

WHO WILL YOU SERVE

Joshua 23, 24

Every person that has ever lived, or will live must make this choice: Will they serve the Lord, the Creator of all the universe, including mankind, or will they serve themselves, their passions, and their desires? That choice is made each time we decide whether to do what God wants or to do what we want. God gives us his word to show us what the right choices are. He gives each of us a conscience that speaks to our hearts convicting of what is right and wrong. No person will ever be able to say, I didn't know what was right. There is no excuse of ignorance when it comes to choosing the Lord or choosing against him.

A long time after God had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, Joshua was old and stricken in age. He called for all Israel, their elders, their heads, their judges, and their officers, and said to them, "I am old and stricken in age. You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these nations because of you. The Lord your God has fought for you."

"I have divided by lot to you the nations that remain, to be your inheritance. The Lord your God will expel them from before you, and drive them out. You shall possess the land, as the Lord your God promised you. Be therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses. Do not turn away from it either to the left hand or to the right. Do not get involved with the false gods of these nations around you. Don't even mention their gods, nor swear by them, nor serve them, nor bow to them. But cling unto the Lord your God as you have done until now."

"For the Lord has driven out for you great and strong nations, and none of them have been able to defeat you, because the Lord your God has fought for you. Watch yourselves, make sure that you love your God. If you turn away from God, know for certain that he will not continue to drive out your enemies, and instead they will become snares and traps for you. They will be scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off the good land which the Lord has given you."

"Today I am going the way of all flesh, and you know that not one good thing that the Lord has promised you has failed. So you know that as all the good things he has promised have happened, so he will bring all the evil that he has promised if you turn away from him."

Joshua gathered together all the people at Shechem, and said to all the people, "This is what the Lord God of Israel says, "Your ancestors lived on the other side of the flood in the old time. Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, they served other gods. I took your father Abraham out of that land and brought him to Canaan, and multiplied him and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave Esau and Jacob. Jacob and his family went down into Egypt. I sent Moses and Aaron, and plagued Egypt, and afterward I brought them out.

I brought your fathers to the Red Sea and there I delivered them from the Egyptians who pursued them with horses and chariots. After that you stayed in the wilderness for a long time, until I brought you to the land of the Amorites, which lived on the other side of the Jordan. I destroyed them and gave you their land. Then Balak hired Balaam to curse you, but I would not allow it, and I delivered you out of his hand. You crossed over the Jordan and the men of Jericho, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites all fought against you, but I delivered them into your hands. I drove them out from before you and have given you a land for which you did not work. I gave you cities that you did not build, and you live in them. I gave you vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant, and you eat of them."

"Now therefore, fear the Lord. Serve him in sincerity and truth. Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt. Serve the Lord. If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose today who you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Then all the people answered and said, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. For the Lord our God it is he that has brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. He did great signs and wonders, and preserved us everywhere that we went. He drove out our enemies from before us."

Joshua said to the people, "You can not serve the Lord for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not overlook your transgressions or sins. If you forsake him and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt."

The people replied, "We will serve the Lord."

Joshua answered, "You are witnesses against yourselves today that you have chosen the Lord. Now put away those strange gods from yourselves, and turn your heart to the Lord."

Again the people said, "The Lord our God will we serve and we will listen to his voice. "

Then Joshua made a covenant with all Israel and set them a statute and ordinance in Shechem. He wrote the words in the book of the law, and took a great stone and set it under an oak that was near the sanctuary of the Lord. Joshau said, "This stone shall be a witness to us, for it has witnessed all the words that were spoken here. It will be a reminder to keep you from denying your God. Then Joshua let them all go home.

After this Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died being one hundred ten years old. They buried him the border of his inheritance. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel.

Many people today will say that they serve the Lord, but the question we must ask ourselves is; are we saying that we serve the Lord with our mouths, while at the same time we serve the things of this world with our hearts. If we would truly serve the Lord, it must be with our whole being. Lip service is no service at all! God knows our hearts, he is not fooled by the words our mouths. Just as Joshua continued to remind the people that if they wished to serve the Lord they must put away their idols, so the Lord reminds us every day, to obey him rather than our own desires and passions.

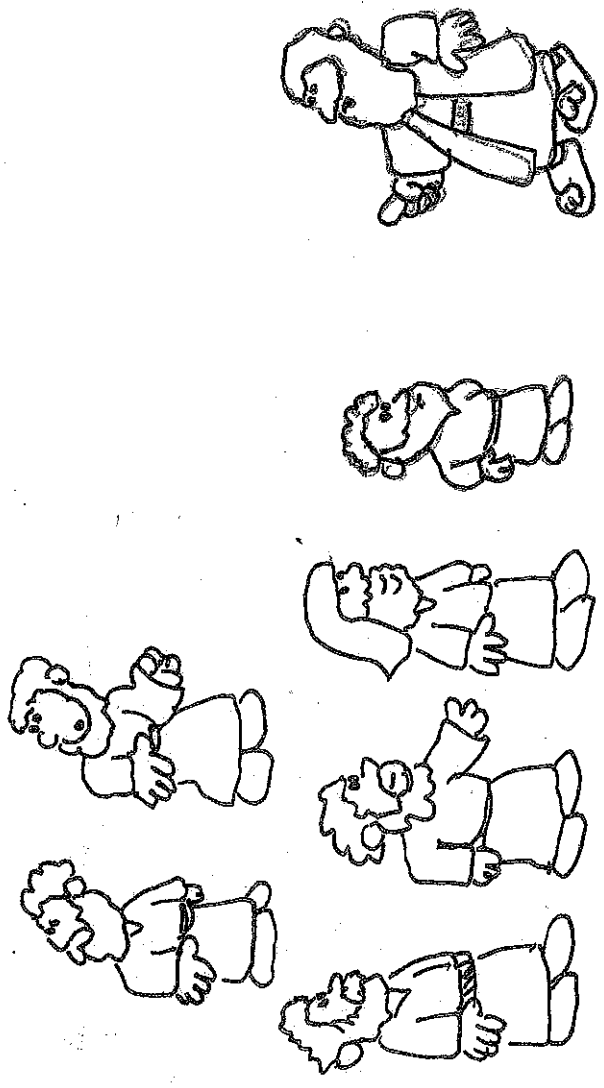
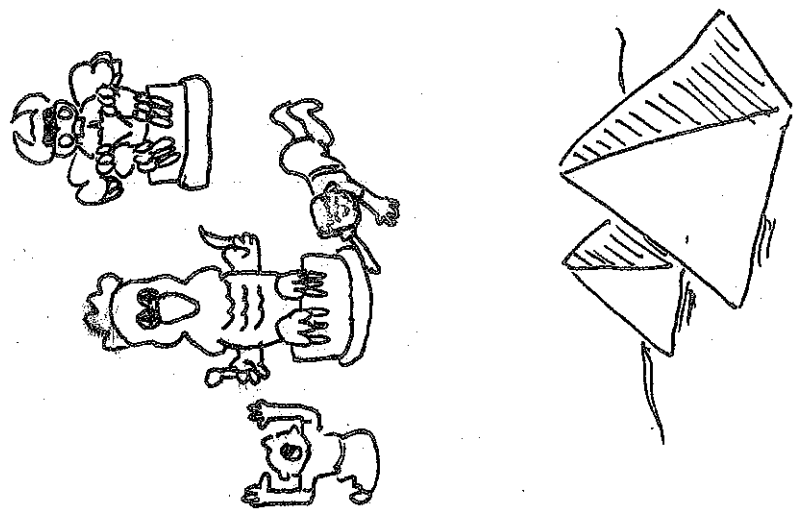
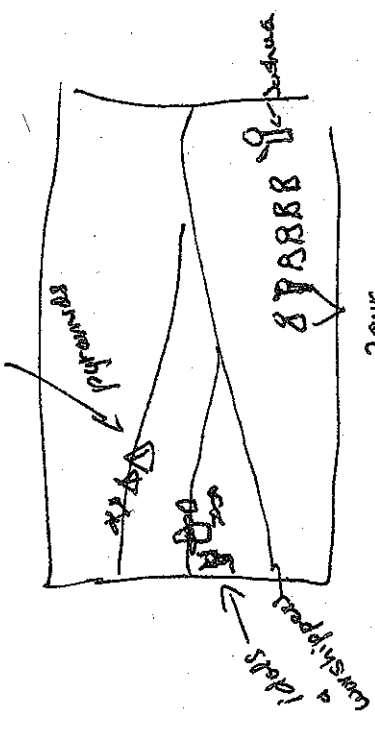
LEARN; Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied to him with their tongues.

For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.

But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not, yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Psalm 78: 36,37,38

1. Color all characters
2. Cut them out.
3. Paste on sheet to show what Joshua said to the people of Israel.





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