

Sunday School Notes for 27 August: Making choices (Joshua 24)

We all have to make choices every day. What will we wear today? What shall we drink? What shall we play? Who shall we play/ associate with? And one of the biggest choices we have to make is about God. Today many people think God is out of date so they just ignore this choice – but actually they are still making a choice. (Jesus said “whoever is not with me is against me” (Matt 12:30))

Joshua knew that as soon as all the folk who had seen God’s power died their children and grandkids might not bother about God. In fact, by the time he was about to die, this was already happening. So he knew he had to take a stand.

He gathered all the leaders together and asked them to think about the choices they were making.

He began by reminding them of their history from Abraham on, highlighting how God had helped them. He pointed out that without God they wouldn’t have had their successes, nor their cities, nor their farms. He reminded them that they couldn’t play games with God and try to worship God alongside idols.

Then Joshua challenged them to destroy the useless, un-powerful idols and to choose to love the only true God: “Choose you this day whom you will serve ... but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” And the people shouted out that they would remember God always: “We also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

Joshua warned them that this meant sticking to God’s laws and respecting him so they mustn’t promise if they didn’t mean it, but they repeated their promise. Then Joshua wrote down the words of God and what they had said. He then made another memorial stone to remind them of God’s promises and their promise.

And the people remembered their promise - for a few years! But when all those who had experienced God’s help in the wilderness and in the land of promise had died, their descendants allowed the other people in the land to influence them and they

began to forget about God's love and power. All the memorial stones they had didn't remind them of God's power or his holiness or his law. It wasn't (and still isn't) enough just to hear about God, we have to choose to love him.

And you can guess what happened when the people got out of touch with God? Yes, things started to go wrong for them. No one (then or now) can manage without God.