

## PRAISE

the Lord for:

- ★ The opportunity to have the Trezona family in Perth for a rest as well as promotion and development for the USA editions of the paper.
- ★ New project area for Kenya distributing a bi-lingual main and prison edition
- ★ Our first Prison edition of the paper going to press and being distributed around Australia
- ★ His blessing upon the Challenge newspaper as we continue to see it grow steadily
- ★ A number of large gifts coming into the office for various project areas around the world

## The need to remember God's blessings

Joshua was coming to the end of his life and he wanted to challenge the nation of Israel to be single minded in following God.

He begins his farewell speech in **JOSHUA 23** by reminding them of God's faithfulness in fighting for them, against their enemies, in the Promised Land. Then he encourages the Israelites to stand firm and be obedient to the Word of God in v. 6. Joshua was concerned about the tendency for Israel to be syncretistic in their worship.

There is something worth noting here. Christians struggle with temptation on a daily basis. The constant nature of temptations we face can grind away at us, and we are tempted to throw in the towel. The Lord's encouragement for any Christian struggling with overcoming temptation, or struggling with habitual sin, or feeling down and disillusioned because of failure, is that He is willing to fight against these enemies, if we are willing to trust Him for it.

Joshua was encouraged in chapter 1 v.8-9 to meditate in the Word of God day and night, and to obey it. Thus he would know prosperity and success. Moses challenged Joshua to be strong and courageous.

It would appear that Joshua – by nature – was prone to being frightened or scared. However, as he trusted God he became more than an overcomer. It would seem that in chapters 13 and 24 Joshua was concerned that a lack of reading and meditating upon the scriptures left the Israelites susceptible to compromise in their walk with God.

The Word of God served as a reminder of God's past exploits in delivering the nation of Israel from Egypt, and the enemies faced in going into the promised land. Throughout the Old Testament God constantly takes time to remind the Israelites of past blessing; the aim being to highlight the fact that God is absolutely faithful and trustworthy, and if He was faithful in the past, then He can be trusted to be faithful in the present and future.

These reminders through the Word of God all served to challenge Israel, and us, as God's people, as to what can happen when we forget God's past blessings. Again and again Israel experienced the blessing of God, and soon after, when faced with a difficulty, forgot God's recent blessings. For example when Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, the people became restless. Aaron, under pressure from the

*Continued over*

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## PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Each edition of Challenge as they go to various printers around the world as often things can go wrong with machinery, paper supplies etc.
- ★ The prison edition as it goes into many of our prisons around Australia. Pray for smooth entry and distribution into each facility
- ★ USA trip for Carl and John. Carl will be speaking at a number of churches and key mission conferences. Dates February 20 – March 25
- ★ Kenya project as funding is urgent and the need is enormous
- ★ A full time Editor to free Carl up to concentrate on promotion and development of the ministry in Australia and overseas

people fashioned a golden calf. You know a nation is in trouble when its leadership not only encourages idol worship, but also fashions what they worship, as Aaron did.

When we forget God and His blessings, we are capable of the most incredibly wicked, evil sins. In Joshua 24:14 Joshua challenges the people to serve the Lord in sincerity and truth, and to put away the gods which their fathers served. The depth of their sin is brought home to us when the Israelites started offering their children to pagan deities.

When a nation forgets God they quickly devalue human life. Some of us may be horrified to realise that Israel could plummet to such a spiritual low as offering up their children to appease pagan gods. However, our own nation doesn't seem too perturbed at the demise of 100,000 babies aborted annually on the altar of convenience.

Joshua in v.15 makes his impassioned plea to his people. *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

We choose what we worship. However, we must recognise that what we worship determines how we think, and how we think can determine how we act. Joshua was bringing home to his people that they could not serve two masters. To try and worship the living God and meld that with the worship of pagan deities is not acceptable worship. The only worship that is acceptable is expressed for us in John 4:24: *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"*. The question is this: who and how are we worshipping?

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE



## MY RESPONSE

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