

## Joshua 24:1-13

**“I have chosen you”**

### I. Intro

#### II. Vs. 1-4 I took

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### I. Intro

Joshua, (now 110) was not a pastor, preacher or priest he was a soldier and administrator. But at the end of his life he looked ahead to what the nation would face after his departure and he needed to communicate to the nation the necessity of **maintaining a relationship with God based upon what God had done for them not what they had for God.** To do this Joshua by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit becomes a Bible teacher. Several years ago a committee was formed to define Biblical Exposition, not an easy task when one considers that Biblical Exposition involves two things:

- A. Communicating the meaning of a particular portion of scripture.
- B. Doing so in such a way that the hearer learns the truths and desire to apply the teaching to their heart.

This is what Joshua was being called to do on the eve of his graduation into the presence of the Lord to a nation that would be left behind. He needed to preach in such a way as someone said **“As a dying man to dying men!”** He begins his sermon in the first 13 verses by reminding the people of what God had done for them from the beginning up to this very moment. And it follows a threefold outline with regards to what God had done through three specific time frames:

1. Vs. 1-4 Abraham to Jacob the central idea is that God **TOOK** Abraham and Esau out of idolatry into the formation of the people of God.
2. Vs. 5-10 Second, God **BROUGHT** a nation out of bondage and into the border of the land of promise.
3. Vs. 11-13 Finally God **SENT** them into the land of promise and gave them all that He had promised Abraham.

### II. Vs. 1-4 I took

Vs. 1-2 These words of Joshua are unusual in as much as they are framed with the words in verse 2 *“Thus says the Lord God of Israel”* which makes this a prophetic word not just Joshua’s closing remarks. Yet when one reads these words you will find that what is recorded is not

predictive at all instead it looks back at God's faithfulness. The "river" here is the river Euphrates where Abraham dwelt with his family in the land of Ur. It was here amongst those who were worshipping idols that God came to Abraham to start a new nation to be comprised of those who worship the true and living God. It has been said that the definition of humility is twofold:

**A. Knowing who you are**

**B. Knowing who God is**

So Joshua starts with reminding the nation just who they are by reminding them about their beginnings recalling that Abraham and his family was a bunch of idolaters according to Gen. 11:27-12:9. In Stephens' final words before being stoned he said in Acts 7:2 that "*listen: **The God of glory appeared** to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran". **It wasn't Abraham who sought after God it was God who reached out to Abraham.** In other words Stephen said to those ready to kill him "*Your pride in your national identity was an act of grace by a loving God.*" In Deut. 7:7 Moses reminded the nation that, "*The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples*". Then Jesus said in John 15:16 "*You did not choose Me, but I chose you..*"*

**What Joshua communicated was a warning not to begin to think of God's victories as man's achievements.** Oh dear ones let us hear the preacher Joshua with regards to this **least we begin to think that some how God's victories were our achievements.** Listen to Paul's questions to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4:7 where he asks a threefold question, "*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*" David prayed this prayer upon the completion of gathering the necessary supplies for the future building of the temple in 1 Chron.

29:14, as the funds came in from the Lord working on the hearts of the nation David thanked God saying, *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You.”*

They were also to recall where they would have been if not for God. I’m afraid that we are under the mistaken opinion that when God chooses a person that He does so by human methods looking for someone head and shoulders above the rest, someone worth saving but that is not the case. You see if God looked for someone, anyone worth saving then he would find none. Paul declared this to the Romans in chapter 3:10-12, 23 saying, *“There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.....For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Consider the comparison of Saul and David where are told in 1 Samuel 9:2 with regards to Saul that *“There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.”* Then in 1 Samuel 16:7 the Lord said to Samuel, *“Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

Amazing as this may seem three generations from Abraham Rachael Jacob’s favorite wife took her father’s house idols and hid them on their departure. My point is that the people of God were still struggling with idols according to verse 14 the temptation to go back to them was still quite strong. Saints let us realize today that when we:

- **Start thinking that God’s victories were our achievements**
- **Start thinking that God chooses us based upon our qualities instead of His**

Than **we have already begun the slide into idolatry and what we are worshipping is ourselves.** Oh dear ones God’s choice of you wasn’t based upon your value, talents,

accomplishments, no His chose has everything to do with Him and nothing to do with you.

Those, which we would not think of as valuable, God shows that He values them enough to sacrifice His only Son for them. This truth alone ought to be enough to keep us humble and broken before the Lord and each other but it doesn't. No, we have to add something on to the phrase to distinguish us from the rest of the believers don't we? "*Why I'm a good Christian*", we say in our defense don't we? Are there degrees of being a Christian? Do you have to achieve merit badges, tithe a certain amount, and read the bible through certain amount of times to be considered a "*good Christian*"?

### III. Vs. 5-10 I brought

Vs. 5-7 Let's get the story straight **Joseph's brothers shipped him off to the Egypt out of jealousy but God's plan was to send him there to be a blessing to his father and brothers.**

**Isn't God amazing?** Oh it gets even more amazing as the very people God used to save God's people 400 years later enslaved then. So then we see that God raised up a man named Moses who should have been killed as a child but was raised up as an Egyptian out of Egypt for 40 years only to return at 80 years later to deliver his kindred out of the bondage of the Egyptians. And in all of this we read that long before any of it happened God told Abraham in **Genesis 15:13-14** saying, "*Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.*" Amazing as this all sounds Egypt's persecution only served to bring God's blessing multiplication as when they came into Egypt there were only 70 in the family of God upon their departure there were millions. But God not only used Moses to deliver His people He also used him to judge Egypt

who were drown in the Red Sea. It was the Lord who saved them, it was the Lord who blessed them and that is what Joshua tells them.

Hey saints **it's good for you and I to recall our former bondage and how the Lord has delivered us from the things of this world.** There was a skeptic who once asked an old fellow if he believed the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, and the Old fellow said “*Sure do!*” To this the young man began to quote many learned men who claimed it was impossible. The old man listened carefully to all the young man had to say and finally the young man proudly asked, “*So what do you have to say to that?*” “*Well*”, he said, “*I'm not a learned man like you but I figured that if God could cause me to part with my Black Velvet that I drank for 50 years that parting a little old Red Sea was no big thing!*”

Vs. 8-10 Joshua takes up the journey on the other side of the Red Sea with God's faithfulness in the wilderness. You may recall that God's design was for the nation to enter into the land of promise right away and not wait 40 years but the nation struggled with trusting in God's goodness and promises' so the Lord sent them out for another lap in the wilderness until that generation died. Yet even in this when Balak king of the Moabites hired Balaam to curse the nation all God allowed was a blessing.

Oh dear ones are you getting the picture yet? **Our lives are filled with our failures and struggles where we fail to appropriate God's love for us and because of this we wonder in the wilderness of life with out experiencing His bountiful blessings.** And even in this **God patiently waits for our flesh to die off all the while preserving us and pronouncing His intended blessings upon us.** God always know just the right amount of pressure to apply in our lives to draw us into His arms of grace doesn't He? Saints, I rather think that is how God views His work in us, it's not that He doesn't know our faults as He is all knowing but it is that

not even our failures can thwart His plans and purposes. In that great prophecy in Jeremiah 31 concerning the New Covenant in verse 34 the Lord promises “*I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*” How wonderful it is that in Christ our Lord chooses to no longer to remember our sin and failure!

#### IV. Vs. 11-13 I sent

Vs. 11-13 Finally Joshua brings up what the Lord did while for them while they were in the land of promise. **The same God who baptized them into the Red Sea also Baptized them into the Jordan.**

Oh saints don't miss this as **far to many children of God settle for the baptizing that separated them from the world but miss out on the baptism of the Spirit that brings them into the fullness of the blessings of God. No one enters the land of promise and the victorious Christian life apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit and just as it was then it is now a “step of faith” into deep waters but rest assured the waters will pill up and you will walk across on dry land.** Oh there were battles against mighty fortress and powerful enemies that set themselves against the advancement but Joshua recalls, “*I delivered them into you hand*”. There were victories and defeats champions and compromises but God never gave up on those folks.

And the point of all of this reminiscing? Verse 13 “*I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.*” Simply put God wanted them to realize that everything they now possessed was not based upon what they had done but rather it was based solely upon what God had done. **Each of us in the end will not look upon our lives seeing our accomplishments we will look back and view God's.** God who has done so much, with so little

and has given us everything and would have given us more had we only trusted Him and entered in.

**16 times** we read what “***God did***” on behalf of this ragtag group of people that came from one man Abraham to the nation that now was dwelling in the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. **Friends every life in Christ and to some degree even those lives that are apart from a relationship with God will stand as a monument to what God has done for us.** Every single talent, gift and blessing came from the hand of God. Any and every accomplishment and direction is from His hand. Clearly all of His creation will one day stand before Him and say in praise, “***God did***” and I can’t wait to see the things that He did that I wasn’t aware that He was doing! For instance notice here the variety of things that God did, “*He took, He gave, He sent, He plagued, He brought, He destroyed, He would not listen, and He delivered*”. Now think of your life and you will see that He too took and gave, sent and plagued, brought and destroyed, would not listen and delivered, and praise His name that He did just those things when He did.

I love to go on the tour of homes where you get to walk through these million dollar mansions that are more works of art than they are homes to live in. And as I walk through them amazed that someone actually lives in these palaces there is always a moment where I realize that God has blessed someone with incredible wealth to build such a place and most likely the person is completely unaware that it was God who has done so. But you know what? It didn’t stop God from blessing them, I mean He did it with out asking permission but you never hear anyone complain about that. Or how about all those beautiful days He gives us where the weather is just perfect and you are out in it enjoying the beauty that He has placed you into, do you ever chime in and say, “*Lord, uh, excuse me a moment but You didn’t ask my permission to give such a wonderful day so could you please just remove it?*” My point? Well James says it

best in James 1:17 that *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”* **Beloved, our problem lies in not seeing that every thing that God sends our way is in some way a “good and perfect gift”.** *Not buying it?* Listen to Jesus words in Matthew 7:11 where he said, *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”* **Our Father only knows how to give good and perfect gifts.** *Still struggling with this?* Here the words of Joseph, who’s brothers sold him into slavery to the Egyptians in Genesis 50:20 where Joseph declared an amazing truth with regards to his brothers action towards him when he said, *“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”* Dear ones **every cloud has a silver lining in Christ** even those things that break our heart and bring tears that only stop because we run out of water in the end we will see landed us right where our Lord wanted, in His loving arms. *“But why did He have to send it the way He did”,* you ask? Well, if there had been an easier way, a shorter more pleasant path, rest assured saints His gift would have been delivered by that rout but your stubborn heart wouldn’t allow it. So because God so loves you and wants to give you His best, He had to send His “Good and perfect” gift by a more painful path. So how about praying, *“Lord allow me to see that everything you send me is a good and perfect gift from you and please Lord soften my heart so that I’ll receive it from you hand of love and not have to be driven into your arms.”*