

Living in the Covenant Joshua 1:1-5

The very first prerequisite to understanding the Old Testament as a whole and the book of Joshua in particular is to understand the different covenants that are brought forth in the preceding books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). A short list of the covenants up until Joshua 1 are as follows:

Adamic Covenant- God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. To fill the earth and subdue it. They could eat any tree in the garden of Eden, including the tree of life, but must not eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. Adam broke this covenant, and mankind, the serpent, and the earth received the curse of breaking it. God also provided garments and sacrifices for mankind so that they would not immediately die and could still fulfill their mandate to fill and subdue the earth.

Noahic Covenant- God destroyed the earth through a flood, but spared Noah, his family, and all the animals on the ark. God promised in the new earth after the flood that he would never again destroy the earth by a flood. He also offered animals as a food source to Noah who would also now strike fear into them. Man's murder would be avenged life for life.

Abrahamic Covenant- God would show Abraham a land that he would give to him and his offspring. Abraham would have offspring from his own blood through his wife, Sarah. The offspring would become too numerous to count. By that offspring all of the families of the world would be blessed.

Mosaic Covenant- God binds the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the covenant he made with Abraham by giving them a law. If they obeyed the law, they would receive blessing. If they broke the law, they would receive curses. God reiterates the promise of land that he had previously made to Abraham without conditions.

It is into this Mosaic covenant that Joshua steps. Here are the opening verses of Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-5

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, ²“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

Take a moment in your group to reflect on the situation that Joshua is in. "Moses my servant is dead." This is a monumental moment not just in the life of Joshua, but also in the life of the covenant and the entire people. There was likely a lot of fear and apprehension not simply at the enemies and challenges that they were facing, but at whether things would even be viable without the namesake of the "Mosaic" covenant.

God quickly puts those fears to rest. **"Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses..... No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."**

God's covenant is not abandoned because Moses is dead. God has worked out the details because he ALWAYS keeps his covenants. Joshua has been preparing his whole life for this moment. God has prepared Joshua. The command is to simply live into the covenant that is already in place and receive the land God has already given to Joshua and the people.

Most importantly, God promises to be WITH Joshua.

Discussion Questions

- **How do you know that Joshua had absorbed the importance of the covenant that God had with Moses?**
- **What was Joshua's role in the covenant?**
- **How do you think Joshua felt after the death of Moses?**
- **How do you think the people of Israel felt after the death of Moses?**
- **Have you experienced a transitional season in your life similar to Joshua 1?**
- **What did God teach you through that transition?**
- **Why are God's words to Joshua important for Joshua to understand that God is present with him?**
- **How has the presence of God made a difference in your life through times of apprehension?**
- **In what ways are the promises made to Joshua ultimately fulfilled by Christ?**