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“Farewell for Now”

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, May 15, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #4

(hot breakfast provided)

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The book of Joshua wraps up in chapters 23-24 with Joshua’s farewell messages.

Remember, the people of Israel began with Abraham (Gen. 12: 6-7; 15:18-21). God chose Abraham and his family became the people of Israel eventually enslaved in Egypt. God rescued Israel out of Egypt through Moses and made a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai (10 Commandments). Subsequently, God brought Israel through the wilderness and Joshua instructed them to obey all God commands in so doing they will show all the other nations what God is like.

The story of Joshua unfolds in chapters¹:

1-5: Joshua Leads Israel into Promised Land

- ✚ Moses is dead. Joshua is Israel’s new leader
- ✚ Joshua is the new Moses
- ✚ Joshua called the people to obey God’s commands
- ✚ Joshua sends spies into the land
- ✚ Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promise Land
- ✚ Joshua meets the Angel of the LORD

6-12: Battles with the Canaanites

- ✚ Jericho and Ai – God’s faithfulness/Israel’s failure
- ✚ Gibeonites makes peace with Israel and follow God
- ✚ Canaanite Kings refused peace and made war
- ✚ Why does God declare war? Why the Canaanites? Did God initiate Genocide?
 - Culture of Canaanites exceedingly evil
 - Sexual Immorality
 - Child Sacrifice
 - Hyperbole, not literal
 - Duct. 7

- Joshua 10:36-39 vs. 15:13-15

- God gave mercy and peace to Canaanites that turned to follow Him.
 - Gibeonites
 - Rahab
- Unique moment in history
 - Limited to Canaanites
 - All other nations peace – Duct. 20
- Purpose of Battle Narrative
 - To show God is bringing His justice on human evil in a unique time in history, and how He delivered Israel from being annihilated
 - Note: It is not to set up a “holy war”

13-22: Joshua Divides Up the Promised Land as the inheritance to the 12 tribes.

- ✚ Old Joshua
- ✚ Divides and distributes land
- ✚ Geography important – Fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham (Gen. 12: 6-7)

23-24: Joshua’s Final Speeches

So now, it was all coming to pass exactly as God said it would. Joshua gives two talks to Israel that are similar to the talks Moses offered in Deuteronomy.

“After a long time had passed and the Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man...”

“After a long time” refers to the beginning of the book of Joshua into the Promise Land, victorious battles in the land, distribution of the land, until the end of Joshua’s life. Joshua lived to 110 years old. Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land at 80 years old followed by 30 years of battle.

“And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the Lord your God who has fought for you.”

¹ <http://www.readscripture.org>



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Israel had been witnesses to the powerful works of God. Joshua 24:1-13 describes all the LORD has done.

“The Lord your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the Lord your God promised you.”

Joshua reminds them of what the Lord has done, he points them forward to what the Lord is going to do. God’s work is not done. Israel’s march has not stopped. At that time, the Lord had given them rest from their enemies, demonstrating that God kept all his promises made at the beginning with the Abrahamic Covenant and through the book of Joshua.

God gave Israel their land. God fought for them. God gave them rest in the land. So, be thankful, Joshua says, and most importantly, be very careful to love the Lord your God.

“But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you...God will no longer drive out these nations before you...they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land...“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.”

Joshua lays out a challenge to Israel to remain faithful to the LORD, to obey everything Moses wrote in the Torah (Law), and to not turn away from the LORD.

Israel’s continued success depended on their faithfulness to God’s covenant and to love the LORD their God. From the fabric of your heart, remember, God has fulfilled all His promises – The LORD is faithful. God finished what He started. Now, continued blessing will come as Israel faithfully follows the commands of the LORD.

“What was Israel going to do?”

If they go the way of the other nations one consequence is that the Lord will no longer drive away their enemies. He

would no longer fight for them. They will be driven off the land, rather than their enemies.

If they do, it will lead to life and blessing in the land. If they don’t, it will lead to the same divine judgement that was brought on the Canaanites – driven off the land and into exile.

“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

At this point, Joshua calls for commitment. The people affirm their commitment to serve the God a second and third time. So Joshua wrote their words in the Book of the Law and confirmed a covenant with the people by setting up a large stone under the terebinth tree.

The question was, “What was Israel going to do?” Fast forward to today’s question, “What are you going to do with God?” Just as Israel had a choice, you and I have a choice. Choose to live faithfully in relationship with God or choose to break faith and separate yourself from God.

“What are you going to do with God?”

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (Romans 12:1-2, MSG)



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