

Ye Cannot Serve the LORD

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And Joshua said unto the people,
Ye cannot serve the LORD:
for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God;
he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.
Joshua 24:19 (full context Joshua 24:1-31)

Joshua was a preacher to Israel before dying. He was instant in season – insistent, pressing, urgent – to a church promising loyalty to Jehovah. His sober words, Ye cannot serve the LORD, are not absolute, for then he nor they could do what he said his family would do and what he expected Israel to do. Rather, he had seen Israel’s tendency to compromise, saw the temptations of surrounding nations, and knew that serving holy and jealous Jehovah was not an easy or light thing, as Israel experienced in the wilderness. The nation kept their covenant only a short while, for the book of Judges follows, with Israel serving other gods, when Joshua and the elders of his generation died. Our Joshua (Jesus) preached, Count up the cost, or ye cannot be my disciple. [Pastor’s Update, January 27, 2026].

Theme: Serving Jehovah or Jesus is a very serious choice that demands counting and paying the high cost.

Suggested Links:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who Is on the LORD’S Side? ... (1991).2. Belly Worshipers ... (2001).3. Perilous Times ... (2000).4. Contemporary Christianity ... (2000) ... Contemporary Christianity (2 sermons).5. Blue Fringe Holiness ... (2007) ... Holiness of God.6. Nice Christian Heretics ... (2009) ... Beware of Nice Christian Heretics.7. Another Jesus ... (2015).8. Cut It Down! ... (2006).9. Carnal Christians ... (2000).10. Is Jesus Lord? ... (2001) ... Is Jesus Lord? (2 sermons). | <ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Lose Your Life to Find It ... (2022).12. They Promise Them Liberty ... (2004) ... They Promise Them Liberty (2 Sermons).13. True Grace and False Grace ... (2005) ... True Grace and False Grace (2 Sermons).14. Spirit and Truth (John 4:20-24) ... (2016) ... Spirit and Truth of John 4:20-24.15. The Sword of Christ ... (2012).16. Biblical Separation ... (2003).17. Few There Be that Find It ... (2003).18. Are You a Bible Christian? ... (2005).19. God Hates Compromise ... (2001).20. God Is Jealous ... (2005) ... The Lord Is Jealous. |
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Introduction:

1. The goal and purpose of these sermons is for you and me to know the sober warning of Joshua 24 that I was convicted by 50 years ago and how it fits with the rest of scripture, especially Matthew 11’s end.
2. Throughout the Bible are appeals and warnings about serving the LORD, from Moses in Deuteronomy to Joshua here to David to Solomon to the prophets to our Lord and Paul and then our Lord again; we do not want to err either in our knowledge of God’s nature or His expectations of our devotion to Him.
3. Many love and declare like Joshua, *As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD* (Joshua 24:15).
4. But few know the God of Joshua and the strictness to serve Him (Josh 24:19), which Joshua knew (a) by the character of Israel he had seen his whole life, (b) by the heathen remnants living among them, and (c) by God at Sinai, cursing his generation, Moses kept from Canaan, plagues, Korah, Achan, etc.
5. We live in a generation that has watered down authority, accountability, and punishment, and along with it, Christians and churches have watered down the character of God, theology, judgment, worship.
6. We pray for God to preserve us that we may promote and publish Him and His Son, and thus this topic.
7. A good portion of the church recently heard a sermon from 1991, [Who Is on the LORD’S Side?](#)
8. Paul, even in an excellent church like Philippi, warned often with tears about belly worshippers, for all

men tend toward compromise with their lusts and the world due to their inherited depravity ... **Belly Worshippers**.

9. We do not preach God's love at the same time as His wrath, lest we confuse or dilute them both ... **The Love of God – (#1)**.
10. Joshua = Jesus (Acts 7:45; Heb 4:9) = Jehovah is salvation (Matt 1:21). Both preached true religion.
11. These sermons are for you and me ... to make sure we think correctly about the most important duty in life – worship of God that is acceptable to Him (II Cor 5:9-11; Hebrews 12:28-29; John 4:20-24).
12. Because the Pauline perilous times are obvious all around us in America and other nations, we must be vigilant against their distortion of God and corruption of scripture for religious compromise ... **Perilous Times**.
13. Your pastor's sabbatical last year was to examine 50 services/sermons to see what we might learn to do better ourselves and to observe the decline of content and reverence in most conservative churches.
14. Our goal is to stand against ungodly religious trends and to correct any corruption of related scripture.
15. We must exalt the God of Joshua, for He is the same today; we must not deceive ourselves about Him.
16. We must exalt Bible preaching against "smooth things" and sermon content that takes the true God of the Bible away from men (Is 30:8-11), which also matches the N.T. perilous times in error and remedy.

And Joshua said unto the people,

- A. Context: Joshua, after many years of service and before dying, in two chapters taught and warned the whole nation of Israel and its leaders to be faithful to Jehovah their God.
- B. Joshua was at least 40 years older than anyone else in Israel (only Caleb and he entered Canaan of those over 20 fifty years earlier), and he had seen much of God and of Israel.
- C. Joshua had seen everything from the plagues in Egypt to God on Mount Sinai, assisted Moses for 40 years, spied out the land faithfully, and lead Israel after Moses' death.
- D. He led many battles in Canaan to destroy their enemies with divine direction, seeing the mighty works of God in those victories, and he divided the land to Israel's tribes by lot.
- E. He was a great statesman for Israel and a faithful representative of God; this key event at the end of his life was a crucial warning before Israel went home to their inheritances.
- F. Consider, from Abraham in Haran to this event of sending Israel to their homes was about 480 years, during which time they were together as a congregation but would now be spread through Canaan with some heathen to prove them (Judges 2:3,20-23; 3:1-4).
- G. Serving God is a covenant obligation (Joshua 7:11,15; 23:16; 24:25; Judges 2:20); ours is initiated by baptism and extended by joining the temple of God with Christ as Head, and whether a formal covenant agreement is used or not, His N.T. rules are the covenant.
- H. This great leader that succeeded Moses and brought Israel into Canaan warned Israel; he did not comfort them, for they did not need comfort; they needed a severe warning; Isaiah 40 and such places with comfort are part of the gospel, but certainly not all of it.
- I. He warned about remaining nations having influence on them to depart from Jehovah; if they

compromised in marriage or religion, God would turn from their friend to enemy.

- J. He was a faithful barking dog in these words, for they could not act like their fathers and compromise with the heathen due to God's strict standards (Is 56:9-12; Ps 78:1-8).
- K. Jehovah had fulfilled every promise of good things to Israel, but He would turn to bring all evil things upon them until they were destroyed, if they were to sin (Josh 23:14-15).
- L. God did not care about any past obedience, if they were to break covenant (Ezek 18:24).
- M. He reviewed God's great blessings and appealed to them to serve Him (Josh 24:11-14), reducing it to a simple either/or decision, stating he would serve Jehovah (Josh 24:15).
- N. The people answered Joshua that they were as committed to God as he (Josh 24:16-18).
- O. Joshua, being the perfect preacher like Jesus, denied their easy promise (Joshua 24:19).
- P. He continued to warn, though they all agreed, and made a covenant (Joshua 24:20-28).
- Q. Israel obeyed while Joshua and contemporaries lived (Joshua 24:29-31; Judges 2:6-13).

Ye cannot serve the LORD:

- A. Though he said he would, and they agreed to also serve God, Joshua denied or mocked them; this is proper preaching, stressing a key lesson, not its explanations or exceptions.
- B. Many might call such a harsh denial of Israel as cruel, domineering, negative, unloving; but this inspired man of God had character, conviction, fear, and wisdom they did not.
- C. Never forget these inspired words, for they war against false knowledge of God; they declare truth that is rarely preached but that agrees perfectly with our Joshua (Jesus).
- D. Never dislike or resent this verse, for it will show ignorance or rebellion against the true religion of the God of the Bible, which is very contrary to contemporary Christianity.
- E. Love this strong warning about backsliding or compromising, for that is what it is, as Joshua knew this church and its tendencies, the same tendencies of most churches today.
- F. Popular Christianity with another Jesus, spirit, and gospel will sound loving, warm, and friendly in comparison to the truth, with their different God, doctrine, and worldview.
- G. His statement is not absolute, for he said he would do it, and he expected Israel to do it.
- H. His statement is not absolute, but strong enough to warn them clearly and free his soul.
 - I. He knew their wandering hearts, surrounding temptations, and Jehovah's holy jealousy.
- J. He knew the horror of 50 yrs. earlier when they would not take Canaan and were cursed, and then it was too late to repent and gain His blessing, and He killed them all over 20.
- K. His statement may be modified this way to grasp it: *Ye cannot serve the LORD ... as easily as you presume, for it must be done soberly and zealously according to His rules.*
- L. His warning was a prophecy, for they soon compromised (Josh 24:31; Judges 2:6-15).
- M. God Jehovah is very great and very high – think governor and deceiver (Mal 1:8,14) – and fear and hate any compromise of devotion, service, worship, or zeal in His religion.
- N. Our Joshua (Jesus) preached the same negative way to followers (Luke 14:26,27,33); they both preached

the same: Ye cannot serve the LORD = Ye cannot be my disciple; Jesus made discipleship a costly decision and taught counting and paying the high cost.

- O. His religion requires hatred of dear relatives (Luke 14:26; Matthew 10:21-22,34-39), which is understood in comparison to love of Christ, but Jesus did not explain it then.
- P. His religion requires denying yourself for a daily cross (Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:38-39).
- Q. His religion required crucifying or mortifying your lusts (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5).
- R. His religion requires cutting off hands and plucking out eyes (Matt 5:29-30; 18:8-9).
- S. His religion is found only by a few – no popular, growing church is His (Matt 7:13-14).
- T. Foolish compromisers think that God is like them due to no instant death (Ps 50:21-23).
- U. It is better to never know the way of righteousness than to turn from it (II Pet 2:20-22).
- V. Just minding earthly things is shameful belly worship against Christ (Phil 3:18-19).
- W. Worship is more than spirit and truth – it is reverence and godly fear (Heb 12:28-29).
- X. Compare similar verses that show God’s strictness (Psalm 130:3; 143:2; Job 9:2-3).
- Y. This verse is the terror of the Lord, matching Jesus’ apostles (II Cor 5:9-11), who taught fear of Him often (Acts 2:34-36; 13:44-52; 17:30-31; 24:24-25; 28:25-29), without any mention of the love of God in any form of the verb or in any context in the book of Acts.
- Z. We want the crown of the road, which avoids the ditch denying ability to worship God acceptably and avoids the ditch of casual, contemporary, compromising Christianity.

YE CANNOT SERVE THE LORD (Joshua in OT)

- A. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you do not love me with all heart, mind, soul, strength.
- B. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you flirt with or marry any of the neighbors around you.
- C. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you think you can have a few strange gods beside me.
- D. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you try to serve me with the customs of other nations.
- E. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you lack gladness of heart for abundance of all things.
- F. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you listen to heresy by a dear friend like your own soul.
- G. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you think I am anything like you as you befriend sinners.
- H. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you modify my holy “due order” in all worship details.
- I. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you criticize, disrespect, or disobey my chosen leaders.
- J. *Ye cannot serve the LORD* ... if you allow lightness by prophets about my sober religion.

YE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE (Jesus in NT)

- A. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you do not hate all family and friends compared to me.
- B. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you like earthly things and think you can love them too.
- C. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you dislike hard preaching and pulpit warfare against you.
- D. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you like to hear and explore contemporary worship ideas.

- E. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you want God and Christ in your life without any pressure.
- F. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you think private devotions is a substitute for the church.
- G. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you think books by women or Arminians are like Bible.
- H. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you do not practice all 15 aspects of charity toward others.
 - I. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you are reluctant to curse false doctrine and reject heretics.
- J. *Ye cannot be my disciple* ... if you allow any promised liberty that compromises holiness.

Objection: *Jesus said His yoke is easy and burden light, so lighten up (Matt 11:28-30)!*

1. Most of us have had a superficial grasp of these verses, and because we have heard them or thought of them the same way for a long time, it takes special effort to see them fit the rest of scripture and be limited to spiritual gospel rest without natural life promises.
2. Remember the simple rules of Bible hermeneutics – these verses must fit perfectly with all of scripture, especially the rest of Jesus Christ’s teaching (II Pet 1:20); there cannot be a contradiction in the Bible, and these verses do not alter or modify at all the strictness and severity of following the Jesus of the Bible as a dedicated Christian, as Asaph learned in Psalm 73 and Paul declared our religion was most miserable without heaven.
3. This loved passage is not about an easy Christian life or softening of discipleship; it does not offer a bed of roses for Christians or suggest retirement after baptism; it does not allow casual, easy churches without hard preaching, expectations, or accountability; Jesus had, and His followers will have, much tribulation (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22); these verses are more about salvation (conversion) and soul rest by submission to hardship.
4. Let us answer this popular objection, for it sounds like it is against Joshua’s inspired warning; it is used by some to justify wide-gate religion; some think Jesus taught 75 minutes a Sunday (or less) and prayer before meals is enough; some use the verses to reject strict discipleship, doctrinal dogmatism, intense preaching, detailed religion, and accountability; the text is used to promote today’s casual Christianity the Bible rejects.
5. These verses do not alter Jesus’ strict religion of self-denial, losing your life, a strait gate and narrow way few find, taking up a cross daily, plucking out eyes, austere demand for a yield on talents/pounds, pulpit warfare with hearers, etc. that He preached with all authority (Sermon on Mount), calling for hate of all dear relatives (Luke 14:25-33), and driving away carnal hearers with hard doctrine (John 6; John 8; John 10), etc.
6. The context is Jesus seeing God’s distinguishing grace to reveal His gospel to despised and simple babes and not to their exalted and self-righteous religious leaders, and these previously rejected souls were invited by our Lord to try His religion instead of Israel’s; the context is inviting them to believe on Him for salvation and His gracious leadership.
7. What labor and burden are here? Guilt of sin, fear of God’s wrath, and hopelessness, for Moses’ religion never comforted the conscience, and Pharisees added burdens (Matt 23:4), and in this setting were truly repentant babes to whom God had revealed Jesus, and while they heard and saw Jesus with gladness, He invited them to believe on Him.

8. What labor and burden are here? Ephraim (Jer 31:18-20), a woman (Luke 7:36-50), the prodigal (Luke 15:17), the publican (Luke 18:13), Jerusalem (Luke 19:42), a thief (Luke 23:40-43), Peter's hearers (Acts 2:37), Saul (Acts 9:4,6,9), the jailor (Acts 16:29-30).
9. What labor and burden are not here? Finding out being a wife and mother are a lot of work ... being a good church member takes effort, cost, sacrifice, and time ... a Bible pastor pressing doctrine, duties, and involvement that may irritate ... not getting much praise for all you do ... people hating and hurting you for Jesus' sake ... a church that has sober assemblies in an effort to worship with reverence and godly fear ... crushed by duties and fear of financial or professional failure ... tiredness by long sermons, etc.
10. What labor and burden are here? In summary, the labor and burden are the exhausting, futile, and frustrating attempt to save themselves or please God through Mount Sinai legalism, exacerbated by Pharisee burdens, while Jesus offered the restful yoke of grace; compare to the poor in spirit, the mourners, and the hungry and thirsty (Matt 5:3-12).
11. It was soul rest (not lifestyle ease) from guilt and fear due to sin, temptation, and vain religion; the rest is not body or natural life rest, but spiritual by obedience (Jer 6:16), for Paul had more affliction than any other, but he called it light (II Cor 4:17, 12:7-10).
12. The rest in context is gospel rest by precious things revealed to babes and believed by them that resulted in knowing God and His Son in spirit over letter to gain confident assurance of eternal life through His work (Jn 14:6; II Cor 3:6-18; Heb 4:9; Rev 22:17).
13. Coming to Christ is gospel faith in Him (John 6:29,35-37), by the Father revealing His Son (Matt 11:25-27) and drawing men to Jesus (John 6:44-47,64-65), by which they have a liberated conscience and can feast on the gospel (Is 55:1-2; Jn 4:10-14; 7:37-39), with this passage in Isaiah being a fabulous cross-reference for these Matthew verses.
14. Jesus said it was a religious yoke and burden (not bed and sleep), for carrying a weight and/or pulling a load; Christians must crucify or mortify worldly lusts, avoid flirting or friendship with the world, and diligently produce much fruit and good works for heaven; His rules of character and conduct are still expected with divine and apostolic authority.
15. His yoke is easy and burden light compared to the bondage of false religion (Heb 2:15), compared to the hopelessness of a condemned conscience, being despised by Israel's religious leaders, and no provision of joy, peace, hope, strength and more by the Spirit.
16. His yoke is easy and burden light compared to the distractions created by contemporary Christians e.g. fulfill the Great Commission, dig wells in Africa, subsidize devil worship in Haiti, run a rescue mission downtown, demonstrate in front of abortion clinics, etc., rather than seek the ministries of the Holy Spirit and joyfully fulfill Christian life duties.
17. His yoke and burden includes meekness and lowliness in heart, which Jesus showed us, for this humble and lowly Son learned obedience by suffering, which we learn from Him by the example He set and reward He earned (Heb 5:6-10); our ease and lightness comes by submitting to His rules and circumstances, not by avoiding or resenting either.
18. How was Jesus meek and lowly, for us to learn? By His humility for incarnation and losing all reputation (Phil 2:5-7), by accepting a life of deprivation and trouble without a proper bed (Matt 8:20), and by

submitting to a cruel trial and torturous death (Is 53:7), which if we learn His heart, makes His rules easier (I Peter 2:18-23; 4:1-5; Heb 2:10).

19. If we lose all for Him, which is still required of all followers of Christ, we gain by Holy Spirit fellowship and power (Rom 5:2,5; 15:13), God's faithfulness to limit temptations and make a way to escape and bear them (I Cor 10:13; Phil 4:13), repayment in kind 100 times (Mark 10:28-30; Matt 10:39; 16:25; II Cor 9:6-11), and eternal life that far outweighs any affliction in this life (Rom 8:18; II Thess 1:7-10; Phil 1:23; Heb 12:1-3).

For he is an holy God:

- A. The first reason Joshua gave against Israel being able to serve Jehovah was His holiness.
- B. **Holy.** Spiritual perfection or purity. Free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect and unsullied, infinite moral perfection as found in God. He abhors and abominates both sin and sinners and His fierce wrath will burn against both.
- C. Let us say for understanding, *Ye cannot serve the LORD, for His moral standard of perfection and hatred of sin is far greater than yours and can only be met by great effort.*
- D. God Jehovah is holy (Leviticus 11:45; 19:2; Psalm 99:5,9; Isaiah 6:1-4; Revelation 4:8).
- E. God is free from sin or temptation (Job 34:10; Deut 32:4; I Jn 1:5; Heb 7:26; Jas 1:13).
- F. He has perfect hatred for sin (Hebrews 1:9; Proverbs 6:16-19; 8:13; Psalm 5:5-7; 7:11).
- G. He cannot look on evil approvingly or accept compromise (Hab 1:13; Ezekiel 20:39).
- H. He is a holy God and ordered shoes off and terrified Isaiah (Exodus 3:5; Isaiah 6:5-7).
 - I. Read how severely He judged details of Cain, Moses, Nadab and Abihu, David, Uzziah.
- J. God ordered a man stoned for picking up sticks and a ribband of blue (Num 15:30-41).
- K. He still expects holiness in the N.T. (Matthew 5:19; Heb 13:8; 12:28-29; I Pet 1:13-16).
- L. It is true separation from sin and the world (II Cor 6:14 – 7:1; Eph 5:27; II Pet 3:11,14).
- M. Never measure your holiness by hated sins but rather by those you tend toward, for our holy God does not make such distinctions – He hates all sins, especially your favorites.
- N. Many at Corinth were weak and sickly and many died for their sins (I Cor 11:29-31), and while we may have mentioned this many times, do you get Joshua's warning of it?
- O. Many Christians today are guilty of a symptom of perilous times – unholy (II Tim 3:2), which is clearly one of the ways Jehovah cannot be served and Jesus cannot be followed.
- P. Preaching better make a difference, for that is part of the job (Ezek 22:26; 44:23), and N.T. apostles covered details of female modesty, marital sex, speech, rulers, drink, etc.
- Q. For more about the holiness of God, sermons and outline, *Blue Ribbon Holiness ... Holiness of God.*
- R. For more about the severity of God against what we might think are minor faults ... *Why sweat small stuff?*.

He is a jealous God;

- A. The second reason Joshua gave against Israel being able to serve God was His jealousy.
- B. **Jealous.** Passionate possessiveness and selfish obsession to claim total devotion from a person; also great fear and/or anger at the thought of unfaithfulness in a beloved object.
- C. Let us say for understanding, *Ye cannot serve the LORD, for He both created and saved you, and He expects your total devotion and loyalty to Him over anything or anyone.*
- D. God Jehovah is jealous (Exodus 34:14; 20:5; Deut 6:15; Nahum 1:1-9; Ezekiel 38:19).
- E. The first commandment is His demand for all your love (Deut 6:4-5; 10:12; Matt 22:37).
- F. God graphically compared false religion to spiritual adultery, fornication, or whoredom in both testaments to raise attention to the importance of loyalty and anger of infidelity.
- G. Our Joshua (Jesus) is intolerant of lost first love or lacking hot passion (Rev 2:4; 3:16), and instead of sound bites for both churches, grasp the severe standard and punishment.
- H. Befriending the world, flirting in context of adultery, is to be God's enemy (James 4:4).
 - I. Our Joshua demands total devotion and denies serving two masters (Matthew 6:19-24).
- J. Among other faults, He promised total ruin for lack of glad gratitude (Deut 28:47-48).
- K. God judged Eli severely for not restraining his evil sons more aggressively (I Sam 3:13), which compromise and punishment could be included in all three of Joshua's reasons.
- L. In the N.T., our Joshua (Jesus) required disciples to hate dear relatives (Luke 14:25-33), and He promised to make sure we get the choice to show Him (Matt 10:21,34-37), just as He left nations among Israel to prove their faithfulness (Judges 2:3,20-23; 3:1-4).
- M. Think about this rule of discipleship and worship that Jesus emphasized – hatred of dearest relationships – rather than not doing drugs, rather than praying for hours, etc.
- N. Think about what it really means – if you are messed up by family in whatever way they tempt you to compromise, then you cannot be His disciple, for He requires hatred.
- O. When meeting seekers, He identified the cost and slighted the excuses (Luke 9:57-62).
- P. Remember that many Christians risked their lives to follow Jesus according to the Bible, and the history of the martyrs for many hundreds of years shows Christ's true followers.
- Q. The Bible has no mercy for those that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor 16:22).
- R. For other teaching about jealousy with a different perspective and verses ... **God Is Jealous!, The Lord is Jealous.**
- S. For more about His jealousy by referring to idolatry or worldliness as adultery ... **Spiritual Adultery (2 sermons).**

He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

- A. The third reason Joshua gave against Israel being able to serve God was strict severity.
- B. We know God forgives like no other, and we depend on it and trust it often, but there are times and ways that He will not forgive, and ignorance here defrauds the true God.

- C. Let us say for understanding, *Ye cannot serve the LORD, for you can foolishly limit His mercy by frequent backslidings, neglect of His means of grace, or presumptuous sins.*
- D. Only the Bible reveals God's character, and His mercy is limited (Ex 34:7; Nahum 1:3), if you provoke Him too much or reject too many reminders (Prov 29:1; Rev 2:20-23).
- E. God warned Israel about provoking an Angel that would not pardon (Exodus 23:20-33).
- F. Fifty years before, Israel listened to ten spies, and God had no mercy (Num 14:20-45); He cursed that generation and their repentance meant nothing (Ps 95:8-11; Heb 3:7-19).
- G. Fifty years before, Israel angered Moses so he smote a rock rather than speak to it, and God denied his prayers to enter Canaan (Ps 106:32-33; Num 27:12-14; Deut 3:23-27).
- H. Jehovah killed 36 for Achan's sin; He swore against the family tree of Eli for not restraining his sons (I Sam 3:11-14); He killed 70,000 for David numbering the nation.
- I. Hundreds of years later, Manasseh and other kings ended any remedy (II Chron 36:16); Isaiah warned before Manasseh's violence and idolatry that mercy was over (Is 27:11).
- J. God cursed His Son's generation like Israel in the wilderness, and there was no sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful and fiery judgment (Heb 2:1-4; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:25-29).
- K. Jesus did not coddle or comfort the lazy servant that buried his pound due to fear, but instead took it away and gave it to the diligent seeker with ten already (Luke 19:20-27).
- L. God rejected and destroyed those excusing themselves from the gospel and kingdom of His Son, for the offered privilege was incredibly kind (Matt 22:1-7; Luke 14:16-24).
- M. Abounding grace through Jesus Christ is far greater than abounding sin (Rom 5:20-21), but it does not allow continued sinning for grace to abound (Romans 6:1-2; 8:1,4).
- N. God's promises are for perfect holiness (II Cor 7:1), heaven all diligence (II Pet 1:5-11).
- O. It is better to never know the way of righteousness than to turn from it (II Pet 2:20-22).
- P. There is a sin unto death, and it should not be prayed for (I John 5:16; see I Sam 16:1; Jer 11:14; 14:11-12; 15:1; Ezek 14:14; II Thess 3:1-2; II Tim 4:14; Hebrews 12:16-17).
- Q. For much more about God's limited mercy and the sin unto death in I John 5:16 ... **First John Chapter 5 (#1) ... Verses 1-5.**

Application:

1. We only know the details of God Jehovah and Jesus Christ's character and conduct by Bible revelation.
2. Preaching must include very sober warnings, as Joshua illustrates and John, Jesus, and Paul confirmed.
3. This event was an important moment in Israel's history, the O.T. church, by a kind and honest warning.
4. These words of Joshua are not contrary or inconsistent with Jesus or the N.T. at all for real Christians.
5. In fact, they are precisely complementary ... Ye cannot serve the LORD = Ye cannot be my disciple.
6. Jesus made discipleship a very costly decision with emphasis on counting the cost and paying the cost.
7. The prophets and preachers in the Bible are quite different from most preachers today ... **Why are you so harsh?, Rude Preachers, Instant Preaching.**

Conclusion:

1. Some may be discouraged by a sermon like this, but that should not happen for learning truth of God!
2. Some want happy times all the time, but that is only in heaven, not the pattern of true discipleship.
3. Embrace His strict expectations; follow true worshippers like Joshua; be a sacrificing disciple of Jesus.
4. Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Joshua, Samuel, David, Paul, and others were very confident serving Jehovah.
5. The rewards are great – Spirit fellowship, proof of life, repayment 100-fold, and eternal life in heaven.
6. Do not let these perilous times affect you by not enduring pressing preaching to prefer entertainment.
7. We want to know God exactly as He is, and we want to worship Him exactly as He desires and expects.