
Joshua: God's People in God's Land
 "Between the Promise and the Fulfillment"
 Joshua 21: 43-45, 23:14

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

"By April 1970 I had grown sick to death of the church viewed as "religious cushion" and me as chief cushioner. I had been a pastor for more than a decade and instructor at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia for four years. I had given it all my best shot. But as a change agent I had bombed out. I was awash with cynicism about the prospects of the Christian church and went around with continual sorrow in my heart over the state of the churches around me. In a mood of dark despair I resigned both from the seminary faculty and from my pastorate . . . I began an intensive study of the promises of God in Scripture. I spent long hours tracing out great themes of grace predicted in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Joel, Habakkuk, and Zechariah. Sometimes, like a man dying of thirst, I drank in the Gospel of John and the enormous promises presented in it . . . As the weeks passed, my mind also began to be captured by the vastness of God's promises. I was awed by what the risen Lord had promised to me in my weakness, utterly silenced in my soul like an astronomer unexpectedly seeing a whole new galaxy when he was only searching for a single planet! . . . The promises are the handles we grab in our weakness in order to secure His Presence." - Jack Miller, Outgrowing the Ingrown Church

"There is more in God's promises to comfort than in this world to perplex." - Thomas Watson

"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." - Hebrews 11: 13-16

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?
- Where are you currently living in the gap between promise and fulfillment in your life?
 - What are the temptations you face in the gap?
 - What are you drawn towards to bridge the gap artificially - that is, apart from God's making things happen?
- Why do we struggle to live under the weight and hope of promises?
 - Why does living with unmet longings seem so difficult?
- How does looking back upon the kept promises of God build trust for us?
 - What promises did the author of Joshua highlight for his audience? Why? Why so emphatically so?
 - How does living on this side of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus equip us with more kept promises?
 - Are the kept promises causing you to trust and worship?
 - Are there any specific evidences of grace animating you now?
- What promises are the New Testament and modern Christians living towards?
 - How are they similar to and distinct from the ones highlighted in this passage?
 - Are you growing in your hope for those promises to be fulfilled?
 - How does Christ's finished work stoke the flames of hope for you?