

Joshua 24:1 ¶ And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua 24:2 And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

Joshua 24:3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

Joshua 24:4 And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

The opening verse indicates that Joshua called another meeting with the people and their leaders and asked them to come and present themselves before the LORD at Shechem, the place from which they had recited the blessings and cursings and renewed their covenant with the LORD when they first entered the land of promise.

Joshua opened his address by declaring his message to be from the LORD; he was speaking for the LORD. He reminded them that their fathers had been idol worshippers, specifically Terah, the father of Abraham. The LORD noted that he took Abraham and led him throughout the land of Canaan and multiplied his seed through Isaac, Jacob and Esau. (The fact that God led Abraham requires the understanding that Abraham followed Him.)

He notes that He had given Esau mount Seir as his possession. Jacob and his children (the children of the covenant), however, went down to Egypt.

Genesis 17:19 "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

Genesis 28:10–14 "And Jacob went out from Beersheba...And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Joshua 24:5 I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.

Joshua 24:6 And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

Joshua 24:7 And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

Joshua reminds them how the LORD sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them from Egypt and how He caused plagues to convince Pharaoh to let them go. Even after letting Israel leave Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the people to the Red Sea with chariots and horsemen. The LORD describes how He put darkness between the people of Israel and the pursuing Egyptians and that He eventually caused the armies of Egypt to drown in the sea. Many of those listening had witnessed those events, and they had all endured the wilderness wanderings.

Joshua 24:8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.
Joshua 24:9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:
Joshua 24:10 But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.

The LORD reminded them that he brought them to the land of the Amorites that was west of Jordan and destroyed them so that they could possess the land. Then Balak, the king of Moab, tried to get Balaam to curse Israel; but yet again, the LORD delivered them.

Joshua 24:11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.
Joshua 24:12 And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.
Joshua 24:13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

Joshua goes on to narrate how the LORD led them across Jordan to defeat Jericho as well as the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites.

“I sent the hornet before you” – JFB notes that the “hornet” was probably a figurative expression for uncontrollable fear. This makes sense because every victory of the armies of Israel provoked fear in the hearts of those dwelling in the land. I believe the reference to the two Amorite kings is to Sihon and Og as identified by Rahab.

Joshua 2:10 “For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.”

Joshua went on to say that even though the people had used weapons to defeat

these kings, that was not what won the victory. It was the fact that the LORD was fighting through them because He had determined to give them the land. He had, in fact, given them a land with ready-made cities to live in and crops ready to provide for food.

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

Joshua 24:15 ¶ And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

In light of all He had done for them, Joshua urged the people to give the LORD the reverence and honor that is His due and serve Him with a whole heart in faithfulness (from the Hebrew for “truth”). He urged them to get rid of the false gods that their fathers served before coming to Canaan and while they were in Egypt. He urged them to serve the LORD, to obey Him as a slave would his master (from the Hebrew for “serve”).

Joshua then issued a challenge to the people—Choose this day whom you will serve. Choose to serve the LORD or serve the false gods of their fathers or of the Amorites. Then Joshua boldly proclaimed, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” This should be the proclamation over the door of every Christian home in the world!

I have to make one more observation. This is just another of many places in scripture that declare that God gave man the privilege of making his own choices. Though He has known those choices since before creation, making them predestined so to speak, each individual is free to choose. The LORD wants to fellowship with a people that truly love and worship Him—things that are only meaningful if given and done willingly.

Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

Joshua 24:17 For the LORD our God, he *it is* that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

Joshua 24:18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: *therefore* will we also serve the LORD; for he *is* our God.

The people quickly responded that their desire was to serve the LORD because He had delivered them from bondage in Egypt with great wonders and miracles. It was He that preserved them as they journeyed through the wilderness; He had protected them from the attack of other nations. They went on to acknowledge that the LORD had faithfully driven out the people of the land of Canaan to give them a homeland. In light of all He had done for them, it was only right that

they choose to serve the LORD; they accepted Him as their ruling authority.

Every true believer today can make a personalized statement of his/her own that is similar in nature. The LORD Jesus has delivered us from the bondage of sin. He has and will continue to preserve us as we sojourn in the domain of the god of this world, Satan. He will drive out the enemy before us if we will but look to Him in faith and obedience to act in accordance with His word.

1 John 5:4 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua 24:20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

Joshua 24:21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

You would think that Joshua would have responded with a big smile and congratulated them on making such a wise choice. Not so. He wanted the people to make a thoughtful choice that showed recognition of the consequences of breaking that commitment. Joshua reminded the people that the LORD is a holy God, a jealous God that will not tolerate continued willful or unintentional disobedience. If they decided to turn away to false gods, He would turn away from them and destroy them in spite of all that He had done for good on their behalf.

This truth didn't deter the people; once again they declared that they desired to serve the LORD. Joshua then declared that they were witnesses against themselves of this choice. Again, they readily agreed and affirmed their commitment.

Joshua 24:23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

Joshua 24:24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

Joshua went on to urge the people once again to get rid of the "strange gods," the idols that some of them still possessed, and to give their hearts fully to the LORD God of Israel.

The people answered by again declaring their intent to serve the LORD "our God" and obey His voice. Though they didn't say so specifically, that statement included a commitment to get rid of their idols since you can't truly serve and obey the LORD and keep your idols.

Once again, that is a truth that is applicable to every true believer today. We cannot hold on to idols in our lives and serve and obey the Lord with a whole heart. An idol is anything in our lives that we serve with passionate devotion that supersedes our passion and devotion to God.

Joshua 24:25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

Joshua 24:26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

After reading through several translations, it seems clear that Joshua made a written contract while in Shechem of their commitment to serve the LORD God that is included in the book of the law of God. He then positioned a “great stone” under an oak by the sanctuary of the LORD to memorialize the event.

Joshua 24:27 And Joshua said unto all the people, 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 unto you, lest ye deny your God.

Joshua 24:28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

Joshua declared to the people that this stone was to serve as a witness to all that the LORD had spoken to them that day through His servant Joshua. It would serve as a silent witness against them if they broke their contract with the LORD. Joshua then let the people return to their homes.

Joshua 24:29 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

Joshua 24:30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

Joshua 24:31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

Having completed all that God had purposed for him to do, Joshua died at the age of 110. They buried him in the land of his inheritance, in Timnathserah in mount Ephraim on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

Happily, the people of Israel served the LORD all the day of Joshua and the elders of his generation that outlived him, those men that were witness to the works of the LORD in bringing them into possession of the promised land. Sadly, we know that they will turn away from the LORD in the years to come.

Joshua 24:32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

It is noted that the bones of Joseph that the children of Israel had carried out of Egypt with them were buried in Shechem in a plot of ground that his father had purchased from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for 100 pieces of silver.

Genesis 33:18–19 “And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for an hundred pieces of money.”

This land became part of the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Joshua 24:33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

It is also noted that Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died and was buried in a hill in mount Ephraim that had been given to his son Phinehas.