



# Spring Study Discussion Guide #3

**Sermon Title:** Three Chairs

**Biblical Reference:** Joshua 24:11-17, 24:29-31 Judges 2:6-10

**Date Preached:** Sunday, January 29th, 2023, @ 11am

**Fall Study Date:** Wednesday, February 1st, 2023

## Sermon Summary

This past Sunday we studied the generational decline of the children of Israel. We looked at the differences between the “Joshua Generation” (the generation that left Egypt), the “Elder Generation” (the children taken out of Egypt), and the “Unknowing Generation” (the first Jews born in the Promised Land). By the time you get to the third generation there was no difference between the Jews and the Canaanites. It was as if all the miracles that happened leaving Egypt and all the miracles along the way to the promised land had never happened. It was as if Moses had never received the commandments from God.

In Joshua 24, the battles are over, and Joshua summons the tribes of Israel to present themselves before the Lord at Shechem. Joshua rehearsed to them the good things the Lord did for them, from the time of their ancestor Abraham to that day. He then gave them an invitation to reconfirm their covenant to the Lord. This sermon contains the famous words of Joshua that are most quoted and most capitalized on by Hobby Lobby. Perhaps you grew up in a house with them on the door or the wall: “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua made a choice that he would follow the Lord and ensured that the members of his house did as well. Because of his influence, Israel served the Lord all of Joshua’s days, and all the days of the “Elder Generation”. But the “Elder Generation” did not ensure that their house or their children served the Lord. Joshua ordered them that day to choose who they would serve. We have a choice, what generation do we want to be like? It is our choice. If you try to put off the choice or try not to make the choice, that is a choice in itself. Unfortunately, it is the wrong one, a choice against the Lord. Make an honest assessment of your life. What generation does your life most represent?

## Quick Review

### Ice Breaker:

To get to know each other as a group let us go around the room and have everyone answer the ice breaker question.

What was your first job, the most unpleasant job, or most unusual job?

**Ask a volunteer to read:**

*Jos 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.*

*Jos 24:15 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 on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

*Jos 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;*

- Were there any insights the Lord showed you or anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you? Either from the sermon or from your personal study of this passage?
- How did the Holy Spirit speak to your heart from this passage/sermon?

## My Testimony

- Joshua's influence helped an entire generation serve the Lord. Tell us about the Christians that were the biggest influence on your life? Explain what you admired about them.
- Describe some of the most discouraging Christians in your life? (Do not mention people by name here.)

## Digging Deeper

### **1. The Joshua Generation (1<sup>st</sup> Chair)**

In the following verses we see Joshua was a leader that did not need to be prodded, reminded, and helped along. He saw his life used by the Lord in a major way. His life was a testimony of the Lord (God working in a person's life that was fully committed to Him). Joshua was a first chair Christian. Wholehearted and committed.

**Ask a volunteer to read:**

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*Jos 24:15 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 on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

*Jos 24:31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.*

**Discussion Questions:**

- What is most significant to you in this passage? Please explain?
- Can you tell us about the time when you made a commitment to follow the Lord no matter what? Was it a difficult decision at the time? What were some of the things you wrestled with?
- Can you give us an example of how being a slave in Egypt as an adult may have changed Joshua's perspective?

As is typical with first generation Christians, Joshua had a different attitude about idols/sin than the people he was talking to. Think about some of the first church Christians you have known. Let us go around the room and have each person comment on attitudes about one of the topics listed below.

- How would you describe their attitude about marriage? Children? Family? Sin? Money? Church? Neighbors?

In the following verse you will find the Lord's assessment of Joshua's life work. This was Joshua's legacy:

*Josh 11:15 As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.*

- What are some things you believe the Lord is leading you to do?
- God worked through Joshua in a significant way. What are some big ways you would like used by God?
- What do you want your spiritual legacy to be?
- As this generation died off things started to go south. What are some things you see the church losing as some of our dear older saints go home to be with the Lord?

- How can we move into that gap and be the same example to our generation?

## **2. The Elder Generation (2<sup>nd</sup> Chair)**

In the following verses we read about the “Elder Generation”. These people were taken out of Egypt by their parents. They did not make the hard choice to leave Egypt. They were here because of their parents’ choice. They represent the second generation of Christians. Like some of us who grew up in Christian households. People who were introduced to Christianity by their parents. They had different challenges and different values. They tried to make a commitment to God with idols in their possession and had to be told twice to put them away. They did not pass on their values to their children. God used their parents to lead and pioneered the nation; God worked through them. We are told the “Elder Generation” knew about God’s great works and had even seen them. They were not impressed enough by them to teach their children about them.

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Jos 24:31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel*

*Jdg 2:7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.*

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What, in this passage, is the most significant to you? Please explain.
- How many of you grew up in church? Did you stay in church or fall away? What do you believe were the factors that led to you serving God when most of your peers fell out?
- What were your unique challenges?
- What idols did you have to put away to move to the first chair?
- Do you have a hard time believing you can be used in the same way you have seen the First Generation being used?

After Joshua died, they did not take any more ground and compromised with the enemy.

- What harmful ways do you see Christianity compromising with the world?
- What excuses do you think they would have given for not teaching their children?
- What are some of the advantages the second generation has?

### **3. The Unknowing Generation (3<sup>rd</sup> Chair)**

In the following verses you find the “Unknowing Generation”. The first of God’s people born in the Promised Land. They do not know God. They do not know about the works of God. To them it was a fairy tale as if it never happened. Sadly, this is often the way it is today. God did a great work in many people’s lives and their grandchildren are just as lost as the rest of the world around them. If we are not real and intentional then surely our descendants will walk away. They will say there was nothing to the church. All it amounts to is a bunch of hypocrites. They will be just as much the enemy of God as anyone else.

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Jdg 2:8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.*

*Jdg 2:10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*

*Jdg 2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Have you seen this happen? How does it happen?
- We are not given any guarantees that our children will follow the Lord. What do you believe are the most important considerations for a parent to make?
- If you raised children as a Christian, what would you do differently?

# Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of discovering the truths and principles in the text:

1. What truth or principle in this text was most impactful for you?
2. How did this truth or principle challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
3. How will you put into practice what you have learned today?