

Worship God Only

Key Verse: *"If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*
—Joshua 24:15

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 24:1-24

OUR LESSON IS A REMINDER

of God's first commandment to Israel: "I am the LORD thy God. ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exod. 20:2,3) In addition, since no one can make a likeness or image of God because no human has seen him, Israel was given a second command: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God." —vss. 4,5

God addressed these words to his chosen people, Israel, in conjunction with giving them the Law Covenant, which they promised him they would keep. God knew that the basis for any success they might have in keeping his covenant would, first and foremost, lie in their worship and obedience to him only, and to no other being or object. He wanted all the affections, confidence and trust of his people. This was not selfishness on God's part, but was for their ultimate good.

Looking at the words spoken by Joshua in our Key Verse, we see that, over time, the children of Israel had fallen well short of what God had commanded. Still later, in Elijah's day, we find yet further evidence of Israel's lack of obedience. Elijah confronted the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him." (I Kings 18:21) The lesson contained in the words of Joshua and Elijah applied not only to Israel, but also to us. As Christians, we make decisions each day whether to serve God and his Son, Christ Jesus, or serve various other "gods" in our life.

With regard to our lesson, indecision is not an option. In fact, indecisiveness is one of the greatest foes of character building. We have the liberty of choice, of exercising our free will. This is one of the important elements of the image and likeness of God, in which we were created. As Joshua asked the Israelites to decide whether they would be faithful to the Lord, or serve other gods, we also must daily make positive decisions as respects our course of life. Thus, Joshua gave witness of his decision: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24) The word "Mammon" signifies riches, but also denotes any object, condition, or character quality that originates from fallen man or Satan. God has purposely put the matter so that we cannot be servants of any of these and also be servants of God. As James points out, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:8) In our decisions, we are brought to the testing point—"Is God first in our lives?"

We should have no idols, whatever they might be, which will attract our devotion away from God, and tempt us to ignore the rich blessings which he is now offering to us. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed, ... that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:2 ■