

Joshua 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Analysis

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

God's command begins with stark realism: "Moses my servant is dead." The repetition emphasizes finality—there can be no looking back, no depending on Moses' leadership anymore. Yet this statement also honors Moses as "my servant," maintaining his legacy while making clear that a new era has begun. The Hebrew construction emphasizes divine ownership and relationship.

The word "therefore" (atah, עַתָּה) marks logical progression—because Moses is dead, Joshua must arise. God allows no paralysis through grief or fear. The double imperative "arise, go over" (qum avor, קוּם עָבֵר) demands immediate, decisive action. The Jordan River, though narrow (80-100 feet wide), was swollen with spring floods, presenting a formidable natural barrier requiring divine intervention (3:15).

The phrase "which I do give to them" uses a Hebrew present participle (noten, נוֹתֵן), emphasizing ongoing divine action. Though the land is promised, it requires human cooperation—God gives, but Israel must go and possess. The designation "children of Israel" recalls covenant identity rooted in the patriarchal promises to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, assuring Joshua that this conquest fulfills ancient divine commitments.

Historical Context

The Jordan River formed the eastern boundary of Canaan proper, separating the Transjordanian territories (already conquered under Moses) from the heartland west of the river. Crossing the Jordan symbolized entering the Promised Land itself, the goal of the entire Exodus journey. The command came during the spring flooding season (3:15; 4:19), when the Jordan overflowed its banks, making the crossing humanly impossible—requiring obvious divine intervention.

Canaan in the Late Bronze Age (15th-13th centuries BCE) was a collection of city-states under nominal Egyptian control, with the Egyptian Empire in decline. The Amarna Letters (14th century BCE) reveal Canaanite kings requesting Egyptian help against invaders called "Habiru" (possibly related to "Hebrew"), showing regional instability that facilitated Israelite conquest. Canaanite religion centered on Baal worship with accompanying sexual immorality and child sacrifice, practices God had condemned (Leviticus 18:21-30; 20:2-5).

The land had been promised to Abraham 600 years earlier (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18-21), with the delay attributed to the Amorites' sins not yet reaching full measure (Genesis 15:16). Now the time of divine judgment on Canaanite wickedness and fulfillment of patriarchal promises had arrived.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What "Jordan crossings" might God be calling you to—transitions from waiting to action, from promise to possession—that require faith despite obstacles?
2. How do we balance honoring past leaders and seasons ("Moses my servant") while embracing new directions God is leading ("now therefore arise")?
3. In what areas of life are you waiting for circumstances to change before obeying, rather than trusting God to work through your obedience?

Interlinear Text

מֹשֶׁה	עַבְדִּי	יָמֻת	וְעַתָּה	קֵץ וָיָמַי	עָבֹר	אֵת
Moses	my servant	is dead	H6258	now therefore arise	go over	H853
H4872	H5650	H4191		H6965	H5674	
הַיַּרְדֵּי	הַזֶּה	אֵתָהּ	וְכָל	הָעָם	הַזֶּה	אֵל
this Jordan	H2088	H859	H3605	thou and all this people	H2088	H413
H3383				H5971		
הָאָרֶץ	אֲשֶׁר	אֲנִי	נֹתֵן	לָהּ		
unto the land	H834	H595	which I do give	H0		
H776			H5414			
לְבָנַי	וְעַתָּה	יִשְׂרָאֵל:				
to them even to the children	of Israel					
H1121	H3478					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 3:28 (Parallel theme): But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

Deuteronomy 31:7 (References Moses): And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must

go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

Isaiah 42:1 (Parallel theme): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Joshua 1:1 (References Moses): Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

Joshua 1:11 (Parallel theme): Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

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