

Chapter 24

After delivering his farewell address to the leaders of Israel (Chapter 23), what did Joshua do next (v. 1)? He summoned all the *people* of Israel, including the leaders, to Shechem.....for his Second Farewell Address.

What was Joshua's purpose in gathering all the people of Israel? Joshua was nearing the end of his life and he knew it. He also knew there was no obvious leader waiting in the wings to take on his role as leader of Israel. He feared that Israel would drift from their relationship with the Lord in the absence of strong leadership. So, he did not merely issue a series of public admonitions in order to guide Israel after his death. Chapter 24 describes a formal covenant renewal enacted at the site of Shechem [cf. 8:30-35] for the purpose of getting a binding commitment on the part of the people of Israel to serve and obey their God.¹

As Joshua recounted the Lord's mighty acts of grace on behalf of His people, where did he begin his journey (vv. 2-4)? Speaking the very words of God, Joshua traced the nation's origins back to the calling of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans and then he moved through the patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob. God summoned Abraham to leave his homeland and journey to the Promised Land. The first display of grace in this chapter is God's sovereign choice of Abraham—there was nothing in Abraham himself that earned or prompted this special blessing.

What was the next scene in Joshua's historical survey (vv. 5-7)? He turned to the Exodus, a second great display of God's grace toward Israel. The raising up of Moses and Aaron, along with the sending of the plagues, were divine acts intended to secure His people's release from slavery in Egypt. Their deliverance—highlighted by the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army—together with God's sustaining care in the wilderness, powerfully testified to His faithfulness throughout that chapter of Israel's history.

What was God's third great act of grace extended to Israel (vv. 8-10)? The Israelites' victory over the Amorites east of the Jordan River. And the way He dealt with Moab's (King Balak's) hostility toward God's people.

What period of grace did He highlight next (vv. 11-12)? The fourth divine provision was the crossing of the Jordan River and the consequent victory over the numerous Canaanite tribes. The Lord reminded them that they drove out their enemies with the help of the hornet that He provided and not by their own strength.

What/who was the hornet (v. 12)? There has been much conjecture as to who or what the hornet is, but in the end, we don't know. The scriptures don't tell us.

How did God summarize the marvelous deeds He had performed for Israel's benefit (v. 13)? Any greatness Israel achieved was not by her effort but through God's grace and enablement. From first to last, Israel's conquests, deliverances, and prosperity were because of God's good mercies and were not of their own making.²

What appeal did Joshua make to the people in vv. 14-15? The conditions of the covenant renewal were then stated: Israel must fear the LORD and serve Him. Joshua boldly challenged them to choose between the gods of Ur, the gods of the Amorites in Canaan, and Yahweh. Then, Joshua assured them that whatever their choice was, his mind was made up, his course was clear: "*But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*"³

How did the people respond to Joshua's appeal (vv. 16-18)? With great eagerness and enthusiasm, moved by the force of Joshua's arguments and the magnetism of his example. "Perish the thought that we should ever be guilty of such ingratitude," was their instant reply. They promised that they too would serve the Lord.⁴

How did Joshua answer the people's commitment (vv. 19-20)? Joshua was not at all satisfied with their burst of enthusiasm. He reminded them of the difficulties involved in following the Lord faithfully. They would not be able to serve the Lord in their own strength; simply by determining to do so using their willpower (cf. Exodus 19:8).

When the people sincerely renewed their commitment to serve the Lord (v. 21), how did Joshua respond (v. 22)? He reminded them that they were witnesses against themselves in this covenant renewal. By their own declaration, they had bound themselves to the Lord, and if they later turned away, their own words would stand as testimony against them. Their forefathers had made similar vows when the Mosaic Law was given (Exodus 24:3, 7), yet they failed to keep their promise at Mount Sinai and throughout the wilderness wandering.

How did Joshua challenge the people's commitment to be witnesses against themselves (v. 23)? Joshua returned to the point he had mentioned at the beginning, "... *throw away the foreign gods that are among you*" (cf. v. 14). He had heard the pledge on their lips; now he challenged them to prove their sincerity by their works knowing that many of them were secretly practicing idolatry.

How did the people respond (v. 24)? Without the slightest hesitation the people shouted, "*We will serve the LORD our God and obey Him.*" For the third time, they said they would be obedient servants of God,

On that day, what did Joshua do to settle and confirm the promise and pledges (vv. 25-26)? Realizing that further words would be fruitless, and semi-satisfied with the genuineness and sincerity of the people's consecration, Joshua solemnly renewed the covenant. He wrote down their agreement in the Book of the Law of God.⁵

The covenant that Joshua made with the people on this day was not a brand new one but another renewal of the Mosaic Covenant, which was made for the first time at Mt. Sinai. The Mosaic Covenant was not an everlasting covenant; hence it needed to be renewed in every generation.⁶

What did Joshua do as a final reminder (v. 26)? Joshua also apparently inscribed the statutes of the covenant on a large stone slab which was set up beneath the oak at this sacred location as a permanent memorial.

When Joshua had finished making the covenant with the people what did he do next (vv. 28-30)? He sent the people away to their own inheritance.....and then he died at the age of 110; the very same age as Joseph when he died. With the memories of this solemn occasion indelibly impressed on their minds the Israelites returned to their homes in possession of their inheritance.⁷

Each tribe was to proceed now to exterminate the Canaanites in its own inheritance territory, trusting in Yahweh and obeying His covenant. God would raise up local tribal leaders (called judges), as He saw the particular need for these, in order to provide leadership in difficult situations.⁸

What were the three burials that marked the close of the Book of Joshua (vv. 29-33)?

vv. 29-31. Joshua died and was buried in his own town (cf. 19:50). No greater tribute could be paid to him than the fact that he was called simply "*the servant of the Lord.*" He aspired to no greater rank than this.

v. 32. The burial of Joseph's bones is also recorded. His dying request was that he be buried in the Promised Land (Genesis 50:25).

v. 33. The third burial mentioned is that of the high priest Eleazar, son and successor of Aaron. It was his privilege to direct the ministry of tabernacle worship in the crucial years of the Conquest and settlement of Canaan.⁹

These three peaceful graves testify to the faithfulness of God, for Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar once lived in a foreign nation where they were the recipients of God's promise to take His people back to Canaan. Now all three were at rest within the borders of the Promised Land. God kept His word to Joshua, Joseph, Eleazar—and to all Israel. And, by this, we are encouraged to count on the unfailing faithfulness of God.¹⁰

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Joshua, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 148.

² Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua" in the Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 369.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 370.

⁶ Ibid., 369.

⁷ Ibid., 370.

⁸ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Joshua, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 153.

⁹ Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua" in the Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 370.

¹⁰ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Joshua, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 156.