

**Choose You
This Day**

Joshua 24

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac. And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau.

And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, 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 when they cried to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt.

And you lived in the wilderness a long time. Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan.

They fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand. And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you,

and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.'

“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.” Then the people answered,

“Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

But Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.” And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the LORD.” Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to

serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.” And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.” So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. 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 terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.” So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

Joshua gathered **all the tribes** of Israel to **Shechem** and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they **presented themselves before God.**

At Shechem

Abram (Abraham)- God appeared to him and made promises about the land.

Genesis 12:6-7

Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

At Shechem

Jacob- After he reconciled with his brother Esau- he built an altar to the Lord, trusting his promises.

Genesis 33:18-20

And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. And he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

At Shechem

Joshua- After they were defeated at Ai due to Achan's sin, Joshua led the people in a covenant renewal.

Joshua 8:34-35

And afterward he read all the words of the law according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of **Abraham** and of Nahor; and **they served other gods**. Then **I took your father Abraham** from beyond the River

God began with Abraham, as we know.
Joshua mentions Abraham. But
Abraham is not mentioned to remind
the people of their supposed illustrious
ancestry but rather to remind them of
their humble and utterly pagan
beginnings.

– James Montgomery Boice



I took your father Abraham

I gave him Isaac. And to Isaac **I gave** Jacob and Esau

I sent Moses and Aaron

I plagued Egypt

And afterward **I brought** you out.

I brought your fathers out of Egypt

Then **I brought** you to the land.

They fought with you and **I gave** them into your hand.

I destroyed them before you

Balaam (cursed) you but **I would not listen** to him

I delivered you out of his hand

I gave them into your hand

I sent the hornet before you, it was not by your
sword or bow.

I gave you a land.

If any man ascribes anything of
salvation, even the very least thing, to
the will of man, he know nothing of
grace, and he has not learned Jesus
Christ rightly.

– Martin Luther



Now **therefore** fear the LORD and
serve him in sincerity and in
faithfulness.

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you **therefore**, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Ephesians 4:1

I **therefore**, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy** of the calling to which you have been called

In reminding the people of their past, he was not reminding them of some great heritage they were being challenged to live up to, but rather of the fact that they had been pagans, worshipers of false gods, before God called them. They were to live for him because of who they had been and what he had done for them.

– James Montgomery Boice



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.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how **you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God**

Some may be disturbed by the way Joshua calls for a decision. Is he serious about which pagan gods they should choose? But he is using a reductio ad absurdum. He says, “Serve God- but if you won’t choose the non-gods you will serve.” You will say, “But choosing between pagan gods is stupid.” Joshua retorts, “That’s precisely my point. If you reject Yahweh, you are stupid, and the only options left are so absurd they make no sense at all.”

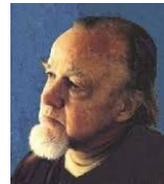
– Dale Ralph Davis



But as for me and my house, we will
serve the LORD.

This was the character of Joshua. He chose, and he chose, and he chose, and he kept right on choosing. Thus his word to the people was not an affirmation puffed up on the spur of the moment. It was deeply imbedded in Joshua's comprehension of what is required of a person made in the image of God, one called upon not to obey God like a machine or an animal, but to obey God by choice.

– Francis Schaeffer



“Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

But Joshua said to the people, “You are **not able to serve the LORD**, for he is a holy God. He is a **jealous God**; he will **not forgive** your transgressions or your sins. **If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods**, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.”

Matthew 6:24

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the LORD.” Then Joshua said to the people, “You are **witnesses** against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.” And they said, “We are **witnesses.**”

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. 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 terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us.

John 6:66-69

After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

As for the future, can you suggest anything which can arise that shall render it necessary for you to mutiny, or desert the old flag to serve under another captain? If life be long--he changes not. When we are sick, what more do we want than Jesus to make our bed in our sickness? When we die, is it not written that "nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" We say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

– Charles Spurgeon

