

**JOSHUA 23 STAY THE COURSE**  
**11 January 13 by Glenn Palmer**

**REVIEW**  
**CONQUEST**

- Joshua 1: *Strong in the Lord*
- Joshua 2: *Spies*
- Joshua 3: *Surge*
- Joshua 4: *Stones*
- Joshua 5: *Sacraments*
- Joshua 5-6: *Supreme Commander*
- Joshua 6: *Sound of the Trumpets*
- Joshua 7: *Sin*

- Joshua 8: *Sack*
  - Joshua 9: *Schemers*
  - Joshua 10: *Sun stands still*
  - Joshua 11: *Sparing no one*
  - Joshua 12: *So many kings*
- SETTLEMENT**
- Joshua 13-15: *Slaying the Giants*
  - Joshua 16-19: *Settlements*
  - Joshua 20-21: *Safety and Sanctity*
  - Joshua 22: *Separation and Sanctity*

**JOSHUA 23 STAY THE COURSE**

**Introduction:** Joshua is now old and these next two chapters are his last will and testament. They are exhorting Israel to love the Lord her God and to obey all the commandments.

**THEMES**

1. How many times do you find the “Lord your God” in this chapter? *12 times*
2. What is the Hebrew word for “Lord” and what does it mean? *Jehovah - the covenant God - comes from the Hebrew “to be”; think I AM - God who always exists*
3. What is the Hebrew word for “God” and what does it mean? *Elohim is the plural form of the word ‘Eloah’ which means God. Elohim means God with more than one person. It is God the creator - creative energy - Genesis 1!!*
4. Compare Joshua and Moses

Event	Moses	Joshua
Crossing water	<i>Red Sea</i>	<i>Jordan at flood stage</i>
“Burning Bush”	<i>Burning Bush</i>	<i>the Commander of hosts</i>
In Battle	<i>Holding up his arms</i>	<i>At Ai</i>
Altar to the Lord	<i>At Sinai</i>	<i>At Shechem and Shiloh</i>

5. Note God’s activity:
  - a. Vs. 3: *Everything the Lord has done - the Lord fought for you*
  - b. Vs. 5:
    - 1.) *Will drive them out*
    - 2.) *Will push them out*
  - c. Vs. 9: *The Lord has driven out*
  - d. Vs. 14: *Kept His promises*
6. Promises:
  - a. Keeping the promises:
    - 1.) One of the promises God kept was the curse of Canaan. After Noah was found drunk by Ham, he cursed Canaan. Genesis 9:25-27 (@ 2350 BC).
    - 2.) Another promise was to Abraham in Genesis 15:16-21 (@2100)
  - b. Vs. 5: *“As the Lord your God promised you”*
  - c. Vs. 10: *“Just as He promised.”*

- d. Carrot and the Stick
  - 1.) Vs. 14: *“not one of all the good promises that the Lord your God gave you has failed.”*
  - 2.) Vs. 14: *“Every promise has been fulfilled.”*
  - 3.) Vs. 15: *“every good promise of the Lord your God has come true.”*
  - 4.) Vs. 15: *“The Lord your God will bring on you all the evil he has threatened.”*
- 7. In this exhorting passage, Joshua asks the Israelites to do three things:
  - a. Vs. 6: *Be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law*
  - b. Vs. 8: *Cleave (cling to) See Genesis 2:24*
  - c. Vs. 11: *Love the Lord you God”*

### **Exposition of the Text**

#### **Joshua 23:1**

- 8. This was presumably at Shiloh where the ark was (19:51). Later they will go to Shechem (24:1).
- 9. “given rest from all their enemies”
  - a. Read Psalm 95
  - b. Read Hebrews 4:1-13
  - c. Rest has two facets:
    - 1.) Eternal rest - heaven Hebrews 11:11
    - 2.) Temporal rest here on this earth. Hebrews 4:3
  - d. Matthew 11:28

*Practical Application: Many spiritualize the rest and think of some future day - we die and cross the Jordan and go into the Promised Land. But does Christ give YOU rest on this earth? If you do not feel any rest, how can you achieve that rest?*

- 10. Joshua is probably younger than Caleb, but in Joshua 13:1 we read “When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the Lord said to him, ‘You are very old.’” Now ten chapters later we read that Joshua was “old and well advanced in years.” Why did Joshua age more quickly than Caleb? *Responsibility. Look at how the presidents age.*

#### **Joshua 23:2**

- 11. All the leaders of the community.
- 12. This is Joshua’s last will and testimony. See II Peter 1:12-15

#### **Joshua 23:3**

- 13. Joshua writes that they were eye witnesses to what had occurred.

#### **Joshua 23:3-5**

- 14. Who has done/will do the fighting? *The Lord your God*

#### **Joshua 24:6**

- 15. NIV: “Be very strong”
- 16. KJV: “Be ye therefore very courageous”
- 17. Become courageous by obeying!
- 18. Is this any different than what Joshua commanded them in the first chapter? Look up Joshua 1:7-9. Theme of this chapter “STAY THE COURSE.”

19. Clear instructions:
- careful*
  - obey*
  - all*
  - written in the Book of the Law*
  - without turning aside to the right or left* - Theme of tonight's lesson - Stay the course

**Joshua 23:7**

20. What happens when you associate with these nations? *See the sin of Peor in Nu. 25*

Practical application: *If you don't associate with the non-believer, how can the gospel be spread? If you are isolated from the world, the non-believer will not come in contact with the believer.*

*Thoughts:*

- 1.) Is the situation in Joshua's day the same as in America today? No, the Lord God had told them to wipe them out.*
- 2.) To what type of events can you go? Go to a sporting event, but not carousing. Go to a restaurant. Invite them into your home so you are in charge. Go to a block party.*
- 3.) Whatever you do, don't court them or be courted by them!!!!!! This is non-negotiable. See Numbers 25!*

21. What happened when the Israelites would invoke or swear by a pagan god? *They get to become equal with God. You swear by them - you acknowledge them.*
22. Psalm 63:11: It appears that those who swear by God's name are considered to be believers. Thus, those who swear by other gods would be unbelievers.

Practical Application: *Today we do not have stone or gold idols to which we bow down. So does this verse have any impact for us today?*

Heidelberg Catechism Answer 95. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed Himself in the Word.

**Joshua 23:9-10**

23. Judges 15:15-16

**Joshua 23:11**

24. God is a jealous lover. He wants us to be fully dedicated to Him. Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Practical Application: *How do we show that we love the Lord our God?*

**Joshua 23:12-13**

25. What is the way that the Canaanites would turn the hearts of the Israelites away from the one true God? *Intermarriage*

Practical Application: *What is the moral of the story for today?*

26. What are the consequences?
- God will no longer drive out the enemies*
  - They will be snares and traps*
  - They will become whips on your backs*
  - thorns in your eyes*
  - UNTIL YOU PERISH FROM THE LAND*
27. Did this happen? *Yes - the 10 northern tribes disappearing for ever; Babylonian Captivity*

**Joshua 23:14**

28. "Going the way of all the earth"

*Practical Application: Are you prepared to "go the way of all the earth"?*

29. Was God faithful in His promises and blessings? Yes

**Joshua 23:15-16**

30. If the Lord was faithful to the Israelites in blessing them, He will also be faithful to them in the cursing. If they disobey Him, He will surely punish them, even though, or especially because, they are His chosen people.

*Practical Application: Do we really believe this stick?* No. If we did we would sin far less. The fear of God's wrath would help keep us from sinning. When was the last time you heard a *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* type sermon. Punishment would help us remember to obey the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

**Bottom line: The Israelites need to STAY THE COURSE. Just as in Chapter 1 they were to <sup>7</sup> "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey the all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."**