

Joshua Series

Choose You This Day

Joshua / Joshua 24:14–28

You'll find the passage for our final message in this series through Joshua as you turn your Bibles and join me in Joshua 24.

Introduction:

When I served as a missionary into our public schools, we had a program called **Words of Wisdom**. It was a daily 60-second video segment used during the announcements to encourage the students to make wise choices each day. At the end of each segment we challenged the students, "With something to think about this is Mr. Dustin. Make it a great day, or not; the choice is yours!"

Joshua brings the people to a place of decision in their lives as well.

In verse 15, Joshua challenges the people to a choice: choose you this day whom ye will serve. This challenge is as relative to us today as it was then. Will you choose to follow Christ or will you go your own way and serve your own idols.

Why should you follow the Lord?

Transition:

In Joshua 24:1 and Joshua 24:25 the writer identifies that Joshua has gathered the people together at **a town called Shechem**. We'll deal more with this later, but for now, Shechem was situated between two mountains: **Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim**. In Deuteronomy 11:29 Moses pronounced the blessings for keeping the Law from Mt. Gerizim and the curses for not keeping it from Mt. Ebal.

Deuteronomy 11:29

29 And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

So one mountain, Mount Gerizim, became blessed and fruitful. The other mountain, Mount Ebal became cursed and barren.

In Joshua 8:30-35 Joshua fulfills this command given to the children of Israel to pronounce these blessings and cursing once they come into the promised land. We are told that to this day Mt. Gerizim is forested while Mt. Ebal is barren.

Joshua 8:30–35

³⁰ Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal, ³¹ As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. ³³ And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

Can you **imagine the scene** as Joshua now is challenging Israel in Joshua 24:15, he has gathered the people to Shechem, situated between the mountain of blessing and the mountain of cursing, and he says, “Choose you this day who you will serve.”

Hence the decision **which way will you go?** Will you go the way of Ebal and live a life of barrenness or will you go the way of Gerizim and live in the bountiful fruitfulness of the Lord?

Galatians 6:7

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

The overall theme of this series has been **“Answering the Call”**. Joshua is calling to the children of Israel in the text and the Holy Spirit is using it to call out to you today as well.

Two choices: will you serve the Lord or no? The latter ends in a tragedy.

Proverbs 14:12

“12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death.”

The choice is yours. I want to look at _____ why you should choose to serve the Lord.

Someone has called this, The Inescapable Choice.

1. Review What God Has Done By His Grace in Your Life- v. 1-13

The first thirteen verses are **Joshua recounting the history of major events** that God has done for children of Israel. The Jews often recount important events to bring them up to the current day. Like the genealogies. And like Jesus on the road to Emmaus. I call this the trail of grace. This is walking down history's trail reminding the children of Israel of moments where the grace of God was obvious.

You could **look over your own life** and point out obvious moments of God's grace that brought you to where you are today.

In college class one day, our **professor warned us** about forgetting about how we got to where we are. It's easy sometimes to forget how we got here. Its easy to say, "oh look at what I did". We have to remember we didn't get here on our own.

ILL - - When you walk down the path and you see a **turtle up on the fence post** hanging out like he's made it somewhere, always remember this, he didn't get there by himself. Someone else put him there. That's what Joshua is reminding the children of Israel. Here we are in the promised land. The land is at rest. We all have our own homes and lands but just remember you didn't get there on your own. In fact, you didn't earn it. You surely didn't deserve it. This was God's gift to you.

There is a **four-fold structure** in this recounting of history:

A. God's Grace towards Abraham, Issac, Jacob - v. 1-4

Joshua 24:1-4 KJV 1900

¹ And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. ² And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. ³ And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. ⁴ And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

v. 2- It is interesting what **God delivered Abraham** from. It is said in verse two that Terah, his dad, was a worshipper of idols.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

B. God's Grace when Moses delivered them from Egypt and they wander in the wilderness - v 5-7

Joshua 24:5-7 (KJV 1900)

⁵ I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagues Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. ⁶ And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. ⁷ And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

Remember the way **God delivered them from the bondage of Pharaoh**. He went through the plagues and then after none of those worked, he used the blood of the lambs.

As the death angel passed by that night Exodus 12:12-13

“12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

When they left the land of Egypt they crossed over the Red Sea and walked on dry ground. They started murmuring at the report of the spies and they disbelieved God’s promise as reported by Joshua and Caleb and an 11-day journey turned into a 40-year wandering in the wilderness. But even then God didn’t leave them. He still provided for them their daily bread and he led them in a cloud by day and a fire by night.

C. God’s Grace Before you crossed the Jordan - v. 8-10

Joshua 24:8–10 KJV 1900

⁸ And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. ⁹ Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: ¹⁰ But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.

God took care of the children of Israel to fulfill his promises and bring them to the banks of the Jordan river. It was an incredible victory they experienced as they fought against the Amorites and the others in the East of the Jordan. They warred but God fought for their victory.

One of my favorite scenes is in Joshua 3:14-17 and it is evidence that God was the one taking care of the the children of Israel.

Joshua 3:14–17

¹⁴ And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; ¹⁵ And as **they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)** ¹⁶ **That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up** upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. ¹⁷ And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm **on dry ground** in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

D. God's Grace After you crossed the Jordan - v. 11-13

Joshua 24:11–13 KJV 1900

¹¹ And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. ¹² And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. ¹³ And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

Look at all that God has done for the children of Israel since they crossed the Jordan.

Identity the grace of God in your life since your salvation.

2. God's Character Motivates You

A. God is a promise-keeping God - v. 1; 25

Joshua 24:1 KJV 1900

¹ And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua 24:25 KJV 1900

²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

His covenant name is the LORD. The children of Israel have come full circle with God's promises.

Shechem is a significant place of God's promises:

- Genesis 12:1-3

God called Abram at 75 years old to a strange, unknown land. He makes a 5 fold covenant (Harthill, Hermeneutics pp 20-22) Without question or doubt, Abram rose and stepped out by faith.

- Genesis 12:4-9

God met with Abram in Shechem and gives him a glimpse of the covenant that is to follow in the succeeding chapter 15. This happens around 2091 and Joshua dies at 110 years old in 1383. This means that some +/- 700 years later, Joshua is standing on the same place where Abram made an altar to the LORD and saw a glimpse of God's promised land.

- Genesis 33:18-20

Later, **Jacob came to Shechem** and bought a piece of land for 100 pieces of money. He built an altar and names it El-Elohe-Israel, God, the God of Israel.

- John 4:12

This is where **Jacob's well** is in Sychar, is another name for Shechem.

In fulfillment of Deuteronomy 11:29 **Joshua would build an altar at Shechem** after conquering Joshua 8:30-35 and bless Mt. Gerizim and curse Mt. Ebal.

Now Joshua would challenge the people to continue to live in God's promises or no. Joshua wanted to see the people take personal responsibility for their faith instead of trusting in him.

The **enjoyment of the blessings of the land conditional to each generation.**

The generation that came out of Egypt could have enjoyed it if they would have trusted God but they didn't. The promise didn't change but the realization of enjoying that promise did. The children of Israel in the land believed God and they enjoyed the blessings of the land. Later on they would again rebel and God would remove them from the blessings. That's the same thing that happened in the garden of Eden. They chose not to obey God and they went their own way, they didn't live in the blessings of the garden. So it is today. Those who live under the Lordship of Christ will enjoy His blessings. The problem is many people don't occupy the blessings because they don't want to. They want to go their own way.

Ephesians 1:3

*³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly
places in Christ:*

Ephesians 1:3-14 tells of many of the great blessings that can be experienced by those who believe on Jesus Christ and submit to Him in obedience

B. God is a jealous God - Joshua 24:19

Joshua 24:19

¹⁹ And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he *is* an holy God; **he is a jealous God**; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

This may be a difficult concept for us to understand. The best way to remember God's jealousy is that He isn't jealous *of* you He's jealous *for* you. Nahum 1:2

Nahum 1:2

² God *is* jealous, and the Lord revengeth; The Lord revengeth, and *is* furious;

The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, And he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

Charles Spurgeon wrote this in his devotional,

Your **Lord is very jealous of your love**, O believer. Did he choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another. Did he buy you with his own blood? He cannot endure that you should think that you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that he would not stop in heaven without you; he would sooner die than you should perish, and he cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and himself.

He is very jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we lean upon him, he is glad, but when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely upon our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, he is displeased, and will chasten us that he may bring us to himself.

He is also very jealous of our company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in him only, this is true love; but to commune with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, to prefer even the society of our fellow Christians to secret intercourse with him, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He would fain have us abide in him, and enjoy constant fellowship with himself; and many of the trials which he sends us are for the purpose of weaning our hearts from the creature, and fixing them more closely upon himself. Let this jealousy which would keep us near to Christ be also a comfort to us, for if he loves us so much as to care thus about our love we may be sure that he will suffer

nothing to harm us, and will protect us from all our enemies. Oh that we may have grace this day to keep our hearts in sacred chastity for our Beloved alone, with sacred jealousy shutting our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!¹

How He Loves

He is jealous for me
loves like a hurricane, I am a tree
bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy
When all of a sudden, I am unaware of these afflictions eclipsed by mercy
and I realize just how beautiful you are and how great your affections are for me.

C. God is active in our lives - Joshua 24:3-13

God is not an impersonal God that created a universe and took His hands off. He is not a force or a power that we call on. He is a person who is actively involved in the known and unknown details of our lives.

Notice the many actions of God in Joshua 24:

Joshua 24:3 (KJV 1900)

³ And **I took** your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and **led** him throughout all the land of Canaan, and **multiplied** his seed, and **gave** him Isaac.

Joshua 24:4 (KJV 1900)

⁴ And **I gave** unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and **I gave** unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

Joshua 24:5 (KJV 1900)

⁵ **I sent** Moses also and Aaron, and **I plagued** Egypt, according to that which **I did** among them: and afterward **I brought** you out.

Joshua 24:6 (KJV 1900)

⁶ And **I brought** your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

Joshua 24:7 (KJV 1900)

⁷ And when they cried unto the Lord, **he put** darkness between you and the Egyptians, and **brought** the sea upon them, and **covered** them; and your eyes have seen **what I have done** in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

Joshua 24:8 (KJV 1900)

⁸ And **I brought** you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and **I gave** them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and **I destroyed** them from before you.

Joshua 24:10 (KJV 1900)

¹⁰ But **I would not hearken** unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so **I delivered** you out of his hand.

Joshua 24:11 (KJV 1900)

¹¹ And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and **I delivered** them into your hand.

Joshua 24:12 (KJV 1900)

¹² And **I sent** the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; **but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.**

Joshua 24:13 (KJV 1900)

¹³ **And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.**

3. Your Response to the Challenge — v. 15-16

Joshua 24:15–16 (KJV 1900)

¹⁵ And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

¹⁶ And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods;

There should be a proper response to God's call on our lives.

Now therefore - this is the response we should have as Christians. This is the Romans 12:1-2 moment

Romans 12:1–2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

A. The people made their choice public - gathered together - v. 1

The congregation of Israel gathered together publically. Hebrews 10:25

Hebrews 10:25

²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

B. The people pronounced their choice - we *will* serve the LORD - v. 16, 21, 22, 24

Matthew 10:32–33 KJV 1900

³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. ³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

C. The people made their choice Personal - choose *you* this day -

The CSB translates it, choose for *yourselves*

Jeff Schreve - God doesn't have any grandchildren

Each person is responsible for their own choice. No one goes to heaven riding someone else's shirt tail.

Philippians 2:10–11 KJV 1900

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

D. The people got their priorities right - Joshua 24:23-24

Forsake the idols in our lives. Search our hearts and see if there are any idols.

FAITH = Forsaking All I Trust Him

The prodigal son in Luke 15 had his priorities wrong. He took his inheritance and lived a life of sin but then it came back on him and he got to a point where he had to submit to the Lord.

We have to forsake our sins and turn to the Lord.

Jeff Schreve told about a young lady named Julie who had **baby raccoon as a pet.**

A guy told her that she didn't need to try and make a pet out of this raccoon because something happens to them around 24 months and there's this change that takes place. They can become aggressive and if you're not careful they'll turn on you for no reason and hurt you.

Julie said, oh no way. Not my raccoon. He's different than any other raccoon. He wouldn't hurt me. It'll be different for me.

Three months later Julie had to go to the hospital for facial lacerations sustained when he adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason.

Sin can come to you looking like a cute cuddly raccoon and it'll let you hold it and love on it and feed it and talk to it and house it but then when you least expect it, it'll turn on you and cost you a great price!

Closing:

The Hudson River in NY got its name originally from the Native Americans who called it the Muhheakantuck, which means, the river that flows both ways. Tides from the Atlantic move the river northward, while the origin of the the currents are southbound.

Just as the Hudson flows two ways, so does your life. The crossroads you face in life ultimately offer two ways.

Dr. Tony Evans writes in his book Kingdom Man about two occurrences that took place on the Hudson River that runs through NYC. Both occurrences illustrate what happen when we do, and do not, make wise choices. One event has been known as the miracle on the Hudson while the other is known as the tragedy on the Hudson.

- January 15, 2009 — A veteran airplane pilot made positive decisions as he made a miracle landing on the Hudson.
- A mother drives van into the Hudson, claiming her own life and three of her four children. ²

Men, we have to lead out on being the person God has called us to be. We have to answer the call.

Dustin Logan
Preached at:
FBC Lambrook
September 18, 2022
Morning Worship

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening: Daily Readings (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896). God is our Defender

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/newburgh-mayor-calls-hudson-river-deaths-a-tragedy/>