

Jesus our Joshua (12)

Be Buried in your Inheritance. Joshua 24:14-33, Judges 2:6-15

“They buried *Joshua* in the land of his inheritance” –v. 30

“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God.” Rom 6:11.

In our introductory reflection we noted that the name Joshua in the Greek means ‘*God is salvation.*’ Like the name ‘Moses,’ (‘*one who draws forth*’ or ‘*redeemer*’) this is a type of human saviour. Both names reflected (a) the character and purpose of God (b) point forward to the Joshua of the New Covenant, ‘Jesus.’

The book of Joshua began with stories of triumph and here ends with a funeral. In fact, here we have Joshua’s farewell sermon. Joshua spells out the **just, holy nature of God**. God will have no rivals. The people needed to come to terms with putting away all other gods. The Lord had brought them out of Egypt, and faithfully protected them, working great signs and wonders. Israel’s God is also known for His **grace and favour**.

Joshua seems to offer Israel a choice between the old gods of their ancestors in Egypt, contemporary gods of Canaan. or the “Creator, Lord of Heaven and Earth.” Having reminded Israel of God’s mighty deeds---he then challenges the people to serve the Lord in the land God has given them and to rely completely on God’s intervention for their future security. Accepting the Covenant would be of extreme importance. While the 12 tribes had become unified through Joshua’s leadership, now however they were faced with a choice. God’s people faced a new land and the need to give up their old wilderness-life-habits and also to disconnect themselves from the dazzling lure of Canaan’s wealth, power and sex. The old habits and gods were familiar and comfortable. They were alluring, spell binding, but empty. **Are there similarities today?**

Does God have ‘*church-cultured-grandchildren*’ or does ‘*spiritual-new-birth*’ require a conscious choice? (Josh. 25:15, John 3:14-15) **Today then what do we choose?**

Christians not only believe in the existence of God’s truth, but they believe that in Christ they come to share in the way, truth and life. If our cotemporary friends are to take us seriously then they will be confronted with a ‘*living truth*’ that becomes evident in who we are and our life-practise (John 17:22)

As Christians we need go beyond just thinking about issues. **Joshua confronted the people with choice**. In an objective way we need courage to choose to engage with those we disagree with. It is easy to settle and to be content with being ‘right’ in our own eyes. It is all too easy to find reasons for ‘*going with the flow,*’ for not being who we are by making a stand. Often only under extreme provocation do we tend to contest, question or confront. What did Jesus do?

When Joshua died his burial in the promised land signalled the end of his earthly pilgrimage with God. We will all die but no matter how we die or what happens to our present bodies on this earth, to be united with Jesus means we have already died with him. *“The death he died, he died to sin, once for all: but the life he lives, he lives to God. So, you also must consider yourselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**”* (Rom.6:3-4,10-11)

Christ’s grave was set apart. His resurrection power has become our inheritance. When we are physically buried in that inheritance we will remain with Christ until the day when we will rise to a new life and death will reign no more. Practicing the principle of loyalty within the visible institutional church, amid the turmoil and confusion of our time **requires choice and courage** but like Joshua we can be bold when it counts by making our position clear and by making it clear, “as for me and my house-hold we will serve the Lord.” !!

Discussion:

(1) In Roman 6 we are encouraged to *‘consider yourselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**’* In practical terms how do we claim and encourage growth in this new self understanding and identity?

(2) From the start, --“the Church’s mission was **neither easy, nor military.** Nor was it an **‘invasion’** for that matter. The whole point was that the Creator of the world was reclaiming his rightful possession from usurping powers. ---The victory was indeed won, the revolution was launched. Through the suffering of Jesus, it is now implemented, put into effective operation, by the **suffering of his people.**” (2 Cor. 6:4-10) ---

In Western churches **“this message about the necessity of suffering has not been really understood---the revolution that began on the cross only works through the cross.”** *“The Day the Revolution Began,”* N.T. Wright 2018, p367.

(3) Being renewed does not mean; *‘get busy and find some different or better method of Christian action.’* It means: *‘Expose yourself to the life-giving work of God.---the renewal of the Church does not begin with more or less solemn decisions of synods, conferences or committees, but with encounter between God and men, in which God takes hold of the situation and empowers them to serve as instruments of renewal. So, we must be continually on the watch for the initiatives which he will take.’*

‘The Renewal of the Church’, W.A. Visser T. Hooft 1955, p 90.

Rev E. A. Curnow trained in the Adelaide Bible College before entering ordained ministry. His creative gifts have had a rural focus spanning South Australia, Victoria, and two years in Cornwall with the Methodist Church. He has documented the pioneer church in *‘Bible Christian Methodism in South Australia 1850-1900’* and in retirement continues to preach and services a website with an Evangelical focus.

www.tedcurnow.wordpress.com

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