



## Men of Joshua's Generation

Joshua 24 is a man's chapter and put backbone into the men and hence stability into the nation. The men of Israel had gathered to hear Joshua's last doctrinal message which indicated that they had a respect for his authority. Men are often heard to say, "I wouldn't go across the street to hear that so and so." Men will boycott a businessman who they think has dealt with them unfairly or dishonestly. These men held the key to Israel getting blessing from God. As goes the men of a nation, a local church, so goes their nation.

### A Review of the Past

In Joshua 24:1-12, Joshua was the spokesman for the Lord God of Israel. The men of Israel heard Joshua speak of the fragrance of memories regarding the work of a righteous God in gracing out Israel. In Joshua 24:13, he spoke of the visible wages for their victories was the property of the enemy. Israel was thinking with the mind of Christ.

*"Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God." (Joshua 24:1, NASB)*

*"I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant." (Joshua 24:13, NASB)*

### The Recourse of the Present

In Joshua 24:14, "fear" יָרָא (yare) in the Hebrew means to fear, to revere, to frighten, to dread, to respect. It is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word φόβος (phobos). You respect the character of God. You respect the authority of God. This is positive volition.

*"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14, NASB)*

"In sincerity" is תָּמִים (tâmîym) and means entire or completed as does the word τελειόω (teleioō) in the Greek. It also means to be without blemish, sincere, sound, without spot, undefiled, upright, whole.

"Serve" is עָבַד ('âbad) and means to work in cooperation with, to be enslaved to a principle, to have spiritual good production. This is a challenge to serve Him in the spiritual life!

In Joshua 24:14, "and truth" is אֱמֶת ('emeth) means trustworthiness, stability, certainty, to build up or support. "Put away" is סָרַר (sûr) and means to get rid of or liquidate. This is the important doctrine of separation and means overt separation as a result of inward stability.

In Joshua 24:15, "disagreeable" is רָעַע (raa) and means to spoil by breaking in pieces, to make good for nothing. This is negative volition. "Choose" is בָּחַר (bâchar) and means to select, to choose, to come to the fork in the road and either go positive or negative.

*"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15, NASB)*



“The gods which your fathers served” and “the gods of the Amorites” are referring to the old traditional religions and contemporary religions at that time. What resolves positive or negative thinking? Volition! Go one way or another. “How long will you hesitate between two opinions?” 1 Kings 18:21-22. Joshua’s answer is in Joshua 24:15 - “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

*“Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.” (1 Kings 18:21-22, NASB)*

*“If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15, NASB)*

### **The Remedy for the Future**

Spiritually mature men who have spiritual backbone and make biblical categorical decisions are the key stability for a nation. Isaiah 3 shows where the leadership of women and children negative to Bible doctrine lead a nation. Isaiah 3:12.

*“O My people! Their oppressors are children, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray And confuse the direction of your paths.” (Isaiah 3:12, NASB)*

Four times Joshua’s men affirmed their obedience to the Lord. Joshua 24:16; Joshua 24:21-22; Joshua 24:24.

*“The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;” (Joshua 24:16, NASB)*

*“The people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the LORD.” Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.”” (Joshua 24:21-22, NASB)*

*“The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice.”” (Joshua 24:24, NASB)*

In Joshua 24:16, “far be it from us” is חֲלִילָה (châlîylâh) and means heaven forbid, never! But there was a little problem. While they were saying this, they were right up to their armpits in idolatry. They weren’t ruling their homes, etc. They were using an oath to cover a lie. James 5:12.

*“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.” (James 5:12, NASB)*

We understand the issue that we all have fragrance of memories. They were saying that they knew the battle was the Lord’s. They were saying that they understood the issues. Joshua 24:17-18.

*“for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. “The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God.”” (Joshua 24:17-18, NASB)*

Joshua as their communicator and leader was unimpressed with their repeated assertions of being



positive to the Word of God. A communicator cannot help being a bit cynical as he has seen so much lip-service, especially among men. Some of you men have your family falling apart and you won't admit it, even if your life depended upon it. Men can be such idiots. Joshua 24:19.

*"Then Joshua said to the people, 'You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.'" (Joshua 24:19, NASB)*

"You will not be able to serve the Lord" is a warning that they cannot serve two masters. It's either God or other "foreign" gods. Joshua knew they were giving him that old damnable lip service. "He is a holy God" means that God is perfectly righteous and just.

A spiritually mature believer really makes a difference in a community just like David did when Israel was facing Goliath. The Christian life must be lived God's way! "He is a jealous God" is **קננו** (qannô) and means that God is possessive of His own and tolerates no other viewpoint. None at all!

"He will not forgive your transgression or your sins" means that the only One who can forgive will not forgive. Why? Because He can only forgive in His way. He cannot forgive negative volition. He can only administer divine discipline to correct the carnal believer's wrong thinking to get them to name their sins to God the Father and return to fellowship with the Lord.

In Joshua 24:20, "If you forsake the Lord" is **אזב** (azab) and means to loosen, to relinquish, forsake. "And serve foreign gods" refers to anything that you give higher priority than God and His Word.

*"If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." (Joshua 24:20, NASB)*

"Foreign gods" can refer to the love of the Baptist church on the hill, the emotionalism of the Assembly churches, the prestige of the Presbyterian church, the ritual of the Episcopal church, the tradition of the Catholic church, the sweet concern of the Nazarene church, the cultic culture of the Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists.

All are "foreign gods" and anti-grace. All are false teachers. All deny that Jesus Christ is the only means of gaining an eternal relationship with God. All of these religions put something man can do or accomplish (human works) to gain a relationship with or favor from God instead of the grace gift of salvation through belief in the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross for the sins of all mankind. Salvation is only by God's grace. Eph. 2:8-9.

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)*

In Joshua 24:20, God will "turn" is **שׁוּב** (shûb) and means that He will turn on you. He will switch from grace and love to judgment. Many people just can't understand the absolute attributes of God. The Lord is supposed to put up with a lot of verbiage, blasphemy, have no judgment, peace with everyone, brotherhood to all, love regardless of the behavior, etc.

"Do you harm" is **רָעָה** (raa), the same word used in Joshua 24:15 and is translated evil. "And consume you" is **כָּלָה** (kâlâh) and means to finish, to perish, to consume, to utterly destroy. He is going to take care of the situation! He does not tolerate negative volition to Bible doctrine. The people's verbal response continued to be affirmation to the Lord. They understood the situation. Joshua 24:21; Joshua 24:24.

*"The people said to Joshua, 'No, but we will serve the LORD.'" (Joshua 24:21, NASB)*



*"The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."" (Joshua 24:24, NASB)*

Some were in reversionism with emotional verbal statements of being positive to the Lord. Most said that they chose the Lord and had put away strange gods. Joshua made a covenant with the people and wrote it in stone so they would remember their decision. Joshua 24:25; Joshua 24:27.

*"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." (Joshua 24:25, NASB)*

*"Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God."" (Joshua 24:27, NASB)*

### **The Outcome**

In Joshua 24:28, "his inheritance" refers to their land, jobs and families. The example of Joshua kept them in line. The example of Joshua's mighty men kept them in line. Joshua 24:31.

*"Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance." (Joshua 24:28, NASB)*

*"Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel." (Joshua 24:31, NASB)*

Two visible manifestations of their positive volition toward God was Scripture written in stone and a great stone placed under an oak tree. This rock represents Jesus Christ who would come as their Messiah and pay for their sins on the Cross. Joshua 24:26.

*"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 oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD." (Joshua 24:26, NASB)*

Joshua spoke of the continued blessings from the God of Israel. He appealed to the person and work of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament and then commands the men to go for yea or nay. Joshua 24:15.

*"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."" (Joshua 24:15, NASB)*

Joshua spoke for his house where all were positive to the Lord. This is a direct contrast to Job in Job 1. Men can do no less than their leader. They either go for Bible doctrine or go for the rubbish of negative volition.

Joshua was cynical and pins them down and four times they state they are positive to Bible doctrine. Each man must realize the priority of Bible doctrine first, their family second, and their job (lands) third.

Two tangible objects attested to the fact that the issue was made clear and the men understood the message of Joshua which was the reality that God is faithful today and tomorrow. They were the literal writing of the covenant and the literal rock under a great oak tree.

*"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 oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God."" (Joshua 24:26-27, NASB)*



Today, we have the completed written Canon of Scripture. The bones of Joseph became a visible object that attested to the fact that men hundreds of years before had been faithful. Joshua 24:32.

*“Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons.” (Joshua 24:32, NASB)*

The era of Moses and Joshua ended. Moses died at 120 years of age. The events of the Book of Joshua take 26 years. Joshua dies at age 110. Therefore, Joshua was 35 years younger than Moses. When Moses was 80 and began to lead the children of Israel, Kadesh Barnea found Joshua 44 years of age. Joshua began to lead the people at the age of 84, for 26 years, then he died at 110.