

# Life's journey: living

January 29, 2012

Joshua 24:1, 14-28

Joshua's life, Israel's life, our life! The Christian journey!

What did we learn last week?

The end of Joshua's life is based a lot on what has gone before: choose who you will serve, as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord. What do you want to pass on to the next generation? What do you want said at your farewell/ funeral?

Their willingness to go along with his challenge, is based on their experience of his leadership over the preceding years and remembering God's faithful actions. This is the renewal of the covenant. Our witness is so often based on how we live.

Joshua ends up with his people, family, in a covenant relationship with the Lord. Our journey with God may have similar experiences. This is my dream. This is really the story of Joshua. It can also be the story of our lives.

## Key events in the book, journey:

1. The call of God over our lives [chapter 1]: be strong and courageous
2. Rahab and the spies [chapter 2]: the people in Canaan had heard of all that the Lord had done – Jericho melting with fear – God already preparing the way – spiritual warfare – He has already won the battle.
3. Crossing the Jordan [chapter 3 and 4]: the Lord goes ahead of the people as they cross – trial by water to see which God is greatest – repeat of the crossing of the Red Sea – faith and baptism.
4. Circumcision and Passover [chapter 5]: so much shows same preparation as Israel leaving Egypt – "only as a consecrated people could Israel expect to be given victory in Canaan" – celebration of God's goodness.
5. The Fall of Jericho [chapter 6]: the Lord lays siege – He takes the city – the people march – Rahab saved – great, great, great grandmother of King David, ancestor of Jesus, through Ruth and Boaz – God breaks the power of strongholds – we get to share in God's victories, but the proceeds are His.
6. Achan's sin [chapter 7]: sin can so easily follow victory and affects so many that we love – must be dealt with for God's kingdom to advance.
7. Ai destroyed [chapter 8]: with sin confessed, victory follows – the covenant is renewed – grace experienced.
8. Gibeonite deception [chapter 9]: worn out clothes, donkey claiming to come from a long way away, to save themselves – Israel taken in because they did not consult the Lord – beware Satan's deception.
9. Sun stands still [chapter 10]: this deception leads to a spiritual attack – the Lord supernaturally intervenes until victory is won – even though they made an error, God is still all powerful.
10. Conquest – however the victory is not complete – some see this as showing that we live in between the kingdom that has come and the kingdom that is still to come – victory not complete until the Lord comes again – we have many battles to fight.
11. Division of the land – on both sides of the Jordan – shared occupation – we need each other – shared ministries, one inheritance.
12. Cities of Refuge [chapter 20]: the need for effective administration, under pinned by grace – the need for order in our lives – need for safe place to retreat.



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13. Care for the Levites [chapter 21]: need to give security to the spiritual leaders so they could carry out their roles – tithing.

14. Eastern tribes return home [chapter 22]: promises acknowledged and differences settled.

15. Joshua's farewell to the leaders [chapter 23]: the mantle, baton passed on to the next generation.

16. Covenant renewed – chapter 24:1, 14-28:

<sup>1</sup> Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2</sup> Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:"

When we assemble this way, God is present. He then runs through the history of the nation under God.

<sup>14</sup> "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup> But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Affirmation of faith must start with us.

<sup>16</sup> Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! <sup>17</sup> It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. <sup>18</sup> And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

Confessional statement

<sup>19</sup> Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."

Shows danger of over confidence

- "holy" His incomparable awesome majesty and His absolute moral integrity.
- "jealous" His marriage to us, His exclusive right to us, that demands our exclusive devotion, His loving protection of us and judgement on all who oppose Him – all based on relationship and grace.

<sup>21</sup> But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD." <sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

Normal covenant / treaty statement

<sup>23</sup> "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." <sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him." <sup>25</sup> On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. <sup>26</sup> And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

Large stone – memorial / reminder

<sup>27</sup> "See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God." <sup>28</sup> Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.

Where are you and I on the journey? Let us celebrate where we are and renew our covenant to continue until the Lord calls us home!