Joshua's Final Charge

Choosing Righteousness

4th-6th Grade
Lesson 7

The Teacher's Preparation

Scripture Passages to Study: Joshua 22-24, especially Joshua 24:15

Study Guide: Read "Joshua's Final Charge: Choosing Righteousness" from *The Promised Land.*

Lesson Objective: In this lesson, Joshua forces the children of Israel to make a decision. Ask your students to make the same decision; who or what are they going to serve?

Lesson Application: If we do not consciously choose right, we will, by default, unconsciously choose wrong.

Memory Verse: Joshua 24:24

And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

—Joshua 24:24

The Teacher's Checklist

- ☑ Activity Worksheets and Pencils
- ☑ Attendance and Record Notebook
- ☑ Lesson Plan
- ☑ Cue Card
- ☑ Memory Verse Card
- ☑ Music Player
- ☑ Visual Illustrations for the Lesson
- ☑ Attention Getter: The Titanic

Teacher Tips

When you use visuals to enhance your lesson, keep in mind that your lesson must focus on the Word of God.

The Teacher's Lesson Plan

Attention Getter

Bring in a picture of the Titanic. How many of you have ever heard of the Titanic? I'm not taking about the Hollywood movie, I'm talking about the real ship. Who knows the real story of the Titanic? Let me tell you, it is a story full of wrong choices.

The Titanic was a brand new cruise ship in 1912. It was designed to be the safest and most luxurious ship ever built. It had all the latest features and comforts, all except one very important feature: life boats. The Titanic only carried enough lifeboats for half of the passengers. Some people even thought that was too many lifeboats. They believed that the ship was so safe that some said, "Not even God could sink it." Whoever said that made a wrong choice. The captain of the Titanic never made the passengers conduct any safety drills. That was wrong choice, also. The Titanic's captain made more wrong choices when he steered the ship into icy waters.

When the order was given to abandon the ship, no one knew what to do, and many lives were lost due to that error. While the Titanic was sinking, the captain sent up rescue flares. Another ship, named the Californian saw the flares but never did anything about them. That was another wrong choice. Neither of the captains and crews of the two ships deliberately made up their minds to be the cause of the deaths of so many, but, because they did not do what they should have done, many people did die. Things could have turned out differently, but there was a terrible tragedy that people are still talking about almost one hundred years later!

Today's lesson tells about a time when Joshua challenged the people of Israel to make a choice. I will challenge you to make the same choice.

I. Reuben & Gad's Altar

Joshua called the tribes that were planning to live on the other side of the Jordan River. They had done what they were commanded to do. They helped the rest of the nation take over Canaan. Now it was time for them to return home. Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh made their way back to the land Moses had given them on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Before they left, Joshua reminded them what Moses said God had told them to do. They would be separated from the rest of the nation of Israel. If they did not decide to obey, the other tribes would not be around to help them get back on the right path.

When the men arrived at their home on the other side of the river, they built a large altar. When the other tribes heard what they had built, they were afraid. They thought that the men of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh had built an altar to worship a false god. The other tribes sent men to go find out what was going on.

When they caught up with Reuben and the others, they asked them why they had built an altar to an evil god. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh told them that the altar was built to remember what God did for them and not to honor a false god.

II. Joshua's Final Command

God gave the nation of Israel peace for many years. But now Joshua was an old man. He had led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua gathered the leaders of the tribes together to give them his final message.

Joshua reminded the people of how God had fought for them in the past. He told them of

how God had given them the Promised Land. Joshua gave the people a warning. He warned them not to forget God. Joshua told them to love God and to obey Him.

Joshua told the people about a message from God that began with the history of the nation of Israel. He reminded them of how God had sent plagus on the Egyptians. Joshua spoke of how God had brought them out of the land of Egypt. He spoke of how God used Moses to part the Red Sea and how He drowned the army of Egypt. God then brought them into the Promised Land. Through all of this, the people had remained faithful. God was blessing the people of Israel for their faithfulness to Him. Joshua told the people to serve God in truth. He did not want the people to act like they were serving God only so others would think they loved God. Joshua wanted it to be real in their hearts.

Joshua reminded the Israelites of the wicked gods of the people who used to live in the land. He told them to choose who they would serve. Without a leader, it would be very easy to fall into worshipping the gods of the other nations. Joshua asked the people to decide right now who would be the God of their lives. Joshua made it very clear that every person had to decide for himself what god they would serve. Joshua told the people that he would serve the only true God. Not only would Joshua serve God, but his family would also.

> *And if it seem evil unto you serve the LORD, Choose you this day whom you 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

After Joshua was done speaking, the people told him that they would follow God. The children of Israel knew that without God they would still be in slavery in Egypt. Joshua tested them and they still said that they would serve God.

> *And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*
>
> —Joshua 24:24

III. Lessons from Joshua

Joshua set an example for the people to follow. He lived his life by the same commands he gave his people. Joshua asked the nation of Israel to obey God. The most important thing for a Christian to do is to obey God. We will not always know why we are told to do something, but we must obey. When Joshua asked the army of Israel to march around Jericho, they did not know why they needed to march around the city. Because they obeyed, God gave them a great victory.

Joshua told the people to love God. Once we learn to love God, we want to obey him. God wants his people to love Him. As Christians, we need to learn to love God. It is so easy to get busy doing what we want to do and never learn to love God.

Joshua told the nation of Israel to serve God. God has given all of us so much. God sent His Son to die on the cross for us, yet we sometimes forget what He did for us. Joshua commanded the Israelites to obey, love, and serve God. As Christians, we must work to obey, love, and serve our Lord. Joshua told the people to love God. Once we learn to love God, we want to obey him. God wants his people to love Him. As Christians, we need to learn to love God. It is so easy to get busy doing what we want to do and never learn to love God.

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Teacher's Notes

Samuel Adams to his
future son-in-law:
I could dwell on the importance of piety and religion, of industry and frugality, of prudence, economy, regularity and even Government, all of which are essential to the well being of a family. But I have not time. I cannot however help repeating piety, because I thing it indispensable. Religion in a family is at once its brightest ornament and its best security.