him in perfection (תְּמִיךְ) and in truth (תְּאֵמָה). Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh.
 7. Every day, the believer chooses which God or gods he or she will serve.
 - a. **Joshua 24:15** 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.
 - b. As human beings, we are made to worship, and so we must do so.
 - (1) “It may be the Devil, or it may be the Lord, but you’re gonna have to serve somebody.”¹
 8. Fathers are responsible for determining which God or gods his family will worship.
 - a. **Joshua 24:15** 15 But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.
 9. Beware of making promises to God you can’t keep.
 - a. **Joshua 24:16-22** 16 Then the people answered, Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods, 17 for it is Yahweh our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed. 18 And Yahweh drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve Yahweh, for he is our God. 21 And the people said to Joshua, No, but we will serve Yahweh. 22 Then Joshua said to the people, You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Yahweh, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.
 - b. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”
 - c. What should the people of Israel have said?
 - d. Joshua’s generation did serve Yahweh, but their children and grandchildren did not.

¹ Bob Dylan.

10. Godly leaders are realistic about human nature, even when things are going well.
- Joshua 24:19** 19 But Joshua said to the people, You are not able to serve Yahweh, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your offenses or your sins. 20 If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, then he will turn, do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.
 - Godly leaders know it is only by God's grace that people are able to serve Yahweh.
 - Godly leaders maintain a high view of God's holiness, jealousy, and justice.
 - Godly leaders remind believers about the consequences of turning their backs on God.
11. To serve and obey God, one must put away foreign gods and incline their heart to him.
- Joshua 24:23-24** 23 He [Joshua] said, Then put away the foreign gods that are among you and incline your heart to Yahweh, the God of Israel. 24 And the people said to Joshua, Yahweh our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.
12. The covenant at Shechem is one that is to last between Yahweh and Israel for all time.
- Joshua 24:25-27** 25 So Joshua cut a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh. 27 And Joshua said to all the people, Behold, this stone (אֲבִיבִים) shall be a witness (עֵדוּת) against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness (עֵדוּת) against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.
 - “Chapter 24 describes the covenant that Joshua makes between God and Israel. Like the altar built to recall the covenant in Joshua 8:30-35, a physical image of the covenant is set up again to remind the people of their promises: a stone is erected in the sanctuary of the Lord at Shechem.”²
 - Joshua 8:30-35** 30 At that time Joshua built an altar to Yahweh, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, 31 just as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, upon which no man has wielded an iron tool. And they offered on it burnt offerings to Yahweh and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. 33 And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.
 - God has fulfilled his promise. He has brought Israel into the land and divided the inheritance.

² Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 461–462.

- d. Israel officially declares she will maintain fidelity and loyalty to God.
 - e. The large stone, the seventh stone of Joshua, testifies to the marriage covenant between Yahweh and Israel.
13. What will Israel do with her inheritance? What will we do with ours?
- a. **Joshua 24:28** 28 So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance (נַחֲלָה).
 - b. Just as Israel may temporarily forfeit her inheritance, so believers and churches may temporarily forfeit their inheritances.
14. To be buried in one's own inheritance is a distinct blessing of the righteous.
- a. Joshua will rise and retake possession of his inheritance in the Messianic kingdom.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:29-30** 29 After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being 110 years old. 30 And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash.
 - b. Joseph will rise and retake possession of his inheritance in the Messianic kingdom.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:32** 32 As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.
 - (2) Here is another proof that the books of the Bible, taken together, tell one unified story.
 - (a) Genesis, Exodus, and Joshua all fixate on the bones of one man, Joseph.
 - (b) Those bones, buried at Shechem, are a testimony of Yahweh's faithfulness.
 - c. Eleazar will rise at Gibeah to serve as priest in the Messianic kingdom.
 - (1) **Joshua 24:33** 33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of Phinehas his son, which had been given him in the hill country of Ephraim.
 - d. Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar are all buried in the territory of Ephraim.
15. Every generation has to reckon with God. Some generations will succeed; others will fail.
- a. **Joshua 24:31** 31 Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that Yahweh did for Israel.

Notes