

Joshua

The Story of
The Promise-Keeping God

Joshua 23

1 A long time after the Lord had given Israel rest from all the enemies around them, Joshua was old, advanced in age. **2** So Joshua summoned all Israel, including its elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in age, **3** and you have seen for yourselves everything the Lord your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the Lord your God who was fighting for you. ...



4 See, I have allotted these remaining nations to you as an inheritance for your tribes, including all the nations I have destroyed, from the Jordan westward to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 The Lord your God will force them back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take possession of their land, as the Lord your God promised you. ...



6 “Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left 7 and so that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; do not serve them or bow in worship to them. 8 Instead, be loyal to the Lord your God, as you have been to this day.



9 “The Lord has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and no one is able to stand against you to this day. 10 One of you routed a thousand because the Lord your God was fighting for you, as he promised. 11 So diligently watch yourselves! Love the Lord your God! ...



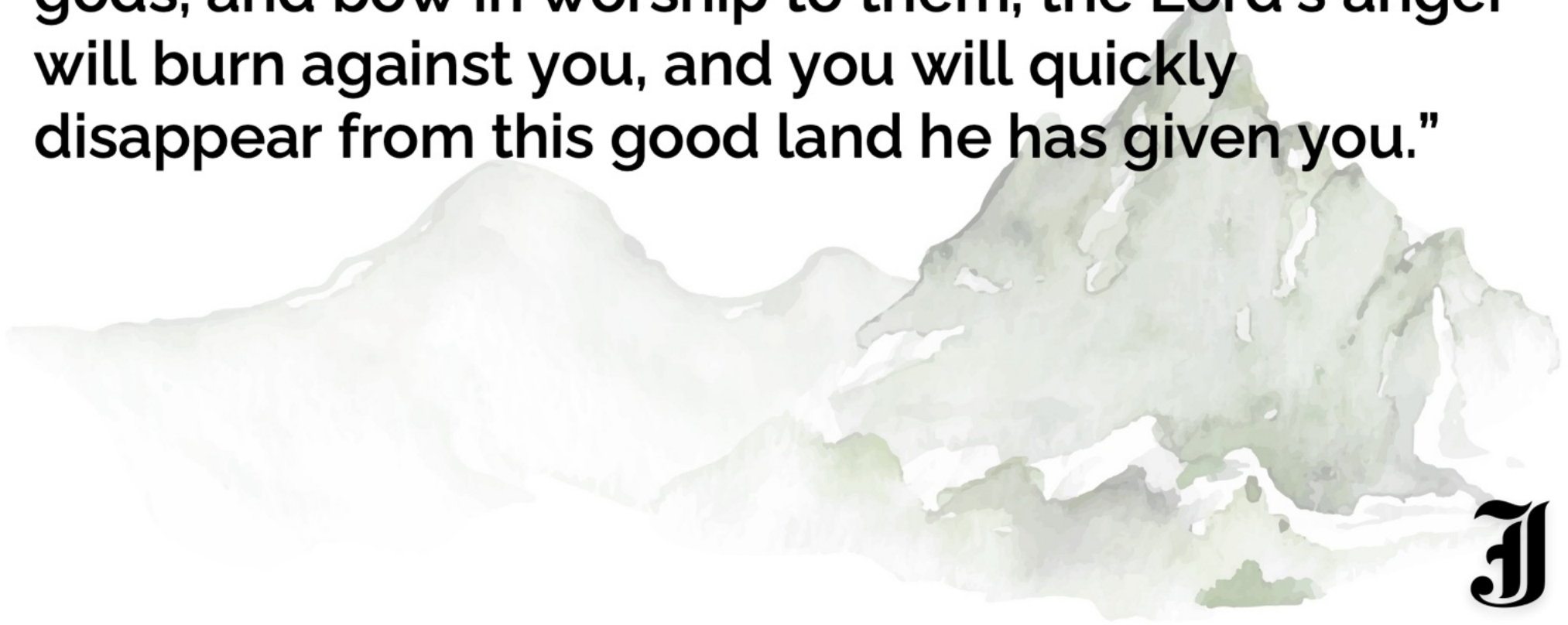
12 If you ever turn away and become loyal to the rest of these nations remaining among you, and if you intermarry or associate with them and they with you, **13** know for certain that the Lord your God will not continue to drive these nations out before you. They will become a snare and a trap for you, a sharp stick for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you disappear from this good land the Lord your God has given you.



14 "I am now going the way of the whole earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed. 15 Since every good thing the Lord your God promised you has come about, so he will bring on you every bad thing until he has annihilated you from this good land the Lord your God has given you. ...



16 If you break the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow in worship to them, the Lord's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land he has given you."



MAIN IDEA

In Joshua 23, God calls His people to two expressions of covenant loyalty, so we would remain loyal to God and not turn to idols—a loyalty ultimately fulfilled in Christ and now empowered in us to fulfill through the Holy Spirit.



Suzerain-Vassal Treaty

Joshua 23 is shaped like an Ancient Near Eastern treaty—a Suzerain-Vassal Treaty.



Suzerain-Vassal Treaty

Basic Parts

- **The introduction and Historical Prologue:** Who the king is and what he's done for the people.
- **The Stipulations:** The terms for how the vassals are to live in response.
- **The Blessings and Curses:** What happens if they obey or disobey the terms.



The Introduction & Historical Prologue (Verses: 2-5, 9-10, 14)

Joshua 23:2-5

2 So Joshua summoned all Israel, including its elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in age, 3 and you have seen for yourselves everything the LORD your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the LORD your God who was fighting for you.

...



The Introduction & Historical Prologue (Verses: 2-5, 9-10, 14)

...4 See, I have allotted these remaining nations to you as an inheritance for your tribes, including all the nations I have destroyed, from the Jordan westward to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 The LORD your God will force them back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you."



The Introduction & Historical Prologue (Verses: 2-5, 9-10, 14)

Joshua 23:9-10

9 “The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and no one is able to stand against you to this day. 10 One of you routed a thousand because the LORD your God was fighting for you, as he promised.”



The Introduction & Historical Prologue (Verses: 2-5, 9-10, 14)

Joshua 23:14

“I am now going the way of the whole earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed.”



The Introduction & Historical Prologue (Verses: 2-5, 9-10, 14)

Everything else in this treaty rests on the foundation of who their King is and what He's done for them. The loyalty they are to show is a response to the LORD's loyalty first given.



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

These are the terms for how they are to live in response to who the king is and what he has done for them.

It is covenant loyalty, seen in two expressions:

- Obeying the King's word. And,
- Love for the King Himself.



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:6

6 “Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left...”



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

“Continue obeying” literally means “to keep”, “guard”, or “watch over.” It’s the same word in Genesis 2:15 for Adam’s task in the garden “to work it and **watch over** it.”

Similarly, Israel was to watch over the word so that they would flourish in covenant loyalty in the land—which is a kind of new Eden.



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:7

...7 and so that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; do not serve them or bow in worship to them.



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:8

8 Instead, be loyal to the LORD your God, as you have been to this day.



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

“Be loyal” literally means “cling to.” It can also be translated as “bonds with” or “hold fast to” or “cleave to.”

It's the same verb used in Genesis 2:24, “This is why a man leaves his father and mother and **bonds with** his wife, and they become one flesh.”



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:11

**“11 So diligently watch yourselves! Love the LORD
your God!”**



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:11-12

“11 So diligently watch yourselves! Love the LORD your God! 12 If you ever turn away and become loyal to the rest of these nations...”

“Loyalty” here is the same as back in verse 8 (“be loyal”), which literally means “cling to.”



The Stipulations (Verses: 6-8, 11)

Joshua 23:11

“11 So diligently watch yourselves! Love the LORD your God!”

“Diligently watch” is the same word used back in verse 6 (“continue obeying”), which literally means “watch over.”



The Blessings & Curses (Verses: 12-13, 15-16)

Joshua 23:12-13

“12 If you ever turn away and become loyal to the rest of these nations remaining among you, and if you intermarry or associate with them and they with you, 13 know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out before you. ...



The Blessings & Curses (Verses: 12-13, 15-16)

Joshua 23:12-13

... They will become a snare and a trap for you, a sharp stick for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you disappear from this good land the LORD your God has given you."



The Blessings & Curses (Verses: 12-13, 15-16)

Joshua 23:15-16

“15 Since every good thing the LORD your God promised you has come about, so he will bring on you every bad thing until he has annihilated you from this good land the LORD your God has given you. ...”



The Blessings & Curses (Verses: 12-13, 15-16)

Joshua 23:15-16

“... 16 If you break the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow in worship to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land he has given you.”



Ezekiel 36:26-27

“26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.”

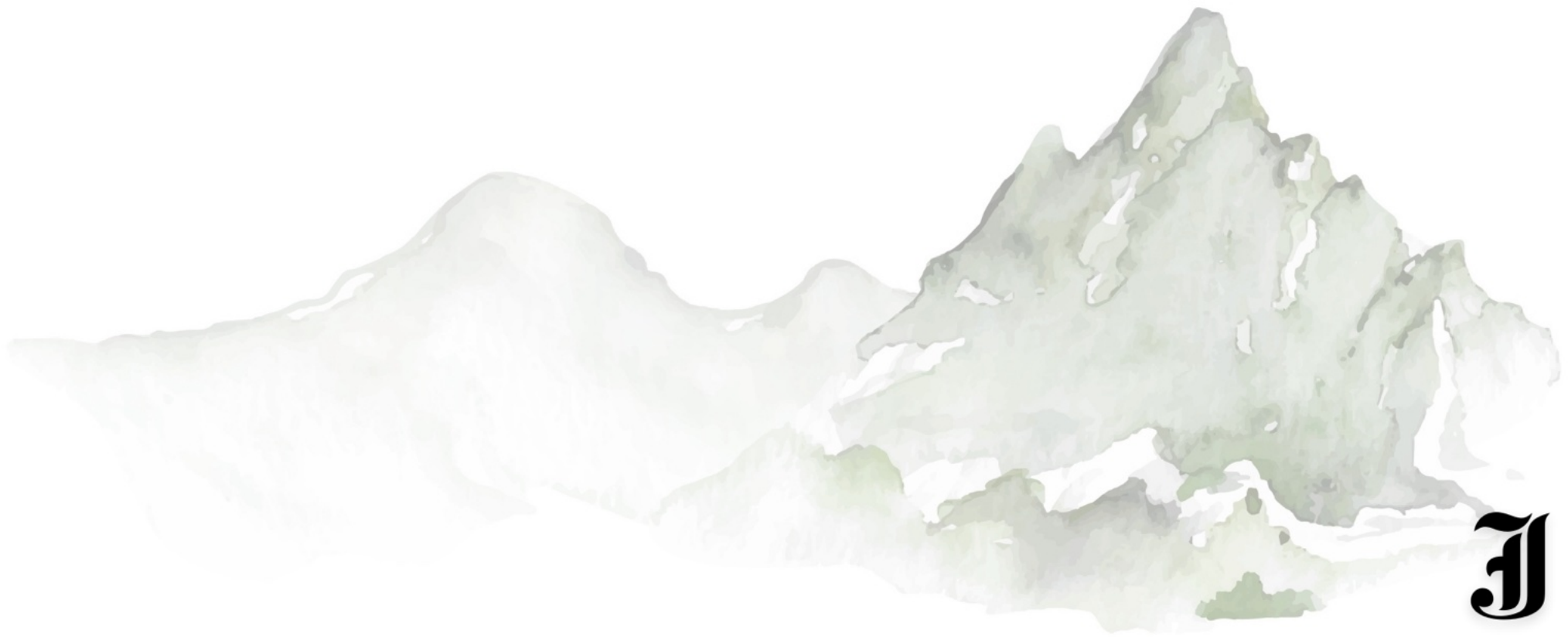


MAIN IDEA

In Joshua 23, God calls His people to two expressions of covenant loyalty, so we would remain loyal to God and not turn to idols—a loyalty ultimately fulfilled in Christ and now empowered in us to fulfill through the Holy Spirit.



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Obeys God's Word **(Verses: 6-8)**



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John 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commands."



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Obeys God's Word (Verses: 6-8)

Romans 8:4

"...4 in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Obeys God's Word (Verses: 6-8)

Meaning:

- **Jesus fulfilled the covenant by his perfect obedience.**
- **And now, by the Spirit's power, we can live in faithful obedience.**



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Obeys God's Word (Verses: 6-8)

**How to Pursue Spirit-empowered obedience to
God's Word:**

- **Anchor yourself in Scripture**
- **Resist cultural drift**
- **Depend on the Spirit**



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Loves God Himself

(Verses: 11-12)



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(Verses: 11-12)

Mark 12:30

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Loves God Himself (Verses: 11-12)

1 John 4:10, 19

“10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ... 19 We love because He first loved us.”



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Loves God Himself (Verses: 11-12)

Augustine describes our love drifting as, “disordered loves,” because we’re fundamentally driven not merely by rational thought, but by what we love most. And what we love most always shapes what we’re loyal to.



Spirit-Empowered Loyalty Loves God Himself

(Verses: 11-12)

Two Considerations to “diligently watch yourselves”:

- Marvel at God's love for you
- Identify and reorder disordered loves

