

Joshua 07-11-30a

This is Friday, the 30th of November, 2007. We continue our study in the book of Joshua. We're leaving chapter 23 and entering chapter 24.

Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise our priesthood, to go before the Lord and recognize the opportunity that we have to receive the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we study God's Word together. Shall we pray? Father, we recognize what an opportunity we have, what a privilege it is to be alive, to live in this world at this time in history, to spend our brief time in civilization, going through the decades of our life and seeing the changing circumstances, the challenges, and the circumstances that are a part of human life. It is an opportunity to reflect as we gather together to spend time in the study of your Word and in fellowship, to reflect and to remember that our life can have a transcendent purpose, it can have an eternal meaning and destiny through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who has lifted us up out of the mundane, out of the temporary, out of the ethereal and transient and into that which is permanent, that which is the ultimate reality that goes far beyond anything that we can comprehend in our limitations and in our flesh.

We thank you for the truth of your Word, the revelation of these transcendent truths. We thank you that we are able to partake of that manna and have it nourish our souls and build us up and give us insight and give us a look, however dim, into things that are well beyond our understanding. We thank you for the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes it possible for us to understand and to meditate on those truths and to have them work into the meaning and the purpose of our lives.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His example of how to live a life that focuses on that which is beyond ourselves. We recognize the foreshadowing and the symbolism and the perspective that we gain on the Lord Jesus Christ through this book of Joshua and we pray that as we study tonight that God the Holy Spirit will enable each one of us to partake of the riches of your grace and your truth in these passages that each of us will find in it the truth that will sustain us and equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, as we draw near the close of this study in Joshua, it is interesting to see Joshua himself, seeing that his life and his work is drawing to a close. Way back in chapter 13 it said that he was growing old, advanced in years, and there was still much of the land left to be possessed.

And you get the idea that that recognition of the temporal nature of life, the transient nature of life, was something that sort of made Joshua hurry up. He had a sense of urgency. He's old and advanced in years and there's still a lot left to be done.

Depending on where we are in our life, if we're young, some who listen to the sound of

my voice are quite young in their teen years. Others are a little further along. Some of us are more than a little further along.

Some of us are three times that age. And especially as we move through the middle years and start to realize that maybe we have spent more of our life than we have left, this is what should come to our mind, a sense of urgency. There is still a lot of work left to be done.

And you look at what we've covered in the last ten chapters, from the first notice of Joshua's advancing age, we've had ten more chapters of his activity in sending out survey parties, dividing the land, exhorting, encouraging, teaching, leading, trying to prepare Israel for the days when he will no longer be around. And that's what he has done. So now as we come to chapter 23 and chapter 24, Joshua is assembling the people and saying, look, I'm about to go the way of all the earth, and here it is in a nutshell.

Everything, and you think about the span of Joshua's life from the time when he was an apprentice under Moses at the door of the tabernacle, in the background, in the shadow, devoting himself to the things of God, being taught, learning to read, learning to write, watching the example of Moses, learning and learning and learning and preparing. And for 40 years, you remember, right after they came out of Egypt, and they had that battle down in the plain, Joshua is down there leading. He's a young man, and for 40 years he is Moses' apprentice, and he learns and he watches.

And Moses dies just on the brink of going into the land. And then Joshua has to take the reins, and now the mentor is gone, the example and the leader, and that which has sustained and guided him for four decades is gone. And he's got to be his own man.

He's got to be the leader of the nation of Israel, and that's what he does. And you can see in that, as you step back from it a little bit, the picture of the nation of Israel itself as it is guided in its first generation by the law of Moses, by the Torah, by the legalities and the entole, the commandments and the ordinances and so on of the law. And at the time that the Lord Jesus comes, it is time, when that Yeshua comes, it is time to leave the Torah behind, to not be limited by it, and not to reject it either, not to have it be destroyed.

Jesus said, I've not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, to build on that foundation and move on to greater and grander things. And of course, in our John study, we're already seeing by chapter 9 that Israel is unable to make that step. They are going to die in their sins.

The Pharisees and the scribes are going to miss it. They are tangled up in the law, and they are of that same mindset that is going to drop in the wilderness. All of that has been written for our instruction.

You think, well, wait a minute, I'm not a Jewish person, I'm not from Israel, that was then, this is now, I never was under the law. But if you think about it, we grow. When you go to the book of Hebrews, which draws on that history to make a point to the church, what does it say? Look at Israel.

They had the opportunity, but they did not mix the promises of God with faith. And they failed. We are brought along, we are given milk and not solid food.

And this is sort of like the law. In the early phases of our Christian life, things are relatively simple. We're not given advanced tests.

We're not expected to make great discernment. And it is enough for us to recognize sin, and to recognize good, and to start to discern the difference between the two. You remember there is a prophecy talking about Emmanuel, and before he learns his right hand from his left, when he's still eating the curds and the honey, certain things are going to happen.

And there's a reference to a child who grows up, and before you learn right from wrong, there is one set of standards. But as you learn and as you grow, and in Israel, when you reach the age of 13, and it was time for your Bar Mitzvah, and now for girls they have the Bat Mitzvah, because Bar is the son, and Bat is daughter. And this is the inauguration, the entrance into adult life.

You and I, as believers, move through that same major transition, from being a child, Paul says, when I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child, but when I matured, I put away childish things. Israel in the wilderness is the child. Wrote commandment.

Do this. Here's the pillar of cloud. When it moves, you move.

When it stops, you stop. It's very simple. You don't have to do a lot of deep thinking about what to do next.

Well, look out the tent flap. Hey, pillar of cloud is lifting up. We better saddle the ass and gather the belongings, pull up the tent pegs, and let's move.

Where should I stay? Well, you've got that great cross-shaped pattern. Every tribe knows where it is. It's simple.

There's no demand made upon the intellect, no demand made upon the judgment, except for personal holiness. Don't offer strange fire. Don't get greedy.

Don't complain. Don't reject the Lord your God and whine for the leeks and garlicks of Egypt. They have to learn these very simple, very direct, very straightforward lessons.

Look at the same nation now, 40 years later, 47 years later, after the Exodus. They're in the land. They have been given a tribal allotment.

Now they're going to go in, and each situation is different. They've got to think, well, we've got some hills, we've got some mountains, we've got some cities, we've got some towns, we've got different kinds of Amorites. Maybe we've got the Girgashites.

Our particular clan, our particular family's got to go in and got a few Girgashites hanging around. Well, the Girgashites might be a completely different thing than the Hivites. Hivites over here act one way.

The Girgashites act another way. They have different kinds of military skills, different kinds of tenacity, different kinds of property, different kinds of terrain, different kinds of challenges. Everybody has to start figuring things out for himself while retaining a focus on God and His plan and His purpose and the overall strategy for the conquest of the land.

So it requires a mature nation. And this is the picture that we've seen in our working through the three major phases of the book of Joshua. Conquest of the land, taking possession of the land, and now dwelling in the land.

Well, now the last transitional element, which is Joshua, he was part of the old economy. He was part of the Torah. He was part of the Mosaic legislative, administrative leadership.

And he has transitioned them into the land. And he has led them faithfully. Now it's his time to go.

He is giving them parting advice. And now there's going to be no Joshua. And there's going to be no Moses.

What will they do? Are they grown up enough to take this on their own? Anybody who has been a parent, anybody who is going to be a parent, we either know or we quickly find out that the process of training children is teaching them ultimately to be independent of me. When they're a little baby, I diaper them. I poke food in their mouth.

I clean them up. I protect them. I keep them from falling and electrocuting themselves, burning themselves.

Their little heads get bumps and their little bodies get... God shrouds them in fat so that they bounce because they're learning how not to hurt themselves. And we do everything for them. There is nothing more helpless.

There are some things as helpless, but nothing more helpless than a newborn human infant. I would submit to you that one of many one-line refutations of evolution is look at the helplessness of a child. We should have evolved a little armor-plated, snaggle-toothed, fierce nuclear power little baby who could live on its own if the parents get killed.

Evolution would tell me, hey, our young have got to come out like lizards. When lizards come out of the egg, they're ready to go. Little alligators, they can bite the end of your finger off.

They are ready to go. They are fully functional. Their eyes are open.

Mammals, which are supposedly the pinnacle of upward evolution, mammals, we're in the mammalian group, well, blind, weak, stupid, completely incapable of caring for themselves, got to keep the mother around with a food supply. You've got to have a society and a structure. Now how does that evolve? I don't want to get off on that, but here's the point.

We are supposed to grow to the point of self-sufficiency. Parents have the task within about a decade and a half of training their children to be self-sufficient. Get out of my house.

Drive your car. Work your job. Get your education.

Find your mate. And to the extent that societies do not do that, the societies that arrange marriages and things like that, well, this is because their kids are stupid. I don't trust you to pick a mate.

I'll pick him, and I'm going to sign a contract on it while you're still in whatever passes for diapers, and I'm not going to leave that up to you because I don't have any confidence that I can actually train you to be a functional, discerning, and my apologies, I know people that actually are in arranged marriages, and God bless them. It's not their fault. But I think societies cripple children when they do not encourage self-sufficiency.

Our society is quickly moving in that direction. Our society is crippling. We are crippling our young.

They say you shouldn't eat your young. Well, we're basically crippling our young. You might as well be Chinese and wrap their feet in tape, the girls, with some strange symbolic idea of beauty.

We cripple our children when we do not make them self-sufficient. That's what God is doing with Israel. Starts out with Moses, moves through Joshua.

Now, this is the third phase. They are supposed to be able to function on their own. The tribes function on their own.

The clans, the families, the individuals are supposed to be able to make their own decisions. There is no Joshua. They don't go to the high priest and say, can you throw the dice and tell me whether or not I ought to attack this Gergashite village, or whether or not I ought to make a treaty.

Look, you've got the guidelines. You've got the strategy. You've been given the overall, overarching set of standards.

Go thou and do. And isn't this where we are today? The human race. When you see Israel, the people of God, under the law.

The law is a paidagogos, a schoolmaster, a pedagogue, to bring us to Christ. To bring us to Yeshua, who teaches us to be independent. Who gives us possession.

Who sets us free with the truth to be our own people. Well, this all sounds grand and great, but that's where we are in the book of Joshua. This is the, as they say, the climax, the pinnacle, the whole point of the book is to get Israel to this point.

Israel is 18 years old and leaving home. Leaving the nest. Going to go out and do their own thing.

Joshua says, I'm old, I'm not going to be around. Take it. And he's going to exit stage left.

Well, what does it mean to us? It means we begin our Christian life with trying to figure out the Ten Commandments. I really ought to live a moral life. There is sin and there is goodness.

I am supposed to be good. Be ye holy for I am holy. Eschew what is evil.

Cling to what is good. We start with the Ten Commandments. We develop our understanding.

We become more and more sophisticated. And then we ought to know that. It's like walking or feeding ourselves or dressing or attending to our personal hygiene.

Okay, I shouldn't really need somebody to come in and say, you know Sam, we need to have a counseling session. I would be your mentor. Let me disciple you.

Let's meet in the early morning and I'll hold you accountable. And you tell me what your secret thoughts are. And I'll tell you if you're sinful or not.

This is very popular in many areas of Christianity. And it's crippling. It's backward.

It is childish. Accountability to one another. That is not taught in Scripture.

Personal accountability, personal priesthood before God. I am my own priest. I enter with my heart.

It doesn't say somebody else sprinkled my heart from an evil conscience. It doesn't say my brother, my fellow Christian washed my body with pure water. Let us enter in, Paul says.

The author of Hebrews says. With our own heart having been sprinkled from an evil conscience. Our body having been washed with pure water.

We do that for ourselves. We don't need a priest. We don't call any man father.

You have no need that any man teach you. You have the Spirit. And that's where we are.

We are to attain, as it says in Ephesians, to the standard of a mature man. Both collectively as church, as body and bride of Christ, and individually as believers. That's the goal.

Now, we don't typically wake up in the morning on a Tuesday and think all of those thoughts. But we really ought to remind ourselves constantly that the reason we are here. Why is Israel in the land of Canaan? Is there something intrinsically wrong with Egypt? Could God not have just let them stay in Goshen and blessed them in Goshen? There were fertile fields down there.

Nice climate. What's wrong with Goshen? What's wrong with the east side of the Jordan? Couldn't they spread out a little bit? A lot of people living in that part of the world today. And it's not nearly as nice now as it was then.

Why couldn't they all just spread out in Gilead and in Bashan and move on up into Asia Minor? Swing back around to the north up there where Terah lived. And Nahor. The father and the family of Abraham Why didn't they swing around and live up there? Why this particular spot that's populated with all of these feisty weapon-wielding Amorites? Why not swing around somewhere else? Go where there's no people.

Why this spot? The challenge, the task is to learn, to grow, to overcome, to be independent, and to function before God in this place, to overcome that challenge. This is what Joshua is going to talk about. That's all background.

We're now going to get into the text. But just keep these ideas in mind. This is the flow.

This is where we are in the book of Joshua. We finished last time near the end of chapter 23. And Joshua is speaking.

Remember he called the leaders at the beginning of chapter 23. And there are three kinds of leaders. Joshua called for all Israel, but this is not the entire assembly of every man, woman, and child.

When he calls for all Israel, what does it mean? Well, it defines it. When he called all Israel, he called for their elders. Elders is a blanket term that covers pretty much everybody.

What are the elders? Well, there are heads, and there are judges, and there are officers. And actually, the heads covers both judges and officers. I can take you to passages back

over in Deuteronomy where Moses says, you know, I'm going to appoint heads, which will be your officers and your judges.

So it gets progressively finer and finer. These are the representatives, these are the congressmen, if you will, for the nation of Israel. Joshua is too old to stand up and project his voice to the millions of Israel, and nor can they all assemble.

Now, where are they when he gives this first address? Well, if you remember, Joshua received an inheritance of his own. Where was that? Back in chapter 19? Didn't he get the city of Tirzah? After everybody else had gotten their allotment, then Joshua received his. And this is probably where he assembled all of these people, these leaders.

He said, okay, you guys, come here, I've got something to tell you. We went through all this. I'm old.

You've seen all that the Lord God has done. You need to be faithful. You move down to verse 14.

This day I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one good thing has failed. Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you.

Not one word of them has failed. This is the look back. When you look back, everything God said has come true.

And the implication is, has it not? Anybody want to argue? Anybody want to say that when God said, I will take you out of the land of Egypt, I will take you out of bondage, I will sustain you, I will bring you to a good land. Has he not done so? When he said, I will drive out the nations before you, has he not done so? Have we ever lost a battle outside of Ai in the land? When we're obedient and doing what God says, have we ever lost? We have not. Everything God has said has come true.

Therefore, it shall come to pass that just as all the good things have come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things. Look at that phrase, all harmful things. This is interesting because the word *davar*, D-A-B-A-R in Hebrew is a very multipurpose word.

It primarily means word. Not like word, but it means the word word. The word of the Lord, this is the *davar* of the Lord that comes.

But, it also comes to mean an issue, or a matter, or a thing. And it is translated in all of those ways, in the matter of this, or in the issue of this, or in the things of God. These are the *davrim*, the words.

And so, this is just as the Lord brought all these good things, these good words to pass,

He will also bring all the evil words to pass. This is kol ha davrim ha tovim, all the good words that He spoke. Those came to pass.

Well, guess what? All of the davrim hara, the evil words will also come to pass. Now, Calvinism, determinism, God's elective sovereign will is often misunderstood. And it is passages like this that make it clear that we choose.

Joshua is going to end up in the next chapter saying, choose you this day whom you will serve. Do you want to choose the good words, or do you want to choose the bad words? Just as God has brought the good words to pass, if you transgress the covenant, all the bad words will come to pass. It is just as sure, just as certain.

Don't think that God is going to go blind or deaf. Don't think that His arm is short. Don't think that His ear is heavy.

Don't think that He's going to get busy and be off somewhere and ignore disobedience and faithlessness. Now, think about the modern day. Think about Christianity today.

There's a magazine called Christianity Today. If you read the thing like I do, it will absolutely make blood shoot out of your eyes. It just is absolutely the most frustrating, most blood-boiling, most finger-clawing-the-chalkboard magazine I have ever read in my entire life.

I had a subscription to it for one year, and I nearly had an aneurysm, so I didn't renew it. And here's why. Every form of apostasy that you can name, every godless pagan, it is just horrible.

It is the most twisted, perverse, frustrating, pale, shadowy, imitation, 15th generation copy of Christianity that they call Christianity Today. When they start talking about, well, here's somebody from some denomination who shall remain nameless writing something about, it bears no resemblance to biblical Christianity whatsoever. And it is widespread.

It is rampant. It is pervasive. We are leaking bad Christianity from every scene in this country.

And if you want to know how bad it is, if you think I'm shining you on here, buy one copy. Don't get a subscription. Buy one copy off the newsstand of Christianity Today and go to their website and just read some of the sample articles.

And if you have got a thimble full of the word of God in your soul, your hair will stand on end and curl at what passes for Christianity Today. It's awful. Now, we say, well, but didn't God say if you're disobedient and faithless, bad words will come to pass? How come these people prosper? You look at their TV shows.

You look at their ministries. Multi-million dollar things. Thousands of people packing

stadium-size auditoriums.

Where is the wrath of God? Where is this promise that the bad words will come to pass if you transgress? There is a very interesting answer to that question in this context. And it may not be what you think. Who did Joshua assemble to speak to here? What did we just review at the beginning of the chapter? Is he talking to every Jobob in Israel here? You know, J-O-B-A-B, that's a real name in Israel.

Jobob. If I was an Israelite in the old days, I'd have said, I think I'd name him Jobob just so I could say it. Hey, Jobob.

But these are your run-of-the-mill Israelites. You don't know what you're going to get. You get a collection of 30 or 40 and you don't know who's in there.

Who is Joshua speaking to? Who is he directly addressing? In fact, it is so emphatic that he actually reverts to the singular form as he moves through this speech. I'll point it out when it happens. Just as the good things have come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you, the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things until He has destroyed you from this good land.

These are the whom? The elders, the officers, the judges, the leaders in Israel. This is the audience to whom he is specifically addressing these words. And that's important.

You might think, well, they're just going to pass it on to everybody else. But think about it. This is a standard to which the best and brightest in Israel are going to be held.

As goes the leadership, as goes the government, so goes the nation, right? But these particular individuals, these are your Caleb's. These are your Othniel's. These are your sharp, with it, faithful, I didn't get to the top of my tribe by being a dummy kind of guys, right? That's important.

It's important. When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods and bowed down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you. Now, quickly doesn't mean, oh, one week you're there, and the next week you're gone.

This word translated quickly in Hebrew means suddenly, in a surprising way. It might be a long time before there is this sudden destruction. This is suddenness as in 721 B.C. This is suddenness as in 586 B.C. There can be plenty of warnings, there can be a process, but then there is this great, catastrophic destruction.

This brings us to chapter 24. Now, look at the difference between the beginning of chapter 24 and the beginning of chapter 23. Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for

their officers, and they presented themselves before God.

Did we have before God up in chapter 23? Why would it be before God? There is the private briefing of the department heads, and then you have the public declaration where you've got a much larger assembly. You still probably don't have every citizen of Israel because the land would be vacated, all of the defeated people would come back. Remember, Israel has been scattered into their regions, into their allotments, into their villages and their acreage.

These are going to be representatives, but this is a much larger crowd than he had the first time, but he calls all the tribes of Israel to Shechem. Why Shechem? What is the significance of Shechem? When was the last time we thought about Shechem? What is near Shechem, or what is Shechem near? There are a couple of mountains near Shechem. What are they called? One of them is Mount Gerizim, and the other is Mount Ebal.

Something happened near Shechem when they first came into the land. Remember that? They made a big march up from Gilgal. They had the blessings and the cursings.

Six tribes on one side, six tribes on the other. The big assemblage was up there. And what did they talk about at Shechem? The good words and the evil words were read out to the entire nation.

Remember that? Kind of like that big whitewashed billboard thing. Blessings and cursings on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. So that was seven years or more ago.

Right? Maybe even more years ago. Joshua brings them back. They are looking around as they are probably outside Shechem.

What else do we know about Shechem? Has it been mentioned in the intervening parts of Joshua? It's been mentioned twice because what did we have in Joshua chapter 20? Look at the heading of your chapter there. Chapter 20. What's going on in chapter 20? Those are the what? Cities of refuge.

How many cities of refuge are there? Six cities of refuge. Three on one side of the Jordan, three on the other. Of the three on the good side of the Jordan, which ones are they? Well, one of them is Shechem.

You go to the next chapter, chapter 21. What's going on in chapter 21? You've got the cities of the Levites, the Levitical cities, the place where you're going to get extra bang for your buck because you've got priests and Levites hanging out there. That's where they dwell.

And Shechem is a Levitical city. Shechem is a city of refuge. And Shechem is the place where they did the blessings and the cursings at Ebal and Mount Gerizim.

Why Shechem? Well, its history goes way back. That is where Jacob settled. Remember the story of Jacob? Jacob and Esau, hairy arms.

Bless me, Father. Here comes my brother. Mom says, Flee.

Up north he goes. Sleeps at Bethel. Pillow on a rock.

Stairway to heaven. Jacob's ladder. If you take care of me, I'll dedicate myself to you.

Up he goes. Where does he go? To what place? To the people of his mother. Who is Rebecca's family? That's Nahor.

That's Isaac's uncle. Right? Isaac basically marries his cousin, Rebecca, descended through Nahor. Tira, father of Abraham and Nahor.

They're up outside of the land. They're up in the sides of the north, so to speak. He goes up there.

Seven years for Leah. Seven years for Rachel. Jacob goes up to the people of his mother.

That's where Rebecca came from. With the servant to come down to Isaac. She lighted off her ass and so on.

So, he goes up there. Fourteen years he lives up there. Seven years for one wife, seven years for another wife.

Comes back down. What's one of the major incidents when they're coming back down and Nahor is in hot pursuit. What's he looking for? What's missing? The teraphene.

Rachel's, oh, I'm in an indelicate way. I can't get up. Sorry.

And she's sitting on him. The teraphene. There's godlessness up there.

And yet, that is the place from which Isaac and Jacob get their wives. So, this is a lot better than the surrounding nations, right? Where did Esau get his wives? Egypt is one of them. Canaanite is another.

Remember, Rebecca was all upset because he married a Canaanite, married an Egyptian. He had two or three wives floating around there from the local population. Not supposed to do.

Bad idea. Supposed to go, even up there with Nahor and the teraphene and however screwed up they are up there. Yeah, Laban.

Descended from Nahor. It's the household of Nahor. Laban is the brother of Rebecca.

He's the son of Nahor. But you get the idea. It's Nahor's household up there.

Because he's Abraham's brother. Abraham, Nahor, brothers. One of them is outside the land.

The other moves down into the land. When Abraham got himself up from Ur of the Chaldees and headed out at God's command to take possession of his inheritance, they short-stopped in Haran. Remember that? Who ended up getting a bunch of land and saying, Hey, this is great.

I believe I'll just live here. Nahor. The whole clan of Abraham's father's house and his brother and so on, they stop and say, This is good enough.

I'm planting my roots here. Once Abraham's father dies, Abraham folds up his tents and comes on down and eventually gets with God's plan. But there's a delay.

And they stop. And all the rest of the family stops. So they've got theirs.

One in the hand is worth two down south. Abraham's got to go down. And what does he do? Well, he's wandering.

He's holocking up and down the land. It takes a long time. He's digging wells.

He's going down to Egypt. He's at the Bimelech thing in Gerar and so on. And God says, you know, it's going to be a while before your descendants actually take possession.

They're going to go away. They're going to come back. But eventually the iniquity of the Amorites will be full and then they're going to get theirs.

You could imagine Abraham saying, you know, when I look north, my kin folks, they've got theirs. I have to go to them for my son to get a wife. My grandson, you have to go up there to get a wife.

They're established. They've got stability. They've got security.

They've got assets. I'm wandering around here trying to battle with the neighbors and keep the wells open and so on. So think about that.

Abraham, the guy that is still sojourning, other people who have settled down and put down roots, and they're all in the realm of belief. That's why they have to go back there to get their wives. Don't marry amongst these godless pagans.

Go up to people that at least recognize God, but they've got the teraphim, but God is in it. Do you think Rebecca was a complete teraphim worshiper? Obviously not. She knows when her twins are born, what's up.

And she came from that household. So you can argue teraphim all you want, but there are believers up there. And Rebecca is one of them.

That's why she's such a wonderful, beautiful, instantly recognizable paragon of faith when Abraham's servant goes up there. So, he's wandering around. Now, who are Abraham's sons? Ishmael and Isaac.

Isaac has to continue to wander around. Ishmael and the 17 other sons of Zechariah, they're off taking possession of the desert and getting their stuff. Isaac, he goes to Egypt, he goes to Gerar, he follows in his father's footsteps.

Like father, like son, he makes some of the same mistakes. My wife is my sister, etc. He has how many sons? Two sons.

Jacob and Esau. Now, this is what Joshua is going to review. Look at this.

Joshua gathered all these guys together in the sight of God. They're before God. It's kind of like when you get amongst those mountains, blessings and cursings.

Is it the good word or the evil word? Remember Shechem? When Jacob came back down with his two wives and his... I think he had ten sons at that point. He comes back down. Where does he stop and put down some temporary roots? Shechem.

Shechem is the city of Jacob. He built an altar just as Abraham first came down here. Abraham, back in Genesis 12, remember? 12-1, Abraham gets up and goes to the land, and when Abraham finally gets there, Abraham passes through the land to the place of Shechem, Genesis 12-6.

At the Terebinth Tree of Morah, the Oak of Morah. And the Canaanites were in the land. Here we are at Shechem, hundreds of years later, and the Canaanites are being driven from that same land.

At Shechem, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to your descendants, I will give this land. And there, he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him, Genesis 12-7. Very significant spot.

You begin with Abraham and the promise of God. Your descendants will take this. His descendants are standing there, and Joshua is saying, I'm going the way of all the earth.

Take it. Here it is. It has been delivered as promised.

What a wonderful historic place for this final speech by Joshua. Well, we're out of time in our first session. We're going to pause here and take our break.

But just remember, they are standing there because they have made the choice to be faithful and be obedient. Their previous generation did not make those choices, and they are not standing there. They are buried in the dust of the wilderness.

We have the same choice. Let's pause here and take our break. We'll come back and

resume right here in verse 2 of chapter 24.