

The Decision for Service (Joshua 24:15)

This is a brief excerpt of the sermon given by Pastor Alexander Thomas during the Watch Night Service on Thursday, December 31st, 2015 at the International Church, Atlanta, Georgia.

This New Year 2016 message was taken from Joshua Chapter 24 Verses 15

A Call to Decision "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). Joshua gave an invitation to serve. They could choose to serve Jehovah or one of the gods of idolatry. Elijah gave a similar invitation some years later at Mount Carmel when he said, "If the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Joshua called for a decision; we the International Church Family need to do the same. You cannot serve two masters (Luke 16:13). Now that the people have arrived in the Promised Land, it would be easy for them to join the local people. Perhaps there would be benefits to serving other gods. Joshua has urged the people to serve the Lord alone, and to put away the false gods.

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). Joshua leads by example. He has encouraged people to make a decision about serving, and encourages the people by his example to choose to serve Jehovah. Joshua's declared choice was of high character.

Now notice how Joshua stood alone and made these declarations.

1. It was a Public Decision. Joshua made his choice known before all the Israelites. He was not a secret disciple. He let everyone know where he stood. Though he's old and stricken in years, still he rules his house. The people responded and said to Joshua, "Oh, we also will serve the Lord," "We will serve the LORD." Joshua made it very clear whom he would serve. Joshua walked what he talked. He had been faithful in service for Jehovah all his life. He publicly declared what he believed.

2. It was a Personal Decision. God invites all people to have a personal relationship with Him, but He does not force Himself on us. He gives us a choice, and we all decide for ourselves whom we will follow in life. At one hundred and ten years of age, Joshua was still saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua did not make the decision because the crowd chose to serve Jehovah. His choice reflected his own personal convictions.

3. It was a Parental Decision. "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua lived his faith in his family. He did not send his children to church, he took them. "As for me and my house," said Joshua, "we will serve the Lord!" It is not only encouraging but also essential that Godly Fathers set a good example in their own homes. Joshua challenged the Israelites to a life of devotion to God. Joshua also understood that he, as the priest of his family, was charged with the responsibility to see that his whole house served the LORD. He had the job of representing his whole house before God. How great it is when the father can speak for the house. He rules his house well. Every generation has to make this decision in life. Will we be completely committed to God, or will we adopt the practices of the nations around us? Every individual today must also make a strong commitment to serve the Lord above anything or anyone else. Joshua's noble decision for himself and his household has been an inspiration to succeeding generations of believers: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." We the International Church Family, we will serve the Lord.