

# Church of God Sunday School

## JOSHUA TELLS THE PEOPLE GOODBYE

Joshua 14:1-15; 23:1 — 24:33

When Joshua and the Israelites reached Canaan, much land had to be claimed by the Israelites. Eventually, the land was claimed. Joshua and the heads of the Israelite tribes divided the land, in the way God had commanded Moses to do it, which was by *lot* (a system using pebbles to make decisions).

But some of the inhabitants of Canaan were allowed to remain alive. The Israelites did not kill them all as God had said to do. (This would cause Israel much grief in the years to come.)

At that time, Caleb came to Joshua. (Remember, years before, Caleb and Joshua had been the only spies to give a good report of the land. See Numbers 13:17-33.) Caleb reminded Joshua of how he had been faithful, saying, "I wholly followed the LORD my God." Before he died, Moses had promised Caleb that he could have the land where the city of Hebron was for his inheritance because he had followed the Lord in every thing.

Caleb was now 85 years old, yet he said, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me." Caleb then asked, "Now therefore give me this mountain [the land where the Anakims (*AN-uh-kims*) lived] . . . if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

Caleb was 85, but he believed that with God's help he could take the land where the city of Hebron was. So Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him the land he desired.

Years passed; Joshua was very old. Soon he would die. He called all of Israel together so that he could say goodbye. He said: "I am old and stricken in age. And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you."

Joshua told the people the Lord wanted them to be "very courageous" and to do all that was "written in the book of the law of Moses." They were not to turn away from serving God in

any way. If they did, God would "bring upon you evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land."

Joshua also told the people not one thing had failed of all the good things that the Lord had spoken concerning them. Everything had come to pass. They knew that was true. God had blessed the Israelites. But Joshua said that just as good things had come upon them from the Lord, so bad things would come from the Lord too, if they did not follow Him.

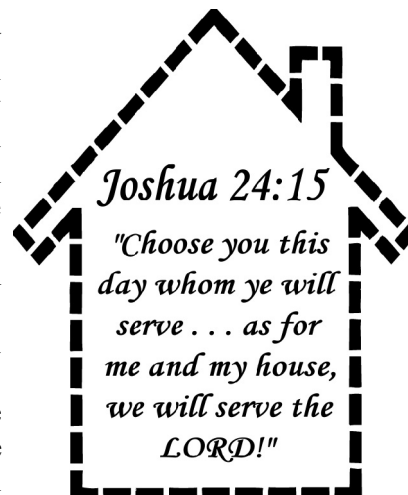
Joshua called for the Israelite elders, the judges, and the officers. They gathered at Shechem (*SHEE-kuhm*). He reminded them of all that God had done for the Israelite people from the time Abraham was called to go to Canaan until the present time.

Already many of the Israelites had begun to follow the false gods of the land, the gods of the Canaanite people that they had let live. Joshua told the Israelites to "fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth."

Joshua gave the people a choice. They would receive good or evil from God, depending on the choice they made. Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua was going to stay true to God! When the people declared that they would serve only the Lord, Joshua said, "Ye are witnesses . . . that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him."

The people said they would get rid of the strange gods that were among them. Everyone promised to obey the Lord. Joshua wrote the words of the people in the book of the law of God as a testimony, a witness, that they had chosen to serve only God.

Joshua took a large stone and set it under an oak tree by the house of God as a reminder to the people of their promise to serve God. Then all the people went to their homes.



Sometime after those things took place, Joshua died. He was 110 years old. He had been prosperous and successful (see Joshua 1:8). He had kept the Law of Moses and followed God. He had been a good leader. He was buried in the mountains of Ephraim (*EE-free-uhm*), which was part of his inheritance.

Something else took place around that time. A promise was kept after many, many years. It involved the body of Joseph, the same Joseph who had been sold into Egypt by his brothers. Before he died, Joseph made his family promise to take his body out of Egypt

when they left for the Promised Land. They had taken Joseph's body in a coffin when they left Egypt, and now, at long last, Joseph was laid to rest. He was buried in Shechem, the land that had once belonged to his father Jacob.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

*—Joshua 24:15*  
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