

19th June 2019.

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL, THE CLARION CALL TO MAKE A CHOICE AND TAKE A STAND.

Joshua 23 & 24.

Tonight as we come to the end of our study from the adventurous book of Joshua that Pastor John started on the 16th of January this year 2019 with a very good introduction and overview, and Pastor Kenny taught the greater part, we are given his farewell address to the people he had led so faithfully, I'd say ever since he was Moses' assistant way back in the beginnings of the Exodus. In which he gave them a clarion call to make a choice and take a stand, as his signature phrase ".....But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" seals it.

[A 'clarion call' is a direct public request for people to take action.]

'Joshua' which as we learnt is the same name as 'Jesus'. Yeshua is the Hebrew rendering; Joshua, the Greek rendering; and "Jesus" the English pronunciation of the Greek. Has the personality of Joshua portraying Jesus. Even as their ministries also had notable resemblances. The Book of Joshua being a wonderful illustration of what it means to live the Spirit-filled life as we have often reckoned in our studies, has been an inspiring and exciting journey for us as well through the months.

[Reading chapter 23:1-16.....]

This is the first of two farewell addresses by Joshua. Here he spoke to the leadership of Israel. Vs 2.... Giving testimony of what 'The Lord has done'....

Joshua's command to be both courageous and scriptural (vs. 6) echo the words of the Lord to him years earlier (Josh.1:7 – "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go..") He had since proven the truth of them in the crucible of life and was now able to confidently pass them on to the following generation.

He reminded them of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises concerning the land and concerning its heathen inhabitants. God would continue to drive out the enemy, but the people would have to be obedient to Him.

Let's recall what he had charged the Eastern tribes in Chpter. 22:5 "But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you: to love the Lord your God and to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments and to cling to and unite with Him and to serve Him with all your heart and soul [your very life]."

Above all, they should keep themselves free from the idolatry of the nations or from intermarrying with the Canaanites. Otherwise these pagans would be a continual source of trouble to Israel.

None of God's words had failed (vs. 14). This does not mean that all of the land was as yet in Jewish hands, for the Lord Himself had said that He would not drive out the inhabitants all at once but gradually (Deut.7:22). The fact that not one promise of the Lord's had yet failed was the strong encouragement that Joshua was using to urge the leaders to finish the job he had started. To this exhortation he attached a warning (vs.16) that Jehovah would be just as faithful in destroying them from off the good land as He would be in destroying the Canaanites, if they forgot their covenant and turned to idols.

The NT parallel to this chapter is 2Cor. 6:14-18..... Separation is vital for the man of God. We cannot cleave to the Lord and be bound to His enemies at the same time.

The First title to this message I had was "*Joshua's farewell, the clarion call to belong to God and have Him belong to us*".....

[Reading chapter 24.....]

After a while, Joshua gave a second farewell message, this one to the people, and was delivered at Shechem. Which incidentally was where Abraham, the first trustee of God's covenant with this people, settled at his coming to Canaan, and where God appeared to him (Gen. 12:6,7), and near which stood mounts Gerizim and Ebal, where the people had renewed their covenant with God at their first coming into Canaan, Josh. 8:30. Of the promises God had made to their fathers, and of the promises they themselves had made to God, this place might serve to put them in mind. And was ideal for a renewal of their covenant with their God.

Joshua reviewed the history of the people of God, beginning with Terah and continuing on through the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He reminded the people of the mighty deliverance from Egypt, the wilderness wandering, and the victory over the Moabites on the east side of Jordan. Then he recounted their entrance into the Promised Land, their victory at Jericho, and their destruction of kings in Canaan (vv. 2-13). The darkness in verse 7 points back to Ex. 14:19-20, where the cloud produced light for the Israelites and darkness for the Egyptians.

In this summary of history from Genesis to Joshua, one outstanding fact is evident: the sovereignty of God. Notice how He tells the story:

I took (vs. 3), I gave (vs. 4), I sent (vs. 5), I brought (vs. 6-8), I would not listen (vs. 10), I delivered (vs. 11), I sent (vs. 12), I have given (vs. 13). Jehovah works according to His eternal purposes, and who can stay His hand? Such a God is to be feared and obeyed, vs. 14.....

24:15 The choice here was not between the LORD and idols: Joshua assumed that the people had already decided against serving God. So he challenged them to choose between the gods which their ancestors had served in Mesopotamia and the gods of the Amorites that they had found in Canaan. Joshua's noble decision for himself and his household has been an inspiration to succeeding generations of believers: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Which again highlights the challenge men have in leading their households in the ways of the Lord, that His blessings may abide upon them and their descendants. This we see of Abraham in Gen. 18:17-19... "And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Having just celebrated 'Father's day', the renewed challenge we have this era, is that fathers fulfill their responsibilities and be faithful to their wives the mothers of their children as well as to their children if they are to have any worthy legacy they are to leave on the earth.

Joshua kept going strong until the day he went home. How did he do it? Isaiah declared that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary.

They shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31). The older and more tired you are is the time to wait on the Lord, to learn about Him, to spend time with him. And as you do, you'll mount up with wings as eagles. You'll run and not be weary. You'll walk and not faint. When fatigue sets in to the soul of a man, it's indicative of a failure to wait on the Lord—because the promise of God's Word is that if we wait on Him, He'll renew our strength.

I fell in love with a passage many years ago as I had just committed my life to Jesus Christ that made me possess a copy of the Amplified Bible....

Psalm 92:12-15.....