

THE LAST MESSAGE OF JOSHUA



Passages to Study: Joshua 24:1-31.

Read with the class: Joshua 24:1-15.

Texts for memorization:

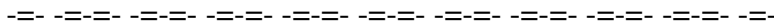
Younger: Joshua 24:15, "Choose ye ... me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Older Joshua 24:15.



OBJECTIVES:

- 1. To show that reminders of the past are of benefit as incentives to serving the Lord better in the future.
2. To emphasize the power of God that was at work in events of the past, events both recent and distant.
3. To underscore the kind of faith needed to see the power of God today as in days of old
4. To guide in the choice among the options that present themselves to us in this life and especially with reference to the service of God.
5. To apply to the students in the class the challenge that Joshua presented to his hearers. "CHOOSE YE THIS DAY."



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: To present a panorama of history, figures with their names written to represent the following persons: (a) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron. Also figures depicting (b) the children of Israel on their journey; (c) the battle with Amalek; (d) Balak and Balaam; (e) people near the river Jordan: and (f) a group of Israelites in Canaan.

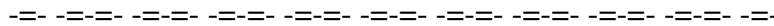
DEVELOPMENT:

- At the age of 110 and knowing that he soon must die, Joshua calls a general meeting of the Israelites.
- Joshua is aware of the grave danger that is presented by the surrounding idolatrous nations in Canaan.
- As he gives his last message to the people, Joshua goes over some past events and stresses certain details related to these happenings.
- Joshua wants to stimulate the people to think of the greatness of God, His power, and that it is worthwhile to serve Him and not go after false gods.
- God's work in the lives of important people in their past ought to lend itself to the objective that is in Joshua's mind, that of motivating the people to serve God.
- ABRAHAM left his native land not knowing where he was going, but God guided him to the end.
- In ISAAC were placed all Abraham's hopes and with his birth, God kept His promises.
- Next is JACOB, father of 12 sons, who at his death could look into the future and pronounce a prophecy regarding the future dealings of God with each of the families.
- AARON and MOSES were recent leaders and would be remembered by the Israelites.--
- The EXODUS FROM EGYPT which some of them had experienced as children, being under 20 years of age at that time.
- They knew the power of God, for the opening of the Red Sea had been a very remarkable event.
Sug. Ask the students if they remember some act of the past that has convinced them that God really is concerned about us. The teacher could refer to a personal experience, for it is good to recognize what God has done, and this is the basis of gratitude towards Him.
- God helped in the battles with their enemies, bringing about miracles to win the freedom of His people.
- BALAAM was unable to curse them as BALAK wished, for God did not allow him to do so.
- No doubt the Israelites felt very happy and relieved when they reached the JORDAN, for their journey through the desert to the Promised Land was about to come to an end.
- Joshua now mentions things of a very recent date in their history, which they would still remember.

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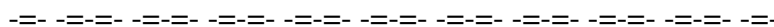
- Upon their arrival, the people found the **ABUNDANCE PROMISED** by God, since they were able to use the provisions the former inhabitants had left behind.
 - Recounting all this would lead the people to think about God's faithfulness and encourage them to trust Him for the future.
- Sug. The value of Bible stories is in their revelation of God's power and faithfulness, leading to the conclusion that if God acted like this in the past and does not change, He will continue to be the same toward us in the present, and will be with us in the future.



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: (a) In the city of Shechem, the figure of Joshua with scrolls on which is written the Law of God, b) a monument of stone under a tree, (c) groups of people and the verse written, **"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE; ... BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD."**

DEVELOPMENT:

- Joshua knows that many of the Israelites have images and things related to idol worship, which they have brought out of Egypt.
 - He reminds them of their past idolatry and warns them that if they were to return to depending on these false idols, they could not serve a holy God.
- Cmt.** It is surprising how much the practices of the old life remain with people who profess faith in Christ, especially those things that the Bible names as vain or sinful.
- Cns.** It is possible that certain jokes or expressions that young people learn come close to being immoral or have a sexual connotation.
- Cmt.** It is hard for some who have been saved out of a religion that uses images, to throw them out or destroy them.
- The word **"SERVE"** appears time after time in Joshua's message. See verses 2, 14,15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22 and 24.
 - His exhortation to the people is that they come to a decision and "choose .. today whom ye will serve."
- Apl.** Joshua calls on the people to commit themselves at once. See **"CHOOSE ... TODAY."**
- He gives his own example of a decision taken many years earlier: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
 - The people understood what Joshua was saying when he called on them to serve the Lord and they promised to do so.
 - Later they forgot their promise.
- Apl.** Many do the same thing today, promising and not keeping their word. It is a common fault.
- Apl.** The person who believes on Christ promises to serve Him and be faithful to Him.
- The rock and the tree would be permanent witnesses of their promise and each time they passed that way, they would be reminded of their commitment.





SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: Figures that represent what it means to serve.

Exm. 1. Two young people before a cross and the words written **SAVED to SERVE**.

2. A candle or lamp and the words **TO SERVE is TO GIVE LIGHT**.

3. A young person at some stage of growth being measured with a vertical measuring stick such as is found in the offices of doctors. Also a Bible and the words **GROW IN GRACE**.

4. Puppets representing something that depends upon another to function. **TO SERVE GOD IN DEPENDENCE UPON HIM ALONE**.

5. A picture of a couple at their wedding and a Bible, with the words **BE CAREFUL WITH COMMITMENTS**.

6. A man arguing with another person who tries to make peace and the words **PROBLEMS in SERVICE**.

7. People giving away clothing and money and the words **KNOWING HOW TO SHARE**.

8. A map of the world and figures of people of different nations with the words **TO SERVE, EVANGELIZING**.

Sug. Have written in large letters the text of Joshua 24:15.

DEVELOPMENT of the APPLICATION:

Sug. It is well to apply Joshua's call to the students, after exercise of heart on the part of the teacher, so that they understand that to believe in Christ involves not only going to heaven but also having the privilege of serving the Lord here and now.

1. We are saved to serve.

2. We serve God giving light in the place where we are, both by the way we behave as well as by our words.

3. God wants the saved person to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

4. Service for God means not to be controlled by those who do not love the Lord or who do not have the same concern for carrying out the will of God.

5. The person who wants to serve the Lord does not get involved in unequal yokes, that is, becoming partners with those who do not follow Christ with all their hearts.

6. There will always be those who will try to hinder, criticize or make problems for those who serve God.

7. Serving the Lord includes using our material things in a way that pleases Him, sharing with others.

8 a) We will take advantage of the opportunities that come along to speak to others the message of the gospel.

8 b) It is possible that in serving the Lord, He might call a faithful servant to take the message to other parts of the world.

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