

## The Past in the Present

### Scripture Reading — Joshua 24:1-14

“Now ...”  
—Joshua 24:14 —

Your grandmother is telling you a story about a prank she played on someone many years ago. After relating all the exciting details, she says, “Now, then ...” and you know the moral of the story is next. Why can’t grandma just leave it at the story? Why does she always end with a lesson? For one very good reason: stories from the past help us understand how to live in the present. That’s also how the Bible tells its story.

As Joshua recounts God’s wonderful deeds—beginning with Abraham and on to the time when Israel received the land of Canaan—he is preparing Israel for their task in the present. Because Joshua is telling the story in the first person singular, as if God himself were speaking, we hear God reminding us of his gracious deeds, of his faithfulness to his promises. And when we hear the word “Now ... ,” we know we’re at the teaching moment.

Joshua’s rehearsal of God’s mighty deeds serves to motivate the people to be loyal to God, to praise him for his grace and mercy, and to acknowledge his faithfulness.

The book of Acts includes a couple of similar history lessons. And in both cases the audience has a “now” moment: God has already acted mightily; now, how will you respond? Some reject Christ (Acts 7:54), and others submit to him (Acts 13:48).

What is your response to Christ?

### Prayer

*Lord, we praise you for your faithfulness, especially Christ, our Lord. Help us obey you. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Bible Characters](#), [Joshua](#)

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