

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA
THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY
JOSHUA 23:1-16

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Introduction

ISRAEL had known many **BATTLES**, they had a few bad days of **DEFEAT**, yet they had many wonderful **VICTORIES!**

At this point in their history, they had reached a relatively **PEACEFUL** time—a time when they could **ENJOY** the **BLESSINGS OF THE LORD!**

They were **ENJOYING** a time of **REST**— a time when they could **REFLECT** on their labors and **THANK THE LORD** for **HIS WONDERFUL PROVISIONS** for them!

They had, to a certain extent anyway, **POSSESSED THEIR POSSESSIONS!**

It is often during **PEACEFUL** times that we can **BECOME LAX** and **SLACK** and we allow our **COMMITMENT** and **DEVOTION** to the **LORD** to slip. There is always the **DANGER** in the midst of **SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS** to **FORGET ABOUT THE LORD!**

MOSES had warned them about this in *Deuteronomy 8:13-14*:
"And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage"

Here in *chapter 23*, we see that **JOSHUA** called together the **LEADERS** of the nation. He had some advice for all of those who were in **AUTHORITY!** But, all of us would do well to listen to **JOSHUA'S** admonitions here. **JOSHUA** was not a **PESSIMIST** but a **REALIST!** He recognized **THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!** (*i.e. Not giving attention to!*)

I. JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS!
(*Vs 1-5*)

- A. We All Need To Be Reminded Of How God Has Blessed Us!**
(*Psalm 103*)
- 1. Forgiveness of sin. (*Psalm 103:3*)**

- 2. Healing of disease. (*Psalm 103:3*)**
- 3. Redemption of our lives. (*Psalm 103:4*)**
- 4. Lovingkindness and tender mercies. (*Psalm 103:4, 8-18*)**
- 5. Satisfaction and provision. (*Psalm 103:5*)**
- 6. Executing righteousness and judgment for the oppressed. (*Psalm 103:6*)**
- 7. Sovereignty. (*Psalm 103:19*)**

The result should be that we should *bless the LORD!*
(*Vs 20-22*)

B. However, Our Tendency, Like ISRAEL, Is To FORGET!

- Sometimes it is the attitude of :
"What have you done for me, lately?"
- Have you noticed how easy it is for us to remember the bad things of the past, and to forget the good things?
- JOSHUA** reminded the nation that **GOD** had done so much for them, and that **HE** would do more! (*Vs 5*)

JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS.
II. JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S UNCHANGING STANDARDS. (*Vs 6-11*)

A. Concerning the BOOK of the LAW (GOD'S WORD!)
(*Vs 6*)

- Remember what **GOD** told **JOSHUA** at the beginning of this **BOOK?**

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Joshua 1:7-8—“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

2. But, **MOSES** had instructed them also.

Deuteronomy 5:32—“Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”

Joshua Reminded Them Of GOD’S Unchanging Standards. . . Concerning The WORD OF GOD...

B. Concerning Their WALK WITH GOD! (Vs 7-10)

1. They were to bind themselves to the **LORD!**
2. The word used here is "*cleave*" and it means "*to stick close or adhere.*"
JOSHUA encourages them to **STICK CLOSE** to the **LORD**, **NOT** letting anything come between them and the **LORD!** This wasn't anything new!
Deuteronomy 10:20—“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.”

Deuteronomy 11:22-23—“22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; 23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.”

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Deuteronomy 13:4—“Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.”

Deuteronomy 30:20—“That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

3. **JOSHUA** was especially concerned about the false gods of the nations. (*vs 7*)
4. **NOTHING** should come between us and the **LORD!** This is the same word *cleave* that the **LORD** used concerning the relationship of a husband and wife...**NOTHING** ...and **NO ONE** should come between us.
5. This is not just an **OLD TESTAMENT** thing. It wasn't just for the **ISRAELITES**. When **BARNABAS** was sent by the **CHURCH** in **JERUSALEM** to the new **CHURCH** in **ANTIOCH** *Acts 11:23* says “Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”
6. This is great advice for us as well! We need to **STICK WITH THE LORD!**
Romans 12:9—“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; *cleave to that which is good.*”

Joshua Reminded Them Of GOD’S Unchanging Standards... Concerning The WORD OF GOD...Their WALK With GOD...

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- C. Concerning Their LOVE OF GOD! (Vs 11)**
1. **JOSHUA** feared that the **LOVE** they had for the **LORD** might grow cold. He recognized **THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!**
 2. It happens all the time...
 - a. Husbands and wives.
 - b. Friends and family.
 - c. The **CHURCH** and **GOD**.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Remember how the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** questioned **PETER** regarding **PETER'S LOVE for HIM?**

John 21:15—"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."

Remember **CHRIST'S ADMONITION** to the **CHURCH AT EPHESUS?**

Revelation 2:4-5—"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS.

JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S UNCHANGING STANDARDS.

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III. JOSHUA WARNED THEM OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF COMPLACENCY! (Vs 12-13)

A. There Would Be Loss Of POSITION!

If they neglected these things he was telling them about, they would stand to lose the supreme position **GOD** had given them.

The nation of **ISRAEL** would lose it's distinctive character of being **GOD'S** people. Their testimony would be ineffective! There are many **BELIEVERS** who have lost their testimony among the lost world and among their family from inconsistent living.

B. There Would Be Loss Of POWER!

GOD had **BLESSED** them with much **MIGHT** and **POWER!** **HE** had **FOUGHT** their **BATTLES** for them!

They had experienced the **POWER** of **GOD WORKING IN** and **THROUGH** them.

But if they **NEGLECTED** the things that **JOSHUA** had mentioned, they would become **POWERLESS!**

C. There Would Be Loss Of PEACE!

Instead of the **FREEDOM** and **LIBERTY** that they now enjoyed, they would once again find themselves in **BONDAGE**, just like they had been in **EGYPT**.

SIN would master their lives and they would become ensnared and trapped.

JOSHUA could see the possibility of **TROUBLE** ahead. He knew what **COMPLACENCY** could do to the nation.

Don't think that **SIN** can't do the same thing today! **SIN** robs us of our **POSITION**, our **POWER** and our **PEACE** just as well as it did the **ISRAELITES!**

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*JOSHUA REMINDED THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS...
GOD'S UNCHANGING STANDARDS...THE CONSEQUENCES OF
COMPLACENCY.*

IV. **JOSHUA GAVE THEM A SOLEMN FAREWELL. (Vs. 14-16)**
DEATH will come to us all unless the **LORD** comes back while we
who know **HIM** are living.

DEATH is not something that we like to think about, but it is a
REALITY!

When it is all said and done, and our life has come to an end what kind
of **LEGACY** will we leave behind?

Will it be an **EXAMPLE** of **FAITHFULNESS** or **FAILURE**?

JOSHUA reminded them that **GOD** had never failed and will never
fail to do what **HE** said **HE** would do.

Now, they would certainly have times where they would fail **GOD**, but
GOD would not fail them! That is true for each of us also! It is a
reality of living in this flesh.

GOD told **JOSHUA** in *Joshua 1:5*—“*There shall not any man be able
to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I
will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*”

SOLOMON in his **PRAYER** at the **DEDICATION** of the **TEMPLE**
said in *1 Kings 8:56*—“*Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto
his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not
failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the
hand of Moses his servant.*”

Now, we see in **JOSHUA'S FAREWELL** that he **WARNS** of what
will come to pass. Although we do not think of **JOSHUA** as a
PROPHET, he certainly was on the mark with this.

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History records how the people began to become influenced more and
more by the nations around them until they became just like them!

As a result **GOD JUDGED** them and brought against them powers
who would carry them away from this land in captivity.

In **JOSHUA'S** words... *"Therefore it shall come to pass..."*

Conclusion

Tonight we have been **REMINDED** of **GOD'S FAITHFULNESS**, of
GOD'S UNCHANGING STANDARDS, and we have been **WARNED OF**
THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!

It is easy for us to **FORGET** the **LORD** and what **HE** has done for us.

It is so easy for us to get so caught up in what's going on in the world around
us that we **FORGET** there is an **ETERNITY** to come.

There is so much to lose when we **NEGLECT the WORD OF GOD...**when
we **NEGLECT our WALK WITH GOD...**when we **NEGLECT our**
LOVE FOR GOD!

COMPLACENCY in our **CHURCH** is a **GREAT DANGER** to us and to
those around us!