

“But As for Me and My House”
Joshua 24:15

Introduction: After the review of history, Joshua gave an invitation to the Israelites to serve the Lord. Serving the Lord is the theme of this portion of Scripture. This is evident by the fact that fourteen times the word “serve” or “served” is found in our text. The Israelites had a choice to serve the gods of idolatry or the God of the Bible. Joshua was leading the people to make a personal decision regarding the Lord. Likewise, we need to do the same. Joshua’s goal was to lead by example. This choice to serve the Lord was:

1. A Public Choice Joshua 24:1-2- *“And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people...”*
2. A Personal Choice Joshua 24:15- *“...but as for me...”*
3. A Parental Choice Joshua 24:15- *“...and my house...”*
4. A Particular Choice Joshua 24:15- *“...we will serve the LORD.”*
5. A Perpetual Choice Joshua 24:15- *“...we will serve the LORD.”*
6. A Persuasive Choice Joshua 24:16- *“And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods”*

Body: It was Joshua’s determined decision to serve the Lord that persuaded others to follow. Certainly, the Scriptures are true when they state, *“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”* It is our decision to serve the Lord that will determine if our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will as well. How do we influence our family to serve the Lord?

1. An Enthusiasm on our Part
 - a. Noah Hebrews 11:7- *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”*
 - b. Felix Manz (1498-1527)
 - (1) Manz was sentenced to death for preaching believer’s baptism. The sentence was droning to death in the Limmat River.
 - (2) As he came down to the boat, he praised God that he was about to die for the truth, for Anabaptism was right and founded upon the Word of God.
 - (3) John T. Christian wrote, “On the way his mother and brother came to him and exhorted him to be steadfast, and he persevered in his folly to the end.”
2. An Example on our Part (Our example will affect generations to come.)
 - a. Lot
 - (1) Genesis 13:12- *“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”*
 - (2) II Peter 2:8- *“(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)”*
 - (3) Genesis 19:26- *“But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”*

- (4) Genesis 19:36- *“Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.”*
- b. Elimelech
- (1) Ruth 1:1- *“Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.”*
- (2) Ruth 1:3- *“And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.”*
- (3) Ruth 1:4-5- *“And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”*
- c. David
- (1) II Samuel 11:4- *“And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.”*
- (2) David's Child Dies II Samuel 12:18- *“And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?”*
- (3) Amnon Rapes Tamar II Samuel 13:14- *“Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.”*
- (4) Absalom Kills Amnon II Samuel 13:28- *“Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.”*
- (5) Absalom Rebels Against David II Samuel 15-18
3. An Education on our Part
- a. II Timothy 3:15- *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*
- b. II Timothy 1:5- *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”*

It is only through these means that God will help us to train up our children to serve Him. Certainly, the Lord will help our families serve Him if we have that desire. Not only do we see people in the Bible serving Him, but we also see families serving Him in our Baptist heritage.

I. The Holmes Legacy

A. Obadiah Holmes

1. Obadiah Holmes was born in 1606.
2. Mr. Holmes was whipped thirty stripes, and in such an unmerciful manner that in many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest, but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay.
3. Obadiah Holmes had eight children. (Edwin S. Gaustad- *“Baptist Piety”*)

- B. Jonathan Holmes
 1. Obadiah Holmes son.
 2. He was a Baptist and helped to settle Middletown, New Jersey.
- C. Obadiah and Jonathan
 1. They were Jonathan Holmes sons.
 2. They were the grandchildren of Obadiah Holmes.
 3. They were members of the Middletown Baptist Church.

II. The Wightman Legacy

- A. Edward Wightman
 1. Edward Wightman was accused before the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and on the 14th of December, 1611, was condemned of numerous heresies.
 2. The only charges of supposed false doctrine against Mr. Wightman, about the truth of which there was no doubt, were that he believed “the baptism of infants to be an abominable custom; that the Lord’s Supper and baptism should not be celebrated as they are now practised in the Church of England; and that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the Church of England, but only in part.”
 3. For these shocking doctrines the gentle Richard, Episcopal shepherd of Lichfield and Coventry, delivered Mr. Wightman to the secular power, according to the custom of the Inquisition, to be burned alive. And James I., who could not bear the sight of a naked sword, and who had just issued the present version of the Scriptures, ordered our noble Baptist brother to be committed to the flames. His body was reduced to ashes on the 11th of April, 1612, at Lichfield.
- B. John Wightman
 1. He was the son of Edward Wightman.
 2. He witnessed the burning of his dad, Edward Wightman.
- C. George Wightman
 1. He was the son of John Wightman.
 2. He was one of five brothers who came to America, all of whom were Baptists: two were preachers, two deacons, and one a private member.
- D. Valentine Wightman
 1. He was the son of George Wightman.
 2. Great Grandson of Edward Wightman, the last martyr to be burned at the stake in England.
 3. He married Susanna Holmes, the granddaughter of Obadiah Holmes.
 4. Planted the first Baptist church in Connecticut in 1705 and New York in 1714.
 5. Pastored the first Baptist church in Groton, Connecticut for 42 years.
- E. Valentine Wightman’s Daughter
 1. A daughter of Valentine married a Mr. Rathbun, who has two sons and two grandsons, who are ordained Baptist ministers.
- F. John Wightman
 1. He was the son of Valentine Wightman.
 2. He was sent out of the church as an evangelist. He traveled and preached in various parts of the country.
- G. Timothy Wightman

1. He was the son of Valentine Wightman.
 2. He pastored the church in Groton for 42 years.
 3. He saw many revivals as he was a church planter. He lived during the Revolutionary War.
- H. Jesse Wightman
1. He was the son of Timothy Wightman.
 2. He was a Baptist minister at Springfield.
- I. John Gano Wightman
1. He was the son of Timothy Wightman.
 2. He pastored the church in Groton for 41 years.
 3. He saw 10 revivals at the church and was instrumental in planting church.
- J. Palmer G. Wightman
1. He was the son of John Gano Wightman.
 2. He pastored the church in Groton.
 3. He saw revival and led the church in a building program.
- K. Frederick Wightman
1. He was the son of John and Sarah Wightman.
 2. He was a Baptist preacher that preached 42 years.
 3. He preached over 7,000 sermons.
- L. Stillman Wightman
1. He was the only child of Frederick Wightman.
 2. He was a faithful Baptist church member.
 3. He held a position on the American Baptist Home Mission Society.
- III. The Merrill Legacy
- A. Daniel Merrill
 - B. Thomas Merrill—Michigan
 - C. Moses Merrill—Labor with Isaac McCoy—First Missionary to Nebraska
- IV. The Merrill Legacy
- A. Benjamin Merrill
 1. When they came to the plantation of Captain Benjamin Merrill they seemingly caught him by surprise. At any rate, they arrested him and immediately sent him away, the members of his family knew not where, but doubtless to Hillsboro.
 2. Death pronounced against him in these words by Chief Justice Howard: I must now close my afflicting duty by pronouncing upon you the awful sentence of the law, which is that you, Benjamin Merrill, be carried to the place from which you came; that you be drawn from thence to the place of execution, where you are to be hanged by the neck; that you be cut down while yet alive; that your bowels be taken out while you are yet alive and burnt before your face; that your head be cut off, and your body divided into four quarters, and this to be at his Majesty's disposal; and the Lord have mercy on your soul.
 - B. Jemima Merrill
 1. The widow was blind. Whether the blindness was caused by some natural defect or from excessive grief at the sad and untimely death of her husband was not known. She was never herself after the death of her husband — she never

recovered from the shock. She was almost crazed at the cold, cruel fate which befell her in thus being bereft. She suffered great mental distress and spent much of her time walking to pass off the melancholia which clung to her only to darken her days of grief and bitterness. Her mind was scarcely ever free from her affliction while awake.

2. From both church records and tradition it is known that in all her sufferings Mrs. Jemima Merrill remained faithful and active religiously. We have seen that she carried her children miles from her home to hear Br. Soelle as often as he preached at Mr. Reed's. It is evident that the Baptists then had no church in the River Settlements. Soon afterwards the Baptists established a church at Boone's Ford, which Mrs. Merrill joined by letter on September 17, 1774. She reared a large family who followed their mother in religious interests. In the record books of the churches, east and west of the Yadkin, the name Merrill often appears, Rev. George L. Merrill, a great-great grandson, graduated from Wake Forest College in 1888, and was thereafter for many years a prominent and beloved minister in the Sandy Creek and other associations.

V. The Marshall Legacy

- A. Daniel Marshall
- B. Abraham Marshall
- C. Jabez Marshall

VI. The Kirtley Legacy

VII. The Witter Legacy

- A. William Witter
 1. Born in 1584
 - 2.
- B. Josiah Witter
 1. Born in 1638
 2. Son of William Witter
 3. Married the daughter of John Crandall
 4. He was a Baptist
- C. John Witter
 1. Born in 1677
 2. Grandson of William Witter
 3. He was a Baptist
- D. Josiah Witter
 1. Born in 1716
 2. Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. He was a Baptist in Westerly, Rhode Island
- E. Josiah Witter
 1. Born in 1739
 2. Great, Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. He was a Baptist in Hoptinkin, Rhode Island
- F. Ebenezer Witter

1. Born in 1761
 2. Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. Cofounder of Sipeo, New York
 4. Baptist of Cayuga County
- G. Solomon Brown
1. Born in 1757
 2. Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. Baptist preacher in New York
- H. Ebenezer Witter
1. Born in 1788
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. Baptist of Legrange, New York
- I. Oliver Spalding Witter
1. Born in 1792
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter
 3. Baptist preacher in Michigan
- J. Theodore Witter
1. Born in 1844
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson (8th generation)
 3. Baptist of Wolfville, Nova Scotia
 4. Baptist Sunday School teacher and musician
- K. Oats Charles Simons Wallace
1. Born in 1856
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter (9th generation)
 3. Baptist preacher and author. Wrote a book titled, "What Baptist Believe".
- L. William Ellsworth Witter
1. Born in 1853
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter (9th generation)
 3. Baptist missionary to India. Then, went on to Nagaland and translated the Scriptures. It is reported that over 90% of the people there are members of Baptist churches.
- M. Theodore Volney Witter
1. Born in 1885
 2. Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson of William Witter (10th generation)
 3. Born on the mission field in India and a Baptist missionary.

Conclusion: Will your grandchildren be Baptist?

1. The Stand We Take
2. The Book We Preach
3. The Life We Live
4. Will it produce Baptist grandchildren?