

Joshua Chapter 23: Parallels with Moses' Ministry

1. Introduction

- Joshua's actions in chapter 23 closely mirror Moses' actions toward the end of his ministry.

2. Key Parallels Between Moses and Joshua

- **Moses** gathered Israel and the elders; **Joshua** gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem.
- **Moses** renewed the covenant; **Joshua** renewed the covenant.
- **Moses** forbade idolatry; **Joshua** forbade idolatry and warned against intermarriage (which could lead to idolatry).
- **Moses** had the law written in stone; **Joshua** wrote a memorial on stone.
- **Moses** was succeeded by Joshua; **Joshua** was succeeded by elders.
- **Moses** warned against following other gods; **Joshua** warned against serving other gods.
- **Moses** foretold that God would bring a nation against them if they disobeyed; **Joshua** warned of perishing if they turned away.

3. Joshua's Reminder to Israel (Joshua 23:14)

- **Joshua's Declaration:** "Behold, this day I am going the way of the earth (meaning he was going to die)."
- **God's Fulfilled Promises:** Joshua reminds Israel that everything God promised has come true.
- **God's Blessing:** God desires to bless His people, but there are consequences for disobedience.

4. Consequences of Disobedience (Joshua 23:15)

- **Warning:** As God has fulfilled His good promises, He will also bring evil upon them if they turn away.

- **Pastor Rafferty's Insight:** God is not at war with people, but with sin, and He is committed to completely annihilating sin.

5. Understanding God's Nature and Judgment

- **God's Judgment on Sin:** Sin's annihilation is not only judgment but also mercy, as it prevents sin from continuing.
- **The Misconception of God's Nature:** We often misunderstand God's judgment, seeing it as wrath against people rather than against sin.

6. Exodus 34: Revelation of God's Nature

- **Moses and God's Revelation:** Moses asks to see God's face, but God says no one can see His face and live.
 - God places Moses in the cleft of a rock, covers him with His hand, and passes by while proclaiming His name.
- **The Name of the Lord:** In **Revelation 19**, we learn that the name of the Lord is the Word of God. When God passed by Moses, He proclaimed the Word of God, revealing His nature.

7. God's Self-Description (Exodus 34:6-7)

- **How God Describes Himself:** "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, long-suffering, slow to anger."
- **God's Justice:** While merciful, God does not clear the guilty. His long-suffering and mercy should not be mistaken for letting sin persist, which is not mercy.
- **The Importance of Justice:** Eradicating sin is an act of justice.

8. Conclusion

- **Context of God's Wrath:** God is not at war with us, but with sin. His actions in judgment are motivated by His commitment to eliminating sin.