

"AL HAPEREK"

A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

Yehoshua Perakim 23-24

The book of Yehoshua is completed with two speeches made by Yehoshua as he parts from the nation. The death of Yehoshua marks the end of a heroic period of entry, conquest, and settlement of the Land of Israel.

General Overview < "וַיִּקְרָאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

Perek 23

- ❶ Two speeches that summarize the book of Yehoshua appear in perekim 23 and 24. Look at 23:2 and 24:1-2. To whom are the two speeches directed, respectively? How is the content of each speech tailored to its own particular audience?
- ❷ Compare the textual and structural links between Yehoshua's speech in perek 23 and Moshe's speech in Devarim 6:1-15. What light does this comparison shed on the speech of Yehoshua?
- ❸ The root D-V-K (דב"ק) appears twice in this chapter (in pesukim 8 and 12). How does the use of this word in these two different contexts help frame one of the nation's biggest challenges in the Land of Israel?

Perek 24

- 4 The first section of Yehoshua's speech in perek 24 includes a survey of Israel's history. Which events does Yehoshua mention, and what, in your opinion, was his guiding principle in choosing them?
- 5 Compare Yehoshua 24:16-26 to Shemot 20:2-6 and Shemot 23:27-30. Look carefully at the connections between the pesukim. How do these connections sharpen our understanding of Yehoshua's words here?
- 6 Pesukim 28-33 conclude Sefer Yehoshua. How is the end of this historical period expressed in each part of these pesukim?

In-depth Study < "מִפְּרָשׁ וְשׁוֹם שְׂכָל"

- 7 Throughout the book of Yehoshua, the deep relationship between the figures of Moshe and Yehoshua is apparent. Look at Bamidbar 33:52-56 and Devarim 29. How does the parting speech that appears in perek 24 of Yehoshua contribute to our understanding of the relationship between these first two leaders of Israel?
- 8 Yehoshua commands the people to remove foreign gods from their midst. This warning also appears in Bereshit 35:2-4 and in I Shmuel 7:3-4. Study each warning in its own context. Does the warning indicate the actual existence of idolatry, or does it refer to its potential danger?

Appendix < "וַיְבִינּוּ בַּמִּקְרָא"

"The parting assembly, at which Joshua articulated the completion of his task, is a rare phenomenon in history and is a striking reflection of the fateful period in the life of the nation. Joshua released the bonds of his central authority, disbanded the army that he himself had formed, and—in almost utopian fashion—proclaimed the end of the state: There was to be no more central government; every man could now decide for himself. He, Joshua, had finished his task and concluded an era in history. And, therefore, at this unusual assembly, he reviewed the history of the Jewish people and declared: Our fathers lived on the other side of the river; they worshiped other gods. Now—in the language of the legend—God has brought us to this land where we can worship Him. The promise given to Moses and the Children of Israel has been fulfilled, and freedom is granted to make the choice whether to worship other gods or the Lord God.

This baring of the issue shows that Joshua was well aware that his life's work had been a continuation and a completion, leading to a new start. He was the one who, in actual fact, brought about the concrete realization of the hopes and dreams of the patriarchs who founded the nation, as well as of Moses, who led its people out of Egypt.

From this point, Israel began to act on its own, to take responsibility for itself. With the passing of Joshua, the hero in the history of Israel was the nation itself. Joshua was well aware of the nature of his success in bringing the Exodus to a conclusion, but he made no attempt to create a dynasty of power for his family or those around him. In this last deed he showed how well he recognized the nature of the new era and his role in the Torah."

Biblical Images, Rav Adin Steinsaltz, p.110-111

חזק חזק ונתחזק!