

POWER HOUR

6/21/2026

Lesson Text:
Joshua 24:2-13

Related Scriptures:
Genesis 11:27-12:9;
Exodus 14:1-31;
Numbers 21:21-35; 22:36 – 23:12;
Deuteronomy 9:1-5

“GOD’S MERCY IN HISTORY”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them. Joshua 24:13 NLT

Time: about 1390 B.C.

Place: Shechem

Joshua 24:2-13 NLT

¹ Then Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, including their elders, leaders, judges, and officers. So they came and presented themselves to God.

² Joshua said to the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River, and they worshiped other gods. ³ But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants through his son Isaac. ⁴ To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir, while Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. ⁵ “Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I brought terrible plagues on Egypt; and afterward I brought you out as a free people. ⁶ But when your ancestors arrived at the Red Sea, the Egyptians chased after you with chariots and charioteers. ⁷ When your ancestors cried out to the Lord, I put darkness between you and the Egyptians. I brought the sea crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them. With your very own eyes you saw what I did. Then you lived in the wilderness for many years. ⁸ “Finally, I brought you into the land of the Amorites on the east side of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I destroyed them before you. I gave you victory over them, and you took possession of their land. ⁹ Then Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, started a war against Israel. He

summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹⁰ but I would not listen to him. Instead, I made Balaam bless you, and so I rescued you from Balak. ¹¹ “When you crossed the Jordan River and came to Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them. ¹² And I sent terror ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory. ¹³ I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them.

INTRODUCTION

If there is one thing people in general are good at, it is forgetting. We need constant reminders of God's faithfulness. Joshua used his farewell speech to remind them of God's faithfulness and to renew the covenant with them. Their history stood as a witness against their rebellion and God's mercy.

We can benefit from reflecting on how God blessed Israel as well! If God called Abraham away from worshipping false gods, can He not save our wandering children? If He could deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt, can He not deliver us from bad things? If He delivered them with powerful miracles, can He not move powerfully in our lives today?

Additional Scripture Readings

God Calls Abraham. Genesis 11:27—12:9.

God's Power over Pharaoh. Exodus 7:1-13.

Israel's Victory over the Amorites. Numbers 21:21-35.

The Lord Reverses Balaam's Curse. Numbers 22:36—23:12.

Why God Gave Israel Victory. Deuteronomy 9:1-5.

A Warning to the Next Generation. Joshua 23:1-16.

Undeserved Deliverance and Gifts. Joshua 24:2-13.

1. History of promise (Joshua 24:2-4). Before confronting the Israelites with their sin and charging them to fear the Lord, Joshua recounted their history. He began with

their first father: Abraham, the man whom God had called out of idol worship and to whom God had promised blessing.

At first, it might seem surprising that Joshua specifically mentioned that Abraham worshipped false gods (Isaiah 43:27). However, the Israelites' immediate context explains this emphasis. They, like Abraham, were now in a land of idol worshippers. Because of this, Joshua reminded the people that God had separated Abraham and called him for His own—just as God had done for the Israelites. God had also fulfilled His promises to Abraham of future descendants, and those very descendants were in the land God had promised.

2. History of deliverance (Joshua 24:5-7). Having summarized the history of promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joshua moved to more recent history—the enslavement and deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Once again, the presence of idol worship is implied: the exodus, which was the defining event in the formation of the nation of Israel, was God's judgment on the false gods of Egypt and the declaration of His glory to all nations (see Exodus 12:12). In addition, the Israelites themselves had worshipped idols while in Egypt, and God's victory over them was a proclamation of His sovereignty and status as the only God (Joshua 24:14; and Ezekiel 20:7).

By reminding the Israelites of God's glory over the Egyptians and their false gods, Joshua was highlighting God's ability to save. The false gods were no help to the Egyptians; only God could and did save. It was His mercy alone to the Israelites that enabled them to pass through the Red Sea while the Egyptians were swept away by the waters (Exodus 14:1-4, 15-31). The Israelites had doubted God then, just as they would doubt God in the Promised Land. Their history, however, was a witness against them and a witness of God's mercy.

3. History of conquest (Joshua 24:8-13). Joshua finished the history of the Israelites by recalling the first conquests God had given them. By God's might, the Israelites had defeated all their enemies east of the Jordan. God had also protected them from Balak and the curses of Balaam, turning those curses into blessings. When Balaam's curses had failed, he then enticed the Israelites to sin through idolatry and sexual immorality (Revelation 2:14). Although Joshua did not explicitly mention this sin, the reference alone would have brought the Israelites' sin to mind as a

direct contrast to the mercy of God.

Joshua then finished the history by telling the people of the first conquest in the Promised Land itself. God, against all odds, destroyed the city of Jericho in a way that made His mercy clear. The Israelites' power had nothing to do with the conquest; they owed everything to God alone.

God consistently fulfilled His promises to His idolatrous people. Even though they did not deserve His presence, He continued to be with them as a demonstration of His mercy. We see the great depths of God's mercy when we contrast it with the Israelites' sin. Joshua knew this, so he used the Israelites' history as a witness against them, calling them to forsake all gods and be faithful to God alone, a command that applies to us today.

PRACTICAL POINTS

God calls people out of any background. We should not give up on people as lost causes (Joshua 24:2).

The Lord can work even in the most dysfunctional families. No one is beyond His help (vs.3-4).

The Lord can deliver from seemingly impossible situations (vss. 5-7).

We can trust the Lord to deal with His enemies (vss. 7-12).

We can trust the Lord to keep His promises, to protect & provide for us (vs. 8 - 13).

CONCLUSION

By recounting the Israelites' history, Joshua reminded them of their own sin in contrast to God's persistent mercy. This reminder led them to the choice to serve false gods or to serve the only Living God.

Although we are not a part of the nation of Israel under Joshua, the same choice applies to us today. Are we going to trust in our own strength and try to take control of our lives, turning ourselves into our own idol, or are we going to remember God's faithfulness to us in our own lives, along with His faithfulness in the history of salvation?

Next week, we see how God listened to the people as "**God Grants Israel a King**". **1 Samuel 8:1-18**. *Union Gospel Press, LifeStone*