

Pile 7

Future Challenge - Joshua 24



24:26 Final Reminder

Introduction

We've almost made it to the end of the Book of Joshua. Congratulations! The book closes with a rousing speech by Joshua to all the tribes of Israel as they assemble at Shechem. It's a summary of all that's come before, and a challenge for the future.

In preparation

Carefully read Joshua 24 before your group meets, and spend some time thinking through the questions below so you'll have something to share with the group.

Discussion Starter

The first verse of the old hymn "I surrender all" says this:

All to Jesus I surrender; all to him I freely give;

I will ever love and trust him, in his presence daily live.

I surrender all, I surrender all, all to thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

Would you hesitate to sing these words? Why?

Retracing the story

As the Israelites and their leaders gather, Joshua speaks on behalf of God, retracing their history. Notice the starting point in verse 2. How did their ancestors start out?



Sometimes there's a lot to be said for sticking to family traditions... but not in this case! God says, their ancestors worshipped other gods. **BUT I CHANGED ALL THAT!** Verses 3 to 13 are full of God's actions. I took, I gave, I gave, I... **List them all in this space.**

Every step of the history of Israel - taking Abraham from his ancestral land, giving him offspring, assigning land, afflicting Egyptians, bringing them to the land, and destroying their enemies before them... it's all down to God. He, He, He, has done all this. The question is, how will Israel respond?

- * According to verse 14, how *should* Israel respond to these acts of God?
- * Astonishingly after all this time, what do verses 14 and 23 imply? What's the *heart* of the issue?

The point is, right from the start, God has been saving Israel FROM serving other Gods, and bringing them to a place where they uniquely would serve only Him, the Lord of all the earth... **from the heart**. Why go to all this trouble if they're just going to keep serving non-gods anyway? As Moses said at the end of Deuteronomy, that's Israel's ultimate decision. Who are they going to serve? Their future in the promised land depends on it.

- * What TWO OPTIONS does Joshua put before Israel. Read carefully. This is a trick question!
- * Joshua's choice is inspiring (and appears on many framed cross-stitch designs hanging just inside Christian front doors.) The sentiment is nice, but watch what happens next...
 - * How do the people respond in verses 16-18?
(Maybe to the tune of "I Surrender All?")
 - * How does Joshua react, and why?
 - * How do they react in verses 21 and 22?
 - * How does verse 23 moderate our confidence in their promise?

The Final Rock to Remember...



That brings us to Joshua's final 'rock of remembrance.' (v25-27) What is its meaning and purpose?

According to verse 31, how long does Israel's faithfulness last?

What tone do you detect in the statement that the people served the Lord through Joshua's lifetime (v31)? What does it imply happened after that?

Ultimately, while Joshua was a great military leader, he couldn't change Israel's hearts. Even back then, it was obvious a new covenant was needed - a spirit-solution, which has finally been brought about by **the better Joshua, Jesus Christ**. (It's worth reading **Hebrews 10!**)

- * While Moses and Joshua called Israel to keep the law, according to Galatians 3:1-5, what are we to stick to? What 'heart solution' is there in Galatians 5:16, 22-25?
- * What kind of idolatry tempts you away from trusting Jesus?

Look back over these studies together, and think through all Joshua's 'rock-piles'. What reasons do you have for being 'strong and courageous'? What *rest* does God promise? What have you learned together? Pray about these things as a group.