

never cheated by it, Jer. 17 : 10. *Put away the gods*, etc. Joshua knew that these earlier idolatries actually continued to no small extent among the people.

V. 15. *If it seem evil...choose, &c.* Joshua urges the people to the service of Jehovah, by forcing them to face the possible alternatives. If they discard Jehovah, let them deliberately look for another god. For some god, he knows, men must serve; it is a question between the true God and false gods. He meant them to see that there was none other than Jehovah worthy of their homage: neither (1) the Babylonian gods... *beyond the River* (Rev. Ver.) Euphrates, the birthplace of Abraham; nor (2) *the gods of the Amorites*, the most powerful of the Canaanitish tribes, whose name was therefore often given to all the inhabitants of the land, Gen. 15 : 16. *As for me and my house* (family), etc. Joshua's own mind was made up, and he hopes that his decision will influence theirs in the same direction. He would not force them, however, but only persuade them to the right course.

## II. A Choice Made, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. *God forbid...forsake the Lord...serve other gods*; an expression of the utmost horror at the thought of idolatry. *The Lord our God, he it is*. The people base their promises of fidelity to God on: (1) their deliverance from *Egypt*; (2) the *great signs* wrought by God in that land (notably the plagues and the opening of a way through the Red Sea); (3) their preservation in the wilderness; (4) the driving out of the *Amorites*.

## III. A Choice Confirmed. 19-28.

Vs. 19-21. *Ye cannot serve the Lord*. Joshua is afraid the people's pledge may be given too lightly, and as lightly broken. He therefore points out to them that the service of Jehovah is one that cannot be easily rendered: indeed, without the help of divine grace, it is impossible. *Holy*; and therefore will not tolerate impurity or selfishness in His people. *Jealous*; will not endure the presence of any rival god in their hearts. *Will not forgive*. This means that there would be certain judgment for disobedience, if it was persisted in. *He...consume you, after...done you good*. God's past goodness would furnish no safe ground for

presuming that they would escape punishment, if they turned away from Him. *Nay; but we will*. They repeat their pledge, notwithstanding his apparent discouragement, as he hoped they would.

Vs. 22-24. *Witnesses against yourselves*. They could not change without condemning themselves. *Put away...the strange gods*. Joshua knew that there were remnants of idolatry still surviving amongst the people, and he urges them to rid themselves of all these, that they may give undivided allegiance to Jehovah. *The Lord our God will we serve*. For the third time they renew their pledge (see vs. 18, 21).

Vs. 25-28. *Joshua made a covenant*. This was a confirmation of the covenant made in Moses' time at Sinai (Ex. 24 : 3-8) and renewed on the Plains of Moab, Deut. 29 : 1. Every generation must make anew its covenant with God, if that covenant is to be maintained. The virtues of our forefathers will not advantage us, unless we practise them ourselves. *In the book of the law*. Joshua wrote these words to recall the transaction to mind, when there should be danger of its being forgotten. The record was placed in the book (roll) containing the Law of Moses. *A great stone*; a further memorial of the people's pledge. *Under the oak* (Rev. Ver.); the tree at which Abraham had received his first recorded promise of Canaan, and had built his first altar, Gen. 12 : 6, 7. *By the sanctuary*; holy place—regarded as such, because Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 33 : 18-20; 35 : 2, 4) had worshiped here. Perhaps the very altar used by them was still standing. *Let the people depart*; having done all he could to confirm them in their fidelity.

The remaining verses of the chapter give an account of Joshua's death and burial, which closes the Book of Joshua

## Light from the East

OTHER GODS—The Babylonians, amongst whom Abraham, the founder of the Hebrews, grew up, worshipped a triad, Anu, Bel, Ea—the god of heaven, the god of earth and the atmosphere, and the god of the watery element. With these were associated Ishtar the goddess of fertility, Shamash and Sin,