

A The story that God wrote (Joshua 24:1-13)

- ❖ The place chosen by Joshua for his final speech was a historical place: Shechem (Josh. 24:1).
 - It was the first place in Canaan where Abraham camped (Gen. 12:6)
 - It was the first place in Canaan where Jacob camped (Gen. 33:18)
 - It was the only possession acquired by Jacob (Gen. 33:19)
 - There Jacob buried the foreign gods that his family still possessed (Gen. 35:4)
- ❖ Joshua began by telling them about the “strange gods” that Terah, their ancestor, worshipped (Josh. 24:2). From there, he reminded them in the first person of everything God had done: I took; I brought; I increased; I sent; I struck; I brought out; I brought you in; I delivered them; I destroyed them; I did not listen to Balaam; I delivered you; I gave them up; I sent flies; I gave you the land (Josh. 24:3-13).
- ❖ In this account, generations pass one after another without distinction. All are included. Those who listened to Joshua came “from beyond the river”; they went down to Egypt; they left with great power; they crossed the sea; they took Transjordan; they possessed Canaan. What God did with their ancestors, He is doing with them, and He will do with us today.

B The call to integrity (Joshua 24:14-15)

- ❖ Just as Jacob invited his family to bury their gods before renewing their covenant with God at Bethel, Joshua invites the people to abandon their gods before renewing their covenant with God (Josh. 24:14b).
- ❖ They were to fear God and serve him “in sincerity and in truth” (Josh. 24:14a). What does this imply?
 - To fear God: To show profound respect for the One who is infinitely greater than I am, and to accept Him as my King and Lord.
 - Serving God in sincerity: A service without defects (this is how the animal was defined that was only suitable for sacrifice if it was “without defect” [whole])
 - To serve God in truth: To be faithful, trustworthy, loyal, undivided, and consistent. To reflect through my life my gratitude to God for what He has done in me.

C The election of the people (Joshua 24:16-21)

- ❖ What was the response to Joshua's call (Josh. 24:16)? The entire people said no to their gods, and accepted that they only had one God: “our God,” the same one who had guided them—both their ancestors and themselves—up to that moment (Josh. 24:17-18).
- ❖ Instead of congratulating the people on their decision, Joshua gave an unexpected response: “You are unfit to serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:19 NIV). What a disappointment!
- ❖ Joshua had heard his parents make the same promise (Ex. 19:8), and had seen how they had repeatedly broken it for 40 years.
- ❖ This harsh response achieved its purpose. The new generation was determined not to repeat the same mistakes (Josh. 24:21).

D The renewal of the covenant (Joshua 24:22-28)

- ❖ To conclude his speech, Joshua asked them to remove the gods that are “among you,” and to turn their hearts back to God (Josh. 24:23).
- ❖ For the third time, the people pledged to serve God (Josh. 24:24). The covenant was ratified, and, like Moses, Joshua “gave them statutes and laws” (Josh. 24:25).
- ❖ Although the covenant with God is based on a living relationship with Him and cannot be fully expressed through mere regulations, Joshua understood that it was necessary to leave clear reminders that would help them stay in the covenant.
- ❖ He put the covenant in writing, and erected a memorial monument: a stone to serve as a witness to the commitment they had made (Josh. 24:26-27).

E The continuation of the story (Joshua 24:29-33)

- ❖ The book of Joshua ends with three burials. One of them, prophesied hundreds of years earlier, was the burial of Joseph in Jacob's inheritance (Gen. 50:24-26; Josh. 24:32).
- ❖ The rebellious generation that had come out of Egypt was buried in the desert. But the new generation was to be buried “in their inheritance,” along with those who had remained faithful in an unfaithful generation: Joshua and Eleazar (Josh. 24:29-30, 33).
- ❖ This new generation remained faithful (Josh. 24:31). But what about the next generation (Judg. 2:10-11)?
- ❖ Each generation must make its own covenant with God. The faith of their parents can help them make the right decision. But the decision is theirs. Let us make our decision today: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15 NIV).