

Hobab Asked - Hobab Assured

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning and thank you very much, Ian, for your warm welcome. It's good to be with you and I do bring greetings from the Black Isle from our congregation at Ferentos and Rizollas.

We're going to read as our call to worship this morning the words of 1 Peter chapter 1. At verse 24, we read these words, For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.

And this word is the good news that was preached to you. Well, of course, we associate the fellowship of the gospel with God's house, and we are going to commence our service by singing together from Psalm 122.

It's the Sing Psalms rendering of Psalm 122. This is on page 169.

To the Lord's house they were calling, and with joy I went with them. Now at last our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem, and so on.

[1 : 49] So let's stand, let's sing to the praise of God. Psalm 122. To the Lord's house they were calling, and with joy I went with them.

Now at last our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

See Jerusalem like a city, built compactly, close and strong.

That is where the tribes assemble, tribes which to the Lord belong.

To the Lord's name praise they offer, as for Israel the great.

[2 : 57] There are set of thrones for judgment, thrones of David's royal seed.

Pray for Zion's peace and safety. May your friends securely dwell.

Peace within your walls continue. Strength within your citadel.

For the sake of friends and brothers, peace be in you I will sing.

For the sake of her God's temple, I seek your prosperity.

[4 : 06] Well let's draw near to God in prayer. Let's pray. Amen. As your people rejoiced during the days of ancient Israel, it is truly a joy for us to be in the Lord's house on the Lord's day.

And for this renewed opportunity to gather in gospel fellowship, we give thanks. We praise you for how your people gravitate towards the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And we pray that on this Lord's day, the sound of the gospel would resonate far and wide. We pray that in our towns and villages and crofting townships alike, knees would bow and tongues would confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And as we pray for our communities, so we pray for our cities, our countries and continents alike.

And so we pray that the proclamation of the gospel would be heard across our world, indeed to the far ends of the earth.

[6 : 01] We praise you for your living and abiding and enduring word. And as we gather under its supreme authority, so we pray that we would read it and engage with it with heartfelt reverence.

Still our hearts even now and enable us to worship you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we do so in spirit and sincerity and in truth.

May God the Holy Spirit hover over us. May God the Holy Spirit minister to us and enable us, we pray, to have as our great endeavor the glory and honor and praise of your name.

and so we seek your blessing upon us we ask oh lord that you would forgive us for we confess our sins we pray for cleansing through the shed blood of jesus our sinless sin bearer and so we come in his name giving thanks that we have in this moment direct access to the very throne room of heaven through our mediator and advocate with the father we ask oh lord that you would grant us now grace and mercy and peace for all we ask is in jesus name and for his sake amen well it's wonderful to see so many boys and girls now we're going to think just for a few moments on the

bible as a manual for life but before doing so we're going to read together from the bible from the new testament from second timothy chapter 3 now the apostle paul writes to a very young timothy and as he writes to him he is urging timothy to read his bible now we're going to read from verse 14 in second timothy chapter 3 this is on page 1199 of the pages so timothy so timothy so timothy so timothy so timothy so timothy so timothy so timothy but as for you continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in christ jesus all scripture is breathed out by god and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

The Bible, a manual for life. Now, there are manuals and there are manuals. I have here a screenshot of a manual that's probably more familiar to, shall we say, a more mature generation here today. Decades ago, almost every garage across Lewis would have had a copy of Haynes' manual.

[10:08] This one is for the Ford Escort, the Owner's Workshop Manual. These are now readily available on eBay and on other platforms, but much of these manuals are no longer available. You've got to go looking for them. But if you had a manual like this and you owned a car and you thought, I can strip it down, I can reassemble it, I can fix it, then you'd have turned the pages of Haynes' workshop manual. But the Bible is a manual for life. Now, this manual, it's been around for a long time.

In fact, it was first published, Haynes' workshop manual, back in 1965. Now, that was a long time ago.

But really, Paul is saying to young Timothy here that the Bible has been around much longer. Because when you start reading your Bible, you'll discover that many of the Bible stories, if you go way, way, way, way back to book number one of 66, then you're taken back thousands upon thousands of years. Now, unlike the Bible, Haynes' manual is not a one-size-fits-all. Great if you own a Ford Escort, but this particular manual is of no use to you if you own, for example, a Volkswagen Golf. Now, Haynes' manual is, well, mainly for cars. But the Bible is a manual for life. Haynes equips you to get to know your car better. But Paul is saying here that the Bible thoroughly equips us for getting to know the Lord Jesus Christ and walking with him every day. Sadly, John Harold Haynes, who first published this manual back in 65, well, he's no longer with us. He died in 2019 at the age of 80. But Jesus lives, and he ever lives. And when we turn the pages of the Bible, the Bible points us, doesn't it, to the Lord Jesus. Now, as I said at the beginning, many of Haynes' manuals are now history and of no use to anyone because, well, most of the cars we drive these days are a world removed from the Ford Escort of 1980 to 1982. But the Bible, as Paul tells us here, is God breathed. It is inspired. You can't say that about any other book you have in your library. And whenever we're talking about Haynes' manual, we're talking in the past tense. We're talking about stuff that was. But you see, the Bible is useful. Paul is speaking in the present tense.

[13:55] It's useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and training in righteousness, training us how we can have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

And finally, Haynes' workshop manual, well, it made many of its readers in decades past into very, very good mechanics. But the Bible makes its reader into a man or a woman of God. So I want to encourage you today to read your Bible. There's nothing terribly scientific about that, but it is so, so important to read your Bible every day, to read it carefully, to read it prayerfully. And as you do so, ask the Lord to lead you and to guide you to Jesus, to get to know him and to walk with him every day in life. Because the Bible is a manual for all of life. Amen. We're going to pray together.

We're going to pray the words of the Lord's Prayer. So let's do that as the Lord Jesus taught his disciples. So we pray with one voice. Let's do so in unison. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Well, let's continue to sing to the praise of God. Psalm 19. And this is the Scottish Psalter version of Psalm 19.

[16:17] On page 223. And we're singing verses 7 to 11. A psalm which focuses on various aspects of the Bible. Verse 7, the Bible, God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies.

[23 : 34] And if you do go with us, whatever good the Lord will do to us the same will we do to you. So they set out from the mount of the Lord for three days journey.

And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them for three days journey to seek out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day whenever they set out from the camp.

And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered and let those who hate you flee before you. And when it rested, he said, return, O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.

Amen. Amen. And we trust we know God will add his blessing to the reading of his holy and inspired word.

Let's continue to sing to the praise of God. Psalm 23 on page 28. It's the Sing Psalms version. The Lord is my shepherd.

[25 : 16] He's my shepherd.

And this he has done his great name to display. Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near.

Because you are with me, no evil I'll fear. Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer.

In the sight of my enemies, a table you spread. The oil of rejoicing you poured on my head.

My cup overflows and I'm graciously fed. So surely your covenant, mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

[27 : 05] I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days. Well, before we turn to God's word, let's once again bow our heads.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Shepherd us now, we pray.

Thank you, gracious God, gracious God, into the green pastures and still waters of holy scripture.

Open the eyes of our understanding.

Give us light. Give us gospel clarity as only you can. We pray that you would bind us together as one in Christ Jesus.

Grant your blessing upon us for it is your blessing we long for, the blessing that makes one rich and adds no sorrow.

[28 : 18] We praise you for the indescribable gift of your Son, your one and only Son, your only begotten Son, the Son of your steadfast and unfailing love.

How we praise you today anew for the one in whom we have redemption through his shed blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of your grace, which you have lavished upon us via Calvary's cross.

Remember us, we pray, as we bring our cares and our concerns before you at the throne of grace.

You are the God of all grace, and for the sufficiency of your grace, we give thanks. We praise you that you are the God of all comfort, so may you bring comfort, consolation, encouragement, strength to all this day who may be in need of having a felt awareness of your presence, of your grace and mercy and peace anew.

So draw near to us and grant us now, we pray, to wait upon the Lord. May we know the joy of the Lord as our strength, and may we look to you with our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and the perfecter of our faith.

[30 : 13] For we ask all things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Well, turn with me, if you will, to the book of Numbers, to the passage we read together from Numbers chapter 10.

Our text is verse 29, the words of Moses to Hobab. Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the Lord has promised good to Israel.

A man named Hobab. Now, the Old Testament has, you might say, a register of peculiar names.

And whilst some are, these days, very popular baby names, such as Adam and Caleb and Noah, Leah, Esther, Hannah, Rebecca, you are less likely to find the name of Hobab on a birth certificate. After all, he is mentioned ever so briefly on the pages of Scripture. Other than this reference, we have in Numbers chapter 10, verse 29, he is not referred to again across the landscape of the book of Numbers.

[31 : 54] There are two further indirect references to Hobab in the book of Judges, but that's it. So, why turn the spotlight this morning on someone who seems so insignificant and somewhat irrelevant?

There are, after all, some 3,000 names in the Bible to choose from. So, why Hobab?

Well, because I would argue that there is much to glean from this Bible character. There is much for us to learn from Hobab here in Numbers chapter 10, so much so that we're going to spend the day unpacking this passage before us.

We are going to be a little forensic, more of a fine-tooth comb than a broad brush, as we explore verses 29 to 36 of Numbers chapter 10.

But this morning, we're going to focus primarily on the words of verse 29, and we're going to do so under two headings, two A's.

[33 : 10] Hobab asked and Hobab assured. What has he asked? What are we to make of the invitation of Moses?

Come with us and we will do good to you. We will treat you well. Well, that is the assurance that Hobab is given in its sum and substance.

So, Hobab asked, now, Numbers chapter 10, if we go back to verse 11 where we began to read this narrative concerning Hobab, it marks a significant turning point for Israel.

You might say a new beginning. Having pitched their tents for a whole year at Mount Sinai, it's now time to move on.

Indeed, we read that they set out, verse 12, to begin the conquest of Canaan. So, picture the scene, if you will, at this key landmark.

[34 : 22] There they are, assembled, mobilized into orderly ranks with standards and banners lifted up. Destination Canaan, the promised land.

Now, our interest this morning is in the personal dynamic to the narrative, particularly verse 29, because it revolves around this character by the name of Hobab, Moses' Midianite brother-in-law. Note that he is asked to join the people of Israel to sign up, to subscribe, to walk with Moses and the people of Israel, to accompany them through the wilderness, and to play a meaningful part as a, verse 31, service provider in assisting Israel in navigating their way to Canaan.

So, why Hobab? What is it about Hobab? Why is Moses so compelled to speak to him and ask him to come with them?

Well, Hobab is a knowledgeable, resourceful man who is more than familiar with the desert terrain.

[35 : 54] Hobab can provide much-needed guidance, direction, and practical advice for mapping out purposes and more besides.

But if we just take the spotlight away from Hobab for a moment and turn the spotlight on Moses, then it tells us also, doesn't it, something interesting, something that perhaps warms our hearts about the great leader of Israel himself.

Does he really need Hobab? After all, he's an outstanding leader. He's well resourced.

Yes, but does Moses not recognize too that he is not indispensable? You'll recall how his father-in-law, Jethro, had reminded him back in Exodus 18 of his need to delegate responsibility onto others.

Wise counsel. Here we are in Numbers chapter 10. Moses, yes, he is assured of divine protection.

[37 : 17] But he also seems to be saying here that he also values human support and assistance. Yes, here is the illustrious Moses, the godly servant of God who knew God face to face.

But he's also, in the words of the commentator Raymond Brown, a mere man, with all the natural hesitancy and fears that anyone would feel on the verge of such a massive enterprise.

I want you to think of Hobab as the ultimate Sherpa. Hobab. So, if this was Everest terrain, then you would instinctively call someone like Hobab, someone well-informed and experienced.

But I want us to stop there because he is not merely being called upon here as a facilitator, as a pilot, as a navigator, as a root finder, no, there is so much more to what is unfolding.

There is always substance to Scripture and verse 29 of Numbers 10 is no exception. Notice that Moses' invitation goes so much deeper.

[38 : 53] What we have here in verse 29 is a personal gospel invitation. An invitation, you might say, with a powerful gospel dynamic to it.

But I know that the moment we make reference to the word gospel, someone might be thinking, hold on, this is not the New Testament.

We are not here on the pages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The book of Numbers centers on ancient Israel, not the first century world of the gospel.

Well, that's true, but there are clear, very clear overtones of the good news of the gospel here, as you will find across the pages of the Old Testament.

Let's not forget how it begins. Where do we first see that powerful, moving, stirring gospel dynamic? [40 : 10] We see it, don't we, in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15. Theologians call it the Proto-Evangelium, the first announcement of the gospel on the pages of scripture.

And yes, this is book 1 of 66, and the gospel is beginning to resonate as we begin our journey through redemption history.

Genesis 3, 15 revolves around the offspring of the woman, the one who would triumph over the old serpent, and his name is Jesus Christ.

he shall bruise your head, God says, to the serpent in the narrative of the fall.

Yes, the gospels are a distinct part of the New Testament, but exploring gospel themes like Numbers 10, 29 within on the pages of the Old Testament provides us, doesn't it, with a deeper understanding of the Bible as a whole and of how the Old Testament points us consistently in the direction of Jesus.

[41 : 47] The Old Testament gravitates towards Jesus and ultimately crystallizes in Jesus Christ. The great translator of Scripture himself, William Tyndale, puts it so, so well, the Scriptures spring out of God and flow into Christ and were given to lead us to Christ.

Well, Numbers 10 is no exception. So I want us to see that this passage is bulging with what we're going to call gospel markers.

The invitation of the gospel and Hobab's response to it is played out very, very clearly here. So the symbolic significance of what unfolds is striking.

You see, Hobab is essentially being invited here by Moses to enter into fellowship with God's people. It is a call to discipleship and there are overtones here of that key discipleship directive follow me so central to the gospel ministry of the Lord Jesus on the pages of the gospel but we see it here.

you might say that it's a big ask from Hobab's perspective. Well, so it is. But for you and I this morning there are moments in life when we either accept or decline an invitation to various life events, functions, meetings, receptions, and other occasions.

[43 : 39] But you see, Numbers 10 29 takes us into the realm of one of life's defining moments.

This is a momentous invitation like no other. And how you respond today to this gospel invitation of Numbers 10 29 matters more than anything else that's unfolding in your life right now.

In fact, it will determine how you live the rest of your life and where you will spend the endless ages of eternity. This is serious business.

Hobab is invited. It's more of an exhortation, isn't it? Come with us to associate himself with Israel, to join the circle, to position himself behind the ark of the covenant and to follow the pillar of clouds, to walk by faith, to follow not just God's people, but God himself.

And should he come along, Hobab is assured that he will be made to feel most welcome, he will be well received, and he will be embraced with generosity and kindness.

[45 : 12] We will treat you well, is what Moses conveys to Hobab literally in the words we have here.

And by extension, this is your assurance today too, should you come and follow in the footsteps of Hobab.

But secondly, Hobab assured. Now, what are we to make of Moses' words of assurance to Hobab here?

Well, the words are interesting. We will do good to you, we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things for Israel.

Hobab's assurance is founded on the goodness and faithfulness of God. The Lord, in his covenant faithfulness, has promised good things for Israel, primarily the promised land.

[46 : 25] And this is what Moses is alluding to. Hobab now has the opportunity to become a recipient of this covenant promise and the multiple blessings that go with it.

He's invited, he's encouraged, he's exhorted in the imperative mood. Come with us, walk with us, journey with us on this epic journey, and we will treat you well.

You will share, you too, yes Hobab, you too will share in our inheritance of God's goodness and loving kindness.

This is his assurance should he come along and it is quite compelling. Again, there are gospel overtones to this promised inheritance that we find, don't we, across the scriptures.

Listen to the words of Peter in 1 Peter 1 verses 3 and 4. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us in Jesus an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

[47 : 53] And he says this inheritance is kept in heaven for you. You see, what was promised in Numbers 10 29 is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

the ultimate inheritance we have in Christ is Emmanuel's land, the heavenly city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God.

Hebrews 11 10, alluding, of course, to that great promise given to Abraham. Abraham. And Abraham actively pursued this great promise.

He was looking forward to it, the writer to the Hebrews tells us in 11 10. You see, the words of Numbers 10 29, these words were uttered some 3,500 years ago.

And isn't it remarkable that these words continue to resonate with us today and are amplified through the gospel. So, Numbers 10 29 has lost nothing of its gospel intensity.

[49 : 19] This invitation comes to us today within these walls with the propelling thrust of the gospel. It has lost nothing of its weight and urgency.

Come with us. It's a familiar formula of words, isn't it? You might say, it sounds like.

Well, it does. Come with us is very similar to, for example, what Philip said to a somewhat skeptical Nathaniel in the opening chapter of John's gospel.

If you read from verse 43, the narrative unfolds. But what does he say to this somewhat cynical Nathaniel? Come. Come with us.

Come and see. Accompany me. Let me take you to the feet of Jesus. Nathaniel is a reluctant disciple who, before accepting Philip's invitation to come to Jesus, questions whether anything good can come out of Nazareth.

[50 : 31] But, oh, when he comes and when he follows Jesus, he is immediately, just like Hobab, assured of seeing greater things.

Come with us. This is the great anthem of the Church of Christ. It's a personal invitation inviting you this morning if you have not as yet embraced this invitation to come, to come into Christian fellowship.

It's a call to Christian discipleship to publicly associate yourself, yes, in this very moment with God's own people and to lift the gospel standard, the banner of Jesus Christ and to join the circle and follow Jesus.

We are talking about an open confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Is this the moment where some of us here today will stand up and stand out and respond in a positive vein to this gospel invitation of Numbers 10 29.

The assurance, the declaration, the guarantee that is extended to Hobab has not changed.

[52 : 10] I assure you today on the authority of God's word that we, the people of God will do you good. We will treat you well.

Now, coming back to Hobab, he knows a thing or two about the wilderness. Let's be clear about that. He knows that the wilderness out there beyond Sinai is difficult.

It's demanding. It's challenging terrain, and Moses will not try to pull the wool over his eyes.

Because Hobab knows too much.

He knows the wilderness far better than Moses. He knows that it's a dangerous world out there.

Yet, he is reminded that God has promised an abundance of good things to his covenant people.

Multiple blessings await him. a promised land flowing with milk and honey. Now, Hobab has seen for himself, of course, in the life of his brother-in-law, Moses, that God is indeed true to his word.

[53 : 30] Yes, he is truthful, he is faithful, and he is covenant keeping. Because the same Moses, this is the same Moses we're talking about, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he who was once a prince in Egypt, walking through the corridors of power within the palace.

But he chose, of course, he chose rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy, as Hebrews 11, 24 puts it, the fleeting pleasures of sin.

And he has endured much, but his endurance has not been without enjoyment. Moses has experienced God's presence, God's power, God's blessing time and again.

So, come with us is applicable to you an eye today, because, you see, just like the Israelites at the beginning of this narrative back in verse 11, every day of our lives, we too are setting out, we too are embarking on a journey into the unknown.

We don't have a clue when we get up in the morning how the day is going to unfold and how it's going to end. life is uncertain. However, there is, as this passage reminds us, absolute certainty in the promises of God.

[55 : 13] The future is as bright for the Christian today as the promises of God, because all of his promises are yes, amen, in Christ Jesus.

You see, Numbers 10 comes with a concrete assurance that God's covenant mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways and that ultimately I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days, world without end.

This is the dynamic of the great assurance that Hobab is being assured of.

We see it, don't we, in the writings of John Newton, in that great song, that great hymn of praise, amazing grace.

The Lord has promised good to me. His word, my hope secures. He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

[56 : 35] So I want to ask, just as Hobab was asked, as we close now, will you resolve to come on this journey?

Do you feel the excitement of this moment at Mount Sinai? God will be to leave. And just like Hobab, you too are encouraged, as we bring this service to a close, as we pronounce the benediction, to sign up, to come with us.

So how will you respond to this gospel invitation today? That is the question. Will you join the circle, and will you sit with us at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ?

There is no better place to be seated. Because you see, this gospel invitation of Numbers 10 29 finds its ultimate fulfillment in one greater than Moses.

In the very personal invitation of the Lord Jesus, on the pages of Matthew 11 verse 28, again, sounds like, come, Jesus says, come to me, come with me, come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I assure you that I will give you rest.

[58 : 05] Come with me and I will do you good. You will find rest for your souls. God will Hobab do?

Well, that remains to be seen. And if you are interested in how all of this unfolds, because it's not without an element of uncertainty, there's an element of suspense at this point.

but if you are interested in what happens next and how it all concludes, come back at six o'clock, because we're going to revisit this passage, and we're going to navigate our way through it and determine how it all ends.

But the big question today is for how this service ends for you. Will you respond to this invitation in the here and now, and come to the feet of Jesus?

Amen. Our heavenly Father, we praise you for the invitation of the gospel, how we give thanks today for the multiple invitations and exhortations we have across the pages of the Bible.

[59 : 41] We thank you for the compelling words we have engaged with this morning, and may we be led to stand where Hobab stood with Moses.

all these generations ago, in the mists of time, and yet your word is both timeless and timely.

It speaks to us now, and may we sense your still small voice bidding us to come. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We're going to sing in conclusion to the praise of God the words of Psalm 34. It's the Scottish Psalter.

It's on page 247. And we're going to sing verses 8 to 15.

[60 : 53] this great gospel invitation of the Psalter to taste, to see, to experience the reality of God's goodness in Christ.

Oh, taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed, fear God his saints, none that him fear shall be with want oppressed.

Let's sing these stanzas and conclusion. Oh, taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed, fear God the saints, and the saints none that in fear shall be with want oppressed.

oppressed. The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear, I shall you teach to understand how he the Lord should fear.

[62 : 51] What man is he that life desires to see good would live on, and lips refrain from speaking God, and from ill words thy tongue.

Depart from ill, do good, seek peace, pursue eternally.

God's eyes are on the just, his ears are open to their cry.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, remain with us all. Amen.