

As for You and Your House

Joshua 24:1-28

September 18th, 2011

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❖ The Context of Joshua 24: 1-28

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- ◆ After the Northern conquest, the land is divided among the tribes (and others) but there are still Canaanites and Canaan idols in the land. Joshua summons the people to Shechem where there had been a long history of events that occurred in this city. Joshua gives a charge and a dire warning regarding apostasy to the children of Israel.
- ◆ **The Promise of God to Abram - Genesis 12:1-7** - One of the most beautiful fulfillments of God's faithfulness to Abram is where we see that Abram came from a family tradition of idol worship. Abram was born in Ur which is well to the East (about 750 miles) of Canaan over by Babylon (modern Kuwait). It was out of this idol worship that God appears to Abram and calls him to the land West of the Jordan river and gives more detail on the promise of a family and a land.

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The renewal of this covenant is necessary because of sin but is only renewable because God made a provision in the covenant for reconciliation. This does not mean that the terms of the covenant are abolished, because in fact, there were curses in the covenant for such rebellion and blessings for faithfulness. You can not be under the blessings or curses of a covenant to which you are not a party.

- ◆ **Call to Fear and Serve the Lord** – Joshua calls the people to fear God because of who He is and what He has done. Sin brings a form of spiritual insanity...one that would deny the power of God manifest over and over before their eyes. But this is very telling; living by faith is better than living by sight. They are told to remember the faithfulness of the Lord and then serve Him by faith with their lives.

Joshua then commands them to either serve the Lord or else have their pick of false gods to serve. The dichotomy here is between following the Lord or anything else, and there is a limitless number of gods to follow after.

Joshua is skeptical of the profession of the people given their history of abandoning the Lord, but the people insist on their desire to follow after the Lord. Joshua tells the people that their profession will be commemorated by statute and ordinance in the sight of God.

- ◆ **Call to Abandon Idols** – The gods "beyond the river" I take to refer to the pagan gods worshipped by Abram's family as well as the gods that were prolific in Egypt (and later Canaan). Then there are the gods that Israel took with them *after their redemption* from Egypt and these seemed to exist right along side of the worship of Jehovah. But all of them, Joshua commands them to destroy, forsake and deny.

❖ False Gods of the Antithesis and Synthesis

- ◆ We see in the text two basic classes of gods. First there are those gods that they worshipped in Egypt (pre-redemption or pre-Christian) which were setup in opposition to the true, living God. These are typically easy to spot because they don't try to be deceptive and are commonly referred to as the gods of antithesis. In fact, part of their attraction is that they *aren't* the God of the bible (Dagon, Baal, Ashtoreth, etc.)
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not share His glory, even with those gods that seem to be in the service of the one true God. These gods are more difficult to spot and they are the gods of grey or off-white.

❖ A Sampling of Synthesis Idols that Plague Us Today

- ◆ ***The Nameless god of Prayer Breakfasts & Political Rallies*** – We live in a land where there is an acknowledged distinction between the realm of the Church and the State. But our sinful hearts have taken this to become a separation of God and State and ultimately, God and culture. To appease this idol of political correctness, we empty God of any character, history, power or authority. And then when even this god is no longer tolerated by the culture, we fight for moments of silence or prayer in government schools or no football games on Sundays. We must repent from our idolatry of cleaning God up and His requirements so that He will be acceptable to a sinful world. Instead, the Gospel is about how God has made sinners acceptable to Himself.
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- ◆ ***Prayerfully Examine Yourself*** – What gods of synthesis are stealing your affections? As mentioned before, these are often hard to identify because they present themselves as legitimate. Is it wealth, obedient children, status, knowledge, etc.? Whether we fashion a god of gold with a shaping tool or we fashion a god with our mind and deceitful heart, it still is setup to receive the worship that should be reserved for God alone.
- ◆ ***Men, Serve Your Family*** – All of the Saints of God need to examine themselves, but I want to speak to the men specifically. Regardless of what station of life you are in, married, single, father or not, the health of this church will follow the spiritual health of the men. God has made you to be leaders in numerous spheres of influence. Have you abdicated that responsibility? Are you spiritually lazy? Are you applying standards of righteousness to others that you have not first applied to yourself? The stakes are too high and the news is too good...God calls you to repentance and receives you where you are, not where you should have been.

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