

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1
Copyright 2018 T. M. and Susie Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press).

Joshua 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 of Joshua sets forth the primary themes of the entire book: God's presence with His people, for the sake of the promises He made to their forebears, by means of the power that comes through faith and obedience.

Joshua is an able leader. We see him instructing the heads of the tribes of Israel, with particular attention to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh. These had already begun to enjoy the benefits of the conquest of pagan peoples. Now Joshua would hold them to their promise to fight with their brethren until all the tribes had rest.

Part 1 of Joshua deals with the preparations for entering the land of promise. It is the second largest section of the book and reminds us that any calling or task, given by the Lord, requires careful preparation of various kinds.

We're pleased to make this resource available for personal or group study at no charge, and we hope you will find this series helpful in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our thrice-weekly devotional newsletter, *Crosfigell*, or our daily *Voices Together* devotional and prayer guide.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Joshua's Commission

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory." Joshua 1.1-4

Reflect and discuss.

1. Why did God wait to speak directly to Joshua until after Moses had died?
2. What had God chosen and anointed Joshua to accomplish?

Think about it.

God had been preparing Joshua for this role for forty years. Previously, however, He had only spoken directly to and through Moses and Aaron. Now that they were dead, God made Joshua the new focus of His revealed Word and will.

What an awesome and terrifying responsibility!

These first verses of the book of Joshua focus on promises that go all the way back to Abram (Gen. 12.1-3). The promises God spoke to Abram, He reiterated to Moses (v. 3); now He speaks them to Joshua, showing that the events that are about to unfold are but the latest stage of a covenant that has been in place between God and His people for long generations. The significance of this will not be lost on Joshua, as we shall see.

God outlined the broad parameters of the vision Joshua was to pursue (vv. 3, 4). Joshua could not possibly have understood the full scope, much less all the details, of this vision, but the outlines are here. The rest would be filled in by stages as the work of gaining the land of promise progressed.

An important idea – one that will be learned the hard way, then repeated over and over – surfaces in the words “you and all this people” (v. 2). Gaining the promises of God is a *communal* effort. Those who think only of themselves, as well as those who refuse to take their part in striving to gain those promises, will find they are out of step with God's plan.

Meditate and discuss.

1. God entrusted Joshua with His Word, as He did with Jesus (Jn. 17.8). He has also entrusted His Word to us. How does this obligate us as the people of God?
2. The vision God outlined for Joshua was vague, but it was sufficient for this stage of his calling. Why did God do this? What is the role of vision in gaining the promises of God? What are the broad outlines of God's vision for your life?
3. Gaining the promises of God is a communal effort. Why does this make the local church important to the life of faith? How many New Testament “one another” verses can you call to mind? How does this reinforce the communal nature of our calling to gain the promises of God?

“There are certain diabolical races of powerful adversaries against whom we wage a battle and against whom we struggle in this life. However many of these races we set under our feet, however many we conquer in battle, we shall seize their territories, their

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

provinces and their realms, as Jesus our Lord apportions them to us.” Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart, and help me today to...

Pray Psalm 90.1-17.

This psalm served Moses well as he led Israel for forty years. Let this psalm lead you in giving thanks and in seeking the Lord's vision and work for the day ahead.

Psalm 90.1, 2, 12-17 (*Landas: My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Lord, You have been our dwelling place from generations gone.
Before the mountains came to be, before the earth was born,
Before the worlds, and long before men on the earth first trod,
From everlasting long ago, O God, You are our God!

So teach us all our days to note that wisdom may be ours.
Return, O Lord, have pity on those servants who are Yours.
Each morning let Your love appear that we for joy may sing.
And make us glad for every day You us affliction bring.

Now let Your work to us appear; our children show Your might.
And let Your favor rest on us; show mercy in Your sight.
The work that You have given us, confirm, and to us show,
That we Your chosen path may walk and in Your precepts go.

2 Promised Presence

“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.” Joshua 1.5, 6

Reflect and discuss.

1. Joshua’s commission was to deliver the people of Israel into the land God had promised to their forebears. But this was not going to be an easy task. Why? Imagine yourself facing such a challenge. How would you feel? What would you be thinking?

2. Jesus has promised to be “with us always” (Matt. 28.20). How do you experience His presence with you throughout the day? Paul says we are present with Him, where He is, seated at the right hand of God (Eph. 2.6). Is this a presence you experience consistently? Explain.

Think about it.

It was most important that Joshua understand that God would be with him as he took up his commission to lead Israel into the land of promise. Moses had pled with God for His presence, and God granted it, and with it, a foretaste of the “rest” Israel would know in the land of promise (cf. Ex. 33.12-14). Rest awaited Israel at the end of her season of struggle, just as rest awaits us through Jesus once our Kingdom journey has reached its end.

By knowing God’s presence in the midst of his calling and work, Joshua could be at rest and peace, even though many nations would stand up to resist and try to destroy him and the people he led. The same is true for us, as we take up our daily walk with and work for the Lord.

God doubly reinforced this promise of presence: “I will not leave you nor forsake you.” Knowing this, Joshua would have to “be strong and of good courage” to carry out his task. God promised success; but He also indicated that the road to that success would require some very hard work. Joshua would have to be strong and courageous.

And at each step of the process, each new phase of the struggle, God’s presence would be with Joshua and Israel to give them rest.

It only remained to be seen whether they would rest in His presence at all times or rely on their own wits and strength.

Meditate and discuss.

1. God was with Moses during the time in the wilderness. In what ways? Did God’s presence with Moses mean that his job would be an easy one? When God promised Joshua to be with him, just as He had been with Moses, how would Joshua have understood this? How should we understand Jesus’ promise to be with us always?

2. Even though God would be with Joshua and Israel, they would have to endure many struggles before realizing the promised land. Why? Why didn’t God just drive the nations out by other means, rather than require His people to undertake such struggle? According to Paul (Acts 14.21, 22), how should we think about our own calling to seek the promised Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12; Matt. 6.33)? Why must this be so?

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

3. God promised success to Joshua and Israel (v. 6, cf. Deut. 28.1-14). Would it have been important to keep this outcome in mind as they campaigned against the Canaanites? Why? What has God promised us (2 Pet. 1.4; 2 Cor. 1.20; 1 Jn. 3.1-3)? Does He think we should keep this in mind at all times (Col. 3.1-3)? Why? What does it mean for you to be strong and courageous today in struggling to realize the promises of God?

“It isn’t a man, not your equal or you yourself, but God who says to you, ‘I will not forsake you, I will not desert you.’ If a man made such a promise, you would trust him; God makes it, and you hesitate? He made the promise, put it in writing, made out the bond; you needn’t worry at all. Read what you’ve got in your hand, you’re holding God’s bond; as your debtor you hold the one whom you have asked to cancel your debts.” Augustine (354-430 AD)

Today, Lord, as I go forth into my Personal Mission Field, I know You have promised to be with me, and so I...

Pray Psalm 23.

To what “green pastures” and “still waters” will the Lord take you today? What evil threatens the success of your journey? What rest does the Lord hold out for you to keep in mind and enjoy?

Psalm 23 ([*Taladh Chriosda: Hymn of the Christ Child*](#))

The Lord my Shepherd is, and I
Shall not want; He makes me lie
In green pastures, leads me by
Refreshing waters, still.

Restore my soul, Lord, day by day;
Lead me in Your righteous way
For Your Name’s sake, Lord, I pray,
According to Your will.

And though through death’s dark vale I go,
I no fear of evil show,
For Your rod and staff, I know,
Shall guard and comfort still.

A table You before me spread
In the midst of those I dread,
And with oil anoint my head;
My cup You over fill.

Thus goodness e’er shall follow me;
Mercy all my path shall see;
Your house shall my dwelling be,
Forever after still.

3 Law and Promise

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1.7-9

Reflect and discuss.

1. How does the Law of God relate to our salvation? Are we saved by keeping the Law? Are we saved *without* keeping the Law? Explain.
2. What role does the Law of God play in your own walk with the Lord? How does this compare with what the Lord commanded Joshua in Joshua 1.7-9?

Think about it.

God had graciously saved His people out of captivity in Egypt. He had graciously borne with them during their years of rebellion in the wilderness. Now a new generation was poised to lay hold on His promises and to gain the blessings outlined in Deuteronomy 28.1-14.

So what does keeping the Law have to do with any of this?

The Law was given to the people of Israel *after* they had come to salvation and *before* they began to enjoy the promises of God’s covenant. The Law did not save them; God saved His chosen people by His grace and power. The Law marked out the path of life (Lev. 18.1-5), the life of love for God and neighbor, and of enjoying the fruits of justice, equity, righteousness, freedom, and peace, for which the Lord had saved them. The Law marked out the pathway *into the promises* of God. The conquest of Canaan was but the beginning of Israel’s life in the promises of God. The full realization of those promises depended on full and explicit obedience to God’s Law.

What God commanded Joshua in verses 7 and 8, He commanded as well to every one of His people. Of course, they could never meet this requirement, no more than can any of us. Was God setting them up for failure?

No. The promise of verse 9 would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Who perfectly fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s Law, and selflessly endured all the wrath of the Law against sinners such as Joshua, Israel, and you and I. Can you imagine how the Son of God, hearing those words of His Father to Joshua, must have thrilled at the prospect of the work He knew He would one day accomplish? Jesus is the righteousness of God and the Way into the precious and very great promises of God, as well as His rest. And He is with us always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28.20).

But the command to be strong, of good courage, and keep the Law of God remains. This is the path Jesus walked, and it is the path all must walk who, having known His saving mercy and grace, would follow Him into God’s covenant blessings and rest (1 Jn. 2.1-6).

Meditate and discuss.

1. The conquest of Canaan involved more than merely vanquishing the enemies of Israel. Israel would only fully enjoy the promises of God by obeying the Law of God (vv. 7, 8), and this continually. How does this

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

teach us to think about life as a follower of Jesus, in Whom all the promises of God are *Yes* and *Amen* (2 Cor. 1.20)?

2. We note the repetition of the command to “be strong and very courageous” (vv. 7, 9). How would Joshua fulfill this? Where would he find the strength and courage to lead Israel in conquest and obedience? Do we need this strength and courage today, as followers of Jesus? Where can we obtain it?

3. Notice God’s emphasis on the *inward* and *outward* aspects of the Law of God. How should you apply this to your life? What can you expect if you do?

“You should not be like a wanderer, rambling about the streets, without just cause, to spy out those who live wickedly. But by minding your own trade and employment, endeavor to do what is acceptable to God. And keeping in mind the oracles of Christ, meditate in the same continually.” Apostolic Constitutions (381-394 AD)

Lord, Your Law and all Your Word are a lamp unto my feet, so that by the Light of Your Word I may...

Pray Psalm 19.7-14.

Dwell on David’s description of the Law. Is this your experience? Ask the Lord to give you greater love for His Law, and all His Word. Let His Spirit convict you of any lack in this area and confess and repent accordingly.

Psalm 19.7-14 (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure;
The simple man God’s wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.
God’s Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;
He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.
His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.
O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet;
Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight
Be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

4 Making Ready

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" Joshua 1.10, 11

Reflect and discuss.

1. How important is it to prepare daily for your walk with and work for the Lord? How do you prepare? How do you think about the day ahead, and how does this affect your preparations?
2. Read Matthew 25.1-13. What do the lamps represent? What does the oil represent? What's the lesson here about making ready for the Lord's return?

Think about it.

Joshua was an effective leader, and we will see this in a variety of ways. Here we may observe three important components of effective leadership as he begins to ready the people for their mission.

First, effective leaders do not act alone. God had structured His people so that each of the twelve tribes was broken down into family groups, and each of the tribes and family groups appointed heads or judges to preside over them. Moses was introduced to this way of organizing by his father-in-law in Exodus 18, and God confirmed the grace shown to Jethro when He commanded that judges and elders be appointed for every tribe, family group, and town in Israel. Joshua knew these leaders were important to the success of God's mission for Israel, so he engaged them from the get-go.

Second, Joshua also understood that this project would require the commitment and involvement of all the people of God. He made sure to instruct the leaders to ready all the people and the entire camp of Israel for the events that were about to ensue. Joshua might have done this by speaking to the people in a general assembly; however, he understood that to engage and keep all the people involved, they would need to identify with their chosen leaders, so he entrusted this beginning of preparations to them.

Third, Joshua outlined the scope and objective of Israel's mission, and set it firmly within the framework of what God had promised His people. The task ahead of them would be long and arduous, but the goal was worth it, and the Word of God underwrote it all. There must be no mistaking the mission on the part of the people, and no doubt as to whether God was in it with them.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Leaders lead by vision, goals, plans, and promises (or objectives, outcomes). How can you see that in Joshua's instructions to the officers of the people? Does this reflect the practice of your church's leaders? Explain.
2. Was it important that *all* the people understood the mission to which God had called them? Why?
3. We note that Joshua *commanded* the officers of the people. He didn't suggest, and he didn't request nor merely encourage. He commanded. What is implied in this verb? How would those officers have understood what was required of them? Is there a place for *commanding* leaders in churches today? Explain.

"For this reason Joshua said to the people, 'Prepare your provisions for the journey.' Today, if you willingly listen, Christ our Lord says to you, 'If you will follow me, prepare food for the journey.' This food is good works which accompany us like faithful

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

food for the journey to future bliss. Therefore, consider, brothers, that if each one does not prepare food for himself, he cannot follow Joshua when he enters the land of promise.” Caesarius of Arles (470-543 AD)

Lord, Your promises lie ahead of me today, as I go into my Personal Mission Field. Help me make ready, so that...

Pray Psalm 121.

How do you need the Lord's help today? Be specific as you seek Him for it. How will you know the Lord as your help, shade, and preserver throughout this day?

Psalm 121 (*Duke Street: Jesus Shall Reign*)

I lift up my eyes up to the heights:
Whence comes my help by day, by night?
My help comes from the Lord above!
He made creation by His love!

God will not let our footsteps fall;
He will preserve us all in all.
He does not slumber, does not sleep;
God will His chosen people keep.

You are our Keeper and our Shade;
You have our debt of sin repaid!
You will preserve us by Your might;
Naught shall afflict us day or night.

Lord, You will guard our lives from ill;
You will our trembling souls keep still.
All our endeavors You will guard;
Eternal praise be Yours, O Lord!

5 First Blessed, First into the Fray

And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."
Joshua 1.12-15

Reflect and discuss.

1. You might like to review Numbers 32 for the background of these verses. Summarize what happened there.
2. Why was it necessary for Joshua to address a special word to these tribes? Was there a danger these tribes might want to "rest on their laurels" rather than take up the challenge of conquering Canaan with their brethren? Is this a temptation we all face from time to time? Explain.

Think about it.

As we see in Numbers 32, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh had already accomplished some considerable fighting. They had wrested lands and cities from pagan nations and were already busy setting up shop while the rest of the nation was preparing to enter the land. God had blessed them first and blessed them abundantly.

But He had done so in response to their word, the vow they took saying they would fight with their brethren to subdue all the land of Canaan and would only return to their appointed places once all the other tribes had received theirs. Here Joshua reminds them of God's Word and theirs. They had taken a vow before the Lord, and Joshua was determined to help them keep it.

We're all tempted to relax in the blessings of the Lord, and not to exert ourselves on behalf of others beyond our comfort zone. But the promise God made to Abraham – on which the conquest of Canaan would proceed – was that we are blessed so that we might be a blessing to others. That principle served as the condition for granting the request of these tribes in Numbers 32. God would bless them, but they must promise to help the other tribes gain their blessing before fully enjoying their own.

Here is another excellent principle of leadership: Hold people to their word, especially when that word – promise, vow, or stated intention – is based on God's Word of promise to them. What are the implications of this principle for helping people fulfill their vows, whether of marriage, church membership, or church leadership?

We also notice that Joshua put these tribes at the head of the armies of Israel (v. 14). They had battle experience. The awareness of their victories, and of the lands they had won, would be always before all the people as they campaigned against the pagan nations of Canaan. Here is another solid principle of leadership: Those who are first blessed and most blessed must lead others into the blessings God has for them.

Meditate and discuss.

1. What does it mean for you to be "blessed to be a blessing" each day? Do you seek the blessings of God in prayer? Does He grant them? Why?

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

2. Complacency is a great sin, as we see in Jesus' parable about the good Samaritan. We are too easily satisfied with our experience of faith, and not as willing to help or bless others as we should. Considering how Joshua spoke to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh, what would Jesus speak to you about the work of your Personal Mission Field?

3. If your church can be compared to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh, and your local community to the land of Canaan, how would you interpret Joshua's instructions for your congregation?

"Rest is not given first to those who through Moses receive the inheritance—that is, those who pleased God through the law—unless they assist their brothers in the battles.... Thus those who are strong men, their loins armed and girded with truth, go forth to our aid and fight with us." Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

Father, thank You for the many blessings I have known already this day. Strengthen me to take these blessings and...

Pray Psalm 126.

What is your vision for the work God has given you to do? As you think of your calling, and the Lord causing you to prosper in it, are you filled with joy and anticipation? What "sowing" will be required of you today?

Psalm 126 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

When God restored our fortunes all,
We were like those who sweetly dream.
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,
"The Lord has done great things for them!"
Indeed, great things our God has done,
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow
And cast their seed on every hand,
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home,
And bring the harvest of their land.

6 Be Strong and Courageous

So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage." Joshua 1.16-18

Reflect and discuss.

1. What should church members look for in those who lead them? What is the responsibility of church members to such leaders?
2. What do you see as the greatest hindrance to effective church leadership? That is, what keeps church leaders from helping their churches realize more of the presence, promise, and power of God's Kingdom?

Think about it.

The leaders of Israel offered *qualified* commitment to Joshua. That is, they agreed to follow his leadership as long as he stayed close to the Lord, as Moses did, and continued to "be strong and of good courage."

God's people have a duty to follow their leaders – ecclesiastical or civil – only insofar as their leaders are following the Lord. Everyone knew that Moses had a special relationship with God. He spent time with the Lord. He encountered God in His glory, so much so that the glory of God was manifest in Moses' face (cf. Ex. 33.7-11, 34.29-35, and note the word *whenever* in vv. 34, 35). Paul wrote that when we are reading God's Word, we should expect to encounter Him in His glory; the effect of this is that the glory of God "rubs off" on us as we are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18). This is what every believer should expect – not only for leaders, but for themselves – since we stand in the grace of the Lord and "in the hope of glory" (Rom. 5.1-5).

Joshua would need to be strong and of good courage because he was undertaking a task neither he nor anyone else had taken on before. He would need to exert himself beyond his normal strength. He would need a heart (French: *cour*) filled with fear of the Lord, love for His people, zeal for the promises, and commitment to the task at hand. We do not come by such a heart naturally. Rather, we must seek such *courage* from the Lord, by trusting in His Word, calling on Him in prayer, and relying on His Spirit for our every next step.

Leaders who seek and know the glory of God, and who follow God beyond their normal strength with hearts fully committed to the Lord, inspire people to follow them into the precious and very great promises of God (2 Pet. 1.4). Like Joshua before Him, Jesus was such a leader, and He continues to command a following to this day, multitudes from every nation, tribe, and tongue who every day do whatever He commands and go wherever He sends them. But Jesus does not lead us into a land of milk and honey. He leads us into Himself, in Whom *all* the promises of God are *Yes* and *Amen* (2 Cor. 1.20).

Meditate and discuss.

1. How can you tell when the Lord is "with" someone "as He was with Moses"? Do you experience the Lord being with you like this?
2. In his book, *Finishing Our Course with Joy*, J. I. Packer insists that every Christian is a leader at some level, and all Christians continue to have opportunities to lead as long as they live. Do you agree? Explain. Should all Christians expect to learn about leading others from the book of Joshua? What are you learning thus far to help you as a leader?

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

3. Joshua told the leaders of Israel what he expected of them and the people (Josh. 1.10-15). They told him what they expected of him (vv. 16-18). Do you think it's important that, in a local church setting, such mutual expectations should be clear to all? Explain. Where does Jesus fit in the midst of all these expectations?

"Thus those who are strong men, their loins armed and girded with truth, go forth to our aid and fight with us." Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

Pray Psalm 132.13-18.

Use these verses to give thanks to God for choosing you, saving you, dwelling with and in you, blessing you, and helping you to grow in your salvation. Rejoice in all His goodness to you, and renew your resolve to follow Him today, whatever He commands, wherever He leads.

Psalm 132.13-18 (*Finlandia: Be Still My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever,
To meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior,
And made us His eternal resting-place.
His foes are banished from His presence ever,
But we shall reign with Him before His face.

7 Presence, Promise, Power

Read Joshua 1

Reflect and discuss.

1. As you read Joshua 1, see how many verses you can cluster around each of the words in the title of today's summary (Presence, Promise, Power).
2. From our study of chapter 1, why is Joshua an especially important book for those who are called to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God (Matt. 6.33)? What have you learned thus far to help you in this calling?

Think about it.

Joshua presents a study in realizing the presence, promise, and power of God's Kingdom. Like the main characters in a novel, each of these themes is introduced here in chapter 1. Let's review:

Presence: The people are poised on the brink of entering the land of promise, where they will establish a new nation unlike any the world has seen before, one that will gain the admiration of all who see it (Deut. 4.5-8). More important even than this, God is *present* with His people (v. 5), and promises them – as He did Moses (Ex. 33.14) – that His *presence* would go with them unto rest and joy (v. 13-15).

Promise: Through Moses, God cast a vision of the blessings He would bring to His people in the land of promise (Deut. 28.1-14), and He summarized that vision to Joshua here in chapter 1 (vv. 3-6). Two-and-a-half tribes had already begun to taste and see that the promises of God were true and good, and they would be an inspiration for the other tribes throughout all the conquest of Canaan.

Power: God reminded Joshua of the power He had shown in the past, in delivering Israel from Egypt. Now He commanded Joshua to appropriate that power through obedience to His Law. God would flow His power through Israel, make their way to prosper, and give them success in all things as they walked according to His Word.

What God commanded Joshua, Joshua commanded the leaders of Israel, who would, in turn, command the people. Thus all would be aware of the task before them, and would take their part in seeking to realize the presence, promise, and power of God in this new kingdom He was preparing for them.

Meditate and discuss.

1. How would God make His *presence* known among the people of Israel? Why was it important for the people to know this? How would they expect to realize God's presence with them?
2. Joshua was encouraged to remember the many ways God had shown Moses the *power* that accompanies His presence (v. 5). God promised to make His power available to Joshua as well. Joshua's exercise of divine power would be for the sake of delivering Israel into the presence and promises of God. How is he a type of Jesus in this regard?
3. In the book of Joshua, Joshua is a type of Christ, but so also is the land of promise. Explain. Meditate on Acts 1.8. In what ways are the "marching orders" Jesus has given us similar to those God gave Israel through Joshua?

"The book does not so much indicate to us the deeds of the son of Nun as it represents for us the mysteries of Jesus my Lord. For

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

he himself is the one who assumes power after the death of Moses; he is the one who leads the army and fights against Amalek. What was foreshadowed there on the mountain by lifted hands was the time when 'he attaches [them] to his cross, triumphing over the principalities and powers on it.'" Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

Today, Lord, I would realize more of Your presence, promise, and power as I...

Pray Psalm 105.

Let this psalm lead you to praise and thank the Lord for His many blessings to you, and to guide you in preparing to realize more of His presence, promise, and power this day.

Psalm 105 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

Presence, Promise, Power
Joshua 1

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. The second longest of the five sections of the book of Joshua is Part 1: Preparation. What significance should we attach to this? How should you apply that in your life?
2. What important principles of leadership can you identify in Joshua 1?
3. How do the ideas of God's presence, promise, and power come to light in Joshua 1?
4. How does the book of Joshua encourage us to look ahead in time to the coming of Jesus?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Joshua 1? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.