

Studies in the Book of Joshua
Lesson 13 - Joshua 23:1-16
The Abundant Life
Joshua's Farewell Message

We commonly think of Joshua as a great soldier, and he was, but here we see him as a great shepherd with a loving concern for his people. He had served the Lord and the nation faithfully, now he was concerned about the people departing from the Lord and losing their inheritance. This was the same concern Peter had before he died and also the Apostle Paul. How tragic it is when one generation sacrifices to obtain God's blessing and a new generation comes along and loses everything.

Joshua called the leaders of the tribes together, probably at Shiloh. He wanted to instill in his leaders a sincere devotion to the Lord. He would die, but they would be left to carry on the work. Joshua wants them to be faithful to their God. These men had seen the wonders of the Lord, from the crossing of Jordan to that present day. Note how Joshua gives God all the glory for what had been achieved: The Lord fought the battles; all Joshua did was divide the land! It is good for us to remember what God has done for us. God's workers change, but His Word remains the same. Joshua assures them that God will continue to fight for them and give them victory over their enemies.

What God does for His people depends often on what the people do for God. Joshua reminds them of their responsibilities as the people of God, and his words take us back to Moses warnings in Deut. 7–11. Israel must beware of the heathen nations in the land. The only way Israel could ever hope to gain the land and claim their inheritance was by obeying the Law of God. It would take courage to trust the Word and oppose the enemy, but God would enable them.

Joshua's main concern was that Israel be a separated people and not entangle themselves with the heathen nations. They had to choose either the Lord or the heathen nations; but if they entangled themselves with the heathen, God would remove His blessings from them. The principle here in verse 13 applies to all believers: any sins we allow to remain in our lives become traps and thorns to us.

We cannot help but notice Joshua's emphasis on the Word of God. "*There has not failed one Word of all His good promise.*" To obey His Word means victory and blessing; to disobey it means defeat and disappoint.

Read Joshua 23:1-16. Pray and answer the following questions:

1. Why did Joshua call the rulers of the people together?

2. What has he promised to do?

3. What statement does Joshua make in verse 3? Why is this important in a Christian's life?

4. What were the positive things the Israelites were to do?

5. What were the negative things they were to avoid?

6. What reasons did Joshua give Israel for loving God? (See 23:9-11). What are some specific ways that you can show your love to God?

7. Verse 10 says, "*The Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.*" How would this verse be an encouragement for the future of Israel and how does it encourage you?

8. What does verse 14 tell us about God's character?

9. In verse 15-16 we see two sides of God's truthfulness which Joshua reveals. Why is it important for us to understand both sides?

10. What are some of the false gods of our culture? How can you avoid engaging and bowing down to them?

Joshua wanted to prepare the next generation. We have seen through this study, that he was old and advanced in years. Soon he would leave and go to be with the Lord. What would happen to the Israelites after he was gone? What would happen to the next generation? Would the work Joshua started continue or disappear without him around? Joshua was a disciple maker. Disciple makers desire to train up the next generation so that even when they are absent or have to leave the work will go on. Moses had trained and prepared Joshua to take over the work when he was gone. Now Joshua wanted to make sure others were ready to take the mantle. In the book of Judges, we learn that the effort to train up the next generation was not entirely successful. Here we learned that at least Joshua tried. He cared about the people. He cared about what would happen to them when he was gone. He did what he could to help encourage them to follow the Lord themselves because of what he had done for them.

Joshua gives all the glory to God for the successes in his life. When people approach the end of their lives, they begin to think about what legacy they will leave behind. Joshua is not like this at all. He is not thinking about himself. He wants the people to remember God's work on their behalf. He is not concerned about his legacy, he is concerned about God's legacy, wanting to give God glory for all that has happen.

Here's Some Key Verse's from This Lesson

On God's Promises: Jer. 1:12, Ezek. 12:28, 2 Peter 3:9, Ps. 91

On the Consequences of Sin: Pro. 14:12, Isa. 59:2

On Standing Firm: 1 Cor. 10:12

On Treasuring and Clinging to God's Word: Job 23:12, Pro. 3:7, Pro. 16:16