

*(A Long Time After That)*

*Joshua 23:1 – 24:33*

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God has covered and accounted for every chapter and each verse of the Pentateuch thus far. We went with Moses and Israel the entire forty years through the desert. God had warned the children of Israel not to turn away from Him and not to serve other gods - but they did. In this report, we conclude the first of the Historical books of the Bible; and we are going to examine the second and third historical books of Judges and Ruth before returning to the New Testament to consider the Acts of the apostles as authored by Dr. Luke again.

In this leg of our safari, Joshua is gathering the people and warning them from his deathbed not to forsake the True and Living God as they enjoy the land and become familiar with it. Joshua understood full well that as the people entered into rest, affluence and prosperity, they would quickly drift far away from Jehovah. This report brings us the farewell message of Joshua as a retiring senior citizen; and it is the same doctrine Paul will bring later: He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ! That's the message of Joshua. That's the message of Paul. That's the message of the Spiritual Safari. And that is the only proper, correct and complete message of sound doctrine. You can just write that down.

Joshua is conveying courage and certainty to his people in this section of Scripture. The nation Israel knew what God had done for them so many times in the wilderness – and how He had led them by the Shekinah Glory. Joshua also brings them the message of consecration and consideration of the covenant of God. After this, Joshua will be no more. It seems the deathbed speech is becoming a familiar account early on in the Old Testament. We saw the first one when Jacob called his twelve sons to him

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and gave prophecies concerning each - just before drawing his feet up into his bed and dying. And we saw Moses call the twelve tribes of Israel that had descended from the twelve sons of Jacob and give them the same message before going up into Mount Nebo – where we saw the last of him....

## **XXIII**

***1 And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.***

***2 And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:***

***3 And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you.***

***4 Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.***

***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.***

***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;***

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***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:***

***8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.***

~ When we are in uncertainty and crossing a land filled with giants – a land we do not know and in which we do not know what to expect – and when fear is mounting on every side – we are instructed to draw near and remain close to the Lord. The people have entered the land and are now experiencing rest and peace, prosperity and plenty of everything; and they were already at high risk of getting further away from God. The altar “Ed” was a total initial manifestation of all things bad that were on the horizon in Israel. Joshua was a very smart man, friends. This just happens to be our story of human nature, too - because human nature never changes.

It can be extremely troubling and difficult to see how God sometimes judges a people by permitting prosperity; and that is the condition of the United States of America – JUDGED with plenty. America, as we know it, has been tested – and has failed – the test of prosperity. Don’t kid yourself about this. In this nation the affluence, technology and gadgetry is NOT a blessing. The materialism we are experiencing is the curse of judgment upon us. Now, I know that’s not popular, and I know most of you will not like that type of talk. It happens to be the truth. America is – or was – a great nation and world power; but look at us now. Look what we have come to in the light of judgment by God. The most dangerous time in life is the time of prosperity. If it wasn’t so – Joshua would never have given the children of Israel the charges he is handing down right now....

***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.***

***10 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.***

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**11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.**

**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:**

**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.**

~ I have to believe God gave the previous inhabitants of the land this same speech for hundreds of years before Israel arrived on the banks of the Jordan River. Well, either way, if you don't like what God says and don't want to accept what the Spirit of God is teaching us in this report, then you likely stopped reading a long time ago. After all, this is the Word of God we're studying; and God Himself has now confirmed what I teach – straight from the horse's mouth, so speak. That should be the trend and theme taken away from this safari message today, friends. If the Bible is the Word of God, then nothing else matters. If the Bible is not the Word of God, then nothing matters....

**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**

**15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.**

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**16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.**

## **XXIV**

**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**

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***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.***

***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.***

~ I cannot urge you enough to pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment in the Word of God, and then stop and THINK about what you are reading in this section of Scripture. Something is revealed that we have not learned

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thus far. Some of us suspected it, but we didn't know it for a certainty. The name Abraham means "the man from the other side." When God called Abraham out of Ur, which was also on the other side of the Jordan River, Abraham followed God into the land. Remember, Abraham's father, Terah, and Abraham's brother, Nachor, were rank idolaters. Most of us likely skipped right over that information we were given in Genesis – but here it is again; and there's no brushing it off anymore.

God chose Abraham and made a nation from him because, after the Tower at Babel, mankind COMPLETELY departed from the Lord. It wasn't just some people that rejected God – it was ALL of mankind again. The world slipped into total apostasy at Babel - again. Since NO ONE was serving God, and God had promised no more floods, this time they were scattered, and sent out in every direction. They had knowledge of the Living and True God, friends - they simply rejected Him. Interestingly, today, the nations we call the most heathen and pagan typically have a crystal-clear understanding of the Lord God. They know their ancestors served the True and Living God way back in their beginning, and later generations departed from Holy Writ.

Well, we have ALL gotten away from God and, my friends, the forum on which we teach this Spiritual Safari is another construction of the Tower of Babel – you can just write that down, too. Near total apostasy is our condition – right NOW. At this point, God could – and will – do anything He wants to do; and that should ring our little alarm bell so loud we could never get back to sleep again. Thankfully, God only acts in accord with His attributes, His character and His Word. God intends to recover humanity from abject apostasy. This world and human family could be judged at any moment. A complete and total extermination of everything that was ever made and everyone that sucks air into a lung, or transpires in any fashion, would be nothing but justice as far as God is concerned. We could be obliterated, and God will still be Holy and righteous.

Honestly, I just do not see the point of having a human family here on earth any longer. Quite frankly, I think this earth should be as barren and bleak as

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the moon. Well, you can bow down right now and thank God that I am NOT Him because – I'm telling you – that's exactly what I might do right NOW! Well, if God is going to make that recovery of mankind, He will have to get through to him somehow. That's the same condition the world was in when God called Abraham and told Abraham to get away from his family down in Ur. Abraham had a desire in his heart to know and understand the True and Living God; so, God told Abraham to get away from those rank idolaters who were worshipping heathen gods. And Abraham obeyed God.

From the nation Israel our Messiah was brought into the world. God did NOT form Israel in a cushioned and prosperous land – God formed them in the brick yards of slavery in Egypt – in bondage – with chains on their necks and shackles on their hands and feet. If God is EVER going to do ANYTHING for you, it is begun in the fire. I never have and never will believe God uses high paid pansies in affluent cultures with a feast before them to bring His message of salvation; God doesn't operate that way, according to His Word.

We have repulsive groups in the average church – and I just happen to know – from firsthand information – God is preparing to move on them in judgment. They have NO IDEA what it means to be loyal and true to Him. They have never made a stand for the cause of Christ or spoke out against sin. They go off the rails running in every direction EXCEPT up. They've never turned to Christ in confession of sins. Most of them believe they are sinless. A sound, doctrine-oriented church can turn the corner into apostasy faster than one can say "rapture." See, the human heart is desperately wicked – who can know it? Not YOU – and not me. That just happens to be Joshua's warning to us in this report; and it ties into the first two of the Ten Commandments. This should terrify us. God is calling us to turn our lives over to Him because we cannot trust OURSELVES....

***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.***

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~ The more I learn about Joshua the more I like him. Joshua has stood faithfully in the shadows of Moses through the years we have been studying. I tend to think of Joshua as a miniature Moses – without the miniature part, because Joshua is a great man of proper strength and correct stature. There was no mistake when God decided to use Joshua, that’s for sure. Joshua started out as an average man and the Lord used him as an average man for a mighty purpose. Verse fifteen, which we have just read, is what I call “free will with a vengeance!” What are YOU going to do, safari friends? Are you going back to the nothingness of you fathers? Are you going back to your pagan, filthy lifestyle when you’re done reading this report? Maybe you want to serve the gods of the Amorites – it’s all the same – idolatry. The choice is yours; and there will be no choosing not to decide anymore. I've made my choice, and now God challenges YOU to make yours. His challenge is to consider your consecration in your covenant with Him....

***16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;***

***17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:***

~ Well, maybe “God forbid” – but serving other gods is exactly what they did. You would think these people would want to stay close to God and serve Him after all He had brought them through. But they didn’t – and what about YOU? It’s so easy to point the finger way back yonder to Israel and shake our head while saying what a sorry bunch of failures they were. I bet you think YOU would never do anything like this. I see the phrase Joshua uttered in verse fifteen plastered all over the place; but I see very few actually following through. Ask yourself: how close are you staying to the True and Living God right now? How much time do you spend in a

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sincere and educated Bible study? How much support do you give to proper, correct and complete Bible teaching? Any? I venture to say you are as completely ignorant of your situation as you are of the Word of God – and that’s shameful....

***18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.***

***19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.***

***20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.***

~ God has been so good to us, and yet most people barrel recklessly ahead in their lives doing whatever they feel like doing; and they expect God to bless them at whatever they have decided is right. Then, they pout and whine when God refuses to clean up their mess after they ruin His plan and purpose. Yes, God is a God of mercy, the God of love and comfort and help; but He is also a GOD OF JUDGMENT, my beloved. The things we sometimes say sound good, but they have no impact or meaning in anyone's life. Believe me, I see it all the time. Don't bother writing me telling me you don't like me. Take your complaints up with the Lord. I turn these reports into Him - not you. Whether or not anyone reads the Spiritual Safari candidly makes no difference whatsoever to me. That's God's problem. I'm just serving Him the best I know how to....

***21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.***

***22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.***

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***23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.***

***24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.***

***25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.***

***26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.***

***27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.***

***28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.***

***29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.***

***30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.***

***31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.***

***32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought***

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***of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.***

***33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.***

~ The writings of Joshua were placed on top of the scrolls containing the books Moses had written; and we also have the death of Joshua recorded. In our next report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we'll begin our examination of the Book of Judges. If you were shocked and concerned by my safari commentary on Deuteronomy, or these reports from Joshua, you will literally be traumatized by where we go next. This is where things truly get weird in our safari. If these reports are a blessing to you, maybe you will want to pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment in the Word of God and that it will burn in my heart. I could easily set to speak of Him no more.

Lastly, the children of Israel have been toting the bones of Joseph through the wilderness all these years, and now they finally bury him. They did this because Joseph is expecting to be raised in the land of Israel someday - not in Egypt - not in the wilderness. The high priest, Eleazar, becomes the second high priest to die amongst them. Another, third high priest will come on the scene. This book just happens to be bound – cover to cover – with death. Joshua began with the death of Moses and ends with two deaths: one of them being his own. Guess what? – YOU are going to end in death, too. Are you prepared for that moment? Verse thirty-three reveals that, although the priests were given no land – the high priest, Phineas, acquired a nice little chunk of property. This section of Scripture marks the distinct beginning of total departure from the laws and commands of the Living and True God by the nation Israel as had been prophesied of and revealed by Moses ~

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