

God Keeps His Promises and Offers Us Rest

DARRELL DELANEY

Sometimes waiting for something promised can feel like an eternity. A parent travels for work and makes a promise to a young child: I'll be back in time for the school play, or: I will bring you back a present. The child anxiously waits for the parent's return, watching out of the windows days too early; asking what day it is for the millionth time, or how many more hours until that parent gets home. Many parents do their best to keep these promises...some will, some cannot, and some won't; but God is better than a human parent. He keeps his promises without fail. As the book of Joshua begins, we see God poised to begin the fulfilment of the promise he made to Abraham long ago. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And Darrell, we are beginning a six-part series on the book of Joshua; a very interesting book, and a very interesting place in Israel's history, where these events take place.

DARRELL DELANEY

In this book of the Bible, we are picking up on something that God has promised years ago. Like in Genesis, he told Abram in Chapter 12: I am going to make your name great; I am going to make you...I am going to give you descendants and I am going to give you land; but he only really sees Isaac and a few of his children and his children's children...some grandchildren...but he doesn't see the whole promise come to pass. He doesn't see the land; he doesn't see the full manifestation of his descendants.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; in fact, by the time Genesis ends, actually, Darrell, the descendants still aren't a nation by any means, right? We've got Jacob's kids and we've got Joseph, and now he's got some kids. So, they are not a mighty nation; but here is the other thing: Abraham, at least, and Sarah, eventually made it to Canaan, which is the Promised Land, but by the time Genesis ends, they are not even there anymore. Now, they are in Egypt...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Because that is where Joseph got sent into slavery by his wicked brothers. So, they all go to Egypt. So, as Exodus opens, the people are a nation now; in fact, in Exodus 1, for the very first time in the Bible, the descendants of Abraham are called a nation in Hebrew, but they are in slavery. They have grown...there are tens of thousands...maybe there are a hundred thousand Israelites by now. So, they are big enough to qualify as a nation...big enough to qualify as a threat to Pharaoh...the problem is, they are in Egypt, not in the Promised Land.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, then we see God use the story of the exodus and Moses and how he delivers them from the oppression of the Egyptian Pharaoh, but they are, at the end of that book, on the precipice of going into the land. They send spies into the land to see what is going on there, and that is how Joshua gets tied into the story, because he is Moses' aide when he is enlisted to go and look at this Promised Land. So, Moses gets to look into the land by getting some information back, but he doesn't get to go into the land; and so, Joshua is, as Moses' aide, going to go over; and they have ten...they have twelve spies, actually. Ten gave bad reports and two gave good reports, and Joshua and Caleb were the two who gave good reports.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But they were the two nobody listened to; and so, we will think a little bit more about those spies back there in Numbers 13 in the next program in this series, but suffice it to say, they don't get to go into the land. God tells them they have to wait forty years, and by the time those forty years are over, so is Moses. Moses' time of leadership is over, as you say, Darrell, he doesn't get to go in; but he is going to be succeeded, and we pick that up right here in Joshua 1:1:

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ²“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.”

DARRELL DELANEY

⁷“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

I see these verses...they are very powerful to me because God is promising to be with Joshua in the same way he was with Moses, and you see how God was with Moses, a very powerful thing. He is actually transitioning the people from the slave mentality...slaves to soldiers...in this passage, and God will use Joshua as the instrument of salvation to bring the people into the Promised Land.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I couldn't help but notice, Darrell, as you and I just read this passage from Joshua 1, three times in just about five verses: be strong and courageous...be strong and courageous...be strong and courageous...three times. I figure if God has to say it three times, there is probably going to be reasons why he is going to *have* to be strong and courageous because this is not going to be easy, and there will be plenty of times to feel afraid, potentially; but God is saying: Don't; be strong and courageous because I will lead you...

DARRELL DELANEY

That is right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, this is Joshua. You know, back in Deuteronomy 18, when Moses was giving his farewell sermon to Israel, there became a key promise that becomes important for the whole Bible, where Moses says in Deuteronomy 18 that there will always be a prophet in Israel.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Moses was that prophet for the exodus era, and then the generation of the wilderness wanderings; and now, the mantle has passed to Joshua. He is the new prophet. So, Moses is gone, but in fulfillment of the promise God made in Deuteronomy 18, there will be another prophet; and of course, as Israel's history goes forward, we will see lots of prophets: Elijah, Elisha; eventually Isaiah, Jeremiah...all the rest. So, Joshua is the new Moses. His name means to save.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is the Hebrew form of Jesus...the same name that in Matthew 1: Name him Jesus for he will *save* his people from their sins. Here, Joshua is going to save the people and bring them into the land of promise.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think, too, Scott, it is important to know that it is not really about Joshua at all; it is about God who says...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

I have promises to keep, Joshua. I have made promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. I have even made promises to Moses, and you are going to be the instrument in which we fulfill those promises is the first thing. The second thing is...I mean, Psalm 24 says the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. So, me, you and I, we don't own anything. We just are stewards of what God has entrusted to us. So, in his sovereignty, he can say this is going to be their land and this is going to be their land, and these people, if they follow and believe in me, they can also have this Promised Land that I have given them; and then, like you said earlier, he literally tells Joshua that he needs to not be afraid.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; there is a sense, Darrell, in which Joshua is the leader. He is the new Moses...the new prophet. His name foreshadows the name of Jesus. All important things, and yet, you made a good point just a second ago, Darrell, it is finally not really about Joshua; it's about God, right? And if Joshua is going to be strong and courageous, it is not because Joshua *is* so strong and courageous. It is not because Joshua *is* so skilled, although he has skills...God chooses people and he uses their gifts...but at the end of the day, if he is going to be successful, it is going to be because of God. If he is going to be strong, it is because God is strong and God is with him. If he is going to be courageous, it is because God is with him...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Not because Joshua can muster all the mental, moral, and military energy all on his own. God is going to walk with him, and that is going to be the source of his strength.

DARRELL DELANEY

Coming up next, we are going to talk about what else God has to say to Joshua, and to us in this book. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we are in the first episode of a six-part look at Joshua; and Darrell, we just read the first few verses, where God designates Joshua as Moses' successor. Moses is dead, so Joshua is next as a prophet among the people; and we heard the triple call of God to be strong and courageous. Then the story picks up in verse 10.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Joshua ordered the officers of the people: "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.'" ¹²But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ¹³"Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, 'The Lord your God will give you rest by giving you this land.' ¹⁴Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them ¹⁵until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

And so, in this passage, Joshua is reminding them of what we read in Numbers 32, where Moses has given them the provision...the Reubenites, the Gadites and Manasseh...that he has given them a provision of this land, but the condition was: Okay, you are going to have to help us get our land when we get into this battle; and this is the battle that Joshua was them preparing for.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The Reubenites, the Gadites and half of Manasseh...this is with Moses yet. It is long before they have started to conquest Canaan, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And they say: Hey, Moses; it is nice here; you know, we like it here. We have lots of cattle. We don't want to haul them all across the river, you know; we would like to build some corrals and some pens and, you know...can we stay here...when, when, you know, when we take the rest of Canaan? We like it here. Moses says: Fine, but you have to fight for the rest...

DARRELL DELANEY

Don't forget...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, you still have to help your other sisters and brothers in Israel, and you have to fight. So, when the time comes, you will be able to live here, but in the meanwhile, you have to help the rest of Israel fight. So, that is the story in Numbers 32, which we are flashing back to now here; but the point is, one of the larger points here, Darrell, is that God promised the land; God is going to give them the land, but it is not free, or at least it is not just going to be handed to them on a silver platter. They are going to have to do some work.

DARRELL DELANEY

God says: I promised the land, but there are these giants in it and they have to fight to get it; and it is interesting that God would do it that way, because, I mean, if you think about it in our terms today, if we say: God, could you give me a job? We don't just sit at home. We actually go fill out applications; we go online; we do interviews; and we see that through that active, what we say is: Okay, we trust God; we pray and we ask him for a job and we believe he is going to give us one, but when we show that action by actually applying for these jobs and putting some work behind it, the work doesn't earn our righteousness or anything, but it does prove that we believe in a God who is going to do something. Then we see the job happen; and I think that in this situation, the "work", if you will, will be that Joshua believes God is going to give them the Promised Land. Therefore, he will go and fight. That is the belief that credits righteousness to people, when they believe that God is able to do something and their actions follow that suit.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We call it...it's the classic Latin phrase: *ora et labora*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes!

SCOTT HOEZEE

Pray *and* work; that has been a classic posture of God's people all along, that yes, God provides...God is the providential God, but God doesn't just drop things into our laps. He works through our talents; he works through our skills; he works through our industry and our effort. So, the Promised Land is a promise to them. God is going to help them get it, but they are going to have to fight; they are going to have to do some work, including, again, these Reubenites, Gadites and Manasseh. In fact, picking back up here in Joshua 1 at verse 16, these two-and-one-half tribes answer Joshua:

"Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"

So, no; these people are echoing God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Again, be strong and courageous; but interesting, this is their response to Joshua here, Darrell, is proof that Joshua is the continuation of Moses. Moses is dead, but he is not gone in the sense that God has still got his lead person in Israel, and that is Joshua. So, they say: May God be with you as he was with Moses. If people don't listen to you, they are going to be in trouble, same as they would have been with Moses. So, be strong and courageous and we will follow you.

DARRELL DELANEY

Another thing is that Joshua doesn't have to go fight that Promised Land battle all on his own. These brothers are going to go with him, and they are going to have the power to fight together as a family. Sometimes we forget as we fight the good fight of faith in our own walk with Jesus, it is not just me, myself, and I in that situation. We have brothers and sisters in Christ who can come alongside us to encourage us, to strengthen us, to pray for us, and to help fight, spiritually speaking, shoulder to shoulder in the battles that we may face. Then the other thing is that the echo you mentioned. So, as God was with Moses, may he be with you in the same way. He switches what God said to Joshua directly. He also said be strong and courageous. It is crazy how sometimes God will "echo", what you have been listening to or meditating on or praying about, or a sermon you heard. Then in another situation, people who have no connection to that thing will echo what God is saying because the same Spirit is using that to encourage and build our faith. It is really powerful.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; something you mentioned along the way there, Darrell, is so important; that Joshua cannot do it alone, and he shouldn't want to try to do it alone. Yes, he is God's chosen leader, but he has to take the help, and we do, too. You know, all of us...well, most of us anyway...but probably all of us would rather be a servant than be the one who is served. We love bringing meals into people who are sick. We love helping people move into their new house. You know, we do ministry and volunteer work in the church. Ironically, even some of us who are really good at serving others...sometimes we don't like to be served. It is like: Oh, no, no, no. I don't need your... No, we do, you know. Sometimes servants need to be served when we have our hour of need...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we have to accept that graciously, even as Joshua had to accept help from all the people.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is really powerful to see that God is enlisting all of this to fulfill the promise that he made to Abraham long ago, and he uses these things like confirmations of words that he has said in his prayer closet with Joshua, and even in the brothers who are going to go to war with him, and God is still doing that today. If we meditate on his word, then we will hear echoes and we will hear reminders in our faith; but as we wrap up this episode, we are going to think about the practical applications of this passage. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this first episode of a six-part series on the book of Joshua, the sixth book of the Bible; and Darrell, in this part as we wrap this first program in the series, we want to talk frankly and honestly about sort of where this book is in history, and some of the issues in the book. Above all, as we have seen, God is a promise keeper. He made this promise to Abram way back in Genesis 12 that he was going to establish a nation, and he was going to give them a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and from that nation, that would be sort of God's beachhead for salvation of the whole world. So, that is certainly one of the great big and encouraging things about the book of Joshua.

DARRELL DELANEY

God has a promise to keep, and sometimes the promises of God take longer than we in our human expectations would expect, but it doesn't mean that God has forgotten about it; it doesn't mean that God is sleeping on the case. So, I mean, we serve a God who is really into crockpots as opposed to microwaved instant answers; and we serve a God who we can trust no matter how long it may take. Hopefully, we can keep our faith in him. I think the other thing...and I think we have to address this, Scott, because in the book itself, this book is about conquest; this book is about battles; this book is about war; and God gives instructions that seem to be really strange. Take away these things; kill the women; kill the children; take all of the things out; and sometimes we have seen in our broken history people use these as excuses for genocide and ethnic cleansing, and things that say: Oh, yeah, God gave us this land; and we go over and we take over and we pillage, and we have done this in the wrong motive of greed and pride, and I don't think that is the motive of the book of Joshua.

SCOTT HOEZEE

No; and the Church has been guilty of things like the *doctrine of discovery*, which was vandalistic of indigenous peoples—Native Americans in the US—First Nations people in Canada; manifest destiny. The militarism of Joshua is not a license for the Church to be militant, but you are right. What is sometimes

referred to, Darrell, as the ban...the total ban...the total conquest: don't leave anything; don't take anything; kill everybody—men, women, child, cow, goat, chicken—everything. That is offensive and a scandal for most of us today. It is very difficult to understand why God would do that. There have been different theories. One of my teachers in seminary said: Well, you know, we cannot underestimate God's judgment on sin, and the Canaanites had sinful, pagan religion...pagan practices...child sacrifice, ritual prostitution. So, there is a judgment angle here.

DARRELL DELANEY

Augustine picks that up in the Fourth Century.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, right; that sin and evil are serious. So, there is that part of it. The other thing, I think, Darrell, and we already said in the previous part of this program, that Joshua and Jesus...those two names both are about salvation...really, this book in some ways foreshadows Christ; and the total conquest of Canaan, terrible though it is, is a reminder that sin isn't going to go away easily; and even Jesus is going to have to go all the way to the cross. Jesus is going to have to die to make things right. So, some of the tough, rough, brutal, even offensive edges of Joshua kind of foreshadow that; that even God's Son couldn't just snap his fingers and make sin go away; he had to enter the battle and die.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right, right; and so, in the Old Testament we see God's plan for redeeming concealed, if you will, but then in the New Testament we see God's plan revealed through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Because Christ came, he came to give us a new Promised Land—a new rest. In Hebrews, it talks about how Christ is the new rest, and if you look at these verses, starting here in Chapter 4, it says:

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. ⁶

Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, (you mentioned that earlier, Scott) ⁷God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

SCOTT HOEZEE

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

So, here, Darrell, is a New Testament echo of Joshua and of the conquest, and saying, you know, the Israelites were imperfect; they didn't go into the land initially because of their rebellion, so they had forty years of wandering. Even when they did go in, they still didn't go in perfectly. We will even get some of those stories here in Joshua, and we certainly know in the subsequent history of Israel for centuries to come, they are going to disobey. In other words, what the writer to the Hebrews is saying is, the Promised Land of Canaan, the land of milk and honey, the land of rest for the Israelites, wasn't the final rest. It too prefigures...foreshadows...points forward to the ultimate Sabbath rest from all sin and evil that only Jesus would make possible.

DARRELL DELANEY

In verse 8 it is so curious: "If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken about another day." Now we see that Jesus Christ himself is the rest. Those who come to him will find eternal rest. So, it is not about a geographic location; it is not about these giants...these physical people in this land. Jesus beat the real giants: the sin, the death, and Satan. Those are the real giants; and Jesus Christ beat those giants by dying; and he enters us into the opportunity to have, by faith, a Promised Land rest in him.

SCOTT HOEZEE

All of what is going on in Joshua is a fulfillment of the promises made to Abram, already initially way back in Genesis Chapter 12, that God is going to give a land to a people, but that that people was not the end of the story. They were the people who were on the way to a blessing of all the nations; and ultimately that never happens for Israel; it only happens through the new Israel, who is Jesus Christ; who has indeed provided for us the final rest from sin and evil. Thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study of Joshua by examining Chapter 2, and discussing the story of Rahab and the spies.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

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