



ALL NATIONS COMMUNITY CHURCH

321 Normandy Street
Waterloo, Iowa 50703
319-226-5448

allnations321@mediacombb.net



Mary Robinson, J.D., M.Div, Pastor

“BIBLICAL SIGHTS AND SOUNDS”

1. Welcome. Welcome to Biblical Sight and Sounds. Biblical Sight and Sounds is the Bible Study that helps us to do the job of daily living by uncovering truths and promises found in Scripture. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide you in this study so that your life will be enriched. Please take the time to pray before beginning. In prayer, give to God whatever is on your mind. Remember to thank Him for His many blessings, both seen and unseen and known and unknown. Ask for the Holy Spirit to inform, give spiritual insight, convict when and where needed, and to bless. And above all, relax, as you prepare to reach higher heights and deeper depths in the glorious splendor of God’s Holy Word.

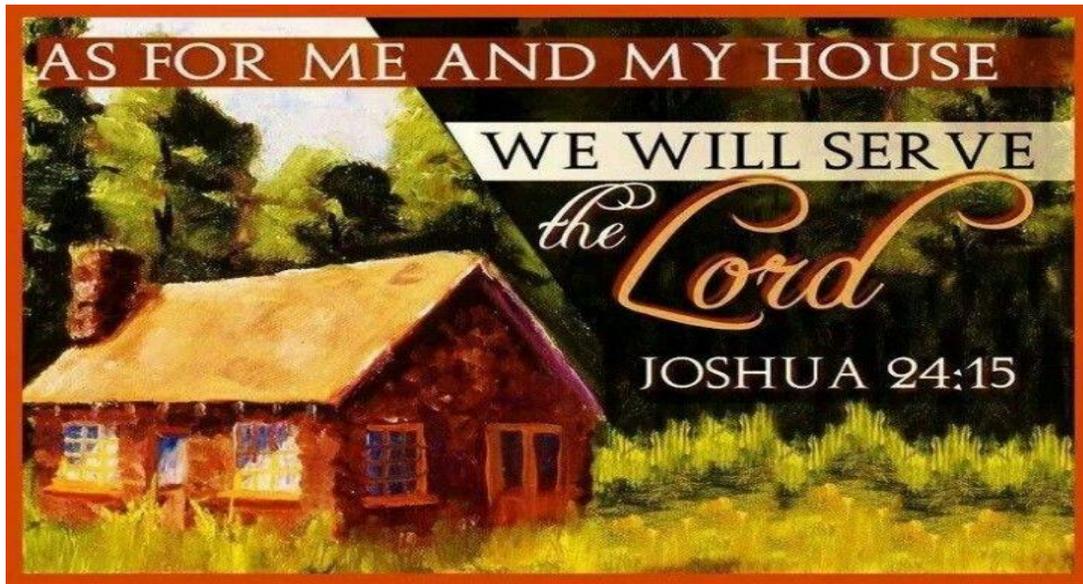
2. Scripture: Joshua 24:14-28 (NIV) ¹⁴“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

¹⁶Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! ¹⁷It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. ¹⁸And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.” ¹⁹Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”

²¹But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the LORD.” ²²Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD.” “Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied. ²³“Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.” ²⁴And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.”

²⁵On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. ²⁶And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of

the LORD. ²⁷ “See!” he said to all the people. “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.” ²⁸ Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.



3. “As for Me and My House, We Will Serve The Lord”

This is a bold proclamation made by Joshua – even in the time in which he lived. Surprisingly, it rolls so easily off the tongues of many Christians today. Some, however, argue that the time in which we are living, with such diverse social, economic, and political realities make it difficult, if not impossible, to strictly keep such a promise.

On the other hand, others believe that God’s Word is the same for each generation, for all ages, and forever. Difficult, at times? Yes. But, oh so necessary to strive for. I happen to fall into this camp. I do agree that Joshua 24:15 can be seen as one of the more difficult Biblical proclamations in that it raises questions about process and execution. Two obvious questions are: (1) What does it really mean? and (2) In today’s world, how do we actually live it out in the ways in which the Lord intended?

4. Scripture Background and Context

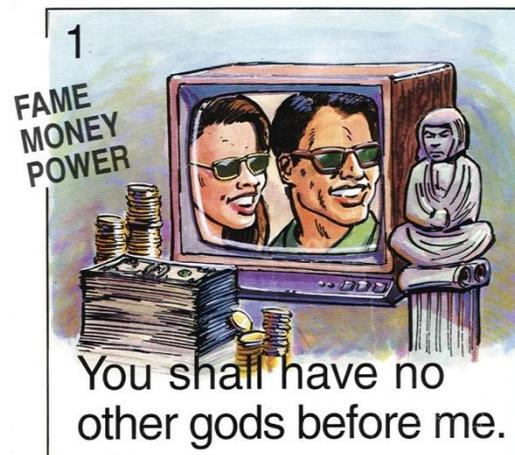
This verse comes as Joshua tells the Israelites about what God has done for them since the beginning: bringing Abraham into a new land and sending the Jewish people out of Egyptian bondage, through Moses and Aaron, to where they were presently—following Joshua to God’s Promised Land. Joshua had witnessed several shameful behaviors by the Israelites as they wandered the wilderness with Moses, from the creation of the Golden Calf to what he had seen prior to his statements. He pleads with his people to turn away from the gods their fathers worshipped while in Egypt and while traveling in the wilderness. (Josh. 24:14) His hope was to show them through their shared history about God’s love and provision in their lives and in their ancestors’ lives, that it was better to serve the Lord who took care of them than false gods who “demanded” unholy sacrifices but did little to help. His statements to the Israelites are to mark who will be following God in service and who will continue the treacherous path of serving false gods. He ended by boldly stating that his family would be serving the Lord.

5. It is God who provides

The people choose the path of righteousness by telling Joshua they would serve the Lord and forsake their former gods, thereby re-dedicating themselves to the covenant with the Lord. Joshua, then, calls them to witness for their stated loyalty to our Holy God. So, we learn from this revolutionary speech that Joshua brought awareness to the Israelites, reminding them that all their provision and survival in the wilderness over the past several years was from a loving God who had done the same, generations before them, and would continue for generations to come. That declaration from Joshua and the Israelites centuries ago is still relevant today, as we examine and honestly assess whether we are living lives in service to God.

6. Be Careful Not to Follow Gods of Comfort

Yet, just as Joshua admonished the Israelites for continuing to embrace their fathers' gods, we are still at fault for following false gods who promise us comfort, understanding, and love (lifestyle, money, fame, social media, other religions, alcohol and drugs, jobs and careers, even our family and friends). All too often, we choose to go to others who know less about our situations than God the Father who created the heavens and the earth. Matthew 6 tells us that "No one can serve two masters; for either they will hate the one and love the other, or else they will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." This speech from Joshua calls for us,



too, to be witnesses of our lives and of ourselves. That we have to not just speak the words so that we **“LOOK”** like Christians, but that we proclaim them boldly to ourselves so that, from this day forth, our houses, our families, and ourselves will **“SERVE”** only the one, True Lord.

7. What Does Living in Service to the Lord Look Like?

If we don't want to endure the same hardships of the Israelites (forty years of wandering aimlessly in the wilderness), we need to take to heart what it means to have one's home in service to the Lord.

- a. It does not mean that you only present yourself and your family as “surface” Christians, which means that you walk, talk, and interact as Christians but deep in your home and by your actions, it is another story.
- b. Being in service to the Lord in your home doesn't mean that you only serve the Lord when it is convenient for you or when you are in a period of blessings from God. God doesn't listen to your prayers or intervene in your life when it's convenient for Him or when He will receive benefits from you. Rather, God helps us because it is part of a greater plan that will benefit and grow us in faith and in love for Him.

8. What does it mean to live out, “for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”?

It means observing, taking to heart, and being what’s described in [Matthew 6](#); [Ephesians 4:29-32](#); [Colossians 1:10](#); [Colossians 3:12-17](#); [Deuteronomy 10:12-13](#); [Proverbs 3:5-6](#); [Psalm 119:1-16, 33-48, 57-72, 97-106, 129-138, 175-176](#); [Ephesians 4:25](#), [Romans 12:1-2](#), [Micah 6:8](#), just to list a few verses.

REMEMBER



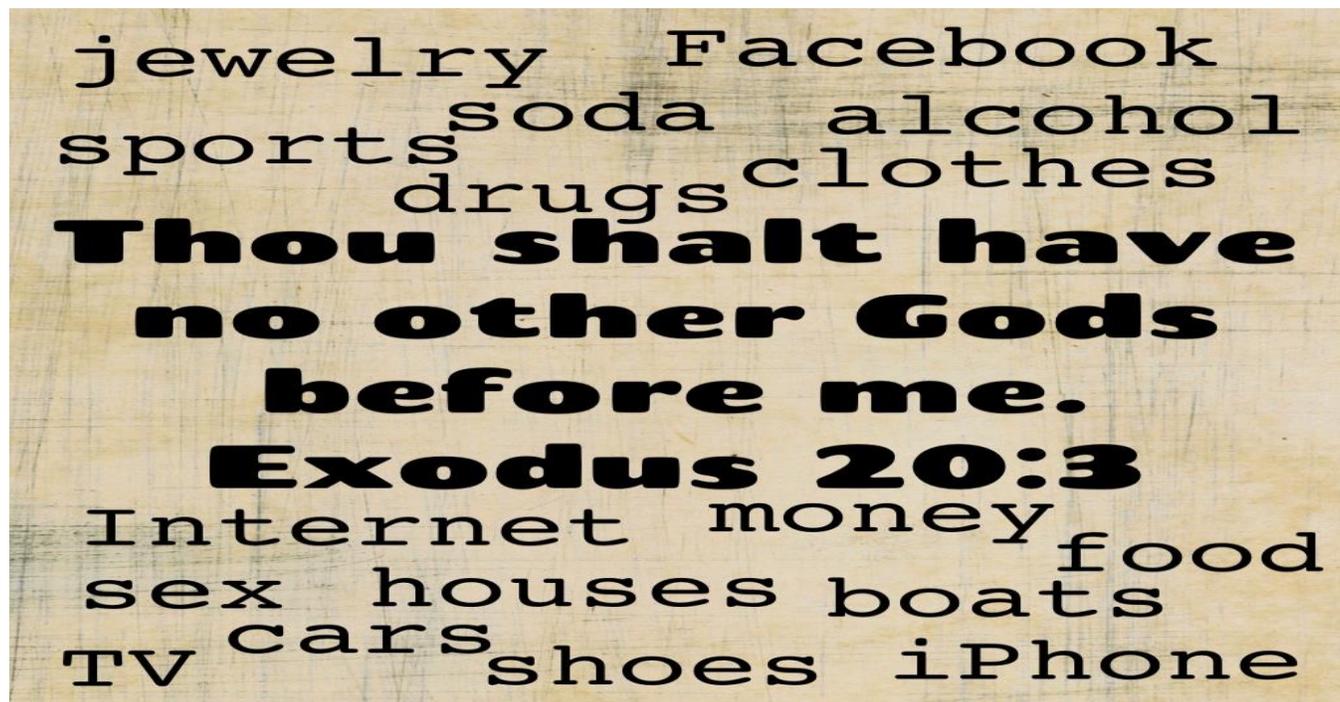
9. Serve the Lord out of Thankfulness

Making the choice to follow God’s decrees and leading our household is standing firm on the belief that serving the Lord is important. Serving the Lord isn’t for the glory or compliments that we will receive from others for our “good deeds;” it is serving in thankfulness for all the Lord has done, is doing, and will do until that appointed time when He calls us to eternal glory. It is also for the pleasure of serving Him and following His will, so that we can help draw others closer to God. This allows them to make the choice to accept Him into their lives through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Just as Joshua said to the Israelites of long ago, we are the witnesses to our own promise to serve the Lord. Thus, we too, must make the **CHOICE** to put total faith in God and give our service to Him - before anyone, any situation, and anything. Knowing that He will be pleased with us as His good and faithful servants!

10. Life is full of choices and decisions

Life is full of **CHOICES**. From the moment we wake up in the morning we start making choices about our day. The first decision for many is whether or not we will actually get up with the alarms on our cell phones or clocks or whether we will choose to sleep in. Once up we begin making decisions about what we will have for breakfast or even if we will have breakfast; what we will wear; and perhaps make decisions about how the rest of our day will look. Most of the decisions we make are routine and ordinary. In this passage Joshua is challenging the people of Israel to make a decision. “But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.” This is a **LIFE CHANGING** decision. Joshua is asking them to leave behind their foreign gods and serve God with their whole heart. The people respond passionately saying they will worship the God of Israel. But Joshua knows their hearts and that their enthusiasm is overshadowed by divided loyalty. He recounts how God has been

faithful to them throughout their history. The phrase “serve God with all faithfulness” literally means to serve with integrity and truth. Throughout Israel’s history they have not been able to completely commit to God. From their ancestors to those standing in front of Joshua, there had always been divided loyalty. Even after hearing them reaffirm their commitment, Joshua charges them to throw away their foreign gods. They were stating how committed they were to God while they still had foreign idols in their tents. Our God is a jealous God and will not accept divided worship. No matter what the people decided, Joshua was going to lead the way by stating “as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” What decision are you going to make today? If Joshua stood before you today, what would you have to throw away, modify, or change?



WHAT DOES YOUR LIST LOOK LIKE?

REFLECTION AND MEDITATION:

1. This passage is Joshua’s challenge to the people of Israel to fully commit themselves to God. When was a time when someone challenged you to fully commit yourself to something (ie. work, school, marriage). How did you respond?
2. Israel was passionately stating their commitment to God while they still had foreign gods in their tents. What are some things that distract and divide people’s commitment to God? How do you, who say you believe in Jesus, know if you are fully committed?

3. Do you (seldom, sometimes, or often) have things, people, issues, organizations, committee work, leisure or other activities that are distracting you and that you place before your service to God?

REMEMBER



• Anything can become a god to us — anything we worship or put an excessive amount of time into.

4. Have you ever made a decision that turned out to be life changing? How did you go about making the decision?
5. When was a time you took a stand no matter what anyone else around you was doing?
6. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
7. Joshua repeats his challenge to the people three times. He wanted to make sure they knew the seriousness of the commitment they were making. What is the difference between making a commitment based on emotions and one that is fully thought out? How can you make sure your commitments are fully thought out?
8. Joshua set up a stone to remind the people of their commitment. What practice do you currently have or what reminder will you set up for the commitment you have made?
9. Joshua told the people to throw away their foreign gods. Do you feel like there is anything in your life holding you back from being fully committed to God? What steps do you need to take so you can say with truth and integrity “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord”?
10. Are there things you disagree with or do you have questions for Pastor Mary about this Study?

PLEASE END WITH PRAYER.

BLESSINGS AND THANK YOU!

A number of ideas contributed to this study and resources used, in part came from:

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/how-to-serve-the-lord-you-and-your-house.html> and
<https://www.firstmbchurch.org/sites/default/files/LifeGroup%20Questions%20The%20Challenge%20Feb%20202.pdf>