

Joshua Chapter 24: The Covenant between God and Israel is Re-ratified

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INTRODUCTION

Having delivered the Promise Land to Israel and given them rest, God calls for a renewing of the Mosaic Covenant. He sets the history before them and seeks their response. Israel unequivocally agrees to the Covenant, they pledge their full obedience. During Joshua's lifetime and the elders who followed him Israel remained true to their word.....until they forgot the works of the Lord, Jud. 2:7-15. Have you forgotten the works of the Lord? If you have, to where has this forgetfulness brought you?

ISRAEL'S HISTORY PRIOR TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

- After 400yrs of Slavery, God frees Israel from the Land of Egypt (Ex. 12:29-41).
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12).
- Israel is cursed to wander in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35).
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14).
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 31:14).
- God delivers two Amorite kings into Israel's hands. (Num. 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:10).
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56).

JOSHUA CHAPTERS 1-11: *Conquest of the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 1: *Victory before Entering the Land*

Joshua Chapter 2: *The Two Spies Confirm God's Word about the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 3 & 4: *The Parting of the Jordan River, Israel's Crossing, and the Stones of Remembrance*

Joshua Chapter 5: *A Tuning Point in Israel's History*

Joshua Chapter 6: *The Lord Delivers Jericho into Israel's Hands*

Joshua Chapter 7: *Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai*

Joshua Chapter 8: *Israel's Victory Over Ai*

Joshua Chapter 9: *Failure to Seek the Lord's Counsel: Treaty with the Gibeonites*

Joshua Chapter 10: *"The Lord God of Israel Fought for Israel" (10:42)*

Joshua Chapter 11: *The Lord Fulfills His 600yr Promise Concerning the Land*

JOSHUA CHAPTERS 12-21: *The Division of the Promise Land*

JOSHUA CHAPTERS 22-24: *Events after the Conquest & Division of the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 22 *Civil War is Averted in Israel*

Joshua Chapter 23 *Joshua Recalls God's Faithfulness and Urges Israel to do Likewise*

Chapter 24 *The Covenant between God and Israel is Re-ratified*

The Two Parties to the Covenant: God and Israel (24:1)

24:1, *The Two Parties to the Covenant are Present*: Joshua 24 is an official ceremony between God and Israel to re-ratify the Mosaic Covenant that was originally ratified in Deut. 29-31. The format *sort of* follows that of ancient Hittite treaties of that day.

The History between the Two Parties: God's Faithfulness to Israel, even before She was Born (24:2-13)

24:2-4, *God's Faithfulness to the Patriarchs*: What's Israel's history? God took their forefather Abraham out of a godless land and blessed him. He multiplied his progeny via Isaac and Jacob, from whom the nation of Israel was born.

24:5-7, *God's Preservation and Deliverance of the Nation of Israel*: Israel started out as 70 people, Deut 10:22, and grew to over 2,000,000, despite the Egyptians efforts of genocide, Ex. 1:8-22. Then God delivers them from slavery with great power, Ex. 12:29-41, and sustains them through the wilderness wanderings, Deut. 1:10.

24:8-10, *God Destroys Two Amorite kings and Delivers Israel from Balaam's Curse*: God recalls the two Amorite kings, Sihon & Og, whom He delivered into Israel's hands, Num. 21:21-35, and His protection against Balaam's curse, Num. 22-24.

24:11-12¹, *God Conquers the Promise Land for Israel*: It was God who defeated the seven Canaanite nations that were greater and mightier than Israel, Deut 7:1. It was by God's power: (1) men of Jericho were terrified because of God, 2:10-11, (2) God parts the Jordan, 3:14-17, (3) 601,730 (Num 26:51) soldiers are circumcised and God protects Israel, 5:2-3, 13-15, (4) God brings the Walls of Jericho down, 6:15-21, (5) God rains large hail upon the enemy and stops the sun and moon, 10:11-14, (6) God delivers the Canaanites' massive army into Israel's hands, 11:1-15.

24:13, *God's Concluding Statement*: God gave Israel a "turn-key" Promise Land. Israel had houses they did not build and vineyards they did not plant.

Israel is Called to Covenantal Loyalty to her God (24:14-15)

24:14-15, *In Light of God's Faithfulness, Joshua Urges Israel to Serve God Alone*: Having recounted His faithfulness to Israel and to the Covenant He made with them, God calls for a response from Israel. Joshua knows where he stands, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

¹ Some believe that "hornet" in 24:12 is symbolic for the terror God sent over the Canaanites, especially because we don't have an account of God using hornets in battle. They cite Ex. 23:27-28 where "terror" is mentioned in v. 27 and "hornet" in v. 28. However, "terror" and "hornet" don't seem to be parallel to each other, but distinct calamities God would bring upon the enemy. Thus, I see "hornet" as literal.

Israel Swears to Covenantal Loyalty to Her God (24:16-18)

24:16-18, *Israel Wholeheartedly Agrees to the Covenant*: Israel agrees with God's assessment of history and enthusiastically agrees to the Covenant.

The Consequences for Breaking the Covenant (24:19-20)

24:19-20, *Joshua Reminds Israel of the Consequences for Breaking the Covenant*: Joshua makes God's request for obedience crystal clear: if Israel pursues idolatry, they will pay dearly for it.

Israel Repeats Her Oath to Covenantal Loyalty to Her God (24:21)

24:21, Knowing the Consequences, Israel Repeats their Oath to Serve God Alone.

Israel Signs on the Dotted Line and Agrees to a Covenant that is then Set in Stone (24:22-28)

24:22-25, *Israel acts as Witnesses against themselves and Unequivocally Agrees to the Covenant*: Rather than invoking false gods as witnesses to this Covenant (as in a Hittite treaty), Israel acts as witnessing against themselves and without question agree to the Covenant.

24:26-28, *The Covenant is Set in Stone and will Act as Witness against those who Break It*: This is now a permanent, binding, irrevocable contract and as the stenographer's tape, it will act as witness against those who break it.

Joshua Dies and Israel Remains Faithful all his Days and the Days of the Elders' who Followed Him (24:29-31)

24:29-31, Joshua dies at age 110 and is buried in Timnath Serah, in Ephraim.

Joseph's Bones are Buried and Eleazar, the High Priest Dies (24:32-33)

24:32-33, *Joseph's bones are Buried in Shechem and Eleazar, the High Priest, Dies*: Joseph's bones are buried according to his request to Israel in Gen. 50:25. Eleazar, the high priest, dies and is buried in land belonging to his son, Phinehas, who'd already been acting high priest, Jos 22:13, 30.

Now that Israel's leaders are dead (Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Eleazar have all died), what will happen with Israel? They remain faithful all the days of Joshua and the elders that followed him, 24:31. But when they forgot the Lord and His works, they did evil in the sight of the Lord, Jud. 2:7-15.

CONCLUSION

The key to Israel's success was remembering her Lord and His works, remembering the history of His deliverance of a tiny nation made up of 70 people, who grew to over 2,000,000 people and conquered the Promise Land. When Israel forgot this, they did evil before the Lord and suffered dearly for it.

What does this have to do with you today? Romans 15:4 reveals that these things were written for our learning that we through the comfort of the Scriptures might have **hope**. How are we to take hope and comfort from these events in history? Forgetting the Lord and His works can lead to two outcomes: (1) it can lead to a life of sin and needless suffering as was the case with Israel, when the cares and desires of this world occupy our minds and are all we know and practice, or (2) it can lead to tremendous suffering during a tragedy when we attempt to face the tragedy on our own because we've forgotten the God of deliverance, who delivered a nation called Israel.

Don't misunderstand. God's children are called to suffer, Phil 1:29—*For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for His sake.* What did our Lord tell His disciples the night He was arrested, Jn. 15:18-21? The world will hate us and persecute us for His name's sake. However, God has a hope for us during our suffering, whether due to our own sinfulness, or forgetting to call on His name when tragedy strikes or we are being persecuted for His name's sake.

When was the last time you remembered the Lord's works? Does the fact that some 3,400yrs ago God delivered Israel with 10 plagues in Egypt, parting the Red Sea, defeating 2 Amorite kings, parting the Jordan River, bringing down the walls of Jericho, raining hail down upon the enemy, stopping the sun and moon, defeating all the Canaanite nations, have an affect on the way you live your life today? These things are supposed to give you **hope** today! Rom. 15:4.

Do you live with these realities in mind as you face the next relationship issue, the next temptation to drink, your spouse, children, parents, boyfriend, boss. Have you forgotten the God of deliverance?.....1Pt. 5:7.