

## Joshua (24:14-29)

Joshua said to all the people: Fear the Lord and serve him perfectly and sincerely; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if you will not serve the Lord, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting the Lord and serving other gods! Was it not the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed? What is more, the Lord drove all those peoples out before us, as well as the Amorites who used to live in this country. We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

Then Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the Lord, because he is a holy God, he is a jealous God who will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you desert the Lord to follow alien gods he in turn will afflict and destroy you after the goodness he has shown you.' The people answered Joshua, 'No; it is the Lord we wish to serve'.

Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him'. They answered, 'We are witnesses'. 'Then cast away the alien gods among you and give your hearts to the Lord the God of Israel!' The people answered Joshua, 'It is the Lord our God we choose to serve; it is his voice that we will obey'.

That day, Joshua made a covenant for the people; he laid down a statute and ordinance for them at Shechem. Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a great stone and set it up there, under the oak in the sanctuary of the Lord, and Joshua said to all the people, 'See! This stone shall be a witness against us because it has heard all the words that the Lord has spoken to us: it shall be a witness against you in case you deny your God.' Then Joshua sent the people away, and each returned to his own inheritance.

After these things Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died; he was a hundred and ten years old.

The Word of the Lord.