

### Digging Deeper Joshua Week 8

Compared to the warped speed that we went through Joshua 11-22, this week we will once again slow down and take our time as we wrap up our study of Joshua. It is kind of nice to be able to slow down this week and really take in all the details and appreciate all that the Lord has for us in these final two chapters. Again, my prayer is that you will not just be a consumer of this information but one that takes it out – one that shares something you have learned with someone else.

We pick up in these last two chapters about 25 years after the allotments of the land. We know this because at the end of Joshua 24 we learn that Joshua is 110 years old and remember he was about 40-45 years old when he crossed the Red Sea and remained in the wilderness for an additional 40 years.

We begin and end on beautiful notes this week – we begin with the Lord giving the Israelites rest.

*Joshua 23:1- A long time afterward, when the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years,*

Do you remember when rest first appeared in Scripture?

*Genesis 2:2-3 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

God created rest for us. He rested after He completed His work and He calls us to rest. Rest was the last of the things the Lord created. How do you rest? Do you get enough rest?

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Joshua is no spring chicken here and as his life is coming to an end he is focused on his people. He wants the best for the Israelites and wants to do all in his power to set them up for success. if you knew you only had a short time to live, what would your focus be?

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If you have known someone who was given a terminal diagnosis, where was their focus? What things become suddenly less important? What does that say about where we put our time and energy?

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Joshua reminded the Israelites of what the Lord was going to do for them – He would continue to be with them and give them military success so that they could drive out all of the pagans from the land the Lord had given them as an inheritance. He tells them it will require strength to do so.

*Joshua 23:5-6 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. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left,*

They were not to turn aside to the right hand or left – turning aside doesn't seem like that big of a deal but even a little off is off. It is in the little things that we are taken off track. The problem with turning aside is that we don't recognize that we are doing it – it is small – it doesn't seem like a big deal but it leads us down the wrong path.

What small ways have you been taken off track during this pandemic? Have you disconnected from church – even online? Have you spent more time binge watching your favorite shows? Have you spent more time on social media and less in His Word? Have you found yourself feeling disconnected from others?

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Joshua tells them not to mix with the people around them because the Lord KNEW that if they did they would be tempted to worship their Gods and that's exactly what we see happen down the road. Joshua told them to not only not mix with those around them but to cling to the Lord.

When you hear 'cling to the Lord' what image does that bring to mind? What would it look like for you to cling to the Lord? Do you feel you are currently clinging to the Lord?

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The warnings continue from Joshua.

- i. God ALWAYS gives us a choice. He never forces Himself on anyone. He invites us but we have to accept His invitation.

Joshua tells the Israelites his time is short and God is faithful.

*Joshua 23:14 “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.”*

Not one word has failed – everything that God says He will do, He will do. He is 100% trustworthy 100% of the time. His Word stands forever.

Isaiah 55:11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

What does it mean to you to know that God’s word doesn’t return empty?

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Joshua gathers the people.

*Joshua 24:1 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.*

Notice that Joshua gathered all the tribes. Why do you think it was important that everyone was called to present themselves before God?

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Next we see Joshua review all the Lord had done for the Israelites going all the way back to Abraham.

*Joshua 24:2 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.*

Abraham served other gods and yet God chose Abraham to be the father of nations. God took Abraham from where he was to where God wanted Him to be and He does the same thing for us. He takes us from our life of sin and death and takes us into His marvelous light. He chooses us first.

*John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit ...*

Did you realize Abraham served other gods? Why do you think god chose Abraham and what does that mean for us?

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What does it mean to you that Jesus chose you first – that it all began with Him? How does this knowledge change the way you think about how you came to salvation?

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*Joshua 24:3 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.*

He not only choose Abraham and took him from where Abraham was to where the Lord wanted him to be but God led Abraham. The Lord God Himself led Abraham and He leads us by His Holy Spirit.

*John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...*

How important is it to you that the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth? How is that even more important in the world we live in today where everyone seems to have their own truth and where there is great skepticism to anything we read or hear on the news or in the media?

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*John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever*

How does this differ from how the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament? What does it mean to you that His Holy Spirit will be with you forever? What does it mean to you that His Holy Spirit dwells within you?

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*John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

The Holy Spirit will teach us and remind us of all that the Lord has taught us and all that we have read in His Word. Why is this important for us?

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Joshua went on to review more of the history of God and his dealings with the Israelites all the way back to the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Joshua 24-10. Joshua wanted to make sure the Israelites knew that the Lord was not just with them but had been with their forefathers. The same is true for us – for our family members who have put their faith in Jesus – He has been with them. Think about how far back your spiritual heritage goes in your family. For some of you it is generations and for others it may have begun with you. Describe your spiritual heritage.

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What kind of spiritual heritage are you leaving for your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc.?

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Next Joshua gets to the part of the history that this group of Israelites lived through. It may seem unnecessary to remind them of what the Lord had done since they all experienced it, but the Israelites quickly forgot what the Lord had done for them over and over again.

*Joshua 24:11-13 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.'*

What do you think it mean to the Israelites to be able to live in cities they did not build and enjoy the fruits of the labor of vineyards, fields and orchards that they did not plant? How were the living conditions different for them from wandering in the desert to living in these cities?

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After reminding the Israelites of all God had done for them Joshua boils it down to a simple decision.

Joshua 24:14-15 *“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. <sup>15</sup> 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.”*

Choose this day whom you will serve – that same question is one we all have to answer. How we answer it is found in verse 14 – fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and faithfulness and put away idols and serve the Lord. Seems like an easy thing to do – the decision is easy but the follow through is challenging. Whom are you serving today? Are you serving the Lord in sincerity and faithfulness? Or do you serve Him some of the time and idols at other times? Is your services sometimes insincere or does your faithfulness wane?

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The people of Israel give their answer about whom they will serve and Joshua pushes back three different times and the Israelites commit to serve the Lord each time. Why do you think Joshua kept pushing back on their decision?

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Joshua wanted to make sure the people knew the gravity of their decision. He wanted them to understand that there would be rewards if they were obedient and consequences if they were disobedient. He wanted this to be a serious decision that they did not make lightly. Do we take the decision for salvation lightly? Are we interested in getting our ticket to heaven but have no intention of walking with the Lord or allowing Him to rule over our lives? Are we willing to have Jesus as our Savior but not as our Lord?

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Joshua renews the covenant with the Israelites.

Joshua 24:25 *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem.*

Joshua follows this with creating a stone of remembrance.

*Joshua 24:26-27 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. <sup>27</sup> 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."*

This is not the first stone of remembrance that has been set up in the book of Joshua. What other stones can you recall were set up for remembrance? Why do you think these were so important for the Israelites?

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Then Joshua sends the people home to live in the land that the Lord had given them. He had completed the job the Lord had for him, the job he picked up from Moses.

*Joshua 24:28 So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.*

How do you think Joshua felt after completing the call the Lord had on his life? Can you share an example of when you completed a task for the Lord and how you felt after it was completed?

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Death of Joshua at 110 years old.

*Joshua 24:29-30 After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. <sup>30</sup> And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash.*

Joshua's final epithet was servant of the Lord. I can't imagine a greater description for Joshua. Think about your own life – if you could choose your epithet – what would it be?

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Now we come to my favorite verse in Joshua.

*Joshua 24:31 Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel.*

This was one of the most faithful times in all of history for Israel. They were not only faithful during the life of Joshua but also in the lives of all the leaders who served under Joshua. Why do you think they were able to remain faithful during this time? What things do you think contributed to making this possible? What does this say about the kind of leader Joshua was?

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I am incredibly humbled that you have stuck out this eight week study of Joshua with me! It has been a joy and a pleasure to study Joshua with all of you. I hope you have learned some new things and have found ways to apply the lessons from Joshua and the Israelites' lives to your own life and your own walk with the Lord. My greatest prayer is that you will not just be a consumer of this study but one who is willing to share what you have learned with someone else. I pray that this study doesn't just impact those who have participated in it during this time but that it continues to be used and shared with others. All of the videos, lists of Scriptures and Digging Deeper material will remain in this Facebook group at [www.facebook.com/groups/DHCBibleStudy](http://www.facebook.com/groups/DHCBibleStudy) and in addition it has all been loaded onto the Daughters of the Holy Cross website for you to share with those who do not use Facebook at <https://www.daughtershc.org/joshua-bible-study> Please feel free to share these with others. May the Lord bless you and keep you and make His face shine upon you! Looking forward to beginning a new study with you all in January 2021.

I would LOVE to hear your feedback on this study, please share what you have learned, how the Lord has used this study to further your faith journey and how you have shared what you have learned with others with me at [deaconshellysorem@gmail.com](mailto:deaconshellysorem@gmail.com)