

# SOLID

## JOSHUA - PUT GOD FIRST

They came, they saw and with God's help, they conquered!! Now Joshua has summoned all the Israelites together one final time, to encourage them to keep pressing on 'towards the goal' and to renew their covenant with the Lord.

Read Joshua 23:1-16

*Joshua 23:1-6*

1. Whom did Joshua call to this meeting?

2. What advice did he give them?

*Joshua 23:6-16*

3. Joshua says eight things about the people's relationship with the Lord and what the Lord has done for them, in these verses. What are they?

4. What does this teach us about the character of God?

Read Joshua 24:1-33

*Joshua 24:1-13*

5. What is God saying through Joshua here?

6. Can you think of a time you can look back to and say, 'God was guiding my life then.'

*Joshua 24:14-15*

7. What does Joshua challenge the people to do in verse 15?

8. What three kinds of gods were they to choose between?

*Joshua 24:15-24*

9. What splendid example did Joshua give the people?

10. What choice did they make?

11. What was to be the proof of their decision?

*Joshua 24:25-28*

12. What did Joshua do to help the people remember their promise?

13. *Acts 17:11; Hebrews 10:25* What can we do to help us remember our promise to serve God?

*Joshua 24:29-33*

14. *Judges 2:6-10* How long did the people keep their promise to put God first?

15. Joshua's life had had a tremendous influence on the people of Israel. Can you think of someone who has influenced your life toward Jesus Christ?

### The End Bit!

As Joshua's life drew to a close, He asked the people a question: 'From this moment on, who is going to control your life?'

Consider the three possibilities:

#### **1. The gods their ancestors worshipped.**

Joshua was referring to the time before God called Abraham to be the father of His people. Back in their ancestry was a time when God was unknown and the people worshipped gods which gratified human instincts and selfish desires.

But this is true of each of us too. Before you came into a personal relationship with Christ, there was a time when everything you did was to please yourself, not God. 'Self' was in control and how easy it is still, to slip back into those ways of putting 'self' first!

## **2. The gods of the Amorites, in whose land they were living.**

Remember, the Israelites had not completely obeyed God. They hadn't driven out all the people of the land. They hadn't become a separate, holy people and it was all too easy to be influenced by those around them.

Isn't that still true? 'So what ... everybody's doing it!' 'You've got to keep up with the times.' The world around us tries to squeeze us into its own mould. Advertising dictates how we should spend our money. 'The Joneses' see to it that we keep up our standard of living. Public opinion via the media hands us our values. It is very hard to stand against these and other pressures and not to be controlled by them – in fact, there is only one way to do it!

## **3. The Lord.**

To serve the Lord is to recognise that He is the Master and we are the servants. We belong to Him – our purpose in life should be to do what He wants and to be available for Him to use. Each day, we should come before Him to find out His plan for us and to surrender our will to Him. It is not important what we want or what other people say – the only thing that matters is that His will should be done through our lives.

No wonder Joshua warned the people to think carefully before they made their choice, for when a person makes the decision to serve the Lord, it means a total commitment of themselves, so that God can work in every area of their life to transform them into His likeness.

### Verse to remember

"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:15