



Intro to Joshua 23

Sunday, February 9, 2020
Pastor Don Denyes

Mark Dever, a pastor in Washington D.C. has described the structure of the whole Bible in two phases: The Old Testament he characterizes as “promises made”; the New Testament, “promises kept.” That’s a fair structure and one that gets not only at the dynamics of the overall storyline of the Bible but gets to the heart of God’s character as well. Since the Bible is about God, it figures that the whole storyline would be structured around His character and actions toward us.

What’s more, His character and actions are the basis for our relationship to Him, and at the core of that is His trustworthiness as a promise-maker and promise-keeper. Unless we are convinced that God is our good Creator, merciful Savior, and benevolent Judge, we will have a hard time entrusting ourselves to Him for salvation. So, of all the things that we must believe about God, the thing that gets repeated over and over again is that God is a maker and keeper of promises.

Context

With Joshua getting ready to die, it is crucial that the people understand the big picture of how they got to where they are and, more importantly, who has been orchestrating their rescue from Egypt and victory over their enemies. That is why Joshua gathers the people to testify to God’s work in and among them. He wants them to know that after he dies, it will be up to them to continue to pass on the story of God to the next generation, so that they might obey His commands. For those that know the whole storyline of the Bible, verse 16 looms large as another kind of promise. The people would not be able to keep the land because they could not keep the law. This sets up the glorious reality that only Jesus could keep the law perfectly, thus securing for us a righteousness from God that gets imputed to us by faith alone.

Read and Reflect (*Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.*)

Read Joshua 23:1-16

“He Keeps His Promise”

1. Promises Made

- Land given to you (5)
- I will fight for you (10)

Be careful to:

- Obey... all that is written (6)
- Hold fast... to the LORD your God (8)
- Love... the LORD your God (11)

2. Promises Kept (14)

- Successful promises not one has failed
- Plentiful promises all
- Good promises His intent is to bless
- Your promises given you

3. Promises Kept (15)

- GOOD ones
- HARD ones

Discuss

- 1) Are there certain promises that God has made that are harder for you to trust than others? If so, which ones?
 - 2) Read Revelation 2:4. Pastor Don said that his greatest fear for South Church is that we would carry on with ministry activities and appear successful yet lose our love for God. How do you think something like that could happen?
 - 3) How can we make sure that love for God is the driving force behind what we do as Christians (individually) and as a church (corporately)?
 - 4) Read Psalm 63:5-8. How often do you think of your relationship to God in terms like what is described in those verses?
 - 5) Pastor Don encourage us to “get” a promise from God for this week from Scripture. What promises are foremost in your mind this week?