

Joshua 24

Serving the LORD God in the Land Part Two

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Remembering the structure of the Book of Joshua CROSS TAKE DIVIDE SERVE

Indicative – Imperative Structure I have given you the land I promised to your fathers, therefore serve me as you dwell in the land where I dwell among you

The structure of the last three chapters God demands Israel to live faithfully in the land

Covenant Renewal at Shechem A fitting end to the Book of Joshua

1. Recounting of the mighty, gracious deeds of God (24:2-12)
 - The origin of the people of God – from pagan nations, worshipping idols
 - God's sovereign choices during the unfolding of the redemptive history
 - God's providential care for His people
 - God's warfare on behalf of His people (not by your sword or your bow)
 - Israel inherited what they did not build – verses 12-13 (compare Deuteronomy 28:39-40, also Ecclesiastes, and Israel enslaved in Egypt)
 - We today enjoy the fruits of someone else's labour, the fruits of the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ

2. In light of what the LORD God has done for you – serve the LORD God faithfully (see Romans 12:1-2)
3. If you do not want to serve the only living God, choose which pagan deities you will serve
4. *As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*
5. The people respond *we will serve the LORD, for He is our God*
6. Joshua's warning *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.*
7. The record of Israel's "obedience" is not great – Exodus 19:7-8 and 24:7-8 compare with Exodus 32
8. See Philippians 2:12 – *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*
9. Joshua *cut a covenant* with the people (verse 25 ESV *made a covenant*); the words of the covenant were written in the book of the Law, and erected a stone as a witness to the covenant
 - (a) Heaven and earth as covenantal witness (Deuteronomy 4:26; 30:19)
 - (b) *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away* Matthew 24:35
10. Worship service as a renewal of the covenant
11. Private renewal of the covenant (recounting and remembering what God has done in my life)

Final Matters Death of Joshua, death of Eleazar (the priest), burial of the bones of Joseph

1. Joshua, the servant of the LORD (compare chapter 1:1)
2. The reports of death of God's servants provide the bookends for the Book of Joshua
3. The mention of Shechem underscores yet again God's faithfulness (Genesis 12:6-7; 50:24-25)
4. The covenantal structure of the Book of Joshua:
 - Indicative – imperative

- *True religion can only come to man in a form of the covenant* – Herman Bavinck.
 - *Covenant: God's condescending commitment to fellowship with man* – Sinclair Ferguson.
5. What a mighty God we have! He keeps promises and He enters into a covenant with man!

Questions Regarding the previous sessions:

1. Who is *the avenger of blood*?
 - Read Numbers 35:9-29
 - *The avenger* or *the avenger of blood* – the nearest male relative; it is the same word that in other places (other context) in the Old Testament means (is translated) *the redeemer*. Depending on context, it may refer to the duty of the male relative of a deceased, who leaves a childless widow behind, to **redeem** her from childlessness through marriage (see Ruth 4:1-6)
 - **The avenger of blood** by killing the manslayer of his relative, *redeems* the guilt of the the manslaughter
2. Why the exile in the city of refuge ends with the death of the current high priest?
 - The texts (Numbers 35:28; Joshua 20:6) does not directly answer that question
 - Just as in the case of an intentional murder, the guilt (pollution of the land) of the shedding of blood is redeemed by the death of the murderer, in the case of an unintentional manslayer, the guilt of the shedding of blood (pollution of the land) is redeemed by the death of a high priest
 - The fullness of the revelation tells us that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest, the ultimate Redeemer, redeemes us from the guilt and power of sin
 - So the cities of refuge foreshadow the work of the True Redeemer
3. Regarding the Levites:
 - Did they own the cities?

- Was there an income from their work as Levites? Income from the sacrificail animals?
 - (a) Read Numbers 3:11-14
 - (b) The LORD God was the inheritance of the Levites – the privilege of the service in the Tabernacle, and later on in the Temple (Deuteronomy 10:8-9)
 - (c) The Levites were to rely on God for their life's provisions:
 - The Levites lived of the share from the food offerings and sacrifices presented by the people of Israel – Deuteronomy 18:1-5
 - The tithes paid by the people of Israel were directed to the Levites (Numbers 18:25-32)
 - The Levites did not own the cities, they owned the houses (could sell them and redeem them) and the pasture land (Leviticus 25:32-34)
- 4. How was it that the Israelites did not eradicate the pagan nations? – Disobedience
- 5. Is the land still the land of Israel? – No.
 - (a) The land was a foreshadow of the future complete inheritance – *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth* (Matt. 5:5) – the word translated *earth* in the original is used in the OT to refer to *the land*; ... *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefied, and unfading* ... (1 Peter 1:3-4)
 - (b) The land was a place where the people of God dwelled with their God and where He chose a place where thay could worship Him – compare ... *an hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem you will worship the Father.* (John 4:21-23)
- 6. In the New Testament times the land east of the Jordan river was not a focus in the ministry of Jesus. Why? – The baptism of Jesus took place on the east side of the Jordan river (John 1:28)