

Joshua 24

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[0 : 0 0] be in the book of Joshua, finishing up the book of Joshua this evening, Joshua chapter 24. Joshua 24, we'll look at that chapter in its entirety. So we'll be finishing up the book of Joshua. We've been in it for some time. Really amazing to me that we've, six and a half years ago, started in Genesis 1, and now we are gradually just plugging along, so to say, making our way and completing the book of Joshua. So it's been quite a journey so far. Let's open up with a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you so much just for allowing us together, together. We thank you for the great privilege of fellowship, and we thank you for the opportunity of getting into your word. Lord, we pray that you would lead us tonight as we study it, as we see it, and read it, and hear it. We pray that you'd be with those in the back who are working with the youth and children. We pray, God, your leadership there. We just ask that in all ways and all manners of things that you would be glorified and honored. Lord, may the word that we hear tonight be a challenge and an encouragement to us. God, may we hear it and grow from it. Lord, and long to apply it in our daily lives, and we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

Okay, we're at the end of the book of Joshua and wrapping up really a pivotal time in the history of the nation of Israel. As you have seen, as we've made our way through, the grand theme of the book of Joshua is that faith wins the victory. Not only is Joshua charged with leading the nation into the promised land, he's also charged with being the one who distributes the inheritance. Now, that theme, inheritance, as we have seen in the last couple of weeks, is very important because an inheritance is neither earned nor gained nor necessarily deserved.

Rather, it is a gift that is given as a gracious outflow or overflow of a relationship that one has. So the promised land there is described as the nation's inheritance, and we've gotten to the point now where each is living within their inheritance. As we have seen, they have peace on all sides. That doesn't necessarily mean all of the enemies have been pushed out. Very clearly, it doesn't because we are told that they're no longer at war. There's peace on all sides, yet much remains to be driven out. And so we've seen that they live in the inheritance, but they do not yet fully possess their inheritance. Just historically, we understand they never do possess all of the inheritance because they fail to live faithfully and continue to push out the enemy and to push out those who were marked as condemned by the Lord their God. It doesn't take very long for us to see that as we flip the page in our Old Testament and we get into the book of Judges.

We see the theme repeated tonight that we will see introduced for us in the book of Judges when we get there and that they live faithfully all the days of Joshua and the elders who lived after him who knew the work of the Lord. But it is when those who had seen and observed the work of the Lord their God die or pass on that the nation begins to digress and to go backwards. And we will see that really in clear detail the longer we make our way through the book of Judges and that just spiral trajectory.

But at the end of the book of Joshua, we have three speeches. Joshua chapters 22, 23, and 24. The 22nd chapter is a speech to the Transjordan tribes, the two and a half tribes who live on the eastern side of the Jordan. And really the speech is all about the faithfulness that is required of them though they're living separate from the remainder of the part. And we've seen how living on borderline really leads to great danger. Then this second speech in Joshua chapter 23 is his speech to the leaders. He calls the leaders to himself. Many believe probably at his own home and he charges and really admonishes the leaders to faithfulness. Evidently they took that admonition because it says that the nation remained faithful as long as the elders who knew Joshua and saw the work of the Lord remained alive. So he admonishes them to faithfulness. Now in this final chapter, probably the one that we're more familiar with than any other, at least one verse of it in the book of Joshua. In Joshua chapter 24, you have his speech to all of the nation of Israel. And by saying all, we can assume also those who have joined with the nation of Israel. Think Rahab and her family. The Gibeonites who have decided that it'd be better to lie and live as opposed to fight

and die, right? They gave the perception like they had traveled a long distance and lied and then were made servants of the Lord. Now we can assume that they're here because they're the servants of the temple of the Lord. They're the woodcutters and the haulers of water and their presence. So you have a mixed multitude present when this great speech is given at the end of Joshua's life. And then we find the record of the ending of his life here, and we will also be reintroduced to it in the opening chapter of the book of Judges. But Joshua chapter 24 says this, [5 : 29] Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers. And they presented themselves before God. Joshua said to all the people, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, from ancient times your fathers lived beyond the river, namely Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.

Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it, but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. Then I sent Moses and Aaron and I plagued Egypt by what I did in its midst. And afterward I brought you out. I brought your fathers out of Egypt and you came to the sea and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.

But when they cried out to the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and brought the sea upon them and covered them. And your own eyes saw, or your own eyes saw, what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time. And then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan. They fought with you and I gave them into your hand and you took possession of their land when I destroyed them before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab arose and fought against Israel and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. But I was not willing to listen to Balaam so he had to bless you and I delivered you from his hand. You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho and the citizens of Jericho fought against you and the Amorite and the Parizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Gershite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand. Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow. I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities which you had not built and you have lived in them. You were eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth and put away the gods which your father served beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord.

If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve. Whether the gods which your father served which were beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. The people answered and said, far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. For the Lord our God is he who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples to whose midst we passed. The Lord drove out from before us all the peoples even the Amorites who live in the land. We also will serve the Lord for he is our God. Then Joshua said to the people, you will not be 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. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you after he has done good to you. The people said to Joshua, no, but we will serve the Lord. Joshua said to the people, you are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the Lord to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses. Now therefore put away the foreign gods which are in your midst and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.

The people said to Joshua, we will serve the Lord our God and we will obey his voice. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and made for them a statute and an ordinance and sheikim. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. Joshua said to all the people, behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us for it has heard all the words of the Lord, which he spoke to us. Thus it shall be for a witness against you so that you do not deny your God. Then Joshua dismissed the people each to his inheritance. It came about after these things that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord died being 110 years old. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-Sara, which is in the hill country of Ephraim on the north of Mount

Gash. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua and had known all the deeds of the Lord, which he had done for Israel. Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt at Sheikim and the piece of ground, which Jacob had brought or had bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Sheikim for 100 pieces of money. And they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons. And Eleazar, the son of Aaron died and they buried him at Gebeah of Phinehas, his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim. Joshua chapter 24. Here at the end of the book of Joshua, we finally find that final stone that is raised. There's a great pile of stones across the promised land and each of them bearing testimony. There's one in the middle of the Jordan River that Joshua himself sets up and he sets this final one up here in Sheikim as a testimony. The one in the middle of the Jordan River is a testimony that the land was dry and that's where the feet of the priest had stood. There's another one. When they crossed, they took the stones from the Jordan River and they set it up at Gilgal. And that is a testimony that God had brought them across. There is one back at Gilgal that is erected over an individual who is namely Achan, because that is a stone of testimony that sin has consequences. There is one after the sin of Achan is dealt with. It is at the gate of Ai, which is the city in which they defeated after they have fell to it originally because of the sin of Achan. And they go to

[11:06] Ai and they defeat it that second time, which shows that God blesses our repentance and calls us back to himself and leads us forward in victory, but does not leave us back in the defeat of sin. There is one at Sheikim that is painted or plastered on each stone. There are two stones rose up after the battle of Ai and it has the testimony of the Lord written on it for all to see and all to hear the blessings and the curses. We find them scattered throughout. There is one at the opening of the cave where the kings were defeated who hid themselves and they called them out and they put their foot on their neck. Remember that? And they slew the kings and this is a testimony that God will lead you forward courageously and you will defeat your enemies. Monument after monument after monument erected in the land of Israel, which shows us that God is faithful. Here is the final stone and it's simply a stone raised to be a testimony that what they have vowed or what they have declared has been heard by them and the Lord. And the stone is there to bear witness that what they have said will stand true. So we see in Joshua chapter 24, a call for a decision. All of these events have come about. Everything has transpired. As we have seen in the last couple of chapters, all the good things which the Lord has promised has come about. Not one of them has failed. All that God has promised has been fulfilled. What God has declared he would do, he has done. Not one good word from the Lord God has failed. And after all that faithfulness, this is probably about seven years of battling that we see before the distribution of the land. We don't know how long after the distribution of the land that these things take place. But after the word of God has been shown true and the character of God has been proven, now God calls man to make a decision. This is something that we see, by the way, consistent throughout scripture. I know that I've told you this before, but it bears repeating. When I first came to Christ, I was consumed with reading the Old Testament and really is a good place to be for a new believer. And I really was just enraptured with the book of Mark and going through it because it's fast. It's a good place to be for a new believer, right? And you're reading through the gospel of

Mark and you're seeing things happen fast and you're reading through the Pauline epistles and all the letters and writings of the New Testament. And there's this theme in the book of Mark that just kept kind of bothering me. And it, you know, it was kind of wearing on me. It didn't bother me in a bad way. It bothered me in a good way is that he called his disciples immediately. They left on followed him. He called his disciples immediately. They left on followed him. Called his disciples immediately. They left on followed him. And I remember just this resonant, God, I wish I was that, just that obedient. That the moment you called immediately I would follow. And I was just under his conviction. That's a good conviction. But then I remember when I, there was a point in which I began to reconcile that with the rest of scripture. And I saw that before they immediately left their nest and followed him, he had already taken them to a wedding feast in Canaan. They'd seen him turn the water into wine. They had heard him teach a number of times. They'd also seen John the Baptist point to him and say, behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. So what we see is the drawing of God is not just an instant moment where all of a sudden there's this great, oh, I'm going to leave off. It is God revealing his character and the truth of who he is. And then calling man to make a decision based upon what they see in the reality of their lives.

And at that moment, when the call is issued, man is faced to make a decision. Because we misconstrue the gospels and all of scripture, I believe, if we perceive Christ walking up to Peter, James, and John, and the very first moment he meets them, he sees them fishing. He says, hey, I'm going to make you fishers of men. Leave everything and follow me. And then they walk away. Now, did they do that? Yes. But they had already had previous encounters with Christ. Because he draws us to himself. Now, that is not diminishing these great steps of faith. Okay.

This is the leading. And what I have said before is faith is not blind. It does not always see, but it does not stand on just blind realities. It is the evidence of things hoped for. Why could they walk away from the fish? Well, if this man has turned water into wine, is teaching the things he is, has been testified about by John the Baptist, has done the things and taught the things which we have already heard, then he is worthy of our devotion. Here we see God being faithful with his people and over a span of seven years and probably a lot more than that. And now he brings them to a place where he calls for a decision. Let's go back a little further than this. Because the argument against God's judgment, especially when it concerns one of the most cataclysmic events that happened in all of history, namely the flood of Noah's day, is that God was so big, mean God that he would judge all the world and he would allow all the pairs save Noah and his family, just a few individuals concerning all of humanity. But what we fail to mention is that the day that God called Noah to go into the ark. And you put this picture, right? Noah has built an ark for 120 years. That's a pretty big testimony anyway, right? That's kind of showing that there's probably something serious. [16:35] And most people thought that Noah was a crazy man. But during the 120 years, the Bible tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. So he's making this declaration that God's going to bring rain. He's going to save the animals and Noah. And everybody's like, yeah, right. But then at the end of 120 years, God tells Noah it's time to go into the ark. But before Noah goes into the ark, there's this great parade of animals. Now, if you don't pay much attention to Noah and his family going into the ark, you probably would catch the attention or probably catch your attention of all of a sudden these animals coming into the ark. And now all of a sudden, everything that Noah's been saying for 120 years begins to be lined up. But then we wait and we see God waited seven days before God shut the door of the ark. Because in those seven days, he was calling those people who for 120 years had heard all was going to happen. And now all of a sudden, the beginning of what is about to happen has been evident to them. The animals have gathered together supernaturally and God waits seven days before he closes the door because he calls man to make a decision. So now tell me the death of all those individuals at the flood. Is that God's fault or man's fault? Because those who witnessed this event and all of a sudden things around them begin to change. But yet do not go into the door of the ark. Even though God has testified to them through signs and works and miraculous events and the faithfulness of the declaration of what was at his at that time his word through his man Noah. And yet they still refuse to make a decision.

And Joshua is doing this not necessarily on an evangelistic scale, but to God's people. Because we understand Paul made this declaration, I die daily. Which means every day I make a decision. As one of Christ's people, as a born again redeemed believer, still every day I'm faced with a call to make a decision of what today will look like. And Joshua extends his call to God's people.

The first thing we see about this call is before any of this takes place, before the decision is ever asked for, there is first and foremost a consideration. Now the consideration is important. Because just as we have seen over and over and over again, Joshua reminds us of the faithfulness of God in the past. Because the faithfulness of God in the past is our motivation to be faithful in the present, right? And our confidence of expectation for the future. What God has done in the past gives us motivation to live faithfully in the present and look to the future with a hopeful expectation. Because before God ever calls his people to make a decision, he first enables them to have a consideration. And Joshua calls all the people together to him. And then he brings the leaders and the elders and all those people. And all the people are gathered together there. And there's this phrase that just kept arresting me as I read this text. And it says it right there in verse 1.

[19:50] And they presented themselves before the Lord. Right? So what's about to transpire is a spiritual exercise or what we would say a demonstration of worship. Now they're at Shechem. Shechem is important.

Shechem is not the place where the tabernacle of God is. That is shallow. Okay? We understand that. They'll be there shallow. Shechem is not the place where the tabernacle of God is. This is not the place where God had so ordained that his name would dwell. The presence of his name would

dwell. But they are at Shechem.

Now Shechem is very, very important. We've already been here once in the book of Joshua. But it bears repeating. Because the reason Shechem is so important is the very first altar that Abraham ever built was at Shechem.

Under an oak tree, by the way. I don't know if you caught it in our text. It says they were there next to an oak tree. It says they raised that stone. And then the very first altar that Jacob ever builds is at Shechem. Right?

So God is coming full circle with his people and bringing them back to the place. It is here that God made the promise to Abraham, I'm going to give you this land. It is here that the Abrahamic covenant, as we have recorded for us in Genesis 12, was ratified and made. It is here that when Jacob comes back after sojourning so long with Laban and he comes back and dedicates himself to the Lord, it is here that his name is changed to Israel and all this other stuff. It is here that we see him coming back now and Joseph's bones are brought back and buried in this same place.

[21 : 31] It is here that God has to now all of this. And they present themselves before the Lord because this is a very spiritual exercise because every time God calls us to make a decision is an act of worship.

Not just an act of going through the motions. So we're reminded of where they're at. They're in the presence of the Lord. And he begins to lay out what he wants them to consider.

And the considerations are the faithfulness of God. Not just the faithfulness of God, but the work of God throughout the nation's entire history. And he doesn't go back to Egypt.

He doesn't even go back to Abraham. He goes back to Abraham's dad. Right? He goes all the way back to the other side of the river, which is the Euphrates.

So he takes it all the way back. And he makes this declaration. That on the other side of the river, Abraham's dad and Abraham and his brother, they were idolatrous worshipers and yet I called Abraham.

[22 : 31] Now from the very beginning, the consideration is Abraham was not called because he deserved to be called. Right? Just stay with me. This is a display of the gracious mercy of God choosing someone in spite of themselves.

We don't know why he called Abraham, but we do know that he did not call him because he deserved to be called. Abraham, he very clearly says, is an idolatrous worshiper of many gods in Mesopotamia.

He wasn't following the Lord. He followed the Lord simply because God called him and he went. He made a decision, right? And he says, he brings him to this land and over and over and over again throughout the text, the thing that we're considering is not what man has done, but what God has been doing throughout the generations.

When I read this, it reminds me so much of Acts chapter 7. Acts chapter 7 is the defense of Stephen before the Sanhedrin, right before Stephen is stoned at the end of Acts chapter 7.

Remember that? And when you open up Acts chapter 7 and you read that long chapter, probably the longest chapter in the book of Acts, and you see Stephen's defense, Stephen begins to make his defense not based upon what he has done or what he has known.

[23 : 48] Stephen's entire defense is what God has been doing throughout the nation of Israel's history. God called Abraham, God empowered Abraham, God sent Abraham's descendants to Egypt, God delivered the descendants of Israel. It's always God did this, God did this, God did this, God sent this man, God ordained this man, God called this man.

And when we come here, what Joseph is asking us to consider is not what man has done, but what God has been doing throughout the generations. God gave the land to Esau over here, he gave him Mount Seir, he sent Joseph, it was God who sent them down to Egypt.

Then God sent Moses and Aaron there, and then God called them out, right? God created the plagues, God brought them to the Red Sea, God put the sea over the Egyptians, God brought them in the wilderness, God brought them to the other side of the Jordan, God brought the kings there and defeated them, God crossed the Jordan River with them, God defeated all the kings there over and over and over and over again.

What we're considering is everything that God has been doing for them in spite of them, because I don't know if you caught it, but they were worshipping idols on the other side of the river, the Euphrates, but they were also worshipping idols in Egypt.

See, God didn't go get them out of Egypt because they were righteous. God went and got them out of Egypt because of his promise. He says, while they were worshipping the other gods in Egypt, I went and got them.

[25 : 03] We try to convince ourselves that they were living so righteously in Egypt that God finally saw them suffering while living so righteously and desired to go down and get them. No, God says, you were worshipping the idols of the Egyptians and I came and got you.

Again, what is all this? This is to show us that everything that has happened up to this point is a result of God, not a result of man. Okay?

This is God's work, not man's worth. This is what God has done. I'm just going to go ahead and let's just lay it out here right now.

When you stop and consider what God has done in your life in the past, because he's talking to God's people, the consideration is not how much you did to get it, but how much you didn't even deserve it.

That's the grand consideration. The grand consideration was even though I was worshipping idols on the other side of the river, even though in captivity I was worshipping idols, even though I was a failure over here, even though my own sins got me in the wilderness, God still did it.

[26 : 19] Because when we begin to put man on the pedestal, then the decision we make will always be for man, never for God. He's reminding them God has fulfilled his word in spite of you and in spite of us and in spite of all these things.

even at times when you so rapidly wasn't even deserving of it. We find the great declaration of Stephen in Acts chapter 7 that when God was raising up Moses, remember when Moses killed that Egyptian who was beating the Hebrew, remember that, right?

And we just think it's kind of an account and we read it in the book of Exodus and say, man, Moses had a problem. But when we go read the rest of the story as Paul Harvey would say and we read the greatest commentary on scripture which by the way is scripture and we see what Stephen says about it in Acts chapter 7.

It says that Moses assumed that the people would know that God was delivering them through him. So God had begun to put this deliverer mentality in Moses and so he said, I'm going to deliver you by force and he kills this Egyptian and he's like, now rise up, let's go people and they're like, no, we don't want to do that.

So Moses had become something and all of a sudden God puts him in the wilderness so that he can become nothing and after he became nothing now he can do something with him, right?

Because it's not Moses' strength, it's not his ability, it's not the people's desire, it's all what God is doing and we see this, this is the consideration.

[27 : 46] This is, when you get before the Lord and you present yourself before the Lord and you're there, this is what you consider. Where I'm at today is not the result of my own efforts or my own worth, but where I'm at today is a full, 100% a result of his work.

You're glory in that because always, my statement is this and I know it gets a little troubling at times because we would love to assume the best about ourselves but a man earned salvation is also a man maintained salvation which means if you can earn your salvation then it's up to you to maintain your salvation.

Now I don't know everything about you but I know everything about me. I'm not that good because there are moments when I'm going to stumble and I'm going to fall flat on my face and if maintaining my salvation is up to me at that moment I've lost it because I'm not worthy of it.

But a God given salvation is therefore a God maintained salvation and since it is him who gave it and entrusted it to me then it is him who will keep me. Right? And we see this being played out in the nation of Israel.

Here's the consideration. The second thing we see in the text is a call for commitment. We see a commitment because he makes this transition after telling them everything he wants them to consider he says it in that 14th and 15th verse that 15th verse is the one that's so familiar to us at least a portion of it.

[29 : 17] He stops and says now now after considering all this right? Now after this knowledge of not highlighting who Moses is not even lifting up who Abraham is we didn't even talk about Jacob's wrestling with God right?

We didn't say anything all we know is that Jacob had some kids we didn't talk about Joseph's righteousness and how he found favor all we know is that he went down to Egypt we didn't talk about Moses and Aaron and any of that stuff now after considering everything that God has done now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth.

Here is the commitment that he calls for fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth which means with absolute abandon and put away this should strike you by the way for 40 years they wandered in the wilderness and their shoes on their feet did not wear out the clothes on their back did not fade away right?

The food did not fail to come for seven years they've battled in the land of Canaan and they've won the battles except for that one where Achan had sinned but after that God restored them God pushed away larger armies but yet even after all of that the distribution of land he has to tell them put away the gods lowercase g which you and your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt see scripture testifies all throughout the Old Testament and when they left Egypt they took more than other people's gold they also took their gods one of the minor prophets cries out and said you worship the sun god in that wilderness wandering time that was the whole golden calf episode too by the way right?

so they still had an idolatrous problem an idol problem because he's he's calling them to here's the commitment serve God in sincerity and truth don't add him to your gods make him your God put away everything else remove it from you and then he gives them here this great challenge if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord choose for yourselves today whom you will serve whether the gods which your father served which were beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living but as for me and my house you serve the Lord so the challenge is this every individual must make that decision because you can't rest on the corporate identity of God's people the corporate identity of God's people is as strong as the individual decision to commitment hence the sin of Achan because one person was weak the entire nation became weak and therefore other people fell but the corporate identity as being we are God's people cannot be the thing which helps others to assume they are okay because each individual you choose for yourself whom you will serve that's the challenge because as you as individuals make a decision then all of a sudden as a corporate body we become stronger and he is challenging them with this reality that after considering the faithfulness and the work of God throughout the generations that brought you to this point now give up everything else with complete abandonment make God your only [32 : 39] God and he challenges them to commit in a way that really is unknown to them you say wait a minute this is the nation of Israel this is God's people right this is do you remember what else happened there at the oaks in Shechem it's also where when Jacob came back he made them bury their idols when they left Laban's house they took the household idols and they had to bury them there we find that in the book of Genesis see just because God's people doesn't mean they're all 100% right God's still working on his people we call it sanctification right and we see this but what he's calling for is this commitment that is really just unknown to them but it's the very first commandment you shall have no other gods beside me right this singular commitment that would challenge them to the very core of their being they wrestle with this until the Babylonian captivity by the way they went into Babylon a very polytheistic nation worshipping many gods they came out of the

Babylonian captivity 70 years 70 plus years after the issue of King Cyrus the most monotheistic people still today in all the world they went into Babylonian captivity serving many many many gods they came out only serving one god were they 100% right in how they did it no but that's how long it took for them to get there but the challenge is put away everything else you're trusting in because see they wanted the god who would do all this stuff but as they look around these other gods seem to have a right tune and god's like no they're nothing put them away remove them there's the commitment he calls for now this third thing and we'll take some time to pray really you see the consideration you see the commitment and the third one is shocking and it's the challenge that he lays before them because if this is us if we're sharing the gospel with an individual and we're using this as an evangelistic commitment and we go through god's faithfulness there in the first 13 verses and then we get to verse 14 and we call the people to make a commitment right we call them to make a commitment someone once asked billy graham how many points should a good sermon have and billy graham response one which means every sermon needs to have a point you're calling people to make a decision you're calling people to do something right that's the altar

call doesn't always have to be evangelistic doesn't always have to be a decision for Christ but there has to always be a point to it so if we're going through this and we get to this point and we're challenging these people we're calling these people to make this commitment for out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went among all the peoples through whose midst we passed the Lord drove out from before us all the people even the Amorites who live in the land we also will serve the Lord for he is our God now that's exactly what we preached for right this is the decision we were asking people to make and it seems amazing because this is the commitment he's asking they say they'll do it not many of us would do what Joshua does in the very next verse but at the same time when you open your gospels this is very similar to what we see Christ doing to the multitude!

around him because when they Joshua his response is you will not be able to serve the Lord you can't do it you say why in the world would you ever discourage what we would call ripe fruit right people who are just ripe for the picking but he challenges them with this he says you won't be able to do it I know you say you can but you can't because he is holy God he is a jealous God he says you won't be able to serve the Lord your God he said well isn't that the very thing that he asked them to do hasn't he asked them to commit to serving God and in the moment they say they would do it he says no you can't do it how many of us if we share the gospel with Christ and we look at the individual and we say give your life to Christ and this is what you need to do and they say yes I'm ready how many of us look and go but you can't you won't do it we would say that's ludicrous it's insane but is it really because see what is challenge!

here is! you can't do it at the level you've been doing it because God's a holy God he's a jealous God and if you think you can make the commitment the same way you've been making the commitment then when you fail him he will judge you because if you say you're his then you're his and he who has been good to you will then be judged!

[38 : 01] we call this full gospel evangelism right we say the fullness of the gospel right to tell people you accept Christ and everything becomes great and your life's made easy and it's nothing but roses and buttercups from that day point it's just a lie right to tell people if you repeat this prayer after me and everything is going to be okay that's a lie because when I tell you you're enlisting in the army and you're going to do battle with the enemy and it's going to be treachery and it's going to be hard and you're going to be tempted like you've never been tempted and all of a sudden the enemy whose fiery darts used to be in his pouch now are being hurled at you and he's going to be roaring around like a lion seeking whom he can devour and destroy and the moment you get on the other side you're the one who's seeking and you start talking about the same and then you say this stuff like if you say you're going to commit to the Lord but then you want to take that lightly that's not a full commitment Deuteronomy

I know this is hard I know it's Wednesday night but Deuteronomy 424 for the Lord our God is a jealous God he is a consuming fire right anybody that's known me over a year knows that's my favorite verse that verse is repeated in the book of Hebrews by the way that's both an Old Testament and a New Testament you say well this is the other side of the cross right so he repeated it on the other side of the cross Hebrews chapter 10 for it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God who's the book of Hebrews written to believers believers that's the text that Jonathan Edwards used to preach his message sinners in the hands of an angry God in which the church members it says they were gripping the back of their pews so hard that their knuckles became white and they were screaming out while he was reading it in a!

He had been up all night praying and he was reading that message sinners in the hand of an angry God and the people who were in the congregation said it seemed like the pits of hell were opening up underneath us and we were going to fall into it I wonder if that's the evangelistic message we declare because see it's a serious thing to say you're committing to the Lord your God salvation is a serious matter it's not to be taken lightly it's not to be taken flippantly it's a serious matter and it is one to be considered Jesus says it is a wise man who will stop and consider remember the multitudes who followed Jesus after he fed the 5,000 and then they followed him to the other side of the sea you remember what happened Jesus told them the hardest thing he ever told anyone if you will not eat of my flesh and drink of my blood you cannot be my disciple that sounds just weird in our context we understand it but they didn't know it and it says and they left him you know what he did he!

he! let them leave sincere were they in this commitment they were making the true biblical message to make a commitment upon this call of decision always challenges us with how serious are we really taking it do we want to make this commitment as part of other commitments or is this the commitment I mean the one commitment that everything else in my life is going to revolve around this commitment and that's it it is the end all be all there's the challenge and they say yeah okay we understand it they didn't discourage them again he just was honest with them and they said we want him to be and that's when he rose the stone up and says now this is the testimony to your commitment by the way multitudes of them fell multitudes of them fell

I try not to be try to not to be cynical or or I just try to be real I have had many many many times where other pastors would call me one in particular I never forget he called me man brother I ran into this guy at the gas station he lives in your area man he is fruit ripe for the picking he is really receptive of the gospel you need to go meet with this and I met with him his family!

[42 : 54] I met with! ministered to him shared the gospel with him tried to be completely honest with him they made the same commitments I challenged them made the same commitments and all from the outside looking in it was like man that's exactly right last I heard they were gone separate ways five kids gone separate ways she had completely turned her back on Christ the church everybody that loved her and the reason she did it is because he did it first he had really just he went from what you would call a serious believer to an atheist in about a year's time he said where's the issue in the moment it seemed like a good decision because really underlying it they were having issues as a family so they thought they would try that out for a while and when it didn't then they must not be real see

Christ calls for a decision after he has already validated who he is in our life after the water has been turned into wine after the testimony of John the Baptist after the great teachings of the Son of God after the testimony of his baptism after the wilderness temptations then he calls for a decision at that point you're not going to see if he works and try him out at that point you're surrendering your all and following him this is exactly what Joshua is asking them to do a call for decision I know I went long but that's Joshua chapter 24 in the book of Joshua as it concludes thank you brothers