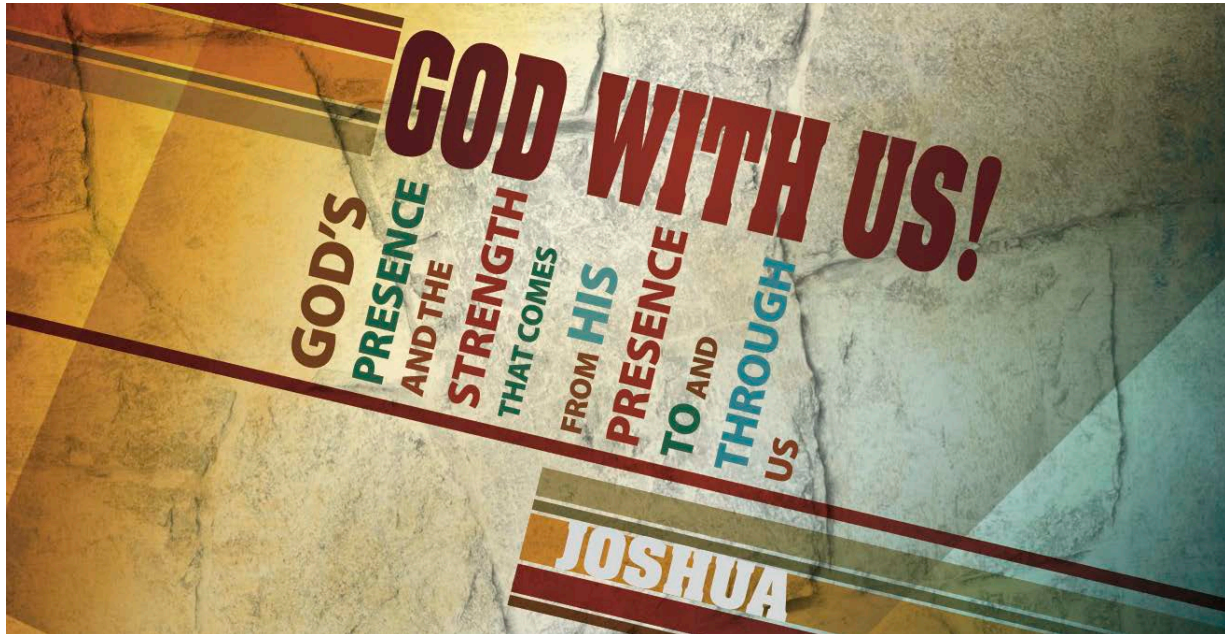


Week 8, Joshua 10:28–19:51

Hook



Main Point: God's presence governs the land and His people.

Current Event: How many promises have you made in your life? How many have you kept? In 2007 a Washington, D.C., resident, Roy Pearson, received a promise from Custom Cleaners: that he would experience "Satisfaction Guaranteed." Apparently Pearson was unsatisfied with his \$10.50 trouser alteration. Pearson dragged the cleaners to court and cited their promise and his dissatisfaction. The plaintiff shared the following regarding the service he received and the promise that was not kept:

"Never before in recorded history have a group of defendants engaged in such misleading and unfair business practices,"

Pearson sought \$54 million dollars in damages.¹

Discussion Questions

Is the word *promise* a part of your vocabulary? With what degree of seriousness do you make promises?

Describe a time in your life when you were pleasantly surprised by a kept promise or guarantee.

¹ <http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/some-retail-brands-lifetime-guarantees-never-went-out-fashion-156314>

What promises has God made to you as a believer? How have you seen these kept in your life?

Week 8, Joshua 10:28–19:51

Book

Main Point: God’s presence governs the land and His people.

Text Summary: Israel’s national identity is strengthened with every battle and chapter 12 culminates with an impressive list of kings overthrown by Joshua—the land of Canaan is conquered. Chapter 13 begins a new era of dividing the land among tribes, seeing to it that God’s children receive their rightful inheritance.

Joshua 10:40–11:6 and 11:12, 15, 23 (Read)

Sub Point: Victory comes through our obedience to Him.

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein”
(Psalm 24:1).*

These chapters testify to God’s authority, protection and His promise. The author uses the language he does in the summary of Israel’s victory to show the total expanse of Israel’s conquest across the land.² This language serves the purpose to show the constant act of God to do what He promised, to show that He did what He said He would do: give them the entire land.³ And He did.

The narrative is consistent to show this: Against insurmountable odds, God is able. The expansive description in the beginning of chapter 11 frames up what has been true for the Israelites throughout their time at war: Their enemy is bigger than they are. The language used shows the contrast between Israel and the army mounting against them.⁴ The military strength and vast weaponry of Israel’s foes may appear more dominant than Israel, but no weapon stands a chance against Israel’s God. This is clear in the military prowess of Pharaoh that came against the Israelites as they fled Egypt.⁵ God works and when He works, He is effective.

Second to God’s steadfastness, the text brings out another key theme. From God to Moses to Joshua to Israel, the Scripture is clear that obedience equals success. This is the theme throughout Joshua and beyond, showing the importance of obedience to God’s commands. Joshua 11:15 sums it up:

² Longman III, Tremper and David E. Garland, [2012] *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Numbers–Ruth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 938.

³ Howard, David [1998] *New American Commentary: Joshua*. Nashville: B&H Publishers, p. 259.

⁴ Longman III, Tremper and David E. Garland, [2012] *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Numbers–Ruth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 939.

⁵ Ibid.

“Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.”

What about the way God acted on behalf of Israel is astonishing? What does that do for your confidence in Him?

What role does obedience play in spiritual victory?

Why is obedience significant in the life of a leader?

Joshua 13:1, 6–8, 14:1–5, 17:13 and 18:2–4, 19:51 (Read)

Sub Point: God desires complete obedience.

Land is valuable and symbolic—it represents safety, livelihood and freedom. The first part of the Joshua narrative focused on Israel’s conquest of the land in obedience to Yahweh and Yahweh giving victory. Now, the narrative shifts to show the distribution of the land and its occupation.⁶ The language in chapter 13 shows Yahweh to be the ultimate caretaker and owner of the land. Yahweh’s role is contrasted with Israel’s, whose role it is to maintain and make use of the land.⁷ This contrast is reminiscent of the Genesis account. God’s place was Creator, contrasted against Adam’s role as creature, whose job it was to work and keep the land. This division of roles should keep humility in the forefront of our minds: God gives us our role; we don’t create our own.

Joshua was advanced in years when he gave the children of Israel their inheritance. He could easily be in his mid-80s by now. It’s been 40 years since Joshua’s first role as a youth in the service of Moses.⁸ This phrase used at the opening of chapter 13 is the same phrase used throughout the Old Testament to describe those who have served Yahweh for extended years.⁹ The phrase occurs in Genesis 18:11 and 24:1 describing Abraham.

But even in Joshua’s old age, the work was not done. There remained land to be possessed and people to eradicate, but it was time to occupy. God said:

“I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you” (13:6).

⁶ Howard, David [1998] *New American Commentary: Joshua*. Nashville: B&H Publishers, p. 292.

⁷ Longman III, Tremper and David E. Garland, [2012] *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Numbers–Ruth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 958.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 956

⁹ *Ibid.*

God gives the land, but the people must possess it. Occupation of the land was a vital part of God's process.¹⁰ Occupation was the sign of completion. Israel's conquest of the land must be followed by its occupation of it.

"So Joshua said to the people of Israel, 'How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?'" (18:3).

Joshua's tone makes it seem like Israel had become idle.¹¹ To the reader, this may seem strange. God did all this work on behalf of Israel, now the Israelites are slacking off and not completing the job. However, this is life for all of us. It's easy to see all that God has done and to revel in his accomplishments on our behalf. But we must be careful that the feeling of euphoria or satisfaction doesn't sideline us and keep us from staying motivated. We must take heed of the account of Israel that obedience to God must continue to the very end of His calling. We continue to call for the Spirit's aid in our lives to keep us steadfast in our obedience to the Lord.

Read 15:63, 16:10, and 17:12–13. What might be the consequences of this behavior for the children of Israel? What do these Scriptures mean for us today?

What territory is left to conquer in your life? Individually and collectively as a class, what challenges has God tasked you to tackle?

Read 17:18. This is Joshua's solution to the complaint of the children of Joseph, who wanted more land. What does this tell you about how believers are to steward our "small allotments?"

¹⁰ Howard, David [1998] *New American Commentary: Joshua*. Nashville: B&H Publishers, p. 297.

¹¹ Longman III, Tremper and David E. Garland, [2012] *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Numbers–Ruth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 993.

Week 8, Joshua 10:28–19:51

Took



Main Point: God's presence governs the land and His people.

Group Activity: God not only makes promises; He keeps them. Break into small groups and discuss some of God's promises that you have believed and seen true in your life.

Lesson Conclusion: God's gift to Israel included real-life blessings: land that they could touch, crops they could taste, and rest they could enjoy. God's gifts to us are less visible today, but they are still as real as the ground under our feet: Faith is substance; hope is an anchor; fruit tastes sweet, and spiritual rest is real. Israel's conquest of the Promised Land yielded real results, and we should expect no less.

Challenge

Rely on God. It's common for believers to trust God for salvation, but not trust Him with the day-to-day aspects of life like money, relationships, work and recreation. Joshua reminds us that once we are in the land, we are still called by God to *occupy it* by trusting His continued power and presence. Pray about this. What is God saying to you?

Tell stories of God's victories in your life. What success stories do you have to share? The Lord has rescued you from sin and you have the unique opportunity—and duty—to share that story. Be bold in relaying the story of God's working in your life.

Stay motivated to accomplish the tasks that God has given you. Have you become apathetic in your pursuit of Christ and the challenges that He has tasked you with? Reaffirm your commitment to Jesus and engage in the opportunities that He has waiting for you.