



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 11 2007

Scripture Story: Joshua 1–5:12.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 44.

promises don't die



flashlight

“While they were filled with grief at their great loss [of Moses], the people knew that they were not left alone. The pillar of cloud rested over the tabernacle by day, and the pillar of fire by night, an assurance that God would still be their guide and helper if they would walk in the way of His commandments” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 481).

keytext

“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.”

(Joshua 1:7, NIV)

what do you think?

Below is a list of people who routinely make promises

to you in your life. Beside their names, indicate whether or not they have: broken a promise (BP), kept a promise (KP), or forgot a promise (FP).

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ Father | _____ Boyfriend/girlfriend |
| _____ Mother | _____ Pastor |
| _____ Sister | _____ Friend |
| _____ Brother | _____ Government |
| _____ Grandparent(s) | _____ Advertisers |
| _____ Teacher | |

Spend some time remembering the circumstances in which each of these broke, kept, or forgot their promise to you. List them on a sheet of paper in the order they appear above. Then ask yourself the following: Who promised the most? Who delivered on their promise?

did you know?

Did you know that the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manassah did not cross over into the Promised Land? Yet they strongly encouraged Joshua to be a man of God and told him that the rest of the Israelites would follow him.

Did you know that there was another miraculous water crossing besides the one on the way out of Egypt? While it perhaps pales in comparison with the crossing of the Red Sea, the crossing of the Jordan seems to be no less spectacular as the Israelites enter the Promised Land. Read Joshua chapter 3 for a description.

INTO THE STORY

“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: ‘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. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up 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.

“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.

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. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.’

“So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ‘Go through the camp and tell the people, “Get your supplies 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.”’

“But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ‘Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: “The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.” Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that 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.’

“Then they answered Joshua, ‘Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses,

so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

(Joshua 1, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What is something that stands out to you in this passage about promises?

Why did God agree to honor the promises that He made to Moses as well as to Joshua?

Why do you think the two and a half tribes stayed behind?

Why is it important to note that God honors His promises?

In the story of Rahab in Joshua 2 (also a part of this week’s Scripture portion), how did the people of the Promised Land feel about the Israelites coming to their land?

Circle a promise in this passage that you can adapt to your own life right now.

Underline any part that is confusing to you right now. Pray for God to reveal to you His character of love as He gives you a better understanding of that passage.

punch lines

“**Not one of all** the Lord’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled” (Joshua 21:45, NIV).

“**For I tell you that** Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs” (Romans 15:8, NIV).

“**Praise be to the Lord**, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses” (1 Kings 8:56, NIV).

“**Then they believed** his promises and sang his praise” (Psalm 106:12, NIV).

“**From this man’s** descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised” (Acts 13:23, NIV).

other eyes

“**It is not the oath that makes us believe the man, but the man the oath.**”—Aeschylus, 5th-century B.C.

Greek playwright.

“**He is poor indeed that can promise nothing.**”—Thomas Fuller, 17th-century English

churchman and historian.

“**God never made a promise that was too good to be true.**”—Dwight L. Moody, 19th-century U.S. evangelist.

Sabbath

Do the *What Do You Think?* exercise if you have not done so before. Look at your responses. Did you identify anyone who consistently made promises to you and broke them? Perhaps you noted many more broken promises than there were promises that were kept. This seems to be human nature. We are constantly seeing promises broken, and breaking them ourselves. Sometimes circumstances prohibit us from doing what we have said we would. However, read Joshua 1:3-5, and see how God was willing to keep His word to the people of Israel and even more specifically, to carry out His promises to Moses through Joshua.

Sunday

Read the story of Rahab (Joshua 2). Look at it in the context of the promises that were made by the Israelites, by Rahab, and by God. Notice that all the promises were kept from and to each party involved. In the end, God was glorified through each promise.

Now read about the crossing of the Jordan River (Joshua 3). When the ark of the covenant (which literally means “promise”!) is taken into the water, the Jordan at flood level pauses to allow the Israelites to pass unharmed into the Promised Land. What a wonderful reminder of the parting of the Red Sea, which none of these Israelites (except for Joshua) had experienced.

Monday

When you read *Into the Story* you will see that God is consistently telling His people that He will honor the promises made to Moses. Joshua understands this and in turn keeps the promises that Moses made to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manassah.

We also tend to keep promises the more promises are kept to us. It is a matter of character to do what we say we will do. It is bet-

ter to promise less in order to be able to keep the ones we do make. How does it glorify God when we keep the promises we make?

Tuesday

Read the *Flashlight* section. Do you think that it would be comforting or scary to have tangible evidence that God is always with you? The pillar of smoke and the pillar of fire were a testament to the promises that God made to His people that He would always be with them.

Note that at the end of the *Flashlight* paragraph it says that God would be with them if they kept His commandments. Even though they have a tough time keeping those things that He asked of them, we see God’s grace throughout the Old Testament as He does His best to stay in a covenant of love with His people.

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines*. Is there a particular verse to which you are drawn? Do you see any significance to the order in which they have been placed? What can we say about God’s promises through the history of salvation?

Write on an index card the verse that speaks most to you. Keep the card under your pillow to read before you go to bed at night and when you wake up each morning. Let it remind you of the constancy of God and His promises.

Thursday

Think of a time when you have made a promise to someone and have not been able to keep it. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I mean to break my promise?
- When I made it, did I honestly think I could keep it?
- Does it happen often that I cannot keep my promises?

- How seriously do I take promise-making?

List the last five things you have promised people. Attach a date to them so that you know if you are taking a long time to fulfill the promises or not. Then see how quickly you can get each of the promises fulfilled. Can you do it all today? Wouldn’t it feel good to have them “checked off”? Ask God to empower and motivate you by His grace.

Friday

Are promises important to you? They are obviously important to God. They are so important that He is willing to transfer His promises from people group to people group, and to entire nations. Those are big promises! Are there any promises that you have made that are a big deal in your life? Any promises that you are very determined to fulfill?

Think about those promises and what you have to do to fulfill them, and work toward that end. At the same time, spend some time in prayer that you might be a Christian of your word and honor God with the promises that you make to Him and to others.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

this week’s reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets,
chapter 44.

*By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.