

# Joshua 1 Commentary

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[Paul J Bucknell - Biblical Foundations for Freedom](#)

LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)  
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JOSHUA			
A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST			
HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS			
CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND	
ACTION		ALLOCATION	
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	
WARLORDS IN CANAAN		LANDLORDS IN CANAAN	
ENTERING CANAAN	CONQUERING CANAAN	DIVIDING CANAAN	
CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE		APPEAL	
Josh 22:1-24:33			

SECURING THE LAND		SETTLING THE LAND	
Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

**Joshua 1:1** Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

- De 33:1 34:5 Ac 13:36,37 Ro 1:1 Tit 1:1 Jas 1:1 Rev 1:18
- Nu 13:8,16 De 1:38 31:3,23 34:9 Ac 7:45, Jesus, Moses' minister. Ex 24:13 Nu 11:28 1Ki 19:16 2Ki 3:11 4:27-29 5:25-27 Mt 20:26,27 Lu 16:10
- **the death:** Jos 12:6
- Joshua: Ex 17:9-13
- [Joshua 1:1-9 as a "Table of Contents" for the book](#)
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- [See bottom of page for multiple devotionals related to Joshua 1](#)

#### Outline from Preacher's Commentary:

##### I. A Lifestyle of Promise: Joshua 1:1–9

- A. Living Life with Your Back to the Past: Joshua 1:1–2
- B. Claiming the Promises While Meeting the Conditions: Joshua 1:3–9

##### II. A People Mobilized for Action: Joshua 1:10–18

- A. A Profile of a Leader: Joshua 1:10–15
- B. A Profile of a People: Joshua 1:16–18

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 27:16-23+ (**MOSES PRAYS FOR THE LEADER WHO WILL FOLLOW HIM AFTER HE DIES**) “May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.” 18 So the LORD said to Moses, “Take **Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit**, (**NOTE THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT JUST "ON" BUT "WITHIN" JOSHUA!**) and lay your hand on him; 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and **commission** ([tsavah](#)) **him in their sight**. 20 “You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 21 “Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation.” 22 Moses did just as the LORD commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him **before** Eleazar the priest and **before** all the congregation. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and **commissioned him**, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

**Spirit IN OT believers** - Compare Ex. 28:3+ (“the skillful persons whom I have endowed **with the spirit of wisdom**”) and Ex 31:3+ (see also Ex 35:30-31+) = “I **have filled** [Lxx = [empiplemi](#)] him [Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah] with **the Spirit of God in wisdom**, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship.”

**Irving Jensen** - No greater commendation of Joshua’s character was made than that made by God: “a man in whom is the Spirit,” that is, Joshua was filled with the Spirit (Num. 27:18; cf. Deut. 34:9). This

determined everything else that he was. ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**John MacArthur** comments on Nu 27:18 - Joshua already had the inner endowment for leadership. **He was empowered by the Holy Spirit.** This inner endowment was to be recognized by an external ceremony. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**HCSB** says "Possession of the Holy Spirit in the OT was for the purpose of carrying out the specific tasks to which a person had been appointed by the Lord."

**NET Note** - The word "**spirit**" probably refers to the Holy Spirit, in which case it would be rendered "in whom is the Spirit." This would likely be a permanent endowment for Joshua (**I AGREE WITH THIS BUT STILL NOT IN THE SAME SENSE AS IN NT BELIEVERS**). But it is also possible to take it to refer to a proper spirit to do all the things required of such a leader (which ultimately is a gift from the Spirit of God). The Hebrew text simply says "in whom is a spirit."

**J Vernon McGee** - There is to be a successor appointed to take the place of Moses. **He must be a Spirit-filled man**. ([Joshua 1](#))

Micah 3:8+ On the other hand **I am filled with power- With the Spirit of the LORD-** And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - Chart

Deuteronomy 3:21-22+ "I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 22 'Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.'

Deuteronomy 34:9-12+ Now Joshua the son of Nun was **filled with the spirit of wisdom**, (cf **MESSIANIC PASSAGE IN Isaiah 11:2 WHICH CLEARLY RELATES WISDOM TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**) for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. (**GREATNESS OF MOSES**) Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:6,11+ Now these things happened as **examples** for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved....11 Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and they were **written for our instruction**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Romans 15:4+ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

## **A PASSION FOR PASSING THE BATON**

The Christian life is like a relay race in which each runner passes the baton on to the next runner. Jesus would describe it as making disciples who make disciples, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20+). Paul described it this way "The things which you (TIMOTHY) have heard from me (PAUL) in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust** (**NOT A SUGGESTION - A COMMAND** = [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) these to faithful men (THE THIRD "RUNNER" IN THE RELAY) who will be able (COMPETENT - [hikanos](#)) to teach others (THE FOURTH "RUNNER") also." (2Ti 2:2+).

**THOUGHT-** **Are you running in the race?** (Heb 12:1-2+, 2Ti 2:5+). "**Run** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in such a way that you may win." (1Co 9:24-27+) Are you preparing to hand off the baton like Moses did to Joshua? Are you making disciples, obeying one of the last commandments given by our Lord Jesus Christ? (see Mt 28:19-20+). Listen to this great song [Run Like Heaven](#).

Claiming God's promises for spiritual victory  
requires engaging and conquering the enemy by grace through faith.  
-- Paul Apple

[David Thompson](#) writes "Joshua teaches us that **conflict** is always a prelude to **conquest**. **Struggles** always precede **success**."

Workmen die, but God lives.  
God's sovereign work continues.

Before the mountains were born  
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting,  
You are God.  
--Ps 90:2+

**Irving Jensen** - When the thirty days' mourning over Moses' death had come to an end (Deut. 34:8), and when all the tears of deep grief (no professional mourning here!) over the departure of this man of God had cleansed the spiritual eyes to see more clearly from the perspective of the eternities, God spoke from heaven directly to Joshua and reiterated his appointment as successor to Moses which had been given him earlier by Moses. **The work of God must go on. His servants die, but God does not die, no less His divine program.** ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

Observe the overview charts above, noting especially that these **first 5 chapters** are preparation for conquest of the promised land.

**Now** - This links Joshua with the end of Deuteronomy.

**It came about after the death of Moses the servant** (['ebed](#)) **of the LORD** - Notice the important time phrase **AFTER** which tells us life goes on even when one of God's servants pass on. "Moses the magnificent" is gone! "Joshua was destined to step into the largest sandals he'd ever had on his feet!" (Getz) And yet the promise has yet to be possessed! This beautiful description of Moses (**Moses the servant of the LORD**) is mentioned three times in chapter 1 (Josh 1:1, 13, 15, cf first use by Moses in Ex 4:10+ and Ex 14:31+ and 13x elsewhere in the Book of Joshua). Joshua begins as the servant of the servant of the LORD and ends his life by himself being designated as **"the servant of the LORD"** (Joshua 24:29) This reminds me of the old Maranatha praise song **If you want to be great in God's kingdom, learn to be the servant of all** ([Play this song](#))." The death of Moses occurred circa 1405 B.C. Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim (1Chr 7:20, 27; cf. Nu 13:8, 16; 14:6, 30, 38). Notice in the overview chart above that the events of Joshua occupy about 25 years, so if Joshua was 110 when he died, he would have been about 80-85 years old at the beginning of this great military campaign!

**THOUGHT** - I am reminded by Joshua's actions at 80-85, that retirement is **NOT** in the Bible. If you are a believer and retired and sitting on your duff or playing golf or fishing all the time (these activities are good some of the time, but not all of the time), you need to soberly ponder the words of James 4:14-15+ that **"you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."** Then you might pray the prayer of the Psalm written by another older man, Moses **"So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom."** (Ps 90:12) I am 75 years old as I write these notes, and by the grace of God have been given the priceless privilege to disciple young men in various parts of America and in India via 2 hour zoom sessions 3-4 times per week. I say this **not** to boast because **"LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."** (1Cor 1:31+). I boast in our Father with a grateful heart that He has given me this "opportunity of a lifetime," and by His Spirit and His Word has enabled me to redeem the time (Eph 5:16+), the last lap of my short race to Heaven (listen to [Run Like Heaven](#)). Brother (sister), let me strongly encourage you to **"look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."** (2Cor 4:18+) **"Store up for yourself treasure in Heaven."** (Mt 6:20+) If you are a disciple of Christ, then your heavenly Father has given you a race to run (Hebrews 12:1+), **BUT** He will not force you to run. You must make the choice to live life in light of eternity! Remember that you are **"His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."** (Eph 2:10+). Can I ask you dear older saint, is there some Timothy to whom you might be willing to become their Paul, instructing them in the faith you have walked in for decades, so that they might pass on the same eternal truths to other faithful men who will be able in turn to teach others? (2Ti 2:2+) From my limited experience (when I was a new believer in a strong, large Bible church I was unable to find even one man to personally disciple me 37 years ago), I can assure you that there is some young man who would like to be seriously discipled in the Word of Truth! If you are still breathing, you can redeem your last breaths in a way that you will never regret throughout eternity!

This section could also be subtitled **"Follow the Leader,"** which was a game many of us played as children, but for Joshua the task was not a game, for Moses had **"big shoes to fill,"** in fact the largest sandals a man has ever seen! While Joshua followed Moses in one sense, there was now only one Leader Joshua could follow and that Leader was Jehovah. The real Leader will proceed to give Joshua his [marching orders](#). Moses was dead, but God's promise and purpose was still very much alive!

**THOUGHT** - All God's men and women in leadership are expendable. God uses us as His "vessels of honor, set apart, useful to Him, prepared for every good (God) work." (2Ti 2:21+). He first sets us apart and when our work is accomplished He sets us aside (so to speak, cf Rev 11:7+ "when they had finished their testimony"). God's servants are immortal until they have finished His work! Our job on earth is over in this short life, the "blink of an eye," but our reward in Heaven will last forever. May we all be sober minded, redeeming the precious time, ever seeking to imitate those who through faith and patience inherited the promises, men like Moses and like Joshua. (Heb 6:12+).

God's work is not affected by the death of His servants  
because the true Leader is not dead!

There are two words for **servant** in this verse ['ebed](#) (Moses) and [sharath](#) (Joshua), the latter translated with the adjective **hupourgōs** (only in Josh 1:1) meaning one who renders service, a helper, an assistant. In short Joshua learned to become a leader by serving under Moses. The way "up" in service to God is first "down!" Jesus said it this way "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Lk 14:11+)

**THOUGHT** - Are you willing to first serve humbly or do you seek to serve in an exalted position? If the latter is the case, then "look out," for you will likely "[be brought back down to earth](#)," so to speak! (see Mt 23:12).

Reading Joshua 1 it is almost like **Moses** is not dead, for his name is mentioned 11x in 9 verses!

Josh 1:1 Josh 1:2 Josh 1:3 Josh 1:5 Josh 1:7 Josh 1:13 Josh 1:14 Josh 1:15 Josh 1:17

As **Davis** quips "What do you have left when everything the first five books of the Bible have been preparing you for ends in a funeral?" ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

One additional strange providential "coincidence" is that the book of **Joshua begins and ends with funerals**, one at the beginning (Joshua 1:2) and three at the end (Joshua - Joshua 24:29-31, Joseph - Joshua 24:32 and Eleazar - Joshua 24:33! There must be a message herein but of that message I am not certain.

"God buries his workmen, but his work goes on."

-On plaque at burial site of John Wesley

**J Vernon McGee** on Moses - As we have seen, Moses was not essential to lead the children of Israel into the land. In fact, he could not bring them into the Land of Promise. Moses represented the Law and the Law cannot save us. The Law is a revealer and not a redeemer. It shows us that we are sinners. The Law was never a savior. Moses could not lead Israel into the land because of his failure. The problem was not with the Law but with Moses just as the problem is with us. The Law reveals that we have fallen short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). "Moses my servant is dead." Only Jesus our Savior, our Joshua, can lead us into the place of blessing He has for us. ([Joshua 1](#))

**Bob Utley** - The question is often asked, "Why could Moses not enter the Promised Land after being such a faithful, effective leader?" The reason is seen in Num. 20:12; 27:14; Deut. 3:26. One major theological truth again and again in the history books of the OT is that when God reveals to someone what to do, but they slightly change it, the result is judgment. God is no respecter of persons. When Moses publically disobeyed God, he reaped the consequences (Gal 6:7-8+, Hos 8:12).

**Hubbard** - The brief opening report formula, "**after the death of Moses**," signals that Joshua 1 picks up where Deuteronomy 34:1-12+ left off and pushes the story forward. {The phrase wayehi'ahare mot X (lit. "**It was after the death of** [proper name]") introduces other significant transitions in Israel's history (Jdg. 1:1 [Joshua]; 2Sa 1:1 [Saul]) cf. Ge 25:11.}. Although we presume a major canonical break between the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, the narrative does not. Further, it reiterates that the chapter's geographical setting remains that of Deuteronomy, the Israelite camp in the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River. The death of Moses leaves a leadership vacuum in Israel, so it is no surprise that the book immediately turns to a speech by Yahweh (Josh 1:1b)....The book of Joshua itself ends with three speeches by Joshua to various Israelite assemblies (Josh 22:2-5; Josh 23:1-16; Josh 24:1-15). **Joshua 1:1-9 marks the first of many occasions on which Yahweh will address Joshua** (Joshua 3:7; 4:1, 15; 5:9; 6:2; 7:10; 8:1, 18; 10:8; 11:6). But on only two occasions does the address amount to a speech—concerning ridding Israel of Achan's sin (Joshua 7:10-15) and concerning Yahweh's past great deeds for Israel (Josh 24:2-13). ([NIVAC-Joshua](#))

**Gotquestions.org** on **servant of the LORD** - [Moses](#) is repeatedly called the servant of the Lord: "And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said" (Deuteronomy 34:5; see also Exodus 14:31; Numbers 12:7-8; Joshua 1:1-2; Nehemiah 1:7-8; Malachi 4:4). Significantly, Moses told the people that "the LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him" (Deuteronomy 18:15). This messianic prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, who, like Moses, was "the servant of the Lord" but in an even greater way (see Acts 3:22 and Hebrews 3:3).

**That the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant**([sharath](#)), **saying** - Joshua is the first personal name in the Bible to incorporate God's personal name, "Yahweh" (see [Yehoshua](#)). Joshua had been "[walking in the footsteps](#)" of Moses for 40 years, in effect being "*discipled*" for 40 years by Moses, one of the greatest figures in the Bible, and doing so without any recorded complaints or envying or jealousy. What does this say about the character of Joshua (that is a [rhetorical question](#))? As alluded to earlier, although we do know exactly the age of Joshua, he is probably about 80-85 years old at this time. I am 75 and cannot imagine leading a military force into hostile territory!

**J Oswald Sanders** - Isaac Stern, the famous musician, once said that of all the instruments in the orchestra, the second fiddle is the most difficult to master. But in this role Joshua displayed great virtuosity. But in this role Joshua displayed great virtuosity. He began his career as second to Moses, and as we shall see later he had no sooner been commissioned to succeed him than he was charged to surrender his command and become second to the new Commander-in-Chief of the Lord's army (Joshua 5:13-16). Not everyone has the stature to cheerfully accept demotion and be superseded in leadership. But Joshua would sooner be second-in-command of the Lord's army than commander-in-chief of his own. Few Christian leaders pass this test with flying colors as did Joshua.

**Jensen** on the character of Joshua - No greater commendation of Joshua's character was made than that made by God: "a man in whom is the Spirit," that is, Joshua was filled with the Spirit (Num. 27:18+; cf. Deut. 34:9+). **This determined everything else that he was.** He feared God utterly, so that he expected Israel to be consumed whenever sin was harbored in the camp. His faith was deep, strong, pure, and enduring—a vital quality in making him the courageous general that he was, undaunted by impossible things. The spirit of obedience which he learned as a devoted follower of Moses was that which he rendered his Commander-in-chief, God, in the mighty tasks given him in Canaan. He was a great ruler, commanding the respect of all his subjects (Deut. 34:9), maintaining order and discipline, putting the worship of God central in the nation's government, encouraging his people to press on to claim God's best. He was also a great military leader (cf Ex 17:8-16+), using his God-given traits of wisdom, confidence, courage, and a spirit of challenge to manipulate his army in strategies that consistently led to triumph. And last but not least, Joshua was a **humble** man who thought highly of others and most gloriously of God. Such a man God was pleased to use. [Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**Joshua** is a beautiful illustration of the importance and the power of discipleship wherein an older, more mature believer discipled a younger believer (Mt 28:19-20, 2Ti 2:1-2). Add to that the fact that God's Word says Joshua was described as a "Spirit filled" man in Nu 27:18+. And while Joshua had the written Word (cf Joshua 1:8), he experienced a personal encounter with Jehovah Who spoke to him directly. Having the **written** Word (inspired by God, penned by Moses) and the **spoken** Word, would have given Joshua double assurance that he was indeed God's man chosen to lead the people into the land to possess the promise.

**Charles Pfeiffer** - While probably not "mouth to mouth" (Num 12:8), this revelation must have come almost immediately after Moses died, in order to maintain the continuity of God's theocratic rule. The Lord gave Joshua four specific orders: (1) go over Jordan; (2) be strong ...; (3) cause this people to inherit; (4) observe to do according to all the Law. (Wycliffe Bible Commentary).

Joshua's original name was [Hosea](#) (salvation) but in Nu 13:16+ we see a change in his name, Moses recording "These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua ([Yehoshua](#) - "Yahweh is salvation"), which is the Septuagint is [Iesous](#), the NT Name for Jesus!

[Guzik](#) adds "The leader: Joshua as a type of Jesus. Remember that the Greek name Jesus simply translates the Hebrew name Joshua. Their names are identical. Whatever Israel received in the Promised Land, they received through the hand of Joshua; whatever we receive from God we receive through Jesus Christ, our Joshua."

Those are fittest to rule, who have learned to obey  
-- Matthew Henry

**Gaebelein** divides Joshua simply - I. The entrance to the land and the conflict.—Chapters 1–12. II. The division of the land.—Chapters 13–24.

**Matthew Henry Concise** - **vv1-4.** Joshua had attended upon Moses. He who was called to honour, had been long used to business. Our Lord Jesus took upon Him the form of a servant. Joshua was trained up under command. Those are fittest to rule, who have learned to obey. The removal of useful men should quicken survivors to be the more diligent in doing good. Arise, go over Jordan.

[Guzik](#) - Joshua was prepared by faithful service in small things, in being Moses' assistant. Redpath tells of a motto over a kitchen sink: "Divine service is conducted here three times daily." The motto is true, and great men and women are prepared by faithfulness to the small things.

**W R Newell** - This is the first great lesson we must learn: that Joshua, not Moses, leads the people into the land. Joshua's name means "Salvation of Jehovah," or "Jehovah Salvation" and the New Testament form of it is Jesus (see Matt . 1:21 and the meaning



of the name). Oh, that all Christians would simply trust their faithful Joshua, leaning only upon Him, and His atoning work, following only Him! How quickly would He lead them all into the full realization in experience of what He has so wondrously purchased for us in His Cross! May Moses (our works) die now with each of us that we may know none else hereafter as our Leader but our Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ! For He not only "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24), but our connection with Adam the first was ended at the cross (see Rom. 6: 6).

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush-** Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**Now after the death of Moses, &c.** The literal rendering of the Heb. is, 'And it was (or happened) after the death of Moses, and the Lord spake, &c.' This rendering discloses more perfectly the use of the copulative 'and' in the original, which is so employed as to bring this book into immediate connexion with the foregoing, and thus makes it a regular continuation of the sacred narrative begun and carried on by Moses in the five preceeding books. In like manner the book of Ruth commences with a similar phraseology, ויהי And it came to pass, &c., although it cannot be questioned that there are other instances, as in the opening of the books of Esther and Ezekiel, where the ו cannot have a copulative, but merely a conversive sense; i. e., it converts, according to a peculiarity of the language, the future into the past or pretorite sense.—The time referred to at the opening of this book, was probably at the conclusion of the thirty day's mourning for Moses, spoken of Deut. 34:8; or it might have been during that period; in which time also it is the opinion of some commentators that the spies (chap. 2:1) were sent out.

**The servant of the Lord.** A high and honorable title, applied to Moses, not merely in the sense in which it is applied to pious and good men generally, who may justly be styled servants of the Most High, inasmuch as it is the grand aim of their lives to serve and obey him; but in this connexion carrying with it, a reference to the peculiar nature of the service in which Moses was employed, viz., that of a minister, mediator, deputy, or vicegerent of God, the honored organ through whom he communicated his will to his chosen people and managed all their varied interests. It is in this character that he stands so highly commended in the sacred volume, having received the divine testimony to his being 'found faithful in all God's house as a servant,' and being expressly distinguished by this title, not only here, where God himself is pleased so to denominate him, v. 2, but also in Rev. 15:3, where it is said of the company standing upon the sea of glass, that they 'sing the song of Moses the servant of God.' On the sense of ministerial ruling oftentimes involved in the term servant, see Note Gen. 24:2.

**The Lord spake unto Joshua, &c.** The name of this illustrious leader of Israel appears in a somewhat different form in several different connexions in which it occurs. In Num. 13:16, we are informed that 'Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua,' where the original is in the first instance הושע hoshēa, the same name with that of the Prophet Hosea, and in the second יהושע yehoshua, having the first letter of 'Jehovah' (יהוה) appended. The first of these the Gr. of the Sept. represents by Αυση, Ausē, the other by Ιησους Jesus. The Hebrew root of the name has the import of salvation, and from this the sense of Saviour has been transferred into the Greek Ιησους, Jesus. In Neh. 8:17, we have still another form; ישוע yeshua, Jeshua, where the Gr. preserves the usual form Ιησους Jesus. It was doubtless from this current usage of the Septuagint that the New Testament writers have in two instances applied to Joshua the name of the Saviour, of whom he was undoubtedly an eminent type. The first is Acts 7:45, 'Which also our fathers, that came after, brought in with Jesus,' i. e. Joshua. The other is Heb. 4:8, 'For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.' This change of names, in the case of various Scripture personages, appears to have been governed by a change of relations, either to God or to man, as in the case of Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Daniel, Paul, and others. See Note on Gen. 17:5. Of the manner of the communication now made to Joshua, we are not expressly informed. From the fact that Moses and Joshua, just before the death of the former, were summoned together into the 'tabernacle of the congregation,' Deut. 31:14, that the dying charge of Moses might be given to his successor, it seems highly probable that the instructions and encouragements imparted on this occasion were delivered from the same place.

**Moses' minister.** Heb. משרת משה meshâreth Moshēh, he that served, or ministered to, Moses. The original שרת shârath, to minister, is used with the accusative of the person ministered to, and is found for the most part in those connexions, where the service of God is spoken of, especially that which was rendered by the Priests and Levites. Joshua was Moses' minister in the sense of an immediate attendant, one who waited upon his person, and assisted him in business; one of whose services he availed himself in a variety of ways, as Elisha, of those of Gehazi. In Deut. 1:38, it is expressed by a different, but equivalent phrase העמד לפניך hâômēd lepânēkā, who standeth before thee, a usual mode of expressing the idea of ministration. The word is rendered in some copies of the Greek, ὑποκείμενος, an under-workman, in others, θηρεύων, one that waits, attends upon, ministers to. Previous to the death of Moses, Joshua had been specially designated to the office which he is now called to assume, Deut. 1:38; 31:3, 6–8; and for which he was peculiarly qualified by his long familiarity with Moses, and by the training which he would naturally receive in the station occupied under him. An humble and devoted spirit, a willingness to serve God in the meanest employments, is the best

preparative, and often the surest precursor to posts of honor and dignity in the church. Wherever this is the case, no previous lowness or obscurity of origin is, in God's sight, an obstacle to advancement. Persons of this character are often surprised to look back, and see from what small beginnings they have been raised step by step, under the guidance of Providence, to stations of the most extensive influence and usefulness.

**Wiersbe** - A wise leader doesn't completely abandon the past but builds on it as he or she moves toward the future. Moses is mentioned fifty-seven times in the Book of Joshua, evidence that Joshua respected Moses and what he had done for Israel...Joshua learned how to obey as a servant before he commanded as a general; he was first a servant and then a ruler (Matt. 25:21). "He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander," wrote Aristotle in his Politics. God commissioned Joshua to achieve three things: lead the people into the land, defeat the enemy, and claim the inheritance. God could have sent an angel to do this, but He chose to use a man and give him the power he needed to get the job done. As we have already seen, Joshua is a type of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), who has won the victory and now shares His spiritual inheritance with us....God didn't give Joshua explanations as to how He would accomplish these things, because God's people live on promises and not on explanations. When you trust God's promises and step out by faith (v. 3), you can be sure that the Lord will give you the directions you need when you need them. ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

**J. Oswald Sanders** - A work originated by God and conducted on spiritual principles will surmount the shock of a change of leadership and indeed will probably thrive better as a result.

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**Joshua** ([03091](#)) (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ **Yehoshua**, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ **yehôšua'**) means "Yahweh is salvation," "the LORD delivers" or "Yahweh saves." There are 4 men named **Joshua** in the OT (a person of Beth Shemesh in 1Sa 6:13-14, a high priest in Zech 3:1-9, 6:11-12; and a governor of Jerusalem in 2Ki 23:8-9), but this note deals with the predominant use describing Joshua "servant of Moses" (Ex 24:13, Ex 33:11). He first appears in the OT in the context of newly delivered Israel's first military conflict, in which he led Israel to defeat (enabled by Yahweh) the Amalekites (see notes Ex 17:8-16).

The name Joshua (or Joshua's) is found 168x in 151 verses in the book by his name!

223x in 204 verses - Exod. 17:9; Exod. 17:10; Exod. 17:13; Exod. 17:14; Exod. 24:13; Exod. 32:17; Exod. 33:11; Num. 11:28; Num. 13:16; Num. 14:6; Num. 14:30; Num. 14:38; Num. 26:65; Num. 27:18; Num. 27:22; Num. 32:12; Num. 32:28; Num. 34:17; Deut. 1:38; Deut. 3:21; Deut. 3:28; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:7; Deut. 31:14; Deut. 31:23; Deut. 32:44; Deut. 34:9; Jos. 1:1; Jos. 1:10; Jos. 1:12; Jos. 1:16; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 2:23; Jos. 2:24; Jos. 3:1; Jos. 3:5; Jos. 3:6; Jos. 3:7; Jos. 3:9; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 4:1; Jos. 4:4; Jos. 4:5; Jos. 4:8; Jos. 4:9; Jos. 4:10; Jos. 4:14; Jos. 4:15; Jos. 4:17; Jos. 4:20; Jos. 5:2; Jos. 5:3; Jos. 5:4; Jos. 5:7; Jos. 5:9; Jos. 5:13; Jos. 5:14; Jos. 5:15; Jos. 6:2; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:8; Jos. 6:10; Jos. 6:12; Jos. 6:16; Jos. 6:22; Jos. 6:25; Jos. 6:26; Jos. 6:27; Jos. 7:2; Jos. 7:3; Jos. 7:6; Jos. 7:7; Jos. 7:10; Jos. 7:16; Jos. 7:19; Jos. 7:20; Jos. 7:22; Jos. 7:23; Jos. 7:24; Jos. 7:25; Jos. 8:1; Jos. 8:3; Jos. 8:9; Jos. 8:10; Jos. 8:13; Jos. 8:15; Jos. 8:16; Jos. 8:18; Jos. 8:21; Jos. 8:23; Jos. 8:26; Jos. 8:27; Jos. 8:28; Jos. 8:29; Jos. 8:30; Jos. 8:35; Jos. 9:2; Jos. 9:3; Jos. 9:6; Jos. 9:8; Jos. 9:15; Jos. 9:22; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 9:27; Jos. 10:1; Jos. 10:4; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 10:7; Jos. 10:8; Jos. 10:9; Jos. 10:12; Jos. 10:15; Jos. 10:17; Jos. 10:18; Jos. 10:20; Jos. 10:21; Jos. 10:22; Jos. 10:24; Jos. 10:25; Jos. 10:26; Jos. 10:27; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:29; Jos. 10:31; Jos. 10:33; Jos. 10:34; Jos. 10:36; Jos. 10:38; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 10:41; Jos. 10:42; Jos. 10:43; Jos. 11:6; Jos. 11:7; Jos. 11:9; Jos. 11:10; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:13; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 11:16; Jos. 11:18; Jos. 11:21; Jos. 11:23; Jos. 12:7; Jos. 13:1; Jos. 14:1; Jos. 14:6; Jos. 14:13; Jos. 15:13; Jos. 17:4; Jos. 17:14; Jos. 17:15; Jos. 17:17; Jos. 18:3; Jos. 18:8; Jos. 18:9; Jos. 18:10; Jos. 19:49; Jos. 19:51; Jos. 20:1; Jos. 21:1; Jos. 22:1; Jos. 22:6; Jos. 22:7; Jos. 23:1; Jos. 23:2; Jos. 24:1; Jos. 24:2; Jos. 24:19; Jos. 24:21; Jos. 24:22; Jos. 24:24; Jos. 24:25; Jos. 24:26; Jos. 24:27; Jos. 24:28; Jos. 24:29; Jos. 24:31; Jdg. 1:1; Jdg. 2:6; Jdg. 2:7; Jdg. 2:8; Jdg. 2:21; Jdg. 2:23; 1 Sam. 6:14; 1 Sam. 6:18; 1 Ki. 16:34; 2 Ki. 23:8; 1 Chr. 7:27; Neh. 8:17; Hag. 1:1; Hag. 1:12; Hag. 1:14; Hag. 2:2; Hag. 2:4; Zech. 3:1; Zech. 3:3; Zech. 3:6; Zech. 3:8; Zech. 3:9; Zech. 6:11; Lk. 3:29; Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8

#### Significant Passages in Life and [Matriculation](#) of Joshua:

Exodus 17:8-9+ (MOSES GIVES JOSHUA COMMAND OVER ISRAEL'S MILITARY) Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to **Joshua**, "Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

Exodus 24:13+ So Moses arose with **Joshua his servant**, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. (NOTE JOSHUA'S NEARNESS TO GOD, ANOTHER ASPECT OF HIS GROWTH IN GRACE).

Exodus 32:17+ (RETURNING TO CAMP AND ISRAEL'S CALF WORSHIP AFTER 40 DAYS ON MOUNT SINAI AT A PLACE LOWER THAN MOSES - GOD KEPT HIM SEPARATE/HOLY - Cf 2Ti 2:3-4) Now when



Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a sound of war in the camp."

Exodus 33:11+ (NOTE HE IS A 'YOUNG MAN') Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his **servant Joshua**, the son of Nun, a young man, **would not depart from the tent**.

Numbers 14:6+ (EXPRESSING DISTRESS AT 10 SPIES WHO FAILED TO BELIEVE GOD WOULD KEEP HIS PROMISE TO GIVE THE LAND TO ISRAEL. IN SHORT JOSHUA TRUSTED JEHOVAH!) - Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;

Numbers 27:18+ (JOSHUA A SPIRIT FILLED MAN!) So the LORD said to Moses, "Take **Joshua** the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; (FOR CONTEXT READ Nu 27:18-23)

Deuteronomy 3:21+ "I commanded **Joshua** at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 22 'Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.'

Deuteronomy 31:7+ Then Moses called to **Joshua** and said to him **in the sight of all Israel**, "**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and **you shall give it to them as an inheritance**.

Joshua 24:29+ (JOSHUA BEGAN AS A **SERVANT** [sharath] OF MOSES THE **SERVANT** ['ebed] OF THE LORD AND ENDS HIMSELF AS "THE **SERVANT** ['ebed; Lxx = doulos] OF THE LORD.") - It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, **the servant of the LORD**, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

#### RELATED RESOURCES:

- [Who was Joshua the high priest? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Joshua in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was the Joshua in Zechariah 3:1-10? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Whyte's Bible Characters - Joshua](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Joshua](#)
- American Tract Society [Joshua](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Joshua, Book of Joshua the Son of Nun](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Joshua, Theology of](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Joshua, the Book of oshua](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Joshua, the Book of Joshua](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Joshua, the Book of Joshua](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Joshua](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Joshua](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Joshua \(1\) Joshua \(2 - main discussion\)](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Joshua](#)

**Servant (05650)** ('**ebed** from '**abad** = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant, and is a title of humility for someone in a position of lower authority or stature (whether in relationship to people or to God). Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). **Summary** - 1) slave, servant 1a) slave, servant, man-servant 1b) subjects 1c) servants, worshippers (of God) 1d) servant (in special sense as prophets, Levites etc) 1e) servant (of Israel) 1f) servant (as form of address between equals) **Uses of ebed in Joshua** - Jos. 1:1; Jos. 1:2; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 5:14; Jos. 8:31; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 9:8; Jos. 9:9; Jos. 9:11; Jos. 9:23; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 12:6; Jos. 13:8; Jos. 14:7; Jos. 18:7; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 24:17; Jos. 24:29;

**Servant (08334)** (**sharath**) basically means to minister to or wait on another, human or divine. Those who so minister are usually human beings, but may include the heavenly host (Ps 103:21) or even the nonhuman (pS 104:4). **(1) personal service** rendered to important person, usually ruler - Joseph to imprisoned officials (Gen 39:4; 40:4); Joshua to Moses (Ex 24:13; Josh 1:1); Elisha to Elijah and the youth to Elisha (1Ki 19:21; 2Ki 4:43; 6:15); the Levites to Aaron (Num 3:6; 13:2) and the congregation of Israel (16:9) and **(2) ministry of worship** of those in special relationship to God, eg priests (2/3's of uses are in this category). In royal contexts, **sharath** has reference to personal attendants (2 Sa 13:17-18; 1 Kgs 1:4; 10:5; 2Chr 22:8; Xerxes in Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:3; cf. Ps

101:6). Occasionally, the word is used of political or military officials (1 Chron 27:1; 28:1; 2 Chron 17:19; cf. Prov 29:12). The verb, therefore, has to do with serving a superior by one of lower rank. The service is continuous but limited in duration. It is the service of free people, not slaves. The first two uses describe Joseph as servant, first to Potiphar (Ge 39:4) and then over other prisoners (including the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt - Ge 40:4).

**Sharath** is a title of subservience, of submission to authority. Joshua was called the "sharath" of Moses and spent 40 years under Moses' leadership learning how to obey as a servant, as a man under discipline, before he commanded as a general. He was first a servant, and then God made him a leader.

**Frethelm** - Ministering associated with the worship of Yahweh. These texts have to do with specific responsibilities of priests (1 Kgs 8:11), Levites (1 Chron 6:32 [17]), and others (Samuel, 1 Sam 2:11, 18) in Israel's life of worship. The idea of serving God with one's whole self and life is not implied in this vb. as it is with עָבַד (but note the parallel with "servant" in Isa 56:6 [cf. 61:6], where something approaching the "priesthood of all believers" may be entailed in this vision of the future).

What this ministry entails is at times more closely specified. The Levites are "to make petition; to give thanks, and to praise the LORD" (1 Chron 16:4; cf. 2 Chron 5:13–14; 8:14); the sons of Aaron are to present "an offering made to the LORD by fire" (Exod 30:20; cf. 28:35, 43), for which ministry various appurtenances are set apart (e.g., vestments, Exod 39:1; Ezek 42:14; cf. Num 4:9; utensils, Num 4:12, 14; Jer 52:18). The activities of the priests in a service of communal lament are specified in Joel (Joel 1:9, 13; 2:17). More generally, it meant caring for the place of worship (Num 1:50) and its furnishings (3:31; cf. 1 Sam 3:1; 2 Kgs 25:14). False ministry is also possible (Ezek 20:32; 44:12).

One phrase used (with varying formulations) is "to minister to God" (Deut 10:8; 17:12; 18:5, 7; 21:5; 1 Chron 15:2; 23:13; 2 Chron 13:10; 29:11). These texts have a personal note to their understanding of service; it is a ministering directed to and on behalf of God himself, not just the places and objects associated with divine worship. This ministry is also in the service of the congregation (Num 16:3; Ezek 44:11). In some sense, God has chosen to be dependent on such persons for this activity; hence, they could be considered divine assistants, from which activity both God and people benefit as their relationship is enhanced.

In the vision of the restored temple, Ezekiel 44–45 makes a distinction between the ministry of the Levites (more general oversight of the temple, 44:11–14; cf. Num 8:26; Jer 33:21–22) and that of the descendants of Zadok (ministry at the altar, Ezek 44:15–27). In the vision of Isaiah 56–66, foreigners will minister to God (56:6, parallel to "servant"), yet Israel, in contrast to foreigners, shall be "named ministers of our God" (61:6; cf. 60:7, 10), parallel to "priests of the LORD." ([NIDOTTE](#))

**Austel** adds that "The high rank of the servant designated by this verb and the special relationship in which he stands in respect to his master is seen in Gen 39:4. Here Joseph was put over all the affairs of Potiphar's estate, and in vv. 8 and 9 Joseph was able to say that Potiphar did not concern himself with anything in the house. He left it all to Joseph's care, nothing being withheld from him except Potiphar's wife. In II Chr 22:8, king Ahaziah's nephews stand as ministers (mēšārētīm) to Ahaziah. These men would obviously not be menials. In Est 2:2 the king's attendants stand in a relationship close enough so that they have his ear and are able to make suggestions which the king follows. Elisha's personal servant was designated a mēšārēt "minister" (II Kgs 4:43; 6:15). Elisha himself, when he was first called to be a prophet, stood in this relationship to Elijah (I Kgs 19:21). Joshua was Moses' chief assistant (Ex 24:13; 33:11; Josh 1:1). Later, as was the case with Elisha, he succeeded his former master. **The second category** involves mostly the Levites and priests who served in the tabernacle, and later the temple (in one passage, Ps 103:21, the angelic hosts are so designated). In a number of passages their service is specifically related to the sanctuary. Thus Ex 28:35 speaks of Aaron's ministry in the holy place, and v. 43 speaks of Aaron's sons as they minister at the altar (cf. Joel 1:13). The Levites were also so designated. I Chr 6:17 and 16:4, 37 speak of their ministry in song, worship, and praise. Samuel, in I Sam 2:11, 18 and 3:1, serves in the tabernacle as Eli's assistant. The special status of the priest was not merely one of ritual or ceremony. He had the grave responsibility of representing the people before God, and it was through his ministry that Israel had access to God. He also stood before the people as God's official representative. As such they settled disputes among individuals (Deut 2:15), and in Deut 17:12 God decrees that whoever refuses to heed the priest, God's servant, shall be put to death. Psalm 101:6 is an important reminder that he who would dwell in God's presence and serve him must walk blamelessly before him. This obviously goes far beyond mere ritual purity. Eventually the whole nation of Israel, not only one tribe, will serve God as his priests (Isa 61:6), thus fulfilling their calling as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex 19:6). Beyond that, the addition even of gentiles to this privileged class is anticipated in Isa 56:6–9. It should be noted here that they humbly recognize themselves as lowly servants (‘ebed), but they love the

name of the Lord and will minister to him. ([TWOT](#))

**Sharath** - 92 verses - assist(1), attendant(4), attended(2), became his personal servant(1), minister(26), ministered(4), ministering(15), ministers(17), personal servant(1), servant(1), servant(2), serve(11), served(6), service(1), serving(1), take care(1), took care(1), used in temple service(2), waiters(1). Gen. 39:4; Gen. 40:4; Exod. 24:13; Exod. 28:35; Exod. 28:43; Exod. 29:30; Exod. 30:20; Exod. 33:11; Exod. 35:19; Exod. 39:1; Exod. 39:26; Exod. 39:41; Num. 1:50; Num. 3:6; Num. 3:31; Num. 4:9; Num. 4:12; Num. 4:14; Num. 8:26; Num. 11:28; Num. 16:9; Num. 18:2; Deut. 10:8; Deut. 17:12; Deut. 18:5; Deut. 18:7; Deut. 21:5; Jos. 1:1; 1 Sam. 2:11; 1 Sam. 2:18; 1 Sam. 3:1; 2 Sam. 13:17; 2 Sam. 13:18; 1 Ki. 1:4; 1 Ki. 1:15; 1 Ki. 8:11; 1 Ki. 10:5; 1 Ki. 19:21; 2 Ki. 4:43; 2 Ki. 6:15; 2 Ki. 25:14; 1 Chr. 6:32; 1 Chr. 15:2; 1 Chr. 16:4; 1 Chr. 16:37; 1 Chr. 23:13; 1 Chr. 26:12; 1 Chr. 27:1; 1 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 5:14; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 9:4; 2 Chr. 13:10; 2 Chr. 17:19; 2 Chr. 22:8; 2 Chr. 23:6; 2 Chr. 29:11; 2 Chr. 31:2; Ezr. 8:17; Neh. 10:36; Neh. 10:39; Est. 1:10; Est. 2:2; Est. 6:3; Ps. 101:6; Ps. 103:21; Ps. 104:4; Prov. 29:12; Isa. 56:6; Isa. 60:7; Isa. 60:10; Isa. 61:6; Jer. 33:21; Jer. 33:22; Jer. 52:18; Ezek. 20:32; Ezek. 40:46; Ezek. 42:14; Ezek. 43:19; Ezek. 44:11; Ezek. 44:12; Ezek. 44:15; Ezek. 44:16; Ezek. 44:17; Ezek. 44:19; Ezek. 44:27; Ezek. 45:4; Ezek. 45:5; Ezek. 46:24; Joel 1:9; Joel 1:13; Joel 2:17

JOSHUA 1:1-9 "TABLE OF CONTENTS" FOR THE ENTIRE BOOK OF JOSHUA	
PASSAGE	CORRESPONDS TO
<b>Joshua 1:2–5</b> arise, go over this Jordan...into the land that I am giving... to the people of Israel"	<b>Joshua 1:10–12:24</b> Israel conquers Canaan
<b>Joshua 1:6</b> you shall cause this people to inherit the land"	<b>Joshua 13–21</b> Israel's inheritance distributed
<b>Joshua 1:7–9</b> "be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law	<b>Joshua 22–24</b> Covenant renewal

**Adrian Rogers** introduces his series on the book of Joshua declaring that "God has given to every one of us a possession, and that possession is victory. Every Christian has victory as a gift. Every Christian is to be living a victorious life. Every Christian is to be an overcomer (1Jn 5:4-5+).... God has given to you victory, and if you're not living a victorious life—I mean, right now, if you're not living a victorious life—you, sir; you, lady; you, young person, are living beneath your privileges. And, while the Bible admits the possibility of failure, it never assumes the necessity of failure. As a matter of fact, the Bible says we're to always triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). And, the Book of Joshua is a book that is written to show us how we might have the victory that our Lord wants us to have.

**Guzik** - Biblically, the land over the Jordan—the Promised Land—does not speak of heaven. Hebrews 3–4 shows Canaan as a picture of the rest and victory that can be enjoyed by every believer. In this sense, F. B. Meyer connects the Book of Joshua with the Book of Ephesians. Both describe a spiritual walk of promise, wealth, and victory that are ours with Jesus. This also shows that the deliverance from Egypt was only in preparation for the enjoyment of Canaan. In our Christian life, we are brought out of sin so that we might be brought in to abundant life. The wilderness is never God's permanent destination for us. Even as an entire generation of Israel died in the wilderness, so many Christians die in the desert dryness of spiritual experience, never walking in the fullness of what God has for them.

**THOUGHT** - Are you in the wilderness beloved? You do not have to remain there!

**Richard Hess** has a variation on Joshua 1:1-9 as a summary of the entire book writing

"This text [Josh 1:2–5] summarizes the book. Verse 2 describes the crossing of the Jordan as found in Josh 1:1–5:12. Josh 1:3 outlines the 'conquest' of Josh 5:13–12:24. Verse 4 implies the distribution of the land in

Josh 13:1–22:34. The emphasis on all the days of Joshua's life in Josh 1:5 is found at the end of Joshua's life in the final two chapters of the book. These verses also introduce the character of the LORD God of Israel. He is one of the main actors in the book. Here he reveals himself through his promises on behalf of Joshua and Israel." ([Joshua - Tyndale Old Testament](#))

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**INAPPROPRIATE APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE** - Below is an example two Hymns which interpret crossing Jordan River as death and entrance into Canaan as into Heaven. Beautiful hymns but not beautiful theology! Note the line " **Land me safe on Canaan's side**". Israel was hardly "safe" on Canaan's side, for the land was filled with godless, idolatrous pagans who had to be defeated in battle. Canaan is better seen as a picture of the spiritual warfare of the believer on earth and before Heaven.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more,  
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through;  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
Be Thou still my strength and shield,  
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

**When I tread the verge of Jordan,**  
**Bid my anxious fears subside;**  
**Death of death and hell's destruction,**  
**Land me safe on Canaan's side;**  
**Songs of praises, songs of praises**  
I will ever give to Thee,  
I will ever give to Thee.

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#### **HERE'S ANOTHER EXAMPLE**

**On Jordan's Stormy Banks**  
**by Samuel Stenett**

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land where my possessions lie  
I am bound for the promised land, I am bound for the promised land.  
When shall I reach that happy place and be forever blest?  
When shall I see my Father's face and in His bosom rest?  
I am bound for the promised land, I am bound for the promised land."

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#### **Swing Low, Sweet Chariot go:**

I looked over **Jordan**, and what did I see  
Comin' for to carry me home?  
A band of angels, comin' after me  
Comin' for to carry me home.

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#### [Introduction from Paul Apple](#)

#### **OVERVIEW**

Spiritual Victory is the great theme of the Book of Joshua as God fulfills His covenant promise to lead Abraham's descendants into possession of the promised land of Canaan despite tremendous obstacles and

powerful enemies. The people under Joshua's leadership needed to engage the enemy by trusting fully in the Lord and turning away from sin. The distribution of the conquered land reminds us of the spiritual rest that comes to God's people as they enjoy the blessings of victory. This account stands in contrast to the Book of Numbers which highlighted the failure and the wandering in the wilderness of a people who did not inherit the blessing because of unbelief. Consecration is the essential preparation for spiritual conflict. Victory gained must still be maintained by an ongoing commitment of faith and obedience.

## **BIG IDEA**

Claiming God's promises for spiritual victory requires engaging and conquering the enemy by grace through faith.

Joshua 3:5 *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."*

## **BASIC OUTLINE**

### **I. (Joshua 1:1 – 5:15) ENGAGING THE ENEMY -- ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND**

- A. (Joshua 1:1-18) Commission to Go to War – Transition from Moses to Joshua
- B. (Joshua 2:1-24) Avoiding the Grasshopper Mentality – The Mission of the Two Spies
- C. (Joshua 3:1-17) Avoiding the Victim Mentality – Crossing the Jordan
- D. (Joshua 4:1-24) Avoiding the Bigshot Mentality – Commemorating Spiritual Milestones
- E. (Joshua 5:1-15) First Things First – Stepping Out in Faith Requires Submission to the Sign of the Covenant

### **II. (Joshua 6:1 – 12:24) ELIMINATING THE ENEMY – TAKING POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND**

- A. (Joshua 6:1-27) Faith Celebrates Victory Before the Walls Even Fall
- B. (Joshua 7:1-26) Sin Snatches Defeat From the Jaws of Victory
- C. (Joshua 8:1-35) Regaining Lost Ground – the Spirit Succeeds Where the Flesh Failed
- D. (Joshua 9:1-27) Rash Commitments – Deception Takes Advantage of Our Limited Perception
  - Spiritual Victory is Compromised When We Make Rash Commitments Apart from Seeking the Guidance of the Lord
- E. (Joshua 10:1-27) Unlimited Divine Weapons and Resources –
  - We Can Rout Our Enemies By Relying on the Lord's Unlimited Weapons and Resources
- F. (Joshua 11:1-15) Victory in Obedience to the Lord's Commands
  - God Provides the Victory When We Obey His Commands by Taking Courage and Taking Action in Faith
- G. (Joshua 11:16 – 12:24) Summary of the Victorious Campaigns

### **III. (Joshua 13:1 – 22:34) EARMARKING THE PROMISED LAND FOR ITS DIVINELY INTENDED PURPOSE – DISTRIBUTING IT AMONG THE VARIOUS TRIBES**

- A. (13:1-7) Joshua's Final Clean-Up Instructions From the Lord – Specific Areas of Canaan Still Needed to be Conquered and Possessed
- B. (Joshua 13:8-33) Earmarking Land for the Eastern Tribes (Reubenites and Gadites) -- Transjordan
- C. (Joshua 14:1 – 19:51) Earmarking Land for the Western Tribes
- D. (Joshua 20:1-9) Designation of the 6 Cities of Refuge
- E. (Joshua 21:1-45) Designation of the 48 Levitical Cities
- F. (Joshua 22:1-34) Dismissal of Eastern Tribes Back to Their Homes

### **IV. (Joshua 23:1 – 24:33) EXHORTING THE NATION OF ISRAEL ONE FINAL TIME TO CONTINUED COVENANT OBEDIENCE**

- A. (Joshua 23:1-16) Farewell Charge from Joshua – Call to Covenant Obedience
- B. (Joshua 24:1-28) Final Review of Covenant History at Shechem
- C. (Joshua 24:29-33) Epilogue – Association of Joshua's Burial with those of Joseph and Eleazar –

## WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To understand the intensity of the spiritual warfare of the believer (both as an individual and corporately as a local church) and what faith steps we need to take to successfully engage the enemy and overcome all obstacles
- To consecrate our hearts and then develop a commitment to courage and obedience in following the Lord's battle plan
- To appreciate that God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ as we step out in faith and trust Him rather than in our own resources
- To learn lessons about spiritual leadership
- To grow in our confidence that God is faithful to keep His promises
- To take our sin seriously in the light of the holiness of God who cannot compromise with sin
- To acknowledge God's sovereignty over all the nations and over all the forces that would oppose His kingdom agenda
- To expect God to accomplish great things

## NOTABLE QUOTES

**Dale Ralph Davis:** The Book of Joshua contains at least four important theological themes which have practical values for today. First, the book is a lesson on the covenant faithfulness of Jehovah. The power of God was not only declared in covenant agreement, but also demonstrated. Secondly, the book demonstrates the importance of the written word of God (Josh. 1:8; 8:32-35; 23:6-16; 24:26-27). There was an authoritative body of written Scripture in the days of Joshua and this consisted of the books of Moses. There is no appeal to contemporary customs or oral tradition. Thirdly, the book points out the utter failure of human effort apart from divine directives. When Joshua and the children of Israel were faithful to God's word and His will, there was victory. When they abandoned His will in favor of their own genius, there was failure and frustration. Finally, the book is a commentary of God's holiness and His judgment of sin. The destruction of the cities of Canaan with their inhabitants was not merely to give Israel military control of the area, but it was, in effect, a judgment of God upon the wickedness of that land (cf. Gen. 15:16; Deut. 7:5-6). ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

**John MacArthur:** A keynote feature is God's faithfulness to fulfill His promise of giving the Land to Abraham's descendants (Ge 12:7; 15:18-21; 17:8). By His leading (cf. Joshua 5:14-6:2), they inhabited the territories E and W of the Jordan, and so the word "possess" appears nearly 20 times.....God wanted His people to possess the Land:

- 1) to keep His promise (Ge 12:7);
- 2) to set the stage for later developments in His kingdom plan (cf. Ge 17:8; 49:8-12), e.g., positioning Israel for events in the periods of the kings and prophets;
- 3) to punish peoples that were an affront to Him because of extreme sinfulness (Lev 18:25); and
- 4) to be a testimony to other peoples (Jos 2:9-11+, cf Josh 4:24+), as God's covenant heart reached out to all nations (Ge 12:1-3).

**John Rea:** The very name "Joshua," the Hebrew form of Jesus, means "Jehovah is salvation." Thus the redemptive history of Israel's entering and possessing Canaan illustrates the Christian's spiritual experience of conflict, victory, and blessing in heavenly spheres through the mighty power of God. In Hebrews 4 the rest in Canaan from vain wilderness strivings is set forth as typical of our present spiritual rest in the finished work of Christ and in his continual intercession to enable us to conquer self and Satan.

**Warren Wiersbe:** The leading person in the Book of Joshua is not Joshua but the Lord Jehovah, the God of Joshua and of Israel. In all that Joshua did by faith, he desired to glorify the Lord. When the Jews crossed the Jordan River, Joshua reminded them that the living God was among them and would overcome their enemies (Josh. 3:10). Through Israel's obedience, Joshua wanted all the people of the earth to know the Lord and fear Him (Joshua 4:23-24). In his "farewell addresses" to the leaders (Joshua 23) and to the nation (Joshua 24), Joshua gave God all the glory for what Israel had accomplished under his leadership.

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**Wilkinson and Boa** feel that "The theme of Joshua is Israel's possession of the Promised Land and enjoyment of God's blessings through obedient faith.....Theologically, Joshua teaches that victory and blessing come through obedience and trust in God. Active faith leads to obedience which in turn brings blessing. God required the people to attempt the impossible in submission to His



directions before He made it possible for them to succeed. The book emphasizes God's covenant faithfulness to His promises regarding a land for Israel, and God's holiness in bringing judgment upon the immoral Canaanites." (Talk Thru the Bible)

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**William Newell's introduction to Joshua**- We have before us now a book of great delight to the spiritual Christian. All through the Christian centuries Joshua has yielded priceless treasures to those saints who have been overcomers " (Rev. 2-3). For those who have been content merely to get to heaven, this book has not, perhaps, presented any special attractions; but those who have been warrior-saints, who were determined to reign with Christ at whatever cost (Ro 8:17; 2Ti 2:12; Rev 2:26, 27), have ever found a very fortress of strength in this wonderful book. **No book is more full of encouragement, wisdom and invigoration for the spiritual soldier.** This land to be possessed, these deadly enemies, the conditions of successful occupation, the Jordan crossing, the successive conflicts, the division of the land --- all these things are of intense interest to the instructed Christian mind. New and deeper meanings are ever unfolded from these simple stories to those who have learned their true position in the risen Christ, and what their own real conflict is and feel their need of instruction and equipment for it. It is our humble hope that some may be led through these lessons to recognize these spiritual treasures in the book of Joshua, and to enter upon their appropriation.

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**John Huffman** - Joshua is one of the most fascinating books in the Bible. At one level, it relates the story of an ancient Hebrew leader and the people whom God called him to lead into the Promised Land. At another level, it's a personal story. It's the story of promise and of the great expectations that God has for us. It's as if God takes on the qualities of the perceptive coach, teacher, or pastor who becomes excited about what we can become if we use the gifts He's given to us. The study of this book helps us see ourselves in this light. It makes us question whether or not we are living up to our potential and God's promise.....The reality is that many of us believers back off from the promises. We live lives of discouragement. Too often we are defeated by temptation, suffering, or the casual blandness of our existence. Joshua models for us—both in the experiences of this Old Testament hero and the complex history of the community he was called to lead into the Promised Land—what it is to flesh out this promise. Joshua helps us see what God is immediately able to do to realize this promise in us. The question is, once we have observed what this involves, are we willing to act upon the promise?(The Preacher's Commentary Series - Volume 6: Joshua)

A lifestyle of promise involves living life with our backs to the past.

--John Huffman

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**Ray Stedman** - The book of Joshua falls into three main divisions. Chapters one through four concern the entrance into the land and all that involves. If you are struggling right now with how to enter into a life of victory with Christ, how to move out of the wilderness of doubt, restless wanderings, and mere subsistence into the full blessing of the Spirit-led experience, then this is the section you ought to be concerned with -- Israel's entrance into the land -- out of the wilderness and into Canaan. Chapters five through twenty-one cover Israel's conquest of the land through many battles and conflicts as they came into the land of promise. Chapters twenty-two through twenty-four, including many passages from Joshua's own lips, set before us the perils and dangers in the land that we must guard against in order to remain in the place of victory that the land represents....The land of Canaan is a picture, as we have mentioned, of the **Spirit-filled life -- the life that God intended for every Christian to live. There are no exceptions to this. The Spirit-filled life is not just for certain advanced saints, but is provided by God for every one of his people.** Beginning in chapter one we have a marvelously descriptive picture of it ([Guidebook to Victory](#))

**Transcribed excerpt from the [mp3](#).** - Some of what Dr Stedman says in his introduction is for some reason **NOT** transcribed in the associated transcript which is too bad. In these opening words there is a most incredible statement from one of the great Bible teachers of the twentieth century and hopefully it will motivate you to listen to the [full 45 minute audio](#) (and not just read the [transcript](#)). Dr Stedman's opening words are especially insightful if you are thinking something like "*O well this is just another one of those archaic Old Testament books and there is really nothing practical for living the Christian life in the twenty-first century.*" If that is your mindset, you need to hear Dr Stedman's opening remarks which hopefully will motivate you to study (or teach or preach) this great Old Testament book. Dr Stedman begins with a question...

"And I wonder how many have been able to read through the book of Joshua today...here are 2 hands! Anyone else? Well, when you meet Joshua up in heaven, you can explain to him why you did not have time. Joshua is the guidebook to victory. What a tremendous book. **I think there is no book in the Bible that is so packed with helpful, practical lessons as the book of Joshua. No book has been more helpful to me in grasping the principles of spiritual life than the book of Joshua and this includes all the books of the New Testament as well!** There's no book that's so challenging in its concepts and so thorough in its analysis of life than this book...if you know how to read it. There's a key of course to the book of Joshua as there is to every book of the Bible. That

key is the pattern given to us in the New Testament, where Paul says "Now these things happened to them as an example (FOR US). What Israel went through in their actual historical experiences become figures, become patterns, metaphors that we can apply to the spiritual battles, the spiritual journey, the pilgrimage on which we are launched and they have an exact and accurate application to us." And if you read the books of the OT with this key in hand, it becomes a very vivid and a very fascinating book. I almost hesitate to begin this survey of the book of Joshua because I am so captured by the lessons involved in so many places through this book that I tend to bog down in details. It's hard to keep going in an overall survey. And I hope you'll bear with me....so that we can get through the book in the time allotted to us, for my tendency is to stop and look more closely at some of these tremendous illustrations of the spiritual life. There are two books of the Old Testament that I would strongly recommend that every Christian master its message. These are two books that I particularly feel every young Christian ought to know. One is the book of Joshua and the other is the book of Daniel for these messages are primarily designed for young Christians as they are engaged in the first full impact in their battle against the world, the flesh and the devil. If you feel the force of the opposing powers; if the tremendous, subtle deceptiveness of the principalities and powers against which we are engaged have come upon you so that you sense that you are in the conflict (Ephesians. 6:12), I urge upon you the book of Joshua and the book of Daniel." ([mp3](#))

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**George Bush ([ONLINE](#) OR [HERE](#)) - Now after the death of Moses, &c.** The literal rendering of the Heb. is, '**And it was (or happened) after the death of Moses, and the Lord spake, &c.**' This rendering discloses more perfectly the use of the copulative '**and**' in the original, which is so employed as to bring this book into **immediate connexion with the foregoing**, and thus makes it a regular continuation of the sacred narrative begun and carried on by Moses in the five preceding books. In like manner the book of Ruth commences with a similar phraseology, ויהי **And it came to pass, &c.**, although it cannot be questioned that there are other instances, as in the opening of the books of Esther and Ezekiel, where the ו cannot have a copulative, but merely a conversive sense; i. e., it converts, according to a peculiarity of the language, the future into the past or preterite sense.—The time referred to at the opening of this book, was probably at the conclusion of the thirty day's mourning for Moses, spoken of Dt. 34:8; or it might have been during that period; in which time also it is the opinion of some commentators that the spies (Josh 2:1) were sent out.

**The servant of the Lord.** A high and honorable title, applied to Moses, not merely in the sense in which it is applied to pious and good men generally, who may justly be styled servants of the Most High, inasmuch as it is the grand aim of their lives to serve and obey him; but in this connexion carrying with it, a reference to the peculiar nature of the service in which Moses was employed, viz., that of a minister, mediator, deputy, or vicegerent of God, the honored organ through whom he communicated his will to his chosen people and managed all their varied interests. It is in this character that he stands so highly commended in the sacred volume, having received the divine testimony to his being 'found faithful in all God's house as a servant,' and being expressly distinguished by this title, not only here, where God himself is pleased so to denominate him, v. 2, but also in Rev. 15:3, where it is said of the company standing upon the sea of glass, that they 'sing the song of Moses the servant of God.' On the sense of ministerial ruling oftentimes involved in the term servant, see Note Gen. 24:2.

**The Lord spake unto Joshua, &c.** The name of this illustrious leader of Israel appears in a somewhat different form in several different connexions in which it occurs. In Num. 13:16, we are informed that 'Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua,' where the original is in the first instance הושע hoshēa, the same name with that of the Prophet Hosea, and in the second יהושע yehoshua, having the first letter of 'Jehovah' (יהוה) appended. The first of these the Gr. of the Sept. represents by Αυση, Ausē, the other by Ιησους Jesus. The Hebrew root of the name has the import of salvation, and from this the sense of Saviour has been transferred into the Greek Ιησους, Jesus. In Neh. 8:17, we have still another form; ישוע yeshua, Jeshua, where the Gr. preserves the usual form Ιησους Jesus. It was doubtless from this current usage of the Septuagint that the New Testament writers have in two instances applied to Joshua the name of the Saviour, of whom he was undoubtedly an eminent type. The first is Acts 7:45, 'Which also our fathers, that came after, brought in with Jesus,' i. e. Joshua. The other is Heb. 4:8, 'For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.' This change of names, in the case of various Scripture personages, appears to have been governed by a change of relations, either to God or to man, as in the case of Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Daniel, Paul, and others. See Note on Gen. 17:5. Of the manner of the communication now made to Joshua, we are not expressly informed. From the fact that Moses and Joshua, just before the death of the former, were summoned together into the 'tabernacle of the congregation,' Deut. 31:14, that the dying charge of Moses might be given to his successor, it seems highly probable that the instructions and encouragements imparted on this occasion were delivered from the same place.

**Moses' minister.** Heb. משרת משה meshâreth Moshēh, he that served, or ministered to, Moses. The original שרת shâreth, to minister, is used with the accusative of the person ministered to, and is found for the most part in those connexions, where the

service of God is spoken of, especially that which was rendered by the Priests and Levites. Joshua was Moses' minister in the sense of an immediate attendant, one who waited upon his person, and assisted him in business; one of whose services he availed himself in a variety of ways, as Elisha, of those of Gehazi. In Deut. 1:38, it is expressed by a different, but equivalent phrase *העמד לפניך* *hâomêd lepânêkâ*, who standeth before thee, a usual mode of expressing the idea of ministration. The word is rendered in some copies of the Greek, *πρεπγος*, an under-workman, in others, *θερπων*, one that waits, attends upon, ministers to. Previous to the death of Moses, Joshua had been specially designated to the office which he is now called to assume, Deut. 1:38; 31:3, 6–8; and for which he was peculiarly qualified by his long familiarity with Moses, and by the training which he would naturally receive in the station occupied under him. An humble and devoted spirit, a willingness to serve God in the meanest employments, is the best preparative, and often the surest precursor to posts of honor and dignity in the church. Wherever this is the case, no previous lowliness or obscurity of origin is, in God's sight, an obstacle to advancement. Persons of this character are often surprised to look back, and see from what small beginnings they have been raised step by step, under the guidance of Providence, to stations of the most extensive influence and usefulness.

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### Irving Jensen - Applying the Message of Joshua Today

Like the other historical books of the Old Testament, Joshua has much to say about who God is, and what man is like, with emphasis on the former. God is shown to be holy, almighty, sovereign, just, full of mercy, a designer of order, worthy of worship, and a rewarder of those who fear and obey Him. These and other truths of the character and works of God are profusely illustrated throughout the book of Joshua.

What makes Joshua so practical for the Christian is that its major application concerns the Christian's pursuit of that abundant life which Christ talked about when He said, **"I have come for people to have life and have it till it overflows"** (John 10:10, Charles B. Williams translation). Israel dwelling in the rest-land of Canaan is a vivid type of the Christian living in intimate relationship to Christ, abiding in Him (John 15:4-5), and being filled with His joy (John 15:11, Eph 5:18, Gal 5:22-23, Ro 15:13). The Christian's rest is a peace that comes out of victory over the soul's enemies, through the power and help of God (Heb. 4:9–10).

The story of Joshua is the story of God's people driving the enemies out of Canaan, so that they might take the promised land inheritance, and make their dwelling place there. The Israelites were promised all the land, but would possess only what they would appropriate and receive from God. This Joshua made very clear when he said to the people, "Go in to possess the land, which Jehovah your God giveth you" (Joshua 1:11). For the Christian, the blessings of abiding in Christ originate in the divine act of regeneration, but are contingent upon the Christian's diligence to enter into that abiding life (Heb. 4:11). (ED: Since the victory belongs to the Lord, our diligence is enabled by His Spirit in us giving us the desire and power to pursue diligence - Php 2:13NLT+. Yes, we must fight our own "Canaanites," but never forget the parallel truth that God fights for us - we see this juxtaposition of [100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#) in Romans 8:13b+)

But the foes of Israel were many and formidable. Whether it was a flooded river to cross, a strong fortress to destroy, or an alliance of armies to conquer, the entrance and possession were impossible—without God. But God was with Israel, and God fought for Israel, and this made the difference. How very vital for the Christian intent on having God's best to learn that the enemies (so many!) of his soul are not driven out by his impotent efforts, well intended as they may be, but by God's devastating dynamite; not by the arm of flesh, but by the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11-18).

When Israel's major campaigns were over, the newly gained land was divided among the tribes. Now it was the Israelites' task to maintain and multiply the blessings of dwelling in the place given by God. It was no easy task, but the Israelites were enlightened as to how to accomplish it: in the same manner by which they secured the land in the first place. Thus the reader of Joshua will see on every page illustrations of God's conditions for the Christian's securing, maintaining, and multiplying the blessings of the rest promised by Jesus, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28-30). ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

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**Alan Redpath** - I would suggest that the clue to the interpretation of this Old Testament book is found in the epistle to the Ephesians and in the epistle to the Hebrews. For example, in the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews we find that the land of Canaan is a picture of the spiritual rest and victory which may be enjoyed here on earth by every believer, a rest of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the Ephesian letter speaks of life "in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:6) – not in heaven, but in the experience of oneness with our Risen Lord in His victory here and now, the place of the fullness of God's blessing. I believe that we shall understand the real significance of the book of Joshua only if we recognize that what it is in the Old Testament the epistle to the Ephesians is in the New. This suggestion, of course, has to be substantiated from the Word of God itself. Therefore, as in this opening chapter we survey the book and its meaning as a whole, I want you to think of the analogy between the land of Canaan and the land of full salvation which is the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all, we realize that Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people. When He appeared to Moses in the burning

bush, He pledged Himself not only to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, but also to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. In other words, the deliverance from Egypt was only in preparation for the enjoyment of Canaan. The passover, the shedding of the blood, the crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's hosts, all would have been useless unless they led to the place of rest in Canaan. Furthermore, it was only by possession of the land of Canaan that the promise of God to Abraham could be fulfilled....The foundation of our faith – regeneration and justification – are deeply laid in order that they may carry the superstructure of sanctification and holiness....**Yet is it not true that the majority of Christians come far short, and are content with a wilderness experience – justified, but not enjoying the possession of all their inheritance in Christ**" (ED: DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE?)

Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it **ED: NOTE - NOT THAT WE CAN WORK TO MERIT IT - WE ENTERED BY GRACE, STAND BY GRACE AND POSSESS BY GRACE - HIS POWER MYSTERIOUSLY SYNERGISTIC WITH OUR EFFORTS, OUR RESPONSIBILITY).** . . . He desires every one of His children to press in against all the assaults of the enemy, that we may lay hold of that which is our inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that every foe we shall ever meet in that battle already has been met and conquered by our Joshua (cf Jn 16:33, Gal 6:14+, Heb 2:14-15, Ro 6:5-6, et al - see discussion of HOW TO HAVE VICTORY IN EVERY SPIRITUAL BATTLE). **Therefore, from these analogies which I have drawn I think you will see that this book of Joshua will open up for us what will be, to many people, new areas in God's plan of redemption for us all, new possibilities of spiritual victory, new secrets of the way of blessing.** This book of Joshua will cease to be, if indeed it is now to any of my readers, a mere record of historic events, and will become a revelation of what God can do in and through the life that is utterly yielded to Him (AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY OBEDIENT TO HIM).

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**ILLUSTRATION** Crossing a border security check point can be intimidating. On one such trip, while passing through Frankfurt, Germany, I was asked to show my identification. The security officer flipped through the pages of my passport, shook her head sternly, and handed it back to me. "I can't let you in," she declared. "There is nowhere left to stamp." My stomach dipped. Frantically, I paged through the booklet and was relieved to discover one empty space. One little thing had almost sabotaged my trip and kept me from crossing the border.

I wonder how many of us, spiritually, are kept on this side of the border, away from where God wants us to be? I encounter many believers who are stuck in a spiritual desert. God has set you free, but you've never crossed the border. You are exhausted, anxious, failing to experience the spiritual rest that God has promised His children (Hebrews 4).

In Joshua, the Israelites were waiting at the border of the Promised Land, the place God had prepared for them. Free from slavery in Egypt, they followed Moses into the desert. But because of their disobedience and unbelief, the journey was long and arduous. Unwilling to trust God, they found themselves stuck in a place they didn't want to be, unable to enter the Promised Land for 40 years. This land was the fulfillment of God's promises to His people, giving them expanded territory (Josh 1:3, 4), victory over their opponents (Josh 1:5), His close companionship, strength, and courage (Josh 1:6). What was required of them? To be strong and courageous, obedient to God's Law, with a laser-focus on Him (Josh 1:7-9). But they were stuck; and we can get stuck also. **We are often reluctant to step out in faith when God calls us, and this delayed obedience is always disobedience.** Friend, if you hear God calling you, do not harden your heart. The author of Hebrews challenges us to follow God out of the desert and into His promises: "Since the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it" (Heb. 4:1). Stepping forward in faith, we can live out the truth of our salvation, follow Him in obedience, and enter His abundant rest. (Dr. John Koessler)

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#### QUESTION - [Who is the Servant of the Lord in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - A servant is someone who carries out the will of another. The Servant of the Lord fulfills God's will and is often presented in Scripture as someone chosen by God to hold a leadership position, to represent Him, and to accomplish a certain divine work. In the Bible, the term *Servant of the Lord* has been applied to individual people, certain groups of people, the nation of Israel, and the Messiah, who is identified as Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

The book of Isaiah contains four "[Servant Songs](#)" describing the Servant of the Lord. The first is found in Isaiah 42:1-9; the second in Isaiah 49:1-13; the third in Isaiah 50:4-11; and the fourth in Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12. In Jewish tradition, the Servant of the Lord in all four passages refers to the nation of Israel. In the final Servant Song of Isaiah 53, a singular pronoun *he* is used for the Servant of the Lord. Rabbis understand this singular pronoun to be a collective reference to a faithful remnant of Israel, a personification treating the group as one person.

The New Testament clearly identifies the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah as our Savior, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This unique Servant takes a preeminent place above all others in Scripture. This perfect Servant never fails to accomplish the will of the Lord and the purposes of God (John 17:5). The final Servant Song (Isaiah 53) is about an innocent [Suffering Servant](#) who dies in place of the

guilty. That passage foretells the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:3 says about the Servant of the Lord, “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.” Jesus was despised by the religious people of His day and rejected as their [Messiah](#).

Jesus Christ, the Servant of the Lord, was “pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). In giving His life for us, “he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth” (verse 7). At His trial, Jesus did not defend Himself but remained silent against His accusers. He suffered and died in the place of guilty sinners. The sins of all people were placed upon Him, the sacrificial Lamb of God. Jesus paid the price for our salvation. These are just a few of many details in Isaiah 53 that point to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy (Matthew 8:17; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:32–33; Romans 10:16; 1 Peter 2:22, 24–25).

When God the Son came to earth, He took on the role of a servant. The Creator chose to serve His creatures. Jesus said that He had come “to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). In the book of Acts, the word *servant* is applied to Jesus four times in connection with His death (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30 ). The humility of Jesus, the Servant of the Lord, is unmistakably seen in Philippians 2:7–8: “He gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross” (NLT).

While Jesus the Messiah is the ultimate fulfillment of prophecies concerning the Servant of the Lord, the Bible also applies the title to others. In the Old Testament, God describes about fifteen different individuals as “My servant” or “the servant of the Lord.”

The patriarchs are often named as servants of the Lord: “Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever’” (Exodus 32:13; see also Genesis 18:3; 32:10; Deuteronomy 9:27; 1 Chronicles 16:13; Psalm 105:6). God called Job His servant: “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job?’” (Job 1:8; cf. Job 2:3 and Job 42:7–8).

[Moses](#) is repeatedly called the servant of the Lord: “And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said” (Deuteronomy 34:5; see also Exodus 14:31; Numbers 12:7–8; Joshua 1:1–2; Nehemiah 1:7–8; Malachi 4:4). Significantly, Moses told the people that “the LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him” (Deuteronomy 18:15). This messianic prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, who, like Moses, was “the servant of the Lord” but in an even greater way (see Acts 3:22 and Hebrews 3:3).

The Bible describes leaders like Caleb, Joshua, and Samson as servants of the Lord (Numbers 14:24; Joshua 5:14; 24:29; Judges 2:8; 15:18). David, Solomon, and Hezekiah are kings referred to as the Lord’s servants (Psalm 89:20; 1 Samuel 23:11; 2 Samuel 7:5; 1 Chronicles 17:4; 1 Kings 3:7–9; 14:8; 2 Chronicles 32:16). Prophets such as Ahijah, Elijah, Jonah, and Isaiah are also called servants of the Lord (1 Kings 14:18; 18:36; 2 Kings 14:25; Isaiah 20:3).

Samuel’s mother, [Hannah](#), describes herself as a servant of the Lord in 1 Samuel 1:11. Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, is described as a servant of the Lord in Haggai 2:23. Even the pagan kings Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus are named among the servants of the Lord in that they fulfilled the purposes of God (Jeremiah 25:9; 43:10; Isaiah 45:1).

Groups referred to as servants of the Lord in the Bible are the people of Israel (Isaiah 41:8–9; 43:10; Leviticus 25:42,55; Nehemiah 1:6,10; Jeremiah 30:10–11; 46:27–28; Luke 1:54), the priests (Exodus 28:1, 41; Leviticus 7:35; Numbers 18:7), the Levites (Deuteronomy 18:7; 1 Chronicles 23:28–31; Ezra 6:18; Ezekiel 44:11), and the prophets (Jeremiah 7:25; 29:19; 44:4; Ezekiel 38:17; Daniel 9:6; Amos 3:7; Zechariah 1:6; Matthew 21:34–36; Mark 12:2–5; Luke 20:10–12; Revelation 10:7). Other nations are also called the Lord’s servants on occasion (Psalm 72:11; Isaiah 56:6; Zephaniah 3:9).

In the New Testament, several believers define themselves or are named by God as servants of the Lord. They include Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:38, 48), Simeon (Luke 2:29), Paul (Acts 27:2; Romans 1:1; Ephesians 3:1), James (James 1:1), Simon Peter (2 Peter 1:1), Jude (Jude 1), and John ([Revelation 1:GotQuestions.org](#))

**Joshua 1:2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore **arise, cross** this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.**



- **arise:** Nu 27:16-21 De 3:28 Dt 31:7
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 12:7+ (THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND!) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Numbers 20:12+ (MOSES FORBIDDEN TO ENTER PROMISED LAND) But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Deuteronomy 2:24 '**Arise** (command) , set out, and pass through the valley of Arnon. Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand; begin to take possession and contend with him in battle.

Deuteronomy 10:11 "Then the LORD said to me, '**Arise** (command), proceed on your journey ahead of the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'

### GOD COMMANDS TO CROSS TO POSSESS

Moses was forbidden to enter Palestine because of his unbelief in striking the rock for water (see Nu. 20:12). The Jordan, then at flood stage (Josh. 3:15), would be difficult to cross, its width ranging from 200 yd (183 m) to one mi (1.6 km).

As noted above many of the hymns depicting the crossing of the Jordan River use it as an illustration of death and the land of Canaan as heaven. Clearly this is a poor illustration at best and in truth is Biblically inaccurate, because once Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan, they immediately experienced warfare in Canaan, not rest as in Heaven! It is more accurate to see Canaan as a place of warfare! However if we compare Hebrews 3-4, (Hebrews 4:3+ and Hebrews 4:10-11+) we see that God does provide spiritual rest and victory for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This rest and victory is entered into by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. An even closer parallel is seen in the book of Ephesians.

Therefore, as in this opening chapter we survey the book and its meaning as a whole, I want you to think of the analogy between the land of Canaan and the land of full salvation which is the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Moses My servant is dead** - One down but more to come. God could have used a donkey (Nu 22:27-28+) to lead Israel over, but He used a man, a man that had been prepared for the past 40 years in "Moses U" so to speak. Yes Moses is dead but it is no time for weeping (the nation had mourned 30 days Dt 34:8), but time to "man up!"

There is the passing of an era yet the endurance of the promise.

-- Dale Ralph Davis

**John Calvin** comments on Moses' death - 'This suggests the very useful reflection, that while men are cut off by death, and fail in the middle of their career, the faithfulness of God never fails. On the death of Moses a sad change seemed impending; the people were left like a body with its head lopped off. While thus in danger of dispersion, not only did the truth of God prove itself to be immortal, but it was shewn in the person of Joshua as in a bright mirror, that when God takes away those whom He has adorned with special gifts, He has others in readiness to supply their place, and that though He is pleased for a time to give excellent gifts to some, His mighty power is not tied down to them, but He is able, as often as seemeth to Him good, to find fit successors, nay, to raise up from the very stones persons qualified to perform illustrious deeds' ([Introduction to Joshua](#))

**Utley** - The term "[Jordan](#)" is from a word which means "descending" (yarad = to go down, descend). This river plunged almost 1,500 feet in just 80 miles. At this particular time of the year it was at flood stage (cf. Joshua 3:15). It was just as much an act of faith to cross this torrent as it was to have trust in God during the Exodus.

**Now therefore arise, cross this Jordan** - Up! It was time to stop wandering and start winning, stop staggering and start possessing your possessions! This command sounds simple, but in Joshua 3:15+ we read "the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest" (and it is harvest time as they prepare to enter the Promised Land) and in some the crossing is up to one mile.

The time had come. It was time to act!

(**THOUGHT** - Has the time come for you to act?)



**THOUGHT** (FROM [ALAN CARR](#)) - I look around me and I see Christians who are **defeated**; who **struggle with sins**; and who **for all intents and purposes are wandering around in a spiritual wilderness**. It does not have to be that way! God has a place of victory and He has promised us that we can live in that place of peace and blessing." Read and meditate on 2Cor 2:14+, Ro 8:37+, 1Cor 15:57+. "I believe with all my heart that God did not save you to see you defeated! Most of the time, we are defeated because we refuse to walk in victory! I believe there is a place of conquest for every child of God today that we can claim for our own and these next few verses tell us what we need to remember as we set out to claim our Canaan. By the way, the land God gave to Israel was about 300,000 square miles. They only claimed about 30,000 square miles of that. Of course, they were not limited to the 300,000. They were given as much as they were willing to claim, v. 3. The extent of their victory was only limited by their faith! The same is true with us!" (Read Mt 7:7+, 1Jn 5:14-15+).

This command **arise** reminds me of the great hymn [Rise Up O Men of God](#) (Listen to this version -- Wow!!!)

Coming out of Egypt pictures redemption, but going into **Canaan** pictures sanctification.

**Canaan** pictures and illustrates the life of victory for the Christian.

**Canaan** pictures to us the fullness of the believer's life, the victory that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ

--Adrian Rogers

(He preached 33 messages on the book of Joshua!)

**Matthew Henry** - At this place and at this time the banks were overflowed. Joshua had no bridge or boats, and yet he must believe that God, having ordered the people over, would open a way. (Play [God Will Make A Way](#))

### **God will make a way**

Where there seems to be no way

He works in ways we cannot see

He will make a way for me

He will be my guide

Hold me closely to His side

With love and strength for each new day

He will make a way, He will make a way

**THOUGHT** - What "overflowing Jordan" has God allowed in your life and yet He has clearly charged you to cross over? God's **commandments** (**arise** and **cross** are both commands) always include His **enablements**! Beloved, trust and obey and He will make the way!

**You and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel**- God's charge was not only to His new commander Joshua but was also to **all this people** (see similar description "this people" in Josh 1:6), emphasizing God's covenant love was to be experience by every soul in the nation. God reiterates His covenant promises made to the Patriarchs, to give **the land** to Israel. Critics of passages like this forget one key truth - God owns the earth. Jesus created it (Col 1:16, Heb 1:2). Jesus sustains it (Col 1:17, Heb 1:3). Therefore God can do whatever is his good and acceptable and perfect will with that which belongs to Him. He is always good, always righteous and always just, so no created being has the right (and should not have the audacity) to criticize what He does with His land! If you question God's actions, then you do well to recall the words of David in the inspired Word...

The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains,

The world, and those who dwell in it.

-- Psalm 24:1

Genesis 15:13+ God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

**Related Resource:** [Why did God command the extermination / genocide of the Canaanites, women and children included?](#)

The writer of Chronicles makes it clear that Yahweh's gift was (1) an unbreakable, grace-based, covenant promise, (2) which was everlasting, and (3) finally was given specifically to the nation of Israel (contrast the aberrational teaching in many churches today of [replacement theology / supersessionism](#))!

Remember His **covenant** forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, 16 The **covenant** which He made with **Abraham**, And His oath to **Isaac**. 17 He also confirmed it to **Jacob** for a statute, **To Israel as an everlasting covenant**, 18 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, As the portion of your inheritance." (1Chr 16:15-18)

**Utley** on the **land** God was giving Israel - In the OT and in Assyrian documents it is called "the land flowing with milk and honey" because of its fertility.

**J Vernon McGee** - This verse tells us that the land was given to Israel. Israel's ownership was unconditional. God promised it to Abraham and his offspring. God reaffirmed His promise again and again in the Book of Genesis. In the Book of Deuteronomy God made the Palestinian covenant with Israel which gave them the land as an everlasting possession. ([Joshua 1](#))

Past failure doesn't affect the promise made by God to His children.

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## **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush** - Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**2. Moses my servant is dead.** As Joshua was of course aware of the fact of Moses' decease, these words could not be intended merely to announce to him that event. They are equivalent to saying, 'The death of my servant Moses has left the people without a leader and a head to conduct them into the promised land. It is necessary that his place should be immediately filled. Thou hast been selected for that office, and the time has now come for thee to enter upon the active discharge of its duties. Arise therefore, and go at once about the work of thy high calling.' Probably Joshua's deep sense of his own insufficiency and unworthiness, and of the many dangers and difficulties which encompassed his path, had caused him somewhat to despond and waver in spirit, and rendered necessary this direct and rousing summons, which, for the same reason, God was pleased to accompany with so many encouraging promises. When it is considered that Joshua was now ninety-three years of age, that he had to govern a very perverse and rebellious people, and was going to contend with a warlike and formidable enemy, it will perhaps appear, that nothing short of the divine assurance he now received, could have sustained his courage in such an arduous station.

**Go over this Jordan.** This river, which you now have in full view before you, and on the banks of which you are encamped. For a description of the Jordan, see 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 20. It was doubtless a severe trial to Joshua's faith, to be thus called upon to make immediate preparation for crossing a river that was now overflowing its banks, chap. 3:15, and for getting over which he was totally unprovided with the ordinary means, whether of boats or bridges. But as God had given the command, he must not doubt that he would open a way for his people, though it should be by cleaving the waters and repeating the miracle witnessed at the Red Sea. It was as certain that they should be conducted over the Jordan, as it was that they should be led into Canaan, and to this the Most High had pledged himself by the most solemn promises, renewed from age to age, from the time of Abraham down to that of Moses. With a 'thus saith the Lord' for our warrant, we may boldly go forth in the face of obstacles that are absolutely insuperable to human power.

**Thou and all this people.** That is, with the exception of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, to whom was granted, at their own request, a possession on the eastern side of the Jordan, where they were now encamped, Num. 32.

**Unto the land which I do give to them.** Heb. אשר אנוכי נתן להם asher ânoki nothên lâhem, which I am giving to them. That is, the land of which I have long promised them the inheritance, and of which I am now in the very act of putting them in possession. Though the promises of God may be slow in fulfilling, yet the accomplishment will come at last; not one jot or little shall fail. Though 'the vision be for an appointed time, yet at the end it shall speak, it shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

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**Paul Apple** - **What side of the Jordan are you living on?** God desires spiritual victory and rest for all of His children ... not just some small elite group Think of the spiritual giants who have gone before us ... great missionary pioneers ... out to fulfill the Great Commission; they are now home with the Lord ... we are the ones left to fulfill the mission Are we motivated by a sense of Mission –

God has called us to Great Things – things that are not humanly possible .... But divinely enabled; Let other people busy themselves with the tasks that don't require God's power

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**J . Oswald Sanders** - Under Moses, Joshua learned to serve . This was a necessary part of his training. God knew Joshua better than he knew himself or anyone else knew him, so He put him under discipline to Moses and compelled the mettlesome and impatient servant to obey commands and execute orders. It was not until he had spent what seemed the better part of a lifetime taking orders that he was set in a place of command and permitted to issue them. Some persons are said to be natural leaders, and this of ten means nothing more than that they are by nature dictatorial and overbearing, enjoying nothing so much as "lording it over God's heritage." God understands the strength and the weakness of such persons and prepares them for usefulness by putting them in the school of obedience. Joshua was such a man. Moses himself had led sheep before he was qualified to lead Israel, and Joshua had to learn to obey Moses before he would be fit to command Israel. (A. W. Tozer) (Promised Land Living, J . Oswald Sanders on Joshua)

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**Give, have given, am giving in Joshua** - Study the uses in just Joshua 1 and as you do, recall that Joshua's name means Jesus, so as you read about God's gift of land to Israel, ponder the blessed gift of God's promise of life in Jesus (e.g., Eph 1:3). God is the greatest GIVER of all time, but His gifts must always be received by FAITH, and faith that receives His good gifts is always faith that OBEYS! Obedience does not earn or merit God's good gifts, but only serves to demonstrate that our faith is not false, but is genuine. Stated another way, obedience is the fruit of genuine faith. Why? Because believers (receivers) have received the good gift of God's Holy Spirit, Who initiates, energizes and enables obedience or a walk of holiness (see Php 2:12+ and Php 2:13NLT+).

Jos. 1:2; Jos. 1:3; Jos. 1:6; Jos. 1:11; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 2:9; Jos. 2:12; Jos. 2:14; Jos. 2:24; Jos. 5:6; Jos. 6:2; Jos. 6:16; Jos. 7:19; Jos. 8:1; Jos. 8:18; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 10:8; Jos. 13:14; Jos. 13:33; Jos. 14:3; Jos. 14:4; Jos. 14:12; Jos. 15:16; Jos. 15:19; Jos. 17:4; Jos. 17:14; Jos. 18:3; Jos. 20:4; Jos. 21:2; Jos. 21:43; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:7; Jos. 23:1; Jos. 23:13; Jos. 23:15; Jos. 23:16; Jos. 24:33

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### **Joshua 1:2 Theodore Epp - Workmen Die, but God Lives**

The first statement made in Joshua 1:2 is, "Moses my servant is dead." Moses was dead but not God.

The work of God is in no way hindered by the death of His servants, no matter how eminent they may be. The workman may be removed, but the work goes forward as ordained by God. This is God's doing.

I think of a remarkable organization that God has raised up in this century, starting it through one man. There came a day when God called that man home, and many people wondered if the organization would continue. I can say to the glory of God that it is not only going on, but it is larger than it ever was. When we recognize that the spiritual life is God's doing, we will begin to grow. Until we do, we will not grow. God can change servants in order to show that He may use whatever instrument He pleases. He is not tied down by, or to, any certain individual. God is sovereign and can terminate the ministry of any of His servants when He pleases. He may change His principle of working any time He desires. A Moses can die, but God is eternal. He never dies.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2 - [Spurgeon note](#)).

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**Adrian Rogers** - I know folks who have had just enough religion to make them miserable; they have come out of Egypt, but they've never entered into Canaan. I heard about a man who hadn't been to church for a long time. His pastor went to see him; he said, "Why haven't you been?" He said, "Well, the kids have been sick. And, you know, the weather—it's been raining; it's rained everyday—raining, rain, rain." The pastor said, "But it's dry at church." He said, "Yes, and that's another reason why I haven't come.".... (Canaan) was also a land of rest. You see, the Book of Hebrews calls it a land of rest. Now, rest doesn't mean inactivity. It's not rest from work; it's rest while you work. It's the difference in burning the wick or burning the oil (**ED**: "OIL" SYMBOLIZES EMPOWERMENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT - cf 1Sa 16:13, Jn 3:34+). A Christian is to have a rest; his life is to be marked by rest, the believer's rest. Jesus said, "Come unto me... and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28+). But, before they entered into Canaan, they knew no rest. They had come out of Egypt, but they didn't know any rest. They had gone round, and round, and round, and round in the wilderness. They knew every grain of sand by name. They had sat on every cactus, but they had not found rest. Don't you want rest unto your souls? Wouldn't you just kind of like to relax in the arms of Jesus and find the believer's rest? That's what the land of Canaan pictures....Now, here's the key to the whole thing: God has already given you victory. Did you hear me? God has given you victory. You say, "Well, why don't I have it then, if God has given it to me? God has given it to you, but you haven't taken it. You have not yet possessed your possessions. The key to all of this is verse 3—look at it—God says, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Joshua 1:3). Now, notice, they weren't even in the land, yet. They hadn't even crossed the River Jordan yet, and God says, "Every place that the sole of your foot sets down—every place that you tread upon—that have I

given you"; not, "I'm going to give it to you. I've already given it to you. It's yours. Now, go. Take it." When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He bowed his head, and He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The victory was won. Jesus, at Calvary, said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Did you know the devil is already defeated? You say, "Well, he doesn't act like it." He hopes you don't find it out. He is already defeated. Jesus, on the cross, defeated Satan. Jesus, by the power of His redemptive death, has given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you now have the victory. Christians don't pray for victory; they pray from victory. Victory has already been won. The land of victory is yours....That land is your land, but you are going to have to put the foot of faith upon the promises of God and say, "This is mine; I claim it." And, until you do, you'll never know reality. We need to possess our possessions. That land is your land, but you are going to have to put the foot of faith upon the promises of God and say, "This is mine; I claim it." And, until you do, you'll never know reality. We need to possess our possessions. **ILLUSTRATION** - Did you know it's possible to have something and still not have it? Some of you have books in your library that you haven't read. Now, I want to ask you a question: Whose book is it? It's your book, but it's not your book, because you haven't read it. You have not yet possessed your possession. When I was a little boy, my mother told me of an immigrant coming from the old country to this country, and he bought a passage on an ocean liner. But, wanting to save money, he took along some cheese and crackers; and, while everyone else was feasting there, in the dining room, he was eating cheese and crackers. He almost starved till he discovered that the cost of his meals was also included in the ticket. Oh, you see, he'd already paid. I mean, it was his, but he failed to possess his possessions....God has given it to you. Listen. The Bible says that He "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3)—not will give, hath given all things. In Jesus Christ you're complete. One of these days, we're going to wake up to understand what God has already given His children. The Christian life is simply possessing your possessions. Do you know what the life of victory is? It is simply walking on conquered ground. It is putting down your foot, by faith, on the promises of God, and saying, "This promise is mine. It is mine. I claim it." ([Joshua 1:1-9 - Possessing Your Possessions](#))

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### [How The Promised Land Was Won](#)

Giant #1: Fear -- How to begin to possess your possessions:

1. Lay claim to God's promises.

- Property (Joshua 1:3-4) "I have given you this land"
- Power (Joshua 1:5) (cf. Romans 8:37)
- Presence (Joshua 1:5,9) (cf. Deuteronomy 31:6-8)

2. Look carefully to your preparations.

- Trade cowardice for courage (Joshua 1:6,7,9) (cf. Deuteronomy 20:4)
- Trade supposition for certainty (Joshua 1:8)
- Trade preaching for practice (Joshua 1:7) (cf. James 1:22-25)
- Trade fear for faith (Joshua 1:9) (cf. Hebrews 3:16-4:3)

3. Live confidently and prosper.

- You will begin to see victory when you say goodbye to the world once and for all.
- You will begin to see victory when you get tired of going in circles in the desert of indecision.
- You will begin to see victory when you get tired of eating manna! (Joshua 1:11) (cf. Exodus 16:35).

Summary Statement: your battle with fear is personal; someone else's faith won't win it!

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**George Bush ([ONLINE](#) OR [HERE](#)) - 2. Moses my servant is dead.** As Joshua was of course aware of the fact of Moses' decease, these words could not be intended merely to announce to him that event. They are equivalent to saying, 'The death of my servant Moses has left the people without a leader and a head to conduct them into the promised land. It is necessary that his place should be immediately filled. Thou hast been selected for that office, and the time has now come for thee to enter upon the active discharge of its duties. Arise therefore, and go at once about the work of thy high calling.' Probably Joshua's deep sense of his own insufficiency and unworthiness, and of the many dangers and difficulties which encompassed his path, had caused him somewhat to despond and waver in spirit, and rendered necessary this direct and rousing summons, which, for the same reason, God was pleased to accompany with so many encouraging promises. When it is considered that Joshua was now ninety-three years of age, that he had to govern a very perverse and rebellious people, and was going to contend with a warlike and formidable enemy, it will perhaps appear, that nothing short of the divine assurance he now received, could have sustained his courage in such an arduous station.

**Go over this Jordan.** This river, which you now have in full view before you, and on the banks of which you are encamped. For a description of the Jordan, see 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 20. It was doubtless a severe trial to Joshua's faith, to be thus called upon to make immediate preparation for crossing a river that was now overflowing its banks, chap. 3:15, and for getting over which he was totally unprovided with the ordinary means, whether of boats or bridges. But as God had given the command, he must not doubt that he would open a way for his people, though it should be by cleaving the waters and repeating the miracle witnessed at the Red Sea. It was as certain that they should be conducted over the Jordan, as it was that they should be led into Canaan, and to this the Most High had pledged himself by the most solemn promises, renewed from age to age, from the time of Abraham down to that of Moses. With a 'thus saith the Lord' for our warrant, we may boldly go forth in the face of obstacles that are absolutely insuperable to human power.

**Thou and all this people.** That is, with the exception of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, to whom was granted, at their own request, a possession on the eastern side of the Jordan, where they were now encamped, Num. 32.

**Unto the land which I do give to them.** Heb. אשר אנוכי נתן להם asher ânoki nothên lâhem, which I am giving to them. That is, the land of which I have long promised them the inheritance, and of which I am now in the very act of putting them in possession. Though the promises of God may be slow in fulfilling, yet the accomplishment will come at last; not one jot or little shall fail. Though 'the vision be for an appointed time, yet at the end it shall speak, it shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

**Joshua 1:3 "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses."**

- Jos 14:9 De 11:24 Titus 1:2
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 14:9+ (SPEAKING TO [CALEB](#)) "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely **the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance** to you and to your children forever, (**WHY?**) because you have followed the LORD my God fully.' (NOTE OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO BLESSING AND POSSESSION!)"

Numbers 14:24+ "But My servant [Caleb](#), because he has had a different spirit and has **followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it**

Deuteronomy 11:24+ "**Every place on which the sole of your foot treads** shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea.

Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

### POSSESSING YOUR POSSESSIONS BY WALKING FORTH IN OBEDIENCE

God's sovereignty is emphasized here, but man's responsibility is also juxtaposed. God's way is not "let go, let God," but more accurately "let God, let's go!" Personal passivity has no place in the walk of faith and obedience.

[Ray Stedman](#) points out that "The **land** is given to the people of Israel, just as the **life** in Christ is made available to you absolutely without effort on your part. In the third verse you will notice that although the land has been **given**, it still needs to be **possessed**. Title to it is the gift of God; possession of it is the result of an obedient walk. The idea is, you can have all that you will take. You can have every bit of the spiritual life that you want. You will never get any more. God will never give you more than you are ready to take. So if you are not satisfied with the degree of your real experience of victory, it is because you haven't really wanted any more. You can have all that you want. "Every place where the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

Title to it is the gift of God;  
possession of it is the result of an obedient walk.  
-- Ray Stedman

**Every place on which the sole of your foot treads-** While in one sense Yahweh's gift of the land was "unconditional" in the sense that they could do nothing to merit this gift, in another sense it was "conditioned" on obedience. Joshua had to lay hold of these precious promises (2Pe1:4+) by faith and patience just as do all His children (Heb 6:12+). God has already given them the land, but



it is their responsibility to put one foot in front of the other and start taking the territory, to step out in faith in obedience to Yahweh. When Abraham first came into the land, the same dynamic was called for. See God's word to him in (Ge 13:14,15,17). There is an important lesson for us today. God has given us "every spiritual blessing" in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3), and we must step out by faith (genuine faith obeys) and lay hold of God's precious and magnificent promises.

The Lord has set before each of us in His body an open door that nobody can close (Rev 3:8). We are called to walk through that door by faith, to claim new territory for the Lord. Perhaps it's in a tough family situation that you have to claim new territory. Maybe it's in the workplace---an especially difficult relationship that you need to face, or a challenge that you've been given that you don't feel capable of meeting. Maybe it's something at school, if you're a student.

In this short, clipped command, the call is to go on from spiritual immaturity to maturity, to go on from always being fed by Bible teachers to becoming those who understand and can handle and teach the word of God. It means moving ahead into new territory.

Claiming God's Promises for Spiritual Victory

Requires a Commitment to Courage and Obedience

**Guzik** on **I have given it to you - Your foot ... I have given you:** Entrance into the land of Canaan was entrusted to a representative. Joshua was the trustee of the land for the people. In the same way, our representative Jesus goes before us and what we have in God we possess in Him. The whole land was given, but they could only possess that which they claimed (every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you). What they took must be fought for against a determined opposition.. God certainly could have simply eliminated all their enemies with a mere thought; but He calls Israel into partnership with Himself to see His will done.. Because taking the land took effort, the challenge ahead was not for those content with Egypt, but for those who would press ahead for what God had called them to.

**Paul Apple** - There is no possession without appropriation. Stepping out in faith is the key ... we must take that initiative in response to God's direction. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." (1Jn 5:4+)

**I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses** - This verse speaks of the dichotomy of 2 truths, God's sovereign pleasure to give whatever He desires to whomever He desires and man's responsibility to possess the possessions which have been given to him by God's grace. God gives, but man still must "lay hold of" what God gives. How do we lay hold of God's promises? By faith, "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col 2:6, 2Co5:7). It's the idea of "possessing in reality the possessions that are already yours because of Christ's victory over the world, the flesh and the devil at Calvary" (See HOW TO HAVE VICTORY IN EVERY SPIRITUAL BATTLE). So on one hand we are "filled with the fruit of righteousness" (Php 1:11+), and yet we still must "work out our salvation in fear and trembling" (Php 2:12+).

**THOUGHT** - What has God given to us today beloved? Read about your inheritance in Christ -**NOW**, not only in **HEAVEN!**

Ephesians 1:3+ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

2 Peter 1:3-4+ Seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these **He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises**, so that by them **you may become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

The promise of victory over every enemy.

The promise of the presence and power of God.

The promise of the faithfulness of God.

How could Joshua lay hold of the promises? What did Joshua have to do to make these things happen? Just one thing - trust and obey. If you really trust, you will obey. Every act of disobedience is an act based on failure to believe God at some point. God was going to give Israel the victory. Joshua was merely the instrument that God had chosen to use to do it. These things were going to happen! For Joshua to be a part of it, all he had to do was trust and obey! The same promises God made to Joshua are in still valid for believers today! For Israel the promises had to do primarily with a land, but for believers the promise has to do primarily with a life (in Christ)! You can count on the Lord to fulfill His part. Enabled by the Spirit will you begin to step out into the "life" God has promised you in Christ (cf Jn 10:10b)?

**Chuck Smith** - Now I like that (Joshua 1:3) because this is stepping in and laying claim to that which is already yours. Notice it's in the past tense, "Every place you put your sole, I have already given to you." Now



God has already given to you a glorious, full, rich life of victory. All you have to do is go in and take it by faith, go in (**ED: TRUE FAITH IS REFLECTED IN WHOLEHEARTED OBEDIENCE! YOU CANNOT JUST "NAME IT AND CLAIM IT" [WHATEVER PROMISE GOD HAS MADE] AND THEN GO AND SURRENDER YOUR WILL TO YOUR FALLEN FLESH! See Gal 6:7-8+!**). "Wherever you put the sole of your foot", the Lord said, "I have given to you". You can go in and begin to lay claim to the blessings of God, to the promises of God (2 Peter 1:3-4+). Let us beware lest God having given us the promise that we would fail to receive it, or enter into it. It is important that we begin to lay claim to those victories over the flesh life that God has promised to give to us (cf the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)). "Every place you put the sole of your foot, I have given to you."...Now it is also tragically true that so many times we fail to take all that God has given to us. We fail to enter fully into that life of victory in Jesus Christ. We hesitate, or we become as they did, satisfied, "That's all we need." We become more or less complacent in our spiritual growth. We just hit a plateau and we say, "Oh praise the Lord. This is wonderful." We don't press on any further...God has so much for you. God wants to do so much for you. If you'll just press in by faith, lay claim, take it, it's yours.

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon.** That is, every place within the limits specified in the ensuing verse. The expression in this, as in innumerable other cases, must be qualified by the connexion. The extent of the grant is more expressly defined in the striking parallel passage, Deut. 11:24, 'Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be.' It is to these words spoken to Moses that allusion is made in the next clause. Indeed, nearly every sentence in this address to Joshua, occurs somewhere in the course of the foregoing history, especially in the book of Deuteronomy.

**J Oswald Saunders** - William Penn, from whom the state of Pennsylvania takes its name, so befriended and ingratiated himself with the Indians of that state that they made a gift to him of all the land he could walk around in a day. Taking them at their word, Penn rose early the next morning and walked briskly all day until dusk. When he returned to the camp at twilight, one of the Indian chiefs quizzically said, "The paleface has had a very long walk today!" But they were not displeased. He had honored their word, and they honored his trust. The land he encircled that day is now the city of Philadelphia.

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**J Vernon McGee** - God has given them the land. The land is theirs, but their enjoyment of it depends upon their taking possession of it. That part of the land upon which they walked would belong to them. Comparatively speaking, we have been told in Ephesians 1:3+ that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. **Unfortunately, very few Christians lay hold of the spiritual blessings that belong to them.**

**ILLUSTRATION** - Years ago a certain Englishman moved to the United States. Soon after he arrived he dropped out of sight. One day his uncle in England died and left him about a five-million dollar estate. Scotland Yard went about trying to locate the man whose last address had been in Chicago. They searched for him but never found him. Later I heard that he was found one morning frozen to death in an entryway of a cheap hotel. He could not afford twenty-five cents for a room although he was heir to five million dollars! He did not claim what was his. He did not lay hold of what belonged to him.

Although God gave Israel the Promised Land, they never possessed all of it. As a matter of fact, Israel got very little of the land. Many Christians today are like Israel in that they are blessed with all spiritual blessings and yet they die like bums in a doorway without claiming those blessings as their own. What a tragedy that is. The Book of Joshua is going to tell us how to lay hold of our possessions. Because there will be conflict, we are told in Ephesians 6 to put on the whole armor of God. We have a spiritual enemy fighting against us. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Ours is a spiritual enemy.

We will have to wear the whole armor of God. The victory has to be won. However, you and I don't get the victory; the Lord Jesus Christ gets the victory. We will get what Israel got—deliverance and possessions. Every victory Israel gained was given by God. If you and I ever win a victory, He will win it for us. We will, by faith, enter into these wonderful possessions. ([Joshua 1](#))

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**A W Pink** - Why didn't the Lord drive out all the Canaanites completely and immediately? (Ex 23: 29,30) – **'little by little'** – thus **Israel was kept in a state of constant dependence before the Lord.** That is one of His principal designs in all His dealings with people; to wean them from self-reliance and teach them to lean more and more upon Himself. The spiritual application to the

Christian of the above is simple and informative. God has nowhere promised to give him victory over all his enemies at once, and therefore he should not expect it. Nor would it be good for him if He did – pride and self-esteem would be the immediate outcome. “Therefore will the Lord wait that He may be gracious unto you” (Isa. 30:18). He has many things to say unto us, but we cannot bear them now (John 16:1 2); and He has victories to give us, but we are not yet fitted for them. As Israel were not to be discouraged by the slowness of their arms, neither must we be dismayed if victory be not ours at once – still less entertain the thought that success will never be achieved by us. In like manner, the possessing of our possessions, the present entering into and enjoyment of our heritage in Christ, is not attained all in a moment, but it is a progressive experience – **“by little and little.” Growth in grace is not an instantaneous thing like the new birth, but a gradual one: patience has to have her perfect work.** (2 Peter 3:18+)

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**Ray Stedman** - A promised, abundant LAND was given to the people of Israel, just as a promised, abundant LIFE in Christ (Jn 10:10b) is made available to believers, not based on any merit of our own but solely on God's sovereign grace and goodness. To repeat, just as the land that had been given to Israel needed to be possessed, so too, believers today must lay hold of God's precious and magnificent promises by faith. Title to it is the gift of God; possession of it is the result of an obedient walk.

The idea is, you can have all that you will take. You can have every bit of the spiritual life that you want. You will never get any more. God will never give you more than you are ready to take. So if you are not satisfied with the degree of your real experience of victory, it is because you haven't really wanted any more. You can have all that you want. "Every place where the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

The land is described as abundant and far-reaching; a land in which you will find all you need, in every area of life; "a land flowing with milk and honey," (Ex 3:8): But we find that it is also a land of both conflict and victory: One of the first things we learn in coming into this place of walking in the Spirit is that although it is a place of conflict, every conflict can be a victory. There need not be any defeats. It is a frontier, if you like, and there is nothing more exciting than life on a frontier. This life is especially frontier living in the victory of Christ. The secret of living in the land includes both a promise and a presence; an obedient heart and an empowering spirit.[Jos 1:6-7a] It is going to take courage. There can be no drifting aimlessly along with the crowd. You are going to have to walk against the current. The written word must be our constant, prescribed meditation and study so we may "know the truth and the truth shall set us free," (cf Jn 8:32). And there is the accompanying presence of the Holy Spirit: **an obedient heart** brings an empowering Spirit (to our spirit). That is life in the land. ([Joshua: Guidebook to Victory](#))

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**George Bush** ([ONLINE](#) OR [HERE](#)) - **Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon.** That is, every place within the limits specified in the ensuing verse. The expression in this, as in innumerable other cases, must be qualified by the connexion. The extent of the grant is more expressly defined in the striking parallel passage, Deut. 11:24, 'Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be.' It is to these words spoken to Moses that allusion is made in the next clause. Indeed, nearly every sentence in this address to Joshua, occurs somewhere in the course of the foregoing history, especially in the book of Deuteronomy

**Joshua 1:4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.**

- **From the wilderness:** Ge 15:18-21 Ex 23:31 Nu 34:2-18 De 1:7 3:25 11:24 1Ch 5:9 1Ch 18:3
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 15:18-21+ (**SEE REPETITION OF PROMISE IN** Genesis 12:6–7; Ge 13:14–15; Ge 15:7, 18–21; Ge 17:8, Ge 24:7; Ge 26:3–4; Ge 28:13–14; Ge 35:12; Ge 48:3–4; Ge 50:24) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt (PRESUMABLY THE **NILE RIVER**) as far as the great river, the river **Euphrates**: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

**Dale R Davis** comments on God's repeated promise of the land - Hence the theological roots of Joshua 1 are sunk deeply into the soil of Genesis 12 and following, and that ancient promise is about to receive its contemporary fulfilment. ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

Deuteronomy 1:6-8+ “The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, ‘You have stayed long enough at this

mountain. 7 'Turn and set your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negev and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 'See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.'

Deuteronomy 11:24+ "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea."

Numbers 34:1-12+ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to its borders. 3 'Your **southern** sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your **southern border** shall extend from the end of the Salt Sea eastward. 4' Then your **border** shall turn direction from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim and continue to Zin, and its termination shall be to the south of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall reach Hazaraddar and continue to Azmon. 5 'The **border** shall turn direction from Azmon to the brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea. 6 'As for the **western border**, you shall have the Great Sea, that is, its coastline; this shall be your **west border**. 7 'And this shall be your **north border**: you shall draw your border line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor. 8 'You shall draw a line from Mount Hor to the Lebo-hamath, and the termination of the **border** shall be at Zedad; 9 and the **border** shall proceed to Ziphron, and its termination shall be at Hazar-enan. This shall be your **north border**. 10' For your **eastern border** you shall also draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham, 11 and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down and reach to the slope on the east side of the Sea of Chinnereth. 12'And the **border** shall go down to the Jordan and its termination shall be at the Salt Sea. **This shall be your land according to its borders all around.**"

Approximation of the Significant Amount of Land God Promised to Israel!  
(Note the small size of Israel which was originally possessed!)

## BOUNDARIES OF THE GIFT OF THE LAND

**From the wilderness and this [Lebanon](#), even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates** - (See [Related Passages](#) above for other descriptions of the borders - they are somewhat difficult to correlate as they are not exactly the same description). From the southern desert to the great Lebanon mountains on the north, and from the mighty **Euphrates** on the east (cf Ge 15:18, Dt 1:7, Dt 11:24) to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. This had been promised to Abraham (Ge 15:18), but because of disobedience, the children of Israel never took all of it except for a brief time under King David (1Chr 18:3). The ultimate fulfillment must be in the future.

Most commentators agree that while the kingdoms of Solomon and David were the most land the nation ever possessed, never in her history did Israel occupy the extent of territory described in Joshua 1:4.

**THOUGHT** - [See the map above](#) for the huge **land** God promised Israel. Now think about the "huge spiritual **life**" (so to speak) which God promises believers in Ephesians 1:3 where Paul says the Father has "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Now think about your past life as a believer. How much of this incredible gift of abundant life in Christ have you possessed? It is notable that the largest portion of the promised land which Israel possessed was during the time the kingdom was undivided and under the wise, godly leadership of David and Solomon (in his earlier years). Sadly, Solomon failed to finish the race strong and remain wholly devoted to Yahweh. Instead his heart was "divided" between Yahweh and idols and almost symbolically God judged his divided heart by dividing his kingdom! **So here is the application question for all us** -- Is my Christian walk like David and Solomon (when he was obeying early in his reign)? Or have I repeatedly disobeyed His clear commands and thus failed to possess all of the abundant life promised to me in Christ? If the latter is the case, who is to blame? My contention is that if you are reading this and have failed to possess most of your possessions in Christ (to some degree that is most of us, certainly yours truly!), it is not too late to step out in faith and obedience. David's obedience was not perfect, and yet God allowed him to possess much of the promised land. While our obedience will never be perfect, we can resolve, enabled by God's Spirit, to henceforth walk in such a manner worthy of the Lord, so that every place the sole of our foot treads, we will possess the abundant life in Christ. And if you are like me and your heart has too often been divided like Solomon, then pray Psalm 86:11 "Teach me Your way, O LORD. I will walk in Your truth. Unite my heart to fear Your name." Remember that "The sacrifices of God are a broken

spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." (Ps 51:17)

"Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your Name."

-- Psalm 86:11NIV

**All the land of the Hittites** - This is usually understood to mean northern Syria (not the Hittite territory in Turkey), though this phrase is not found in this verse in the LXX nor in Dt 11:24. The Hittites are mentioned in (Ge 15:18-21). One solution is to interpret the designation **land of the Hittites** as [synecdoche](#) in which a part represents the whole (or vice versa), and so would include all 10 of the "--ites" in the description above (see [passage](#)).

**NET Note on Hittites** - The expression "the land of the Hittites" does not refer to Anatolia (modern Turkey), where the ancient Hittite kingdom of the second millennium B.C. was located, but rather to Syria, the "Hatti land" mentioned in inscriptions of the first millennium B.C. (see HALOT 1:363). The phrase is omitted in the LXX and may be a scribal addition.

**And as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory**- The **Great Sea** is the Mediterranean. **Setting of the sun** of course means toward the east.

**J Vernon McGee** - God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land and the most they ever claimed was 30,000 square miles. They did not do very well, did they? They took possession of about one tenth of what God had given them. That is about the same amount of spiritual possessions claimed by believers today.

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**From the wilderness, &c.** God here proceeds, in very brief terms, to mark out and define the boundaries of the land of promise. Its utmost limits should be from the wilderness of Sin, or the desert of Arabia Petræa on the South, to Lebanon on the North; and from the Euphrates on the East, to the great sea, or the Mediterranean, on the West. The Israelites did not indeed possess the full extent of this grant until the time of David, but their failure to do so was owing entirely to their own remissness, unbelief and disobedience, as was every reverse with which they met during the whole period of their history. They were not straitened in God, but in themselves; and the same remark holds good with regard to his people in all ages.

**And this Lebanon.** That is, unto this Lebanon, which was the boundary opposite to that of the wilderness. See Note on Deut. 11:24. The mountain range is thus particularized because it could doubtless be seen from the spot where Joshua now stood, rearing its lofty summits towards the clouds in the northern extremity of Canaan. For an account of this well-known range of mountains, any of the various works in sacred geography may be consulted. See also 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 103. The name 'Lebanon' comes from the Heb. root לבן laban white, from its summits being so constantly covered with snow.

**All the land of the Hittites.** This clause is wanting in the Gr. version of the LXX, and in the Arabic it is rendered upon (i. e. beyond) the land of the Hittites. But as nothing is known tending to invalidate the reading of the text, we must presume it to be genuine, and leave it undisturbed. It is not the name of a region lying without the limits above specified, or of a country promised in addition to that which had been so long assigned, in the divine purpose, to Israel, but it was one of the seven nations of Canaan, so often alluded to in the books of Moses, and here probably mentioned by synecdoche, a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole. In like manner, in other instances, the nation of the Amorites stands for the whole of the Canaanitish people. As a reason for the particular mention of the Hittites here, rather than any other of the devoted nations, it may be remarked, that it appears from the transaction of Abraham with the sons of Heth, or the Hittites, (Gen. 23,) that they inhabited the southern borders of the land about the region of Beersheba and Hebron, where subsequently the spies saw the gigantic Anakims, who inspired them with so much terror. It was natural, therefore, that they should regard these people as the most formidable enemies whom they would be likely to encounter, and equally natural that God, in assuring them of the complete conquest of all these nations, should specify that one which more than all others they dreaded. He would thus banish their fears where they would be most certain to rise, and by promising them a victory, where they might apprehend a defeat, inspire them with unwavering confidence of success in contending with all the rest of their enemies.

**The great sea.** The Mediterranean; so called as being the greatest in the vicinity of the land of promise, the greatest with which the Israelites were acquainted, and especially so termed in respect to the smaller seas in Judea, such as the sea of Gennesaret or Tiberias, and the Dead Sea, which were comparatively mere lakes. The Hebrews, however, were accustomed to give the name of ים yâm, sea, to every large collection of waters.

**Toward the going down of the sun.** Heb. מבוֹא חֲשֶׁמֶשׁ mebo hashshēmash, lit. the going in of the sun. The Heb. usage is to speak

of the sun's going in instead of setting, as is common with us. According to the usual analogy of rendering adopted by our version, the word toward should be printed in *Italics*, as there is nothing to answer to it in the original. So also in v. 15.

**Shall be your coast.** Your border, your boundary, your limits. Thus Mat. 2:16, 'Then Herod sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof;' i. e. in all the region or territory bordering upon it. Such also is the import of the word coast, as used by some of the early English writers.

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#### QUESTION - [Has Israel's territory ever encompassed the promise in Joshua 1:4?](#)

**ANSWER** - In Joshua 1:4 God promised [Joshua](#) that the land of Israel would include territory extending "from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west." This territory would include the land from the southern tip of Israel along the Red Sea to the Euphrates River on the east, the border of Syria on the north (land of the Hittites), and the Mediterranean Sea (Great Sea) to the west. As of yet, Israel has not controlled this entire land area.

In Joshua's time, much of the land of Canaan was brought under Israelite control. In the time of David and his son Solomon (approximately 1000 BC, or 400 years after Joshua), a wide area of land was under Israel's control or influence.

**Yet the entire territory promised to Israel in Scripture, both in Joshua 1:4 and elsewhere, has yet to be fulfilled.**

Some point to a passage later in the book of Joshua as contradicting the promise of Joshua 1:4. After the conquest of Canaan, the historical account says, "So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:43–45). There is really no contradiction. At the time referred to in Joshua 21, all of Israel's enemies were subdued. No one posed a threat to God's people. God had given them a right to everything He had promised in Joshua 1:4, and they were authorized to take possession of the entire land—all the way to the Euphrates—as soon as they needed it and as soon as they called on the Lord for aid. The fact that they never did so does not negate the fact that God had kept His promise.

After Joshua's death, the [book of Judges](#) teaches, the Israelites turned away from God. As punishment, God allowed their enemies to increase in power, and Israel lost territory that God had given earlier. Judges 2:14 says, "In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist."

Various judges arose during this period, and there was an ongoing battle for the control of Israel's territory. Later, during the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel controlled the largest part of the Promised Land to date. After Solomon's reign, the kingdom was divided into the Kingdom of Israel to the north and the Kingdom of Judah to the south. Both kingdoms eventually sinned to such a degree that God allowed outside nations to defeat them, and most of the Jews were exiled.

Yet God was not done with His people, and He restored Israel's territory. The books of [Ezra](#) and [Nehemiah](#) document the return of the Jewish people from Babylon seventy years after their exile. The temple was rebuilt, and worship in Jerusalem was re-established. Israel continued in their land until AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the temple and overtook Jerusalem.

It would not be until 1948 that the modern nation of Israel was established following World War II. Now, more than sixty years later, Israel has become a thriving nation and the longest-established democracy in the Middle East. Yet many of its neighbors remain hostile, and a Palestinian movement seeks to develop its own nation within the borders of modern Israel's territory.

**The Bible teaches that God will eventually fulfill the promise to give Israel full control over the Promised Land** (cf 1Chr 16:15-18) Israel's full territory will ultimately be ruled by the Messiah during the Millennium (Revelation 20:1–6). God's promises, partly fulfilled throughout history, will have complete, literal, fulfillment prior to God's creation of new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21—22; cf. Psalm 72:8). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 1:5 "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."**

- **No man will be able to stand before you** De 7:24 Dt 20:4 Ps 46:11 Ro 8:31,37
- **Just as I have been with Moses**,: Jos 1:9,17 3:7 6:27 Ex 3:12 De 31:8,23 Mt 28:20 Ac 18:9,10 2Ti 4:17
- **I will not fail you or forsake you** De 31:6-8 Isa 41:10-14 Isa 43:2-5 Heb 13:5
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life



### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 7:24 "He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; **no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.**

Deuteronomy 11:25 "**No man will be able to stand before you;** the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.

Deuteronomy 20:4 for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

Deuteronomy 31:6-7 "**Be strong and courageous**, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. **He will not fail you or forsake you.**" 7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

Romans 8:31, 37 - What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?....37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NT PARALLEL OF THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S UNWAVERING PRESENCE WITH HIS CHILDREN) Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING TRUE CONTENTMENT) He Himself has said, "**I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,**" 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for **I am with you;** Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Isaiah 43:2-5 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. 3 "For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. 4 "Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. 5 "Do not fear, (**WHY NOT?**) **FOR I am with you;** I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west.

## JEHOVAH'S PROMISE OF PROVISION PROTECTION AND PRESENCE

**No man will be able to stand before** (NET = "resist") **you all the days of your life.** - This is a good summation of Lev 26:3-13. How many commanders have ever received such a word of assurance that they would win every battle all the days of their life? If Joshua was timid or wavering, this promise from God was what he needed to hear. The all powerful God does not say "most will not be able to stand," but no man at all will be able to stand before Joshua. And this promise came with a "lifetime" guarantee!

[Guzik](#) - Victory is assured not because Joshua is a great leader, or because Israel is a great nation, but because God is a great God, and He says to Joshua, I will be with you. This is enough for any man seeking to do God's will.

**Jensen** - Joshua was now sovereignly appointed as the man of the hour, but he was not to forget the one he was succeeding. God reminded him of three important truths concerning Moses' experience: first, that to Moses was spoken God's promise of the land (Josh 1:3); second, that God was with Moses in his ministry of leadership (Josh 1:5); and third, that the law of God delivered by Moses was to continue as the people's law of life (Josh 1:7). These vital reminders to Joshua were certainly to serve him often in the arduous and trying years to come as he would reminisce about his service to his human master Moses and about this day of divine appointment. ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**Just as I have been with Moses I will be with you; I will not fail** (NET - "abandon") **you or forsake you** (NET = "leave you alone") - God wants Joshua first to recall the many times God had stood by His servant Moses, often in very difficult, testing circumstances. Just as God was sufficient for Moses, He would be sufficient for Joshua. God promises His presence, His power, His power and His faithfulness. In the Septuagint **forsake** is translated with the verb *huperorao* (with absolute negation) meaning God would absolutely not disregard Joshua as unworthy of notice, a strong affirmation of God's "watchcare" of Joshua.

**THOUGHT** - God's commitment of his presence and power to always be with us is powerfully encouraging, and it never changes. God made the same promise to Jacob (Ge 28:15). In Dt 31 God made the identical



promise to Joshua. Now God is saying it again to him. The promise will be repeated one day to the fearful Gideon, hiding in a winepress. David will repeat the promise to his son Solomon. It will be repeated again to the Jewish exiles returning from Babylon to their homeland. Best of all, God has made the identical promise to us as his people today. Remember, the gospel of Matthew opens with the promise of Emmanuel, "**God with us.**" And it concludes with the Lord Jesus' saying to us, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20) Hebrews 13:5 quotes this same truth applying it to us as Christians today. This truth should encourage us to keep moving forward in God's will, for as we do, we can be absolutely assured of God's presence and power. We can experience the truth of Ro 8:31:that "If God is for us, who is against us?" There is no opposition that God can't or won't take us through.

What battle are you waging today? Is your battle greater than the power of the Lord? He will walk through the battle with you.

**Davis on I will be with you** - It is interesting to note that these simple words were spoken once before to a very reticent, backward, excuse-making, ask-George-not-me sort of fellow, that is, Moses, in Exodus 3:12+, when he was called to face both Israel and pharaoh. The same God now gives the same assurance in similar threatening circumstances to Joshua. ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

**THOUGHT** - And beloved same God now gives the same assurances He gave to Moses and Joshua in whatever threatening, fearful circumstances you find yourself today! As Hebrews 13:8 says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Count on it (HIM)!

**Davis** adds "Note how this assurance keeps reappearing throughout the book (Joshua 2:24; 3:7, 10; 4:14; 6:27; Josh 10:14, 42; 13:6; 14:12; Josh 21:44; Josh 23:3, 10). ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

Note that not only did God promise to be **with** Joshua but go **ahead** in of him into the enemy occupied territory!

"The LORD is the One Who **goes ahead of you; He will be with you.** He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." Dt 31:8+

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**Fail** (Lxx translates with [egkataleipo](#) in Josh 1:5) ([07503](#)) **raphah** means to sink, to become slack, to relax, to cease (Jdg. 8:3; 2 Sa 24:16; Neh. 6:9; Ps. 37:8), to desist or leave alone (Ex. 4:26; Dt. 9:14; Jdg. 11:37; Job 7:19), to become discouraged, to become disheartened, to become weak, to become feeble, to let drop or let go (Job 27:6; = figuratively; Pr. 4:13 = figuratively; Song 3:4 = literally), to discourage, to leave alone, to let go, to forsake or abandon someone (Deut. 4:31; 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5; 10:6; Ps. 138:8), to be lazy (Ex. 5:8, 17; Josh. 18:3; Prov. 18:9). **Uses of raphah in Joshua** - Jos. 1:5; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 18:3

**Forsake** (leave, abandon) ([05800](#)) **'azab** basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x; "left" 22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. Things that can left behind or forsaken include persons (Ge 44:22; Nu 10:30; Ru 1:16; 2Ki4:30), people who should left behind (Ge 2:24); places (2Ki 8:6; Jer 18:14; 25:38) and objects (Ge 39:12,13; 50:8; Ex 9:21). **Uses of azab in Joshua** - Jos. 1:5; Jos. 8:17; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 24:16; Jos. 24:20

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**William Blaikie** - "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,"—an assurance which is extended in the Epistle to the Hebrews to all who believe. We are so apt to view these promises as just beautiful expressions that we need to pause and think what they really mean. A promise of Divine presence, Divine protection and guidance and blessing all the days of our life, is surely a treasure of inexpressible value. It is no slight matter to realise that this is in God's heart—that He has a constant, unvarying feeling of love toward us, and readiness to help; but we must believe this in order to get the benefit of it; and, moreover, He must be left to determine the time, the manner, and the form in which His help is to come. Alas for the unbelief, the suspicion, the fear that is so prone to eat out the spirit of trust, and in our trials and difficulties make us tremble as if we were alone! What a profound peace, what calm enjoyment and blessed hope fall to the lot of those who can believe in a God ever near, and in His unfailing faithfulness and love! Was it not the secret alike of David's calmness, of our Lord's serenity, and of the cheerful composure of many a martyr and many a common man and woman who have gone through life undisturbed and happy, that they could say—"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"? God grant us all that, like Abraham, we may "stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief, but that being strong in faith we may give glory to God, and believe that what He hath promised He is able also to perform." ([Joshua 2 The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

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### Joshua 1:5 Woodrow Kroll Never Forsaken by

**Never Forsaken** - In 1970 an Arizona lawyer named Russel T. Tansie filed a \$100,000 damage suit against God. The suit was filed on behalf of Mr. Tansie's secretary, Betty Penrose, who accused God of negligence in His power over the weather when He allowed

a lightning bolt to strike her home. The woman won the case when the Defendant failed to appear in court. I wonder if she ever collected?

When trials come or disaster strikes, it's easy to feel as if God is being negligent. When something we can't explain happens, we believe God has let us down. But the Bible makes it very clear that this is not true. God told Joshua that He would not leave nor forsake him. Actually, in the Hebrew language, the negative comes first and makes the thought even stronger: "not will I leave you" and "not will I forsake you." The order of these words emphasizes the fact that, no matter how difficult Joshua's circumstances might become, God would not leave and He would not forsake. He was as committed to Joshua as He had been to Moses. Could you use that same kind of commitment from God today? You have it. Read [Hebrews 13:5 \(note\)](#).

God's presence doesn't mean that things will always go smoothly. Christians don't walk around with protective plastic bubbles surrounding them. We experience cancer; we endure sorrow and heartache; we fail in business. God's promise, however, is that He will continue to walk with us and be faithful to us even in our sorrows or failures. His company will bring you comfort that will exceed your understanding (see note Philippians 4:7).

Be assured that as God was with Moses and Joshua, He is with you as well. Jesus promised, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Whatever difficulties you face, you will not have to face them alone. He will never, no never, fail you nor forsake you. That's His promise to you.

Only God can say never--and really mean it.

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**Matthew Henry Concise** - Verses 5-9. Joshua is to make the law of God his rule. He is charged to meditate therein day and night, that he might understand it. Whatever affairs of this world we have to mind, we must not neglect the one thing needful. All his orders to the people, and his judgments, must be according to the law of God. Joshua must himself be under command; no man's dignity or dominion sets him above the law of God. He is to encourage himself with the promise and presence of God. Let not the sense of thine own infirmities dishearten thee; God is all-sufficient. I have commanded, called, and commissioned thee to do it, and will be sure to bear thee out in it. When we are in the way of duty, we have reason to be strong and very bold. Our Lord Jesus, as Joshua here, was borne up under his sufferings by a regard to the will of God, and the commandment from his Father.

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**Adrian Rogers** - the first principle is there is a possession to possess. Now, the second principle is this: There is a promise to plead. Notice verse 5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all of the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5). Now, not only did God tell them about their possession, but God also gave them a promise. And, remember, all these things happen to them for examples to us (1 Corinthians 10:11). Now, look at this promise, and let's analyze it. First of all, the Lord gives the promise of a conquering power. Notice in verse 5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life" (Joshua 1:5). There's power to do everything that God ask you to do. You say, "Brother Rogers, I don't have the power to cross the River Jordan. I don't have the power to drive out the giants of fear, and doubt, and lust, and hate, and envy, and jealousy, and worry. I don't have the power." No, but, dear friend, these enemies—these giants—cannot stand before you, if you go in the name of Jesus, if you claim His power.

**Living victoriously is not your responsibility;  
it is, rather, your response to God's ability.**

(ED: See "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)")

This promise is the promise of a conquering power, and it is the promise of a continuing presence. (Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.)

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**ILLUSTRATION - I WILL BE WITH YOU** - I love the story of the little boy in Sunday School who interrupted her teacher as he told about David and Goliath. He explained how brave David was to face the giant Goliath. The little boy said, "David was not the brave one. Goliath was." "Why do you say that?" the teacher asked. The little boy explained, "Goliath had to go out and face David alone, but David had God with him." And so do we. As we do what God tells us to do, we have the assurance that He is there with us.

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**GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**There shall not any man be able to stand before thee.** Heb. לא יתיצטב איש lo yithyatzteb ish, a man shall not plant or station himself. The form of the sentence in our version 'shall not be able to stand' comes from the Lat. Vulg., which has 'nullus poterit vobis

resistere.' The Gr. has ο κ ἀντιστήσεται, shall not resist. But the idea expressed in our version no doubt correctly represents the sense of the original, which is not so much to deny the fact that opposition would be made to Joshua and the Israelites, for we know that their enemies did often 'plant themselves' against them, but rather to assert the inability of their adversaries to make any successful resistance. No man shall be able effectually to withstand thee, to maintain his ground before thee, or to throw any serious obstacle in thy way. Joshua is, however, admonished that his sufficiency was not of himself. It was solely in consequence of God's being with him, upholding and prospering him, as he did Moses, that he was to be rendered thus invincible. Those that contended with him were contending with omnipotence, and in this unequal contest they must necessarily be worsted. 'If God be for us who can be against us?' What Joshua had himself, on another occasion, said to encourage the people, Num. 14:9, God now says to him. This signal success, moreover, was not only to mark the commencement of his enterprises, but to attend him throughout his whole career. However it might be with Israel when he was gone, yet during his life-time he should be favored with a constant tide of triumphs. If it be asked how this assurance consists with the fact, that he met with such a serious repulse in one of his earliest expeditions, and that so many thousands of Israel were smitten and turned their backs before the men of Ai, the answer is, that they failed in the conditions on which the promises of victory were suspended. These promises were not absolute. They were made with a proviso. They were to be fulfilled on condition of the implicit faith and obedience of the people, with the perfect understanding, at the same time, that God's grace was sufficient for them, and that if they sought him sincerely, they should never fail to receive an adequate measure of ability to enable them to comply with these conditions. On the occasion alluded to, they had grossly failed in duty, they had sinned and transgressed the covenant and were therefore smitten before the enemy, 'because they were accursed,' i. e. laboring under the Divine displeasure, Josh. 7:12.

**As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee** Chal. 'As my Word was for Moses' help, so shall my Word be for thy help.'

I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Heb. לא ארפך lo arpekâ. The original term here rendered 'fail' properly signifies to let sink, to let grow slack and fall down, being generally spoken of the hands, and implying a loosing or relaxing of one's grasp, and the consequent falling down of the hands, as in Josh. 10:6, 'Slack not thy hands (אל תרפ ידך al tēreph yâdekâ) from thy servants.' It has a meaning directly opposite to that of the word for laying a firm hold, taking a vigorous grasp, of any thing. The other is the usual word for leave, forsake, abandon. The sense clearly is, that God would keep firm hold of his servant, would not let go of him, would not resign him up to the power of his enemies. Moses had before given to Joshua the same assurance, couched almost in the express words of this passage, Deut. 31:6–8; and here God is pleased, in accordance with the character which he elsewhere gives of himself, Is. 44:26, to 'confirm the word of his servant,' and engages never to leave or be wanting to Joshua.

**Joshua 1:6 "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.**

- **Be strong and courageous:** Jos 1:7,9 1Sa 4:9 1Ki 2:2 1Ch 22:13 28:10 2Ch 32:7,8 Ps 27:14 Isa 35:3,4 Da 10:19 Hag 2:4 Zec 8:9 1Co 16:13 Eph 6:10 2Ti 2:1
- **you shall give this people possession of the land :** Nu 34:17-29
- **which I swore:** Ge 26:3
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

##### NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS:

1 Corinthians 16:13-14+ **Be on the alert, stand firm** in the faith, **act like men, be strong. Let** all that you do **be done** in love. (All 5 commands are in the [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)).

Ephesians 6:10+ Finally, **be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

2 Timothy 2:1+ You therefore, my son, **be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

**MAN UP JOSHUA!**  
**VICTORY IS GUARANTEED!**

The **Septuagint** for **be courageous** is the rare verb [andrizo](#) (used in the command in 1Cor 16:13+) and in the [present imperative](#) (see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) - cf Nu 27:18+) calling for Joshua to continually '**man up**,' playing the

man and behaving like a man.

**THOUGHT** - This is a good charge for all God's soldiers, men and women. We must continually be filled (with the Spirit Eph 5:18+ and the Word Col 3:16+) so that we might be supernaturally enabled to fight the good fight of faith (1Ti 1:18, 1Ti 6:12+, 2Ti 4:7+).

**Jensen** - The success and prosperity which God promised had their source therefore in God Himself. Without God, there would be defeat; with God, success. But woven into the sovereign design of success for Joshua and the people was the human strand of the condition of their obedience (Josh 1:6, 7, 8, especially **all** the law...**all** that is written in it - **ED**: GOD WAS CALLING FOR COMPLETE OBEDIENCE!). ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**THOUGHT** - Are you experiencing the blessings of freedom in Christ, power of His Spirit, abundance of spiritual life, etc? If not, you might consider doing a "moral inventory" of the past few days, weeks or months. What is your "obedience quotient?" (so to speak). Is it "complete" (notice I did not ask if it is "perfect" for perfection awaits glorification) or is it partial, good in some areas, not so good in others? Partial obedience is disobedience. Confess, repent and return to reliance on the Spirit to obey and then experience the blessing from the good hand of the Lord.

**Be strong and courageous** - These are clear commands, not subtle suggestions! This imperative which God issues to Joshua is a call to courageous, obedient leadership, and is based on the absolute certainty of God's presence, or as we might say in NT terms "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" (Ro 8:31+). Recall also that Nu 27:18+ says Joshua is "**a man in whom is the Spirit**." Does this not recall Jesus' words in giving the Great Commission (the greatest spiritual battle in all of history!) in Mt 28:20, promising "I am with you always (HOW? HIS SPIRIT), even to the end of the age." The grounds for whatever courage Joshua might have (or we might have!) are not in himself (ourselves!), but in the powerful encouragement that God would be with him!

**THOUGHT** - God's **commandments** all come "pre-packaged" with God's **enablements**. Which commandments are you finding it difficult to obey? Perhaps you are relying on your own natural strength and willpower to keep them. You need to learn to jettison natural power and rely wholly on the Holy Spirit to supernaturally empower your desire and power to keep God's commandments (cf Php 2:13NLT+).

**Guzik** - This bold courage would not be in Joshua himself, but in God. We can be full of self-confidence that will take us to ruin, but we should instead be full of a genuine God-confidence.

**For** - Explains the reason for God's commands Joshua to be strong and courageous.

**You shall give this people possession of the land** - While it is ultimately Yahweh Who gives Israel the land, it is Yahweh's servant (cf Josh 5:14, Josh 24:29) who would be instrument of the fulfillment.

**THOUGHT** - God uses men and women to accomplish His purposes. Watch where God is working and join Him in His work.

**Which I swore to their fathers to give them** - God had made a solemn, immutable promise to the Patriarchs (cf Abraham - Ge 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:7-8; 22:16-18, Isaac - Ge 26:3-5, Jacob - Ge 28:13; 35:12 and Moses - Ex 6:8), a truth Joshua needed to keep uppermost in his mind, so that he would never doubt the success of his assigned mission. Possession was theirs for the taking but Joshua had to lay hold by faith, a faith that was reflected in obedience to God's commands.

**THOUGHT** - This explains the importance of meditating on God's Word day and night (Joshua 1:8). If this was one of the keys for victory in Joshua, is it any less a key our victory in the New Testament (that's a [rhetorical question](#))?

**Campbell** - While in any given generation the fulfillment of this great and significant promise depends on Israel's obedience to God, there can be no question that the Bible affirms her right to the land. By divine contract the title is hers even though she will not possess it totally and enjoy it fully until she is right with God. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

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**Be strong** (02388) (**chazaq**) conveys the basic meaning of to be or become strong, to make strong or strengthen, in the Hiphil to take hold of or seize ("retain His anger" - Mic 7:18+), in the Hithpael to strengthen oneself (to take courage 1 Sa 30:6). To be courageous. To overpower. **Chazaq** describes strength - severity of a famine (a "strong" famine) (2 Ki 25:3, Jer 52:6), strength of humans to overpower (David and Goliath 1Sa 17:50, cf 1Sa 17:35 = seized; Amnon and Tamar = 2Sa 13:14), in a battle, to capture (2Chr 8:3), Samson's last demonstration of supernatural strength in which he asks God to "please **strengthen** me" (Jdg 16:28). Used in the command "**Be strong** and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18, Josh 10:25, Dt 31:6-7, 23). **Chazaq** used 12 times in Ex 4-14 of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf similar use in Josh 11:20). In a great passage in Da 11:32+ we read ""By smooth words he

will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but **the people who know their God** will display **strength (chazaq)** and take action." The **Septuagint** translates **chazaq** with [ischuo](#) in all 4 commands in Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18.

**Courageous (0553)(amets)** means to be stout, to be strong (Ge 25:23), to be bold, to be alert. Be determined. In short it means to be strong and courageous. (2 Chr 13:18). Uses related to conquering Canaan - Deut. 2:30; Deut. 3:28; Deut. 31:6; Deut. 31:7; Deut. 31:23; Jos. 1:6; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:9; Jos. 1:18; Jos. 10:25. The **Septuagint** translates **amets** with [andrizo](#) in all 4 commands in Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18, the verb calling for them to "act like men!" See use of Paul's 5 commands in 1Cor 16:13-14+

**Possession (05157)(nahal)** means inherit, get possession of, take as a possession. **TWOT** says it "basically signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession. Sometimes the idea of succession is absent but the "possessing" carries with it a connotation of permanence (e.g. Ex 34:9; Pr 14:18)." Nahal in Joshua - Jos. 1:6; Jos. 13:32; Jos. 14:1; Jos. 16:4; Jos. 17:6; Jos. 19:9; Jos. 19:49; Jos. 19:51

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**F. B. Meyer on Be Strong and Courageous** (repeated 4x in chapter 1): Joshua afflicted with his inadequacies and so charged here with courage and strength: It is when men are in this condition that God approaches them with the summons to undertake vast and overwhelming responsibilities. Most of us are too strong for him to use; we are too full of our own schemes, and plans, and ways of doing things. He must empty us, and humble us, and bring us down to the dust of death, so low that we need every straw of encouragement, every leaf of help; and then he will raise us up, and make us as the rod of his strength. The world talks of the survival of the fittest; but God gives power to the faint, and increase might to them that have not strength; he perfects his strength in weakness, and uses things that are not to bring to naught things that are. If Ehud had been right-handed, he might never have judged Israel; if Gideon had been the greatest instead of the least in his father's house, he would never have vanquished Midian; if Paul had been as eloquent in his speech as he confesses himself to have been contemptible, he would never have preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round to Illyricum. Let us consider the sources of Joshua's strength: I. A Faithful Past – II. A Distinct Call – III. The Sense of the Presence of God – IV. The Indwelling of the Word of God --

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**Be strong and of a good courage.** Heb. חֲזַק וְאִמַּץ hazak veematz. Gr. σῆς καὶ νδριζου be strong and act the man. The original terms, though nearly related are not precisely synonymous with each other. They both occur, though under slightly different forms, Is 35:3: 'Strengthen ye (חֲזַק hazzekū) the weak hands and confirm (אִמַּץ ammētzū) the feeble knees,' from which and from other passages, it is inferred that the first, 'be strong,' properly implies that strength which is in the hands for grasping and holding firmly any thing, while the latter points primarily to the strength of the knees in steadfastly maintaining one's position, and withstanding every aggressive assault of the enemy. From this view of the primary and literal acceptation of the words, we obtain a better idea of their import when applied metaphorically, as here, to the acts of the mind. They imply the utmost degree of vigorous and determined action, a spirit and energy directly the reverse of every thing imbecile and pusillanimous.

**Unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land** Heb. תַּנְחִיל tanhīl thou shalt cause to inherit. Which supposes the previous entire conquest of the land; and in this respect a higher degree of honor was vouchsafed to Joshua than to Moses, for he was only permitted to conduct Israel through the wilderness, and bring them to the borders of the promised land, while Joshua had the glory of actually taking possession of, and distributing the land to his people an inheritance. God is pleased, therefore, to make known to him his purposes concerning him, as a reason for his assuming all that strength and courage which he now enjoins upon him. Compare the parallel passage, Deut. 1:37, 38: 'Also the Lord was angry with me, for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither. Encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.' This 'encouragement' which Moses was to give to Joshua we find embodied in his farewell address, Deut. 31:7, 8, 23: '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. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and, said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee! The Most High, therefore, in these words emphatically reminds Joshua of the solemn charge which Moses had given him. God will not fail to adopt and enforce as his own those commands which are uttered by his servants in accordance with his will.



I RECALL THE FIRST TIME I watched the children's classic movie The Wizard of Oz. I was spellbound by the music and the enchanting way in which the simple themes of family, valuing home, and celebrating individual differences were on display. But perhaps the most hilarious character of all was the lion —the bumbling, wimp of a cat, who cowered in fear at the smallest threat. What he needed was courage!

I love it. Who doesn't, by the way? We all need courage to face another difficult conversation with our employer. To step into a new ministry with a genuine level of confidence. To ask someone special to the dance. To tell the family your unsettling news about the future.

Thankfully, God has not left us to ourselves. In fact, at critical junctures in our lives, He offers the assurance of His presence to bolster courage. Remember Joshua, having just stepped into the oversized sandals of the great Moses —leader of Israel? What did he need most? You got it: courage. Knowing that, God stepped in to bolster Joshua's confidence.

Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. . . . This is my command —be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord God is with you wherever you go. JOSHUA 1:6-7, 9

David had it when he slung his sling (1 Samuel 17). Daniel felt it when he laughed at the lions (Daniel 6). Moses showed it when he faced Pharaoh (Exodus 5–10). And Jesus had it when He carried our sorrows. You can know its strengthening power too.

Do you need a fresh infusion of divine courage? Facing an uncertain future? Wondering how everything will work out? Feeling inadequate for the task ahead? Don't faint. Don't despair. The Lord promises His presence and power if you trust Him. Take courage! ([Good Morning, Lord . . . Can We Talk?](#))

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#### Charles Swindoll - Facing Failures Joshua 1:6-7

ANY THIRD GRADER COULD have told you the vaunted sky cycle leap across the Snake River Canyon on that sultry Sunday afternoon was a triple-A flop —a classic fizzle. The sky cycle, created by Dr. Robert C. Truax, gave up in mid-air; the driver floated to safety beneath a nylon cloud. But he didn't sit long-faced in a dark corner. As bystanders shouted "Rip off!" he was thinking about write-offs. Anyone who can walk away from a failure with a smile, a bulging rear pocket, and his pride still intact must have something going for him. The six-million-dollar man was a two-wheeled wonder named Evel Knievel. Nobody in the long history of sports ever came off a more abysmal failure better than he. The remains of the flop cycle littered the canyon, but the man who took off like a bird made out like a bandit.

There's an abiding truth in that Idaho extravaganza we ought to capture and cultivate: "The person who succeeds is not the one who holds back, fearing failure, nor the one who never fails, but rather the one who moves on despite failure."

If anyone in Scripture had justification for fear of failure it would have been Joshua. He had some mighty big shoes to fill, following Moses! Yet as he stepped into his new role as shepherd of Israel, God issued the newly minted leader this command:

Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. JOSHUA 1:6-7

God didn't say, "Don't blow it, Joshua!" There was no warning against failing . . . God understands our human limitations. What He desires is that when we do fail, we remain firm in our resolve to trust Him. To get back up and keep moving . . . not with a tentative, halting attitude, but with a strength and courage that flow from our confidence in Him.

If you've blown it, don't sweat it. Make things right today, brush off your sandals and move back out in His strength and courage. It's not that great a leap. ([Good Morning, Lord . . . Can We Talk?](#))

**Joshua 1:7 "Only be strong and very courageous; be 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.**

- **which Moses My servant commanded you:** Jos 1:1 11:15 Nu 27:23 De 31:7
- **do not turn from it to the right or to the left** De 5:32 12:32 28:14 Pr 4:27 8:20
- **so that you may have success wherever you go:** De 29:9 1Ki 2:3 1Ch 22:13
- **success** Jos 1:8
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 31:7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

## GOD'S KEY TO SUCCESS IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The "key" that opens the door to an abundant land (for Joshua) and an abundant life (for believers today) is possession and practice of the Word of God. It behooves every teacher and preacher to focus their efforts on the pure milk of the Word, because God gives no other source for spiritual growth! (1Pe 2:2+). Not Christian books, not devotionals, not commentaries like you are reading, but His Word, for that alone comes with His sure promise "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isa 55:6) And may I suggest when you teach disciples, that you assiduously avoid questions like "What does this verse mean to you?" or "How does this verse make you feel?" Focus instead on questions like "What does this passage say?" or "What does this passage teach?" Then you be more actively involving the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit Who inspired the Holy Word that He might grow Holy Saints.

**Only be strong and very courageous** - The second time Joshua hears these divine commands.

**Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you** - Remember the context is the passing of the baton of leadership from Moses to Joshua (OT version of 2Ti 2:2, making disciples as Jesus commanded in Mt 28:19, something the church has failed at miserably in America in the 21st century) and God's instructions to Joshua as to how he will be able to take the children of Israel into the land victoriously. Hearing (reading) the Word of God is the key. But it is not just hearing the word but heeding it, obeying it without hesitation, for this assures victory and blessing.

**THOUGHT** - James gives us a NT parallel which we can apply and thereby be blessed, writing that the "one who **looks intently at the perfect law**, the law of liberty, and **abides** by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an **effectual doer**, this man **will be blessed** in what he does. (Jas 1:25+) This word clearly makes obedience the key to blessing.

**Don Anderson** - The key to victory is one's relationship to the Word. It is interesting to notice the centrality of the Word here in the Lord's message....In verse 7 the Lord's message is to be careful to obey, and to not turn from it to the right or to the left. And now in verse 8 the command is to meditate upon it day and night. The Lord's message to Joshua is that the key to success is to obey the law and to meditate upon it day and night.

**Be careful** is the frequent Hebrew verb **shamar** (see below) which conveys the idea of watching over something, to guard and protect it from damage or loss. It is repeatedly used in Joshua because Israel was continually in need to be watchful (as we all are beloved!). All uses of **shamar** in Joshua - Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:8; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 10:18; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:6; Jos. 23:11. The Septuagint translates **shamar** with the picturesque verb **phulasso** which means to guard, as guarding someone to prevent them from escaping and is in the present tense calling for one to continually be on guarding ourselves so that **we do according to all the law!**

**THOUGHT** - Believers need to continually be on guard "to do according to all the law," because our fallen **flesh** (as well as the **world**, and the **devil**) is continually tempting us to turn to the right or to the left! "But I say, **walk** (**present imperative** see **our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey**) by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh (present tense - continually) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are (present tense continually) in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." (Gal 5:16-17+)

**Davis** makes a great point commenting that "Constant, careful absorbing of the word of God leads to obedience to it. Lack of study results in lack of obedience. Notice how the writer stresses this urgency of obedience to Yahweh's word in the last chapters as well (Joshua 22:5; 23:6; cf. Joshua 8:30–35). (**Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible**)

Lack of study results in lack of obedience.

-- Dale Ralph Davis

**Do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success**(**sakal/sākhāl**) **wherever you go**.- As part of God's fulfilling his promises, Joshua was called to exercise faith through strong and courageous leadership. Divine sovereignty always expresses itself through human response. God first speaks the word of promise, the indicative statement about who he is and what he'll do; and then that encourages us as his servants to believe, step out, trust, and obey. Joshua wasn't to use these guaranteed

certainties as a reason to kick back and wait to see what God would do. No, the promise of effectiveness was powerfully motivational for Joshua, encouraging him to purposeful activity.

**THOUGHT** - The promises of God's presence and activity are fantastic. God is saying to us through these verses, "I won't drop you in the middle of a project that I've given to you." God is not in the business of deserting his people when we get in trouble if we're honestly endeavoring to do his will. God does close doors, and this promise of his power and presence doesn't preclude disaster, persecution, struggle, or difficulty. Our faith will be tested, we may suffer, our lives will be very hard at times---the work is tough. But God's power will be with us through the good and bad times, and His presence will continually sustain us. Life won't be easy for Joshua, but we're going to see him claim God's power and presence through both bad and good times.

**Donald Campbell** on **be strong and very courageous**- This command is based on God's power through His Word. This is a stronger exhortation, indicating that greater strength of character would be required to obey God's Word faithfully and fully than to win military battles! The emphasis in these verses is clearly on a written body of truth. Many critics argue that the Scriptures did not appear in written form until several centuries later but here is a clear reference to an authoritative Book of the Law. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Utlley** explains that the prohibitive charge **do not turn from it to the right or the left**- This phrase (ESSENTIALLY) reflects the Hebrew words for "**sin**," which were always a deviation from the standard (i.e., God Himself). The Hebrew term "**righteousness**" is literally "a measuring reed." All the terms for sin in Hebrew, and to some extent, followed by the terms for sin in Greek, mean "**a deviation from the standard**" or "**crookedness**" or "**perverseness**" or "**falling short**." (**ED: AND ALL DEPICTED BY THE PHRASE TURNING TO RIGHT OR LEFT**) God Himself is the standard!

**The phrase turning to the right or the left**(used in a moral/ethical sense) **is repeated several times in the Old Testament** - Dt. 2:27, Dt 5:32; Dt 17:11, 20; Dt 28:14; Josh 1:7, Josh. 23:6; 2Ki 14:19, 2Ki 22:2; 2Chr 34:2; Pr 4:27

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**Be careful** (guard, observe, watch) ([08104](#)) **shamar** means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one. The first use of **shamar** in Ge 2:15 is instructive as Adam was placed in the garden (a perfect environment) and was commanded to "**keep**" it which in the [Septuagint](#) is translated with **phulasso** (which is used to translate many of the OT uses of **shamar**) which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post. Clearly Adam did not do a good job at "keeping" the garden safe from intruders! And because of this failure he was cast out of the garden and angels stationed to "**guard** (Lxx = **phulasso**) the way to the tree of life" so that he would not eat of it (Ge 3:24). After Cain murdered Abel he answered God "Am I my brother's **keeper**?" (Ge 3:24) **Shamar** is used 6 times in the seven verses of Psalm 121 and most notable is our Keeper (3b "He who **keeps** you will not slumber. Behold, He who **keeps** Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your **keeper**; ...7 The LORD will **protect** you from all evil; He will **keep** your soul. 8 The LORD will **guard** your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever.: see [commentary](#))

**Shamar** in Joshua - Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:8; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 10:18; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:6; Jos. 23:11; Jos. 24:17;

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**Adrian Rogers** - Now, the third thing I want you to notice: Not only is there a possession to possess, and not only is there a promise to plead, but, therefore, there is a person to prepare. Notice Joshua 1:7. Now, we have said that God gives the victory, and there's nothing we can do to get the victory; God already gives it to us. And yet, there this verse that tells us that we've got to be strong, we've got to be courageous, and we've got to be obedient. And, we say, "Now, Pastor, those are exactly the three things I'm not. I'm not strong; I'm weak. I'm not courageous; I'm a coward. And, I'm certainly not obedient; I turn from the right and the left—all the time, to the right and the left. I just don't obey the Word of God like I ought, so how can I be—how is God asking me—little ole' me, little ole' weak me—to be strong, and to be courageous, and all of these things? Well, look. Joshua was flesh and blood, just like you. And, here's the secret—are you listening? Everything God demands of you, God supplies for you. Every command is a promise. Behind every command of God is the omnipotent power of God to carry out that command. You see, God doesn't want you to be strong in your strength. God doesn't want you to be bold in your strength. God doesn't want you to be obedient in your strength. You see, you have to understand verse 7 in the light of verse 5, where our Lord, here, is—and, in verse 6, where our Lord is—saying, "I'm going to be with you. I'm going to strengthen you. I will not leave you." And, because of that, He tells us to be strong. Do you understand? It's not my strength. It's His strength in me. Did you know that weak people can choose to be strong? Did you know that you can have strength by a choice? Did you know that cowardly people can choose to be bold? Did you know that disobedient people can literally, actually choose to be obedient? But, there is a person to prepare; and, if you think that you're going to sit idly by, then you're wrong. Victory is God's doing. God gives us victory, and then, God promises us victory. But, not only is there a

possession to possess, not only is there a promise to plead, there is a person to prepare. Are you, today, willing to say, "I will, by the grace of God, be strong; by the grace of God, I will be courageous; by the grace of God, I will be obedient"? There is a person to prepare. (Excerpt from sermon "Possessing Your Possessions" on Joshua 1:1-5, 7-9 - [listen to full sermon on youtube](#))

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**Only be thou strong and very courageous.** The Heb. term here employed רק רק, only, clearly indicates that a condition is stated on which the promise of the foregoing verse shall be made good. This condition is the constant and rigid observance of the Divine command, an inflexible firmness in adhering to that code of precepts contained in the law of Moses. This he was incessantly to make the man of his counsel and the theme of his daily and nightly study. It was in this respect mainly that his courage and fortitude were to be evinced. A steadfast obedience to the mandates of Jehovah would require a stronger principle of courage, than his anticipated conflicts with the most formidable enemies. The important lesson which we hence learn is, that in nothing is there more scope for the display of the highest moral heroism than in daring, in all circumstances, to cleave steadfastly to the word of God as the rule of our conduct. It is in this chiefly that the fortitude of the Christian soldier is to evince itself. He is not only to fight, but to 'fight lawfully,' that is, in conformity to that system of Divine instructions contained in the Scriptures. From this he is never to deviate, nor to turn away his eyes. However difficult or self-denying its injunctions, he must obey them, and rather die than depart from them. In so doing he will find the promises fulfilled, and the Divine blessings imparted as truly and as signally as did Joshua himself in his arduous warfare.

**Which Moses my servant commanded thee.** The particular commands of Moses here referred to are to be found in Deut. 5:32; 28:14, and 31:7, 8; and though originally delivered to all the congregation, yet here they are especially applied to Joshua, who, as leader, stood as the representative of the whole collective body of the people.

**Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.** Heb. אל תסור ממנו al tâsur mimmenu, turn not from him; i. e. from Moses; where his person stands for his writings. So our Saviour says, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets,' i. e. the words of Moses. **The metaphor is taken from a man's pursuing a journey, who goes straight forward in the direct road, if he knows it, without turning aside into by-paths that lead he knows not whither.**

**That thou mayest prosper.** Or, Heb. תשכיל tashkil, mayest do wisely, mayest deal or behave understandingly. The primary and most usual sense of the original is, to direct one's self wisely, to act with prudence and discretion, to be wise, intelligent, and thence secondarily, to prosper, to have good success. Thus 1 Sam. 18:14, 'And David behaved himself wisely (משכיל mashkîl) in all his ways; and the Lord was with him.' These two senses of the word are so intimately connected, that it is often difficult to determine precisely which of them is intended in a given passage. This very uncertainty, however, proves it to be clearly intimated, in the native import of the term, that real prosperity and success in the affairs of life, is the result of a wise, discreet, and prudent course of conduct, and inseparable from it, and that it is vain to look for it from any other source. Those only can reasonably expect the blessing of God upon their temporal affairs, who make his word their rule, and conscientiously walk by it in all circumstances; and this is the way of true wisdom.

**Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, 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.**

- **This book of the law** : De 6:6-9 11:18,19 17:18,19 30:14 31:11 Ps 37:30,31 40:10 Ps 119:42,43 Isa 59:21 Mt 12:35 Eph 4:29
- **shall not depart from your mouth** Ps 1:2,3 Ps 19:14 Ps 119:11,15,97,99 Pr 2:1-5 3:1 Col 3:16 1Ti 4:14-16
- **so that you may be careful to do** De 5:29,32,33 6:1-3 Mt 7:21,24 28:20 Lu 11:28 Joh 13:17 14:21 Jas 1:22-25 Rev 22:14
- [See more In depth comments on Joshua 1:8](#)
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Exodus 17:14+ Then the LORD said to Moses, **'Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua,** that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

Deuteronomy 31:9-11; 24+ (**THE BOOK OF THE LAW**) So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.....24 It came about, when **Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book** until they were complete,

Colossians 3:16+ (**A NT PARALLEL TO JOSHUA 1:8**) **Let** the word of Christ richly **dwell** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

## ONE OF THE KEYS TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY

Note that God has already told Joshua to obey and now he is going to tell him how to obey! God has shown Joshua their possessions, told him to prepare and now gives him the plan for taking the gift of the land, the key to victory and possessing Israel's possession.

Meditation upon the Word day and night is critical in the campaign against the powerful enemy forces - for Joshua this was the fierce godless Canaanites, but for believers it is the relentless attacks from the the godless [world](#), the fallen [flesh](#) and the deceptive [devil](#), all of which seek to steal, kill and destroy, seeking to prevent us from inheriting our promised life in Jesus.

**This book of the law** A reference to Scripture, specifically the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy, written by Moses and available to Joshua (cf. Ex 17:14; Dt 31:9-11, 24).

**Meditate** on it - To read with thoughtfulness, to linger over God's Word. The parts of Scripture they possessed have always been the main spiritual food of those who served Him, e.g., Job (Job 23:12); the psalmist (Ps 1:1-3); Jeremiah (Jer 15:16); and Jesus (Jn 4:34).

**F B Meyer** - We must **meditate** on the words of God, because it is through the **Word of God** that the **Spirit of God** comes in fullness to be the mighty occupant of our inner man. This, after all, is the secret of strength—to be possessed of the strong Son of God, strengthened by his indwelling might, and filled by his Spirit. (**Comment** - The only caveat I would make is that every believer has 100% of the Spirit, but the Spirit does not necessarily have 100% of us!)

Deuteronomy 31 talks about Moses' completing the book and committing it to the care of the priests, but it wasn't enough that the priests carried it around and protected it. Here we see that Joshua had to take the time to read it every single day, to make it a part of his inner person by meditating on it.

**Shall not depart** This word has deep meaning for Israel where God affirms His covenant with Abraham forever (Isa 54:10 59:21 Jer 31:36 Zech 3:9, 14:4)

**From your mouth** refers to the custom of muttering while studying or reflecting. . The ancient practice of reading aloud to oneself as an aid to memorization is in view here. "This book of the law [~Scripture] shall not depart from your mouth," ~ it should be the constant topic of your conversation. Why? "Because you shall meditate on it day and night." Now whatever you're thinking about all day and thinking about all night will show up in your conversation. So he's saying you ought to be dominated by the Word of God. It is the dominant thing in your life. Meditatively it becomes the dominating thing in your life conversationally. Then it's into action that he speaks so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. You meditate on it, you talk about it and pretty soon you begin to live it out. Then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have success. But you need to do according to all that is written in it. There are many Christians who can't do according to all that is written in it because they don't understand it. And that's why it's incumbent upon us to study the Scripture so that we can understand it so that we can do it so that we can be blessed and prosperous and have good success.

If the word is not to depart from Joshua's mouth, the implication is that when he speaks he is to proclaim God's Word to Israel. He is not only to have God's Word in him that he might meditate on it but he is to proclaim it because **there is power in the proclaimed/spoken word of God!** No Word from God is devoid of power (Lk 1:37ASV). God's Word is sharper than a two edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). God's Word is like fire (contrast Jer 23:28) and like a hammer which shatters a rock! (Jer 23:29). God's Word is like a sword the Spirit uses (Eph 6:17). There is power in speaking the very words of the Scripture. Have you used the Scripture as your battle-axe? Have you used this Word of God as a hammer to break the rock into pieces? Have you? Have you used it as your power of attorney when you go in to take the land that God Almighty has given unto you? We're to proclaim the Word.

**but you shall meditate on it** MEDITATE: HAGAH: Qal Perfect: Note the tense. When one continually mutters God's Word to himself, he is constantly thinking about it. Knowledge of God's law is not enough; one must also "be careful to do" what it commands, relying not on will power, but Spirit power to obey! Thus the perfect law of liberty is to control and direct all our thoughts and actions (as we think will determine how we act - cf Pr 23:7).

"Everything written in it" must be observed, because obedience to certain parts only is no obedience at all. When you study the Bible "hit or miss," you MISS more than you HIT. As the Epistle of James (Ja2:8-13) explains, such a practice shows respect for certain parts of the law only, but not for the Lawgiver. It's one thing to say to a leader, "Be strong and courageous." It's quite something else to enable him or her to do it. Joshua's strength and courage will come from meditating on the word of God, from believing the promises in it, from living in obedience to its precepts. Moses gave this same counsel to the entire nation back in Dt11 almost word-for-word. But now God is applying it specifically to Joshua.

**A W Tozer:** "Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it—meditate on the Word of God day and night. When you are awake at night, think of a helpful verse. When you get up in the morning, no matter how you feel, think of a verse and make the Word of God the important element in your day. The Holy Ghost wrote the Word, and if you make much of the Word, He will make much of you. It is through the Word that He reveals Himself. Between those covers is a living Book. God wrote it and it is still vital and effective and alive. God is in this Book, the Holy Ghost is in this Book, and if you want to find Him, go into this Book." ([Discipleship - Collected Insights from AW Tozer](#))

This passage is calling us to think "Biblically", reading and soaking in and reflecting on the word of God, so that we live "Biblically" in all we say and do.

**Day and night** - Dt 17:19,20 The Hebrew word for meditate is interesting---it means to mutter. We mutter under our breath, talk to ourselves, interact with issues. I think of the practice of the Jews even today who read the Scriptures aloud to themselves. You can see them at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, repeating the Scriptures aloud to the Lord and to themselves. The Jewish people even to this day love to discuss the Scriptures with each other and debate over Torah. That explains God's warning to Joshua here in verse 8 to not allow the book of the law to depart out of his mouth. There is a sense in which we are to engage in dialogue with our Bibles, and that goes way beyond a casual reading through the One Year Bible, or hearing a sermon once a week, or even being passively involved in some group Bible study on a weekly basis. This is talking to our Bibles. This image is of soaking in the Scriptures---intense, regular, personal engagement with the Scriptures---with the desire not just to gain information for its own sake, but to be guided and directed and controlled by God's revelation. We want it to keep us from wandering off in the wrong direction, from turning to the right hand or to the left, in the words of our text. We want it to enable us to succeed in the things that God desires for us.

**Guzik** - Joshua did not only need to read God's word. It had to be on his lips (shall not depart from your mouth), in his mind (meditate in it day and night), and he had to do it (observe to do according to all that is written).

**Adrian Rogers** - We are to ponder the Word of God. It's not simply enough to quote it; we are to turn it over in our minds. I never preach a sermon but I take the Word of God, and I chew on it, and I digest it, and I turn it over, and over, and over, in my mind; and, all night long, when I'm sleeping, I am preaching. Did you know that? All last night, before, while I was asleep, I was going over this scripture. And, I wake up, in the morning, conscious of the fact that the Word of God has been going through my mind, up and down through my mind—to ponder the Word of God; to meditate on it. This word meditate has the connotations and the overtone of our word humming. You know, do you ever go around with a little ditty in your mind—a little tune that you just can't get out of your mind, and you just hum it? It's a little tune you can't get out of your mind. The Word of God is to be like that. It's like something that you just hum, that you go over, and over, and just keep the Word of God in your heart and in your mind. You see, it must be absorbed in your system before it can do you any good. Some of you read the Bible and wonder why it doesn't do you any good. You remind me of that definition of **education**. Do you know education is? **Education** is that process by which the material in the professor's notebook gets into the student's notebook without going through the mind of either one. Meditation gives you knowledge about God; obedience gives you knowledge of God. There is no way to know God without obeying God. Let me give you a scripture from the New Testament. Let's just turn to it. Read John 14:21...if you will take the commandments of God and begin to keep those commandments, you're going to find out that the Lord is going to manifest Himself to you; the Lord is going to make Himself extremely real to you. And, the reason that God seems distant to some people and that all of this seems unrelated is that they don't keep the Word of God. The reason some people never enter into Canaan; the reason some people never have victory; the reason some people never know the land of corn and wine, the land of milk and honey, the land of figs and grapes and pomegranates, the land of towering mountains and streaming rivers, is that they do not obey the Word of God. (Excerpt from Sermon "God's Plan for Your Prosperity.")

Meditation gives you knowledge **ABOUT** God.

Obedience gives you knowledge **OF** God.



God's Word is not just to **INFORM** but to **TRANSFORM**!

God's Word is not to make you a **SMARTER SINNER**, but to make you **MORE LIKE JESUS**.

--Paraphrase of saying by Dr Howard Hendricks

**So that** (purpose clause) **you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it**- Kathab is the only general word for "write" and it is widely used (211x). According to R. K. Harrison, [Wellhausen](#) still in his day held that the Hebrews did not write before the times of the monarchy (Wellhausen did not seem to be able to read the literal text or better stated to believe the literal text!). Writing began among the Sumerians shortly before 3000 B.C. Hebrews in Palestine had a great advantage over the Egyptians and over those in [Mesopotamia](#) who wrote on [clay tablets](#). The Hebrews had an alphabet. Whereas one must know several hundred signs to read [Akkadian](#) ([See picture](#)) and also a large number to read Egyptian ([hieroglyphics](#)), the Hebrews only had to learn twenty-two.

**F F Bruce** writes that "It is worth noticing that it was the (HEBREW) alphabet that made it possible for all classes to be literate; its invention is therefore a landmark of great importance in the history of civilization." Of course the greatest value of Hebrew was to facilitate the spread of the knowledge of God's Word.

**For then** - Term of explanation. What's he explaining? The inestimable value of obedience to the Word of God.

**You will make your way prosperous** - generally expresses the idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of such success is God: "...as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2Ch 26:5). The root means to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended.

**Campbell** - To enjoy prosperity and be ... successful in the Conquest of Canaan Joshua was to do three things with regard to the Scriptures: (a) The Law was not to depart from his mouth; he was to talk about it (cf. Deut. 6:7); (b) He was to meditate on it day and night, to think about it (cf. Ps. 1:2; 119:97); (c) He was to do everything written in it, to obey its commands fully and to act by it (cf. Ezra 7:10; James 1:22-25). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - In our lives as Christians, success and prosperity are not to be measured by the physical, material standards of the world. The issue for us is spiritual blessing; spiritual prosperity. We can choose to set out on our own to become materially successful. In the words of our text, that would be turning to the right hand or to the left. But the reality is that we can achieve the goal and live to regret it. George MacDonald once said "In whatever a man does without God, he must **fail miserably** or **succeed more miserably**." It is possible to know physical and material success and yet be an absolute failure spiritually. Meditating on the Scriptures will help us evaluate our motives in decision-making with regard to success and prosperity. We will learn to ask ourselves the right questions out of the word of God.

Am I totally committed to the will of God in this action, this choice, this endeavor? Am I relying completely on the Spirit of God to empower me, or am I trusting my own resources? Am I serving for the glory of God? If I can answer those questions with a yes, then my ministry, my activity, my relationships will be successful in God's eyes, no matter what people think and no matter what the physical, material outcome is.

**And then** - Continues the narrative explaining the value of obedience to God's Word.

**You will have success** ([sakal/sākhāl](#)) - This is the true "prosperity gospel!" It is not speaking of material success as much as spiritual success. The Hebrew word for success is translated in the Lxx with Greek word [sunesis](#) meaning understanding, and means to put together the pieces and make sense out of a set of facts presented to one's mind. It's the idea of putting "2" and "2" together so to speak and thus describes the ability to assess a situation and decide what practical course of action is necessary. And in the context of Joshua 1:8 this "ability" is integrally related to the constant intake, meditation and practice of the pure milk of God's Word.

**THOUGHT** - Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) said "**God's work done in God's way will not lack God's supply**." Note God's sovereignty interacting with man's responsibility. God's presence and power is essential for success in His work (cf Jn 15:5), but men must also work in His (Spirit's) power according to His revealed will. It is easy to fall into the trap of substituting human wisdom and understanding for simple, unhesitating obedience to God's Word.

**Dale Ralph Davis** - There is no escape! Indeed, the [Torah](#) should be our delight (cf Ps 1:2+). Life in the kingdom of God must be lived out by the Word of God. Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3+ alike tell us that a life pleasing to God does not arise from mystical experiences or warm feelings or from a new gimmick advocated in a current release from one of our evangelical publishers; no, it comes from the Word God has already spoken and from obedience to that word. ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))



**Donald Campbell** - Joshua's life demonstrates that in a practical way he lived according to the teachings of the Law of Moses, the only portion of the Word of God then in written form. This alone explains the victories he achieved in battle and the success that marked his entire career. In one of his farewell addresses to the nation just before he died he urged the people to live in submission to the Scriptures (Josh. 23:6+). Tragically they heeded this charge for only a short time **ED: SEE Judges 2:8-12+**). In succeeding generations the people of Israel refused to be guided by God's authoritative revelation, and they all did what they chose (Jdg 21:25+ = *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*). Rejecting an objective standard of righteousness (**ED: GOD'S HOLY WORD**), they chose a subjective one characterized by moral and [spiritual relativism](#). (**ED: [What is moral relativism?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)**) This in turn plunged the nation into centuries of religious apostasy and moral anarchy (**ED: THE BOOK OF JUDGES IS ONLY 21 CHAPTERS BUT COVERS ALMOST 300 YEARS OR ~25% OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!**). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Irving Jensen** - The charge to Joshua is filled with lessons for Christians on enjoying spiritual success and prosperity. Successful living is a promise of God, a gift of God, attainable by the help of God. Its potentialities are enormous, waiting only to be appropriated. Enemies of the soul--Satan, the world, and the flesh--need to be driven out, but they are enemies of God, and so He promises all the help needed for conquering them. The condition laid to the Christian is costly but absolutely necessary: living in constant obedience in the light of God's Word. The blessings of victorious living come by invitation to the Christian, but the conditions for its fulfillment come by mandate. Christians, like Joshua, cannot escape the divine words loud and clear: "Have not I commanded thee?" (1:9).

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**Success** (prudent, wise) (07919) [sakal/sākhāl](#) primarily means to act with insight, to be prudent, to give insight, to teach, to prosper, to consider, to ponder, to understand, to act prudently, to act with devotion. The primary sense of [sakal/sākhāl](#) is to be **prudent**, which means "marked by wisdom or judiciousness, shrewd in the management of practical affairs, marked by circumspection." One who manifests prudence is more likely to have success.

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### The Key to "Good Success" -- Woodrow Kroll

Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

The Key to Good Success - My local newspaper reported that a man and woman who tried to hop a Union Pacific train from North Platte, Nebraska, to Omaha were being held in Dawson County jail on trespass charges. But the couple wouldn't have gotten to Omaha even if they hadn't been apprehended; the train was headed to Kansas City.

Many people who think they're on the train headed for success are really going in the opposite direction. History is awash with examples of men and women who found a form of **success**, but lived to regret it. It was not what the Bible calls **"good"** success (**ED: KNOCK OUT AN "O" = "GOD SUCCESS"**). [Lord Byron](#), who achieved fame both as a poet and a [libertine](#), wrote at the age of 35 (**ED: HE DIED SOON AFTER AT AGE 36, HARDLY A "GOOD SUCCESS!"**):

My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone.

God's success is far different; it's always headed in the right direction. Joshua was assured that if he lived consistent with what was written in God's Word, he would achieve success--but not just any success. God's promise to Joshua, as well as to you and me, is that if we live by all that is written in the Bible, we will achieve "good" success.

The key to **good success** is obedience to God's Word. If you conform your life to God's will, as it is revealed in His Word, you'll experience the kind of success that will be a blessing rather than a burden. Only a good God can give good success. (**ED: AND HE ALWAYS DOES SO TO THE ONE WHO EXHIBITS "GOOD OBEDIENCE!"**)

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**Brian Harbour** - If they followed the law, Joshua explained, "Then you will be prosperous and successful" (1:8). Some proponents of the health and wealth Gospel have used this verse as their justification for suggesting that if we just have enough faith, God will bless us materially and physically. That goes beyond the meaning of this verse. This verse is simply a reminder that we have been made for a certain kind of living, a kind of living outlined in the parameters of the Ten Commandments, and living within these parameters will enable us to experience life as God intended it to be.

C. S. Lewis captures this idea in his usual succinct style in Mere Christianity: "A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run

properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”

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### Even on the Golf Course January 30

Those needing strength often turn to Joshua 1:1–11, a potent passage given to Joshua as he assumed the leadership of Israel : Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people. ... As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. ... Be strong and of good courage. ...

Tom Lehman, PGA Tour Player of the Year in 1996, has often spoken of this verse. He came to Christ in high school when a friend invited him to a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting. After playing golf in college, he joined the PGA Tour briefly but didn't play well enough to continue. In 1991 he won three tournaments on the Ben Hogan Tour and was named Player of the Year, qualifying him again for the PGA Tour.

Then in 1995, he got a scare. Doctors discovered precancerous colon polyps. Tom and his wife got down on their knees and committed the matter to God. Joshua 1:9 sustained him : Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Surgery was successful, and Lehman resumed his golf.

The following year, he and Steve Jones were playing the 18th hole during the final round of the U.S. Open. Both men longed to win their first major championship, and they were tied for the lead. The situation was tense, but the men calmed themselves by quoting Scripture to each other, Lehman reminding Jones of Joshua 1:9.

Jones won out by one stroke. But, remembering his verse, Tom shook off the discouragement and entered the British Open. He arrived in England quoting Joshua 1:9 to himself. This time, he won a two-stroke victory.

“In every difficult situation,” he said, “even on the golf course, I remember Joshua 1:9.”

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Robert Morgan - [From This Verse](#))

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**Meditating upon God's Word**— Joshua had just succeeded Moses in the leadership of the nation Israel. Moses had led the nation for 40 years and had the benefit that all the wisdom and culture of Egypt and the king's household could provide. Moses was a seasoned, multitalented man who had walked closely with God. Joshua, by contrast, was relatively untried. He was assuming an awesome responsibility in taking command of two-and-a-half million people. If anyone needed a formula for success, Joshua did. Likely there were many well-meaning people with all kinds of advice and formulas to help Joshua in the seemingly impossible task that lay ahead. What comfort and assurance it must have been as the Lord (Yahweh) spoke directly to Joshua, assuring him of His presence with him as He had been with Moses (Jos1:5), and giving him the key to success—meditating upon God's Word. Joshua is to meditate upon the Word of God day and night (i.e., at all times), and is promised (1) prosperity and (2) good success in the God-given task that lies ahead. Reading and memorizing God's Word provide the basis for meditating upon God's Word. You meditate upon the Word of God by rehearsing its thoughts over and over in order to understand its implications for the situations of life. Meditating upon the Word of God will guarantee prosperity and success in the new life.

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**This book of the law:** That is, by way of emphasis, 'the book of the law,' the law of Moses, to which, as he well knew, God attached the utmost importance, and of which he speaks as if it were at that moment in Joshua's hand, or at his side, as it continually ought to be.

**Shall not depart out of thy mouth.** Thou shalt constantly read and ponder it; it shall incessantly employ thy lips; thou shalt have thy heart so constantly imbued with its letter and spirit, that thy mouth shall, as it were, overflow with its rich contents, as 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' The same phrase occurs but once elsewhere in the Scriptures, Is. 59:21. 'As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever;' where it is implied that the covenant promise should be deemed so precious, that it should be a perpetual theme of

meditation and discourse; that it should constantly dwell on the tongues of those interested in it. It is moreover implied, in this charge to Joshua, that he was not only to make the book of the law the subject of assiduous study for his own personal benefit, but also to make it the sole rule and standard of all his public and official proceedings; he was to issue orders and pronounce judgments according to its precepts, and that too without exception or reserve—he must ‘do according to all that is written therein.’ Though appointed to the rank of supreme head and magistrate of the nation, he was not to consider himself elevated in the slightest degree above the authority of the Divine law, or the necessity of consulting it; nor should any Christian magistrate at this day consider himself at liberty to dispense with the light which beams from the word of God, in regard to the great matters of his duty. The higher any man is raised in office, the more need has he of an acquaintance with the sacred oracles, and the better will he be qualified by the study of them for the discharge of his arduous duties.

**Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** This is the character of the good man as described by the Psalmist, Ps. 1:2, in words which are almost an exact transcript of those here employed. The Heb. term for ‘meditate,’ (הגהן hâgâh) implies that kind of mental rumination which is apt to vent itself in an audible sound of the voice. See my Comment, on Ps. 1:2.

**Make thy way prosperous**—have good success. Two different words are here employed, the latter of which is the same with that remarked upon above, v. 7, and which should probably be rendered here also, ‘do wisely,’ ‘conduct understandingly,’ as otherwise it is little, if any thing, more than a bare repetition of the preceding phrase. The Arab. renders it, and thy ways shall be directed.

**Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."**

- **Have:** De 31:7,8,28 Jud 6:14 2Sa 13:28 Ac 4:19
- **Be strong:** Jos 1:6,7
- **Do not tremble:** Ge 28:15 De 20:1 Ps 27:1,2 Jer 1:7,8
- **for the Lord:** Ps 46:7 Isa 43:1,5
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE THIRD CALL TO COURAGE

**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed - NET** has "Don't be afraid and don't panic." The task Joshua faced was huge and he was as human as any man, and God Who knew his heart, knew he needed re-affirmation.

**For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go-** The "for" explains why Joshua could obey the exhortation to **not tremble or be dismayed**. The answer? God's presence. Of course Joshua still had to fight, but he fought with a Mighty Warrior at this side.

God's Presence is the Difference Maker

-- Paul Apple

I love the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary when he appeared to her and told her about how God wanted her to give birth to the Savior of the world, and she asked the very logical question, "How can an unwed teenage girl get pregnant?" Gabriel's response was this (American Standard Version, 1901): "For no word from God shall be void of power." (Lu 1:37+) The very word that God speaks has in it the power of fulfillment. Our call is to trust God's word and walk in obedience to it. For Joshua, in the twenty-five years (plus or minus) that are to come, whenever he faced enemy opposition and was tempted to be afraid (he was human!), he would recall these truths to mind that he has been personally commissioned by the Almighty God Who promised to provide all the resources (especially His presence) necessary to fulfill the task. Whenever things went wrong---and they did---he would be tempted to be dismayed, but could claim the presence and power of the God who commanded him and the influence of the word of God upon which he had meditated. Joshua will allow the encouragement of God to invigorate him over and over again.

**THOUGHT** - What are you being called of God to arise and do today? What obedience to truth is required of you? How has God personally commissioned you to serve him and His people? Is there someone in whose giant shadow you will be serving, a loved leader you're being asked to follow, perhaps as a Sunday School teacher, staff person, or whatever? If none of these questions connects with you, then you have a different issue to deal with. It might mean that you're idling in neutral---gradually sliding backward, losing ground in your spiritual journey. Perhaps the call to you is to stand up and step out. Maybe it means saying, "Okay, Lord, what do you want me to do? What do you want me to possess? What do you want me to move into?" I pray that

you're encouraged by this text, that it strengthens you and gives you a [brave heart](#) (one of my all time favorite movies!)

**Campbell** - Joshua probably had times when he felt weak, inadequate, and frightened. Perhaps he considered resigning before the Conquest even began. But God knew all about his feelings of personal weakness and fear and told Joshua three times, Be strong and courageous (vv. 6–7, 9; cf. v. 18). God also urged him not to be afraid or discouraged (cf. Deut. 1:21; 31:8; Josh. 8:1). These charges with their accompanying assurances (God's promise, God's power, and God's presence) were sufficient to last a lifetime. Believers in all ages can be uplifted by the same three assurances. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - The final encouragement, repeated from Joshua 1:5, reminds us that Joshua's success did not depend solely on his ability to keep God's Word. It depended even more on God's presence with him.

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**Tremble** (dread, cause terror, shock) ([06206](#)) **arats** means to cause to tremble, to be alarmed, to be terrified, to dread, to be struck with awe or dread. Isaiah says the splendor of the majesty of Jehovah make the earth tremble (Isa 2:19, 21). Deuteronomy and Joshua repeatedly reminded the Israelites before battle to not fear because God would be with them - Dt. 1:29; Dt 7:21; Dt 20:3; Dt 31:6; Josh. 1:9). Each time, Israel was admonished not to fear the nations who dwelt in the Promised Land, and each admonishment was followed by a reason for the maintenance of courage.

**Arats** - 15v - Deut. 1:29; Deut. 7:21; Deut. 20:3; Deut. 31:6; Jos. 1:9; Job 13:25; Job 31:34; Ps. 10:18; Ps. 89:7; Isa. 2:19; Isa. 2:21; Isa. 8:12; Isa. 8:13; Isa. 29:23; Isa. 47:12

The Septuagint of Joshua 1:9 uses the verb **deiliao** which means to be cowardly, timid, afraid, and is used once in the NT commanding His disciples (INCLUDING US TODAY - WHO LIKE JOSHUA WOULD BE ENTERING INTO MAJOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE!) "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **Do not let** your heart **be troubled** ([tarasso](#)), nor **let it be fearful** (both **verbs** = [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))." (Jn 14:27)

**Dismayed** (discouraged; Lxx translates in Josh 1:9 with [phobeo](#) - be afraid)([02865](#)) **chathath** basically refers to breaking or shattering like a boe (Jer 51:56) or ground cracked by drought (Jer 14:4). This idea of shattering is used figuratively of God shattering nations (Isa 7:8). It can also mean to fright or terrify (Isa 30:31, Job 7:14). The first use in the OT is God's word through Moses to Israel - "See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or **be dismayed**." (Deut. 1:21) The second use is similar Moses charging Joshua at his commissioning "The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Dt 31:8) This same Hebrew word is used two more times in Joshua...

Joshua 8:1 Now the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear or **be dismayed**. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

Joshua 10:25; Joshua then said to them, "Do not fear or **be dismayed**! Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight."

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**ILLUSTRATION - FEAR** - One of the great preachers of Scottish Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century was John Livingstone (1603–72). When he was a young man in his twenties he doubted whether he had a call to the ministry; he had a great fear that God had not set him apart to that work. When he was twenty-seven years old he still had no ministerial charge. A neighbouring minister one day engaged him to preach on a Sunday at his church in Shotts. The morning of the sermon Livingstone had such a fit of fear and panic that he sought to flee before the service. He took heart, however, knowing that fleeing would show distrust for God, and **courageously** went forth and preached on Ezekiel 36:25–26. Five hundred people ascribed their conversion to that sermon.

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### Joshua 1:9 Step Into The River Is Wide - Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

**Knowing** and **doing** are two different things. One can know what to do and fail to do it because of fear. At times, obedience is incomplete due to fear.

The Israelites were concluding 40 years in the wilderness due to fear (Nu 13:31-33). What they saw as impossible kept them from doing what God had wanted (and promised was possible!). Now the nation was once again on the brink of entering the land. A new leader stood before them. His frequent challenge was, "**Be strong and courageous**." That phrase is repeated four times in chapter 1 (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9 and 18) and expressed in slightly different terms in other verses. It was time to move out. They knew what they were to do and now they were to do it! Notice what happened next. The spies brought back an encouraging report (Joshua 2) and the people prepared to move out. Their first steps, though, were into a flooded river-where their sandals were to meet the mud, so to speak. "Be strong and courageous" was put to the test when they stepped into that dangerous river. But they obeyed and God

blessed (Joshua 3:15-16).

There will be times in our life of obedience that our courage will be tested.

Be ready to step into the river.

God is faithful even when the river is wide.

"Today and every day, Lord, give me the courage to obey.

I need the strength You give."

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#### **QUESTION - [Does God's promise to Joshua and Israel in Joshua 1:9 apply to us?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In Joshua 1:9, God commanded Joshua, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Does this promise apply to Christians today?

In one sense, the promise in this passage was specific to Joshua's role as leader of the Israelites as he took them into the Promised Land. Joshua had a tremendous task to fulfill after the death of [Moses](#)—the responsibility of leading an entire nation into a new land. God's words of boldness and encouragement served as an important message to strengthen Joshua as the leader of God's people.

While the promise that God would be with Joshua was specific to Joshua, the principle extends to us today. First, God expects His followers to live strong and courageous lives. In the New Testament, we find the apostle Paul telling Timothy, "The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7). In Acts 1:8 Jesus told His followers, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

In addition to living bold and courageous lives as Christians, we are called to live without fear. Jesus taught, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). When Paul was imprisoned, he wrote, "Because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear" (Philippians 1:14). While there is a sense in which we are called to fear God, meaning to live in respect and reverence of Him, Scripture is clear that we are to live with confidence in God's promises and power.

Third, the reason we can live courageously and without fear is that God is with us wherever we go. What God commanded Joshua is also seen in the [Great Commission](#): "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Also, we have the promise of Hebrews 13:5: "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

In summary, while the promise of Joshua 1:9 was specific to Joshua, the principle is affirmed elsewhere in Scripture as applicable to all believers today. God calls us to live courageously, without fear, knowing that God is with us at all times. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **Charles Swindoll - Stay in the Kitchen Joshua 1:9**

NOT LONG AGO I was reading through Psalm 78 when my eye fell upon verse nine. I was intrigued by the strange stroke of the psalmist's pen. See if you get the same vibes:

The warriors of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned their backs and fled on the day of battle. (Ps 78:9)

Like foxes hunted by hounds, they ran. The only weapon they used to restrain the enemy was a cloud of dust they stirred up as they retreated en masse, in a hurry, while "armed with bows." What an indictment! When these trained fighters should have charged with confidence into the fray of conflict, instead, they fell back in fearful retreat. They caved under pressure. They allowed fear to override their confidence and they turned tail and ran. How sad! Yet that's how many believers respond in the heat of their own time of adversity and struggle.

Notice, though, what the Bible says should be our attitude in battle:

This is my command —be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. JOSHUA 1:9

Are you facing some difficult challenge today? Don't run! Stand still . . . and refuse to retreat. You are under command to "be strong and courageous." Look at it as God looks at it and draw upon His power to hold up under the blast. Sure, it's tough. Nobody ever promised you a rose garden.

I've never been much of an admirer of Harry S. Truman—but I did, at times, appreciate his gristle. The political battle often raged during his presidency, and on one occasion he responded to it with the words:

If you don't like the heat, get out of the kitchen!



I've not met anyone who was able to stay strong without some time in the heated kitchen. The Ephraimites cut and ran as soon as things heated up. My advice is a slight revision of President Truman's: stay in the kitchen so you can learn how to handle the heat! ([Good Morning, Lord . . . Can We Talk?](#))

**COMMENT** - In fairness to Ephraim it is notable that the great general **Joshua** was from the tribe of Ephraim, so not all of the Ephraimites were retreaters!

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### Joshua 1:9 Woodrow Kroll - Strong and Courageous

**Strong and Courageous** - A child had to walk each evening past a dark, spooky house. Some adult friends tried to give him courage. One handed him a good-luck charm to ward off the ghosts. Another installed a light at a particularly dark corner near the house. A third took a more spiritual approach, saying, "It's sinful to be afraid. Trust God and be brave!" It was good advice, but not much help. Then one friend said with compassion, "I know what it is to be afraid. I'll walk with you past the house." Instantly the child's fears were gone.

This was what God did for Joshua. Joshua faced the fearful task of leading a group of nomads against the trained armies of established kingdoms. That was enough to make even the bravest man tremble. But God did more than give Joshua a battle plan or a pep talk; He reassured him, saying, "I will be with you wherever you go."

God does not promise He will not lead you into fearful situations. He may call you to serve Him in a land far from your friends and family. For most of us this challenge could be frightening. Or God may ask you to stand against the tide of popular opinion on your school board or at a city council meeting. And again your knees may knock and your voice tremble. But just like Joshua, you can do it because God also has given you the solution for your fears: He has given you Himself.

In Christ you have strength for every weakness and the courage for every fear. The psalmist said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [literally, the valley of dark shadows], I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4 - [Spurgeon note](#)). Are you facing a formidable task? Trust God's presence to dispel your fears and give you renewed strength and courage.

Courage is spelled C-H-R-I-S-T.

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**Have not I commanded thee?** I, whose authority is paramount, whose power is infinite; who am able to carry thee through all difficulties and dangers, and whom thou art bound implicitly to obey. So in the Christian warfare, it is the God of heaven whose battles we fight, and in whose service we are engaged. Were it only an earthly monarch to whom we had devoted ourselves, we ought to serve him with all fidelity; what then should we not do for the King of kings, who has not only chosen us to be his soldiers, but has himself taken the field for our sakes, to subdue our enemies, and to deliver us from their assaults?—It should be remarked, that the interrogative form of speech is often used, not as implying any thing doubtful, but as the most emphatic mode of expressing either a negation or affirmation, particularly when the speaker wishes to rouse and excite strongly the attention of the hearer. Instances are innumerable.

**The Lord thy God is with thee.** Here is somewhat of a remarkable change in the persons, from the first to the third, but whether with any peculiar significance it is not easy to determine. The Chaldee renders it in reference to the Son, 'The Word of the Lord thy God shall be with thee.' Considered as a pledge of the presence and support of the God of heaven with all his faithful people, in their trials and conflicts, the promise is full of precious meaning. He says to us, in effect, what he says to Joshua; and what encouragement can we desire more?

### Joshua 1:10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

- **the officers of the people:** The {shoterim,} or officers, were different from the {shophetim,} who were the judges among the people. The {shoterim} have been supposed to be subordinate officers, whose business it was to see the decisions of the {shophetim} carried into effect. Calmet conjectures, that the {shoterim} here may have been the heralds of the army. Jos 1:10
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life



## JOSHUA STEPS UP TO THE PLATE!

**To step up to the plate** means to take responsibility for something that must be accomplished! Joshua proves himself to be a man UNDER authority, the authority of the Captain of the Hosts (Joshua 5:15+), by obeying without delay.

**THOUGHT** - Do you (I) obey God's commandments without hesitation like Joshua? Remember, God has given him these commandments in the context of impending warfare. Obedience was critical to assure Israel's military victory over their strong enemies. Are you experiencing victory over your supernaturally strong enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)? If you are not, could it be that you are delaying to obey some critical command from your Captain (Joshua 5:15+)? If so, confess, repent, return and obey (1Jn 1:9+, Rev 2:4-5+), for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus then to **trust and obey**! If you want or need a little exhortation to fight the good fight of faith (1Ti 6:12+), invest 50 minutes of eternity and listen to Charles Haddon Spurgeon's powerful message [Driving Out the Canaanites and Their Iron Chariots](#). I can assure you, you will not regret your "investment"!

Joshua immediately gets things organized for the project of possessing their inheritance.

**Then** - Don't miss this "expression of time"! When is "**then**?" Clearly the context (Josh 1:9 and preceding passages) shows that this "**then**" is after Yahweh has given Joshua His word of encouragement and exhortation.

**THOUGHT** - This is why it is so important for us to DAILY (Mt 4:4+, Dt 8:3+ not periodically or sporadically) be **IN THE WORD**, for there is no other way to get God's encouragement and exhortation **INTO US** beloved. Dear soldier of the Cross (2Ti 2:3-4+) you receiving your "marching orders" each morning before you go out into the battlefield of this godless, [devil](#)-controlled (1Jn 5:19+) [world](#)? If not, then you should not be surprised at the "wounds" you receive during the day, for your enemy is relentless and continually prowls "around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1Pe 5:8+). In the same way our fallen flesh is continually firing into our minds, those seductive "[fleshly](#) lusts which (present tense - continually) wage war against the soul." (1Pe 2:11+) "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But **victory belongs to the LORD**." (Pr 21:31)

**Joshua commanded the officers** ([shoter](#) - see same word in Nu 11:16) **of the people, saying** - Joshua commanded by the Captain of the hosts (Joshua 5:15+), now faithfully passes on His commands to the **officers** (or leaders) of Israel. We see herein Joshua's faithfulness to His Lord and His Word and his confidence (cf strong and courageous) to take charge, speaking God's commands with a "[ring of conviction](#)."

The Septuagint translates **officers** ([shoter](#)) with the word [grammateus](#), the word used for scribes in the NT, those who were well versed in the Law. It was also used of a chief executive officer of a governmental entity.

**Donald Campbell** makes an excellent point that "this situation closely paralleled the dilemma Moses and the Israelites encountered at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:1-31+). In both cases the obstacle occurred at the beginning of the leaders' ministries. Both were impossible to overcome by natural means. Both demanded implicit trust in and absolute dependence on God's miracle-working power." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Brian Harbour** - Despite his fear and uncertainty, Joshua nevertheless acted in obedience to God's commands. He didn't hesitate. He didn't wait for someone else to lead the way. Joshua took the initiative himself. This is one of the competencies that characterizes leadership—the willingness to take the initiative.

**Matthew Henry Concise** - Verses 10-15. Joshua says to the people, Ye shall pass over Jordan, and shall possess the land; because God had said so to him. We honour the truth of God, when we stagger not at the promise of God. The two tribes and a half were to go over Jordan with their brethren. When God, by his providence, has given us rest, we ought to consider what service we may do to our brethren.

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**Commanded the officers of the people.** Heb. שְׂטָרִים shoterim. These were under-officers, subordinate to the שְׂפָטִים shophetim or

judges, whose duty it was to see to the execution of the orders of the heads of the people, whether Moses, Joshua, or his successors the Judges. Deut. 16:18; 20:5–9. The original is usually rendered γραμματεῖς, scribes, in the Gr. version. See Note on Ex. 5:6, where the import of שטררים shoterim is more fully discussed.

**Officers (07860) shoter** describes a scribe, an official, a magistrate, a record keeper, and an officer. The word is used primarily to denote an officer or overseer. **TWOT** says **shoter** "is a general term, widely used for an official in many areas of government and society. It names the Jewish sub-officials under the Egyptian overseers who drove the Hebrews to hard labor (Exodus 5:6, 10), being accountable for both the amount and quality of the work (Exodus 5:14-19). During the years of wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 11:16), it designates the sub-officials of the seventy elders of Israel whom the Lord gave to Moses to share the weight of administration (Deut. 1:15). Throughout the early days of Israel, they seem particularly attached to the elders, sometimes in the civil administration (Deut. 31:28) or in matters relative to military affairs (Deut. 20:5ff.; Joshua 1:10; Joshua 3:2). The position apparently continues into the united and divided monarchies where they are involved in military affairs (1 Chron. 27:1; 2 Chron. 26:11) and as Levites, in judicial and religious matters (1 Chron. 23:4; 1 Chron. 26:29; 2 Chron. 19:11; 2 Chron. 34:13)." (Patterson)

### Questionable Separation - Theodore Epp - Joshua 1:10-18

Joshua 1:10-18 - A rather sad note enters in with regard to some of the tribes of Israel. They did not all have the same degree of separation from the evil around them or the same degree of surrender to God. The background for this lies in the fact that while Moses was still leader, the Israelites conquered some of the kings on the east side of Jordan and took possession of their lands (Dt 3:1-13, Dt 2:24-37)

It was good land with strong, walled cities (Dt 3:5) and a countryside ideal for the raising of cattle. Two and a half of the tribes, **Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh** asked to stay on that side of the Jordan. It must be said on behalf of these two and a half tribes that their warriors were willing to help the other tribes take the land across the river and possess it. But the Reubenites and Gadites wanted to return to the other side of Jordan where things were more appealing to the eye and where there was ease, comfort, plenty and riches as the world would look at it. They tasted of the blessings of the Promised Land and helped the others to secure it, but they themselves longed for the world--its pleasures and indulgences--and were eventually trapped and ensnared by it. This is always the danger of those who would live on the border and not get into the land. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1<sup>+</sup>).

**Joshua 1:11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.'"**

- **three days:** Jos 3:2 Ex 19:11 2Ki 20:5 Ho 6:2
- **you are to cross this Jordan:** De 9:1 Dt 11:31
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Joshua 3:1-3+ Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed. 2 At the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp; 3 and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

Deuteronomy 9:1+ "Hear, O Israel! **You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations** greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven,

Deuteronomy 11:31+ "For **you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to possess the land** which the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall possess it and live in it,

**PREPARE PROVISIONS  
TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSION**

**Pass** through the midst of the camp and **command** the people, saying, '**Prepare** provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess ([yarash](#)) the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess ([yarash](#)) it' - Note 3 commands, two for the officers and the third for the officers to the people. Possession of their promised possession called for preparation. Note the verbs **prepare**, **cross**, **go in** (he could have just said cross, but they were not to just get to other side and stop, but were to move forward - let the soles of their feet step on the ground and) **possess**, with emphasis of **possess**. Note also the pattern for victory given here and repeatedly emphasized throughout the Bible - Man's Responsibility and God's Sovereignty. Man must fight, but God gives the victory!

**THOUGHT** - Each day of the believer's life introduces a new spiritual battle (or battles plural). And as with Israel, it behooves the Christian soldier to cross over into this God hating world having prepared for the battle! Begin with the Word (Joshua 1:8) and prayer to prepare in order to prevent defeat by your strong spiritual foes. **Be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Lord and the strength of His might (Eph 6:10+). Remember the words in Zechariah 4:10 "Not by might nor by power, but **by My Spirit**," says the LORD of hosts." Strong in His Spirit, not strong in self!

**Adrian Rogers** adds "It's time for a change of diet. It's time to get away from this desert diet, it's time to move into Canaan, it's time to possess our possessions. It's time to have all that our Lord God has promised us and so Joshua says, "Prepare...victuals" (Joshua 1:10KJV). What's he talking about? Well, he was talking in that day about physical food, but the spiritual application is that we're going to have to have a change of diet. We're going to have to start feasting on the Word of God like we've never feasted on it before. **Listen, if you want to inherit Canaan you'd better start feeding on the Word of God and I'm not talking about twinkles, I'm talking about beefsteaks!** I'm not just talking about nick knacks, sandwiches, hors d'oeuvres or appetizers. I'm talking about going down deep, and getting into the Word of God, and letting the Word of God get into you and nourish you until you are strong in The Word. Prepare as if you are going to possess your possessions. You see, there is a call to preparation. Now, you know what some of you are apt to do? You're apt to listen only so long and then tune me out. I heard of an old Arab who was traveling through the desert. He was weary at the end of the day so he got down off his camel and sat down on the sand cross-legged, got his little knapsack and pulled out three dates. That's all he had for his meal that evening. Then he got his lamp, and lit his lamp in the darkness, and he took the first date, and held it under the lamp, and opened it, and there was a worm in it so he threw it over his shoulder. He reached in the knapsack, took out the second date, opened it, and looked, and there was a worm in that one. He threw it over his shoulder. He reached in his knapsack, got the last date and leaned over, blew out the lamp and ate it. Now, do you know what happens so many times when the light of God's Word shines upon our *desert diet* and shows us just what it is rather than obeying the Word of God? **We blow it out and keep on eating the same thing** Now, listen, are you going to hear the Word of God today or are you just going to say, "Well, ha, ha. Rather than obeying it I'll just ignore it." Friend, that's your privilege, that's your privilege. You can ignore what I'm saying today, but I'm telling you, dear friend, that if you want to possess your Canaan, you had better make preparation, you'd better prepare. You'd better get in the kitchen and start preparing something from the Word of God that will nourish you because an army travels on it's stomach and this is especially true about God's army. ([Joshua - God's Call to Conquest](#))

**Ryrie** on **within three days**. The mission of the spies (chap. 2) apparently took place before this command to prepare was given. What is described in 3:2 may be the same as in 1:11 or may have followed it.

**Utley** has an interesting note on **three days** - This seems to be the period required for ritual purification (cf. Exod. 19:10–11) as well as time for preparation of food and for travel. It referred to the remainder of the day on which it was spoken and all of the next day and part of the succeeding day (cf. 3:2).

**Guzik** applies **three days** to believers - The waiting for God is often the most difficult part for us, but days of waiting are always days of preparation in God's work. There is no wasted time with God.

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**Prepare you victuals.** The Heb. term צֶדָה *tzēdah*, prey, from צֹד *tzūd*, to hunt, primarily and properly denotes that which is taken in hunting. But the usage in several places proves that it is taken with more latitude, and implies provisions in general. In the present instance it doubtless refers somewhat widely to the subsistence, technically termed viaticum, such as the corn, oxen, sheep, &c.,

which they were now enabled to obtain in the more inhabited region which they had reached. For although the manna was their main dependence during their sojourn in the wilderness, yet they do not appear to have been forbidden to supply themselves with other kinds of food when they had an opportunity, Deut. 2:6, 28; and at this time, when they had come into a land inhabited, where they could procure such provisions, it is probable that the manna did not fall so plentifully, or they did not gather so much as previously, so that they were now commanded to lay in a store of other eatables to supply the deficiency. Certain it is, however, that the manna did not entirely cease falling till they had entered the land of Canaan, and eaten of the old corn of the land, ch. 5:12.

**Within three days.** Heb. בעוד שלשת ימים within unto three days. The exact import of the Hebrew is not easily determined, and it is variously rendered in the versions. The Chal. which Kimchi approves, has 'at the end of three days;' the Lat. Vulg. 'post triduum,' after three days; Luth. 'über drei Tage,' over three days. The prevailing sense of γοι, denoting time not yet elapsed, favors the rendering in our version, but Winer and others suppose the phrase will admit the sense of three days complete. The probability we think is, that the passage over the Jordan was not made till after the lapse of three days, and that it took place on the fourth: the three days, therefore, here mentioned, are to be reckoned exclusive of that on which the proclamation was made, ch. 2:22; 3:1. Or, as the original for 'shall pass,' is literally 'shall be passing,' it may mean simply, that within the space of three days they should have broken up from their present encampment, and commenced their march, although the actual passage of the Jordan may not have occurred till a day or two afterwards. The confidence with which Joshua speaks of the event, shows the undoubting character of his own faith in the promise of God. Augustin thinks that Joshua acted too much on his own responsibility in fixing the definite period of three days for passing the river. But it is not to be supposed that he would order a step of this nature without being prompted by Divine dictation. This was no doubt a part of the instructions now given him, though not expressly recorded.

**Which the Lord your God giveth you.** Heb. נתן nothên, is giving; i. e. is even now in the act of giving. It would tend greatly to animate the faith and zeal of the people, and to secure their vigorous co-operation, to see God, as it were, girding himself to the work, and actually putting forth his power in the execution of his promises. It would not do for them to be remiss when omnipotence was visibly engaged in their behalf. This language would teach them too that the result was not to be brought about by their own strength, and, consequently, that they could not take the glory of it to themselves.

To possess it. Heb. לרשתה lerishtâh, to inherit it; i. e. not only to occupy it as something which had happened to come into their possession, but deriving their right from the grant of the Supreme Proprietor of heaven and earth, to enter upon as if they had received it by inheritance from their forefathers. Viewed in this light the language is peculiarly expressive.

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**Provisions** (06730)(tsedah) means a supply of something such as food, especially food provided for people on a journey. Preparing a supply of food was part of the preliminaries for warfare as here in Joshua 1:11 and then with Gideon in Jdg 7:8 (cf Jdg 20:10). **Used in 9v** - Gen. 42:25; Gen. 45:21; Exod. 12:39; Jos. 1:11; Jos. 9:11; Jdg. 7:8; Jdg. 20:10; 1 Sam. 22:10; Ps. 78:25

**Possess** (03423) **yarash** to take possession of, inherit, dispossess, to drive out. Possession of the land was directly connected to a person's relationship with the Lord; breaking the covenantal relationship led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3). In Israel's history the root takes on its double force, to inherit and to dispossess, in relationship to the covenant. God made a covenant with Israel that they would become his own special people (e.g. Ex 19:5f.). A major benefit on Israel's side was the promise of an inheritance, namely a land where they could develop into a holy nation (Genesis 15:8; Exodus 6:8). Israel, however, became a people in Egypt before they occupied a land. Therefore to become a nation they had to gain possession of a land. They left Egypt, agreed to the covenant at Sinai and then proceeded to take Palestine as their possession. However, forty years passed between Sinai and the first successful attempt at conquest.

In Joshua 1:11 the Septuagint translates **possess** with the verb [katecho](#) which means to hold fast.

**Uses of yarash in Joshua** - Jos. 1:11; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 8:7; Jos. 12:1; Jos. 13:1; Jos. 13:6; Jos. 13:12; Jos. 13:13; Jos. 14:12; Jos. 15:14; Jos. 15:63; Jos. 16:10; Jos. 17:12; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 17:18; Jos. 18:3; Jos. 19:47; Jos. 21:43; Jos. 23:5; Jos. 23:9; Jos. 23:13; Jos. 24:4; Jos. 24:8;

**Joshua 1:12 To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,**

- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses - overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**EXHORTATIONS TO THE TRIBES  
SETTLING EAST OF JORDAN**

**Davis** gives an interesting analysis of why so much of chapter 1 is devoted to the two and one-half tribes writing - One might think there is little theological meat in these verses, but when they are read in light of Numbers 32 they take on new significance. When the two (or two and one-half) tribes request Moses to assign them an inheritance to the east of the Jordan, Moses suspects that their query hides a fresh conspiracy to abort the fulfilment of God's promise. In a flash of white heat he lambastes them as a 'brood of sinful men' (Num. 32:14), apparently content to possess their land now, sit out the Cis-jordan conquest, allow the other tribes to fend for themselves, and thus to discourage and dishearten (Num. 32:7) the majority of God's people. So, Moses says, there will be another Kadesh-barnea! Numbers 13-14 all over again! It is in the light of the peril of rebellion against Yahweh that the unity of God's people becomes so crucial (Num. 32:16-27). Now perhaps we can see why the unity of all Israel portrayed in Joshua 1 was so critical. Here Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh are models of willing obedience and instruments of encouragement. Indifference on their part or snubbing their noses at the western tribes would have discouraged and disheartened the rest of God's people and led to rebellion and unbelief ([Joshua: No Falling Words Focus on the Bible](#))

**To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said-** This is the second group Joshua addressed, for they had received their inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan. It would be tempting for them to not join their brethren and cross the Jordan, so Joshua exhorts them to assist their brothers. Read of their prior commitment in Numbers 32:16-32 and Deut. 3:12-20.

**Alan Carr** - Now, Joshua addresses the tribes of Reuben, Gad and that half tribe of Manasseh. These tribes had sought, and gotten, permission from Moses to remain East of the Jordan, just outside the promised land. Their reason in making this request? The land east of Jordan was a land that was good for raising cattle, Num. 32:1, 4, 16. Still, Joshua reminds them that they had promised to fight alongside their brethren until the land was conquered, Deut 3:12-20+. These people are challenged to remember their promise and to aid the nation until victory was secured. While these people settled in a land of prosperity, they were also in a land of danger. Years later, when the Assyrian army attacked from the East, these tribes were the first to go away into captivity.. Folks, there is a very powerful lesson for us in these verse. We have literal legions of Christians who are just like these 2 ½ tribes. They are more concerned about **making a living** than they are about **making a life**! The primary thing that motivates them is getting ahead in life. In other words, they are materially minded instead of spiritually minded! These people represent those Christians I would call "borderline Christians". These are people who have trusted Jesus for salvation, but that is about as far as they are will to go. (**ED:** They need to read and heed 2Co 13:5+) They will come when they want to, tithe when they feel like they can afford to, fight a battle now and again, but most often, they are seen just playing around the edges, refusing to put God first in their lives. By the way, it is this type of Christian who is usually the first to fall in times of attack and temptation! People who live like this can say anything they want to, but the truth is obvious: they have others gods in their lives to whom they have sold their souls! (cf Mt 6:24+) If you really love God this morning, then how about deciding to cross on over today! Make the decision to leave behind anything that is holding you back from serving God like you should. You can rationalize it all you want to, but the truth still remains, many are choosing gold, and other worldly things, over God! If you refuse to line up with the will of God for your life, then you can be assured of the fact that one day, you will fall. My friends, you cannot play around the edge of this long before you fall out. Illustration - Eutychus—Acts 20:9.) ([Joshua 1:1-18 This Land Is Our Land](#))

More Christians today living on the wrong side of the Jordan River –  
closer to the wilderness wanderings than the land flowing with milk and honey  
-- Paul Apple

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

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**12. To the Reubenites, and to the Gadites.** Heb. ולראובני ולגדי velârubeni velaggâdi, to the Reubenite, and to the Gadite; the collective singular for the plural, a very common idiom of the original, particularly in speaking of tribes and nations; as if the whole body, from their intimate union, were regarded as one person. This is a peculiarity of the Heb. language, which is of almost incessant occurrence, and as it necessarily escapes the notice of the English reader, though in many cases important to be known, we shall usually indicate it wherever met with.

**Remember the word which Moses, &c.** This engagement on the part of the two tribes and a half, is detailed with all the circumstances attending it, Num. 32:1-42; and it was proper here to remind them of it, as, otherwise, having arrived at the place of their settlement, they might be induced to seek their own ease, by remaining with their wives and families in the rich and fertile region of which they had come into possession.

**The Lord your God hath given you rest.** The two tribes and a half had already received their possessions on the East of Jordan,



as we learn from Num. 32:33. These precise words do not occur in the address of Moses to the two tribes and a half, but the sense of them does, and Joshua intended, doubtless, merely to quote the substance of what Moses said. The phrase 'hath given you rest,' perhaps merely implies that they were now brought to a place of rest, rather than a positive state of rest, which they could hardly be said to enjoy till they had subdued their enemies. They were at rest, however, in contradistinction from journeying, and in this sense the original word is often employed.

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**Alan Redpath:** Look through the terrifying record of the consequences of that choice made by those two and half tribes. Read 1 Chronicles 5:1-26. You will discover that these tribes, who had tasted of God's best and enjoyed God's victory, who had led the army of the people of God into the land of blessing, were the first to be captured by Assyrians when they invaded Israel. Taken captive, they never returned. They went down to defeat and into bondage, even though at one time they had led the people of God in the way of blessing. Judges 5:16 says this: "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." I should think there were! They chose, they tasted of blessing, they had entered into the land of promise, but they hankered after the world, its pleasures, its indulgence, and its sin, and they were trapped and caught and ensnared in it. ([See note on Redpath's book on Resources](#))

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**QUESTION - [Why did Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh want to live on the east of the Jordan?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Israelites were poised to enter Canaan. Before they crossed the [Jordan River](#) and moved west, God spoke to Joshua some words of encouragement. Included was a promise of even more land later (Joshua 1:4). For the time being, though, the land they would inherit would be west of the Jordan (Joshua 1:2). Yet, even before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the tribes of [Reuben](#), [Gad](#), and the half-tribe of [Manasseh](#) had already staked out their claim—they chose to settle east of the Jordan.

Numbers 32:1 reveals one reason why these tribes wanted the land east of the Jordan: "The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock." The land east of the Jordan River was seen as a prime area for raising livestock.

At first, Moses was opposed to the idea of some tribes staying east of the Jordan. He thought these tribes were attempting to avoid helping their fellow Israelites in the military campaign to subdue and settle Canaan. However, these tribes responded with a pledge to help: "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. But we will arm ourselves for battle and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place" (Numbers 32:16–17). These tribes kept their promise and helped their brothers in the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 22:1–4).

Upon receiving the tribes' pledge, Moses accepted their request to settle the land east of the Jordan. Numbers 32 concludes with a description of the land meted out: "Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of [Og king of Bashan](#)—the whole land with its cities and the territory around them" (Numbers 32:33). Sihon and Og, whose kingdoms were east of Jordan, had been defeated earlier, and their land was assigned to the two and a half tribes.

In his final blessing on the tribes of Israel, Moses gave this blessing to Gad, one of the tribes that settled east of the Jordan: "He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled, he carried out the LORD's righteous will, and his judgments concerning Israel" (Deuteronomy 33:21). The land east of the Jordan was a choice area and a blessing to those who lived in it.

Moses' blessing also included positive words concerning Joseph, the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. The words apply to the lands where both tribes of these brothers would settle, including the land east of the Jordan. In Deuteronomy 33:13–16 we find, "May the Lord bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield; with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush."

There was a strategic reason for Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh to request the land east of the Jordan, and the Lord blessed them in their inheritance. Thus, God's blessing extended even beyond the Jordan River. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 1:13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land.'**

- **Remember:** Jos 22:1-4 Nu 32:20-28 De 3:18
- [Rest in the Bible](#)
- Dr Walter Kaiser's excellent summary - The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 130

- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 3:18+ "Then I commanded you at that time, saying, 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess it; all you valiant men shall cross over armed before your brothers, the sons of Israel. (Read Nu 32:20-28)

Nu 32:25, 31-32+ The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, **Your servants will do just as my lord commands...** 31 The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the LORD has said to your servants, so **we will do.** 32 **"We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan,** and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan."

## THE KEY WORD REMEMBER!

**Remember** ([zakar](#)) the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land. - In the Septuagint **remember** is a command ([aorist imperative](#)). Their response in Joshua 1:16-18 indicates that they had not forgotten the former stipulations that must be fulfilled before they could fully enjoy their inheritance (see Nu 32:16–32; Dt. 3:12–20).

**THOUGHT** - Note that **REST** is given preeminence over **LAND** (how true: what one possesses can never give true rest and in fact usually ends up possessing the possessor & making him restless!). Moses understood **REST**...he had prayed to God in Ex 33:13+ for His presence and God answered in Ex 33:14+ that Moses would have His presence and that His presence included **REST** (in Septuagint [katapauo](#) = cessation from activity. When you enter His presence, you enter His rest! Lord, I pray Thee, let the reader enter Thy presence and thus Thy holy refreshing rest. Amen. How sweet His presence is as David say in Ps 16:11 "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fullness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever."

**Uitley** on "the LORD your God gives you rest" This was referred to in Deut. 3:18–20. The term "rest" (BDB 628, KB 679) is used in the sense of

#### 1. a resting place

- a. Exod. 33:14
- b. Deut. 3:20
- c. Josh. 1:13, 15; 22:4
- d. 1 Chr. 23:25
- e. Isa. 63:14

#### 2. freedom from enemies

- a. Deut. 12:10; 25:19
- b. Josh. 23:1
- c. 2 Sa 7:1, 11
- d. 1 Chr. 22:9

**Remember** (record, mention) ([02142](#)) **zakar** means to recall, call to mind or to be brought to remembrance. The first use of zakar is wonderful for it says "God remembered Noah" remembering His covenant (Ge 6:18),

**Rest** ([05117](#)) **nuach/nuah** means to rest or pause and as noted from the many ways it is translated (see list of words below), nuach has many uses in the OT. **Nuach** essentially conveys a basic sense of absence of movement and of being settled in a particular place with overtones of finality. The first use in Ge 2:15 describes how God **"put"** Adam in the Garden. The next use describes a physical setting down of something (Ge 8:4, cp 2Sa 21:10, Ex 10:14, Josh 3:13). The Septuagint translated the Hebrew for **rest** with the verb [katapauo](#) which is used in Hebrews 4:8+ referring to the rest (from warfare) obtained under Joshua.

**Nuach/nuah uses in Joshua** - Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 3:13; Jos. 4:3; Jos. 4:8; Jos. 6:23; Jos. 21:44; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 23:1

**Joshua 1:14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them,**

- **in battle array** Ex 13:18
- **the valiant:** De 20:8 Rev 17:4
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TRUSTING THE LORD TO GUARD THEIR FAMILIES

**Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan-** This would require them to trust the Lord and His watchcare and protection of their families on the eastern side of the Jordan while they were at war on the western side of the Jordan

**But you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them-** Note the phrase before your brothers (**NET** = ahead of your brothers), indicating they were to be the "[vanguard](#)" of the military expedition!

[Utley](#) on **battle array** - This (BDB 332) seems to come from the Arabic root which means "in a group of five" and possibly refers to the marching order of the army (cf. 4:12; Exod. 13:18; Num. 32:17; Jdgs. 7:11). The order would be (1) the advanced guard; (2) the main body; (3 and 4) two flanks and (5) a rear guard. This is similar to the marching order of the Egyptians (Rameses II) which shows the historicity of these accounts. Moses was trained at Pharaoh's court. The tribes whose families were safe and settled had to go into battle first (i.e., #1). "**valiant warriors**" This term is used several times in Joshua to describe the soldiers (cf. Joshua 6:2; 8:3; 10:7; Jdg. 6:12; 11:1).

[Guzik](#) - **you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them:** This same principle operates in the Body of Christ. When one member has a need, it is the common need of the body (1 Corinthians 12:25–26). We should never refuse to help a brother in need because our own state is settled.

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**Your wives, your little ones, &c.**, Heb. טַפְּכֶם tappekem, your babe, collect. sing. for plural.

Ye shall pass before your brethren. That is, as the original implies, ye shall pass or cross over before, or in the presence of, your brethren. It does not appear to signify that they should take the front rank or lead the van, for such an intimation respecting them is nowhere else clearly given; but simply that they should not absent themselves; that they should be present with their brethren, united with them in the expedition. The Heb. phrase is often used in this sense.

**Armed.** Heb. חֲמִשִּׁים hamashim, marshalled by five. Of the import of this expression, see Note on Ex. 13:18, where it is rendered harnessed

**All the mighty men of valor.** Not absolutely all the fighting men of these tribes, but the choice of them, the most active, bold and energetic; for as there were only forty thousand of them that passed over, ch. 4:13, while the whole number of warriors was far greater, Num. 26, it is evident that a large body of them must have remained on the other side of the Jordan, to take care of the women, children, and flocks. Probably as many at least as seventy thousand, as the sum total of the men in those tribes able to bear arms was upwards of one hundred and ten thousand. See Num. 26:7, 18, 37.

**Joshua 1:15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."**

- **Until:** Nu 32:17-22 Ga 5:13 6:2 Php 1:21-26 2:4
- **then** Jos 22:4-9 1Co 12:26 13:5
- [Rest in the Bible](#)

- Dr Walter Kaiser's excellent summary - The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 130
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
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**Until** - Note it does not say "If" but "until" indicating Jehovah will give them rest from war.

**The LORD gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them** - Note twice we see it is Yahweh Who is the great Giver, of rest and the land.

**Then** - Time phrase. When God had given the other tribes rest in the land.

**you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise** - They had fulfilled their promise which allowed them to enjoy their land toward the sunrise, the eastern side of the Jordan.

We read of the culmination of this **"then"** in Joshua 22:4-9

And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan. 5 "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him **with all your heart and with all your soul.**" 6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents. 7 Now to the one half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other half Joshua gave a possession among their brothers westward beyond the Jordan. So when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, 8 and said to them, "Return to your tents with great riches and with very much livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, iron, and with very many clothes; divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers." 9 The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned home and departed from the sons of Israel at Shiloh which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession which they had possessed, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

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**Until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you.** That is, until he hath brought them to their place of rest; for it could not strictly be said of either company, that the Lord had given them rest, until they had so far conquered their enemies as to be in no danger of being henceforth seriously molested by them. But that was, at this time, by no means the case with the two tribes and a half, nor have we reason to suppose, in respect to the others, that the mere putting them in possession of the promised territory would be 'giving them rest,' as long as their enemies remained in great numbers unsubdued. We are led therefore to understand from this expression, simply the bringing them to, or planting them in, a place of rest. The actual enjoyment of the rest was a matter of subsequent favor.

**Toward the sun-rising.** The East; as 'toward the going down of the sun,' signifies the West

**Joshua 1:16** They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

- Nu 32:25 De 5:27 Ro 13:1-5 Tit 3:1 1Pe 2:13-15
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 32:25 The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands.

Deuteronomy 5:22-29 "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. 23 "And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 "You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 'Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die. 26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 'Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and **we will hear and do it.**' 28 "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, '**I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.** 29' **Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever.**

### ENCOURAGING AFFIRMATION FROM THE 2.5 TRIBES

**They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go-** This is almost like a covenant renewal. The words of their lips did not prove to be "lip service," but life action. Israel had previously said "we will hear and do" (Dt 5:27), but sadly they heard but failed to do! They failed to obey the Word of the Lord and suffered the disciplining hand of the Lord. One can only imagine what went through Joshua's mind as he heard their affirmation - Would they be like their forefathers, or would they trust and obey?

**THOUGHT** - Isn't this the question for all of us? We have heard the good Word of the LORD. We have said in our head and with our lips "I will do it." And then temptations come like a hurricane and sweep our will away and we fall into sin and are defeated in the spiritual battle. And we fall into despair and discouragement. We ALL (your writer especially) need to not just HEAR but also HEED, now enabled by the Holy Spirit Who indwells us, God's Temple, so that "by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.." (Ro 8:13+). Yes, the battle is the LORD's, for He is the only One Who can defeat our inveterate mortal enemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). And yet we are responsible to fight. And so in Romans 8:13 we see the supernatural power is from the Spirit, but this calls for a daily, continual choice of our will (even that enabled by the Spirit giving us the desire to put sin to death - Php 2:13NLT+) to fight the good fight of faith (trust in God's Truth, God's Provision), and slay the sin that so easily seduces us when we fail to rely on the enabling supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. This begs two questions - As you read this note are you being filled with (controlled by) the Spirit?" (Eph 5:18+). And are you walking by the Spirit, because if you are, then (and only then) can you win the battle and refuse to fulfill the desires of your fallen flesh! (Gal 5:16+). Canaan is a land of real military warfare. Christianity is a life of real spiritual warfare!

[Guzik](#) - Here we see Israel in the kind of unity as a nation that was essential to fulfill God's calling and promise for them. They overcame the temptation to see the eastern tribes as separate from the rest of Israel.

**Matthew Henry Concise** - Verses 16-18. The people of Israel engage to obey Joshua; All that thou commandest us to do we will readily do, without murmuring or disputing, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. The best we can ask of God for our magistrates, is, that they may have the presence of God; that will make them blessings to us, so that in seeking this for them, we consult our own interest. May we be enabled to enlist under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, to be obedient to his commands, and to fight the good fight of faith, with all that trust in and love his name, against all who oppose his authority; for whoever refuses to obey him must be destroyed.

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**And they answered Joshua.** This, as some conceive, was not the answer of the two tribes and a half only, but the response of the whole host, who thus concurred heartily with them in their solemn engagements. It is not unlikely that such were the real sentiments of the entire congregation; but it seems more natural, from the connexion, to understand it of those who were directly addressed.



They afterwards received the testimony of Joshua, as having fully complied with all their stipulations, ch. 22:2–4.

**All that thou commandest us we will do, &c** Thus are we required to swear allegiance to Christ, the Captain of our salvation, the Christian's Joshua, and to bind ourselves to do what he commands us by his word, and to go wheresoever he sends us by his providence.

**Joshua 1:17 "Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses.**

- **Only may the LORD:** Jos 1:5 1Sa 20:13 1Ki 1:37 1Ch 28:20 Ps 20:1,4,9 118:25,26 Mt 21:9 1Ti 2:1,2
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPIRITUAL AMNESIA

**Just as we obeyed Moses in all things** - Woe! Aren't they having a little spiritual amnesia? **None** of the 12 tribes obeyed Moses **in all things**! Yes, this was the Second Generation of Israel out of Egypt, but even this generation disobeyed while camped in the plains of Moab, awaiting orders to enter the land! Read the sordid tale of their disobedience in Numbers 25:1-18+.

**So we will obey you** - They had good intentions and in fact they did join the other 9.5 tribes to fight the enemies in Canaan.

**Only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses** - Note **your God** which implies they understand that Joshua has a personal relationship with Jehovah. Notice also that this declaration is like a prayer for their leader Joshua. At the very least it is certainly a **benediction**. They are right to recognize that the triumphs under Moses' leadership were because of the fact that Jehovah was with him. And so they are right in recognizing that Joshua needed to depend on the same God if they were to experience victory.

**Donald Campbell** feels like "there was one condition: they were willing to follow Joshua if he showed clear evidence that he was being led by God (v. 17). This was a wise precaution and one to be carefully followed lest Israel's leaders turn out to be false prophets or "blind leaders of the blind."" ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

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**According as we hearkened unto Moses, &c.** As we obeyed Moses. Nothing is more common than this sense of the word 'hearken' in the sacred writers. If it be asked, how this language is to be reconciled with the declaration of Moses himself in regard to their conduct under him, Deut. 9:24, 'Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you,' we answer, that neither the words of Moses, nor of the people, are to be understood as holding good universally, and without any exception. They were sometimes rebellious, and sometimes obedient. What they mean is, that they would be as obedient to Joshua as they ever were to Moses, when they did obey him, when they were in their best moods; as obedient, in fact, as they should have been to Moses, and as many of them generally were. The literal rendering of the original is, 'According to all (in) which we hearkened to Moses, so will we hearken to thee.' This perhaps limits the point of comparison to those cases in which they were actually obedient, and excludes those in which they rebelled.

**Only the Lord thy God be with thee, &c.** Chal. 'The Word of the Lord thy God be for thy help, as he was for the help of Moses,' &c. This is not to be understood as a condition, or limitation of their promised obedience, as if they should say, 'We will obey thee as far as we perceive the Lord is with thee, but no farther,' but rather as an earnest prayer in behalf of Joshua, that he might constantly enjoy the Divine guidance, protection, and blessing; q. d. 'Do not fear for us. Be assured of our constant obedience. Be solicitous mainly for thyself. This is the matter of our anxiety, that the Lord would be with thee, and prosper thee in all things.' To pray fervently for those in authority over us, is the surest way to render them blessings to us and to the communities in which we live.

**Joshua 1:18 "Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."**

- **who rebels against your command and does not obey:** De 17:12 1Sa 11:12 Ps 2:1-6 Lu 19:27 Heb 10:28,29 12:25
- **shall be put to death:** Ro 13:1-5
- **only be strong and courageous:** Jos 1:6,7,9 Ezr 10:4 1Co 16:13 Eph 6:10
- Joshua - Portrait of the Man God Uses- overview of Joshua's life
- Joshua 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EVEN THE 2.5 TRIBES ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

**Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death** - This declaration indicates their wholehearted commitment to follow Joshua. Note that the "definition" of a rebel in this passage is one who did not obey all Joshua had commanded. They were leaving no "[wiggle room](#)" in their affirmation of obedience. It was to be total OR ELSE!

[Utley](#) - Obedience was the key to covenant fidelity and military victory. The consequences of disobedience were terminal!

**Only be strong and courageous** - And here the tribes are so committed that they even give Joshua two commands, the fourth time these commands have been given in Joshua 1.

**Be strong and courageous** - 10x in 10v in the OT - Dt. 31:6; Deut. 31:7; Deut. 31:23; Jos. 1:6; Jos. 1:9; Jos. 1:18; Jos. 10:25; 1 Chr. 22:13; 1 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 32:7

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 1](#)

**Review by Cyril Barber on George Bush**- Bible students, whether laypeople or pastors, should eagerly acquire the writings of this fine biblical scholar and for their own edification and enrichment read what he wrote. ([The Minister's Library - Vol 2](#) [The Minister's Library - Vol 3](#))

**That doth rebel against thy commandment.** Heb. אשר ימרר את פִּיךָ asher yamrēh eth pika, that doth rebel (against) thy mouth; i. e. the word or commandment of thy mouth. Perhaps in this they had an eye to what Moses had said respecting the Lord's raising up a prophet like unto himself, and to whose word they were to hearken under the severest penalty, Deut. 18:18, 19. They might have supposed this prediction to be fulfilled in the appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor, without knowing, at the same time, but that it might have an ulterior fulfilment at some subsequent period, in a yet more illustrious personage.

**Only be strong and of good courage.** The original for 'only' (רַק rak) might perhaps be better rendered 'therefore,' as it undoubtedly means, ch. 13:6, when speaking of the land that remained to be possessed. God promises to drive out the inhabitants, and therefore commands Joshua to divide it to the Israelites for an inheritance.

## DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO JOSHUA 1

### Joshua 1:1-7 Much Trouble

I will not leave you nor forsake you. —Joshua 1:5

A young boy named Riley started a fight with Avery on the school playground after a soccer match. The teacher broke it up, and both boys were sent to the principal's office. Later, Avery said, "And of course, like always, we both got in trouble." But he shared that he learned a lesson: "God is always with us, even if we get in as much trouble as this."

The nation of Israel was in big trouble. Yet the Lord promised the nation's new leader: "I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). Joshua was taking over leadership of the Israelites after Moses' death, just before they were to enter the Promised Land. Trouble was on the horizon with numerous military campaigns against their enemies coming up (Josh 8:3; 9:1-2). Without God's presence, they couldn't begin to acquire the land.

Joshua had a strong faith in the Lord, as seen when he spied out the land of Canaan (Num. 14:6-9). But God graciously gave him the reminder as he took over the leadership role that he could be courageous because of His presence. He promises the same to His children today (Heb. 13:5-6).

It's a comforting lesson for God's children of all ages to know: The Lord is always with us. Even when we're in "as much trouble as this."

Dear Lord, we're so thankful to be Your children,  
and that You'll never leave us.  
Help us to hold on to that promise when  
trouble seems to threaten on every side. Amen.

When troubles call on you, call on God.

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### Joshua 1:1-9 Recipe For Success

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night . . . Then you will have good success. —Joshua 1:8

Wrinkled noses and puckered lips—sometimes this is my family's reaction to my cooking, especially when I'm trying something new in the kitchen. Recently, I had a breakthrough with a unique version of macaroni and cheese. I jotted down the ingredients and tucked the recipe away for future reference. Without that set of instructions, I knew the next batch would be a flop.

Without God's instructions, Joshua would have failed at leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. The first step was to "be strong and of good courage" (Josh. 1:6). Next, he was to continually meditate on the Book of the Law, and finally, he was to do everything it said. As long as Joshua followed the directions, God promised him "good success" (v.8).

God's "recipe for success" can work for us too, but His idea of success has little to do with money, popularity, or even good health. In the original Hebrew, "then you will have good success" means "then you will act wisely." Just as God called Joshua to walk in wisdom, He wants us to "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (Eph. 5:15).

As we take courage in the Lord, feast on His Word, and obey Him, we have a recipe for godly success that's better than anything we could cook up on our own.

You will surely find at the journey's end,  
Whatever the world may afford,  
That things fade away, and success is seen  
In the life that has served the Lord.  
—Anon.

Obedience to God's Word is the recipe for spiritual success.

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### Joshua 1:1-9 His Part - Our Part

"Arise, go over this Jordan...I will not leave you nor forsake you." - Joshua 1:2,5

Whenever the Lord assigns us a difficult task, He gives us what we need to carry it out. John Wesley wrote,

"Among the many difficulties of our early ministry, my brother Charles often said, 'If the Lord would give me wings, I'd fly.' I used to answer, 'If God bids me fly, I will trust Him for wings.'"

Today's Scripture tells us that Joshua was thrust into a position of great responsibility. No doubt the enormity of the challenge before him made him tremble with fear. How could he ever follow such a great leader as Moses? In his own strength it would be impossible to lead the people into the Promised Land. But along with the marching orders, the Lord gave him an assuring promise: "I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). Then He said, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh 1:9). Such reassurances were the backing Joshua needed.

If God has given you some special work to do that frightens you, it's your responsibility to jump at it. It's up to the Lord to see you through. As you faithfully do your part, He will do His part. - R W De Haan

I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,  
O'er mountain, or plain, or sea;  
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,  
I'll be what You want me to be.

- Brown

Where God guides, God provides!

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### **Joshua 1:2 Look Both Ways**

Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise. —Joshua 1:2

During our church's annual New Year's Eve Communion service, we say this prayer together: "Father, we surrender this past year and give it up to You. We give You our failures, our regrets, and our disappointments, for we have no more use for them. Make us now a new people, forgetting what lies behind and pressing on toward that which lies ahead of us.

"We give You all our hopes and dreams for the future. Purify them by Your Spirit so that our wills shall truly reflect Your will for us.

"As we stand on the threshold of another year, encourage us by our successes of the past, challenge us by the power of Your Word, and guide us by the presence of Your Holy Spirit."

In every transition, it's good to look both ways. When Joshua assumed leadership of Israel, God told him to consider the past and the future: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them" (Joshua 1:2). Then He promised, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. . . . Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh 1:5,9).

With confidence in God, we can look back and look ahead, then walk boldly into a new year.—David C. McCasland

Forgive us, Lord, for failures past,  
Then help us start anew  
With strength and courage to obey  
And closely follow You.  
—Sper

The victories of the past give courage for the future.

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### **Joshua 1:1-9 Mindless Prayer**

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. —Joshua 1:5

Sometimes I am ashamed of my prayers. Too often I hear myself using familiar phrases that are more like mindless filler than thoughtful, intimate interaction. One phrase that annoys me, and that I think might offend God, is "Lord, be with me." In Scripture, God has already promised not to leave me.

God made this promise to Joshua just before he led the Israelites into the Promised Land (Josh. 1:5). The author of Hebrews later claimed it for all believers: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5). In both cases, the context indicates that God's presence has to do with giving us the power to carry out His will, not our own will, which is generally what I have in mind in my prayers.

Perhaps a better prayer would be something like this: "Lord, thank You for Your indwelling Spirit who is willing and able to direct me in the ways You want me to go. May I not take You where You don't want to go. May I not enlist You to do my will, but humbly submit to doing Yours."

When we are doing God's will, He will be with us even without our asking. If we're not doing His will, we need to ask for His forgiveness, change our course, and follow Him.

God Himself is with thee—  
Thy Savior, Keeper, Friend;  
And He will not forsake thee,  
Nor leave thee to life's end.  
—J. D. Smith

May our prayers not be mindless, but instead mindful of God's will.

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### **Joshua 1:9 Equipped for the Task**

"Be strong and of good courage; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

I was in England during World War II working as a surgical technician in an army hospital when I heard the shocking radio announcement: "Franklin Delano Roosevelt is dead!" I was saddened and troubled. Was Vice President Harry Truman qualified to be President?

I was relieved when I heard him say that he felt as if an enormous weight had fallen on his shoulders and that he desired people everywhere to pray for him. This reassured me that he humbly recognized his inadequacies and his need for God's help.

Few of us will ever be thrust into a position of leadership with duties of that magnitude, but most of us know the feeling of inadequacy in the face of great responsibility we are about to assume. It might be that of taking on a new job, getting a promotion at work, choosing a spouse, becoming a parent, or accepting a new ministry in Sunday school or church.

When we face a new challenge, we can take courage from the Lord's words to Joshua 1:9. We can accept our opportunity as from Him and believe that He will give us all we need to do it well. If we meditate on His Word, obey it, prayerfully rely on Him, and work diligently, He will do the rest. He will equip us for the task.—H. V. Lugt

The Lord will give you help and strength  
For work He bids you do:  
To serve Him from a heart of love  
Is all He asks of you.

God's call to a task includes His strength to complete it.

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### **Joshua 1:1-9 Trust The Compass**

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. —Psalm 32:8

An old sailor repeatedly got lost at sea, so his friends gave him a compass and urged him to use it. The next time he went out in his boat, he followed their advice and took the compass with him. But as usual he became hopelessly confused and was unable to find his way back. Finally he was rescued by his friends.

Disgusted and impatient with him, they asked, "Why didn't you use that compass we gave you? You could have saved us a lot of trouble!"

The sailor responded, "I didn't dare to! I wanted to go north, but as hard as I tried to make the needle aim in that direction, it just kept pointing southeast." He was so certain he knew which way was north that he stubbornly tried to force his own personal conviction on his compass.

After the death of Moses, God spoke to Joshua just before he led Israel into the Promised Land. The Lord reminded Joshua of His law and told him, "Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (Josh. 1:7).

Those who follow God's instructions and warnings are spared the waste of foolish wandering and the heartache of shipwreck and ruin. We must ask God to point the way. Then let's trust the compass of His Word.

All the way my Savior leads me—  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy,  
Who through life has been my Guide?  
—Crosby

To know God's will, trust His Word.

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### **Joshua 1:1-9 Inconvenient Or Important?**

Go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them. —Joshua 1:2

Modern society emphasizes efficiency and convenience but minimizes interaction among people. For example, a person using the phone may hear recorded messages: "For account information, press 1." "At the tone, leave a message." "For flight information, press 2."

Although we may think life would be easier if we didn't have to deal with troublesome, time-consuming relationships, God calls us to operate from a different perspective. As followers of Christ, we are to remain in the people business.

When Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel, God commanded him, "Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to



the land which I am giving you” (Josh. 1:2). I might have questioned the Lord, “This group has a terrible track record. Wouldn’t it be easier to leave the complainers and second-guessers behind? Isn’t it my job to conquer the land?” But the Lord had said, “You and all this people.”

In God’s way of doing things, people are never a means to an end; they are the end. Inefficient and inconvenient? Frequently! Unimportant and unnecessary? Never!

Do we treat the people in our lives as inconveniences? Or as important individuals we need and love?

Important as your task may be,  
That work you must fulfill;  
Be sure you keep the human touch  
If you would do God’s will.  
—DJD

People are at the heart of God’s heart.

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## Joshua 1:1-9 Leadership Lessons

Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. —1 Timothy 4:12

You are a leader. Yes, you! You may not be the president or manager of an organization, but you will be called on to lead others.

Do you teach Sunday school? You’re a leader. Are you a parent? You’re a leader. Have a job? You’re a leader. Have friends? You’re a leader.

No matter who you are, others are looking at you and being influenced by your example. As you think about this awesome responsibility, what should you do? Someone has said that a good leader is one who “knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

Joshua was like that. He knew the way because God had told him. He went that way by being obedient to the Lord, and he showed the way by providing servant-leadership.

Look specifically at what God told Joshua:

- Be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:6).
- Obey all of God’s laws for living (Joshua 1:7).
- Think often about what God has said (Joshua 1:8).
- Remember that God is with you (Joshua 1:9).

We need to keep these lessons of leadership in mind, because people are following our example. If we learn them well, we will know, go, and show the way that pleases God—and we will be good leaders.

Christians, remember you bear His dear name,  
Your lives are for others to view;  
Living examples—men praise you or blame  
And measure the Savior by you.  
—Anon.

Leaders who serve will serve as good leaders.

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## Joshua 1:1-9 On Shoulders Of Giants

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. —Joshua 1:5

Giants hold a special place in our lore—both historical and literary. From the real giant Goliath to the fictional giant of Jack and the Beanstalk fame, we are fascinated by these larger-than-life characters.

Sometimes we use the word giant to honor ordinary-size people who have done extraordinary things. One example is the 17th-century physicist Sir Isaac Newton. A committed Christian, he credited his success to other “giants” who had gone before. “If I have seen a little further,” he said, “it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” Indeed, Newton became a giant on whose shoulders later scientists stood—even as they used his observations in the conquest of space flight.

When God commanded Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, Joshua certainly had a giant's shoulders to stand on. He had watched Moses' leadership for 40 years, and now he would put what he had learned into action.

Joshua had another advantage—his walk with God sustained his life's mission. Therefore, he had both Moses' example and God's promised presence as he led Israel.

Looking for help as you face the future? Look for a giant to follow. And never underestimate the importance of your walk with God.

There is a destiny that makes us brothers:  
None goes his way alone;  
All that we send into the lives of others  
Comes back into our own.  
—Markham

A good example is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

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### Joshua 1:1-9 Anchors In The Storm

The Lord your God is with you wherever you go. —Joshua 1:9

When Matt and Jessica tried to navigate their sailboat into a Florida inlet during Hurricane Sandy, the craft ran aground. As the waves crashed around them, they quickly dropped anchor. It held the sailboat in place until they could be rescued. They said that if they had not put down the anchor, "We would have lost our boat for sure." Without the anchor, the relentless waves would have smashed the vessel onto the shore.

We need anchors that hold us secure in our spiritual lives as well. When God called Joshua to lead His people after Moses' death, He gave him anchors of promise he could rely on in troubled times. The Lord said to him, "I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. . . . The Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:5,9). God also gave Joshua and His people the "Book of the Law" to study and observe (Josh. 1:7-8). That, and God's presence, were anchors the Israelites could rely on as they faced many challenges.

When we're in the middle of suffering or when doubts start threatening our faith, what are our anchors? We could start with Joshua 1:5. Although our faith may feel weak, if it's anchored in God's promises and presence, He will safely hold us.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.  
—Owens

When we feel the stress of the storm we learn the strength of the anchor.

INSIGHT: In today's reading, God encourages Joshua who has recently replaced his predecessor, Moses. God's past faithfulness to Moses must have brought great comfort to Joshua: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Josh. 1:5). For us as well, God's faithfulness in the past brings courage for the future.

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### Joshua 1:1-9 He's Always On The Bridge

I will not leave you nor forsake you. —Joshua 1:5

My friend Ralph had the thrilling experience of going on a short cruise on the aircraft carrier USS Kennedy. He saw jet fighters take off, land, and demonstrate maneuvers. He was told that whenever the planes are taking off or landing—dangerous operations—the captain watches from the bridge. Even if the planes are flying continually, he stays on the bridge, cat-napping between runs if necessary. So each time a pilot takes off or lands on the deck, he knows that his captain is always on duty.

In today's Scripture reading, when it was time for Joshua to take over as leader of Israel, he needed reassurance that God would be with him as He had been with Moses. The Israelites knew that Moses had divine direction during their wilderness journey because God led them by a pillar of fire and a cloud.

But what about Joshua? God promised him, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). Joshua could lead Israel with the absolute confidence that God was always watching over him.

Wherever we are, whatever bold endeavor we are involved in, or whatever spiritual battle we may face, we have the confidence that God is with us. What's more, He guides, protects, and leads us. He's always on the bridge!

The Christian finds safety not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God.

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### **Joshua 1:1-7 The Apprentice**

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. —Joshua 1:5

When some employers were asked what makes a good apprentice, they responded that they seek to hire "someone who wants to learn."

In the Bible, a good example of an apprentice is Joshua. We remember Joshua for marching around the wall of Jericho. He also had some important responsibilities as a spy (Nu 13:16) and as a warrior (Ex. 17:10). But he was often in the shadow of someone else—Moses. For 40 years, Joshua served as Moses' assistant, aide, and apprentice (Ex. 24:13).

God takes His own time to prepare us for service. Sometimes that period of waiting is as valuable as learning all the needed strategies and goals. Joshua observed Moses' faith in God. He learned what it meant to be humble (Num. 12:3), how to take instruction (Ex. 17:10), and how to be a true servant of God (Josh. 1:1; 24:29). Even a display of Moses' temper (Num. 20:7-12) was an opportunity to watch and learn. By spending time with Moses, Joshua learned things that couldn't be learned from a book.

Joshua's own time to lead was coming. And when it came, he was able to trust God's promise to him: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5).

People who become great leaders  
Sometimes need to learn  
How to serve and follow others—  
Then they'll get their turn.  
—Sper

A person who is not willing to follow is not prepared to lead.

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### **Joshua 1:6-11 The Challenge of Transition**

Be strong and very courageous. —Joshua 1:7

After former professional athlete Chris Sanders suffered a career-ending injury, he told a group of military veterans that although he had never experienced combat, "I understand the pressures of transitions."

Whether it's the loss of a job, the loss of a marriage, a serious illness, or a financial setback, every major change brings challenges. The former athlete told the soldiers that the key to success when you are transitioning into a new way of living is to reach out and get help.

The book of Joshua is recommended reading whenever we find ourselves in transition. After 40 years of wandering and setbacks, God's people were poised to enter the Promised Land. Moses, their great leader, had died, and Joshua, his assistant, was in charge.

God told Joshua to "be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (Josh. 1:7). God's words of direction were to be the bedrock of Joshua's leadership in every situation.

The Lord's charge and promise to Joshua apply to us as well: "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh 1:9).

He is with us in every transition.

Father, I'm bringing You my trials and frustrations. You know each and every detail. Please comfort me as only You can, and provide exactly what I need for today. Help me give my unfulfilled expectations to You, trusting You're working out a plan for me.

God remains faithful in every change.

INSIGHT: From personal observation, Joshua knew that the Canaanites lived in strongly fortified cities (Num. 13:28-29). But God's command was accompanied with a promise of victory: "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5).

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## Joshua 1:1-9 The Way To Success

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it . . . . Then you will have good success. —Joshua 1:8

During the Chinese New Year it is customary for hongbaos (small red envelopes containing money) to be given away. When parents give hongbaos to their children, it is also to wish them prosperity and success. Knowing that this sincere wish is insufficient, however, they also remind their children to study hard. Chinese people generally believe that a good education is the key to one's success in life.

In Joshua 1, God told Joshua that his ways could prosper as he assumed Moses' leadership role. But he and the people needed to display courage in the face of stiff opposition as they entered the Promised Land (Joshua 1:6). God promised to give them success if they heeded His "Book of the Law" (Joshua 1:8).

Believers today also need to live according to God's Word if we are to enjoy success in our spiritual walk. The Bible contains not only the do's and don'ts for living but also records the life experiences of those who pleased or displeased God.

We, like Joshua, have God's promise that He will be with us always (Josh 1:9; Matt 1:23, 28:20). That should give us strength to face the challenges and difficulties that inevitably arise as we seek to please Him.

Be strong! It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,  
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;  
Faint not—fight on!  
Tomorrow comes the song.  
—Babcock

When facing a crisis, trust God and move forward.

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## Joshua 1:1-9 A Fresh Start

Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. —Joshua 1:9

They stand in the cold by the thousands in Times Square, New York City. What draws them to that place? There's no sporting event or rock concert. There's just a huge lighted ball that drops down a pole on top of a building. It takes only a few seconds, and it hardly seems worth fighting traffic and subway crunch to see—except that it happens on New Year's Eve.

Why have we created a holiday over such a nonevent? Other holidays celebrate famous birthdays or historical milestones or something. New Year's Eve just celebrates the passage of time. We make such a fuss because it signals the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one. The old year's problems and struggles become a dim memory when we think of getting a fresh start.

It must have been something like that for the Israelites who stood with Joshua and looked at the new era ahead of them (Joshua 1:1-9). Behind them were 40 years of wandering in the desert. Ahead was a land of milk and honey. And best of all, they had God's promise that He would be with them.

As we stand with our back to the past 12 months and our face toward the new year, we can have hope because we too can be sure of God's help. That makes the prospect of a new year worth celebrating!

Though I know not what awaits me—  
What the future has in store,  
Yet I know that God is faithful,  
For I've proved Him oft before.  
—Anon.

We can trust our all-knowing God for the unknown future.

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## Joshua 1:9 Amazing Guide

Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken. —Joshua 21:45

When actors and actresses make a movie, it's the director who sees the "big picture" and the overall direction. Actress Marion Cotillard admits she didn't understand everything the director was doing in one of her recent films. She said, "I found it very interesting to allow myself to be lost, because I knew that I had this amazing guide. . . . You abandon yourself for a story and a

director that will make it all work.”

I think Joshua could have said something similar about the director of his life. In today’s Scripture passage, the newly commissioned leader of Israel is standing at the threshold of the Promised Land. More than 2 million Israelites are looking to him to lead them. How would he do it? God didn’t give him a detailed script, but He gave him the assurance that He would go with him.

God said, “I will be with you. I will not leave you” (Josh. 1:5). He commanded Joshua to study and practice everything written in His Word (Josh 1:7-8), and He promised to be with Joshua wherever he went. Joshua responded with complete devotion and surrender to his amazing Guide, and “not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken” (Josh 21:45).

We too can abandon ourselves to our Director and rest in His faithfulness.

He leadeth me! O blessed thought!  
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!  
Whate’er I do, where’er I be,  
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.  
—Gilmore

Faith never knows where it is being led; it knows and loves the One who is leading.  
—Oswald Chambers

INSIGHT: Moses dishonored God (Num. 20:1-13) and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Deut. 3:23-29). Yet God permitted him to see it from afar (Dt 34:1-4). Moses was succeeded by Joshua, a man who was “full of the spirit of wisdom” (Josh 1:9). In Joshua 1:1-9, God assured Joshua of His presence, power, providence, provision, and protection—just as God had assured Moses and been with him.

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### **Be strong and courageous. - Joshua 1:6 TODAY IN THE WORD**

You don’t have to read very far into Joshua before an obvious theme emerges. “Be strong and courageous” is repeated over and over, and that repetition indicates just how important it was for the new leader of Israel to possess and strongly portray those characteristics. C. S. Lewis gives us some insight as to why courage would be so vital to the man leading God’s people when he writes, “Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”

More than anything else, God stressed strength and courage as the predominant character traits that would define Joshua’s purpose, because without courage, Joshua’s other virtues might have dissolved in the face of the many challenges he faced. God paired these character traits with a clear mission for Joshua.

In the opening verses of this book, God clearly communicated the task, characteristics, and guidelines He had in mind for Joshua. Verses 1-5 delineate precisely the boundaries of the land God would give Israel, and verse 6 makes it clear that Joshua’s main task was to lead them to inherit that land.

And God would not leave Joshua in the dark as to how he would accomplish that task. After repeating the encouragement Joshua first received from Moses in Deuteronomy (31:23), God lays down the guidelines for success: meditate on the Law, obey it, and you’ll succeed (v. 8).

The foundation for Joshua’s strength and courage came in the truth communicated in verse 9. God was with Joshua, and we must not overlook that. Joshua’s courage was not described as intrinsic in his makeup. God didn’t say, “You are strong and courageous,” although Joshua had certainly shown those traits in the past. God directed him to be strong and encouraged because no matter what weakness Joshua had, no matter how many people he had to lead, and no matter how big and fearsome the enemy might be, the Lord was with Joshua, and that was all that mattered.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Israel easily could have crumbled in fear of the imposing enemy or turned away to foreign gods, but Joshua’s strength and courage led Israel through a period of faith and obedience. In the unique situation where God has placed you, what character traits are most vital? Maybe you need to be compassionate and gracious or loving and generous. No matter what your personality, God can give you the character you need for the task He has given you. And He will be with you!

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### **Joshua 1:1-9a; 21:43-45 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Are you one of those people who wants to know the ending of a book before you read it? Sometimes the assurance that the “good guys” will eventually prevail is comforting when the plot becomes too tense or suspenseful.

Yet knowing the outcome of the story doesn’t always keep one from feeling stressed! Although Joshua knew that God had promised



the land to Israel as an inheritance (the outcome of this “book”), the Israelites still had to conquer its wicked inhabitants, who greatly outnumbered them. Clearly these odds weren’t lost on Joshua--three times (Josh. 1:6, 7, 9) the Lord commanded him to be courageous! In verse 9, the Lord went even further in His exhortation: “Do not be terrified.”

God’s command to Joshua settled Joshua’s emotions by establishing his mindset--the only way he could avoid terror was to focus on the Lord. Indeed God had promised: “No one will be able to stand up against you. . . . I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (v. 5).

And that’s exactly what happened. When the people trusted the Lord, even the strong walls of Jericho’s toppled (Josh. 5:13–6:21). But when the people stopped trusting the Lord to give what He had already promised, there was disaster (Josh. 9). The land was a divine gift--and so was the conquest and possession of the land. Everything was from God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Even though God had promised Joshua victory, at some point Joshua still had to step into the battle.

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### **Joshua 1:1-11 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Thomas and Tina Sjogren of New York City recently completed an incredible journey. In May 2002, they skied and swam their way without any outside help (such as sled dogs or food airdrops) to 90-1/4 N latitude--the North Pole. Earlier they had successfully reached the South Pole and climbed Mount Everest, sometimes called “the third pole.” Only three people before them had managed to go to all three poles, and Tina is the first woman ever to accomplish the feat.

An incredible journey, a seemingly impossible goal. These words also describe the Israelites at the end of the Exodus, as they stood poised to enter the Promised Land. The legendary Moses had died, and Joshua was trying to fill his big shoes as the head of a restless and wandering nation. He may have been tempted to fear or feel discouragement, despite his special anointing for the task at hand and the fact that he was “filled with the spirit of wisdom” (cf. Deut. 34:9).

In this difficult situation, God made Joshua several promises and gave him several commands. He renewed the promise of conquering and inheriting the land, and specifically promised him victory in battle. Most significantly, He guaranteed His constant presence: “I will never leave you nor forsake you . . . the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (vv. 5, 9). The Lord also told Joshua to be strong and courageous, and repeated this several times for emphasis. He reminded him to meditate on and obey carefully His Law. In summary, Joshua could meet the challenge if He trusted the person, presence, power, and Word of God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Today, we suggest that you do additional Bible study in order to dig deeper into the kind of faithful leadership Joshua exemplifies. What is genuine biblical leadership? What is “servant leadership”? What are the qualifications for leadership in the New Testament church, and why? What sort of leader is Christ? How can we follow in His footsteps? How does what you discover differ from the world’s viewpoint on these same questions, and why? How is God leading you to live out these principles?

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### **Joshua 1:6-9 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Oswald Chambers wrote, ‘The Christian life is gloriously difficult. But the difficulty of it does not make us faint and cave in; it rouses us to overcome. Do we so appreciate the marvelous salvation of Jesus Christ that we give our utmost for His highest? Thank God He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a glad thing, but it also tests us for all we are worth.’

What Chambers described in the spiritual realm is similar to what Joshua faced as he stepped up to fill the sandals of Moses. Israel’s new commander had no less an assignment than leading the nation in the conquest of the promised land. This had never happened before, and no one really knew what to expect.

But it’s clear from God’s message to Joshua that this was no time for paralyzing fear. Bible teacher Donald K. Campbell points out that each of the three times God urged Joshua to be courageous, He gave Israel’s leader a good reason for courage. Let’s notice these, for our own encouragement today.

First, Joshua could be courageous because of God’s promise (v. 6). God had sworn by His covenant promise to Abraham to give the land of Canaan to Israel, so Joshua had a solid reason to move forward with confidence.

Second, Joshua would find all the courage and strength he needed by obeying God’s Word, our source for God’s power (vv. 7-8). This was a strong command, as Dr. Campbell says, ‘Greater strength of character would be required to obey God’s Word faithfully and fully than to win military battles!’

The third reason for Joshua’s courage was God’s constant presence (v. 9). Knowing our eternal Lord is always with us certainly eases the task of keeping an eternal perspective.

Look at this list again, and you'll see that none of these blessings was limited to Joshua. We have God's promise, not of land on earth, but of an eternal home in heaven (Jn. 14:1-3). We also activate the transforming power of His Word by our obedience, and God has said He will never leave us (Heb. 13:5).

Put all of this together and there isn't much room left for paralyzing fears!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Joshua 1:8 is another three-part outline for spiritual success. 1. God tells us to talk about His Word. We can do that as families and friends when we read the Word together and talk about what it means for our lives. 2. We also need to think about the Word. Meditation sounds a little suspicious to some Christians, but deliberately pondering the Scriptures in our minds is a great spiritual discipline. 3. Then we're ready to do the Word. Obedience is God's Word manifested in our lives.

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### **Joshua 1:8-9; Psalm 119:89-104 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Lord, you have promised to meet those who seek your face. Come now and reveal your presence to me as I make myself present to you. . . . Amen.—A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants

Sometimes Christians feel uncomfortable with meditation, perhaps due to New Age forms of meditation. But meditation simply means to reflect deeply on something. The Bible is filled with exhortations to meditate on God's Word and works, and the history of the church records numerous examples of men and women who heeded this call to contemplate God's Word. There is much we can learn from this approach to prayer that includes sustained reflection on our Lord and His Word.

For one thing, meditation is not a mindless repetition of certain phrases, but an intense concentration on God and His ways. Scriptural exhortations to meditate are always directed toward God's deeds, laws, or promises. For another thing, true meditation is not a flight from the world. Thomas Merton wrote, "Meditation has no point unless it is firmly rooted in life."

TODAY ALONG THE WAY The psalmist exclaimed, "I meditate on [your law] all day long" (Ps. 119:97). Let's consider several approaches to meditation. Sometime today if possible, set aside fifteen to twenty minutes for solitude and meditation. Choose a short section of Scripture, perhaps from today's Psalm, and read it slowly several times. If distractions come up, ask the Lord for focus as you reread your chosen passage. As you silently dwell on the passage, ask the Lord to speak to you from this passage. Try to keep focused on His Word and His presence. At the end of your time of meditation, consider writing down things the Lord may have revealed to you.

Another way to meditate on Scripture is to use your imagination to consider the feelings and thoughts of people in the passage. For example, as you read today's passage from Joshua, imagine how it would feel to face a formidable opponent following the death of an incredible leader like Moses. How might the Lord's promises have particularly encouraged Joshua? Why was it important for Joshua to meditate on the Book of the Law? What did the promised land look like?

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### **Joshua 1:10-18 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Most people remember Amelia Earhart for her tragic disappearance, but the strength and resolve that powered her pioneering efforts in flight should not be ignored. Her words about courage fit well with today's reading: "Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace." Joshua needed to be courageous in order to usher Israel into peace and rest.

That peace and rest, though, would come after a time of battle. God told Abraham that all nations of the world would be blessed by Abraham's descendants (Gen. 22:18). We should keep that in mind when reading the book of Joshua. Israel's purpose was not some self-initiated world domination, it was the fulfillment of God's promise.

Joshua laid out God's plan to the leaders of Israel, and he clearly stated that it was God who would be giving the land to them (v. 11). And this military campaign was much bigger than a land war. This was one step of God's ultimate plan to bring His people to Himself. He was giving them rest (vv. 13, 15).

Hebrews paints the larger picture for us . . . and we're in it. Verse 8 points out that the rest Joshua leads Israel to find is incomplete. We have a rest to enter, as Israel did. And the issues are still faith and obedience. Like Joshua, we can be filled with strength and courage because we know that the Lord our God is with us, and we can approach His throne to receive grace and mercy when we need it (v. 16).

Just as God rested after the creation of the world, we await the time when all our striving and efforts, every last task, is completely finished. Between the lines of this passage lies an important truth for us: we aren't done working for God. There is much to be done before the Sabbath rest.

As we think about the purpose of Israel, we see how God reaches out to humanity. We'll read chapters that describe God's judgment

against those who oppose Him, but the ultimate purpose of those battles was to bring God's people into the land of promise and bring blessings to every nation. Even through this, God has always been gracious and slow to anger, and His work in the book of Joshua is no exception.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - What is your wilderness? Everyone has their personal source of frustration that tires us to the core of our very souls. Here's a great source of hope for you: God will give you rest. And we aren't helplessly waiting for it. Hebrews tells us that we can begin to enter that rest by drawing close to Jesus Christ, even now. And just as Israel wiped out the evil nations in the Promised Land, you can begin to rid your life of the evil that weighs you down. You can clear the way for entering the Lord's eternal rest.