

Joshua 24:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

Analysis

Joshua's response to the people's commitment—'Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins'—seems to discourage commitment but actually challenges superficial profession. The emphasis on God's holiness and jealousy shows that serving Him requires total devotion, not casual religiosity. The statement about not forgiving emphasizes that presuming on mercy while continuing in sin brings judgment. This tests the depth of commitment versus mere emotional response.

Historical Context

This challenging response follows the people's confident assertion 'we will serve the LORD' (verse 21). Joshua's counter-challenge ('ye cannot') probes whether they understand the cost and commitment required. His concern proved justified—later generations repeatedly apostasized despite this covenant renewal (Judges). The pattern shows that verbal commitment without heart reality produces temporary enthusiasm followed by drift. True conversion withstands testing and proves genuine through perseverance.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's holiness and jealousy challenge casual or superficial commitment?
2. What tests reveal whether your covenant commitment is genuine or merely emotional profession?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה ה	הַסִּירוּ	אֶת	אֱלֹהֵי י	הַנֶּכֶר	אָשָׁר
H6258	Now therefore put away	H853	God	said he the strange	H834
	H5493		H430	H5236	
בְּקִרְבְּךָ מ	וְהִטּוּ	אֶת	לִבְבְּךָ מ	אֶל	יְהוָה
which are among	you and incline	H853	your heart	H413	unto the LORD
H7130	H5186		H3824		H3068
					God
					H430
יִשְׂרָאֵל:					
of Israel					
H3478					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 24:14 (References God): Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.