

Joshua 24

Joshua 24.1-8

V1 – Where were all the Israelites called together? Shechem

-According to *Beacon Bible Commentary*, II, 93, the acoustics there must have been unusually good (a natural amphitheatre)

V2 – Joshua began a review of Jewish history

-**Where did it all begin?** Beyond the Euphrates River, a reference to Ur of the Chaldees

-**Who was Terah?** Father of Abraham

V3 – Who was the father of the Jews? Abraham

-**What did God do with Abraham?** Led him to Canaan and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac

Who was Abraham's wife? Sarah

V4 – The sons of Isaac were Jacob and Esau

-**What happened to the sons of Jacob?** Went down to Egypt ("It's a long story")

-There were about 400 years between v. 4 and v. 5 (a very condensed recounting of the history of the Jewish people)

V5 – How were the Israelites rescued in Egypt? God sent Moses and Aaron there

-**What did God do in Egypt?** Sent plagues

V6 – In leaving Egypt, what natural barrier did the Israelites come to? The Red Sea

V7 – What did God do at the Red Sea? Destroyed the Egyptians

-interesting expression: "... put darkness between Israelites and the Egyptians" – a reference to death

V8 – The battle with the Amorites – this is what Rahab had heard about (*Exod. 14.20ff*)

Joshua 24.9-13

V9 – Balak tried to get Balaam to curse Israelites

-See Numbers 22-24

V10 – What did God do? Did not allow Balaam to curse the Israelites

V11 – Next events? Crossing the Jordan, taking Jericho, other enemies fell into the hands of the Israelites

V12 – How had God helped his people? Drove the hornets out (very interesting) and the Amorites, without sword and bow (this is also what Rahab mentioned in *Joshua 2.10*)

V13 – How else had God helped his people? He gave them land they had not worked, cities they

had not built, vineyards and olive orchards they had not planted
-**Message?** God had greatly blessed the Israelites

Joshua 24.14-15

V 14 – Commandment of Joshua? Serve God and love him (the Old Testament was not just "law," but the heart was also involved)
-A reference to idol worship of Terah and those in Ur of Chaldees

V 15 – A magnificent verse – What two choices did the Israelites have? Serving the pagan gods (Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth, etc.) vs. serving the one true God
-**What was Joshua's choice?** We will serve the Lord
-He spoke for his family (children especially were included) – **See Eph. 6.1-5**
-In the absence of the father, the children are to obey their mother – **Read Prov. 1.8**

Eph. 6.1 – Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right....

Eph. 6.2 – ...honor your father and mother...

-The Israelites could not remain neutral to Joshua's statement
-**See Matt. 6.24** – we cannot serve two masters

Joshua 24.16-18

V 16 – Initial reply? How could we ever forsake God?

V 17 – Their faith was based on what? Being delivered from bondage (and other acts)

V 18 – Their conclusion? We will serve God

Joshua 24.19-24

V 19 – Joshua seems to be challenging the people

-A football coach will challenge his players during half-time to do better; he may ask them to pledge to try harder

-Here Joshua is making a negative statement, challenging them to disprove him

-**What did they need to remember about God?** He would not overlook sin

V 20 – God would punish them if they forsook him

V 21 – Reply of the people? We will serve God

-this was their third affirmation (oath) that they were remaining faithful to God: *Josh. 24.16-18, 21, 23*

V 22 – Joshua confirmed their statement

-Like making the Good Confession in the New Testament

V 23 – What did Joshua already know about the people? Some of them were possibly already worshipping idols (some already in apostasy)

V 24 – They again stated their faith in God

Joshua 24.25-28

V 25 – Joshua made a pact with them

V 26 – The words they had spoken were incorporated into the Bible (here in this chapter)

What did Joshua do to commemorate this event? Set up a large stone under the oak at Shechem
There were 9 stone memorials listed in this book of the Bible:

1. The stones in the middle of the Jordan River (*Joshua 4.9*)
2. The stones on the western bank of the Jordan (*Joshua 4.20-24*)
3. The stones in the Valley of Achor (*Josh. 7.26*)
4. The heap of stones at Ai (*Josh. 8.29*)
5. The altar on Mt. Ebal (*Josh. 8.30*)
6. The stones of the law of Mt. Ebal (*Josh. 8.32*)
7. The stones at the cave of Makkadah, where they kept the 5 enemy kings, until the battle was over (*Josh. 10.27*)
8. The stone memorial built by the soldiers of the 2½ tribes (returning home) (*Josh. 22.10ff*)
9. Joshua's stone of witness (*Josh. 24.26-28*)

They were very, very careful to keep the 2nd Commandment (no graven images)

V 27 – **Purpose of all this?** To constantly remind them of their promise

V 28 – There was nothing more that he could do

Joshua 24.29-31

V 29 – **Next event?** Death of Joshua

-**Age?** 110 (the lives were still getting shorter)

-**Age of Adam at his death?** *Gen. 5.5* – 930 years

-**Why were the lives getting shorter?** The effect of sin on genetics

Read Romans 8.19.22 – The creation longs to be free from the curse of sin

-*Psalm 90.10* – between 70-80 years today

V 30 – **Place of his burial?** Tribe of Ephraim

V 31 – A great tribute to Joshua

-**What was it?** For his lifetime and the lifetimes of people he trained, the nation was faithful to God

-What a great tribute that would be to us today – if that could be said – that for the people who knew the Christians at our congregation, they and the next generation remained faithful to Jesus Christ

-Probably for 40 years after the death of Joshua, his influence continued

Gus Nichols' lectureship in Alabama – at same congregation for 35 years; his influence continues in Jasper, Alabama

-his life: 1892-1975

-Sixth Ave. Church of Christ – preached there for 35 years

-the church there established a school of preaching: The Gus Nichols School of Biblical Studies (still going strong)

-we are now living 35 years after his death, but his influence continues

Will people be able to say that about us? That a generation later, will our example of faithfulness and the determination to hold to sound doctrine and to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible silent – still be holding?

Book: *Great Preachers of Today: Sermons of Gus Nichols*

Joshua 24.32-33

V 32 – What else was buried? Bones of Joseph

If time:

Read Gen. 50-24-26

Read Exod. 13.19

Read Heb. 11.22

-One of the proofs of the inspiration of the Bible: little, almost "insignificant" details

-But they are maintained throughout the Bible (tied together by the Holy Spirit)

Location of Joseph's burial? Land bought by Jacob

Read Gen. 33.18-19

-This land had been bought about 500 years earlier

-Joseph was now "home" – land bought by his father Jacob (the boundaries apparently were still able to be identified)

V 33 – Who else died? The high priest Eleazar (he was appointed when Aaron died)

-**What was the birth order of Eleazar?** 3rd son of Aaron (*Ex. 6.23*) – Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire for using strange fire on the altar (*Lev. 10*)

-**How do we explain that Eleazar survived until the death of Joshua in the land of Canaan?**

-He had to be under the age of 20 at the time of the Exodus – he therefore died in Canaan, not in the wilderness

-He was buried on land owned by his son Phinehas

Conclusions to the book:

1. Serve God, and he will bless you.
2. A person can remain faithful to God.
3. God's promises are always fulfilled – no exceptions

What is the most meaningful event in the book, in your opinion?

For this teacher: Rahab being saved and entering into the family of God and the genealogy of Jesus Christ (like the thief on the cross in the New Testament)

Promises of God from Joshua:

1. To save Rahab
2. To honor the agreement with the Gibeonites
3. To kill the first-born and youngest sons of whoever rebuilt Jericho

See Joshua 23.14 - All the land promises that God made to the Jewish people were fulfilled in the days of Joshua

- There were not future land promises made to them
- This disproves the claim that the nation of Israel today is "God's country" and has a God-given right to be there
- It disproves premillennialism and the belief that there is a future kingdom of God that will come to the earth and will have its headquarters in Jerusalem
- The land promises came to an end in 721 BC for the Northern 10 Tribes and in 586 BC for the Southern 2 Tribes

This book: Like Homer's *Odyssey* – a wonderful journey of discovery of new things

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