



# 20 | JOSHUA 23-24

## LOOKING FOR A GREATER JOSHUA

*Do you have a life that points to Jesus?*

### Outline

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### Call to Worship

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. – Isaiah 9:6-7

Let the government of Jesus reign in our hearts! He is the Wonderful Miracle Working one, our Divine counselor, our Mighty God, our Father of Eternity, and our Prince that made Peace and reconciled us to God! Praise his name!

### Songs

*O Come All Ye Faithful*  
*King of Kings*  
*O come O come Emmanuel*

## Introduction

We continue in a series in the book of Joshua called “Footsteps of Faith.” Our title this morning is: “Looking for a Greater Joshua”.

Joshua in the last two chapters gives his final parting words to Israel. He tells us of the importance of **taking a stand** in your own generation, and in doing so, he is pointing to the greater Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the book, we want Joshua to stay but he has to go. “It is appointed unto men once to die...” In the end, we are left waiting for a greater Joshua.

After Joshua’s death, we see that Israel quickly turns away from the Lord, and this seems to be the story for the rest of Israel’s history. A leader comes on the scene, the people turn to the Lord, but as soon as that leader is gone, they turn away from God. They need a leader that won’t die!

This is such an appropriate message for the Christmas season. **We are all reminded of the centuries of waiting for Someone greater than Joshua.** We all cry out: O come, o come, Emmanuel, God with us, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### *All Judges and Kings Mortal*

Judges and kings would come, but all would be so sinful, so weak, and so mortal. As each judge or king arrives on the scene, we have such hope. In each one we see a glimpse of Jesus, but all the earthly leaders are imperfect, fallible and mortal. All are taken by death, suddenly off the scene and we are left waiting once again. When will the true leader, Messiah come?

But thankfully, there is a greater Joshua who is coming who will not only conquer the Promised Land, but will conquer sin and death.

It’s not until the Christ child is born, and Jesus arrives on the scene that things begin to radically change. Jesus’ birth changes the world! In his ministry, and through his miracles, disease is literally banished from Israel wherever Jesus is present.

Most importantly Jesus goes to a death for us! But he doesn’t stay dead! He rises from the dead, conquering death by death! God’s people till this point have never really have that international power and influence until Jesus comes and sends his Holy Spirit. Finally, the true Israel is seen in its full power under our true Joshua the Lord Jesus Christ.

Key Thought: For a legacy that changes a generation, you need to have a life that points to the greater Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let’s see these glimpses of our true King, the Lord Jesus Christ in Joshua’s farewell speech. First we see in this farewell speech, Joshua has a legacy that points to Jesus.

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## 1. A LEGACY THAT POINTS TO JESUS (23:1-13)

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Joshua is old. He’s about to die, but he gives his stirring farewell speech. His outlining his legacy: a legacy that points to Jesus. Let’s read it.

**Joshua 23:1-13** | 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, <sup>2</sup>Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers, and said to them, “I am now old and well advanced in years. <sup>3</sup>And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the Lord your God who has fought for you. <sup>4</sup>Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>**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, <sup>7</sup>that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, <sup>8</sup>but you shall **cling to the Lord your God** just as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup>For the Lord has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, **no man has been able to stand before you to this day.** <sup>10</sup>**One man of you puts to flight a thousand,** since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. <sup>11</sup>Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God.

<sup>12</sup>For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, <sup>13</sup>know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.

Here was Joshua, and what a **legacy** he had. He had this divine influence over an entire nation, and then he would pass it off to Othniel (in the book of Judges), who would rule as a judge among them for 40 years, but then it is downhill from there. Joshua had a legacy that pointed to Jesus, but it fell short. Joshua is just a human savior. We are left waiting for a divine Savior. I want you to note several things that point us to Jesus in the legacy of Joshua.

### *The Power of a Surrendered Life*

Look at the power of a surrendered life.

**Joshua 23:3** | “I am now old and well advanced in years. <sup>3</sup>And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the Lord your God who has fought for you.”

Joshua was God’s human instrument to bring his message and power to Israel. He points to the greater Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ. It’s Christ who fights for us! Amen? The price is paid! The war is won! Christ has conquered sin and death. What a fight! What a victory.

Joshua lived a consistent, sincere life of a believer before all Israel. He was a shepherd and a general to Israel. He was from the tribe of Ephraim, a descendent of the great Prince of Egypt, Joseph. But there is a greater Prince, the Prince of peace! The King of kings and Lord of lords!  
Joshua lived that surrendered life, pointing to Jesus.

### *What's a Surrendered Life Look Like?*

What does a surrendered life look like? As Joshua goes through his farewell speech, we see this life and legacy that points to Christ.

What is a surrendered, sold-out life and legacy? Jesus describes it in the book of Matthew. This total, radical commitment is taken on by every sincere Christian. Jesus says:

Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. –Matthew 10:38-39

For Joshua, he says several things here that show us what a surrendered life looks like.

### **A PROMISE BELIEVING HEART**

Joshua didn't live for this world. He lived by faith for another world. He believed the promises of God when they seemed impossible. Joshua trusted God to defeat Israel's enemies and fight for them. Joshua says to Israel:

**Joshua 23:5** | The Lord your God will push them [your enemies] back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, **just as the Lord your God promised you.**

Do you believe that God can conquer all your enemies? ...Enslavement to sin, the devil and the world. Christ can defeat every enslavement.

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. –John 8:32

How many of us can testify that this is true?

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. –John 8:36

Are you free from the choking fruit of a worldly heart: selfish anger and slavish anxiety? Are you totally free? Are these things quickly conquered in your heart? These are feelings right? But what are feelings? Sometimes we don't think feelings can be sinful, but every feeling is merely a disposition of the heart.

What kind of heart disposition, feelings if you will, should we have?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. –Galatians 5:22-23

We are called to have the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience... All of these are states of your heart that show you are resting in the promises of God.

If you have a heart that is bitter and angry or anxious you are living with the enemy in control of your heart. You know that's a wrong state of heart. Joshua was not brought down by the power of his flesh. He was set free by the promises of God. It was the promises of God that brought down all Israel's enemies.

Don't get to the end of your life with a wasted legacy.

How about you? Are you leaving a legacy that points to Jesus? Are you sniffing those enemies out? Do you even understand the sin beneath the sin in your heart? You may shout in anger, but have you dealt with the sinful anger in your heart? You say something unkind in fear, but have you dealt with the anxiety in your heart. Are you living in bitterness?

God says you can be delivered from all your enemies!

Are you experiencing "all the fullness of God?"

Do you know the "peace that passes understanding?"

Are you "filled with the Spirit" so that you are "not giving in to the desires of the flesh"?

### A SCRIPTURE EXAMINED HEART

So many people live without victory, because they have an unexamined heart. A lot of Christians live in idolatry because they will not do the "heart homework" necessary to get to the roots of idolatry. The only way to have know where your heart is going wrong is the light of Scripture. Your heart should be examined always by the Scripture.

Joshua 23:6 | 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.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. –Psalm 110:105

We dare not live life through our own fallen hearts. We have to examine the disposition of our heart by Scripture. This is why Joshua tells the children of Israel to "be strong" to go to the Scripture. It's easy to go through our own fallen hearts.

I'll tell you God would have you to have a heart that is...

"Filled with all the fullness of God".

Are you experiencing the "peace that passes all understanding"? Are you? Take a moment. Examine your heart. Chase down the emotions of your heart that are forbidden by God. Please hear me, Christians can lose years of peace and joy in their lives by living in the deceit of forbidden dispositions of the heart, what we call feelings.

**ANGER:** bitterness, wrath, rage, slander, angry shouting, malice, unforgiveness, blowing up, clamming up, disruption, filibustering, etc.

**FEAR:** anxiety, phobias, terror, hyper scrupulousness, angst, morbid concern, unbelief, doubt, dread, horror, jitters, panic, scared, morbidly suspicious, terror, unease, uneasiness, worry, agitation, aversion, consternation, cowardice, discomposure, disquietude, faintheartedness, foreboding, frightened, trembling, trepidation, cold sweat

**DESPAIR:** hopelessness, desperation, dejection, depression, despondency, gloom, melancholy, self-loathing, disheartenment, discouragement, resignedness, forlornness, defeatism, pessimism, etc.

**FOOLISHNESS:** I feel I need to escape. I feel God doesn't understand and so I dismiss him from my thoughts to relieve the pressure or pain or situation. The desires and feeling like I need to use alcohol, drugs, pornography, abuse of food, or any turning anything to an idol of escape that leads to an enslaving affection.

Is your heart filled with the noise of fleshly desires? Examine your heart with the Word. How do I get rid of this noise? I have to apply God's Word to my heart.

Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. –Psalm 119:11 (NKJV)

Are you experiencing the “peace that passes all understanding”? Are you? Take a moment. Examine your heart. Chase down the emotions of your heart that are forbidden by God. Please hear me, Christians can lose years of peace and joy in their lives by living in the deceit of forbidden dispositions of the heart, what we call feelings. Renew your heart and mind through the Scriptures.

The blessed man's delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. –Psalm 1:2

Oh that you might have a heart like Joshua that believed the promises of God.

### A HEART THAT CLINGS TO THE LORD

Yet ultimately you can know the Scripture but not know the Lord. So that's the biggest part of Joshua's legacy. He knew the Lord. He taught God's people to cling to the Lord.

**Joshua 23:8** | ...you shall **cling to the Lord your God** just as you have done to this day.

Do you have that kind of heart? Are you experiencing God and clinging to him? There's not a thousand things, or 12 steps you need to do. There is one step: love the Lord!

### A HEART THAT EXPECTS MIRACLES

Joshua saw miracles occur constantly. What is a miracle? It is when the divine intersects the normal realm. Not just having the sun stand still. He taught the people of Israel to expect miracles where God became personal and cherished to them. Like one man putting a thousand Canaanite soldiers to flight. Look at this.

**Joshua 23:9-10** | ...For the Lord has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, **no man has been able to stand before you to this day.** <sup>10</sup> **One man of you puts to flight a thousand,** since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. <sup>11</sup> Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God.

ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

I want to testify of what it looks like to expect miracles in your life. Yesterday evening I was praying with a family in our church who was in dire financial need. I didn't know how, but I knew God would provide. I prayed diligently with this dear family for a "Christmas miracle". Within the hour, I got a call from a man. He's not even a member of our church. He's not even a professing Christian. But he called me and said, "I want to give a Christmas miracle to someone in your church."

See God has control of all people on the earth. He can provide in any way that he wants to. This was the kind of faith Joshua had.

Are you seeing the miracle power of Jesus in your life? How are you different from the world? Is there a great influence and aroma for Christ in your life? If not, surrender to the Lord right now. A generation of lost souls is depending on you. What a legacy Joshua had. What kind of legacy are you leaving behind when God takes you home?

So Joshua had a legacy that pointed to Jesus. He also had a testimony that pointed to Jesus.

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## 2. A TESTIMONY THAT POINTS TO JESUS (23:14-24:13)

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Dear saints, Joshua was constantly talking and testifying about God. It's not enough to know him and cling to him. That's everything to us, but if you keep Jesus all to yourself, "how will they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14).

### A FAITHFUL TESTIMONY

Joshua had a faithful testimony.

**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.**

This is what Joshua said all his life. God is faithful! God's promises are true! You need to believe and trust in the Lord. "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psa 34:8).

But part of Joshua's testimony was a warning.

**Joshua 23:15-16** | But just as all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he **has destroyed you from off this good land that the Lord your God has given you**, <sup>16</sup> if you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you."

Do you see that he's warning these families in Israel: "I'm leaving to depart to be with the Lord. When I'm off the scene, you need to follow the Lord or you might lose everything."

Parents, do your kids see a testimony that loves Jesus? So many parents fail, and then they feel like they can't testify to their kids. Listen, if you messed up, testify to them about Jesus' forgiveness. Repent before your kids. Let them see your love for Christ. More importantly, get some accountability and rich discipleship so you can have a consistent walk with Christ. You should be saying:

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. –1 Corinthians 11:1

### A PERSONAL TESTIMONY (24:1-13)

Our testimony is not just bold and faithful, but personal. We need to be able to testify of our personal experience with the Lord. **The first thirteen verses of Joshua 24** are Joshua reciting the history of Israel. Joshua was an eye-witness to the grace and glory of God. God says:

Joshua 24:6 | I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.

Joshua is testifying, not only of the Word of God, but of what he experienced. A believer has firsthand experience of the living God. God says to Israel: You saw my miracles. You enjoyed my presence.

God not only mentions the Red Sea, but the crossing of the Jordan, where the Jordan River parted for twenty miles! God says:

Joshua 24:11 | 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.

God says, "I gave you victory after victory." This is the personal testimonies we ought to have. You remember when God did this for me last week? Remember what God did for so and so this week? There ought to be the fresh manna of God's miracle presence every day. It's a *personal* testimony. Can you testify of God's activity in your life?

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## 3. A WORSHIP THAT POINTS TO JESUS (24:14-33)

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The last and most important thing Joshua is he points to the coming king's worship. The Old Testament motif or expression of worship is: "the fear of the Lord". Joshua says, that's the most important. Joshua defines worship in a wonderful way. Worship is not just singing or praying to the Lord. It's not just reading the Word. You can do that and still be serving two masters. Worship demands that we put anything that might compete with the living God away from our lives. Look at how Joshua defines the worship God desires in these farewell words.



## A SINCERE WORSHIP

**Joshua 24:14a** | Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness.

**Joshua 24:14b-15** | 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.**

Joshua says, here's the point of my life: "fear the Lord and serve him"—worship the Lord! I want to worship him in every part of my life.

What kind of fear are we talking about? It's not a superstitious fear. It's the fear of worship and reverence and adoration of God in all things.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. —Proverbs 9:10

You will know all you need to know as you worship the Lord in all things. You have to invite God into all your thoughts, words and deeds. This is the abundant life that Joshua chose! Joshua says:

Choose this day whom you will serve! ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. —Joshua 24:15

Joshua was pointing forward to Jesus. Joshua didn't know

## A SERIOUS WORSHIP

The people respond to Joshua.

**Joshua 24:16** | Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods..."

Joshua says:

**Joshua 24:19-20** | But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. <sup>20</sup>If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.

This is serious. So many among us have turned from the Lord after they've come from a Christian home or knowing so much of the Lord, but they turn away without truly being born again. There is no hope for any of us if we have a superficial worship that doesn't change us. It has to be a serious worship.

**Joshua 24:21-23** | And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord." <sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against

yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” <sup>23</sup> He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel.”

Serious worship begins when we start putting our idols away.

So the question is: do you have just superficial worship? Or are you a serious worshipper of the Lord.

This worship of the Lord was *serious*. They were to seriously take a reckoning of their lives and destroy all idols. That’s what the Christian life is. We cannot have two masters. We cannot worship God and money or anything else. That was Joshua’s legacy, testimony and worship. That’s what I want to leave behind.

We learn that...

After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. –Joshua 24:29

What a glorious life!

### Conclusion

What legacy will you leave? Who will take a stand? How among us will be hot in a cold-hearted generation? The churches are growing colder and colder. Are you moving our church to become hotter and hotter? The only way forward is rich discipleship and fellowship and worship. The only way I can leave that legacy is by looking unto that greater Joshua!

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith... --Hebrews 2:2a

Let’s do that saints, in this Christmas season, let’s look unto Jesus. Let’s be intentional about drawing near to him in worship and testifying about him to the world.

I’ll leave you with the challenge Joshua gave dear saints:

Choose this day whom you will serve! ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. –Joshua 24:15

Let’s pray.