



Joshua 1:1-18 This Land is Ours!

God is faithful to His promises. The Book of Joshua stresses the truth of the everlasting steadfast faithfulness of God. God is faithful to His word.

The book of Joshua opens with a change of command. The great giver of the Law, Moses, is dead. God brings about a change in leadership for the new nation. Moses was a great lawgiver, statesman and founder of the nation. Joshua is a great commanding general, a fearless conqueror and warrior. Moses was a patient leader of the people. Joshua was a take charge leader who commanded the people to "rise, go over this Jordan." Moses formed a discovery committee; Joshua gave a command to take the land.

God allowed Moses to see the land from a distance, but he was not allowed to go in and possess the land. God declared to Moses "you broke faith with Me . . . because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:51). Moses threw a fit and lost the opportunity.

"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Since you did not trust in Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, for that reason you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them'" (Numbers 20:12).

Deuteronomy 34:5-9 says: "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, in accordance with the word of the Lord. And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows his burial place to this day. Although Moses was 120 years old when he died, his eyesight was not dim, nor had his vigor left him. So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end. Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses."

Joshua's original name was Hoshea (Numbers 13:8; Deuteronomy 32:44) which means "salvation." Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua or Yehoshua. Joshua means, "Yahweh is salvation." Joshua will deliver God's people by the power of Yahweh. Yahweh alone is our salvation. The Greek form of this name is "Jesus." "You will call His name Jesus, [Yehoshua, Joshua], because He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ISRAEL

He also has a plan for you.

God's plan for Israel was to go in and take the Promised Land.

There was a minority report.

Israel did not conquer the land for forty years because of unbelief. Numbers chapters thirteen and fourteen are the tragic story of unbelief. Two of the twelve spies said, "God gave us the land; let's go take it!" Caleb said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). If the *Shekinah* glory of Yahweh had not appeared in the Tabernacle, "all the congregation of Israel would have stoned them with stones."

The minority report was ready to claim the promises of God and take the land. The majority report was evil. They were faithless having lost the vision in a few days time. The minority report measured the giants in the land against God. The majority report could only see their own frail humanity against a land of giants. Ten of the spies evaluated God by their circumstances. Caleb and Joshua, interpreted the circumstances through the eyes of a sovereign God.

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel found out that the inhabitants of the land were scared to death of them. Can you imagine that? Rahab the harlot informed the two spies forty years later that the people of the land had for forty years been afraid of the Israelites. They had heard of God delivering them at the Red Sea and other feats. The giants whom Israel feared at Kadesh-barnea had been afraid of the people of Israel for forty years.

Moses had to die.

Moses had to die before they could enter the Promised Land. G. Campbell Morgan said, "Moses had to die. The death of Moses was necessary to progress into the land. Moses led you out, but he could not lead you in. Joshua led you in but he could not give you rest." Rest depended on an even greater giver of rest. "We must discover Him in spiritual communion."

"Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, Moses My

servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel" (Joshua 1:1–2).

"Moses is dead" and God's work is not going to end. The LORD is their leader. He issues the command. "Now therefore, arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land, which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel." (Joshua 1:2).

It is time to go in and take the land (v. 3). It is their land. God gave it to them. "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory" (vv. 3-4).

Only during the golden age of Kings David and Solomon did Israel's greatest expansion include these boundaries.

God led Israel around in the wilderness. It was an eleven-day journey to the Promised Land that took forty years to accomplish in the flesh! They were going in circles of unbelief for forty years.

Don't miss it; the land was theirs. It had been theirs for forty years! Because of their unbelief, they had failed to take the land. "I have given it to you." The original is in the perfect tense. It is completed action. It is a prophetic perfect meaning the action is so sure to come to pass that it could be written as if it had already happened. It was already their land. God gave it to them.

God has given us everything in Christ.

Many Christian scholars through the centuries have pointed to the similarities in application between the Book of Joshua and Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Moreover, God has given us everything in Christ. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him" (Ephesians 1:3-4). Are we entering in and conquering the land?

God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Every believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. But how much of our inheritance have we appropriated by faith? How much have we claimed? How much do we enjoy in our daily Christian

life? Why do we want to settle for second best when God want to give us His very best?

It is one thing to have the title to an inheritance, but entirely different thing to make it your own in practice. How often we fail to enter into and enjoy that which God has given to us in His Son.

How tragic that we go around in circles of the flesh while God seeks to wean us off our selfish lifestyle.

God wants to lead us into the Christian's Promised Land of Canaan. God's purpose for Israel was a land filled with "milk and honey." He was going to provide all their needs. It is the beautiful picture of the Spirit-controlled life. It is the life God intended for every Christian to live. There are no exceptions. You can have every bit of the spiritual life in Christ that you want. God will not give you more than you are ready and willing to take. It is possessing the life of fullness of Christ. Canaan makes a beautiful analogy of our full salvation in Christ. It is the portion for every believer. God is leading His people to the goal. That goal is Christ likeness. His goal is to conform us to the likeness and character of His Son. Let's not be content for a wilderness experience. We don't have to stay in the wilderness. He brought us out so He might bring us in to Canaan. Are we content to stay on the easy side of Jordan? God has the best for those who will walk by faith and enter into His abundant life. Second best is for those who will not take His best.

Stake your claim. Go in and take possession of all God has given you in Christ. All of the Lord Jesus Christ is mine at conversion, but I possess only as much as I claim by faith. The great saints were all receivers. They received the promises of God. Go ahead take possession by faith! The Promised Land is typical of what we have in Christ. Alexander Maclaren reminds us, "God gives more than we take, and we are content to occupy but a corner of the broad land which He has given us." It is only as we take this place of identification with Christ practically that we enter into and enjoy our present inheritance with Him.

God has a plan for Israel. God will fulfill His promise for Israel. That promise depends on their walking by faith.

GOD'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL

I will be with you.

Yahweh says, "I will be with you." The promise hasn't changed in forty years. He is the same God; it is still His word. One wag said, "When God spoke, He didn't stutter. He said precisely what He meant and He meant what He said." Another wag answered, "If God didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant."

The LORD God said, "No man will *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them" (vv. 5-6). The guarantee of success is the Lord's unfailing presence and power.

God's promises means God's provision.

God's promises means God's provision. Ask the Lord for strength and encouragement. He will make you strong. Obey His message and instruction as you find it in His Word. The Lord is with you. He has promises to go before you. Commit yourself to Him in full surrender and watch Him guide and provide. Make a commitment to follow Him in every area of your life. This is His money back guarantee. The LORD guarantees success. "I will be with you."

Remember that there are giants in the land! The giants are still there, and in forty years, there are more of them. God says, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life." Not even giants. Not even idolatrous giants.

Watch how the author of Hebrews applies this passage to us in our day.

Do you have any giants in your land? You are no different from the children of Israel. Hebrews 13:5-6 is a direct application for you and me. "*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age." Moreover, "He is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He changes not. His promises abide because He abides. God is faithful. God is able. God is going to do it!

Are you standing on the integrity of His Word? Are you resting your faith on what He says in the Bible?

Who is the giant in your life? "No man will be able to stand before you." What is your giant? It may be a person, may be your job, coworker, a powerful temptation, the circumstances in you face, a difficult situation at school, or in the home. Why will your giant not be able to stand?

Just as I have been with Moses and Joshua.

"Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you [put your own name here]; I will not fail you or forsake you" (v. 5). Just as I have been with Moses I will be with you Wil Pounds I will not fail you or forsake you.

It is a walk of faith. Verse six reminds us to "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their father to give them." The message is repeated in verses 7, 9, 18. "Be strong and courageous" (v. 6). "Only be strong and very courageous" (v. 7). "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (v. 9). "Only be strong and courageous" (v. 18). It is hard to miss, isn't it?

God requires faithful obedience from us. "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go" (v. 7). If we love Him, we will obey Him.

You want success in your Christian life? It is not "name and claim" false theology. It is trust and obey His Word. It is a life in fellowship with your Lord.

Meditate on God's Word.

In fact, here is the where Joshua found his courage and strength. Verse eight says, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." When was the last time you got into God's Word and just chewed around on it like a dog gnawing a bone?

That is what this word "meditate" means. It is like an old dog chewing away on a bone. You can hear him off in the distance gnawing away. He makes noises as he chews. The word for "meditate" means "to speak with oneself" in

a low voice as is often done by those who are musing, to contemplate, to have in mind, to purpose." It comes from the idea of "murmuring or muttering." It is the low voice of persons talking to themselves. When we meditate, we read over the texts to ourselves in half aloud reading and re-reading. This is the way you get to the good stuff in God's Word. It settles down into the mind and you begin to think biblically. You think the way God thinks.

No where in the Word of God are we allowed to cut our minds free and let them float away to meditate upon whatever might enter into them. It is always an objective meditation upon God's Word. Let your mind run loose and Satan will give you a great meditation! One you will forever regret.

You will never be strong and courageous in the Christian life if you do not spend time meditating on God's Word. You have to get into it and wrestle with it, meditating and memorizing it and making it as your own. Confident faith comes from meditating on God's Word. Paul said, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ."

God has a plan for Israel, and He has a plan for you. God will fulfil His promise to Israel and in your life. What is the preparation we need to fulfill that promise?

ISRAEL'S PREPARATION

How do you go in and possess the land? There is only one way; it is by faith.

Joshua commanded the people to get ready (vv. 10-11). "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it'" (v. 11).

Joshua didn't sit there and whine, "Well it's been forty years, so what is another month or two?" Joshua has been waiting for forty years! He has been ready and patiently waiting all these years. Let's go!

What is your battle plan in your spiritual battle?

Do you have a battle plan in your fight against the devil? God has made provision for you in your battle against Satan. Have you followed through? The Apostle Paul had a battle plan that he shared with us and it works. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might." Sounds like Joshua. It is not, it is Paul in Ephesians 6:10. "Put on the full armour of God, that you may

be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (v. 11). "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (v. 13). Don't go running out to do battle with your enemy without your armor on. Arm yourself with Christ. He is the armor of God. He is truth. You don't find spiritual truth anywhere else. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father, but through Me." He is your righteousness. There is no other righteousness that will satisfy God. He gives you His righteousness in place of your self-righteousness. Christ is my righteousness. He is my peace, my shield of faith, my helmet of salvation, the living Word of God. And don't forget to pray, Paul says.

Joshua commanded his people to get ready to cross over in three days. God says to us get ready to cross over. How do we prepare to go into a more intimate relationship with Christ? Paul helps us in our preparation in 2 Corinthians 10:5–6. "*We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete."

Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

We must reckon on who we are in Christ. Take a stand on your eternal position in Christ. Paul told the Colossians, "For in Christ all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete" (Colossians 2:9, 10). To the church at Rome he wrote, "Be constantly counting upon the fact that you are dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

All of these resources of heaven are available to us today. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. . . and my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:13, 19). We take possession by taking one step at a time.

Did you say, let's cross the Jordan in three days? Man this is flood season. This river is in the spring run-off and it is a mile wide raging torrent. It is muddy, brown, yuck. We'll all get killed.

No. Joshua and Caleb had been there at the Red Sea and saw God open up the Sea and let them pass through on dry ground. They could say, "I saw God do it! And I will see Him do it again!"

If we are going to cross into the Christian's Promised Land there must be personal accountability. Are you willing to pay the personal price?

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Verses 12-15 are parenthetical. They are in response to a compromise Moses made with half of the tribe of Manasseh, the tribes of Reuben and Gad. They had chosen to remain East of the Jordan and not go in and conquer Canaan. The concession is found in Numbers chapter 32. They appear to be content with their self-interests. They like the fertile, lush cattle land of Bashan, Gilead and Moab. They were content to stay the norm and were not concerned about the abundant Promised Land. They will keep their promise, but will go back to the old life at the first opportunity. History shows they were always getting in trouble with the enemy. This was always the first territory invaded by the enemies of Israel. That was a terrible price to pay because they chose not to enter into Promised Land. When Assyria came calling on the Northern Kingdom of Israel these were the first tribes they defeated.

The land east of the Jordan is a place of indulgence. It is still wilderness. It is not the Promised Land.

They have their kin in our day who would rather remain focused on making a fair living rather than entering into a mature, intimate love relationship with Christ. The cost is too much for them to bear.

On what level do you choose to live the Christian life?

On what level do you choose to live the Christian life? Some believers enjoy the blessings of Canaan. They go in and conquer the ugly, deceitful, ungodly, selfish sinful territory of the Hittites. However, some chose to live in the wilderness of sin in a half-hearted commitment in easy land. They remain east of the Jordan and do not enter in and possess the land. They live in compromise with Moses, tolerating sinful flesh and making flimsy excuses for their selfish lifestyle. Christ calls us out of the self-centered condition into our Christ-centered position. On what level do I choose to live Christ?

The Apostle Paul challenges us to "test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourself, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test" (2 Corinthians 13:5). "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

Where are you in your relationship with Christ? Are you halting at the Jordan? Are you afraid to trust Jesus for your daily victory? Have you drunk at some muddy, bitter waters for so long you can only wander around in the bitterness of self-defeat? I pray you will not be content to live east of Jordan in a half-hearted Christian lifestyle.

Joshua teaches us that strength comes out of our weakness and dependence. The only thing that will keep you is your sense of constant need of God's presence.

God's promises means God's provisions. God promised the land and He would provide it. You take it by faith. You experience the life of Christ for every living moment in the same way you became a Christian. You believed the death of Jesus Christ for your sins. It was a step of faith. The same faith that got you out of sin and unbelief gets you into the land. "As therefore you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in Him" (Colossians 2:6). You take God at His word. "Abide in Me, and I in you." Learn how to lean on the power of God's Word.

The longer I live and minister the more I am convinced it is not how you begin the Christian life, but how you end it. Don't get me wrong, everyone one of us is dead in our trespasses and sins, and no one can enter into the kingdom of God except by a spiritual birth. God raises the dead! Far too many are content just to enter in the Christian life and keep one foot in heaven and one in self. God has something better. I refuse to be an average Christian. I want to be a member of the company of the committed. It is a choice I made, and it is a choice I hope you will make, too. If you are not satisfied with your Christian life, it is because you haven't really wanted any more. You can have all of Christ you want. "Every place where the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

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