

## He Goes Before Us

**The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.**

**Deuteronomy 1:30–31**

**Know therefore today that He who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the Lord your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you.**

**Deuteronomy 9:3**

### Introduction

When I say or write the phrase, “*He Goes Before Us*”, without any Biblical or literary context it can mean many things. It could mean someone moving forward or stepping ahead of the one behind them in a line or a queue. It could also mean someone arriving at a particular destination before others heading to the same destination or place. It could also possibly mean, that someone was chosen or preferred for an activity or opportunity before or ahead of another individual. Additionally, the meaning of a phrase can also be influenced or shifted significantly by how

the words, in that particular phrase or sentence are emphasized or de-emphasized.

In the process of accurately understanding and effectively communicating the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence of spiritual significance or consequence, both Biblical and literary context are essential. The context of a word, phrase, or sentence is most often effectively achieved and accurately understood when we can answer the *who, what, where, and when?* If we apply that criteria to the phrase “*He Goes Before Us*”, we would be able to quickly identify and conclude in a Biblical and literary context.

***The Who as - God our Provider and Protector, Christ our Savior and Good Shepherd, Holy Spirit our Comfort and Courage***

***The What as - The Faith to Follow and Go Forward***

***The Where as - The Place of Promise and Purpose***

***The When as - Always Before Us***

***He Goes Before Us*** is a Biblical phrase seeking a context. ***He Goes Before Us*** is a phrase that holds deep spiritual context for the Reunion Church. ***He Goes Before Us*** is the phrase you and I can embrace and use as a call to faith and courage as we *rise*

*and respond to God's call* to widen our nets, expand our tents, and multiply the gifts and graces we have been given. The next couple of weeks we will unpack and seek wisdom from two Old Testament passages, rich with New Testament fulfillment and present day relevance and real-time implications. We can also use these two passages to help us find our connection and context with ***He Goes Before Us***.

The first will be *Joshua 1:1-9*, regarding the transition of God's people from the leadership of Moses to the leadership of Joshua, and the occupying and actualization of the land of covenant, promise, and purpose. In these nine verses God will re-up on His promise and covenant to the people to go before them with guaranteed protection and provision against all enemies and resistance to their occupation journey. He even goes so far as to say,

*"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."*

The response God expects of them is to be strong in their faith, and courageous in their heart. His expectations also include leaders and influencers being fully on point in following all the law that Moses gave them. The message and mission were made

clear in the details as God specifically asked the people to follow their leaders and influencers in honoring and obeying those covenant commands and moral laws without so much as turning from them to the right hand or to the left.

Joshua 1, began with the story of God giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites. Our passage (verses 1-9) allows us a third-person audience to God's deployment orders to Joshua (YHWH delivers). There would be battles of which God promised Joshua that He would be with him in the same way He had been with Moses. There is an issue addressed in these verses of whether Joshua was capable to lead what was ahead. Indeed he would be, because of the active presence of God with him and before him - [*eh ye eem yat*], if he was careful to keep the authority and order of God in place. The key to success for Joshua and the people of God was that they were to be fully engaged in God's word (verses 7-8).

God's promise in return was that they would have good success wherever they would go - He would go before them. *YHWH ah-tem ELOHIM halak pah-neh ah-tem*

Joshua 1:1-9

**After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to**

**cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”**

The second passage will be from Ezekiel 47:1-12. Where we are given the detailed image of an eastbound river flowing from

under the threshold of the eastern wall of the temple toward the impossibly barren regions of the Dead Sea valley. This of course is a clear instance of symbolism, and certainly expressive of the blessings which will flow from the presence of God's Spirit in His sanctuary to other barren and suffering parts of the land.

Although it is clearly a mistake to interpret or exegete this passage literally, the profound image of the Holy Spirit seen as a river flowing out from the presence of the living God is being made. *He goes before us*. The fact that this flowing river represents an idealized image of God's actual and abundant blessings is confirmed by passages in Psalms 46:4; 65:9; and Isaiah 33:20.

The river inconceivably grows in volume as it ascends and descends eastward through the mountains towards the Dead Sea and before long it becomes too deep to wade through. The sheer physical impossibility of this reveals the actual message that we can use to contextualize the spiritual symbolism for ourselves in our present circumstances. The river that goes out before us comes from one and only one source - the presence of almighty God. There are no other sources or contributing rivers or streams to build its volume of flow and depth - God alone. *He goes before us*. What this passage says and what that means are

more important than the logic or probability of the way it is expressed.

The context of the symbolism is the continuation of Ezekiel's tear-down and restoration vision to the dispersed and captive people of God. The prophet sees an ever-flowing stream which brings lasting fertility (restoration, new life, and a new covenant) in its wake. As the river reaches the Dead Sea, the rancid and stagnant waters there become fresh and swarm with fish, the trees flourish on the rivers banks, producing fresh fruit every month. Even the leaves of the trees will have healing properties. Most importantly is that the life-giving water for the fish, fruit and healing flows from the presence of God. The temple is to be the miraculous source of life, healing and fruitfulness, the river is the flowing Spirit of God - the river of life. He goes out before us. By the miraculous means of the power of the Holy Spirit, the impossible is going to be achieved.

So we prepare our hearts Reunion Church - to faithfully follow Christ, by the move and flow of the Holy Spirit, as God the Father Almighty goes before us...

### 3.5.23.

## He Goes Before Us

### Joshua 1:1-9

*Joshua 1:1-9*, introduces us to the transition of leadership for God's people from Moses to Joshua. It would now be Joshua's courageous leadership that would take the people of God to an actualization of the land of promise, the land of covenant, and the land of plenty. In these nine verses God will re-up on His Word to the people that He had given to Moses just before he died. That promise was detailed and specific. God promised to go before them with protection and provision against all enemies, all resistance, and every obstacle to the fulfillment of His promises. He even goes so far as to say,

*“No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.”*

The response God expects of Joshua is to **trust Him**; first because of **who He is**, and secondly, because of **what He has done**. This is how to lead Joshua - lead as one who trusts in the living God; the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. His command and challenge to Joshua is to lead the people to be

strong in their faith, and courageous in their heart. His expectations also include that all leaders were fully on point in following all the law that Moses gave them. The message and mission were made clear in the details as God specifically asked the people to follow their leaders in honoring and obeying His moral and spiritual laws without so much as turning from them to the right hand or to the left.

**[For Us]**

*We too, are loaded with the authority and power of His Word, and locked-in to the flow of His Spirit to accomplish His will for our lives and not our own. His plan for me is better than mine.*

The story of Joshua and the God of Israel, features God coming through on promises made to Abraham that dated back nearly five-hundred years. God has two direct affirmations of His promises to Abraham regarding the land known as Canaan.

**Affirmation One:** Deuteronomy 34:1-6

**Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3 the**

**Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, 6 and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.**

**Affirmation Two: Joshua 1:4-5**

**From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.**

God promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites. Now Joshua was to lead the people forward to take it. These two passages allows us a third-person audience to God’s (YHWH-Hebrew; delivers) detailed parameters and specific territory to Moses, as

well as the direct deployment orders and commands for occupation to Joshua. There would be battles against the enemies of God's people to which God promised Joshua that He would be with him in the same way He had been with Moses.

There is an issue addressed in these verses of whether Joshua was **capable** to **lead** what was **ahead**. Indeed he would be, because of the active **presence of God** with him and before him - [eh ye eem yat], if he was careful to **keep** the **authority** and **order of God** as **priority**. The key to success for Joshua and the people of God was that they were to be fully **engaged** and **active** in God's word (verses 7–8).

### **[For Us]**

We are capable to lead if we are capable to follow. We are capable because He is capable. We remain active and engaged in His Word and worship. Start with today. Give each day to keeping His presence, authority and order in our lives as priority number one. Finish today the way we started... His day, not mine; His will, not mine; His ways not mine. Do it again tomorrow the same way.

God's promise in return was that they would have good success wherever they would go - He would go before them. (*Yahweh ah-*

*tem Elohim halak pah-neh ah-tem); The Lord your God goes before you.*

### **3.12.23**

#### **He Goes Before Us**

#### **Joshua 1:5-9**

I want to introduce to you this morning something I am quite certain only a very few of you have ever heard of. There is, of course, a significant point to using our time together for this, so work with me. Let's start by sharing a literary process known as ***Chiasm***.

A chiasm (or chiasmus if you prefer) is a writing style that uses a unique repetition pattern for clarification and emphasis to both memorable and main points of interest. As a literary approach, *Chiasm* (*ky'-az-um*) is often called the *chiastic* (*ky'-az-tic*) *structure*. This form of literary repetition appears throughout the Bible and yet, is not well known.

The way a diligent or passionate student of the Bible approaches the scriptures should be dramatically enhanced while learning what *chiastic structures* are and how to recognize them. A *chiasm* is one more on the list of critical considerations in the interpretive process for both the Old

and New Testament text or scriptural passages. The importance of the *chiastic structure* is in its hidden emphasis, clarification, and confirmation regarding a text and its biblical context. Some reputable Bible scholars have identified nearly fifteen-hundred examples of *chiasm* in the Bible. I want to use our passage in Joshua 1 to teach you this writing style and then share the spiritual importance of it's uses and purposes.

By definition, a *chiasm* is a particular Biblical text identified and read in a repetitive sequence such as A-B-C-D and then repeated in reverse sequence as D-C-B-A. One excellent example of *chiasmus* is found in our ***He Goes Before Us*** passage in Joshua 1:5-9.

Joshua 1:5-9

**(A) [Verse 5] No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.**

**(B) Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. “Only be strong and very courageous; [verse 6 and 7a]**

**(C) being careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. [verse 7b]**

**(D) This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth [8a]**

**(D) but you shall meditate on it day and night... [8b]**

**(C) so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. [8c]**

**(B) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed... [9a]**

**(A) for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. [9b]  
NASB**

Now lets share together what we have come up with from Joshua 1:5-9 that is worth hearing today.

Ok, What is the point?

Wow, I'm so glad you asked! I have so many of them.

- I can find God's preserved and purposed meaning for me - without changing His intended meaning at the time when it was spoken and then written to its original audience.
- I don't have to twist or manipulate scripture in order to be relevant to today.
- This ancient yet eternal passage becomes clear, concise, and a complete confirmation that I can trust God to use His Word on which to build *my life* (all of my days) and *my love* (all those I love and let love) upon.
- I can teach or preach this passage with a straight and still look myself in the mirror, knowing that what I have told you is indeed the eternal Word of the Lord.

The bigger point is simply this. Since the ancient of days, God has gone to great lengths to make sure we do not miss His most important points (His truth and revelation). In the inspiration and authoring of His Word He even masterfully used literary genres and writing techniques and methods to weave the important points of truth of His word into a repetitive pattern of writing to *affirm, re-affirm, and confirm* the life giving, and faith building, words and phrases of significance and importance. God always

has a way of making the MAIN THING the MAIN THING in His Word

### **The Importance of Making the Main Thing THE Main Thing**

The Holy Spirit in complete unity and confirmation of the Word of God will persistently and consistently nudge and whisper, push and shout, confront and position you and I into the MAIN THING He has purposed for us. For the entirety of our lives this will continue.

#### **[For Us] - Context and Application**

- **Love the Lord (Mark 12:30-31)**
- **Trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6)**
- **Know the Word of the Lord (Hebrews 4:12-13)**
- **Respect and Obey the Word of the Lord (Psalm 19:7-19; 119:9-16)**
- **Be Strong, Capable, and Courageous in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10-12)**
- **Move Forward in Faith to Accomplish the Call of the Lord (2 Peter 1:3-11)**

This Word of Truth is how you and I move forward to answer the 2023 call of God on our lives and in our church community. This truth is how we go forward and He goes before us.

Next Week - Ezekiel 47