

## Joshua 23

<sup>1</sup>When Joshua was very old, a long time after God gave the Children of Israel security from all their enemies surrounding them, <sup>2</sup>Joshua summoned all of Israel—the elders, leaders, judges, and officers—and said, “I am old and advanced in years. <sup>3</sup>You have seen everything that YHWH your God did for you against these nations. It was YHWH your God alone who fought for you. <sup>4</sup>Remember that I allotted to you as an inheritance, tribe by tribe, the land of all the nations I conquered and of the nations I destroyed, from the Jordan and the Great Sea. YHWH your God alone drove them out as you advanced. It was YHWH who dispossessed them to make room for you, and you took the land, that YHWH your God promised you.

<sup>6</sup>“So be strong! Be courageous! Put into full practice all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses. Be careful not to deviate from it—neither to the left nor to the right. <sup>7</sup>Do not mingle with the nations that still live among you. Never invoke their gods, swear by them, serve them, or worship them. <sup>8</sup>You must cling to YHWH your God, as you have done up to this day.

<sup>9</sup>“God drove out great and powerful nations before you. And to this day, not one of them poses a serious threat. <sup>10</sup>Each one of you tramples over an entire village battalion, for YHWH your God is the one who fights for you, as God promised you.

<sup>11</sup>“For your own sake, therefore, take great care to love YHWH your God. <sup>12</sup>For if you ever abandon God and attach yourselves to the remnants of the nations that still live among you—if you intermarry with them and have relations with them, and they with you— <sup>13</sup>then you can be sure that YHWH your God will no longer drive out these peoples on your behalf. Rather, they will become snares and traps for you. They will be whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until the day you perish from this good land that YHWH your God entrusted to you.

<sup>14</sup>“Now, as you can plainly see, I am going the way of all flesh. All of you know in your hearts and in the depths of your soul that not one of the promises that YHWH your God made to you has failed. Every promise made to you has been fulfilled, without a single exception. <sup>15</sup>But just as all the good promises of YHWH your God have come true, so too can God bring upon you everything evil until you have been wiped off this good land that YHWH your God gave you. <sup>16</sup>If you deviate from the covenant that YHWH your God enjoined upon you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then YHWH’s anger will be roused against you, and you will quickly disappear from the good land you received.”

## Joshua 24

<sup>1</sup>Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, and called a summit of the elders, leaders, judges, and officials of Israel. Once they presented themselves before God, <sup>2</sup>Joshua said to the whole assembly, “This is the word of YHWH, the God of Israel:

“Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates and worshiped other gods. <sup>3</sup>But I took your ancestors Sarah and Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led them through the entire region of Canaan. I made Sarah and Abraham’s descendants numerous: there was Isaac, <sup>4</sup>and to Rebecca and Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I assigned the hill country of Seir, while Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

Echoing once again YHWH’s words to Joshua at the beginning of the book. <sup>5</sup>“Later I sent Moses and Aaron, where I struck the Egyptians with plagues—you know well what I did to them— <sup>6</sup>and after that I liberated you from Egypt. By the time your ancestors reached the Sea of Reeds, the Egyptians were in hot pursuit with their chariots and cavalry. <sup>7</sup>When your ancestors cried out for my help, I put darkness between them and the Egyptians and made the sea engulf them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians.

“You dwelt in the wilderness for a long time, <sup>8</sup>and then I brought you into the land of the Amorites living on the east side of the Jordan. They greeted you with hostility, but I delivered them into your power. And you took possession of their land. <sup>9</sup>Balak, the ruler of Moab ben-Zippor, waged war against Israel. Balak sent for Balaam ben-Beor to curse you, <sup>10</sup>but I refused to listen to Balaam. On the contrary, Balaam was forced to bless you, and I saved you from his power. <sup>11</sup>Once you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho went to war against you, as did the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites. And I delivered them all into your power. <sup>12</sup>I sent hornets ahead of you, which drove the two rulers of the Amorites out of your way. And it was this—not your sword and bow—that destroyed the Amorites. <sup>13</sup>I gave you land that you had not tilled, and cities you had not built, and you have settled in them. You now take the fruit of vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.”

<sup>14</sup>Joshua then said, “I now call upon you to revere and serve YHWH completely and sincerely. cast off the gods that your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt, and worship YHWH alone. <sup>15</sup>If you do not want to worship YHWH, then make the decision today whom you will worship, even if it is the gods of your ancestors beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you live. As for me and my household, we will worship YHWH.”

<sup>16</sup>Then the people responded, “Far be it from us to abandon YHWH to worship other gods. <sup>17</sup>It was YHWH our God who brought us and our ancestors up and out of the land of slavery. YHWH performed those great signs before our eyes. YHWH protected us on the entire journey and among all the peoples whose lands we passed through. <sup>18</sup>YHWH drove out before us the Amorites and all the people dwelling in the land. We too will serve YHWH, who is our God.”

<sup>19</sup>Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve YHWH. This is a God most holy, a jealous God, a God who doesn’t forgive your transgressions and your sins. <sup>20</sup>If you desert YHWH and serve foreign gods, after all God has done for you, you will bring disasters—fatal ones—upon yourselves.”

<sup>21</sup>But the people protested, “No! We will serve YHWH!”

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said, “You are your own witnesses that you are choosing to serve YHWH.” “Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied.

<sup>23</sup>“Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the alien gods among you and turn your hearts to YHWH, the God of Israel.”

<sup>24</sup>Then the assembly said to Joshua, “We will serve and obey YHWH our God!”

<sup>25</sup>On that day Joshua ratified the covenant with the people and drew up statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem, <sup>26</sup>which were recorded in the book of God’s law. Then Joshua took a large stone and set it up there under the oak tree close by the sanctuary of YHWH. <sup>27</sup>Joshua said to the assembly, “See this stone? It will be a witness against us. For it heard all the words that YHWH spoke to us. If you renounce your God, it will be a witness against you.” <sup>28</sup>The Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own holdings. <sup>29</sup>After this, Joshua ben-Nun, the servant of YHWH, died at the age of one hundred and ten. <sup>30</sup>Joshua was buried on his own in Timnath-serah, north of Mount Gaash in the Hillcountry of Ephraim. <sup>31</sup>Israel had served YHWH throughout Joshua’s entire lifetime and the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua and experienced everything YHWH did for Israel. <sup>32</sup>And Joseph’s bones, which the people had transported up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the plot of land Jacob had purchased for one hundred pieces of silver from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father. This became the inheritance of Joseph’s descendants. <sup>33</sup>leazar ben- Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which was allotted to Phinehas, his son, in the hill country of Ephraim.

#### Notes:

The narrative in the Book of Genesis revolves around the themes of posterity and land. Abraham is called by God to leave the house of his father Terah and settle in the land originally given to Canaan but which God now promises to Abraham and his progeny.