

THE JOSHUA FIVE

Part 1 • September 20, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

CONTESTED INHERITANCE

The Promises of God often become contested inheritance.

President John F. Kennedy was once asked how He became a war hero. With his customary dry wit he responded, "It was quite easy. Somebody sunk my boat."

What makes history, are the men and women who make it. The men and women who make it, do so not because they have it easy, but because of what they do when it becomes hard.

When things are contested. It's what you do that makes the difference.

Many will do nothing, a few will do the wrong things, the History makers meet the moment.

Parrot Story: Ernest Campbell tells a story about a lonely woman who purchased a parrot from a pet store. After only one day of having it, she returned to the store and told the storekeeper how disappointed she was with it.

"That parrot hasn't said a word yet!" she lamented. "Does it have a mirror?" asked the storekeeper. "Parrots like to be able to look at themselves in the mirror." So the lady bought a mirror and returned home.

The next day she was back again, reporting that the bird still wasn't speaking. "What about a ladder?" the storekeeper asked. "Parrots enjoy walking up and down a ladder." So the parrot owner bought a ladder and returned home.

On the third day, she was back again with the same complaint. "Does the parrot have a swing?" was the shopkeeper's solution. "Birds enjoy relaxing on a swing." She bought the swing and went home.

The next day she returned to the store and announced that the bird had died. "I'm terribly sorry to hear that," said the storekeeper. "Did the bird ever say anything before it died?" "Yes," said the lady. "It said, 'Don't they sell any food down there?'"

What's the moral of this silly story?

If that Parrot was the promises of God, what keeps the promise alive isn't your best intention, it's feeding it what is right.

THERE ARE 2 TYPES OF PROMISES IN SCRIPTURE.

UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES

JOHN 14:3 (NKJV)

I will come again and receive you to Myself.

PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11 (KJV)

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

ROMANS 14:11 (NKJV)

Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

ISAIAH 46:10-11 NKJV)

My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure... Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass.

CONDITIONAL OR CONTESTED PROMISES OR CONTESTED INHERITANCE

JOSHUA 1:3 (KJV)

I have given you

JOSHUA 1:7 (ESV)

Only be strong and very courageous.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:20 (NKJV)

All of God's promises are Yes and Amen

HEBREWS 6:12 (ESV)

Be Imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

HEBREWS 10:36 (NKJV)

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

GALATIANS 6:9 (NKJV)

Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

The battle is real. What kept the promises from being received wasn't the Giants, it was the internal battle in themselves.

4 WAYS THE PROMISES OF GOD CAN REMAIN OUT OF REACH

1. HIDDEN SIN

Achan: Joshua 7.

Israel had a promise from God, but hidden disobedience affected their ability to move forward.

JOSHUA 7:1 (NKJV)

But the children of Israel broke Faith in regard to the devoted things.

JOSHUA 7:11-12 (NKJV)

Israel has sinned and has transgressed my covenant....Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies."

Trespass - side slip - over the white line - drifted

Transgression - over slipped - violated - "it was a wreck"

Achan took what had been devoted to God and mixed revered things with lesser things.

JOSHUA 7:20–21 (NKJV)

When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment... I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent.

What was hidden in his tent affected what happened on the battlefield.

PSALM 66:18 (NKJV)

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

HEBREWS 12:1 (NKJV)

Let us lay aside every weight (trespass), and the sin (transgression) which so easily ensnares us."

2. COMPLAINING

Israel repeatedly allowed their circumstances to reshape their view of God.

NUMBERS 14:2 (NKJV)

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron."

NUMBERS 14:27 (NKJV)

How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me?

NUMBERS 14:29–30 (NKJV)

The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness... you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in."

1 CORINTHIANS 10:10–11 (NKJV)

Nor complain, as some of them also complained... Now all these things happened to them as examples."

Complaining is dangerous because eventually what you continually complain about can become bigger in your mind than what God promised.

3. ANGER

Moses: Numbers 20.

NUMBERS 20:8 (NKJV)

God told Moses, "Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water."

But Moses allowed the frustration of the people to affect his obedience.

NUMBERS 20:10–11 (NKJV)

Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses struck the rock twice.

NUMBERS 20:12 (NKJV)

Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land.

The complaining of his mission field changed the attitude of the leader.

JAMES 1:19–20

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

EPHESIANS 4:26–27 (NKJV)

Be angry, and do not sin... nor give place to the devil.

You cannot always control the attitude of the people around you, but you have to guard against their attitude becoming your attitude.

4. UNBELIEF

This is ultimately what kept the wilderness generation from possessing what God had promised.

HEBREWS 3:16–19 (NKJV)

To whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Notice how Scripture connects unbelief and disobedience.

Unbelief eventually becomes visible in what we refuse to do.

HEBREWS 4:1–2 (NKJV)

The gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith."

They had a word from God, but they did not mix the Word with faith.

JOSHUA 21:43–45 (NKJV) eventually gives us the conclusion:

The LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers... Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

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