

The Death of Joshua

Purpose: to show the legacy that Joshua left his generation and encourage us to build on the legacy that has been left to us.

At the beginning of this last chapter of the book of Joshua we saw what were the last words of Joshua. Now, at the end of this chapter, we are given a brief summary of his legacy. But what do we mean by legacy?

Definition: something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past. (Merriam-Webster)

- Legacy is what you leave for others
- Legacy is what others remember you for
- Legacy is the mark that you place on others
- Legacy is the way you affect others when you are gone

Here are three books that end with the death of the leader:

- Genesis ends with the death of Joseph
- Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses
- Joshua ends with the death of Joshua

Each death brought an end to one thing and the beginning of something else:

- Joseph brought the children of Israel out of famine and into Egypt
- Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the edge of the promised land
- Joshua brought the children of Israel into their inheritance in the promised land

At the end of the book of Joshua, the death of Joshua is recorded:

Jos 24:29 - Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old.

Jos 24:30 - And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

Jos 24:31 - Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Jos 24:32 - The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Jos 24:33 - And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging* to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

What are we told at the death of Joshua?

His age – he lived long. He is the oldest among them, because all the people that were his age and older had died in the wilderness. If he were a similar age as Caleb, he would have been around 80 years old when they entered the promised land, making him at least 20 years older than everyone else in Israel.

God gave him long life and great service:

Psa 91:14 - "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

Psa 91:15 - He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I *will be* with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.

Psa 91:16 - With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

His burial place – why is this mentioned? Because it was his inheritance. He had received what God had promised. God had been faithful to him:

Jos 19:49 - When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.

Jos 19:50 - According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.

His influence – they served God all of his days and his entire generation did the same. What a testimony to the life of this man!

Jos 24:31 - Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Two other things are mentioned in this passage:

1 - They buried the bones of Joseph:

Jos 24:32 - The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Why was this mentioned? This was a fulfilment of a prophetic statement from Joseph many years ago. It proved that God is all-knowing, faithful, and keeps His promises.

Gen 50:24 - And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Gen 50:25 - Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

#2 - Eleazer's death is recorded here:

Jos 24:33 - And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to Phinehas his son*, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

Why Eleazer? The ministry of the priesthood had fulfilled its service to their generation. They would have removed the holy garments from him and placed them on his son, who would be next in line to serve as high priest.

What was the legacy of Joshua?

All the people who saw the miracles that God had done has completed their work and had passed on. What had Joshua left them?

- An inheritance – the promised land
- The law of God – that which was given to them from Mt. Sinai
- A great example of the power of God and of His covenant and commitment to them

They had everything that they needed and all the potential to become a wise, holy and prosperous people. Joshua had set them up for success. It was now up to them to use or mis-use what was given to them.

What can we learn from the death of Joshua?

Joshua left an amazing legacy to the people that he served. As a Church, we have had three great men who served God in their generation, are now resting in their labours and their works follow them:

- **Elgin Taylor** founded the ministry and through his vision gave us the two building that we now possess. He also laid the spiritual foundation that is our DNA.
- **Loren Row** committed himself to the ministry and was an example of a servant. He was a key to keeping us together during turbulent times.
- **Les Leeder** served faithfully, especially in the areas of finance and teaching. His example is one of wisdom, faithfulness and humility.

Rev 14:13 - Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

We have everything that we need and all the potential to become a wise, holy and prosperous people. It is now up to us to use or mis-use what has been given to us. Let us also build on the foundations that have been laid for us.