

# JOSHUA'S FAREWELL

Joshua 13:1 - 24:31

## STRUCTURE

**Key-person:** Joshua

**Key-location:** Canaan

### Key-repetitions:

- Joshua's commands: be strong and obey the Law of Moses (Jos 23:6); don't serve the gods of the people of the land (Jos 23:7); don't pray to their gods (Jos 23:7); don't ally yourselves with them; don't intermarry with them; don't associate with them (Jos 23:7, 12); serve the Lord (Jos 24:14).
- Warnings: the Lord warned Joshua that large areas of land had yet to be taken (Jos 13:1); if the Israelites associated with the people of the land, then the Lord wouldn't get rid of those enemies (Jos 23:12-13), the remaining people of the land would cause pain for the Israelites (Jos 23:13), and the Israelites would be driven out of the good land (Jos 23:13); if the Israelites served other gods, the Lord would bring to pass all the evil he had threatened and the Lord's anger would blaze against them (Jos 23:15-16).
- God's promises: God promised to drive out the people of the land when the Israelites advanced (Jos 13:6); God's good promises came true (Jos 23:14); God's threats would also come true (Jos 23:15).
- Serve the Lord: Joshua challenged the Israelites to serve the Lord (Jos 24:14); if not the Lord, choose a god to serve (Jos 24:15); Joshua committed that he and his household would serve the Lord (Jos 24:15); Israelites promised to serve the Lord (Jos 24:16-18); the Israelites served the Lord during Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetime of the leaders who experienced the Lord's action in favor of Israel (Jos 24:31).

### Key-attitudes:

- Joshua's disapproval of the Israelites not expelling the people of the land.
- Joshua's challenges.
- Approval of Joshua.

### Initial-situation:

The Lord stopped the flow of the flooding Jordan River, and the Israelites walked across the river into Canaan. Joshua led the Israelites to conquer the cities of Canaan and totally destroy their citizens.

Joshua parceled out the land as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Each of the twelve tribes received its own parcel of land.

### Initial-problem:

Joshua became an old man.

**Final-situation:**

After Joshua died, the Israelites continued to serve the Lord during the lifetime of their older leaders who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel.

**BIBLE STORY**

Joshua became an old man and the Lord told him, "You are old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken" (Jos 13:1). God promised, "I myself will drive out the people of the land when the Israelites advance (Jos 13:6).

Joshua asked the Israelites, "How long will you put off taking possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?" (Jos 18:3).

Joshua became an old man. Joshua called the Israelites together and gave them a farewell speech. Joshua reminded them of all that the Lord God had done for them and challenged them to take possession of the land not yet conquered (Jos 23:1 - 24:28).

Joshua told the Israelites, "Be strong; obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses. There are still people living among us who aren't Israelites. They worship their own gods. Don't worship their gods. Don't pray to their gods. If you ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you, and if you intermarry and associate with them, then the Lord your God won't get rid of these enemies for you. They will cause you pain like a whip on your back and thorns in your eyes. Then you will become the ones who will be driven out of this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Everything good that the Lord promised has come true. In the same way, the Lord will bring to pass all the evil he has threatened. If you violate the Lord's covenant and serve and worship other gods, the Lord's anger will blaze against you (Jos 23:6-16).

"Serve the Lord. But if you decide that it's a bad thing to serve the Lord, then choose for yourselves a god you'd rather serve, and do it today. Choose one of the gods your ancestors served in Egypt or the gods of the people in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

The people answered, "No! We'll never forsake the Lord to serve other gods! We too will serve the Lord, because he's our God!" (Jos 24:14-18).

Joshua, the servant of the Lord, died when he was 110 years old (Jos 24:29).

Israel served the Lord during the time Joshua was living. They continued to serve the Lord during the lifetime of their older leaders who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel (Jos 24:31).

**GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before his death, how did Joshua prepare the people for the future?
2. What did Joshua say about the unconquered land?
3. What dangers did unconquered people present to the Israelites?
4. What are some “unconquered lands” we have in your lives today?
5. What promises about God did Joshua make to the Israelites?
6. What challenge did Joshua give the Israelites?
7. What importance did Joshua give to the word of God?
8. What commitment did Joshua make before the people?
9. What happened after Joshua died?
10. How is the depth of our commitment to the Lord challenged by people around us who are not committed to God?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Procrastination in obeying God may result in being unfaithful to God.** The Lord informed Joshua that large areas still needed to be conquered (Jos 13:1). Joshua asked why some of the tribes were putting off the job of possessing the land (Jos 18:3-6). Joshua had parceled out as an inheritance the land still occupied by the remaining nations. The Israelites only had to conquer it with God’s help (Jos 23:4).
2. **God keeps his promises, both to bless those who faithfully serve him and to punish those who disobey him.** Joshua told the Israelites, “Just as everything good that the Lord promised has come true, the Lord will bring to pass all the evil he threatened if you violate the covenant of the Lord your God and serve and worship other gods” (Jos 23:6-16).
3. **God both saves his people and punishes those who disobey him.** The Lord God who benefitted Israel with great miracles would turn against a faithless nation. Disobeying God by worshiping other gods would cause Israel the loss of the land (Jos 23:16).
4. **Obedience to God requires obeying what is written in his word, and worshiping him alone.** Joshua commanded that the Israelites continue obeying all that was written in the Book of the Law of Moses (Jos 23:6), and not worship any other gods but remain faithful to the Lord (Jos 23:7). Joshua had been commanded to obey what was written in the law of Moses (Jos 1:9). God’s most basic command to Israel was to worship him alone and to refuse to be lured into association with other deities or people who worshiped them (Ex 20:3-6; Deut 5:7-10).
5. **True worship begins at home.** Joshua promised that he and his house would serve the Lord (Jos 24:15). If parents do not practice and teach God’s words at home, they are partly to blame when their children do not serve the Lord.

6. **Individuals are responsible for their personal commitment to God.** Joshua took a definite stand for the Lord. Regardless of what others decided, Joshua made a commitment to God and determined to live by that decision (Jos 24:15).

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

| <b>All</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| Joshua said, "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.... But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14-15 NIV). |  |
| <b>Group 1</b>   | <b>Group 2</b>   |
| Now <b><u>fear</u></b> the Lord.   | <b><u>Serve</u></b> the Lord with all faithfulness.                                  |
| <b><u>But</u></b> if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you   | <b><u>Then choose</u></b> for yourselves this day <b><u>whom</u></b> you will serve. |
| But as for <b><u>me</u></b>  | and <b><u>my</u></b> household.  |
| <b><u>We will</u></b> serve the Lord   | We will <b><u>serve</u></b> the Lord.  |
| <b>All</b>   |  |
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