

Joshua 1:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

Analysis

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

This promise establishes the correlation between divine gift and human action. The phrase "every place" (kol-maqom, כָל-מָקוֹם) is comprehensive, limited only by the boundaries specified in verse 4. The imagery of "the sole of your foot shall tread" (tidroch kaf-raglekhem, תַּדְרֹךְ קַף-רָגְלֶךָם) emphasizes personal, physical appropriation. The land becomes Israel's not by abstract legal title but through actual occupation and conquest.

The verb "have I given" (netatiha, נֶתֶן-הָיָה) uses the perfect tense, indicating completed action from God's perspective—the gift is already accomplished in divine decree, though not yet realized in human experience. This prophetic perfect tense expresses the certainty of God's promise as though already fulfilled. The paradox of divine gift requiring human effort runs throughout Scripture: God gives salvation freely, yet we must repent and believe; He gives spiritual growth, yet we must discipline ourselves.

The phrase "as I said unto Moses" roots Joshua's commission in previous revelation (Deuteronomy 11:24-25), providing continuity and assurance. God's word to Moses remains valid for the next generation. This citation also implies accountability—previous promises bring current responsibilities. The generation that refused to

enter under Moses' leadership perished in the wilderness (Numbers 14); this generation must not repeat their fathers' unbelief.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern conquest often involved claiming territory through physical presence and military action. The concept of a deity granting land to His people appears in various ancient texts, but Israel's understanding was unique in rooting land possession in covenant relationship rather than mere military prowess or divine whim. The Moabite Stone (c. 840 BCE) shows similar language where Chemosh "gives" land to Moab, illustrating the common ancient Near Eastern theological framework.

The promise to Moses referenced here appears in Deuteronomy 11:24-25, where God promises that "every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours." This promise itself echoes Genesis 13:17, where God told Abraham to "walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." The pattern of walking/treading upon land as appropriation appears across ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts.

The land of Canaan measured approximately 150 miles north to south and 70 miles east to west at its widest points—roughly the size of modern New Jersey. Though geographically small, it held immense strategic importance as the land bridge between Africa, Asia, and Europe, controlling trade routes between Egypt and Mesopotamia. The covenant promise gave Israel not just any territory but the most strategically significant land in the ancient world.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What spiritual blessings or promises has God already given you positionally in Christ that you need to appropriate experientially through faith and obedience?
2. How does the imagery of treading with your foot help you understand the relationship between God's sovereign grace and human responsibility in the Christian life?
3. What territory in your spiritual life has God promised to you that remains unconquered because you haven't stepped forward in faith to possess it?

Interlinear Text

בָּיִת	כָּלְכָל	מִ	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	מִקְדָּשׁ	וּמִ	תַּדַּרְתָּ	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	
H3605	Every place	H4725	H834	shall tread upon	H1869	that the sole	H3709	of your foot	H7272	H0		
H0	that have I given	H5414	H834	unto you as I said	H1696	unto Moses	H413	unto Moses	H4872			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 11:24 (Parallel theme): Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be your's: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

Joshua 14:9 (References Moses): And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.