



August 16, 2026
Be Careful What You Cling To
Joshua 23



1. **Sermon Outline:**

- a. In A Time of Peace and Unfinished Business, Joshua Had a Warning for Israel
 - i. Joshua gathered Israel for some final words of wisdom
 - ii. He warned them to be careful to obey God's Law
 - iii. He warned them to stay true to God because He had been true to Israel
- b. Cling to the Lord and His Word
 - i. Cling to Jesus!
 - ii. Cling to the Word of God
- c. Be Careful About Your Close Associations
 - i. You are an ambassador for Jesus in this world
 - ii. Be very careful about deep business, community, or personal relationships with unbelievers

2. **Sunday** – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. **Monday:**

- a. We've skipped ahead to the end of Joshua's life and will examine his two final messages to the Israelites, Joshua 23 this week and then chapter 24 next week.
- b. Begin this week by reading Joshua 23 twice.
 - i. The first time, read it through quickly like you would if reading a novel, focusing on the big picture.
 - ii. Then read it meditatively, looking for the details that make Joshua's message spiritually important.
 - 1. What would you describe as Joshua's main points?
 - 2. Why do you think Joshua felt it necessary to give such a speech?
- c. Does the chapter remind you of any similar passages in the Bible?
 - i. Read Moses' farewell in Deuteronomy 31:1-8. What similarities do you see in the messages of Moses and Joshua?

- ii. Read Samuel's farewell speech in 1 Samuel 12:6-16. What similarities do you see?
- iii. Read the first part of David's farewell message to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-4. What similarities do you notice?
- iv. What is a common theme included in all four? How does Jesus convey the same message to us (see John 14:23-24)?

4. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 23:1-2.
- b. How does the author of Joshua introduce Joshua's first farewell speech?
 - i. The first words tell us that the events being reported are "a long time afterward" (ESV). What do you think the "afterward" refers to (consider Joshua 13:1, 21:43-44, 22:1-4 (along with the events in chapter 22))?
 - ii. What two conditions does the author give to define the time when this occurs?
 - 1. What does it mean that "the Lord had given rest to Israel" (compare with Joshua 11:23 & 14:15)? Had Israel fully obeyed God's command for occupying the land? Why or why not?
 - 2. Approximately how old was Joshua (see Joshua 24:29)? Assuming that Joshua and Caleb were about the same age, how long had it been since the wars ended (see Joshua 14:7,10, & 15)?
 - iii. There is disagreement about whether the speech in Chapter 23 and that in 24 are two different events or two parts of the same event. According to verse 2, to whom would it seem the speech in Chapter 23 is given?
 - iv. Reading between the lines a little, how do you think "the elders, leaders, judges, and officials" responded to being summoned?
- c. Why do you think Joshua opened his speech with the very obvious statement that he was very old?
 - i. What had Joshua obviously not done that would have been expected in our youth-oriented society?
 - ii. Read Psalm 71:14-18. How does the Psalmist capture what would seem to be Joshua's attitude?
 - 1. Read Isaiah 46:3-4. Although written long after Joshua had died, might these verses reflect the promise he held on to for all those years?
 - 2. What lesson can we learn from Joshua and these verses that should apply to us as Christians in America?

5. *Wednesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 23:3-5.
- b. What is Joshua doing in this first portion of his farewell speech?
 - i. Who does he give first credit for Israel's success in subduing their enemies?
 - ii. In verse 4, of what two things does Joshua remind the assembled leaders that he had done?

1. Read Joshua 13:1-7, Numbers 33:54, and 34:13. According to the process used to assign the land, who could be said to have actually done so? [Note: The lot process would have been the same as that used to identify Achan in chapter 7.]
 2. Is Joshua taking credit for something he should not by saying that he had already defeated nations?
 3. Does the fact that Joshua acknowledges that there are still nations to be driven out indicate that Joshua had failed to obey God's command to eliminate all of these people (compare Numbers 33:55 with Exodus 23:29-30 and Deuteronomy 7:22)?
 - iii. What promise did Joshua remind the leaders of? Why could they trust this promise? Who had made it?
 - c. Why do you think Joshua needed to remind the leaders of these facts? What likely has happened during the 25 or so years of peace?
6. **Thursday:**
- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 23:6-11.
 - b. How would you describe what Joshua is doing in verses 7 and 8? What gives him the authority to do so (see Joshua 1:1-9)?
 - c. Although only a small portion of the Bible had been written, what would we say Joshua is doing in verse 6 (compare it to Joshua 1:7)?
 - i. What is he doing in verse 7 (compare with Exodus 23:13 & 33 and Deuteronomy 7:2-3)?
 - ii. How important would God's Word seem to be to Joshua? Does it seem likely that his success might be attributed to doing himself what he was telling the leaders to do in Joshua 1:8?
 - d. How does Joshua's emphasis shift in verse 9?
 - i. Again, who does he credit for eliminating those nations that have so far been eliminated?
 - ii. Why do you think Joshua feels the need to keep emphasizing this point?
 1. How is Joshua reinforcing what Moses had told them in Deuteronomy 8:11-18?
 2. What examples can you think of where the Bible shows what happens to those who don't give God appropriate credit for their success (consider Daniel 4:28-37, Acts 12:21-23, and 2 Chronicles 32:24-25)?
 - e. How important is verse 11 to Joshua's overall message (consider Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Matthew 22:37-38)?
7. **Friday:**
- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 23:12-16.
 - b. What warning did Joshua give to the Israelites in verses 12-13?

- i. What three conditions did Joshua describe that would lead to experiencing what he warns them will happen?
 - ii. Why do you think Joshua repeats the same warning twice more in verses 15 and 16? What does that suggest about how serious the warning was?
 - c. While our salvation is based on God's grace and not on any works we do, how applicable should we view the ideas and principles Joshua is giving in this speech to be?
 - i. Why should we be more "motivated" to obey than the Israelites should have been?
 - ii. How should Joshua's message influence our interpretation and response to passages such as 2 Corinthians 6:14-15?
8. **Saturday:**
- a. Read Joshua 23 twice again.
 - i. The first time, look for repetition. What words, phrases, and points does he repeat, and what is the significance of the repetition?
 - ii. The second time, read slowly, asking yourself how each portion applies to you and how you live as a Christian in 2026.
9. **Application:** Joshua 23 challenges us in at least two important areas:
- a. It is important that we acknowledge and celebrate God's accomplishments and blessings in our lives and the life of our church. Older readers may remember a time when spontaneous testimonies from the congregation were a regular part of church services. Giving God all of the praise and credit He, the Almighty Sovereign Creator and Sustainer, deserves for the good things ("the good land") and especially for the things we may not consider so good (1 Thessalonians 5:18) is an important part of growth as a child of God.
 - b. Obedience is necessary! God has given us commands and instructions for our benefit and that we might grow to be more like Christ, and there are consequences for disobedience. We must never step back from the clear teaching that our salvation is by grace through faith and cannot be earned by obeying the law (Ephesians 2:8-9). But we must also never forget that obedience is an outcome (result) of salvation – "*Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching*"! As the subsequent books of the Old Testament document, the consequences for failing to comply with what Joshua told them were as serious as he had said. And today, too many parents have seen the consequences play out in the life of a son or daughter who didn't feel 2 Corinthians 6:14 applied to them.
10. **Pray:** The third country we don't often consider when praying for unreached people groups is the United Kingdom. England and Scotland played such a prominent role in the growth of Protestant Christianity and Christianity played such a pivotal role in their growth as a nation, that it is shocking to see that well under 50% identify as Christian (of any sort). Immigration is a fact of life, and there are over 50 nationalities which have communities of over 10,000 people in the UK. The world has literally come to them, but the church is largely unresponsive. Pray that the "Quiet Revival" which started in the UK in the past few years will continue to grow and spread to the more than 45 Unreached People Groups that reside in the country.