

October 30, 2016 Follow God - Joshua 24:1-15

I gave you land on which you hadn't toiled and cities you hadn't built. You settled in them and are enjoying produce from vineyards and olive groves you didn't plant. "So now, revere The Lord. Serve Him honestly and faithfully. Put aside the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt and serve the Lord. But if it seems wrong in your opinion to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Choose the gods whom your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live.

But my family and I will serve the Lord." **Joshua 24:13-15**

Old Testament scholar Terence Fretheim quotes Walter Brueggemann, another OT scholar. "*It is likely the violence assigned to Yahweh is to be understood as counter-violence, which functions primarily as a critical principle in order to undermine and destabilize other violence.*' And so," Fretheim continues, "God's violence is 'not blind or unbridled violence,' but purposeful in the service of a nonviolent end. In other words, God's violence, whether in judgment or salvation, is never an end in itself, but is always exercised in the service of God's more comprehensive salvific purposes for creation: the deliverance of slaves from oppression (Exodus 15:7; Psalm 78:49-50), the righteous from their antagonists (Psalm 7:6-11), the poor and needy from their abusers (Exodus 22:21-24; Isa 1:23-24; Jeremiah 21:12), and Israel from its enemies (Isaiah 30:27-33; 34:2; Habakkuk 3:12-13)." Quoting Abraham Heschel, "This is one of the meanings of the anger of God: the end of indifference' with respect to those who have suffered human cruelty. In so stating the matter, the divine exercise of wrath, which may include violence, is finally a word of good news (for those oppressed) and bad news (for oppressors)."

Next week: The STORY series continues. **Judges**

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THE STORY

FINDING YOUR STORY IN GOD'S STORY

We are witnesses to the STORY of God.

God formed a covenant people.

Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is One God.

God's STORY was Israel's identity.

Opposition in the promised land.

What God called them to do, required His help.

God's STORY doesn't end problems.

Embracing God and His STORY brings His presence.

Redeemed to redeem.

You will serve somebody. Whom will YOU serve?

We exist for people who aren't yet here.

Lord, help us extend Your STORY to the world.

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