



Lesson 1 (Josh. 1)

GOD GIVES THE WORD

Opening the book of Joshua, we first hear God speaking to this newly commissioned leader of Israel. God's word is what he has given and what he continues to give his people as they stand on the brink of the promised land. We will do well to listen carefully as God speaks and as Joshua and the people respond; like them, may we grasp the power and the primary importance of God's Word. Because this book continues a much larger story, in this first lesson especially we will spend some time looking back to clarify the context in which Joshua comes to us.

DAY ONE—THE CONTINUING WORD (JOSH. 1:1–5)

- I. The opening verses remind us that this book continues a huge story in progress. Write down any phrases from Joshua 1:1–5 that refer to past events.

JOSHUA

2. That first phrase, “after the death of Moses,” connects us directly to the end of the previous book. Turn back a few pages and read Deuteronomy 34. What other connections with Joshua 1:1–5 do you find in Deuteronomy 34?

3. Deuteronomy 34:4 connects us to God’s previous, repeated promise of the land. Trace this promise through the following representative verses, jotting down brief observations concerning God’s promise to establish his people in the land of Canaan.
 - a. Genesis 12:1–7

 - b. Genesis 15:1–16

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c. Genesis 26:2–3

d. Genesis 28:10–13

e. Exodus 3:7–8

f. Numbers 26:52–56

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g. Deuteronomy 1:6–8

h. Joshua 1:3–4

4. In what ways does this historical perspective expand your understanding of God?

DAY TWO—FOLLOWING JOSHUA
THROUGH THE WORD

I. “Joshua the son of Nun” (Josh. 1:1) carried with him much personal experience of this history. He had been “assistant” (v. 1) to Moses, the one who wrote it all down in the Pentateuch (the Bible’s first five books, called the Books of Moses or the Law). According to the following passages from the Pentateuch, in what ways had God prepared Joshua for this call to action in Joshua 1?

a. Exodus 17:8–16

b. Exodus 24:12–18

c. Exodus 33:7–11

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d. Numbers 11:24–30

e. Numbers 13:16

f. Numbers 14:6–9, 26–35

g. Numbers 27:12–23

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2. In one sentence, summarize what Joshua had been privileged to learn about God through all these experiences.

3. Because it's all been written down in Scripture, we, too, are privileged to learn and believe these things about God. How might reading of Joshua's preparation experiences help prepare you for what you face today or in days to come?

DAY THREE—GOD SPEAKS COMMANDS
AND ENCOURAGEMENTS (JOSH. 1:1–9)

God had clearly been at work through centuries of preparation for this “Now therefore” of Joshua 1:2. So—now therefore, finally, it's time to “arise” and “go” (v. 2).

1. List all the commands given by God to Joshua in 1:1–9.

JOSHUA

2a. The “law” given by Moses (v. 7) and the “Book of the Law” (v. 8) refer to the Pentateuch, the inspired word written by Moses. What do you notice about the commands specifically relating to the written word of God (Josh. 1:7–8)?

b. How do these commands apply to us?

3. Each time God commands Joshua to “be strong and courageous,” he links the command to a different encouragement. What kinds of encouragements do you find in the following verses?

a. Joshua 1:6

b. Joshua 1:7

c. Joshua 1:9 (and v. 5)

4. How marvelous to see a God who clearly commands and personally encourages his people. What specifically encourages you in these verses so far? How or why?

JOSHUA

DAY FOUR—JOSHUA AND THE PEOPLE
RESPOND (JOSH. 1:10–15)

1. What do you notice about Joshua’s response in Joshua 1:10–11?

2. For background, read Numbers 32:1–33, in which two and a half tribes receive already-conquered territory east of the Jordan River. Now, in Joshua 1:12–15, which phrases show the authority by which Joshua is now speaking to these two and a half tribes?

3. Whether Joshua 1:16–18 gives the response of the two and a half tribes or all the tribes, these words represent the right and good response of God’s people to his word. How would you characterize their response?

God Gives the Word

4. What, specifically, challenges you as you see Joshua and then the people responding to the word given them from the Lord?

DAY FIVE—WE RESPOND,
ACCORDING TO THE WORD

1. Look back to Joshua 1:13, 15 and back further to Exodus 33:14. What word appears in each of these three verses to describe what God gives his people in the land?

2. Do people yearn for rest today? What kind of rest? How do they seek it?

JOSHUA

3. In Scripture, rest is both the blessing and the end of the journey that begins with redemption and follows the direction of God's law (see the introduction). According to the following verses, what can you say about the rest God offers to those who believe his word and put their faith in him?

a. Psalm 62:5–8

b. Matthew 11:28–29

c. Hebrews 3:16–4:11 (This is a beautiful but difficult passage; aim simply to get a central idea.)

d. Revelation 21:1–5

4. In believing and obeying the Word of the Lord, we find true rest, now and eternally, through our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Review again the life-and-death seriousness and the beautiful abandon of the people's response to the word of the Lord brought to them by Joshua (Josh. 1:16–18). Spend a few minutes in prayer, telling God your response to his Word.

Notes for Lesson 1

