

# Joshua 23 Commentary

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[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

[Paul J Bucknell - Biblical Foundations for Freedom](#)

LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)  
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<b>JOSHUA</b> A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS			
<b>CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>		<b>DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>	<b>CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>		<b>ALLOCATION</b>	<b>APPEAL</b>
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	Josh 22:1-24:33
<b>WARLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		<b>LANDLORDS IN CANAAN</b>	
<b>ENTERING CANAAN</b>	<b>CONQUERING CANAAN</b>	<b>DIVIDING CANAAN</b>	
<b>SECURING THE LAND</b>		<b>SETTLING THE LAND</b>	

<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Conquest</b>	<b>Possession</b>	<b>Consecration</b>
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

COMPARISON JOSHUA 23 & 24		
	JOSHUA 23	JOSHUA 24
<b>TIME</b>	FUTURE	PAST, PRESENT
<b>THEME</b>	GIFT OF LAND	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
<b>DANGER TO AVOID</b>	MARITAL ENTANGLEMENT	APOSTASY

**Joshua 23:1 Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years,**

- **the LORD had given rest** Jos 11:23 Jos 21:44 Jos 22:4 Ps 46:9
- **old, advanced in years** Jos 13:1 Ge 25:8 De 31:2

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 25:19+ "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, **you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.**

Joshua 24:29+ It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. **Thus the land had rest from war.**

Joshua 21:44 **And the LORD gave them rest on every side** according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand.

Joshua 22:4 "And **now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers**, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan.

## JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

#### Recall the flow of Joshua...

1. THE INVASION OF THE LAND - Joshua 1-5
2. THE SUBJECTION OF THE LAND - Joshua 6-12
3. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND - Joshua 13-22
4. CONCLUSION - Joshua 23-24

See Jensen's chart at top of page - he entitles Joshua 22-24 the (1) **Close of Joshua's Life**, (2) **Consecration**, (3) **Appeal**.

**Donald Campbell** - The Book of Joshua ends with the old soldier saying farewell. His parting addresses were tinged with sadness,

as are nearly everyone's last words. They expressed the deep concern of Joshua who observed a growing complacency on the part of Israel toward the remnants of the Canaanites, an easy acceptance of joint occupancy of the land which was to have been exclusively theirs. With Israel's enemies practically vanquished, Joshua knew well the danger of the people's "letting down." Before his departure from active leadership he felt compelled to warn them that continued obedience to God's commands was essential to continued enjoyment of His blessing. Though some have suggested that these final chapters contain two reports of the same event, it seems better to view chapter 23 as Joshua's challenge to Israel's leaders, and chapter 24 as his charge to the people. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Cyril Barber** introduces Joshua 23 - It is customary to treat with respect the last words of a loved one. The person who is dying is soon to be ushered into eternity, and their admonitions in light of special circumstances are designed to encourage us to persevere through life's many vicissitudes. D. L. Moody was used of God to awaken people in the United States as well as in the United Kingdom to their need of Christ. Over his grave was inscribed the Scriptural promise: "*He who does the will of God abides forever.*" (**ED**: OF COURSE HE IS NOT TEACHING WORKS SAVE, BUT THAT WORKS SHOW ONE HAS A CIRCUMCISED HEART! - see "Circumcision of the Heart" ) [Dr. Edward Payson](#), the well-known Congregational preacher, who came to faith in Christ after graduating from Harvard, and whose ministry saw thousands put their trust in Christ for their eternal salvation, encouraged those who remained behind with the words, "I am dying, but God will surely be with you." And on his coffin was inscribed: "Remember the words which I spoke to you while I was present with you." Leigh Richmond has been forgotten by succeeding generations of Christians. When he came to the end of his earthly pilgrimage he exclaimed, "It will be all confusion." His wife asked him what would be confusion, and he responded, "The church! There will be confusion in the church." His insight into what would happen in subsequent decades proved true. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Don Anderson** says in Joshua 23-24 "we are going to see two addresses made by Joshua, one in each chapter. The emphasis in chap. 23 is upon SEPARATION, and in chap. 24 on SERVICE." He outlines Joshua 23 as follows...

1. THE WAITING GOD - Joshua 23:1-5
  - A. THE PRELIMINARIES - Joshua 23:1-2
  - B. THE PAST - Joshua 23:3- 4
  - C. THE PRESENT - Joshua 23:5
2. THE WAX, TO WIN - Joshua 23:6-11
3. THE WARNING - Joshua 23:12-13
4. THE WRAP-UP - Joshua 23:14-16

There is one thing that really stands out in this speech, and that is, the focus of Joshua's whole life is the Lord his God.

**Now it came about after many days When the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side** -How "**many day?**" One estimate is that it took about 25 years (7 years conquering, 18 allotting the land -**Bush** below has about 20-21 years total). But see what Israel was to do according to (see Dt 25:19 [above](#)). Joshua recognized that now, since they had entered into rest and were enjoying prosperity and plenty, they would drift away from God. That is the story of human nature. It never changes.

**Rest** describes a peaceful situation, one free from external threat and oppression, and untroubled within by conflict, famine or plague (cf Dt 3:20, 2Sa 7:1, 11, Dt 12:9-10; Dt 25:19; Jos 1:13; Heb 4:1-11). **Rest** implies secure borders, peace with neighboring countries and absence of threat to life and well-being within the land (1 Ki 5:4 = rest = "no adversary nor misfortune"; 1Ki 8:56).

**Utley** - "**when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies**" This is an idiomatic statement. It is a recurrent theme (cf. Deut. 12:10; 25:19; 2 Sam. 7:1, 11; 2 Chr. 14:7). It probably means there was no current national military campaign in progress (cf. 21:44). It did not apply to the individual tribes possessing their own allotted territories. The phrase has connotations of no war, security from invasion and/or peace.

**Rest** (in the sense of rest from war) **in Joshua** - Josh 1:13 Josh 1:15 Josh 11:23 Josh 14:15 Josh 21:44 Josh 22:4 Josh 23:1

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Rest in the Bible](#)
- Dr Walter Kaiser's excellent summary - The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 130

**And Joshua was old, advanced in years** (Hebrew = come into days) A long time had passed since he led the conquest ca. 1405–1398 b.c.; Joshua had grown very old, and was now 110 when he died (ca. 1385–1383 BC)

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-10. Joshua was old and dying, let them observe what he said now. He put them in mind of the great things God had done for them in his days. He exhorted them to be very courageous. Keep with care, do with diligence, and regard with sincerity what is written. Also, very cautiously to endeavour that the heathen idolatry may be forgotten, so that it may never be revived. It is sad that among Christians the names of the heathen gods are so commonly used, and made so familiar as they are. Joshua exhorts them to be very constant. There might be many things amiss among them, but they had not forsaken the Lord their God; the way to make people better, is to make the best of them.

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**A long time after, &c.** This is supposed to have been in the last or one hundred and tenth year of Joshua's life, about thirteen or fourteen years after the conquest of Canaan, and seven after the division of the land among the tribes.

**Old and stricken in years.** Heb. זקן בא בימים zâkên bâ bayâmim, old (and) come, or gone, into days.

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#### Joshua 23:1-8 Theodore Epp Courageous in Godly Living

To be courageous in the face of dangers confronting them was not only God's will but also His command. This is equally true with regard to us today.

We are to be courageous in godly living as we seek to live according to the Word of God. All three members of the Trinity are working in our behalf so that all we have to do is by faith accept and appropriate what has been provided.

We may face defeat at times, but we are not to dwell upon our defeat. We are to return to the Lord, confess our wrong-doing, forsake it and go on with Him. We are to forget those things that are behind. There is more land to be possessed.

A negative admonition follows. Joshua said, "That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you." There were still many pagan people remaining in Canaan, but the Israelites were not to have fellowship with them.

God's people were not to copy the heathen forms of worship but to be completely separated from them. There was to be no coexistence with the enemy.

This is also true in the Christian life. There is to be a putting off of what is evil and a putting on of the armor of God (see note Ephesians 6:10-17). The Israelites were to cleave to the Lord their God and put off the ways and beliefs of the Canaanites.

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (see note Ephesians 3:12).

**Joshua 23:2 that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in years.**

- **all Israel:** Jos 24:1 De 31:28 1Ch 28:1 Ac 20:17-35

### I AM A VERY OLD MAN

I am 75 and my body feels like I could make that same statement. Note that in this chapter in contrast to chapter 24, it is Joshua who does all the speaking, whereas chapter 24 begins with Joshua giving God's "testimony" followed by his interaction with the sons of Israel in a covenant renewal.

**that Joshua called for all Israel** - Does this include the Transjordan tribes? It probably not as Joshua 22:1-6 was in a sense their "send off," noting especially Joshua 22:6 "So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents." So all Israel is likely the 10 western tribes (1/2 tribe of Manasseh counting as one of the ten).

**For their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them** - The **NET** has "including the elders, etc." This would suggest the address was given to all Israel, but some commentators (see **Bush** below) think that Joshua gave the charge only to the elders, etc, and they in turn would communicate to the people.

**Alan Redpath** - As the time of his earthly life was drawing to a close, Joshua sensed the danger of their compromise and he confronted the people. He called their leader first, and then the rank and file, to give each a farewell message. You can picture the scene as the great old warrior addressed his people. ([Joshua 23:11 Principles to Follow](#))

**Donald Campbell** - They had come without hesitation to hear the last words of their great chief. And the old veteran wanted to speak on one theme--God's unfailing faithfulness to Israel and their corresponding responsibility to be faithful to Him. Three times he repeated his central message; three times he emphasized the faithfulness of God and the responsibility of Israel, fearful they would not hear and heed .(No Time for Neutrality)

The only adequate response to God's faithfulness is our faithfulness!

**Utley** -"Joshua called" Chapter 23 seems to have been a private meeting with the tribal representatives, while chapter 24 is a more public meeting calling for a public decision.

**I am old, advanced in years** - Unlike Caleb, Joshua does not say he is "as strong today" as when he and Caleb were sent out with the 12 spies 45 plus years earlier.

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**2. Called for all Israel, and for their elders, &c.** Or, Heb. 'called for all Israel, even for their elders,' &c. clearly indicating that by 'all Israel,' is not meant the whole body of the nation assembled in their own persons, but their elders, heads, judges, &c., convened and acting representatively in the name of the people. They could easily communicate the substance of the charge in their several districts, so that all Israel could hear. This appears to have been the usual method of conducting the great and important affairs of the nation. See on Nu 16:1. Whether this assembly was held at [Timnath-serah](#), where Joshua dwelt, or at Shiloh, where the ark was, it is not possible to determine. From the solemn object of the meeting we should infer that the latter was the place.

**Joshua 23:3 "And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has been fighting for you.**

- **And you have seen:** De 4:9 Ps 44:1,2 Mal 1:5
- **for the:** Jos 10:14,42 Ex 14:14 De 20:4 Ps 44:3

## JOSHUA REMINDS LEADERS OF THE GREAT WORKS OF YAHWEH

**And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you-** He is referring primarily to the 7 years of victory after victory over the powerful Canaanites. **Because of you** is not **because** they deserved it, and so is better understood as "on your behalf." **All that the LORD** had done was all the result of grace, all based on divine fulfillment of God's covenant promises to the patriarchs. It is another way of saying that none of God's promises to Israel had **failed** (Josh 21:45, Josh 23:14) Notice that all through both this speech and the final farewell speech in the next chapter, Joshua's focus is always on what the LORD had done, not on his leadership skill or the war skills of the sons of Israel.

**Guzik** points out that "Joshua begins his address by giving glory to God. It would have been easy for Joshua to focus on what he had done as a military leader, especially because it was impressive. But he is far more interested in glorifying God than talking about himself.

**Utley** - "**the LORD your God**" This is a technical phrase for the Covenant relationship. It is used extensively in Deuteronomy and Joshua.

**LORD your God** occurs 13 times in 9 verses in Joshua 23 (LORD occurs 17x in 11, not counting "He" or "Himself"), so clearly Joshua wants to emphasize Israel's relationship with Yahweh. He is THEIR God.

Lord your God - 147x in 140v - Exod. 6:7; Exod. 8:28; Exod. 10:8; Exod. 10:16; Exod. 10:17; Exod. 16:12; Exod. 23:25; Lev. 11:44; Lev. 18:2; Lev. 18:4; Lev. 18:30; Lev. 19:2; Lev. 19:3; Lev. 19:4; Lev. 19:10; Lev. 19:25; Lev. 19:31; Lev. 19:34; Lev. 19:36; Lev. 20:7; Lev. 20:24; Lev. 23:22; Lev. 23:28; Lev. 23:40; Lev. 23:43; Lev. 24:22; Lev. 25:17; Lev. 25:38; Lev. 25:55; Lev. 26:1; Lev. 26:13; Num. 10:9; Num. 10:10; Num. 15:41; Deut. 1:10; Deut. 1:26; Deut. 1:30; Deut. 1:32; Deut. 3:18; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 3:21; Deut. 3:22; Deut. 4:2; Deut. 4:4; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 5:33; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:16; Deut. 6:17; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:16; Deut. 9:23; Deut. 10:17; Deut. 11:2; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 11:25; Deut. 11:27; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 11:31; Deut. 12:4; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:7; Deut. 12:9; Deut. 12:10; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 14:1; Deut. 20:4; Deut. 20:18; Deut. 29:6; Deut. 29:10; Deut. 31:12; Deut. 31:13; Deut. 31:26; Jos. 1:11; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 2:11; Jos. 3:3; Jos. 3:9; Jos. 4:5; Jos. 4:23; Jos. 4:24; Jos. 8:7; Jos. 10:19; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:3; Jos. 23:5; Jos. 23:8; Jos. 23:10; Jos. 23:11; Jos. 23:13; Jos. 23:14; Jos. 23:15; Jos. 23:16; Jdg. 6:10; 1 Sam. 12:12; 1 Sam. 12:14; 2 Ki. 17:39; 2 Ki. 23:21; 1 Chr. 22:18; 1 Chr. 22:19; 1 Chr. 28:8; 1 Chr. 29:20; 2 Chr. 20:20; 2 Chr. 28:10; 2 Chr. 30:8; 2 Chr. 30:9; 2 Chr. 35:3; Neh. 8:9; Neh. 9:5; Ps. 76:11; Jer. 13:16; Jer. 26:13; Jer. 42:4; Jer. 42:13; Jer. 42:20; Jer. 42:21; Ezek. 20:5; Ezek. 20:7; Ezek. 20:19; Ezek. 20:20; Joel 1:14; Joel 2:13; Joel 2:14; Joel 2:23; Joel 2:26; Joel 2:27; Joel 3:17; Zech. 6:15; Acts 3:22; Acts 7:37

**For the LORD your God is He who has been fighting for you-** Once again we see this juxtaposition God's part, man's part (latter is implied). Joshua emphasizes God's sovereignty, power and presence on the side of Israel. Of course they fought, but the "secret" of their victory over their powerful enemies was that the powerful God was on their side in order to fulfill His covenant promises.

**THOUGHT** - Joshua's words are still the secret for victory over our powerful enemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Romans 8:13+ for example tells us that " by the Spirit (GOD'S POWER) you are putting to death the deeds of the body (MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY)" and the result is "you will live (eternally and daily in fellowship with Yahweh)." (See the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)")

**Utley** - "**He who has been fighting for you**" This same truth is repeated in Josh 23:5, 9, 10. God as warrior is a common theme of the Pentateuch (e.g., Dt. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Ex. 14:14) and Joshua (e.g., Joshua 4:13–15; 10:14, 42). Notice, however, the previous phrase which emphasized the necessary cooperation of Israel ("because of you"). (**ED**: GOD'S SOVEREIGN POWER/MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY)

**Believer's Study Bible** - Joshua's point is that although he will soon be gone, those who remain will continue to have success if they rely on the God whose mighty works they have seen. What was needed was not so much gifted leaders as those who knew God and what He had done.

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**3. Ye have seen, &c.** Joshua here speaks with characteristic modesty and humility. The scope of his address is to engage the covenant people, and their seed after them, to persevere in upholding the true faith and worship of the God of Israel. In order to this, he begins by putting them in mind of the divine interpositions in their behalf. He appeals to what their own eyes had seen, but so as at once to abase himself and exalt the Most High. He does not say, 'Ye have seen what I have done, or what you have done, but what God himself has done.' They were mere instruments in his hand. It was no doubt natural for the Israelites to look upon their veteran general, who had led them on from conquest to conquest, with the most profound respect, and to say, 'Had we not had such a commander we had never succeeded so remarkably in obtaining possession of this goodly land.' But Joshua will leave them no ground for such reflections. He will not divide the glory of their success with God. He shows them that their enemies had been defeated, not by his prowess or theirs, but solely because the Lord their God had fought for them. The battle was the Lord's, and not his, and He was entitled to all the glory. This sentiment is strikingly reiterated by the Psalmist, Ps. 44:3, 'For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto them.' The leader of Israel, in these words, speaks the language of every pious heart, in view of every species of worldly success and prosperity

**Joshua 23:4 "See (BEHOLD), I have apportioned to you these nations which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off, from the Jordan even to the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun.**

- **Behold:** Jos 13:2,6,7 18:10

### REMINDER OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND

**See (BEHOLD), I have apportioned** (YLT - caused to fall; NET - parceled out) **to you these nations which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off, from the Jordan even to the Great Sea (Mediterranean) toward the setting of the sun - Nations which remain** is referring to all the nations/land that remains unconquered. In a sense Joshua is reminding them that their inheritance is actually larger than what they currently occupied.

**Utley - See**" This term is often used by YHWH in Deuteronomy. It helps the people recognize what He had done (cf. Exod. 31:2; Deut. 1:8, 21; 2:24, 31; 11:26; 30:15; 32:39). Here it is used by Joshua for the elders to recognize his advanced age and the beginning of a new period in Israel's history in the Promised Land.

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**I have divided unto you by lot.** Heb. הפלתי לכם hippalti lâkem, I have caused lo fall unto you.

**Those nations that remain.** That remain yet unconquered; where 'nations' stands for the land, or country which they occupied; as on the contrary, 'land' often stands for 'nation' or 'people.' Remnants of the devoted Canaanites still lingered about the country, though their armies had long since been broken to pieces and they were disabled from making any effectual head against Israel.

**Joshua 23:5 "The LORD your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you; and you will possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you.**

KJV Joshua 23:5 And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

NET Joshua 23:5 The LORD your God will drive them out from before you and remove them, so you can occupy their land as the LORD your God promised you.

BGT Joshua 23:5 κ ρ ι ο ς δ θ ε ς μ ν ο τ ο ς ξ ο λ ε θ ρ ε σ ε ι α τ ο ς π π ρ ο σ π ο υ μ ν ω ς ν π λ ω ν τ α ι κ α π ρ ο σ τ ε λ ε α τ ο ς τ θ η ρ α τ γ ρ ι α ω ς ν ξ ο λ ε θ ρ ε σ α τ ο ς κ α τ ο ς β α σ ι λ ε ς α τ ν π π ρ ο σ π ο υ μ ν κ α κ α τ α κ λ η ρ ο ν ο μ σ α τ ε τ ν γ ν α τ ν κ α θ λ λ η σ ε ν κ ρ ι ο ς θ ε ς μ ν μ ν

NLT Joshua 23:5 This land will be yours, for the LORD your God will himself drive out all the people living there now. You will take possession of their land, just as the LORD your God promised you.

ESV Joshua 23:5 The LORD your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you.

NIV Joshua 23:5 The LORD your God himself will drive them out of your way. He will push them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

YLT Joshua 23:5 'As to Jehovah your God, He doth thrust them from your presence, and hath dispossessed them from before you, and ye have possessed their land, as Jehovah your God hath spoken to you,

LXE Joshua 23:5 And the Lord our God, he shall destroy them before us, until they utterly perish; and he shall send against them the wild beasts, until he shall have utterly destroyed them and their kings from before you; and ye shall inherit their land, as the Lord our God said to you.

CSB Joshua 23:5 The LORD your God will force them back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

NKJ Joshua 23:5 "And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

NRS Joshua 23:5 The LORD your God will push them back before you, and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

- **He will thrust them out** Jos 23:12,13 13:6 Ex 23:30,31 33:2 34:11 De 11:23
- **just as the LORD your God promised you** : Nu 33:52,53

## **GOD'S POWER TO POSSESS THE REMAINING LAND**

**The LORD your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you** - So clearly although Joshua gave them "rest" (Josh 23:1), the enemies were by no means totally eradicated from the "good land". Jdg 3:2 says these enemies were left to test Israel and teach them how to conduct war.

**and you will possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you** - **Promised you** refers to the Abrahamic covenant (Ge 12:7,etc). Note again Israel's responsibility in light of God's sovereignty.

**Utley** agrees that this refers to "YHWH's agency through Israel's instrumentality (divine will and human free will)."

**Anderson** says "Joshua is basically challenging the leaders, telling them that the ball is in their court. God is just waiting to respond to their action."

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**GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**5. And drive them from out—and ye shall possess.** The same Heb word, ירש *yârash* is here used to signify, to expel from, an inheritance, and to succeed those thus expelled. Ye shall disinherit them from before you, and ye shall inherit the land in their stead.

**Joshua 23:6 "Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,**

KJV Joshua 23:6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

NET Joshua 23:6 Be very strong! Carefully obey all that is written in the law scroll of Moses so you won't swerve from it to the right or the left,

BGT Joshua 23:6 καπισχ σατε ο ν σφ δρα φυλ σσειν κα ποιε ν π ντα τ γεγραμμ να ν τ βιβλ το ν μου Μωυσ να μ κκλ νητε ε ρ δεξι ν ε νυμα

NLT Joshua 23:6 "So be very careful to follow everything Moses wrote in the Book of Instruction. Do not deviate from it, turning either to the right or to the left.

ESV Joshua 23:6 Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left,

NIV Joshua 23:6 "Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left.

YLT Joshua 23:6 and ye have been very strong to keep and to do the whole that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, so as not to turn aside from it right or left,

LXE Joshua 23:6 Do ye therefore strive diligently to observe and do all things written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not to the right hand or to the left;

CSB Joshua 23:6 "Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left

NKJ Joshua 23:6 "Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,

NRS Joshua 23:6 Therefore be very steadfast to observe and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right nor to the left,

- **very:** Jos 1:7-9 Jer 9:3 1Co 16:13 Eph 6:10-19 Heb 12:4 Rev 21:8
- **that:** De 5:32 12:32 17:20 28:14 Pr 4:26,27

**Related Passage:**

Proverbs 4:26-27 Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. 27 **Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.** (Pr 4:14-15)

**MacDonald** - All along the highway, to the right and to the left, there are side streets and alleys which lead to the haunts of sin. "Let's be true to Jesus, though a thousand voices from the world may call."

Deuteronomy 4:6 (**BE DOERS OF THE WORD**) "So **keep** and **do** them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

Deuteronomy 29:9 "So **keep** the words of this covenant to **do** them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

Numbers 15:39 "It shall be a tassel for you to look at and **remember all the commandments** of the LORD, so as to **do** them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot,

Deuteronomy 16:12; "You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

Deuteronomy 30:8 "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe **all His commandments** which I command you today.

Exodus 32:8 "They have **quickly turned aside** from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'"

Deuteronomy 2:27 'Let me pass through your land, I will travel only on the highway; **I will not turn aside to the right or to the left.**



Deuteronomy 5:32 "So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you;**you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left.**

Deuteronomy 9:12 "Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down from here quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. **They have quickly turned aside** from the way which I commanded them; they have made a molten image for themselves.'

Deuteronomy 11:16 "Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and **that you do not turn away** and serve other gods and worship them.

Deuteronomy 17:17 "He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else **his heart will turn away**; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

Deuteronomy 17:20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that **he may not turn aside** from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.

## **THE PATH TO POSSESSION STRAIGHT AHEAD IN OBEDIENCE**

The key to possession of the land was obedience to the Word. It is still the key to possessing our blessings.

In these farewell chapters (Joshua 22-24), the Spirit filled, wise, aging Joshua speaks his last words (which should always be "lasting words") to the young nation of Israel - Three strong closing exhortations replete with warnings for disobedience - (1) Joshua 22:5-6 to the 2.5 tribes (2) Joshua 23:6-13 (3) Joshua 23:14-28. The book of Judges is a sad testimony that the following generations did not heed his warnings.

**Don Anderson** points out that "This is such a great passage because now at the end of Joshua's life he is telling the leaders who are going to survive him the very things that the Lord told him way back in the beginning--Joshua in Joshua 1:6-9.

Joshua 1:7-9+ "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. "**Only be strong (chazaq) and very courageous**; be careful ([shamar](#); Lxx = [phulasso](#)) **to do** according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you;**do not turn from it to the right or to the left**, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous!** Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

**Be very firm (chazaq) , then, to keep (shamar; Lxx = phulasso) and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses- NET** - "Be very strong! Carefully obey all that is written in the law scroll of Moses" In a word "OBEY!" Obey what? Not Joshua per se, but the Word of God and thus obey the God of the Word! They had a written copy of the Torah to guide their steps! They had no excuse! (And beloved, neither do we! In fact we are more accountable!)

Note that there are 3 verbs in Joshua's charge and all 3 were also found in God's charge to Joshua in Joshua 1:7 (be strong, observe or obey and do). In the Septuagint **be very firm** (ESV - be very strong - [chazaq](#)) is [katischuo](#) and is a command in the [present imperative](#) (see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) calling for them to be strong and powerful continually, having the strength or capability to obtain an advantage, be dominant or prevail. It speaks of the capability to defeat or win a victory over an adversary. Remember that even in the OT, the Spirit was present providing His spiritual power which was necessary to enable those who were believers to keep this charge.

**Paul Toms** adds that "In stressing obedience, Joshua was passing on the advice that he himself received earlier. He was told, "Joshua if you obey, if you keep the law of God, you will be blessed" (see Josh. 1:7). Twenty years later, Joshua is saying, "If you obey and keep the law of God, you will be blessed." He is passing it on." ([This Land Is Your Land](#))

This charge reminds me of Paul's parting words to Timothy in which he said "You therefore, my son,**be strong** ([present imperative](#)) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (2 Ti 2:1+)

**Book of the Law** - Dt 28:58, 61; 29:17, 20-21; 30:10; 31:24, Joshua 1:8 In the ancient world, reading written texts and even meditating on them were usually done aloud (Ex 13:9; Dt 30:14; Ps 19:14; 119:13; Ac 8:30)

**Guzik on all that is written** - They must do all that is written in the Book. We tend to focus on the aspects of obedience that we like

and skip over the parts that attract us less.

**So that (PURPOSE) you may not turn aside (sur) from it to the right hand or to the left-** (see Dt. 5:32+; Dt 17:11, 20+) In this context, even turning to the "right" is always wrong! **NET** = "so you won't swerve from it to the right or the left," Walk straight ahead on the "highway of holiness." This is the walk that God would bless with victory over the enemies. How could one turn? The context (v7) gives one of the most deceptive ways which is to associate with the godless pagans!

Moses helps understand turning aside writing "**do not turn aside** from any of the words which I command you today, **to the right or to the left**, to go after other gods to serve them." (Dt 28:14+) So this charge has to do especially with idolatry.

**THOUGHT** - When tempted to turn to the left or right, to a questionable place, ask yourself, "Would I like to be found on that "sideroad" when Jesus comes back?" (1Jn 2:28+) Or "Would it cause a brother to stumble if they saw me taking a spiritual detour?" (1Co 8:13+)

**Guzik** has an interesting comment on **to the right hand or to the left-** They must not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, because Satan doesn't care which extreme he gets us off to. Either legalism or licentiousness please him.

**John J Davis** summarizes Joshua's charge in this chapter - Two principal requirements were laid before Israel with regard to future occupation of their territory. The **first** was unqualified obedience to the Word of God (vv. 1-6). As in the first chapter of this book, so we are again reminded of the authority of the written Word of God. The principles for godly activity were not to be found in the land of Canaan, but were clearly revealed in the book of the law of Moses (v. 6). The **second** qualification for prosperity of the land involved separation (vv. 7-16). That separation had both a negative and a positive aspect. Israel was to be separated from the gods of the land (v. 7; cf. Ex 23:13; Deut. 12:3). They were also to remain separate from the peoples of the nations (v. 7). The positive aspect of their separation is described in the eighth verse. They were separated not only from the world about them but unto their God. ([Conquest and Crisis: Studies in Joshua.](#))

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**Be...firm** (02388)(**chazaq**) conveys the basic meaning of to be or become strong, to make strong or strengthen, in the Hiphil to take hold of or seize ("retain His anger" - Mic 7:18+), in the Hithpael to strengthen oneself (to take courage 1 Sa 30:6). To be courageous. To overpower. **Chazaq** describes strength - severity of a famine (a "strong" famine) (2 Ki 25:3, Jer 52:6), strength of humans to overpower (David and Goliath 1 Sa 17:50, cf 1 Sa 17:35 = seized;, Amnon and Tamar = 2 Sa 13:14), in a battle, to capture (2 Chr 8:3), Samson's last demonstration of supernatural strength he prays "please **strengthen** me" (Jdg 16:28). Used in the charge "**Be strong** and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9,18, Josh 10:25, "be firm" = Josh 23:6; "**Be strong** and courageous" = Dt 31:6-7, 23). **Chazaq** used 12 times in Ex 4-14 of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf similar use in Josh 11:20). In a great passage in Da 11:32+ we read ""By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but **the people who know their God** will display **strength (chazaq)** and take action."

**Chazaq used 8x in Joshua** - Jos. 1:6; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:9; Jos. 1:18; Jos. 10:25; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 23:6;

**Keep** (careful, guard, kept, observe, watch) (08104) **shamar** conveys the basic idea = exercise great care over something. Thus it means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, be circumspect, to be on one's guard. Hedge about as with thorns - the word the Hebrews used for a shepherd's keeping watch over a flock of sheep. Conveyed the idea of protection as in Ps 121:7-8+ (used 3 times!) In the great Aaronic blessing Nu 6:24+. The first use of **shamar** in Ge 2:15 is instructive as Adam was placed in the garden (a perfect environment) and was commanded to "**keep**" it which in the [Septuagint](#) is translated with **phulasso** (which is used to translate many of the OT uses of **shamar** and is **used here in Joshua 23:6**) which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post, to keep from escaping, be on guard from being lost or perishing (2Ti 1:14). Clearly Adam did not do a good job at "keeping" the garden safe from intruders! And because of this failure he was cast out of the garden and angels stationed to "**guard** (Lxx = **phulasso**) the way to the tree of life" so that he would not eat of it (Ge 3:24+). **Hedge keeps outsiders out and insiders in!** After Cain murdered Abel he answered God "Am I my brother's **keeper**?" (Ge 4:9) **Keep** the Law (shamar torah) = 8x in OT: 1Chr 22:12 Ps 119:44, 55, 136 Pr 28:4, 29:18 Jer 16:1 Eze 44:24 Translated in NASB a few times as a noun: bodyguard, doorkeeper, gate keeper, guardsman, sentries, watchman, watchmen.

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**Sidlow Baxter** - Chapters 23-24 - **The Farewell of Joshua**. Finally, we have the parting counsels of the now aged Joshua. We must not linger over the touching scene. The faithful leader's words unveil the concern of his heart for the privileged nation. For some years now, Israel had been enjoying the rest and plenty of Canaan. What of the future? All depended on whether or not Israel would continue faithful to the covenant. Joshua's words do not conceal his apprehensiveness. Seven times he refers to the idolatrous nations still left in Canaan. He knew the snare they would be to Israel; and he therefore prescribed **three safeguards**.

1. First, there must be brave adherence to God's word (Josh 23:6).

2. Second, there must be a vigilantly continued separation from the Canaanite nations (Josh 23:7).
3. And, there must be a cleaving to the Lord with real and fervent love (Josh 23:8-11).

This is the gist of these closing chapters; and these are the three indispensable conditions (just as truly today as in Joshua's day) for a continuing in the experience of the "fulness of blessing." There must be (1) a living close to the word of God; (2) a consistent separation from all known wrong; (3) a cleaving to God with the best love of the heart. Truly, in the words of 1 John 5:3, "His commandments are not grievous," and they who fulfil them find indeed a Canaan of spiritual, blessing, of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, of heavenly fellowship and treasure, which this world can neither give nor take away. In these last two chapters, then, the emphasis is upon the need and the way of continuance. Thus, in this third part of the Book of Joshua, we have:

- Joshua 13-19. Partition of Canaan - faith rewarded.
- Joshua 20. The Cities of Refuge - faith protected.
- Joshua 21. The Levite's portion - faith preserved.
- Joshua 22. The Altar of Witness - faith unifying.
- Joshua 23-24. Farewell of Joshua - faith continuing.

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do.** See observations on Joshua 1:7-9.

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### Joshua 23:6-8 Dr. Woodrow Kroll - Pass It Along

Joshua 23:6-8 - Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day.

**Pass It Along** - Sometimes we wonder why God allows certain things to happen to us. "Why did God allow my child to die?" "Why was I stricken with cancer?" "Why do I have to face such a struggle with finances?" There's no one answer that fits every situation. But sometimes God allows us to undergo certain experiences so we can pass along the things we learn to those following us.

As he assumed the leadership of Israel, Joshua faced times of great fear and uncertainty. In the midst of those difficulties, God encouraged him with the exhortation, "only be strong and very courageous" (Joshua 1:7). Furthermore, the Lord commanded him, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth ... that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it" (Joshua 1:8). Joshua had learned a great deal from the hardships he suffered and, as he approached the latter years of his life, he shared this wisdom with the ones who would be leaders after he was gone.

As God's people, we have a responsibility to pass on to the younger generation those truths God has taught us. Some call this "mentoring." The apostle Paul exhorted both Timothy and Titus to encourage the older generation to be teachers and encouragers of those who are younger (see notes 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3; 2:4; 2:5).

Don't waste the wisdom God has shared with you. Sometimes younger people don't seem to want to listen, so be creative in your mentoring. Learn to pass on truth in the form of stories or even write them in a notebook. Don't let the truths God has taught you go to waste.

**If God considers it a lesson worth learning, we must consider it worth sharing.**

**Joshua 23:7 so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them.**

KJV Joshua 23:7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

NET Joshua 23:7 or associate with these nations that remain near you. You must not invoke or make solemn declarations by the names of their gods! You must not worship or bow down to them!

BGT Joshua 23:7 πως μ ε σ λητε ε ς τ θνη τ καταλειμ να τα τα κα τ ν ματα τ ν θε ν α τ ν ο κ νομασθ σεται ν ν ο δ μ προσκυν σητε α το ς ο δ μ λατρε σητε α το ς

NLT Joshua 23:7 Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or serve them or worship them.

ESV Joshua 23:7 that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them,

NIV Joshua 23:7 Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them.

YLT Joshua 23:7 so as not to go in among these nations, these who are left with you; and of the name of their gods ye do not make mention, nor do ye swear, nor do ye serve them, nor do ye bow yourselves to them;

LXE Joshua 23:7 that ye go not in among these nations that are left; and the names of their gods shall not be named among you, neither shall ye serve them, neither shall ye bow down to them.

CSB Joshua 23:7 and so that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; do not worship them or bow down to them.

NKJ Joshua 23:7 "and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them,

NRS Joshua 23:7 so that you may not be mixed with these nations left here among you, or make mention of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or serve them, or bow yourselves down to them,

- **You will not associate:** Jos 23:12 Ex 23:33 De 7:2-3 Pr 4:14 1Co 15:33 2Co 6:14-17 Eph 5:11
- neither: Ex 23:13 Nu 32:38 Ps 16:4 Ho 2:17
- to swear: Jer 5:7 Zep 1:5

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 23:13+ "Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth.

Exodus 23:33+ "They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

Exodus 20:5; "You shall not worship them **or serve them**; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Judges 2:19 But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to **serve them** and **bow down to them**; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.

Deuteronomy 7:2-3+ and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. 3"Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.

Proverbs 4:14+ Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

1 Corinthians 15:33+ **Do not be deceived** (STOP BEING DECEIVED! - [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)): "Bad company corrupts (present tense - continually corrupts) good morals."

Numbers 32:38+ and Nebo and Baal-meon—their names being changed—and Sibmah, and they gave other names to the cities which they built.

Psalms 16:4 The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips.

Hosea 2:17 "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.

Romans 12:2+ And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

## CALL FOR SEPARATION

**So that** - Important **purpose clause** - gives the purpose for staying on the road of obedience and not deviating to the right or the left.

**You will not associate** (mixed) **with these nations, these which remain** ([sha'ar/sa'ar](#)) **among you** - NLT = "Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land." **Associate** in the Septuagint is eiserchomai and means to go in among and to begin to experience, to share in something or to enjoy something.

**Bush** - That ye have no familiar intercourse, nor form intimate connexions with them; which could not be done without contracting some measure of the defilement which their idolatries and iniquities had brought upon them. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' (1 Corinthians 15:33+) The prohibition, as appears from Joshua 23:12, is pointed especially at intermarriages with their heathen neighbors. ([Notes](#))

**THOUGHT** - If we are to experience victory over our mortal enemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#), and enjoy close communion and fellowship with the Most High God, we too must separate from the world, James writing "keep oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27+) This principle is emphasized by Paul writing to the Corinthians (who were surrounded by a culture immersed in idolatry and immorality - sounds like America doesn't it?) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 7:1 (see commentary)...

**Do not be bound** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** ([aorist imperative](#))," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH ([present imperative with a negative](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18" And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. (2Co 7:1+) **THEREFORE**, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**TSK** - Have no civil or social contacts with them, as these will infallibly lead to spiritual affinities, in consequence of which, ye will make honourable "mention of the name of their gods," "swear by them" "and serve" them in their abominable rites; and "bow yourselves unto them," as your creators and preservers. (ED: AS ISRAEL DID AT SINAI - SEE "This is your god..." = Ex 32:4+). All this will follow by simply coming among them. He who walks in the counsel of the ungodly, will soon stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of scorners (Ps 1:1+).

## DON'T EVEN MENTION THEIR GOD'S NAMES!

**or mention the name of their gods or make anyone swear** ([shaba](#)) **by them** - NLT = "Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or serve them or worship them." **Mention** ([zakar](#) = to remember) is more literally "cause to be remembered." So it would be potentially deceptive and ensnaring to remember their names, for this might stir up the fallen flesh to follow up the thoughts (mention, memory) with acts or action. As a man thinks within himself, so he is (Pr 23:7).

Paul gives a very similar exhortation to followers of Christ who like Israel, need to possess all that the Lord has promised us in Christ...

**Do not participate** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) (cf "not associate...") in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is **disgraceful even to speak** (cf "mention the name...") of the things which are done by them in secret. (Ephesians 5:11-12+)

**Bush on swear by them** - To **swear by** any god was virtually to acknowledge him as a witness and avenger in the case of the violation of contracts, and so in effect a suitable object of religious worship. It is implied that they were not to make any covenants

with idolaters, because in confirming their covenants they would swear by their idols. 'Let no Israelite be a party to any transaction which should involve such a consequence. Neither swear by them yourselves, nor cause others by your procurement to do it.' By neglecting these slighter occasions of idolatry they might be imperceptibly betrayed into it, and led along by degrees, till they had finally reached its highest step (**ED: SIN IS A SLIPPERY SLOPE!**), which was serving false gods, and bowing down to them, in direct transgression of the letter of the second commandment (Ex 20:3) ([Notes](#))

**Or serve** ([abad](#); NET - worship) **them, or bow down** ([shachah](#)) **to them** - The Septuagint is particularly strong here using [proskuneo](#) for **bow down** and [latreuo](#) for **serve** (thus the NET rendering of "worship") with a double negative (ou me) preceding both the verbs thus signifying absolutely do not do this! This reminds one of the 3 Hebrew boys who refused to bow down to the image Nebuchadnezzar set up (see Daniel 3:13-18+).

**Guzik** comments that "An old Mafia saying says something to the effect of, "Keep your friends close, but your enemies even closer" but this is exactly what Christians are not to do. The normal Christian, by and large, is not called to become an expert in the cults or in heresy, but to become an expert in Jesus Christ—to hold fast to Him.

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**Bow down** ([07812](#))([shachah](#)) means primarily to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship as before a king or a superior and thus paying homage (Gen. 43:28). Bowing down in worship to Yahweh (Ge 24:26). In the Psalms [shachah](#) describes all the earth bowing down in worship to God as a response to His great power (Ps. 66:4); or bowing down in worship and kneeling before the Lord (Ps. 95:6) because God Alone deserves this worship. Joseph in a prophecy described the sheaves of his brothers and parents bowing down to his sheaf (Ge 37:7). Joshua instructed the people of Israel not to associate with the nations remaining around them and not to bow down to or serve any of their gods. He instructed Israel to hold fast to the true God, Yahweh (Josh. 23:7). In Zephaniah, when Yahweh destroys all the gods of the land, the nations on every shore will worship Him (Zeph. 2:11). Septuagint often uses [proskuneo](#) for bow down or worship. **Shachah in Joshua** - Jos. 5:14; Jos. 23:7; Jos. 23:16;

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**Neither make mention of the name of their gods.** Or, Heb. תזכירו *tozkirū*, cause to be remembered. Instead of showing the least respect to their idols, they were to endeavor, on the contrary, to bury the remembrance of them in perpetual oblivion; let their very names be forgotten. So David says of false gods, Ps. 16:4, Their "names will I not take up into my lips." On the same principle, God says, Hos. 2:16-17, 'At that day thou shalt call me Ishi; and shall call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.' Though Baali and Ishi signify the same thing, yet as the former was the appropriated name of idols, he would have it no longer employed, even in reference to himself. The habitual mention of the names of idols would go gradually to diminish the abhorrence in which they were bound to hold them, and eventually to introduce the custom of swearing by them in common discourse. This would infallibly tend to the general prevalence, if not to the formal establishment of idolatrous practices among them. In like manner it may be seriously questioned, whether the paintings, statues, and poems, which abound in Christian countries, replete with allusions to the detestable heathen mythology, have not a most pernicious effect in lessening a just abhorrence of the Greek and Roman idolatry, and thus subserving the cause of scepticism, infidelity, and vice.

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#### Joshua 23:8 "But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

- Jos 22:5 De 4:4 10:20 11:22 13:4 Ac 11:23

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 10:20 "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and **cling to Him**, and you shall swear by His name.

Deuteronomy 11:22 "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and **hold fast to Him**,

Deuteronomy 13:4 "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and **cling to Him**.

Deuteronomy 30:20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and **by holding fast to Him**; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

## SEPARATE FOR IDOLS CLING TO GOD

**But** - In football some say the best defense is a good offense. Cling to God. The hymn writer says it this way

### Turn your eyes upon Jesus

Look full in his wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of his glory and grace

**you are to cling** ([dabaq](#) - be loyal) **to the LORD your God**- Joshua's point is that if Israel will continue to dedicate themselves to Yahweh as they have done (Josh 23:8,11), then their past successes (Josh 23:9,10) will continue (cf. 2Sa 12:8). **Cling** is used three times in Joshua's words of farewell, signifying that this is an important attitude/action for Israel (Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:8; Jos. 23:12)

It is interesting that sometimes today we speak negatively of a clingy person. But God wants clingy people! The idea is we are to be like little children who tend to stay very close to the mother for sustenance, protection, etc.

**As you have done to this day** - They had made a good beginning, obeying the Lord's command to conquer the land. Now Joshua is calling for perseverance of the practice of obedience.

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### Facts of the Matter - Newell Hillis - Devotional from February 7: Clinging To The Lord Your God

" You are to cling to the Lord your God." – These were Joshua's parting words to wayward Israel, just before his death. ( Joshua 23:8)

**CLING:** " To hold fast to something, as by grasping, sticking, embracing, or winding around". As a wet raincoat would CLING to your back.As a person on the verge of death would CLING to life. "To remain attached in thought or practice". " To follow close after, pursue hard; to resist separation".

Jesus put it this way: " If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself... and**keep close behind me.**" (Luke 9:23a+ – Phillips)

**CLINGING conveys the sense of desperation: That there is no other viable option**

**QUESTION: ARE YOU CLINGING TO CHRIST? Or to:**

- Your bank account?
- Your reputation?
- Your capabilities?

**SELF SUFFICIENCY** is the arrogant assumption that I can go it alone... without God. **CLINGING** is the humble acknowledgment that I must be intimately connected to God for life to make sense and to be worth living. In Joshua's admonition to CLING to God he gives this warning:

" If you ever go back and CLING to the rest of these nations (i.e. the world and its values)... (they) shall be to you as: A snare and a trap... A whip on your sides... Thorns in your eyes... until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you." (Joshua 23:12)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Are you CLINGING to Christ?
2. Or do you have it so together that you can go it alone?
3. If so, are you willing to pay the price of independence?

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**Rod Mattoon - How do we cleave to the Lord?**

**C**—CONFESS your sin to Him.

**L**—LOVE THE LORD

**E**—EXAMINE yourself, your attitudes and actions daily.

**A**—APPLY the Word of God in your life and be AVAILABLE to Him.

**V**—VOICE your prayers to the Lord.

**E**—EXPLORE God's Word daily.

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**Cling** (hold fast, cleave) (1692) **dabaq** means to stick to, adhere to, cling to, join with, stay with, stay in close proximity to and which yields the noun form for "glue". Dabaq describes something that sticks or clings to something else (Ezek 29:4 and Ezekiel's tongue to roof of his mouth Ezek. 3:26). It is interesting that one of the most concentrated uses of "**dabaq**" in the OT is found in this short story of Ruth (Ru 1:14, 2:8, 2:21, 23-see **notes** [Ru 1:14](#); [2:8](#); [21](#); [23](#)) -- Ruth 2:8 "**stay** here with my maids"; Ruth 2:21 "You should **stay close** to my servants"; Ruth 2:23 "So she **stayed close** by the maids of Boaz"; A derivative word **debeq** means "soldering." All of these meanings are great illustrations of what our relationship should be like with our Lord. We are to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good (Romans 12:9).

**Dabaq** often refers to physical things sticking to each other, especially parts of the body as described vividly by Job who said "My bone **clings** to my skin and my flesh, and I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20, cf one's tongue "**stuck** to their palate" Job 29:10).

King Hezekiah heeded this instruction and "**clung to** the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses." and the result of his **clinging** was that "Jehovah was with him; wherever he went he prospered." (2Ki 18:6 18:7, cf : Ps 63:8)

A vivid picture of the meaning of **dabaq** is found in David's declaration "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not **fasten its grip** on me." (Ps 101:3), picturing the power of sin to entrap the sinner. ([Spurgeon on Ps 101:3](#))

#### **Positive clinging and negative clinging:**

Deuteronomy 10:20 "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him **and cling to Him**, and you shall swear by His name.

Deuteronomy 11:22 "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and **hold fast to Him**,

Deuteronomy 13:4 "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and **cling to Him**.

Deuteronomy 13:17 "**Nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand** in order that the LORD may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers,

Deuteronomy 28:21 "The LORD will make the **pestilence cling to you** until He has consumed you from the land where you are entering to possess it.

Deuteronomy 28:60 "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and **they will cling to you**.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by **holding fast to Him**; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

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#### **GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)**

**Cleave unto the Lord your God, &c.** Delight in him, depend upon him, devote yourselves to his glory, and continue to do so unto the end, as you have done unto this day; ever since arriving in Canaan. For since that time, though there might have been many things more or less amiss among them, yet the nation at large had behaved much better than they did in the wilderness, and had not been guilty of any open or gross apostasy from God, but had followed him with exemplary fidelity.

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**Joshua 23:9 "For the LORD has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood**



KJV Joshua 23:9 For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

NET Joshua 23:9 "The LORD drove out from before you great and mighty nations; no one has been able to resist you to this very day.

BGT Joshua 23:9 καὶ ἔωλεθρευσεν ἅ τοις κρείσσους πρὸς σὺν ἑθνεῖς μεγάλα καὶ σχυρὰ καὶ μὴ οὐθεὶς ἔτι στήκατεν πρὸς σὺν ὡς τὰς μῆρας ταύτης

NLT Joshua 23:9 "For the LORD has driven out great and powerful nations for you, and no one has yet been able to defeat you.

ESV Joshua 23:9 For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day.

NIV Joshua 23:9 "The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you.

YLT Joshua 23:9 And Jehovah is dispossessing from before you nations great and mighty; as for you, none hath stood in your presence till this day;

LXE Joshua 23:9 And the Lord shall destroy them before you, even great and strong nations; and no one has stood before us until this day.

CSB Joshua 23:9 "The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and no one is able to stand against you to this day.

NKJ Joshua 23:9 "For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.

NRS Joshua 23:9 For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, no one has been able to withstand you to this day.

NAB Joshua 23:9 At your approach the LORD has driven out large and strong nations, and to this day no one has withstood you.

NJB Joshua 23:9 Yahweh has dispossessed great and powerful nations before you, and no one so far has been able to resist you.

- **For the Lord:** Jos 23:5 21:43,44 De 11:23
- no man: Jos 1:5,8,9 15:14

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 3:10 Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

Joshua 13:6 "All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you.

Numbers 33:52; 55 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places ....'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live.

Deuteronomy 4:38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.

Deuteronomy 9:1 "Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven,

Deuteronomy 11:23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess

nations greater and mightier than you.

**For** Term of explanation. Explaining why they should cling to the Lord and persevere in devotion (and obedience) to Yahweh.

**The LORD has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood before you to this day** - These were truths that were indisputable. These were truths which should serve as the foundation for their future obedience. If God had been for them in the past in such clear, powerful ways, He would continue.

Some see this passage as pointing to the future, which does flow well into Joshua 23:10.

**Utley** - Israel's lack of military success (i.e., they did not dispossess, cf. Joshua 13:13; 16:10; 17:13; Jdg 1:29, 30, 31, 32, 33) was due to their lack of faith in YHWH's promises and their unwillingness to seize the moment! The unbelief of the ten original spies returns!

**Utley** - "no man has stood before you to this day" This is a metaphor for negated effective resistance (cf. Joshua 1:5; 10:8; Deut. 7:24; 11:25).

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**9. For the Lord hath driven out.** Or, as the original will admit of being rendered, 'and the Lord will drive out,' &c., and so the whole verse may be rendered in the future instead of the past, in which case it will connect more easily and naturally with the verse ensuing.

**No man hath been able to stand before you.** That is, when it actually came to an issue. Some of the ancient inhabitants did indeed yet remain unconquered, but in every engagement the Israelites came off victorious. In this sense no man had been able to stand before them. Wherever an enemy had been encountered he had been overcome.

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### Joshua 23:9-13 Theodore Epp The Way to Victory

We learn in Joshua 23:9,10 that nothing can stand before the person who will dare to trust God. Everything is in the favor of those who trust Him. With God on their side, total victory is assured.

This is true with regard to us in our spiritual warfare. The enemies are great and more powerful than we are, but they are helpless when we go in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Admonition was added to these assurances as Joshua spoke to the people. He warned them that they must be careful how they conducted themselves and that they, above all, must love the Lord.

This positive and then negative approach would serve to alert the Israelites to their blessings and also to their dangers.

We, too, must not turn back in defeat but go forward in Christian victory. There are evil things that will entangle us and ensnare us, so we must get rid of them. These may be but little things in our lives, but the little things can destroy us.

We are warned in Hebrews 12:1+ to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Nothing is to be allowed to hinder us. The weights spoken of in this passage may not be sins, but they could lead to sin or at least they could hinder us.

There is a danger of losing what we have gained. We can be sure of this: Our sin will find us out.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

**Joshua 23:10 "One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you.**

- **One** : Lev 26:8 De 32:30 Jdg 3:31 7:19-22 15:15 1Sa 14:6,12-16 2Sa 23:8
- **Lord**: Jos 10:42 Ex 14:14 23:27-33 De 3:22 20:4 Ps 35:1 44:4,5 46:7 Ro 8:31

**Related Passages:**

Numbers 14:9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

Deuteronomy 28:7 "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

Judges 15:15-16 He ([Samson](#)) found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it. 16 Then Samson said, "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, **With the jawbone of a donkey I have killed a thousand men.**"

## **MAN'S ACTION GOD'S POWER**

**One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you-** This promise of divine power was contingent on Israel's obedience.

**THOUGHT** - This same principle applies to followers of Jesus today. Obedience is the key to unlocking the supernatural power of the Spirit on our behalf. He will enable us to put to death the enemies that "remain in the land" (Ro 8:13+), but only if we do not quench His power (1Th 5:19+) or grieve His heart (Eph 4:30+, cf Ge 6:6, Ezek 6:9+) by unconfessed, unrepentant sin! We will not prosper spiritually! (Pr 28:13+, 1Jn 1:9+)

[Anderson](#) notes "Statistics are meaningless when the Lord is fighting for them. One of them can rout a thousand when such is the case."

**Utley** - "**one of your men put to flight a thousand**" This is hyperbolic expression of YHWH's victorious presence (cf. Lev. 26:7-8; Deut. 32:30).

**just as He promised you** - Where did He promise?

Leviticus 26:7-8 'But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

Deuteronomy 32:30 "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?"

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**D L Moody** - WHEN in Glasgow, a friend was telling me about a man who was preaching one Sabbath morning on Shamgar. He said: "I can imagine that when he was ploughing in the field a man came running over the hill all out of breath, and shouted: 'Shamgar! Shamgar! There are six hundred Philistines coming toward you.' Shamgar quietly said: 'You pass on; I can take care of them, they are four hundred short.' So he took an ox goad and slew the whole of them. He routed them hip and thigh." "One shall chase a thousand." Nowadays it takes about a thousand to chase one, because we do not realize that we are weak in ourselves and that our strength is in God.

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### **Joshua 23:10 ONE ... SHALL CHASE A THOUSAND**

The Disproportionate Chase—The odds seem tremendous! The thing looks impossible, and so it would be from a natural standpoint, but this is God at work, 'for the Lord ... fighteth for you'. Such odds, while at variance with our way of reckoning, are not unusual when it comes to divine standards. With God all things are possible.

The Disproportionate Count—Ps. 90:4, 'a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night'. We often comment that 'time flies' and we are expected to note the importance of each passing day and apply our hearts to wisdom. We should observe the speed of time not to become depressed but rather to become dependent on the timeless One and say, 'my times are in thy hand', Ps. 31:15.

The Disproportionate Choice—Ps. 84:10, 'a day in thy courts is better than a thousand'. It is a mystery to the worldly person how the Christian finds joy in God. Yet such is the mark of faith, Rom. 5:11. To be on the fringe of God's sanctuary is infinitely better than in the forefront of the world's stage. It is our joy to dwell 'in the secret place of the most High', Ps. 91:1. We go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, Heb. 13:13.

The Disproportionate Chant—Rev. 5:11, 'the voice (singular) of ... ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands'. We marvel at the numberless multitude here and in chapter 7 verse 9, yet the voice is ONE. It is hard to sing with perfect timing

when a crowd is large and spread over a large area, but in heaven, the praise is focused on one Person with perfect harmony of voice. In the days of David, the people could say, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us', and again, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'. He who could be acclaimed as the Chiefest among ten thousand receives eternally the praise of those whom He has redeemed by His blood. A thousand to one is nothing in that day! (John Bennett)

Hark, those bursts of acclamation!  
Hark, those loud triumphant chords!  
Jesus takes the highest station;  
O what joy the sight affords!

THOMAS KELLY

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### **Chris Tiegreen - Living the Promise**

Each one of you will put to flight a thousand of the enemy, for the LORD your God fights for you, just as he has promised. Joshua 23:10

#### IN WORD

God gave Israel some extraordinary promises about possessing their inheritance and overcoming their enemies. It's hard to imagine such favor playing out in the lives of fallen human beings, yet God still offered enormous opportunities for success. But these promises, from the earliest days of the Exodus to the last days of the conquest, were almost always surrounded with exhortations to love Him, serve Him, and remain zealously faithful to the terms of the covenant. Next to their potential glory was a very big "if," sometimes stated but always at least implied. Israel would experience extravagant blessings if they were diligent about keeping His words.

As we know, they didn't—at least not consistently or for long. But the blessings showed up at times in the nation's history, and they presumably still apply to all who receive them. We know we don't live up to the law well enough to earn them, but we know Someone who did on our behalf. And we know that accepting Him as our proxy in life, death, and resurrection implies the need to grow into His likeness. In every respect, we qualify for God's promises in Jesus, the "amen" to every promise given (2 Corinthians 1:20). The nature of God offered to Israel is offered to all who believe in Him and receive His nature. And that includes extraordinary opportunities for success and victory.

#### IN DEED

In your quest for Kingdom territory, you can put to flight a thousand of the enemy. Why? Not because you're strong, clever, or resourceful, but because the Lord fights for you—if you are in the covenant that fulfills His Word. The big question, then, is whether you are believing it, living it, breathing it, applying it, growing in it, and acting on it. If you are, you might be surprised by what you can accomplish in the Lord's strength, and the enemy is alarmed by it. The Lord is ready to fight on your behalf. ([The One Year Heaven on Earth Devotional](#))

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### **Spurgeon - One a Majority!**

"One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you."—Joshua 23:10

WHY count heads? One man with God is a majority though there be a thousand on the other side. Sometimes our helpers may be too many for God to work with them, as was the case with Gideon, who could do nothing till he had increased his forces by thinning out their numbers. But the Lord's hosts are never too few. When God would found a nation, He called Abram alone and blessed him. When He would vanquish proud Pharaoh, He used no armies but only Moses and Aaron. The "one man ministry," as certain wise men call it, has been far more used of the Lord than trained bands with their officers. Did all the Israelites together slay so many as Samson alone? Saul and his hosts slew their thousands, but David his ten thousands.

The Lord can give the enemy long odds and yet vanquish him. If we have faith, we have God with us; and what are multitudes of men? One shepherd's dog can drive before him a great flock of sheep. If the Lord sent thee, O my brother, His strength will accomplish His divine purpose. Wherefore, rely on the promise, and be very courageous.

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### **Joshua 23:1-13 To Chase Or Be Chased**

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you. —Joshua 23:10

I once saw a monarch butterfly turn the tables on a bird. The monarch actually chased the bird away! It was a strange sight, but understandable. This species has been protected by its Creator with a taste that makes birds sick. My guess is that it can

courageously chase birds—while other kinds of butterflies are being chased.

The Lord has also equipped His children so we can be courageous in a hostile world. Although the foes we face may seem to be more powerful, we can resist them because of God's special provision. This doesn't mean He always protects His children from physical injury or even death. But when a child of God works together with God and does His will, he is unconquerable until his work on earth is done.

How do we find the protection that helps us "chase away" the enemy? By trusting and obeying God. Joshua told God's people that if they would obey the Lord, no one could stand against them (Josh. 23:10). The same God who fought for them will also fight for us. He will strengthen us to meet any challenge when we are doing what He wants us to do in the way He wants us to do it (Phil. 4:13).

Yes, the Lord will give us courage as we draw strength from Him each day. [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Though evil may surround us,  
We need not fear defeat;  
For when God fights the battle,  
Our enemies retreat.  
—Sper

To trust is to triumph, for the battle is the Lord's.

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Yes, the Lord will give us courage as we draw strength from Him each day. —M R De Haan II [Our Daily Bread, C](#)

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We need not fear defeat;  
For when God fights the battle,  
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—Sper

To trust is to triumph, for the battle is the Lord's.

### **Joshua 23:11 "So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God."**

Hebrew literally - "Watch carefully yourselves so as to love the LORD your God."

KJV Joshua 23:11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

NET Joshua 23:11 Watch yourselves carefully! Love the LORD your God!

BGT Joshua 23:11 κα φυλ ξασθε σφ δρα το γαπ ν κ ριον τ ν θε ν μ ν

NLT Joshua 23:11 So be very careful to love the LORD your God.

ESV Joshua 23:11 Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.

NIV Joshua 23:11 So be very careful to love the LORD your God.

YLT Joshua 23:11 and ye have been very watchful for yourselves to love Jehovah your God.

LXE Joshua 23:11 And take ye great heed to love the Lord our God.

CSB Joshua 23:11 So be very diligent to love the LORD your God for your own well-being.

NKJ Joshua 23:11 "Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.

NRS Joshua 23:11 Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.

NAB Joshua 23:11 Take great care, however, to love the LORD, your God.

NJB Joshua 23:11 Be very careful, as you value your life, to love Yahweh your God.

- **take diligent heed:** Jos 22:5 De 4:9 6:5-12 Pr 4:23 Lu 21:34 Eph 5:15 Heb 12:15
- **yourselves:** Heb. your souls
- **love the LORD your God:** Ex 20:6 Ro 8:28 1Co 8:3 16:22 Jude 1:20,21

#### Related Passages:

John 14:15; 21 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.....21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

Mark 12:30+ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

**COMMENT** - Only a genuine believer can love this way, for only in the believer has "the love of God (AND FOR GOD) been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us." (Ro 5:5+)

## THE TIMELESS CHARGE LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

**So** - Term of conclusion. Based on the preceding promise of the provision of divine power. Joshua gives a concluding condition for possessing the promises.

Jude 1:21+ says it this way

**Keep** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life (FUTURE LOOKING MOTIVATES PRESENT LIVING!).

**Take diligent heed** ([shamar](#); Lxx = [phulasso](#) in [aorist imperative](#)) **to yourselves to love the LORD your God**- **Diligent** in Hebrew (me'od) means exceedingly, greatly, abundantly. **To take...heed** is not "automatic" but takes a conscious decision of one's will. In other words **diligent** means we are to demonstrate care, conscientiousness and persistent effort to maintain **heed**. Don't fall into the trap of thinking "Well, I have God's promises, grace and forgiveness, so it really does not matter how I live." WRONG! One is reminded of Paul's words "Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that he does not fall." (1Cor 10:12+). The antidote for apostasy to vain idols is love and loyalty to Yahweh. It is the basic principle of the [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#). Simply stated, a true love of God will overwhelm a love of this world, which is passing away and even its lusts (1Jn 2:17+). See related discussion including circumcision of their hearts in Joshua 22:5.

**Bush** adds a good word "As the temptations arising from the presence of your corrupt neighbors, and your own peace and prosperity, are greater than they were in the wilderness, it will require greater watchfulness and diligence to keep yourselves continually approved in the sight of heaven." ([Notes](#))

**Utley** - Loving YHWH is expressed by covenant obedience! Love is an action, not just a feeling. Believers must make a decisive and personal choice to obey God! (**ED: TRUE BUT ONLY POSSIBLE AS WE ARE ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HAVE THE DESIRE AND POWER TO OBEY** - see Php 2:13+). This is a recurrent theme in Deuteronomy (e.g., Dt 6:5; 10:12; 11:13).

**Matthew Henry** adds "Would we cleave (cling - Josh 23:12) to the Lord, we must always stand upon our guard, for many a soul is lost through carelessness (failure to give sufficient attention to avoiding harm or errors; negligence). Love the Lord your God ([Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)), and you will not leave Him.

**NIV STUDY BIBLE** - Obedience to the laws of God requires love and service from the heart. In the ancient Near East, "love" was also a political term, indicating truehearted loyalty to one's king (see notes on Dt 6:5; 11:1).

**Take...heed** in the Septuagint is the verb [phulasso](#) and is a command calling for urgent attention ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) For fallen men to fulfill this charge, they must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit, Who was active in sanctifying believers in the Old Testament.

**Rod Mattoon** - No Christian has a right to do as he pleases except when he pleases to do right and obey the Lord. The Greeks said, "Know thyself." The Romans said, "Control thyself." Christ said, "Deny thyself."

Teach us to love in truth,  
to give and to receive  
with joyful and with open hearts,  
with all that we believe;  
to seek another's good,  
to honor what is right,  
to let our will and our desire  
be held in holy light.

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### **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**Take good heed therefore unto yourselves.** Intimating the condition on which the foregoing promise should be made good to them. Let not the assurance of the divine favor, presence, and protection, tend to relax your diligence, or weaken the sense of obligation to love and serve him; on the contrary, let it operate as an additional motive to the most intense affection and devotedness towards your heavenly benefactor.

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#### **G Campbell Morgan** - Jos. 23:11

As the time of Joshua's passing approached, he twice gathered the people together, and delivered farewell messages to them. The first of these is contained in this chapter. Its burden is that of the power and faithfulness of God, and the consequent earnest desire of the great leader for the faithfulness of the people to Him. The references which Joshua made to himself were very few and brief; the principal ones being: "I am old and well stricken in years," "I am going the way of all the earth." Only incidentally did he refer to his own work. After having declared that Jehovah had brought them in, he said: "I have allotted unto you these nations that remain." His references to Jehovah were constant: "Jehovah your God hath done"; "Jehovah your God, He it is that fought for you," and so on. Earnestly and urgently he charged them to be "courageous to keep and to do" the law, to "cleave unto Jehovah"; closing with the most solemn warning as to what would happen to them if they departed from their allegiance. Of all the wonderful address, the words we have chosen constituted the supreme note. Everything else is assured if men love Jehovah. Failure to keep the law is always the outcome of failure in love to the Law-giver. For such failure in love, men are responsible. In order that love may be maintained, they need to take heed to themselves. That is the meaning of the charge of Jude: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." To cease to discipline the life, is to cool in devotion.

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#### **The Puritans: Daily Readings - Our Duty to Love**

Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Joshua 23:11

It is your duty to love Christ. If it be your duty to have a natural affection unto parents and children, it is much more your duty to have spiritual affections unto Christ: if it be your duty to have conjugal affection unto your earthly husband and wife, it is a greater duty to have conjugal love unto this your heavenly Husband: if it be your duty to love brethren, sisters, and kindred, that love you, it is a greater duty to love Jesus Christ, who loves you above all relations: if it be your duty to love your enemies, it is much more your duty to love Christ, who is your best friend. It is the will of your heavenly Father that you should love Christ: the devil would have you hate Him, but God would have you love

Him; and whether it be most reason that you should obey the will of God or the will of the devil, judge. It is the will of Christ that you should love Him; the will of the flesh is against this love, but whose will ought you to comply with; you are not debtors to the flesh, that you should obey its command, neither are you debtors to any creatures, to give them your choicest affections, but you are debtors unto Christ, to give Him your chief love; Christ has most right to your love, and will you not give to Christ His due? if you are bound to give men their due, are you not much more bound to give unto Christ His due?...Had you thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil to offer to Him: had you all the treasures of the earth at your dispose, and should lay it down all at His feet, it would be all slighted and disregarded by Him, if you give away your hearts from Him. (Randall Pederson)

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**A. J. Gordon** - Take good heed therefore unto your souls Josh. 23:11 (Margin)

Gold cannot be used for currency as long as it is mixed with the quartz and rock in which it lies imbedded. So your soul is useless to God till taken out from sin and earthliness and selfishness, in which it lies buried. By the regenerating power of the Spirit you must be separated unto Christ, stamped with His image and superscription, and made into a divine currency, which shall bear His likeness among men. The Christian is, so to speak, the circulating medium of Christ, the coin of the realm by whom the great transactions of mercy and grace to a lost world are carried on. As the currency stands for the gold, so does the Christian stand for Christ, representing His good and acceptable will.

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**F B Meyer** - Joshua 23:11—Take good heed unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God

Love is the crown of human nature; its regal chaplet of flowers; the bond by which the sentient universe is made one; the trait in which we most nearly resemble God—for God is love. We may love God from four parts of our nature (Luke 10:27). From the heart, the seat of the emotions: from the soul, the seat of individuality or will; in the strength of our activities; and in the mind, the organ of thought and intelligence. Some natures are more prone to one, and others to another. Each is a gate into the metropolis of Love, or by which the love of God may enter us. And it is of small consequence which gate you use, so long as you use one, and in this way enter the city.

Many people are accustomed to impute love to the heart only, instead of associating it also with other departments of the inner life. Because you have no emotion of love, you therefore conclude that you do not love. But there may be the love of soul, wherein the will crowns Christ as King; or the love of the strength, wherein all the energy of life revolves around Jesus; or the love of the mind, in which all thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Choose which you will.

But we must take heed to ourselves. The love of God will come naturally and easily in us as the fruit of the Spirit, unless we do anything to mar or hinder it. Love begets love; think then how much He loved you, when He gave Himself for you. Take heed to your speech, acts, intentions, volitions, affections; watch as well as pray; keep yourselves in the love of God; love one another and so abide in his love; and in you also the love of God will be perfected.

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**Chris Tiegreen** - So be very careful to love the LORD your God. Joshua 23:11

Many are familiar with “love languages”—the idea that each of us has a preferred mode of receiving love from others. Love languages include spending quality time together, physical touch, receiving gifts, acts of service, and words of affirmation. We understand the affections of others when they are expressed through one of these means.

What we often don't realize is that God has love languages too. He enjoys words of affirmation (praise), receiving gifts (offerings), acts of service (obedience), quality time (prayer/meditation), and even physical touch. The last in the list may be a little difficult for us to express—though Jesus surely enjoyed John's leaning against Him at the Last Supper, and the Father surely enjoys our savoring the physical gifts He gives us—but God receives love in much the same ways we do. He even tells us how to express love to Him. Scripture is full of instructions about how to give to Him, speak to Him, and serve Him. God has made His desires clear.

All of our expressions of love—praise, offerings, obedience, conversations with Him, and longings for sensory touches—are meant to be an overflow of our heart. When we turn God's instructions into nothing but a set of obligations, we undermine their purpose. They were all given first and foremost as ways to express our love. That's why the greatest commandment to love Him is above all others; it was meant to shape everything we do in our lives toward God. More than anything else, we were designed to adore Him. And our number one pursuit is to figure out how to love Him well.

Lord, how can I love You well today? What time should I set aside to spend with You? What service can I do? What can I say that will touch Your heart? Help me love You deeply and show it well. ([The One Year Experiencing God's Presence](#))

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**Chris Tiegreen** - Be very careful to love the LORD your God. JOSHUA 23:11

**IN WORD** As the aging Joshua gave his farewell address to the Israelites, he reminded them of everything God had done for them. The appropriate response to God's faithfulness, Joshua said, was to “be very careful” to love Him. It is an act of the will, an intentional response to who He is. But have you ever thought about what it really means to love God?

Many who set out to love God focus on theology. But theology, while important and necessary, makes God an academic subject to study or a philosophical argument to prove. It may be a product of our love for God, but it does not define love. Discussions abound in which God is a premise—a subject viewed through a theologian's microscope or a philosopher's telescope—but in which there is no affection. Doctrine is critical for us to grasp, but it is not love. Ask any Sadducee.

Many who set out to love God focus on works. But works, while an essential outgrowth of love for God, can easily become an attempt to gain His approval. In truth, they are not acts of devotion but acts of self-interest. We want to gain higher esteem in His



eyes, something that makes us one of His "insiders." We end up with a self-righteousness that fills us with brief satisfaction but leaves us empty of love. Ask any Pharisee.

Many who set out to love God focus on emotions. But emotions, though a desirable and essential outgrowth of love, cannot define our love. They are far too fleeting. We end up riding waves of feeling or missing out on them altogether. Love remains constant. Feelings don't. Ask any zealot.

IN DEED So how do we love God? We lie at His feet and tell Him we are His. We seek to honor Him in all we do. We want to be like Him. We crave His fellowship. We pray His desires. We are consumed with, obsessed with, and filled with His ways, His works, and His will. The theology, the works, and the feelings will come. They are good—but only after the devotion. Love always comes first. ([The One Year Worship the King Devotional](#).)

I would hate my own soul if I did not find it loving God.

—AUGUSTIN

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**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 11-16. Has God been thus true to you? Be not you false to him. He is faithful that has promised, Hebrews 10:23. The experience of every Christian witnesses the same truth. Conflicts may have been severe and long, trials great and many; but at the last he will acknowledge that goodness and mercy followed him all the days of his life. Joshua states the fatal consequences of going back; know for a certainty it will be your ruin. The first step would be, friendship with idolaters; the next would be, marrying with them; the end of that would be, serving their gods. Thus the way of sin is down-hill, and those who have fellowship with sinners, cannot avoid having fellowship with sin. He describes the destruction he warns them of. The goodness of the heavenly Canaan, and the free and sure grant God has made of it, will add to the misery of those who shall for ever be shut out from it. Nothing will make them see how wretched they are, so much, as to see how happy they might have been. Let us watch and pray against temptation. Let us trust in God's faithfulness, love, and power; let us plead his promises, and cleave to his commandments, then we shall be happy in life, in death, and for ever.

**Joshua 23:12 "For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you,**

KJV Joshua 23:12 Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

NET Joshua 23:12 But if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you, and intermarry with them and establish friendly relations with them,

BGT Joshua 23:12 ν γ ρ ποστραφ τε κα προσθ σθε το ς πολειφθε σιν θνεσιν το τοις το ς μεθ μ ν κα πιγαμ ας ποι σητε πρ ς α το ς κα συγκαταμιγ τε α το ς κα α το μ ν

NLT Joshua 23:12 "But if you turn away from him and cling to the customs of the survivors of these nations remaining among you, and if you intermarry with them,

ESV Joshua 23:12 For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you,

NIV Joshua 23:12 "But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them,

YLT Joshua 23:12 'But -- if ye at all turn back and have cleaved to the remnant of these nations, these who are left with you, and intermarried with them, and gone in to them, and they to you,

LXE Joshua 23:12 For if ye shall turn aside and attach yourselves to these nations that are left with you, and make marriages with them, and become mingled with them and they with you,

CSB Joshua 23:12 For if you turn away and cling to the rest of these nations remaining among you, and if you intermarry or associate with them and they with you,

NKJ Joshua 23:12 "Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations-- these that remain among you-- and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you,

NRS Joshua 23:12 For if you turn back, and join the survivors of these nations left here among you, and intermarry with them, so that you marry their women and they yours,

NAB Joshua 23:12 For if you ever abandon him and ally yourselves with the remnant of these nations while they survive among you, by intermarrying and intermingling with them,

NJB Joshua 23:12 'But should you in any way relapse, if you make friends with the remnant of these nations still living beside you, if you intermarry with them, if you mix with them and they with you,

GWN Joshua 23:12 "But if you turn away and go along with the other nations within your borders, if you intermarry with them or associate with them,

- **go back:** Ps 36:3 125:5 Isa 1:4 Eze 18:24 Zep 1:6 Mt 12:45 Joh 6:66 Heb 10:38,39 2Pe 2:18-22 1Jn 2:9
- **cling:** Ge 2:24 34:3 1Sa 18:1-3 1Ki 11:2 Ro 12:9
- **shall remain:** Ex 34:12-16 De 7:3 1Ki 11:4 Ezr 9:1,2,11,12 Ne 13:23-26 2Co 6:14-17

### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:12-16 Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. 13 "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim 14 –for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God– 15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, 16 **and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.**

Deuteronomy 7:3 "Furthermore, **you shall not intermarry with them;** you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.

James 4:4+ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15-17+ **Do not love** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Matthew 6:24+ "No one (ABSOLUTELY NO ONE!) can serve two masters; for (Term of explanation) either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (= IDOL - SEE PICTURE OF THE IDOL [MAMMON](#)).

## CLINGING THAT CORRUPTS!

**For** - Term of explanation. In this case the explanation is also a warning of why we need to watch carefully and watch especially what we love! **Uteley** adds "This is a list of the ways of not being faithful to the covenant."

**if you ever go back and cling** ([dabaq](#)) **to the rest of these nations** - **Cling** to God is best way to prevent one from clinging to the pagan ways. **Cling** is [dabaq](#) (Lxx = [proskollao](#) = adhere closely, be devoted, Mk 10:7+) which yields the noun form "glue" (in modern Hebrew) and figuratively conveys the ideas of loyalty and devotion. **The rest of these nations** are the Canaanites that are still infesting the Promised Land, those that had not been completely eradicated.

The first use of **dabaq** in Ge 2:24 reflects basic meaning of one person being joined to another -- INTIMATELY!!! This use is illustrative in regard to Joshua's warning to Israel re "unfaithfulness" to her "Husband" (keeping in mind that **Israel was called the "wife of Jehovah** cf Jer 31:32+). Many times in prophets God calls Israel a "harlot" (eg, Ezekiel 16:15+) for having chased after other "lovers", gods (little "g") that are really no gods at all! See some NT parallels [above](#).

**These which remain among you** - Again reiterating the point that they are still on the scene! The pagans were present and were an ever present danger to Israel's spiritual well-being!

**And intermarry with them, so that** (purpose clause - bad purpose!) **you associate** (cf Josh 23:7) **with them and they with you** - Should Israel marry the idol worshippers, they would become "one flesh" (Ge 2:24) with them and they would then begin to worship what their idolatrous spouse worships! Their idol worshipping wives would make them forget their loyalty to Yahweh and turn their

hearts away unto idols which are not God!

The premier tragic illustration of this basic principle is King Solomon (the "wisest" man of his day -- note that the "heart" of Solomon's problem was the problem of his **heart**, the very thing he himself had commanded watchfulness over in Proverbs 4:23+! He proved to be a hypocrite! Sin deceived even this wise man and, mark it down, **it will deceive** you and me beloved! Heb 3:13+)....

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, 2 from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not **associate** (NOTE SAME WORD AND SAME WARNING IN Joshua 23:7 and Joshua 23:12) with them, nor shall they **associate** (REPEATED) with you, for **they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.**" Solomon held fast (SAME WORD AS "CLING" =[dabaq](#)) to these in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and **his wives turned his heart away.** 4 For when Solomon was old, **his wives turned his heart away after other gods;** and his **heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.** 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and **did not follow the LORD fully,** (see **Caleb** - Nu 14:24+, Josh 14:8, 9, 14+) as David his father had done. 7 **Then** (MARKS PROGRESSION - NOTE THE INEVITABLE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF SIN IF IT IS NOT CONFESSED, REPENTED, KILLED! IT WILL KILL US!) Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. 8 Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. 9 Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. (1Ki 11:1-10)

[Believer's Study Bible](#) has an interesting note - (Joshua 23:12-16) Note the combination of grace and fear as motivating factors (cf. Rom. 11:22): (1) grace -- the good land God has given (Joshua 23:13, 15, 16), and the good Word God has given (Joshua 23:14, 15); (2) fear -- God is faithful in judgment too (v. 15); failure to dedicate themselves to the Lord would result in trouble in their lives (cf. Jdg. 2:3; James 4:4).

**Guzik** - Continuing in God's love will mean that they keep themselves separate from the ungodly influences around them; they must keep themselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

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### **P G Matthew - —Joshua 23:12–13**

In both the Old and New Testaments, God commands his people to separate themselves from the pagan world. We are not to conform to the pattern of this world, for we are the light of the world. So in Joshua 23, Joshua told the people, "Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them." That would be idolatry. God had left some of the nations in the land to test his people, to see whether they would demonstrate their love for him by serving and worshiping him only.

In verses 12–13, Joshua went on to issue a strong warning to the Israelites, a divine threat of covenant sanctions that the people would, in fact, experience in subsequent years. Consider, for example, the case of King Solomon. He rejected the biblical mandate to be separate and holy; instead, he became fascinated with pagan women. What was the outcome? His kingdom was torn in two. We must be careful not to associate with paganism, whether the outright paganism of the world, or the more subtle variety found in many of today's evangelical churches, where the emphasis is on entertainment and affluence rather than the word of God.

In Numbers 23:9, we find Balaam, though himself a pagan, declaring this truth about God's people: "I see a people who live apart and do not consider themselves one of the nations." This is divine separation. Christians are to be in the world but not of the world.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14–18, the apostle Paul exhorts the church, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." This applies to unbelievers in the world as well as unbelievers in the church. Then he asks, "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?" What is the expected answer? Nothing! "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" None! "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." In all generations, God's people are to be separate, holy unto their covenant Lord. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," says the Lord.

**Joshua 23:13 know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this**

KJV Joshua 23:13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

NET Joshua 23:13 know for certain that the LORD our God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. They will trap and ensnare you; they will be a whip that tears your sides and thorns that blind your eyes until you disappear from this good land the LORD your God gave you.

BGT Joshua 23:13 γιν σκετε τι ο μ προσθ κ ριος το ξολεθρεσαι τ θνητα τα π προσ που μ ν κα σονται μ ν ε ς παγ δας κα ε ς σκ νδαλα κα ε ς λους ν τα ς πτ ρναι ς μ ν κα ε ς βολ δας ν το ς φθαλμο ς μ ν ω ς ν π λησθε π τ ς γ ς τ ς γαθ ς τα της ν δωκεν μ ν κ ριος θε ς μ ν

NLT Joshua 23:13 then know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive them out of your land. Instead, they will be a snare and a trap to you, a whip for your backs and thorny brambles in your eyes, and you will vanish from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

ESV Joshua 23:13 know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.

NIV Joshua 23:13 then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you.

YLT Joshua 23:13 know certainly that Jehovah your God is not continuing to dispossess these nations from before you, and they have been to you for a gin, and for a snare, and for a scourge, in your sides, and for thorns in your eyes, till ye perish from off this good ground which Jehovah your God hath given to you.

LXE Joshua 23:13 know that the Lord will no more destroy these nations from before you; and they will be to you snares and stumbling-blocks, and nails in your heels, and darts in your eyes, until ye be destroyed from off this good land, which the Lord your God has given you.

CSB Joshua 23:13 know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out before you. They will become a snare and a trap for you, a scourge for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you disappear from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

NKJ Joshua 23:13 "know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

NRS Joshua 23:13 know assuredly that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land that the LORD your God has given you.

NAB Joshua 23:13 know for certain that the LORD, your God, will no longer drive these nations out of your way. Instead they will be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge for your sides and thorns for your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD, your God, has given you.

NJB Joshua 23:13 then know for certain that Yahweh your God will stop dispossessing these nations before you, and for you they will be a snare, a pitfall, thorns in your sides and thistles in your eyes, until you vanish from this fine country given you by Yahweh your God.

- **will:** Ex 23:33 Nu 33:55 De 7:16 Jdg 2:2-3 Ps 106:35-39
- **snares:** De 7:16 Jdg 2:3 1Ki 11:4 Ps 69:22 2Ti 2:26
- **perish:** Lev 26:31-35 De 4:26 28:63-68 29:28 30:18 2Ki 17:22,23 2Ki 25:21,26 Lu 21:24

#### Related Passages:

Psalms 106:35-39 (**NOTE THE VERBS IN BOLD**) But they **mingled** with the nations And learned their practices, 36 And **served** their idols, Which became a **snare** to them. 37 They even **sacrificed** their sons and their daughters to the demons, 38 And **shed** innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters,

Whom they **sacrificed** to the idols of Canaan; And the land was **polluted** with the blood. 39 Thus they **became unclean** in their practices, And **played the harlot** in their deeds.

Exodus 23:33 “They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a **snare** to you.”

Exodus 34:12 “Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a **snare** in your midst.

Deuteronomy 7:16 “You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a **snare** to you.

Numbers 33:55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as **pricks** in your eyes and as **thorns** in your sides, and they will **trouble** you in the land in which you live.

Judges 2:1-3 Now the [Angel of the LORD](#) came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, 2 and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But **you have not obeyed Me**; what is this you have done?”Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as **thorns** in your sides and their gods will be a **snare** to you.’”

Deuteronomy 4:26 (**THIS STRONG WARNING WAS GIVEN TO THE SECOND GENERATION - SAME GROUP JOSHUA IS ADDRESSING SOME 25 YEARS LATER**) I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **you will surely perish quickly from the land** where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. **You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed**

Deuteronomy 7:4 “For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and **He will quickly destroy you**.



A Snare...A Trap

## THE RESULT OF TURNING AWAY TORTURE AND DEFEAT

**Know with certainty that the LORD ([Jehovah](#)) your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you- Know with certainty** means beyond a shadow of a doubt! In Hebrew for emphasis words were repeated and so in this case [yada](#) is repeated - [yada, yada](#). How different is God's [yada, yada](#) from the worlds "Yada, yada," which describes boring or empty talk often used interjectionally especially in recounting words regarded as too dull or predictable to be worth repeating. God's [yada, yada](#) are words worth repeating so that the divine promises of the ever faithful God are not forgotten! The effect of clinging, intermarrying and associating with the idol worshiping peoples would bring about a loss of God's power to enable Israel to continue to drive out the pagans and ironically would incur the use of God's power to drive the people of Israel off the good land!.

**THOUGHT** - Compare the loss of God's power to "drive out" the enemies of our soul when we sin and grieve or quench the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30, 1Th 5:19). If you are not experiencing victory over the the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#), then it is not because God does not have the power to defeat these strong foes, but because you have blunted His power through unconfessed, unrepentant sins.

**Wiersbe** - If Israel began to mingle with these nations, two things would happen: God would remove His blessing, and Israel would be defeated; and these nations would bring distress and defeat to Israel.

**Guzik** - What today is only an "innocent Canaanite" in our lives may become a torture and a snare tomorrow. These ungodly influences never advertise themselves as instruments of torture; they present themselves as wonderful things—but we must see past all this.

**Redpath** - "How often we see that the temptation we have pampered and encouraged and indulged in has become a scourge and a

thorn in our side. The compromising Christian is not a happy man. Let the enemy remain in a Christian life, let him have one foothold, and he soon becomes a scourge."

**But** - Term of contrast. This usually marks a "[change of direction](#)," and in this context a striking change from victory to defeat - a chilling prediction which came to fruition in the book of Judges!

**They will be a snare** ([pach/pah](#); Lxx-[pagis](#)) **and a trap** ([moqesh](#); Lxx- [skandalon](#)) **to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes** - Note the vivid frightening picture - **snare...trap...whip...thorns!** Disobedience would bring painful suffering! This sounds miserable and it is meant to sound miserable as a warning! So even before they would perish off the good land, they would be inflicted with misery in their lives. The best description of this misery is the entire book of Judges which lasted for about 300 years (25% of Israel's history in the OT)!

**THOUGHT** - There are Christians that are tormented with immoral thoughts, lusts and habits, sins that they should not be involved with (but ponder the solemn charge by Paul in 2Co 13:5+). Why? because of repeated disobedience. God meets you at your point of obedience. The chief source of failure in our life is tolerance of incomplete obedience to God's whole counsel (which is really 100% disobedience!). Are there enemies in your land? Are there enemies that you have permitted to remain in your land? If there are, then you (AND I) need to kill them! See Ro 8:13+ and Col 3:5+.

Thus the way of sin is down-hill,  
and those who have fellowship with sinners,  
cannot avoid having fellowship with sin.  
-- Matthew Henry

**Until** - This is an important expression of time and means up to the point in time or the event mentioned, in this case Israel perishing off of the **good land** (phrase found only 3x in Josh - Josh 23:13, 15, 16).

**You perish** ([abad](#)) **from off this good** (pleasant) **land which the LORD your God has given you** - Yes, God had graciously given Israel the land, but Israel could lose the blessing. The condition for continued enjoyment of the blessings of the LORD was (AND STILL IS) obedience to His holy Word. The Hebrew for **perish** ([abad](#)) is translated in the Septuagint with [apollumi](#) which means ruined or destroyed. Historically Israel was exiled **from off this good land**.

**THOUGHT** - **Beware!** Do not confuse God's patience in your life (especially with your poor choices) with His approval (of your choices)! **Beware** of demanding your own way (your "rights"), because eventually God may give your "*YOUR*" way (rather than "*HIS*" way), and with *YOUR* way will come all of its painful consequences. Read and ponder Jesus' warning to the Church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:4-5+) and Paul's warning to the Corinthians (1Cor 9:24-27+), so that you might repent and return (cf Acts 3:19+).

**Wiersbe** - The final stroke of chastening would be Israel's removal from their land to a land of exile. After all, if you want to live and worship like the Gentiles, then live with the Gentiles!

**Wiersbe** comments on **good land** "When God called Moses at the burning bush, He promised to take Israel into a "good land" (Ex. 3:8); and Joshua and Caleb described Canaan as "a good land" after forty days of investigation (Num. 14:7). In his farewell message Moses used the phrase "good land" at least ten times (Deut. 1:25, 35; 3:25; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:7, 10; 9:6; 11:17). The argument is obvious: Since God has given us such a good land, the least we can do is live to please Him."

Meditating on the goodness of God is a strong motivation for obedience.

-- Warren Wiersbe

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**Snare** (trap)([06341](#)) [pach/pah](#) refers to a literal bird trap and thus means to ensnare, confine and control - As one would birds (Amos 3:5, Pr 7:23, Eccl 9:12). Most OT uses are figurative and refer to that which brings sudden danger and/or which entangles in difficulties, being held captive by circumstances. (Jos 23:13; Job 22:10; Ps 69:23; 91:3; 119:110; 140:6; 141:9; 142:4; Pr 22:5; Isa 24:17, 18; Jer 18:22; 48:43, 44; Hos 5:1; 9:8) The implication is that it is able to snare someone because it is deceptively attractive (eg, a woman who is not your wife - Pr 7:23). The **Septuagint** translates **pach** with [pagis](#) (Josh 23:13) which refers literally to anything that catches and holds fast (1 Ti 6:9, 2 Ti 2:26).

**Trap** ([4170](#))([moqesh](#) from [yaqosh](#)) is a masculine noun meaning a snare, a trap, bait. The picture is of the lure or bait being placed in the hunter's trap, which gives rise to [moqesh](#) referring to the snare itself. Traps were used to capture birds or beasts (Amos 3:5). As used in Judges 8:27 [moqesh](#) refers to a moral pitfall (Pr. 18:7; 20:25). [Moqesh](#) can be anything that lures one to ruin and disaster (Jdg. 2:3; Pr 29:6). The **Septuagint** translates **moqesh** in Jdg 8:27 (Jdg 2:3, 1 Sa 18:21, Ps 106:36) with the Greek word [skandalon](#) (**word study**), which is literally, that part of a trap on which the bait was laid, when touched caused the trap to

close on its prey and came to mean any entanglement of the foot. That's a picture of sin which looks alluring, but if touched, will surely captivate and capture its foolish prey.

**Perish** (lost, destroy, ruin) (06) **abad** is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). Abad can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In a causative sense, abad means to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. God's destruction of evil, both threatened (Lev. 26:38) and realized (Nu 17:12); Israel's destruction of the Canaanites and their altars (Nu 33:52; Dt. 12:2, 3); the perishing of natural life (Ps. 49:10; 102:26; Eccl. 7:15); the perishing of abstract qualities such as wisdom and hope (Isa. 29:14; Lam. 3:18); and an item or animal being lost (Dt. 22:3; Eccl. 3:6)

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**13. Know for a certainty.** Heb. ידוע תדעו yâdoa tidu, knowing thou shalt know.

**They shall be snares and traps unto you.** You will be caught by their wiles; their baits and allurements will seduce you into crime, into a participation of their vile impieties; and as a consequence of this, taking advantage of your weakness, they will vex and harass, torment and oppress you, and as willing though unconscious instruments in the hand of a chastising providence, will be as continual goads, spurs, or scourges in your sides, or as annoying thorns in your eyes. They will kill or drive away your cattle, burn or steal your harvests, lay waste your vineyards, alarm or plunder your houses, and in a thousand ways be a perpetual source of trouble. Nay, so completely shall they at length obtain the ascendancy, that your respective conditions shall be reversed; instead of exterminating them from the bounds of Canaan, you shall yourselves fall before them, or be utterly driven from your inheritance, from the 'good land' which the Lord himself hath given. What could tend more powerfully to arm their spirits against the forbidden alliances than the prospect of such calamities as these?

**Scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes** 'What!' says a wife to her angry husband, 'am I a thorn in your eyes? 'Alas! alas! he has seen another; I am now a thorn in his eyes.' 'Were I not a thorn in his eyes, his anger would not burn so long.' 'My old friend Tamban never looks at my house now, because it gives him thorns to his eyes.' Roberts.

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## James Smith - HOW TO POSSESS AND KEEP POSSESSION Joshua 23:1–13

"The disciples were bow'd by stress of their toil,  
The Master was touch'd, and with gracious smile  
Said, 'Come to the desert and rest awhile.' "

It is ever the longing of Christ's gracious heart to give His beloved ones rest (Matt. 6:28, 29). Joshua was about to enter into his rest after a long, busy, and faithful life for God, being now "old and stricken in age," and in these verses we have what may be regarded as his dying testimony, and, as we might expect, the predominant features of his noble life are "strong in death." It is a blessed sight to see early faith ripening into such God-glorifying fortitude. From his last message to Israel we may learn how to get into our possessions, and the conditions on which they may be kept.

### I. How this Possession was Secured. There was—

#### 1. A PAST DELIVERANCE.

"As a people they were saved out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. The power that held them as bondslaves had to be broken before they could even set their faces toward the possessions reserved for them in Canaan. So with us, we had to be delivered from the guilt and power of sin ere we could set our hearts on things above.

#### 2. A PRESENT DELIVERANCE.

"The Lord had to fight for them even while in the land" (v. 3). There were many enemies that sought to hinder them from enjoying their possessions. But the Lord was able to deliver them from them all. There is also a present deliverance needed by all who have been saved from the bondage of sin and the wrath to come. The [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) are as bitterly opposed to our entering into our inheritance in Christ as the Canaanites were to the Israelites. We need the power of the same Lord Who brought us out of the world to keep us in the place of blessing. But He is able to keep us from falling out of the blessed land of promise, and to drive out every usurping thought from the heart (v. 5).

### II. How this Possession was to be Kept. There must be—

#### 1. NO GOING BACK

"If ye do in any wise go back, know for certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out from before thee" (vv 12, 13). There must be no going back to Egypt nor to the wilderness of sin. The principles that governed the old life must be given up. Put off the old man with his deeds, and let the time past suffice for the will of the flesh (Heb. 10:38, 39). The evil heart will always seek to depart from the living God (Heb. 3:12). Evil things not driven out of the heart never fail to act as pricks in the eyes (Num. 33:55).

## 2. NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE ENEMY.

"Come ye not among them," etc. (Josh 23:7). "Thou shall make no marriage with them" (Josh 23:12). "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14–17). To mingle with the Canaanites **never** improved the Canaanites, and **always** brought misery to the people of God. To become worldly that ye might better the world is the doctrine of devils, if they should be white ones.

## 3. NO DIVISION OF HEART.

"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God" (Josh 23:11). **Love can bear no rival**. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Ex 20:2). "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Dt. 6:5). "This," said Jesus, "is the first commandment" (Mt. 22:37, 38). **Lot's wife** had a divided heart, and judgment overtook her.

## III. The Consequences of Going Back. "

Be sure your sin will find you out."

The backsliding Christian will surely be found out by this impoverished life and heartless testimony. To go back out of the way and will of God means the—

### 1. LOSS OF POWER.

God would not be with them if they went back. This is clearly taught in Josh 23:12-13. To turn out of God's way is to grieve the Holy Spirit and become utterly impotent (Eph 4:30). It is an awful loss to lose one's (ED: SUPERNATURAL) power to live and witness for Jesus Christ. Samson turned aside, and the **Spirit of power had left him** (Judges 16:20+). Separation from the Vine entails loss of that sap which is the power of life.

### 2. LOSS OF COMFORT.

"Scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes" (Josh 23:13). **These are the results of disobedience. Miserable failures instead of joyful conquerors. To turn away from the light is to turn into the darkness.** It is a great mercy that the sins of God's people pinch the conscience. The most terrible calamity that can befall a soul is to be comfortable and happy **without** God.

### 3. LOSS OF CAPACITY.

"Ye shall perish from off this good land" (Josh 23:13). This perishing from off the land of promise, because of disobedience and unbelief, was not the work of a day. When they turned away from God they became day by day more unfit, as a people, to keep possession of the God-given land. Backsliding is, of course, a process (Psa. 1:1), and a process by which our capacities for the enjoyment of the spiritual things freely given us of God gradually perish, until we in heart go right out of the land as far as our personal experience is concerned. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land.

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## Rod Mattoon - Special Study. The Snares of Scripture

Satan desires to ensnare the believer in his traps to enslave him into the bondage of sin and hinder his service for Jesus Christ.

According to the Bible, there are a number of things that can ensnare us as Christians.

### 1. WORDS

Proverbs 6:2—Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

Be careful what you say and the promises you make. They can come back to trap you.

### 2. WICKED WORKS

Psalms 9:16—The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.



### 3. WORRY or Fear over Men's Opinions

Proverbs 29:25—The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Don't get caught in the trap of worrying about what everyone is thinking or saying. Do what God wants you to do and let the dust settle where it settles.

### 4. WEALTH

1 Timothy 6:9, 10—But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

If you are not careful, money can end up controlling you instead of you controlling it. If your decisions are based on money instead of God's Word, you have been snared and better get out of the trap and that way of thinking before you devastate your life completely.

### 5. The WICKED Traps

2 Timothy 2:26—And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Psalms 119:110—The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

Psalms 141:9—Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

### 6. Our WALKWAY'S Have Snares

The hunter will lay traps in the path of the prey he is hunting. Satan will do the same to us too.

Job 18:10—The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

Psalms 142:3—When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

Satan may use people that you rub shoulders with everyday as traps to ensnare you. You will find the greatest temptations will come from those closest to you.

### 7. Those who WORSHIP Themselves or the Proud

Psalms 119:85—The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

### 8. WAVERING in Keeping Your Vows

Proverbs 20:25—It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.

### 9. WISECRACKERS or Scoffers

Proverbs 29:8—Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

### 10. WRONG Associations

Joshua 23:13—Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.

### 11. WORSHIP of Idols

Psalms 106:36—And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

### 12. WRATHFUL People

Proverbs 22:24, 25—Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

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## Joshua 23:1-16 TODAY IN THE WORD

Theodore Roosevelt gave a famous speech: "It is not the critic who counts. . . . The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know

neither victory nor defeat.”

Joshua wasn't perfect, but he was faithful with the task God gave him. Yesterday's reading was a testament to the profound results of Joshua's leadership: his people had hearts inclined toward righteousness. Joshua trusted God in battle; no matter how many swords, spears, and chariots came his way, he held strong. It seems clear by their obedience that the nation of Israel noticed.

Joshua assembled the leaders of Israel for a farewell speech, and reminded them of the victories God has won for them. He assured them of the victories yet to come in completing the command to drive out the enemy. As God had done for him at the outset of the campaign, Joshua gave the leaders very clear instructions.

Be strong. Obey God. Don't serve or worship the gods of the people you conquered. And Joshua really seems to link the trait of courage with the battle of compromise, because he reminds them of their victories as a reason for staying true to God. And when Joshua says, “one of you routs a thousand,” he's not exaggerating (v. 10). The leaders of Israel have seen firsthand what the Lord can do for them.

But they've also seen what God can do against them, and Joshua reminds them of the consequences of unfaithfulness. You might feel a chill down your spine when you read verse 13, because it foreshadows the whips and thorns of Christ's suffering that came at the hands of a more powerful foreign nation. As strong a leader as Joshua was, he was not powerful enough to erase the devastating effects of sin.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Joshua's warning is a powerful reminder that the all-inclusive nature of our culture doesn't mesh well with God's plans. Today's false gospel of “whatever god you worship is okay,” has no place with the faith described in the Bible. At times you might be disappointed with the imperfect people who believe in the exclusive claims of God, but our faith is not in men. Our entire hope is placed in the only One who can bring us eternal life and victory over sin—Jesus Christ, Son of the one true God.

**Joshua 23:14 "Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed."**

KJV Joshua 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

NET Joshua 23:14 "Look, today I am about to die. You know with all your heart and being that not even one of all the faithful promises the LORD your God made to you is left unfulfilled; every one was realized— not one promise is unfulfilled!

BGT Joshua 23:14 γ δ ποτρ χω τ v δ v καθ κα π ντες ο π τ ς γ ς κα γν σεσθε τ καρδ μ v κα τ ψυχ μ v δι τι ο δι πρεσεν ε ς λ γος π π ντων τ v λ γων v ε πεν κ ριος θε ς μ v πρ ς π ντα τ v κοντα μ v ο διεφ νησεν ξ α τ v

NLT Joshua 23:14 "Soon I will die, going the way of everything on earth. Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has come true. Not a single one has failed!

ESV Joshua 23:14 "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.

NIV Joshua 23:14 "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

YLT Joshua 23:14 'And lo, I am going, to-day, in the way of all the earth, and ye have known -- with all your heart, and with all your soul -- that there hath not fallen one thing of all the good things which Jehovah your God hath spoken concerning you; the whole have come to you; there hath not failed of it one thing.

LXE Joshua 23:14 But I hasten to go the way of death, as all that are upon the earth also do: and ye know in your heart and in your soul, that not one word has fallen to the ground of all the words which the Lord our God has spoken respecting all that concerns us; there has not one of them failed.

CSB Joshua 23:14 "I am now going the way of all the earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul

that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed.

NKJ Joshua 23:14 "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.

NRS Joshua 23:14 "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed.

NAB Joshua 23:14 "Today, as you see, I am going the way of all men. So now acknowledge with your whole heart and soul that not one of all the promises the LORD, your God, made to you has remained unfulfilled. Every promise has been fulfilled for you, with not one single exception.

NJB Joshua 23:14 "Today, you see, I am going the way of all the earth. Acknowledge with all your heart and soul that of all the promises made to you by Yahweh your God, not one has failed: all have been fulfilled -- not one has failed.

- **I am going:** 1Ki 2:2 Job 30:23 Ec 9:10 12:5 Heb 9:27
- **not one word** Jos 21:43-45 Ex 3:8 Ex 23:27-30 Lev 26:3-13 Nu 23:19 De 28:1-14 1Sa 3:19 1Ki 8:56 Lu 21:33

#### Related Passage:

Joshua 21:43-45+ So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. 44 And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. 45 **Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.**

1 Kings 2:1-2 As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, **I am going the way of all the earth.** Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man (**SADLY SOLOMON DID NOT HEED THE LAST WORDS OF HIS FATHER! LAST WORDS SHOULD BE LASTING WORDS ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY COME FROM A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART! ACTS 13:22**)

2 Timothy 4:17 (**PAUL'S LAST TESTIMONY IS SIMILAR TO JOSHUA'S**) But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.

### JOSHUA FAREWELL FOCUSES ON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

**Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth** - Like many godly men in the Bible, Joshua knew he would soon "meet his Maker," but he expresses no fear, remorse or regrets. Instead, his focus is on Yahweh's faithfulness.

**and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed** - Joshua is passing the baton to the next generation. He wants them to be firmly convinced of the faithfulness of God to keep all His promises.

**Guzik** - Joshua requires that every man probe deep within, and see if there is every a time in his lives when he could rightly accuse God of unfaithfulness to us.

**Utley** - **"you know in all your hearts and in all your soul"** The VERB (Qal PERFECT) reinforced the Israelites' sense of YHWH's special presence and provisions, which have completely fulfilled all of His promises.

The parallel phrases "in all your hearts" and "in all your souls" are synonymous and refer to the entire person. Each Israelite knew for sure, completely, without doubt that YHWH was faithful to His word to them (cf. 21:45)! They must emulate this same faithfulness (i.e., vv. 6-13).

**Matthew Henry** - Let us trust in God's faithfulness, love, and power; let us plead His promises, and cleave to His commandments, then we shall be happy in life, in death, and forever.

**Spurgeon** reminds us that **"Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have

observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

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**Behold** (02009) [hinneh](#) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of **hinneh** in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and **behold**, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." **Hinneh** is often used in the idiom "**Here I am**" in Ge 22:1, 7,11 Ge 27:1,18, Ge 31:11, Ge 46:2 Ex 3:4 1Sa 3:4, 3:16, 12:3, 2Sa 1:7, Isa 52:6, Isa 58:9. **Hinneh** is used most often to point out people but also to point out things (Ge 31:41, 17:4). God uses **hinneh** to grab man's attention before He brings destruction (Ge 6:13, 17). God uses **hinneh** when He establishes covenants (Ge 9:9, 15:12, 17 [when Jehovah cut the Abrahamic covenant], Ge 17:4, cp Ge 28:13, 15), when He provided a sacrificial substitute for Isaac (foreshadowing His giving us His only Son!) (Ge 22:13). **Hinneh** marks the "chance (The Providence of God)" arrival of Boaz at the field where Ruth was gleaning (Ru 2:4-[read about this "chance romance" - Indeed, "Behold!"](#)). **Hinneh** is used to announce the Lord's sending of a child as a sign and a prophecy of [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#), the Messiah (Isa. 7:14-[note](#)). In fact **W E Vine** says that it is notable that when **behold** (**hinneh**) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances.

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 23](#)

**14. Going the way of all the earth.** About to die, to go into the grave. To die is in a sense to go a journey, a journey to our long home; it is the way of all the earth, the way that all mankind must go sooner or later. Joshua felt himself near his end, and he would have his people look upon him and listen to him as a dying man, that so his words might sink the deeper into their hearts. He would spend his last breath in taking them to witness that God had been punctiliously faithful to every promise, and in solemnly assuring them that every threatening, however fearful, would receive an equally certain and exact accomplishment.

**Ye know—that not one thing hath failed, &c.** The same appeal which is here made by Joshua to Israel after sixty years' experience, may be made to every believer that ever lived. We may bring forth every promise from the Bible, and then search the annals of the world, and inquire of every creature in it, and one single instance will be sought in vain of God's violating or forgetting a promise. The accomplishment may have been delayed or brought to pass in a way that was not expected, but the whole world may be challenged to impeach his veracity, or contradict the assertion that 'all which he hath promised is come to pass: not one thing hath failed thereof.' But let it not be forgotten that the veracity of God is as much pledged for the execution of his threatenings, as for the performance of his promises. The one is a proof of the other. Yet among the world of the impenitent where is there a mind divested of the floating impression, that mercy will in some way interpose to stay the outgoings of wrath? How many, alas! are now experiencing in hell what they would not believe on earth! The subsequent history of the chosen people abundantly shows that both the apostasy here deprecated and the threatenings here denounced did actually take place. Let then every Christian fear as he reads, 'If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee.' The worldly, carnal, sensual Christian has no more right to expect indulgence from the justice of God than the disobedient Jew.

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## Henry Blackaby - Not One of God's Promises

Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass. . . .

"Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed. It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you." Joshua 21:45; 23:14–15 (NASB)

God keeps his promises. That sounds like a warm and fuzzy thought, but let's examine what Joshua had to say about it. Joshua had walked with God his entire life—from the time he was a child slave in Egypt through his days as a Hebrew spy, through his forty-year stint in the desert, and as he led his army to victory all across the Promised Land. Joshua had seen it all. He saw how many times the Hebrews pleased God and how many times they failed him. He saw their faith and their disbelief, their obedience and their disobedience. He was there for the good days and the bad days. Joshua also observed God's ways over his long lifetime. He saw that God kept, to the letter, every single promise he made. He concluded that God had been faithful, without exception, to his

people.

Joshua also saw that God would indeed judge his people for their sin, just as he said he would. Half of Joshua's life had been spent in the back country leading a nation that was paying the penalty for its disbelief. As he looked back over his life, Joshua could say with confidence that God was completely trustworthy to do as he said he would. According to Joshua, this could be troubling or it could be comforting. It all depends on whether you've been faithful.

Are you aware of how many promises God has made to you? It's important that you never take his faithfulness to you for granted. It's equally important that you don't take your faithfulness to him for granted. Strive to be faithful to God, and you will enjoy fully God's incredible faithfulness to you. (The Experience)

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**Robert Hawker** - Joshua 23:14 - SAY, my soul, in looking back the past year, canst thou set thy seal to this truth? Is there a promise which thy God hath not fulfilled? Is there an instance in which God hath forfeited his word? Canst thou point to the time, or place, in any one trial, or under any one affliction, in which thou hast not found God faithful? Give then the Lord the honour due unto his name. If not one thing hath failed, proclaim his glory, set forth his praise, declare his truth, let the father to the children make known that God is faithful. And oh! let thine heart bear testimony to what must be said of all his Israel, in all ages, What hath God wrought!

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### **Vance Havner - "There Failed Not Ought"**

There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. Joshua 21:45.

In recounting the goodness of God to Israel, Joshua tells us that the Lord gave them the Promised Land just as He had said He would. Joshua repeats it in an address to the people (Joshua 23:14). Solomon said it in like fashion years later (1Ki 8:56).

If you will survey the path already trod you will say so too. "There hath failed not ought of any good thing God has spoken... all came to pass." If it hasn't, it will. He which hath begun a good work in us will finish it. He will perfect that which concerneth us.

It ought to fill our hearts with thanksgiving, our eyes with tears and our lips with praise, for "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance."

"There failed not ought..." But how we have failed Him!

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"There failed not ought..." But how we have failed Him! (YES, BUT PRAISE GOD FOR Lam 3:22-23)

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### **GOD NEVER SLEEPS - Martin Luther**

You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed.

Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. Joshua 23:14

Christians are wise when they accept what God has planned and persevere in believing the promises they have from him. His promises are dependable and lasting. The Lord's own pledge is permanent, as we read in the Psalms: "Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4).

But human reason responds, "That's all fine and good. It even sounds nice. But I'm experiencing the exact opposite. God not only sleeps; he snores! In reality, there isn't a God who takes care of me or watches over me."

Jacob was certain of God's promises. He knew that God's pledge was permanent. Yet when Joseph's brothers were angry at Joseph, God didn't spare either Jacob or his son Joseph. It was as if they had no protection at all from the holy angels. Nobody resisted the anger of Joseph's brothers (Genesis 37:12–28). God and the angels remained dead silent. Even today, they appear to let the devil wreak havoc on the church and believers. Where is God in all of this?

Examples like these remind us that we must believe God's promises and never doubt his words. Because God can't lie, he won't stop constantly watching over us, especially if we believe his promise. Because he is faithful, God can't abandon us when we hang on to what he has promised. God may allow us to be attacked, led to the edge of hell, or even killed. It's during those times that we need to remember God has promised to be our guardian—one who never slumbers or sleeps

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### **Joshua 23:14-16 Theodore Epp Not One Thing Has Failed**

Joshua 23:14-16; Hebrews 6:16-20 (see notes Hebrews 6:16; 17; 18; 19; 20)

Recognizing that his death was imminent, Joshua told the Israelites that he was going the way of all the earth and then reminded them, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof" (Josh. 23:14).

What a faithful God! What He promised He fulfilled.

As I think back over my own life and God's dealing with us at Back to the Bible Broadcast, I too have to say that not one thing God has promised has failed. I have failed at times to appropriate what God has for me, but He has never failed.

It is this very fact that should cause us to press on with Him. He is faithful and willing, in fact eagerly desirous, to see us go on to the end in victory. So why not appropriate all things that God has provided for us?

A serious warning is also given. God was faithful in keeping His promises to the Israelites. He was faithful in blessing. He was equally faithful in judgment when that was necessary.

The same warning is needed by us. God has offered us everything in Christ. He will not fail, but if we go back in our Christian experience, we will be the losers.

To know truth and not obey it is to retrogress. God wants us to grow in the knowledge of Christ and appropriate by faith all that has been provided for us.

"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (see note 2 Timothy 2:13).

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### **Henry Blackaby - Not One Word Has Failed**

"and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed."—Joshua 23:14

Near the end of his life, Joshua took time with the Israelites to review all that God had done for them since they first began following Him. God had given them an impossible assignment: to conquer a foreign and hostile land with fortified cities and armies more powerful than their own. The Israelites were to go forward with nothing more than God's promise that He would go with them and take care of them. Now Joshua looked back over their experience and reminded the Israelites that God had kept every promise. They had experienced numerous victories and had enjoyed God's provision for every need.

Sometimes hindsight gives us a clear picture of how faithful God has been. We are tempted during a crisis to wonder if God will be faithful to His promises. We focus on our problems, and our trust in God begins to waver. Twenty-four years after God promised Abraham and Sarah a son, they were still waiting on God to fulfill His promise. But in the twenty-fifth year, Abraham and Sarah could look back and see that God had been faithful. As David was fleeing for his life, he may have been uncertain how God would keep His promise to make him a king. But at the end of his long and prosperous reign, David could review how God had kept every promise.

You, too, can rely on God's faithfulness. Are you in a crisis? Hold to the promises of your Lord! He will not forget His promises to you. Look back over your Christian life and recount the many ways in which God has been faithful to His word.

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### **Robert Morgan - My All in All**

- Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed. --Joshua 21:45 (NIV)

- The LORD is faithful to all his promises.. -- Psalm 145:13 (NIV)

The faithfulness of God is that aspect of His character that results in His complete adherence to fulfilling His Word and keeping His promises. He is unalterably reliable to do exactly as He has said. Because He is trustworthy, we can trust and not worry.

- God is not a man who lies, or a son of man who changes His mind. Does He speak and not act, or promise and not fulfill?. - Numbers 23:19
- You know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed.. -- Joshua 23:14
- Not one of all the good promises He made through His servant Moses has failed.. -- 1 Kings 8:56
- Lord, You have treated Your servant well, just as You promised.... May Your faithful love comfort me, as You promised Your servant.... Sustain me as You promised.... Defend my cause, and redeem me; give me life, as You promised.. -- Psalm 119:65, 76, 116, 154

**Splendid to be so near the gates of heaven!**

**I am lost in amazement!**

**There has not failed one word of all His good promises!**

—Frances Ridley Havergal on her deathbed

**Joshua 23:15 "It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.**

- **shall:** Lev 26:14-46 Dt 28:15-68 Jdg 3:8,12 4:1,2 6:1 10:6,7 13:1 2Ch 36:16,17 Lu 21:22-24 1Th 2:16

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Kings 24:20 For through the anger of the LORD this came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Judges 2:6+ (**NOTE THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL WITHIN ONLY ONE GENERATION AFTER JOSHUA DIED**) When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. 7The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel (**THIS GENERATION DID NOT KNOW YAHWEH, NOR YAHWEH'S PAST WORK AND FORGOT HIS WARNINGS**). 11 **Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals,**

### **WORDS OF WARNING ALSO WILL NOT FAIL**

The good news in Joshua 23:14 is now followed by the "bad news!" Neither good news or bad news from God will fail! This is Joshua's second warning in this section.

**It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the threats** - While most of God's promises are encouraging, the warning promises are not, but they are still profitable for they are calculated to awaken a sense of reality. In this context, the point is that if God kept all His good promises, He will surely keep all of the warning promises! The threats had been clearly enunciated to the first generation (e.g., Lev 26:14-46, see summary of "[blessing and cursings](#)") and then repeated to the second generation (Dt 28:15-68), the very ones being addressed now by Joshua.

**Guzik** - Joshua merely repeats the principle of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience that was a specific part of Israel's covenant with God (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28). He emphasizes that God will be just as faithful to judge as He had

been to bless. We relate to God under a different covenant, a new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6–7), by which Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10–14). Therefore, in Jesus we no longer can experience God's "faithfulness to curse us" as Israel knew it. Yet we do experience God's faithfulness to correct us as a loving Father (Hebrews 12:7), and we do experience a lack of appropriated blessing if we do not abide in Jesus.

**Until** - Expression of time. Marks the coming to fruition of the threats from Yahweh.

**He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you**- This prophecy was fulfilled about 800 years later, when Babylon carried Judah and Benjamin into exile in 605, 597 and 586 BC. (2Ki 24,25).

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#### **QUESTION - [What are the blessings God promised Israel for obedience?](#)**

**ANSWER** - God promised many blessings to Israel in the book of Deuteronomy if they would obey His commands. Many important blessings are listed together in Deuteronomy 28:1–14. They include the following:

1. **Prominence above other nations:** "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1).
2. **Successful cities and farming:** "You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country" (Deuteronomy 28:3).
3. **Blessings of children, food, and livestock:** "The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks" (Deuteronomy 28:4).
4. **Protection and power against enemies:** "The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven" (Deuteronomy 28:7).
5. **Bountiful harvest of food:** "The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you" (Deuteronomy 28:8).
6. **Set apart as God's holy people:** "The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him" (Deuteronomy 28:9).
7. **Feared by other nations:** "Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you" (Deuteronomy 28:10).
8. **Prosperity regarding family, food, and farm livestock:** "The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you" (Deuteronomy 28:11).
9. **Appropriate rain and favorable blessing upon their work, including freedom from debt:** "The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none" (Deuteronomy 28:12).
10. **Leadership among other people and nations:** "The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom" (Deuteronomy 28:13).

In the original Hebrew of this passage, the blessings are arranged in a [chiasmatic pattern](#) with many of the themes repeating. The concepts of prosperity, success, and God's favor predominate as themes of God's people living in the Promised Land. These blessings were conditional, as are the [curses](#) in the next set of verses [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [What are the curses God promised Israel for disobedience?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In Deuteronomy 28, God provides a list of blessings for obedience in verses 1–14 followed by a list of curses for disobedience in verses 15–68. While the entire list of verses will not be repeated here, the following concepts stand out as curses upon God's people, Israel, for when they disobeyed His laws:

1. **Curses upon city and field:** "You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country" (Deuteronomy 28:16).
2. **Curses upon food:** "Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed" (Deuteronomy 28:17).
3. **Curses upon having children and upon livestock:** "The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks" (Deuteronomy 28:18).
4. **Curses during travel and at all times:** "You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out" (Deuteronomy



28:19).

In verses 15–20, the word for “curse” is used seven times, and those curses are explained throughout the remainder of the chapter. The ultimate devastation for continued disobedience was that God’s people would be removed from the land and scattered among the nations of the earth. Verse 64 notes that God’s people would become like the pagans and serve other gods: “Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known.”

The ultimate disgrace is given in the final verse of the chapter: “The Lord will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you” (Deuteronomy 28:68).

In contrast to these curses were the blessings God promised for obedience. The opening words of the chapter note, “If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1). God offered the Israelites both blessings and curses based on their response to His Law.

While Christians today follow Christ rather than the Law, it is important to note that God calls all His children to faithfully follow His Word. The rewards He promises us today are eternal, heavenly rewards given to those who serve Him faithfully. Those who trust in Christ will spend eternity in the Lord’s presence, the most important blessing of all. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Joshua 23:16 "When you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you."**

NET Joshua 23:16 If you violate the covenantal laws of the LORD your God which he commanded you to keep, and follow, worship, and bow down to other gods, the LORD will be very angry with you and you will disappear quickly from the good land which he gave to you."

BGT Joshua 23:16 ν τ παραβ ναι μ ς τ ν διαθ κην κυρ ου το θεο μ ν ν νετε λατο μ ν κα πορευθ ντες λατρε σητε θεο ς τ ροις κα προσκυν σητε α το ς

NLT Joshua 23:16 If you break the covenant of the LORD your God by worshiping and serving other gods, his anger will burn against you, and you will quickly vanish from the good land he has given you."

ESV Joshua 23:16 if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you."

NIV Joshua 23:16 If you violate the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you."

YLT Joshua 23:16 in your transgressing the covenant of Jehovah your God which He commanded you, and ye have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them, then hath the anger of Jehovah burned against you, and ye have perished hastily from off the good land which He hath given to you.'

LXE Joshua 23:16 when ye transgress the covenant of the Lord our God, which he has charged us, and go and serve other gods, and bow down to them.

CSB Joshua 23:16 If you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and worship other gods, and bow down to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land He has given you."

- **then:** 2Ki 24:20
- **perish:** Jos 23:13

#### Related Passage:

Joshua 7:1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore **the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel**

## A CONDITIONAL WARNING PROMISE

**When you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you-** Most versions translate this as "IF" not "WHEN," which emphasizes the conditional nature of promise.

**And go and serve** (NET, NLT, CSB = "worship"; Lxx - [latreuo](#) = perform religious rites as part of worship) **other gods and bow down ([shachah](#)) to them** - Joshua is in effect predicting that Israel will not heed his exhortation in Joshua 23:6-7! Note that this tragic end is a progression and does not happen overnight but over time when one begins to drift or [backslide](#) and continues to sin and fails to confess and repent - here's the progression = **Transgress...go...serve** (worship)...**bow down...anger of the LORD will burn**.

**THOUGHT** - The idols would become their masters! Sin (Heb 3:13b+, Ro 6:12-13+) is supernaturally powerful and fallen flesh will inevitably fall if it fails to continually depend on the strength of the LORD (the Spirit - Gal 5:16+) to obey His good laws and commandments.

**Then** - This word marks the fulfillment of the condition. The pattern is **when...then**. (cf Hos 8:7, Gal 6:7-8+) It marks a sad progression in the narrative of God's Chosen People who were to be a holy nation, holy unto the LORD!

**The anger of the LORD will burn ([charah](#)) against you** - Moses describes God's anger in Ps 90:11 asking "Who understands the power of Your anger And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You?" Israel would fail to give God the fear (reverential awe) due Him and would suffer the consequences.

**THOUGHT** - Do you (I) truly fear the LORD? You (I) should. It for your (MY) spiritual welfare and blessing!

**Utley** - "the anger of the LORD will burn against you" This VERB ([charah](#) Qal PERFECT) is often used of YHWH's burning anger for covenant violations (cf. Joshua 7:1; Ex 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Nu 11:1, 10, 33; 12:9; 22:22; 32:10, 13; Dt. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; 31:17; Jdg 2:20; 3:8; 6:39; 2Sa 6:7). This is anthropomorphic language. Humans use human vocabulary to describe the actions and feelings of God. There is always only an analogous sense.

**And you will perish ([abad](#) - different than "serve"=[abad](#)) quickly from off the good land which He has given you - Given you** (the land) occurs 3 times in this chapter (Josh 23:13, 15:16) emphasizing the land was the gracious gift of God. It was as if Israel spurned this gift by their willful, continued disobedience. This prophecy was fulfilled for the Northern 10 tribes in 722 BC when Assyria took them off the good land and into exile in Assyria (the 10 "[lost tribes](#)") and the Southern 2 Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) in three attacks from Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, in 605 BC, 597 BC and 586 BC.

### Related Resources:

- [When and how was Israel conquered by the Assyrians? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [When and how was Judah conquered by the Babylonians? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Transgress** (cross, pass)([05674](#))([abar](#) qal. pass through; niphal be forded; piel. cause to pass through or over; hiphil. make pass through. The main idea of this verb is that of movement; as a rule it is the movement of one thing in relation to some other object which is stationary, moving, or motivating. Some have said that the simplest translation of 'ābar is "to pass," but this does not really cover the various nuances that 'ābar may carry with it.

Here in Joshua 23:16 **abar** is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [parabaino](#) which means to go beside (walk beside, pass by), to overstep (transgress), to pass over, to let pass, to let slip. The [LXX](#) applies the term to the violation of God's commandments and ordinances, e.g., Ex. 32:8: "turning aside from the right way" (cf. also Dt. 9:12). In Isa. 66:24 God calls backsliders *hoi parabebēkōtes en emoí*. (men Who have transgressed against Me) Other expressions are transgressing God's word (Nu. 14:41) or covenant (Josh. 7:11) and turning aside from his commandments (Dt. 17:20)." (TDNT)

**Become angry** ([02734](#)) [charah](#) means to burn or be kindled with anger, and in the Hithpael, [charah](#) is used 4x (Ps 37:1, 7,8, Pr 24:19) always meaning "to worry" and describing the agitation, irritation or vexation resulting from active worry. **Charah** is used in reference to the anger of both man and God

**Serve** (worship) ([05647](#)) [abad](#) means to work (to cultivate, till - Ge 2:5, 15 - Lxx = [ergazomai](#) before the fall! Ge 3:23 after the fall, Lxx = [ergazomai](#)), to serve (be enslaved or hold in bondage - [Ex 6:6](#) - Lxx = katadouloo = make a slave; Lev 25:38, 39 Lxx = [douleuo](#))(Ge 14:4, 15:13, 14 - Lxx = [douleuo](#)), worship. It is interesting that abad is translated **labor** when Israel was in Egyptian

bondage (Ex 1:13,14) but is translated **worship** after Israel was redeemed from slavery (Ex 3:12 translated in Lxx = [latreuo](#)). In Joshua 23:7NET (And Josh 23:16NET) **abad** is translated "**worship**" (Lxx = [latreuo](#)) = "you must not **worship** or bow down to them!" In sum, there is a very clear association between what/who one **serves** and what/who one **worships**. When the focus of the labor is the Lord, it is a religious service to worship Him. In other words our service is really an act of worship. Moreover, in these cases, the word does not have connotations of toilsome labor but instead of a joyful experience of liberation (Ex. 3:12; 4:23; 7:16; Josh. 24:15, 18). Unfortunately, this worship service was often given to false gods (Deut. 7:16; 2 Ki. 10:18, 19, 21-23).

**Abad in Joshua especially in Joshua 24!** - Jos. 16:10; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 22:27; Jos. 23:7; Jos. 23:16; Jos. 24:2; Jos. 24:14; Jos. 24:15; Jos. 24:16; Jos. 24:18; Jos. 24:19; Jos. 24:20; Jos. 24:21; Jos. 24:22; Jos. 24:24; Jos. 24:31

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**Paul E. Toms** - These closing instructions from this grand old man of God guarantee our success in Christian living. As we have seen in this chapter, we are called upon to exercise obedience, as seen in verse 6; separation, as seen in verse 7; and love, as described in verse 11. To carefully adhere to these biblical instructions is indeed the guarantee of a successful Christian experience. This is that which will enable us to live the life that is pleasing in the Lord's sight. These characteristics will give us the undergirding of blessing and power that comes only from Him. ([This Land Is Your Land](#))