

General Church Education



# Joshua's Farewell

Joshua 23:1-11, 24:14-31

## Lesson 17

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

# Joshua's Farewell

## Joshua 23:1-11, 24:14-31

### For Parents and Teachers

As Joshua prepared to die he gave a farewell speech. His speech focused on the importance of Israel obeying their covenant with the Lord and driving enemy nations out of the land so as not to cause Israel to sin. He stressed the Lord's power in all Israel's victories against the nations and cautioned them against creating alliances with enemies that might trap them into serving other Gods. Holding fast to the Lord would bring peace and prosperity; disobeying Him would destroy Israel. He gave a beautiful summary of the Lord leading Israel from the time of Terah, the father of Abraham, up through the conquest of the land of Canaan, emphasizing the Lord's leadership and care of Israel. The people declared, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Then the covenant was renewed in Shechem, where Joshua set up a witness stone under a mighty oak tree. Following these events, Joshua died at age 110.

The Lord leads and cares for just as He led and cared for Israel. His power alone helps us overcome our spiritual enemies. Like the children of Israel, we must *choose* to serve the Lord and acknowledge His leadership and saving power in our lives. We can remember our promises to the Lord from time to time, perhaps particularly at special services of worship, such as weddings, baptisms and holy supper.

### Ideas for Children

- Joshua was a great leader who encouraged the children of Israel to follow the Lord at all times.
- We remain faithful to the Lord by following the Ten Commandments.
- The Lord can give us peace when we are faithful to Him.

### From the Writings

In the spiritual world angels have so much power that if anything there is in the way and needs to be removed because it is opposed to the Divine, they overturn it simply by an effort of will and a look. I have seen angels scatter thousands of evil spirits and cast them into hell. It does need to be known, though, that angels have no power on their own, but that the power they have comes from the Lord. Further, they are powers to the extent that they recognize this. See *Heaven and Hell* 229-230.

'And Joshua made a covenant with the people on that day.... And Joshua...took a great stone and set it up under the oak that was in the sanctuary of Jehovah. And Joshua said, Behold, this stone will be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of Jehovah which He spoke to us; and it will be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.' (Joshua 24:22-27). 'A witness' means a confirming of the covenant and therefore of their being joined to Jehovah. For a covenant means a joining together. And since being joined to Jehovah or the Lord is not possible except through good, and since no good effecting that conjunction is possible apart from that which gains its true nature from truth, 'a witness' consequently means the confirmation of good by means of truth. In the highest sense 'the stone' is the Lord Himself since He is the source of all truth. See *Arcana Coelestia* 4197.

# Joshua's Farewell

## Joshua 23:1-11, 24:14-31

### Vocabulary

**Great Sea**—Mediterranean Sea

**heed**—give careful attention to

**transgressions**—times when a person disobeys the commandments

**statute**—law

**ordinance**—decree or law

The final chapters in the Book of Joshua are about Joshua's farewell to the children of Israel. Joshua was very old—110 years old. He had led the children of Israel for sixty years. Now his work was done, and he knew he would soon die.

### Hold Fast to the Lord Your God

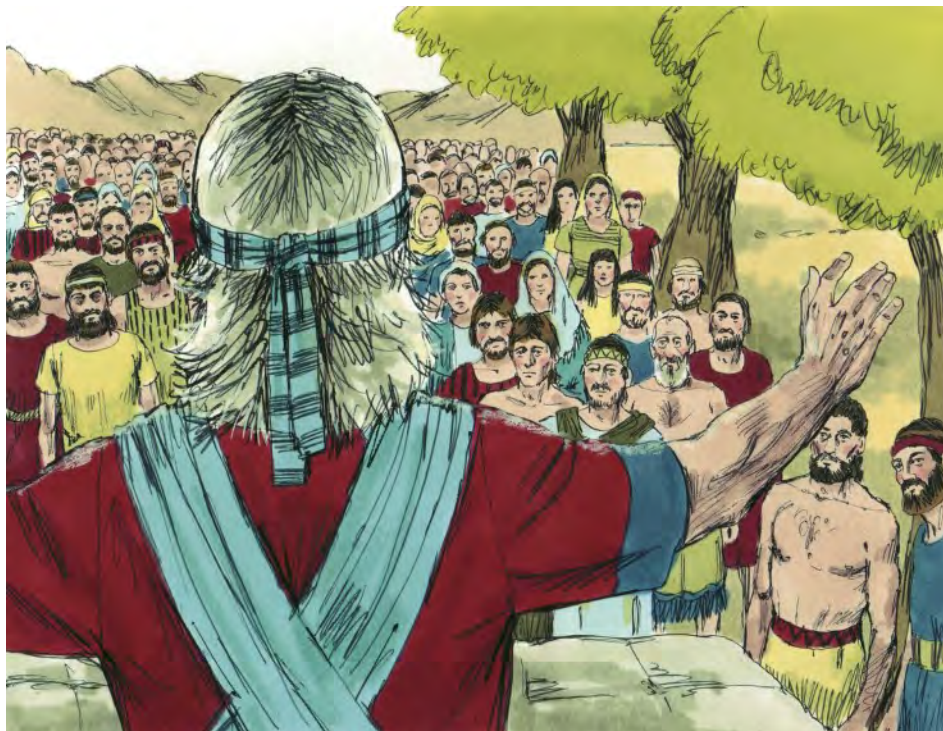
First Joshua called the elders, judges and officers so he could speak to them one last time.

Read Joshua 23:1-11. Joshua reminded them that it was the Lord who had fought for them and given them the land. He told them to continue following the Lord.

Do you remember that before each tribe settled in its inheritance it was supposed to drive out any enemy nations still living in the land? And do you remember they still had not obeyed this com-

mand? Joshua told them not to have anything to do with the enemies who lived among them. He warned about what would happen if they did not follow the Lord and worshiped idols.

“When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger



of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you." (Joshua 23:16)

The Lord had given the children of Israel all the good things He had promised them:

"Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke.... All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed." (Joshua 23:14)



As long as the children of Israel loved and obeyed the Lord, they would have good success. But if they turned away from the Lord they would “perish quickly from the good land”.

### Choose Whom You Will Serve

Next, Joshua gathered the tribes at Shechem. He reminded them of all the Lord had done for them from the time of Abram to living in the Land of Canaan.

Read Joshua 24:1-14.

Then Joshua told the people they must choose whether to serve the Lord their God, or other gods. Is it always easy to do what's right, to serve the Lord? No. The children of Israel knew it was not always easy to follow the Lord's commandments, but they said,

We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God. (Joshua 24:18)

Even when Joshua said it might be too hard for them to do they *insisted*:

"The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" (Joshua 24:24)

### A Covenant and a Witness Stone

Joshua knew it is easy to forget promises. So he made a covenant with the people, and wrote it in the Book of the Law of God. It would remind them of their promises.

Joshua took a large stone, and set it up under an oak tree.

"Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." (Joshua 24:27)

Then the people returned to their homes in the land that they had inherited.

### **Death of Joshua**

Joshua was 110 years old when he died. He was buried in the land he inherited, Timnath-serah. He was a good leader who guided his people to serve the Lord. Joshua was a hero of war because he led the children of Israel to conquer Canaan.

### **We Will Serve the Lord**

If you were asked whether you would choose selfishness or serving the Lord, would you reply the way the children of Israel did? Serving the Lord means learning what He wants you to do and doing it. It is not always easy to do what is right, to do what the Lord wants instead of what we want. We find ourselves turning away from the Lord to follow what we want instead? The Lord gives us this choice every day. Sometimes we may make the wrong choice, but the Lord is always fighting for us.

"Have I not commanded you?  
Be strong and of good courage;  
do not be afraid, nor be dismayed,  
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

### **Discussion Questions**

- What were the children of Israel to remember about their victories in battle?
- What were they to remember about their blessings?
- The children of Israel were told to choose to follow the Lord. What choices does the Lord give us? What consequences do we experience when we do not follow the Lord?
- Why might following the Lord be difficult?
- Why was Joshua a hero?
- What makes a person a hero? Do you know anyone who is a hero, like Joshua? Why is this person a hero?
- In this story Joshua set up a stone for a memorial under an oak tree. What other memorials did the children of Israel set up as reminders as they conquered Canaan and settled there?
- What kind of memorial would you make to remember the Lord?
- What kinds of things do we do to remember important events?

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### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“The Lord our God we will serve,  
And His voice we will obey!” (Joshua 24:24)

### Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- The Lord Is the Hero
- *We Will Serve the Lord*. Listen at <https://newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-we-will-serve-the-lord/> and use the sheet music provided to learn a song.
- Picture to color—Covenant and Witness Stone (Joshua 24)

### Additional Activity Choices

- Review questions for the book of Joshua are available online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-review-questions-for-the-book-of-joshua.pdf>.



## The Lord Is the Hero

The book of Joshua tells us how the Lord led and protected the children of Israel. The stories also teach us about the Lord, and how He leads and protects us.

The boxes in the first column tell how the Lord led and protected the children of Israel. The boxes at the bottom of the page tell how the Lord leads and protects us.

Cut out the sentences at the bottom of the page. Match each one with a box in the first column. When all sentences are matched, glue them in place.

The Lord led and protected the children of Israel	The Lord leads and protects us
The Lord provided a strong and wise leader, Joshua, to lead Israel in their conquest of the Promised Land.	
The Lord fought for Israel against Israel's enemies and conquered.	
The Lord protected Israel when they were faithful, and punished them when they turned to evil.	
The Lord forgave Israel when they turned back to Him. Then He could bring them success.	
The Lord was the Captain of the armies of Israel. He was the Hero.	

The Lord forgives us when we are sorry and turn to Him. Then He can lead us to happiness.

The Lord is the Captain of our life. He is a Hero for us.

The Lord protects and rewards the good and punishes the evil.

The Lord fights for us against our enemies of selfishness and wrongdoing, and conquers.

The Lord is our strong and wise Leader. He leads us in our struggles on the path to heaven.

## We Will Serve the Lord (Song)

Learn a song about serving the Lord based on Joshua 24:13-17. Listen to the song at <https://newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-we-will-serve-the-lord/>

*Based on Joshua 24: 13-17*

*John Odhner*



D      G      A7      D      G

1. I've giv-en you a land with-out your la - bor. You live in homes and towns you did - n't  
 2. The Lord God has giv-en us our free-dom. We've seen ——— the mir - a - cles He's

A7      F#m      Bm7      Em7      A7

build. You eat the fruit of o - live trees and vines you did - n't grow. Now  
 done. — He's the one who's guard - ed us wher - ev - er we have gone. So

Bm Em A7      D      G      A7      D      G

you can serve the Lord. If it seems wrong to serve the Lord, choose to-day whom you will  
 we will serve the Lord.

A7      F#m      Bm7      Em      A7      Bm Em A7      D

serve; but as for me and my fam-i-ly, we will serve the Lord! We will serve the Lord!

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