

**A PERSONAL
VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY**

JOSHUA

Sharon Cravens

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

Joshua 1:2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

Joshua 1:4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

Joshua 1:5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Informational note: The name Joshua means "The Lord is salvation, savior, deliverer." It is the Hebrew name for Yeshua or Jesus.

This book opens with a new leader over Israel, Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' primary assistant. The LORD commissions Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River to take possession of the land of Canaan—defining an area from where they were in the wilderness to the south to Lebanon in the north to the River Euphrates, including all the land of the Hittites, to the Mediterranean Sea to the west. The LORD declared that, in fact, the people of Israel would take possession of every piece of ground upon which Joshua stepped. Not one man would be able to stand up against Joshua because the LORD promised to be with him just as surely as He had been with Moses.

The LORD promised to be "with him," and I think that means through the presence of His Holy Spirit. The LORD promised never to fail or forsake Joshua.

Every true believer in Jesus Christ is blessed in the same way that Joshua was. We are privileged to have the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit to comfort, strengthen, teach and encourage us; and the LORD has promised never to fail or forsake us.

John 14:16–17 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

1 Corinthians 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Hebrews 13:5 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Matthew 28:20 "...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

John 14:26 "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Ephesians 3:16 "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"

Once again it is clear that the land belongs to the LORD and He will give it to whomsoever He chooses—and He chose the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The people of the world seem to think that the LORD has forgotten all about this promise. They refuse to recognize the truth of scripture as declared throughout scripture and detailed by the prophet Ezekiel. Though Israel rejected Jesus their King, the day is coming soon when He will return and reestablish the throne of David from which He will rule all nations. No matter what the nations plot against Israel, she will survive because the LORD has declared it.

*Ezekiel 36:22–28 "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. **For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. **And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**"*

Joshua 1:6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

The LORD is basically putting an exclamation point on the fact that "this people," the ones that Joshua is leading, are the very ones that will get to divide the land as an inheritance among them. This will be done according to the LORD's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He encourages Joshua to "be strong and of good courage" because he has witnessed a multitude of evidence that testifies to the LORD's ability to keep His promises.

Joshua 1:7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Once again the LORD tells Joshua to be strong and courageous. This time the context ties it to being obedient to God's law as communicated to them by Moses. He warns Joshua not to deviate from His law even one little bit. If he is obedient, he will be prosperous in all that he does.

This is actually similar to many prayer promises found in the New Testament.

John 15:7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

John 15:10 "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love...."

1 John 3:21–22 "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

The best way to ensure that you stay obedient to the LORD and gain victory over the enemy is to meditate in the word of God day and night.

Joshua 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Yet again the LORD tells Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He has no reason to be afraid since the "LORD thy God is with thee" wherever he goes. Again, I believe this is in reference to a special gifting of the Holy Spirit that was only given to chosen people for special empowerment according to God's purposes during Old Testament times.

This is a popular memory verse to which I think every believer can make personal application. So often, I hear people declare that the Old Testament promises were only applicable to Israel, or in this case to a specific person. What they choose to forget is that the LORD is unchangeable; He is always the same.

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not...."

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Every true believer can claim promises such as these because the LORD always act in accordance with His unchanging character toward those who look to Him in faith.

Joshua 1:10 ¶ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Joshua 1:11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to

possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

At this point Joshua issues a command to the leaders of the people telling them to command everyone to prepare food because in three days they were going to cross over the Jordan River and begin to take possession of the land that the LORD had promised to give them.

Joshua 1:12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

Joshua 1:13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

Joshua 1:14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

Joshua 1:15 Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

Joshua singled out the leaders of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh to remind them of their commitment before Moses to help the other tribes as they went to battle to take the land. He reminded them that the LORD had agreed to let them take possession of the land on the east side of the Jordan, but only if they joined their brothers in battle to conquer Canaan. They were to leave their wives, children and livestock to occupy the land, but they were to send their armed "mighty men of valor" to join the army of Israel. Once the other tribes had gained the victory and taken possession of the land west of Jordan, the soldiers would be allowed to return home to their families.

Joshua 1:16 ¶ And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

Joshua 1:17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Joshua 1:18 Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

The leaders of the 2.5 tribes promised to do as Joshua commanded and go wherever he sent them. They promised to obey him as surely as they had obeyed Moses. They prayed that the LORD "thy God" would be with Joshua as He had been with Moses. They further declared that anyone that disobeyed his command would be put to death.

Some commentators reason that the last part of verse 17 states a condition for their continued obedience to Joshua. In other words, as long as it is obvious that the LORD is with you, we will follow your command.

It was interesting to note that the leaders referenced the LORD as Joshua's God instead of "our God." Was this just another way of encouraging Joshua?

It was also interesting to me that these leaders closed their answer with an exhortation for Joshua to "be strong and of a good courage," mirroring the LORD's exhortation.