

Joshua 1:10–18

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 July 2022

Preacher: Bing Nieh

[0 : 0 0] This passage is Joshua 1, 10 to 18. And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, prepare your provisions for within three days, you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

And to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, Remember the word that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you, saying, The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.

Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you, beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them until the Lord gives rest to your brothers as he has to you.

And they also take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.

And they answered Joshua, All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you.

[1 : 1 9] Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death.

Only be strong and courageous. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. We're going to be together on this July the 3rd.

And let's just pause as we turn to the Bible and just ask for the Lord's help. Father, we know the words that for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, so your word goes forth from your mouth and it shall not return to you empty, but it shall accomplish all that you purpose for it to accomplish.

And our prayer this morning is that its purpose is to save the lost, to heal the broken, to lift up the downcast, to empower the weak, to encourage the disheartened, that we would behold God in his word.

Help us to that end, we pray. We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, if you have your Bibles, whether digitally or physically or via the Scripture Journal, I encourage you to keep them open.

[3 : 0 7] We will be in Joshua 1, verses 10 through 18. We are in week two of a series through the book of Joshua. This series, which we've entitled Promises Kept, will take us into the early fall.

In the book of Joshua, one of the core themes, if not the central theme, revolves around promise keeping.

Promise keeping. Particularly when thinking about God. Can God keep a promise? Will God make good on his word?

Will he prove himself to be trustworthy? Will he show himself to be faithful? Is he a God that can assure that what he has planned and purposed will actually come to pass?

Being students of the Bible, you might know ever since humanity's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, humanity has been wandering in the biblical story, without a place where they may rest and return to God's presence.

[4 : 18] Though they're an undeserving people, they are now being gifted in the book of Joshua another Eden. Another garden-esque habitation, with milk and honey emblematic of this plentiful provision.

A land promised as early as Genesis 12. And the rest of the book of Joshua will largely emphasize this actualization of taking the land or receiving the land.

At times, the text will actually tediously belabor the point. But it's clear. The book will tell us that God's good promises never fail.

God never fails. And this morning, we will see how God's people receive his promises.

How God's people receive this promise, particularly that of inheriting a land. In the scheme of things, in the Bible, this is not a new promise.

[5 : 22] It's been working itself out in the previous five books leading up to this. But here we are. It's a new people. In a new place.

Under a new leader. Would the promise still apply? And our text this morning answers this question. Though there will be a new generation of people standing at a new place 40 years after 40 years of wandering.

Under a newly appointed leader. God would still be the same. A new people. In a new place. Under a new leader.

But same God. Same plan. Same purpose. The promise would still be good. This is what our Bibles affirm. He's not only unchanging in character, but he's unchanging in his ways.

He is. The same yesterday, today, and forevermore. But allow me to show you from this text. Our verses are comprised of three speech blocks.

[6 : 28] It primarily revolves around one issue. The promise to give them land. It's directly referred to six times in the chapter.

Twice indirectly. You see it in verse 2. You see it again in verse 3. In verse 6. In verse 11. Verse 13. Verse 14.

Verse 15. Twice. The writer wants you and I to know this. That God is not derailed in his plan.

He still will gift a land to his people. His promise was true, and it still rings true. And the great comfort that you and I take in this is that regardless of whether or not you're in a new chapter, or a new place, or in a new job, or new circumstances, that might bring anxiety, the reminder of the text this morning is that God is constant, and he will be your steady companion.

His promises do not diminish over time. They don't wax or wane. They do not fade or fizzle. They are always good in Christ. And the challenge of the text this morning, I would argue, is not whether God will show himself faithful.

[7 : 54] But I believe the question our text poses for us is will God's people show themselves to be faithful? The first five chapters of Joshua are preparatory chapters to enter the land.

We'll see a reconnaissance mission. We will see a miraculous river crossing. We have significant religious rituals that all give us this glimpse of what's being done prior to entering into the land.

But this morning, our text, I'm convinced, is showing us what type of people enter into the land. And this is my objective this morning.

I would like to show you from this text that a faithful God is followed by faithful people. A faithful God is followed by faithful people.

The writer records for us several blocks of speech that when put together collectively, show us a people that will believe in God's promises. When God's promises are made, God's people live in light of those promises and are shaped by those promises.

[9 : 05] A promise making God forms a people who act, who speak, who respond in faithfulness. We are those who arrange our lives according to what is promised.

When God shows himself faithful, his people respond in faithfulness. A faithful God is followed by faithful people. And this morning, as we walk through these verses, I want to take three breaks, the three breaks given to us in our translation, the ESV.

And I'll simply mark them out in this way. Firstly, you'll see a plan, verses 10 and 11, followed by the participants, verses 12 through 15.

And it'll conclude with a pledge, verses 16 to 18. These three words, plan, participants, and pledge, will hold the substance of this passage for us together.

Verses 10 to 11, the plan. What Joshua received from the Lord in chapter 1, verse 2, he now commands the officers of the people to convey to the people.

[10 : 13] They're instructed to pass through the camp. You see that in verse 11. And communicate to the people the plan. They're to make preparations to enter into the land.

It's not entirely clear who these officers were. But it does demonstrate that at least in the early stages of the nation, there was some civil administration. Some form of governance in place.

We know during Moses' leadership, there were explicit elders and wise and capable individuals that helped him lead the people. And it's not hard to imagine that that remained in place following his death.

The plan's not that overly sophisticated. It's actually really straightforward. Garner up enough provisions that enable you to cross the Jordan River.

The narrative actually downplays the significance of the plan. Because the plan is the onset or the outset of the promise of God that they would possess the land.

[11 : 13] It's so matter-of-fact. It's one verse. It's so succinct. But imagine with me this moment. Just imagine with me for a moment.

Forty years. My lifetime. Of wandering. Forty years. Forty years of sojourning in a desert.

Forty years of faithful provision of manna. Daily bread. Amidst bitter grumbling. Forty years. Forty years. Forty years where remarkable provision of water was given.

Forty years of being led by a cloud by day and a fire by night. Forty years experiencing death by snakes and death by the desert.

And all the while, God is multiplying his people. Deaths are supplemented by births. Moms and dads perish. As they raise young Johnny and little Susie.

[12 : 19] All they have is a promise. A land that they may never see.

I imagine as a dad. Johnny. One day you're going to get there. One day you'll see it. One day you'll taste it.

Taste what, dad? The sweetness of land flowing with abundant milk where honey drips in excess. Dad, that's going to be so wonderful. Dad, that's going to be so wonderful. So nice.

Our family's going to be so happy. Susie, one day you'll be there. And you'll sing.

And you'll dance. And you'll rejoice. And you'll celebrate when you arrive. Arrive where? Arrive to the land that provides. A land filled with peace.

[13 : 16] A land where you will prosper. A land where God will be present. Oh, mom, that's going to be great. Our family will be so happy. It's going to be so spectacular.

But Johnny and Susie, let me tell you something. Mommy and daddy aren't going. We won't make it.

Wait, what do you mean? It's a promise that God has made to your generation that you'll get there and we will perish in the desert.

But it's okay. He's a promise keeping God. Will it be okay? Mom, dad, you're not going to survive? No.

You persevere. You endure. You follow. You obey. Even without us. You follow God. You remember the promises.

[14 : 16] And though mom and dad will not travel with you, God is with you. And here it is. From the outset of Joshua, God is fashioning a nation. He has disciplined a nation.

For 40 years, a whole generation will perish in the desert. Johnny's and Susie's will arrive. And they will hear.

And they will see all that mom and dad attested to you. Attested to them. The promise to the people of God. Go in and take possession of the land.

The land that the Lord your God has given you. Moms and dads.

You imagine. The Bible does tell us we're on a journey. We're on going to another land. A better city. A foundation.

[15 : 17] The city whose foundations are built by God. And this is our aim, is it? Not? That as you wander through life.

In the desert. Barely making it with your daily provisions. What do you need? What do your children need? What do my children need? There's a promise.

We're not going to all ride there together. Probably not at all the same time. You know, it's. Just imagine the moment.

You know the story of Joshua. I mean, I'm going off script now. But you know the story of Joshua. Twelve young men.

Dispatched by Moses. Hey. That's the land of Canaan. Promised to us by God. And then twelve young men go. For thirty days they spy out the land.

[16 : 19] And they come back. With great enthusiasm. Ten of them. Say, no, Moses. And faithlessness and fearfulness.

Can't do it. Can't do it. It's nice. Can't do it. And there are Joshua and Caleb. Faith filled.

Saying, the Lord has given us that. Why do we. Why don't we go. And as a result of faithlessness.

And fearfulness. Failure to cling to God's promises. There is Joshua. Probably a young man at the time. Here, forty years later.

Older. Aged. Yet still faithful. And how do I know he's faithful. Because verse ten. And Joshua commanded. Joshua demonstrates his faithfulness in verse ten.

[17 : 21] I saw the land forty years ago. I'm looking at the land now. And I believe we're going in. And how do I know he believes. Because verse ten. Joshua commanded. Joshua commanded.

He demonstrates his faithfulness. By opening his mouth. Going to the officers. And saying. This is the plan. We're going in. We're going in.

I love how one commentator puts it. In this verse. You see Joshua. Believing. In this moment.

Faith is on display. You remember. How did Abraham show faith? Abraham went. How did Noah show faith? Noah built. How did Enoch show faith? Enoch walked.

How will Rahab show faith? Rahab hid the spies. How does Joshua show faith? Joshua commanded. And it's worthwhile to pause.

[18 : 20] And ask the question. Upon receiving the promises of God. In the Lord Jesus. What about me? What about you? And being showed faith. How?

Perhaps. How do you demonstrate faithfulness? So and so prays. So and so reads the scripture.

So and so shares the saving news. So and so gives generously. Sings. Forgives. Forgives. Forgives. Serves. Serves.

Helps. The commander of the people of God. Believed the promise of God. And he commanded the people. Be reminded.

Of the promise of God. The plan is straightforward. Prepare your provisions. Passover. Passover. The Jordan.

[19 : 18] Faith. Faith. Faithfulness. By Joshua. Secondly. The participants. And much quickly. Much more quickly.

Participants. In verses 12 to 15. Beginning in verse 12. We're given further words from Joshua. Demonstrating that he actually believed what God had spoken.

He approaches two and a half tribes. I know it's a little strange. The Reubenites. The Gadites. And the half tribe of Manasseh. And he calls them to remember something that they had done.

Or committed to Moses. The back story is found in Numbers 32. And you can just jot that down in your scripture journals to turn to. For more detail. And you can read it on your own.

And I'll just recount it for us briefly. Because it pertains to how this passage unfolds. According to Numbers 32. Following a victorious battle by the tribes of Israel.

[20 : 18] Israel. Reuben and Gad. Two of the tribes. Desire to settle east of the Jordan River. So if you imagine. I'm the Jordan River.

For you guys. East is this side. Right? After this battle. They had pretty much taken over the eastern side of the Jordan River.

The Bible tells us they had a lot of livestock. And they asked Moses. They said. Hey Moses. I know we're supposed to go west of the Jordan. But would it be okay.

For the sake of our livestock. And our livelihood. That we settle on the east of the Jordan. Numbers 32 verse 5 says. If they're asking.

If we found favor in your sight Moses. Let this land be given to your servants. For a possession. Don't take us across the Jordan. Moses confronts their request.

[21 : 18] And pauses and says. You know. We can't do this. You can't do this. Because you're abandoning your brothers and your sisters. Your other.

Your fellow countrymen. Their absence. If you choose to stop here. You'll actually dishearten the other ten tribes. You'll discourage them.

Why should you. Reuben and Gad. Be given. This land. As a possession. To settle in. To enjoy peace. And prosperity. And provision. While your brothers are engaged in war and battle.

And there. Reuben and Gad. The two tribes. Assure Moses. That they won't abandon their brothers. Rather. They will take up arms. On their behalf.

When the time comes. When the time comes for Israel. To enter into the promised land. Reuben and Gad. Will supply an infantry. To fight.

[22 : 16] With. With. The rest of the nation. And there. You'll find it. In chapter three. That they arm. Forty thousand. Valiant. Men. Soldiers.

To do just that. And verse 12. Is really. Where they make good. On their word. In numbers 32. The summons is great. Though Reuben and Gad.

And half the tribe of Manasseh. Are settled. And established. They are now. To leave their land. Seemingly unprotected. Unprotected. They're supposed to send. Their men of valor.

Into battle. With the rest of the nation. You see it there. Their land is exposed. In verse 14. Their wives. Their little ones. And their livestock. Will remain in the land.

Seemingly unprotected. But their warriors. Would go. And verses 12. To 15. Highlight. The fact.

[23 : 15] That they will participate. In the battle. With the rest of the nation. It would not be. Nine and a half tribes. That go into the land. But it would be. The full 12. It would be.

The whole nation. That would take possession. Of the land of promise. All would participate. In its blessing. None would be exempt. From the battle. And none would be excluded. And here you have.

The unity. And the solidarity. Of the nation. Being emphasized. The strength of the nation. Was being seen. In them being together. Together.

Though they already had rest. On the east side of the Jordan. The goal would not be realized. Until. The other nine and a half tribes. Experienced that same rest. Noted by verses 13 and 15.

See the goal of the land. Is rest. The outcome of the promise. Is rest. It is the cessation. Certainly of work. And labor. And toil.

[24 : 20] It's the enjoyment. Of peace. And prosperity. The most vitally experiencing. The presence of God. And this theme of rest. Will be unfolded. As our book. Continues to unfold.

But here. It's held out for us. At the beginning. That the people of God. Were receiving a land. So that they can enjoy.

His rest. And what needs to be observed here. Is not the faithfulness. Of two and a half tribes. To God himself.

Though it's certainly here. But we see a faithfulness. Demonstrated. By God. God's people. Amongst themselves. We are to be faithful.

To one another. Faithful to one another. The Reubenites. Gadites. And half tribe. Of Manasseh. Were faithful.

[25 : 17] To their brethren. To go into battle. And for us. It works itself. Out in various ways. In an ecclesial setting. A church setting.

How do we remain faithful. To one another. Well. We go to war. With one another. Or for one another. We are to protect relationships.

With one another. We are to reconcile. And forgive. When wrong. We are to repent. And apologize. When we wound others. We are to seek the well-being. And the flourishing. And the rest. Of the other.

We are to bring relief. To the hurting. Provide for the needy. Encourage the distraught. This is why we don't gossip. This is.

Why we refuse to slander. This is why we put away bitterness. Wrath. And anger. Amongst one another. Because in doing so. If you stir up wrath.

[26 : 14] Or anger. In this setting. You actually prove. Not faithful. To one another. For one another. As well-being.

Well. The tribes of Reuben Gad. And half tribe of Manasseh. Refused to enjoy the pleasures. Of peace and prosperity. While their kinsmen were embattled.

They would be faithful. To Moses. They would be faithful. To the newly appointed leader. Joshua. They would be faithful. To their brothers and sisters.

And they would be faithful. To God. Faithful to God. We see the plan. We see all the participants.

And now lastly. And finally. We see a pledge. Made in verses 16 and 18. The final section. Of our text. Shows a corporate response. To Joshua's commands. It's unclear.

[27 : 11] If it's just the Reubenites. Gadites. And half tribe of Manasseh. Responding. But the response. If I may. Is a pledge of allegiance. It is the pledge of loyalty.

And obedience. To their human leader. The emphasis of this section. Is certainly obedience. See. I read this as a corporate response.

Of the nation. The whole nation. Is saying. And as we obeyed Moses. We will obey you Joshua. The words and commands. Of Joshua himself.

Would be like the words. Of the living God himself. So much so. That rebellion against them. Actually drew the death penalty. It was total obedience.

You see it. All that you have commanded us. We will do. All. Wherever. You send us.

[28 : 09] The range. And the scope. Of their professed faithfulness. Had no bounds. When the people. Are affirming. Joshua's leadership. They acknowledge. This transfer of power.

This passing of authority. From Joshua. To Moses. Their prayer. Is that the Lord. Would be with him. As he was with Moses. And people. Would receive. The transition. Of leadership. Prescribed by God.

And submit to it. Joshua becomes. God's human leader. Over God's people. So the people. Vow obedience. And allegiance.

To God's servant leader. The people. Would be faithful. To Joshua. As they were faithful. To Moses. Faithfulness. Would mark. Their relationship. To God's.

Appointed. Leader. And as we come. To the close. Of chapter one. We are to see. A very. Different. People. A very.

[29 : 03] Different. Generation. Entering. Into the promised land. At this point. In contrast. To the generation. That died. In the desert.

We now see. A generation. Mighty. In faith. Because they have confidence. In God's. Promises. The writer. Wants us to see.

And wants us to know. That it is a faithful. People. Entering. Into the land. A faithful. People. The promise of God.

Remained the same. But it was a new people. One that showed great promise. Filled with faithfulness. And enthusiasm. And zeal. And we find that.

The faithfulness of God. Has actually carved out. A people. A faithfulness. Because. A faithful God. Is followed by faithful.

[30 : 00] People. The faithful God. Has not only procured land. For his people. In the book of Joshua. But. If you're a Christian. You're well aware. That he. Aware. That he's procured.

An eternal city. For his people. And as we move. To responding. To the Lord. Through partaking. Of the Lord's supper.

This morning. I want to say. That those of us. This table. In front of me. It consists of. Bread. And juice.

But what this table. Represents. Or what this table is. Is a provision. For God's people. It's for those of us. Who are believers. In the Lord Jesus. Who have responded.

To his faithful. Sacrificial death. And through our. Faithfulness. However feeble. It might be. We're welcome. To this table. And in other words.

[30 : 57] If you received Christ. Acknowledging your rebellion. Against God. Professing your need. For the forgiveness. Of sins. And have put your trust. In the saving work. Then this provision.

Is for you. This table. Is for you. And if you have yet. To make this decision. I urge you. In the next. Few minutes. To just.

Remain in your seat. And observe. As the people of God. Collectively. Share a meal. That commemorates. The death. Of the Lord Jesus. And what. It accomplished. On their behalf.

First Corinthians. Chapter 11. Verse 23.

Paul writes this. For I received. From the Lord. What I also delivered. To you. That the Lord Jesus. On the night. When he was betrayed. He took bread. And when he had given. Thanks.

[31 : 54] He broke it. And said. This is my body. Which is. For you. Do this. In remembrance. Of me. And in the same way. He took the cup. After supper. Saying. This is the cup. Of the new covenant.

In my blood. Do this. As often. As you drink it. In remembrance. Of me. And so. This meal. Is a memorial meal. For those.

Who recognize. What. Jesus's death. Has accomplished. On their behalf. Well.