

## Lessons from Israel 7

### The focus of Israel 1

Today we want to highlight an incident in the history of Israel when the people were challenged about their focus. They were challenged about who they were serving at that moment and who they would serve in the future.

We are headed back to Joshua today as he makes his final plea to Israel before dying at 110 years old.

Joshua 24:14-15

14. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

1. Some did not fear the Lord more than man.

Obviously, this was a historic problem for Israel. We have seen their struggle with the fear of man.

2. Some did not serve in sincerity and truth.

There must have been service for the purposes of being "seen to be serving" alone.

3. Some chose not to put away their gods.

The service of "other gods" is a problem for us all. We value other things more. In this case, they served idols from the land in which they dwelt now and from Egypt, before.

4. Some simply did not serve the Lord.

For whatever reason, apathy, indifference, rejection, lack of belief, laziness, preoccupation, they did not serve.

5. Some thought it evil to serve the Lord.

They had a bias against His service. Perhaps they blamed God for something, were angry with Him, or were using Him as an excuse for something.

“Now therefore...” Joshua 24:1-13

1. And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.
2. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.
3. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.
4. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.
5. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.
6. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.
7. And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.
8. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.
9. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:
10. But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.
11. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.
12. And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.
13. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

1. “They presented themselves before God.” (vs. 1)

Our chief responsibility is not to man.

The key question is not whether some people think we are good people

2. "Thus saith the Lord God." (vs. 2)

God speaks to us directly.

Lessons and sermons are not "for someone else"

3. "I took your father Abraham." (vs. 3)

Many faithful men and women have gone before.

We have dozens of examples in our very own church

4. "Your eyes have seen what I have done." (vs. 7)

We have first-hand knowledge.

You can never tell God you have not seen him work.

5. "I have given you a land for which ye did not labour." (vs. 13)

We are not blessed by our own efforts.

How many of you chose to be born in the United States?

How many chose to have good health?

How many decided they would have enough food to eat?

How many chose to have Christian parents?

How many decided Christ should die on the cross to save them?

Some will choose not to serve the LORD.

1. Some choose not, because they fear man more than God.

Psalm 118:6

6. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Proverbs 29:25

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

2. Some choose not, because they are good at fooling people.

John 13:27-29

27. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

3. Some choose not, because they can't give up a secret sin.

Romans 6:16

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

4. Some choose not, because they love the world.

James 4:4

4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5. Some choose not, because they think it's a bad idea.

II Corinthians 11:24-28

24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Choose you this day whom you will serve.