Lesson 55 – The Last Words of Joshua

based on Joshua 23 and 24

1) Where does our lesson begin today?
Joshua 23:1 And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given _____ unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

The wars and conquest ended, Joshua had withdrawn to the peaceful retirement of his home at Timnath-serah.

2) What did he do?
Joshua 23:2-3 And Joshua called for all _____, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath _____ for you.

Some years had passed since the people had settled in their possessions and already could be seen cropping out the same evils that had heretofore brought judgments upon Israel. As Joshua felt the infirmities of age stealing upon him, and realized that his work must soon close, he was filled with anxiety for the future of his people. It was with more than a father's interest that he addressed them, as they gathered once more about their aged chief.

3) What did he encourage them?
Joshua 23:4-5 Behold, I have _____ unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the LORD your God, he shall _____ them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

The people in general were slow to complete the work of driving out the heathen. The tribes had dispersed to their possessions, the army had disbanded, and it was looked upon as a difficult and doubtful undertaking to renew the war.

4) What did he remind them?
Joshua 23:14 …and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath _____ of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to _____ unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.
5) What happens if we reject God's blessings?
Joshua 23:15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all _____ things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all _____ things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.
Joshua 23:16 When ye have transgressed the _____ of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall _____ quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

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Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that God's love for His people is so great that He will excuse sin in them; he represents that while the threatenings of God's word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. But in all His dealings with His creatures God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character, by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death.

God is the life-giver. From the beginning all His laws were ordained to life. But sin broke in upon the order that God had established, and discord followed. So long as sin exists, suffering and death are inevitable. It is only because the Redeemer has borne the curse of sin in our behalf that man can hope to escape, in his own person, its dire results.

6) What then did he tell them?
Joshua 24:13 (God's reminder) And I have given you a land for which ye did not _____, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.
Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in _____ and in _____: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.
7) Where was this meeting being held?
Joshua 24:1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to _____, 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.
8) What was special about Shechem?
Joshua 24:3 And I took your father _____ 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 8:32, 34 And he wrote there upon the _____ a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel… …And afterward he read all the words of the law, the _____ and _____, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

No spot in all the land possessed so many sacred associations, carrying their minds back to God's covenant with Abraham and Jacob, and recalling also their own solemn vows upon their entrance into Canaan. Here were the mountains Ebal and Gerizim, the silent witnesses of those vows which now, in the presence of their dying leader, they had assembled to renew. On every side were evidences of what God had wrought for them; how He had given them a land for which they did not labor, and cities which they built not, vineyards and oliveyards which they planted not. Joshua reviewed once more the history of Israel, recounting the wonderful works of God, that all might have a sense of His love and mercy and might serve Him "in sincerity and in truth."

9) After asking them to make a decision, what did he tell them?
Joshua 24:23-25 Now therefore put away, said he, the _____ gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we _____, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a _____ with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

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By Joshua's direction the ark had been brought from Shiloh. The occasion was one of great solemnity, and this symbol of God's presence would deepen the impression he wished to make upon the people. After presenting the goodness of God toward Israel, he called upon them, in the name of Jehovah, to choose whom they would serve. The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practiced, and Joshua endeavored now to bring them to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel.

10) What cutting words spoken on that day will live forever?
Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, _____ 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 _____, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua desired to lead them to serve God, not by compulsion, but willingly. Love to God is the very foundation of religion. To engage in His service merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment would avail nothing. Open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy and mere formal worship.

"The gods which your fathers served," from whom Abraham was called out, ***"or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell."*** These last words were a keen rebuke to Israel. The gods of the Amorites had not been able to protect their worshipers. Because of their abominable and debasing sins, that wicked nation had been destroyed, and the good land which they once possessed had been given to God's people. What folly for Israel to choose the deities for whose worship the Amorites had been destroyed!

11) What was the congregational response to Joshua?
Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should _____ 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 _____, and which did those great signs in our sight, and _____ us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:
Joshua 24:18 And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also _____ the LORD; for he is our God.
12) What strange thing did Joshua tell them?
Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye _____ serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Before there could be any permanent reformation the people must be led to feel their utter inability in themselves to render obedience to God. They had broken His law, it condemned them as transgressors, and it provided no way of escape. While they trusted in their own strength and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God's perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God's law. They must cease to rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God.

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13) In the light of their choosing, what did Joshua do?
Joshua 24:25-26 So Joshua made a _____ with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great _____, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

Having written an account of this solemn transaction, he placed it, with the book of the law, in the side of the ark. And he set up a pillar as a memorial.

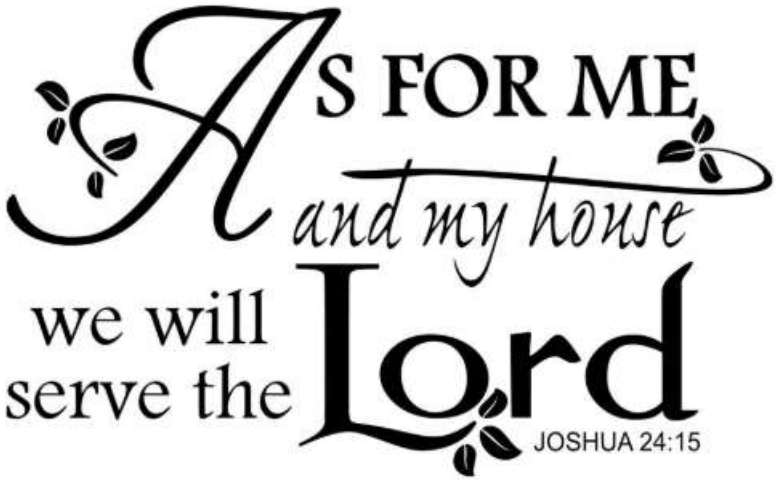
14) What happened with Joshua?
Joshua 24:29-30 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an _____ and _____ years old. And they _____ him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

15) What legacy did he have?
Joshua 24:31 And Israel _____ the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that _____ Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

Can you see how important it is to have an eye single to the glory of God?

Would you like power to root out the sin in your life ?

When is it time to prayerfully go forward in faith?



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