

## Lesson VI. JOSHUA RENEWING THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL November 10, 1907

**BETWEEN THE LESSONS**—For several years the twelve tribes had been busy cultivating the land and making homes for themselves in their various possessions. In this work they had been interrupted by occasional wars with the native inhabitants of Canaan. These wars, were now for a time, practically at an end, and "the Lord gave them rest round about", ch. 21 : 43-45. Joshua, their great leader, now drawing near the end of his long and useful life, summons representatives of all the tribes to Shechem, and delivers two farewell addresses, chs. 23, 24. The Lesson is from the second of these addresses.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—Choose you this day whom ye will serve.—Joshua 24 : 15.

**Memorize vs. 22-24. THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Joshua 24 : 14-28. Read Joshua, chs. 23, 24.

14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth : and put away the gods which your fathers served <sup>1</sup> on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt ; and serve ye the Lord.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods which your fathers served that were <sup>1</sup> on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Am'orites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods ;

17 For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers <sup>2</sup> out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and <sup>3</sup> which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the <sup>4</sup> people through whom we passed :

18 And the Lord drove out from before us all the <sup>5</sup> people, even the Am'orites which dwell in the land : therefore <sup>6</sup> will we also serve the Lord ; for he is our God.

19 And Josh'ua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord : for he is an holy God ; he is a jealous God ; he will not forgive your <sup>7</sup> transgressions nor your sins.

**Revised Version**—<sup>1</sup> beyond the River ; <sup>2</sup> Omit up ; <sup>3</sup> up ; <sup>4</sup> that did ; <sup>5</sup> peoples ; <sup>6</sup> the midst of ; <sup>7</sup> we also will ; <sup>8</sup> transgression ; <sup>9</sup> evil ; <sup>10</sup> the ; <sup>11</sup> unto ; <sup>12</sup> hearken ; <sup>13</sup> he ; <sup>14</sup> against ; <sup>15</sup> sent the people away.

**Daily Readings**—(Courtesy, I. B. R. A.)—*M.*—The Assembly, Joshua 24 : 1-13. *T.*—Joshua renewing the covenant with Israel, Joshua 24 : 14-25. *W.*—Joshua renewing the covenant with Israel, Joshua 24 : 26-33. *Th.*—Samuel's exhortation, 1 Sam. 12 : 1-15. *F.*—Choose life ! Deut. 30 : 11-20. *S.*—Reasonable service, Rom. 12 : 1-8. *S.*—The first choice, Matt. 6 : 24-34.

### THE LESSON EXPLAINED

**I. A CHOICE PRESENTED.**—14. Now therefore. Joshua had been recounting before the representatives of the tribes all that God had done for them and their fathers, beginning with the call of Abraham, vs. 2-13. **Fear the Lord, and serve him.** The Lord's goodness to them was the best of reasons why they should reverence and obey Him. **In sincerity and in truth.** No pretence can deceive God : He searches the heart, Jer. 17 : 10. **Put away the gods, etc.** Many in Israel, Joshua knew, were secretly worshipping idols, while pretending to worship the true God. **Serve ye the Lord.** Make this your choice, now and forever.

15. **Choose you this day.** Israel was free to choose, as we are; but they, and we, as well, must bear the consequences of the choice made. Two sorts of false gods are named : (1) gods . . . on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates), the home of Abraham before he went to Canaan, Gen. 11 : 31, and (2) gods of the Amorites, the most powerful of the Canaanite tribes, whose name, therefore, was often given to all these tribes, Gen. 15 : 16. **As for me and my house (family), etc.** Joshua and his house will stand for God, even if they have to stand alone amongst all the people of Israel.

20 If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you <sup>9</sup> hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Josh'ua, Nay ; but we will serve the Lord.

22 And Josh'ua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord <sup>10</sup> God of Israel.

24 And the people said unto Josh'ua, The Lord our God will we serve, and <sup>11</sup> his voice will we <sup>12</sup> obey.

25 So Josh'ua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26 And Josh'ua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and <sup>13</sup> took a great stone, and set it up there under <sup>10</sup> an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.

27 And Josh'ua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness <sup>14</sup> unto us ; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us : it shall be therefore a witness <sup>14</sup> unto you, lest ye deny your God.

28 So Josh'ua <sup>15</sup> let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

**II. A CHOICE MADE.**—16-18. God forbid . . . forsake the Lord . . . serve other gods.

Such conduct seemed to them horrible, profane and shocking. For. Pick out the four reasons in vs. 17, 18 for not forsaking the Lord. We also will (Rev. Ver.) ; they, as well as Joshua and his house, v. 15. He is our God. This is the people's sincere and enthusiastic choice.

**III. A CHOICE CONFIRMED.**—19-24. Ye cannot; that is, in your own strength; it is harder to serve God than you think,



ANCIENT WRITING MATERIALS

Even before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, people practised the art of writing. We read of documents written by the Hebrews at the time of their leaving Egypt on their journey to the Promised Land of Canaan