



Joshua 23-24

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Tape #7069
By Chuck Smith

And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old and advanced in age (23:1).

They feel that this was approximately eight years after the conquest of the land. Joshua is now approaching a hundred and ten years old. The “advanced in age, stricken in age” speaks of the toll that age had taken upon him. Whereas Caleb said, I’m eighty-five, I’m as healthy and vigorous as I was when I was forty. Not so with Joshua. The years had taken their toll.

And he called for all of Israel, for their elders, and their leaders, for their judges, and their officers, and he said to them, I am old and I am advanced in age (23:2): You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all of these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you (23:3).

So as Joshua begins first of all to address the leaders of Israel, he is reminding them of God’s faithfulness to them. He will use this as the basis for his encouraging them to be faithful to God. God has been faithful. God has blessed you. God has fought for you.

And so, I have divided to you by the 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 (23:4).

The land is ours. From the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea.

And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God has promised you (23:5).

So he had divided the land up. However, they had not yet taken all of the land. They had taken enough to settle but they had not yet fully driven out all of the enemies. And so Joshua is encouraging them to go ahead and take the rest of the territory that was theirs by divine right.

Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left; and lest you go among the nations, these who remain among you; you shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them, you shall not serve them, nor bow down to them (23:6,7):

The exhortation of Joshua is to keep the law of God, the law that was written by Moses. Not to turn aside from it. Not to deviate from it at all. Lest as they come against these nations, they be polluted and not to mention the names of the gods of these nations.

But you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day (23:8).

They have been faithful up to this point but there were signs of moral breakdown among the people. It was not yet complete but it was beginning. “You shall hold fast to the Lord your God,”

For the LORD has driven out from before you the great and strong nations: but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He has promised you (23:9,10).

Here and throughout this entire speech that Joshua is giving to the leaders, he is quoting from the book of Deuteronomy. I didn’t count them but I would estimate there are some twelve or thirteen direct quotes from Deuteronomy in his charge to these people. This “one man shall chase a thousand” comes from the song of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy. And it is interesting that this indeed has happened in their history where God has been with them and one has chased a thousand. Actually in the next book we get to the book of Judges when we get to the case of Gideon, we find that three hundred chased a hundred and thirty-five thousand and put them to flight. And so this one hundred to a thousand is not an exaggerated kind of a figure. God being with them, God strengthening them and God helping them, they were able to put to flight their enemies.

It is so important that we come to the realization as Paul declared to Romans in the eighth chapter, “If

God be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31)? It’s so important to be aligned with God and live with God and covenant with God, in fellowship with God. It’s so important that we have that realization that God is for us. And thus the confidence with which we face any kind of a problem or any kind of a situation. Not fearing, not with anxious heart. God’s for us. God will surely deliver us. And the power of God to help His people.

It’s sort of like Jonathan said to his armor bearer, It doesn’t make any difference with God. If He wants to deliver the Philistines into the hands of Israel today, God can do it as easily to one man as He can the whole army (1 Samuel 14:6). God doesn’t need a whole army to do His work. All He needs is one man who is committed and consecrated.

Dwight Moody used to constantly say, *The world has yet to see what God can do through one man who is totally yielded unto God.* If there were just one man who would completely commit himself to God, the world has yet to see what can be accomplished. Just through one man totally surrendered to God. “One of you will put a thousand to flight.”

Therefore [he said] take diligent heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. Or else if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of the nations, these that remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in to them, and they to you: Know for certain that the LORD your God will no more drive out these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given to you (23:11-13).

Here he is challenging them to love the Lord. In the next chapter as he addresses the congregation of people, his exhortation is to serve the Lord. Serving the Lord follows loving the Lord. I serve the Lord because I love Him. That is of course the mark of the bondsman. You say, I love my master. I don’t want to be free. I want to serve Him. And he would take you to the doorpost and pin you to the doorpost with the lobe of your ear, with the awl through the lobe of your ear. I love my master and so because I love him, I want to serve him. And that’s the motive behind service. “The love of Christ,” Paul said, “constrains me” (2 Corinthians 5:14). And it is the only true motive for any valued service to God. “If I give my body to be burned and have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:3). I have to have that motivation of love for whatever I do for God. The only acceptable motivation. So he encourages them to love the Lord.

And then he warns them about allowing any of the nations to remain among them and begin to intermarry. Because your hearts will be drawn away. It will become a trap to you. you’ll be ensnared by it. You’ll be destroyed by it and you’ll lose the blessings of the land. So basically, he is encouraging them to be faithful unto God because God has been faithful to you. God has given you this land. God has fought for you. God has blessed you. God has brought you in. Now be faithful to God.

Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth (23:14):

Do you realize that his days were numbered? It’s sort of like Paul writing to Timothy and he said, The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:6,7). And realizing the time of his departure. Peter said, I know that I am about to move out of this old tent. And so Joshua says I am about to go the way of the earth. Just the way of the flesh. I’m about ready to die.

and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you; all has come to pass for you, and not one word of them has failed (23:14).

You know this in your heart, in your soul. God has kept His word to you. Not one good thing that God has promised has failed. God has been faithful and again, the faithfulness of God is the basis for His exhortation for their faithfulness to God.

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all of the good things have come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so the LORD will bring upon you all the harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you (23:15).

In other words, God is faithful to His word. God has promised that if you will serve Him, if you will love Him, He will bless you. If you will keep His covenant, if you will keep His commandments, you’ll be

blessed. But God has also promised that if you forsake God, if you worship and serve other gods, if you forsake the covenant of God and the commandments of the Lord, then the curses will come upon you and Joshua is saying, Now you see the faithfulness of God to keep His word. And as God has kept His word to do the good things, you can be sure that God will also keep His word to do those evil things that are declared for those who would forsake the covenant of God. God will be faithful to His word whether it be for good or evil in your life.

The past faithfulness of God is a witness to the future faithfulness of God. That is why we can look with such certainty at the prophecies of scripture. Because all of the prophecies that God has declared up to this point have come to pass. If they have all been fulfilled up to this point, you can be sure that the rest are going to be fulfilled. God isn't going to just say, Oh well, that's enough. Why don't we just forget it? and stop the progression of the prophetic picture that He is painting for us. He has been faithful up to this point. God is right on schedule. And just as sure as the prophecies have been kept until now, you can be sure that they're going to continue. God will continue to be faithful to His word and these things that God has declared that yet are to come to pass shall surely come to pass. They are more certain than tomorrow. God will keep His word.

Joshua is warning them. That can be a blessing to realize God keeps His word. What a blessing. What a thrill. As long as you are keeping His word. But God keeping His word can be an awesome kind of a horror if you are not faithful to God because God will keep His word. And you will experience the judgments of God. God keeps His word.

When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God (23:16),

He's sort of prophesying here declaring when you do it, he knows that they are going to fail. He has observed these people long enough through the forty years in the wilderness, through all the testings. He realizes that there's going to be failure down the line. And so "when you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God,"

which He commanded you, and you've gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them; then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you're going to perish quickly from this good land which he has given unto you (23:16).

What does history show? That these people did forsake the covenant of God. They've begun to worship other gods. And first of all, the Assyrians came and conquered the ten northern tribes. Took them into captivity. And then the Babylonian came and conquered Judah and carried them away to the Babylonian captivity.

In the archaeological diggings there in the Kidron valley just above the spring of Gihon in what is known as the city of Ophel which was the city of Jerusalem, the city of David, as they have been excavating the last four years this particular section of Jerusalem, Professor Shiloh in charge of the digs has uncovered the houses that were destroyed by the Babylonian army when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem in 607 and then later 595 B.C.

In these houses, Professor Shiloh was sharing with me that they have found hundreds of little idols, idols of the pagan gods, which is a mute testimony to the faithfulness of God in keeping His word that if you turn from Me, if you forsake Me, if you follow after other gods, then you will be driven from this land that God has given to you. And such became their history. Turning to idolatry, worshipping other gods. Of course, Jeremiah cried out against this as did Isaiah and the other prophets. But the people forsook the living God as Jeremiah said, God has two complaints against them. First of all, you have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water and you've carved out for yourselves cisterns. But they're broken cisterns that can hold no water. Turning from God they began to worship other gods and as the ultimate result, they were taken in captivity and they were taken away from the land that God had given unto them. Even as Joshua speaks of this as an event that surely will happen.

You remember the song of Moses. As Moses wrote the song and then taught it to the children of Israel. A folksong. But in this folksong, he speaks about the judgments of God that are going to come upon them in time to come when they turned away from God. And then this song was taught to all of Israel, it became a popular folksong among the Israelis. But the whole idea is that later on, when the calamities happen to you

and you get together and you start to sing this song, this song is going to speak of the calamities and the reason for those calamities and it will be a witness against you. The lyrics of the song were a witness against them. And so it was a song placed in their hearts but later on as they were in captivity they start to sing and then, uh-oh, the truth hit. Wow, we were warned. God was faithful in warning us. We were the ones that were not faithful.

It's interesting how that we oftentimes try to blame God for our calamities. When in reality, our calamities result from our failing to walk after God. God is faithful. We need to be faithful. God is faithful to do the good things that He has promised. But God is also faithful to do the evil things that He has declared that would happen to those who would forsake Him.

When God said to Isaiah, "Have I not created evil" (Isaiah 45:7)? He is referring not to evil in the sense of sin but the judgments that come upon those who forsake His ways.

So Joshua in chapter twenty-three addresses the elders of Israel. Now in chapter twenty-four, Joshua's final charge and this is to all of the people.

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

This is Joshua's final charge to the people. Interesting that he would call them to Shechem for this. It is significant. When Abraham first came into the land, it was at Shechem that God made the covenant with Abraham to give to him all of this land. There in Shechem God said to Abraham, "And I'm going to give to you and to your descendants all of this land." And Abraham built an altar unto the Lord and worshipped Him in Shechem. So Shechem was the place where God said, This is it, Abraham. God had called Abraham to leave the Ur of the Chaldees, the place of his fathers, to journey to a land that God would show him. By faith, Abraham journeyed not knowing where he was going. Going out in faith. But when he arrived in Shechem, God said, This is it, Abraham. I'm going to give you all of this land and to your descendants. This is the place. There Abraham built the altar unto the Lord.

Later on, Jacob addressed his family in Shechem and he said, Put away your idols and let's go to Bethel and worship God there. And so he had his family turn in all of their little idols and he buried them under an oak tree there in Shechem. He headed off to Bethel to make a commitment unto God with his family. God commanded Moses, When you come in to the land, have men from the tribes stand on both mount Gerizim and on mount Ebal. And from mount Gerizim pronounce upon the people the blessings that will come upon them if they will keep the covenant of God. But from mount Ebal let them declare the curses if they forsake the law of the Lord.

So here in Shechem between mount Ebal and mount Gerizim, the people stood as the Levites and the elders stood up on mount Gerizim and they called down the blessings that God would bestow upon the people if they would be faithful to keep the covenant of God. From mount Ebal the men cried down the curses that would come. You can go back in Joshua chapter eight and read about this event if you've forgotten it already. It was a few weeks ago that we studied it. But from mount Ebal they pronounced the curses and down below, the people responded, Amen, Amen. So be it. If we fail to follow God, so be the judgment that God will bring upon us.

And so here they are at the place where they made that commitment to keep the law of God, to obey and follow His way. And Joshua brings them to Shechem.

And he said to all the people, Thus says the LORD God of Israel (24:2),

Notice that Joshua is here a spokesman now for God. It is God who is speaking to the people. Joshua is the spokesman but this is God's word to the people. "Thus says the Lord God of Israel," this is God speaking to you. This is what God is saying to you. God sort of rehearses very briefly their history from the time of the call of Abraham. He goes over in a quick synopsis their past.

Your fathers including Terah, who was the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor dwelt on the other side of the flood or the river Euphrates in the old times and they served other gods (24:2).

Living in Babylon they were worshipping the gods that were being worshipped in Babylon.

Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood [or the river Euphrates], and I led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and I multiplied his descendants, and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave

Jacob and Esau: to Esau I gave the mountains of Seir as a possession; but to Jacob and his children they went down into Egypt. I also sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. 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. And so they cried out to the LORD, and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and He brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt: then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time (24:3-7).

So this brief synopsis of their history. Their father Jacob going down to Egypt. And then God sending Moses and Aaron to deliver them out of Egypt, the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians, burying the Egyptians in the Red Sea. And then their dwelling in the wilderness a long time.

And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, to dwell on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you: but I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land; and I destroyed them before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and he sent and he called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you: and so I delivered you out of his hand. Then you went over to Jordan, and came to Jericho: the men of Jericho fought against you, also the Amorites, the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; but I delivered them into your hand. I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites; but not with your sword, or with your bow (24:8-12).

I was the one that delivered the enemies. It wasn't the power of your bow. It wasn't the power of your spears, your swords. I was the one who gave you the land. Who delivered the people into your hands.

And I have given you a land for which you did not labour, cities that you did not build, that you might dwell in them; and you are eating of the vineyards and olivegroves which you did not plant (24:13).

All that you have you owe to God. All of the good blessings that are yours are given to you by the hand of God. Joshua's reminding them, the Lord's reminding them really because God is speaking in the first person, I have given you the land. Joshua's not speaking of himself but he's speaking for God.

Now therefore (24:14)

Now Joshua speaks. God has given His word of His faithfulness, of His blessings, of all He's done for them. Now Joshua says, "Now therefore," because of all of this, because of what God has done for you, because of the blessings and the advantages that you're enjoying today, now therefore,

fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth (24:14):

So first of all, they are to reverence the Lord. Fear Him, which is an awe and a reverence of God. Look what God has done. Stand in awe of God and His power and of His might and of His glory.

To me, it's just such a glorious thing to look around and see all that God has done and I just stand in awe of the work of God. It's just sort of a blessing, a tremendous blessing to see all that God has done. There's so many times I'm just overwhelmed, I'm wiped out by the blessings of God. I just sort of shake my head and say, I can't believe it. The goodness of God, the blessings of God. But that provokes a response in my heart. God has been good to you. God has blessed you. God loves you. God wants to bless you. And this is why we need to respond then to God and we respond by surrendering. Therefore, "serve the Lord with sincerity and truth." Our English word "sincere" comes from Latin, actually there are two Latin words, "sin sere". "Sin" in Latin is without and "sere" is wax—without wax.

The word sincere comes from those words because if you're in Rome, you know that these people were great sculptors. There are all over Rome still the marble carvings, Michaelangelo works and all, these marble busts and carvings and it seems like in those days, they gave kids a hammer and a chisel and a chunk of marble for Christmas and they all began to chip away. It was like crayolas, I guess. There are so many of these marble statues. They would adorn their homes, their patios and all with these marble statues. It seems that there in carving out a face or a marble statue, sometimes the hammer would slip or the chisel would slip as you were shaping the nose. Oops, and off but pop the nose. Tragic because here's the face so beautifully formed, and now without a nose. And hours, days had gone into the carving and you don't want to waste all of that time. So they would grind up marble into dust, mix it with wax and then they would form on a new nose out of wax. They'd put it at the swap meet for sale and some unsuspecting person would purchase that

handsome status and take it home and set it in the entry hall on a pedestal. And when summertime would come, those hot summer days, they'd walk into the entry hall and here would be the nose drooped down and running down the chin. Wax. And so the word developed "sin cere," without wax. True, genuine, not just made up. That's the kind of service God wants from you. A true service. A genuine service. Nothing phony about it. Serve the Lord in sincerity and in truth.

The church today suffers much because a lot of service is not with sincerity. There are a lot of those who have the public eye who have an outward manifestation of serving God but in reality, it isn't a sincere service of God. There are a lot of people that are in it just for the money. Just for the prestige. They are not true shepherds. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. Their desire is to fleece the flock of God, not feed the flock of God. They live very extravagantly and very lavishly. They have their fancy homes in Palm Springs and in Palm Beach. They hurt the cause of Jesus Christ because they don't serve God in sincerity and in truth.

Joshua said,

put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river, and in Egypt; and serve Jehovah (24:14).

In those days when Jacob came back from his uncle Laban with the two wives Leah and Rachel, Rachel you remember stole some of her father's gods and hid them in her tent. She brought some of the idols that her father Laban had been worshipping. When he caught up with Jacob and they had that tense encounter, he said it's not enough that you've taken away my daughters and my grandkids. But you've also stole my gods. It's tragic to have gods that can be stolen. But there remained that remnant of the worship from the other side. The daughters had been infected by it. Rachel wasn't willing to leave it completely. And she evidently passed these on to her children because these were the gods that Jacob had called for in Shechem. He said, Bring to me the gods that you have. And they brought them and he buried them under the oak tree as they went to Bethel to make their commitment unto Jehovah. Now here in Shechem where somewhere these gods were buried, Joshua is calling the people some 400 years later to forsake those gods and to worship Jehovah.

Idolatry is a very common and easy practice to fall into and is a prevalent danger. In fact, in John's first epistle he closes that epistle to the church with a warning, "Little children, keep yourself from idols" (1 John 5:21). In the day and age in which we live, we look down our snobbish noses at the people of antiquity who carve out little gods, little images, little idols and bow before them and worshipped them. And we say, Isn't it interesting what superstition will do to people? And isn't it marvellous that we are no longer living under these kind of foolish superstition where we don't take a piece of wood and carve some grotesque figure and put it on our table and put candles around it and flowers before it and go in and go "Umm" every night. And go through the chants and we're far beyond that kind of silly superstition. We are living in an enlightened age. And thus we oftentimes think that John's warning, "My little children, keep yourselves from idols," is something that is not relevant to us in this day and age in which we live.

But idolatry really begins in the heart. The worship of false gods is something that begins in a person's heart and you can be guilty of idolatry without ever having an idol for it is something that is in your heart. It is another master passion of your life. It is another ideal. It is an ambition. And without ever carving out something to represent it, it is nonetheless there in your heart. In the Old Testament, they would name the various gods. But they recognized these gods.

In Greece, they deified so many things. Pantheism. They deified love. They made love a god and then they had the goddess of love. They had the god of anger. The god of war. The god of peace. So many gods. And they did make images and idols and carvings to represent their various gods.

Today though we do not make carvings, images or idols, yet people are still worshipping some of the same gods that were worshipped in Greece, in Babylon, in Egypt, among the Amorites and the people who inhabited the land, the Canaanites, those that inhabited the land at the time before Joshua came in. For basically, the gods of the Old Testament were divided into three basic gods: the god of the intellect, the god of pleasure and the god of money or power. And if you'll look around today and look at the false gods that people serve, usually it's pleasure, power or education. These are the things that people are worshipping. So many pleasure worshippers today. People who make pleasure their god. People who make power their god.

People who make their intellects their god. He is challenging them to put away the gods which your fathers served. The gods of pleasure. The sensual gods of the flesh.

If it seems evil to you to serve Jehovah, then choose for yourself for this day whom you will serve; whether the gods your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell (24:15):

A person chooses the god that he is going to serve. You each make your choice as to what will be the center focal point of your life. I am going to be, I am going to do, I am going to have. This is my master passion. This is what I desire. And my whole life becomes centered around the master passion.

If it is the god of the intellect, then my whole life is devoted to expanding my knowledge and my understanding. I become absorbed in reading, reading, reading. Everything I can get my hands on in order to expand my knowledge and my understanding of the world around me.

If my god is pleasure, then I measure everything according to the amount of pleasure that it brings to me. My activities are all centered around the pleasure. I work hard all week so I live for the weekends though. When I can get out and follow after my pursuits for that thrill, that excitement, that sensation, that moment of pleasure. A person chooses the god that they are to serve.

To serve Jesus Christ becomes a matter of choice. You choose to serve Him or you choose not to serve Him. It's your choice. You're not forced to follow after Jesus Christ. He does not force anyone to serve Him. He wants your service to be sincere and in truth. He wants your service to Him to be from a willing heart prompted by love. And thus, no one is forced to serve the Lord. It's a matter of choice. I choose to serve the Lord.

Joshua is challenging these people to make your choice. You can live for many of these different things. You can live for pleasure. You can live for money, for possessions, for power. Or you can live for God. But you got to choose. Jesus said you can't have two masters. You can't have two master passions in your life. For you'll love the one and hate the other or you'll hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon, another god, the god of power and money. You can't serve them both. You've got to make your choice. Which is going to be the Lord of your life? "Choose this day, he said, who you're going to serve."

but as for me and my house, we're going to serve Jehovah (24:15).

Here he is, a hundred and ten years old, ready to die but he has cast his lot, made his commitment to serve Jehovah.

So the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods (24:16);

They responded in a very positive way to his challenge.

For Jehovah is our God, it is he who brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way in which we went, and among all the people through whom we passed (24:17):

They recognized how God was intertwined in their history. How God had preserved them. How God had blessed them and acknowledging the hand of God upon them as a nation. The God who did the great signs. Delivered us from bondage. Preserved us through the wilderness and through the nations where we passed.

And the LORD or Jehovah who drove out from before us all of the people, even the Amorites who dwelt in the land: we also will serve Jehovah; for He is our God (24:18).

Notice Jehovah is His name. He is our God. Jehovah is the name of the God that we serve. There are many gods. "The gods of the heathen," David said, "are vain" (Psalm 135:15). But recognizing they are gods, they are gods to these people. Though they have made them themselves. Carved them out. Put ears on them and eyes and feet. Yet they are vain.

In the Mormon religion, in the temple rites, they have an interesting goof. Because they have Elohim and Jehovah as two separate entities. And Elohim being the chief, He says, Go down Jehovah and create the earth. Yes, Elohim, we will go and create the earth. And so they report back and Jehovah says, Elohim, we have created the earth. And then Elohim says, Jehovah, go down and create light. And so Michael and Jehovah go down and create light and they come back and they report to Elohim, We have created light and

it is good and Elohim says, It is good that you have created light. Now go down and divide the dry land from the, and this whole little thing is going of the creation and Jehovah and Elohim are separate entities. Had Joseph Smith known Hebrew, he never could have made that mistake.

For here the scripture plainly declares that Jehovah is our Elohim. He is our God. God is not a name, it is a title. Jehovah is the name of the God that we serve. Molech is the name of the god that others serve. Or Mammon is the name of god that still others serve. Or Baal, or Shimachu or Ashtoreth or Ashtart or whatever. There's myriads of gods that people worship or serve. Jehovah is the name of the God that we serve. He is our Elohim. He is our God.

And so in the whole temple rite, they should correct that because it's. But you're not supposed to know that. That's part of the secret rites and you're not supposed to know that that's in the rites.

But Joshua said unto the people, You cannot serve Jehovah: for He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (24:19).

Whether or not Joshua is just challenging them here, or what his purpose is, maybe he's just speaking of the future knowing by the Spirit what is to happen even as Moses did.

If you forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after He has done you good (24:20).

If you forsake the Lord. Actually there was a king Asa—we'll get to it in Second Chronicles chapter fourteen—who when he came to the throne was faced with a huge army of the Ethiopians, the Nubians. And he prayed and said, "Lord, it's nothing to you to help, whether we are weak or strong: help us, O Lord; in Your name we're going to go out against this enemy and don't let man prevail against You" (2 Chronicles 14:11). And Asa went out and defeated this great host of Nubians that had come against him. And as he was coming back victorious from war, the prophet of God came up to meet him and said, The Lord is with you while you be with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found of you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

God is with you if you will serve Him, if you'll be with God. If you seek God, you will find Him. But if you forsake God, God will forsake you. Joshua is telling the people this. If you turn away from God and you begin to worship other gods, then He will forsake you and He will consume you after even He has done you good.

And the people said to Joshua, No; we will serve Jehovah. So Joshua said to the people, Now you are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Jehovah for yourselves, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses (24:21,22).

So Joshua's really nailing them. He's, Alright, you're witnesses now to this. We're witnesses.

Now therefore he said, this is your choice then put away the foreign gods that are among you (24:23),

Clean up the camp. Clean up the house. Get rid of these foreign gods.

and incline your heart to Jehovah the God of Israel (24:23).

The worship from the center of your life. The heart. That's the kind of worship that God wants. To serve the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

And the people said to Joshua, Jehovah our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and he made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law (24:24-26).

It is thought that the book of Joshua is actually an addendum to the first five books. That it was added to the book of the law. And of course, it is in our Bible. Here it is as a part of the canon of scriptures.

and he took a large stone, and he set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD (24:26). And Joshua said to all the people, Behold, this stone it will be a witness to us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us (24:27):

This stone that was near them where Joshua had given the charge of the Lord to them, he set this stone up and he said, This stone will be a witness. It heard everything that happened here today. And this stone will be a witness. When you see this stone, you will remember the word that the Lord spoke to us today.

it will be a witness to you, lest you deny your God. So Joshua let the people depart, each one to his own inheritance. And now it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD,

died, being one hundred and ten years old (24:27-29).

He was ten years younger than Moses when Moses died.

And they buried him within the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of mount Gaash. And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD, which he had done for Israel (24:30,31).

So those that had witnessed the power of God through the wilderness and through bringing them into the land, they served the Lord through all their days.

Now the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob have bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver: and which had become the inheritance of the children of Joseph. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that belonged to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim (24:32,33).

This old guard is dying off. Joshua and now Eleazar buried there in the mountains of Ephraim. The one mentioned here on the bones of Joseph. By faith Joseph before he died made mention of his bones. That when they were delivered out of Egypt, that they would take his bones with them and bury them in the land that God had promised. Joseph was a prince in Egypt. He had become second to the Pharaoh in command over Egypt. When Jacob came down and began to dwell in Egypt with all of Joseph's brothers and their families, Joseph realized that the promise of God to Abraham was to give him the land of Israel. And so Joseph knew that one day they would be leaving Egypt. He didn't know when but knowing the promises of God to Abraham, he knew that one day they would leave Egypt. And though he had deep roots in Egypt because of his position, yet his heart was in the land that God had promised unto their father Abraham. And knowing by faith that one day they were going to go to possess that land, he commanded that they would make a covenant that when they left this land, you'll carry my bones out of here and bury them in the land that God has promised.

So as Moses and the children of Israel left out of Egypt, they carried probably the mummy of Joseph because he was living at the time when the Egyptians mummified the bodies of the important people. And so they probably brought his mummy out of Egypt and buried it here near Shechem. This of course is brought to mention in the New Testament, Hebrews chapter eleven as an incident that spoke of the faith of Joseph and God keeping His word. Actually it was some four hundred years after the death of Joseph that they finally left Egypt. But they kept the covenant that they have made with Joseph and now the covenant complete, his body buried in Shechem there in the field that Jacob had bought earlier. His father had bought from Hamor, the son of Shechem.

So we leave Joshua and next week we start the roller coaster. The book of Judges. And we have a miserable roller coaster. Tragic, tragic, the history of these people. And as we begin to move into it, what we'll find in the first three chapters next week the pattern that is going to be followed for the next several years. In fact, for the remainder of their history throughout the Old Testament, we're going to see the beginning of this pattern in our lesson next week. Tragic pattern, God keep us from it.

May the Lord bless you and increase you in the knowledge of His love and grace as you experience the blessings of God upon your life, the faithfulness of God in keeping His word. May we each one be faithful unto Him and may we indeed this week serve our Lord in sincerity and truth as we offer to Him our lives. That they might be instruments through which He might work and spread His love in this needy world. May God use you to show someone that Jesus loves them. In His name.