
Joshua 1

Joshua 1:1–18

Joshua Takes Command of Israel

Outline of Chapter 1:

- vv. 1–9 **God speaks to Joshua**
- vv. 10–15 **Joshua assumes command**
- vv. 16–18 **The two and one-half tribes answer Joshua**

Charts:

Introduction: Joshua 1 picks up immediately where Deuteronomy 34 left off. It is pretty much like the next day. The people of Israel had mourned the passing of Moses and now it was time for Joshua to lead them into the land. At the beginning of this chapter, we have a continuation of a pattern which we have seen throughout the Bible. God goes to Joshua, not vice versa. Beginning with Adam and the woman in the garden, God went first to them after they sinned. We cannot go to Him except that He draw us. God is the initiator in our relationship. Joshua was a believer and he was devout and he had been faithful to Moses apart from jealousy and power lust. God will go to Joshua and promote him to a leadership position. From the very beginning, Joshua prepared himself through the study of God's Word (which, at that time, was only the Pentateuch). It was not yet fully grasped how important the words of the Pentateuch were. Certainly, these five books contained the words of God, but few realized that they were the Word of God.

Keil and Delitzsch: *After the death of Moses the Lord summoned Joshua, the servant of Moses, whom He had appointed as the leader of Israel into Canaan, to go with all the people across the Jordan, and take the land which had been promised to the fathers on oath, assuring him at the same time of His powerful aid, on the condition that he observed the law of Moses faithfully. This summons and promise of God from the preamble to the whole book, which is linked on to the conclusion of the Pentateuch by the introductory words, "And it came to pass after the death of Moses..."*¹

The first nine verses of this chapter prepare us for the invasion of Canaan and the wars which follow. This points to the leading theme of the book of Joshua, which is the conquering of the Land of Promise and the subjugation of Canaan by the people of Israel as led by Joshua. This was all done under the direct command of God.²

To make it simple, in this chapter, God speaks to Joshua, Joshua to the people, and the people answer Joshua. This over simplifies the chapter somewhat. Joshua speaks first to the people and then he speaks specifically to the leaders of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. These tribes had made a pact with Moses to continue to take the land with their brothers, even though they already had their own land conquered and carved out. It is this group of men who specifically respond to Joshua in the final few verses.

God Speaks to Joshua

Literally:

And then it came to pass after [the] death of Moses, servant of Y^ehowah; then said Y^ehowah unto Joshua ben Nun, minister of Moses, to say,

Joshua
1:1

Smoother English rendering:

Now, after the death of Moses, the servant of Jehovah, Jehovah spoke to Joshua, son of Nun, the minister to Moses, saying,

¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 21.

² Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 353.

This book begins with the wâw consecutive. The verb is in the imperfect tense. *The imperfect with vav consec., [is] the standing mode of expressing a continued action or train of thought.*³ It is a little minor point and a tiny word, which tells us a great deal about the authorship of this book and of the last portion of Deuteronomy. If you will glance through the books of the prophets, the first thing is that they will either tell you that this is an oracle from God or they will give you the time of writing. They do not begin with a wâw conjunction or a wâw consecutive because they do not immediately follow the book which precedes them. The book of Joshua follows the book of Deuteronomy. The use of this word indicates that we are dealing either with the same author of the previous book (or the last section of the previous book) or with one who is presumptuous enough to follow the books of Moses with the words *and then*. Now, this isn't presumption. Joshua recorded the final words of Moses, and then God spoke to him, and he recorded these words as well. From the tenor of the books of Moses, Joshua recognized that it was incumbent upon him to record what God did on behalf of Israel during his rule over Israel. Because most believers spend little time in the Old Testament, they do not realize that the initial reason for the recording of Scripture is that God spoke, man listened and then man wrote it down. The man included enough narrative to give us an historical background for God's direct dealings with man. The so-called prophets of today show none of the respect or fear which we find in the Old Testament, nor do they chronicle a careful record of God speaking to them. What they have to say may or may not be accurate; and it is generally very trivial. If God spoke to man today as He did in days past, we would still be recording Scripture. However, that is not the case. In the Old as well as the New Testament, almost everyone (if not everyone) recorded their direct contact with God. Barnes on the first word of this verse: *The statement following is thus connected with some previous one, which is assumed to be known to the reader. So Judges, Ruth, I Sam., &c., are by the same means linked on to the books preceding them. The connection here is the closer, since the book of Deuteronomy concludes, and the book of Joshua opens, by referring to the death of Moses.*⁴ McGee: "And" is a connective. *The minute a speaker says "and," he has to keep talking because "and" connects something that has gone before with something that is coming. This supports the theory that Deuteronomy 34 was written by Joshua.*⁵

The first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] simply means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, it often means *and it will come to pass, then it came to pass*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. Following this is the preposition `achar (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*], and it essentially means *after*. Strong's #310 BDB #29. It is this little preposition which precedes and tells us that *the death of Moses* is not the subject of the first verb. This gives us: **And then it came to pass after the death of Moses, a servant of Y^ehowah...** We have studied the death of Moses in Deut. 34:5–12 and quoted this once again in our introduction, to reveal the flow from Deuteronomy to Joshua.

We should take a moment and examine the word *servant*. It is the masculine singular construct of 'e^bved (עֶבֶד) [pronounced *ĠE^B-ved*], which means *slave, servant*. However, this is not the entire story. A public official is often called a public *servant*, even today. Moses was the servant of God, as is Joshua, but along with the sense of humility which this word implies, we also have a sense of position of power, which is carefully tempered with responsibility to the people under his command. I have functioned in various positions, generally as an Indian and not as a chief. I often carefully examine those over me and have noticed that most of them are there because they want the power, the salary and the position. Often, their primary intention is to maintain this position. A person who understands his position of authority understands that he is beholden to and responsible to those under his authority. A person who assumes a position of authority and then thinks to himself, *now, I can call the shots for once*, has totally misunderstood his position. The first priority of a mature believer in a position of authority is not his salary, not his power, and not the maintaining of his position, and certainly not his ability to call the shots, but his first priority is those who are under his authority. These are the people to whom he is responsible and for whom he is responsible. If God has placed you into a position of authority, never take that position lightly. God should be glorified by the way that you handle your authority. And, as an authority, you are a servant to the people under you. Do you recall the argument that disciples had at the first Eucharist? **And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them would be regarded as the greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who would have authority over them are called Benefactors. But it is not so**

³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 21.

⁴ *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 353.

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 11.

with you. Let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the One who serves.” (Luke 22:24–27). Strong’s #5650 BDB #713.

As is often done in Hebrew, the next sentence is begun with a wâw consecutive; this time we have the verb *to speak* used first as the main verb, in the Qal imperfect; and then at the end of the verse in the Qal infinitive construct form preceded by the lamed preposition (*to, for*). The subject is Y^ehowah and following Y^ehowah we have *unto Joshua ben [son of] Nun*. This give us: *Then spoke Y^ehowah unto Joshua ben Nun, to say...*

Joshua had already been chosen by God to replace Moses. In Num. 27:16–23, God commanded Moses to take Joshua before the priest Eleazar and before the entire congregation and commission Joshua as his successor. Moses, in his first formal address to the people immediately prior to his death, also named Joshua as his successor (Deut. 1:38). Transition of power in God’s people was going to be orderly and without rebellion. Joshua was a man of great patience. He learned under the wings of Moses, taking a place far in the background. Most people have such a lust for power that they could not have stood to be as much in the background as Joshua was. He did not even appear to be second in command for most of this time. People went to Aaron, Eleazar and even to Miriam. However, Joshua was God’s chosen man, who learned under Moses until the time came for him to lead the people, and then Joshua stepped up to the plate. He was not a man of inordinant ambition, nor was he jealous, nor did he engage in competition with Moses. God had assigned him a place in life and he took that place without complaint. There are some of these rapture types who are running around trying to get in every good work that they can think of before the rapture comes. There’s nothing wrong with enthusiasm, but I have spoken to people who have been committed to very vocal evangelism for decades who could not even get the gospel right. God the Holy Spirit has to reach through a lot of crap in order to make the gospel clear to those who heard it. The gospel is that the unbeliever is to believe in Jesus Christ; he is to place his faith in Christ; he is to rely completely and totally upon Jesus Christ for his deliverance. The unbeliever is not to dedicate his life to Jesus, he does not need to walk forward during an evangelistic message, he should not ask Jesus into his heart; he does not need to promise God that he will never sin again, or will cut out certain sins from his life or that he will at least do his best to reduce the amount of sinning that he does. He is to believe in Jesus Christ, period. When you have enthusiastic evangelists out there mingling and evangelizing, you only confuse and muddy the waters. You bring along *converts* who have really never trusted in Jesus Christ.

God speaks to Joshua in almost half of the chapters of this book, the exceptions being Joshua 2–3 (when the spies are going through the land), Joshua 9 (when Joshua and the Israelites were beguiled by the Gibeonites), Joshua 12 (when the Israelites defeat the coalition of kings), Joshua 14–19, 21 (where the territory is apportioned), and Joshua 22–24 (Joshua’s final addresses to Israel). We are not told exactly in what way God spoke to Joshua. We can postulate that it was probably not *mouth to mouth*, as God spoke to Moses (Num. 12:8), and my guess is that this did not come to Joshua by dream, as that is not mentioned either. It is not unlikely the God spoke to Joshua through Eleazar the High Priest. Furthermore, Joshua does not even make note of his surroundings, whether he was in the tent of worship, which seems most likely, or in his own tent. Keil and Delitzsch are of the opinion that God spoke directly to Joshua, apart from the High Priest and apart from Urim and Thummim. They do not exactly justify this point of view, but the lack of environmental information points more in the direction of direct communication as opposed to God speaking to Joshua through the High Priest. Urim and Thummim, if you will recall, dealt more with specific questions which required simple *yes* or *no* answers; or the identification of the tribe or tribes God wanted to be used for a particular endeavor.

“Moses, my servant, has died; and now, arise, pass over this Jordan—you and all of the people—into the land which I am giving to them, to [the] sons of Israel. Joshua 1:2

“Moses, my servant has died. It is now time to get up and go over the Jordan—both you and all the people—and go into the land which I have given to the sons of Israel.

The first line is simple: *Moses, my servant, has died* (or, *is dead*). The next phrase begins with the wâw conjunction and the adverb ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced *gâht-TAWH*], and it is an adverb of time meaning *now*. When this adverb is used with the imperative, it implies that the time has come for this exhortation or advice to be followed. This is shown in the way that I have translated the less literal side. Strong’s #6258 BDB #773.

McGee: *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 saviour. 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. "Moses my servant is dead." Only Jesus our Saviour, our Joshua, can lead us into the place of blessing He has for us.*⁶

What had happened is that a great man, a great leader, Moses had died; and Joshua and the people all mourned for Moses for thirty days. However, it was now time for them to move on into the land as God had promised them. Joshua was now the leader. There was no takeover, no intrigue; Joshua did not vie for top spot. He was the natural successor to Moses.

The remainder of this line is literally: "...arise, pass over the this the Jordan—you and all of the people." With regards to crossing over the Jordan, the NIV notes: *The flow of the Jordan near Jericho was not large during most of the year (only 80–100 feet wide), but at flood stage in the spring it filled its wider bed, which at places was a mile wide and far more treacherous to cross.*⁷

The final portion of this verse is, literally: "...into the land which I am giving to them to [the] sons of Israel." *Giving* is in the Qal active participle; God gives the land to them as they simultaneously move into the land to take it. As God had said to the Jews at Mount Horeb: "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." (Deut. 1:8). 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.*⁸

"Every place which a sole of your [plural] foot trod upon it, to you [all] I have given it as which I have promised to Moses.

Joshua
1:3

"Everywhere you walk, I will give that land to you, just as I had promised to Moses.

We begin with the construct of *kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] and this word means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. When used with a plural noun, we often translate it *all of* and with a singular noun, we translate it *every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. This is followed by the masculine singular of *mâqôwm* (מָקוֹם) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], which means *place*. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. This is followed by the relative pronoun *ʾasher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which means *that, which, when* or *who*. Strong's #834 BDB #81. This is followed by the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of the verb which means *to tread, to walk* (Strong's #1869 BDB #201). The 3rd person feminine singular tells us that the subject is *sole [of your foot]*. The Hebrew often uses a singular collective to refer to what we would think of as a plural. *Your* is a 2nd person masculine suffix, indicating that God is speaking to Joshua, but referring to the feet of all of Israel. What could be debated at this time is what land does that encompass? The Israelites have walked from Egypt in a rather circuitous route through the desert area between Egypt and Israel, they have been all over the east side of the Dead Sea and of the Jordan, and they had gone far north from there in conquering the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead. Also, the spies had previously gone through the land which was between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. So the Israelites had been over a great deal of land, all of which might be seen here as being promised to them. The verb *walk* is in the imperfect tense. This is a tense of continuous action or uncompleted action, but there is no reference to time. It is referred to by some lexicons as the future tense, although that is an improper designation. However, the imperfect tense can refer to continuous action in past time, present time or in future time. Therefore, this verse does not tell us enough about what belongs to Israel. It leaves that determination open to debate. Also, God had given the same promise to the Israelites through Moses in his farewell addresses to Israel, 5–6 weeks previous: "Every place on

⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 11.

⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 289.

⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 12.

which the sole of your foot will tread will be yours.” (Deut. 11:24a). God will become more specific in the following verses.

God continues the thought with the phrase **to you [plural], I have given it...** This is followed by the compound ka'asher (כֹּ אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *kah-uh-SHER*], which is the compound of the preposition kaph (כ) (No Strong's # BDB #453), which, means *like, as*; and the relative pronoun 'asher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*] (Strong's #834 BDB #81), which means *which, when or who*. Together, literally, we have *as which*; however, it means *as which, as one who, as, like as*. Strong's #834 BDB #455. This is followed by the 1st person, Piel perfect of dâ'var (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^p-VAHR*], which means *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can be translated *to promise*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. The final phrase, is therefore: **“...as which I have promised to Moses.”** God keeps His Word. He had promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses a certain piece of real estate, which, at one time, was much more beautiful than the Israel that we see today. This promise was partially fulfilled during the time of Joshua and will be completely fulfilled in the time of the Millennium. Although many Bibles refer us to Deut. 11:24 at this time, this is not the correct reference for God's promise to Moses, as Moses was speaking to the Israelites in that passage. Ex. 23:31 is the proper reference. Scofield here notes: *The law of appropriation. God gives, but we must take.*⁹ McGee expands on this thought: *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. Years ago a certain Englishman moved to the United States. Soon after he arrive 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 were sure he was a bum, and they expected to find him in a cheap hotel. 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 blessing 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 to put on the whole armour of God in Ephesians 6. 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” (Ephesians 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.*¹⁰

“From the wilderness and the Lebanon the this and as far as the river the great (a river Euphrates); all of [the] land of the Hittites and as far as the sea the great an entrance toward the sun, will be your territory.

Joshua
1:4

“From the wilderness to this land of Lebanon and as far as the River Euphrates, including all the land of the Hittites and as far as the Great Sea at the setting of the sun, will be your territory.

In this verse, we obviously have God giving to Joshua, and to the people of Israel, the promise which he had given several times before over the past few centuries. The first phrase is *from the wilderness*, the latter word being the masculine substantive mid^ebâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced *mid^e-BAWR*], which does not mean *desert* because it is a place where sheep are grazed (Joshua 2:22 Psalm 65:13). The only way it may be thought of as a desert is it often *uninhabited* (by man) or *deserted* (Job 38:26 Jer. 9:1). Strong's #4057 BDB #184. Where are we speaking of, as we find this word throughout the Old Testament? In Leviticus through Deuteronomy, we have Joshua, Caleb and Moses along with gen X and the generation of promise wandering through a land which was often referred to as *the wilderness* (Num. 32:13, 15 Deut. 1:1, 19, 31); we may personally have a more difficult time determining where this was, but this essentially includes the area through which Israel wandered and camped

⁹ *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; p. 259.

¹⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 12–13.

for the previous forty years. This definitely included the desert of Arabia and possibly the land which was east of the Jordan, a portion of which they had already conquered back in Num. 31–32; however, this was primarily the large area which is between Israel and Egypt. Lebanon takes us to North of Israel, near and halfway up the coast. God gave here the Northern and Southern boundaries. *Lebanon is spoken of as “this Lebanon,” because [it was] visible from the neighbourhood in which Israel was encamped.*¹¹

Then we have the preposition *as far as* and, literally, *the river the great*; or, *the great river*. God specifies which river this is by calling it the *River Euphrates*. Since this is already a specific river, the Hebrew do not use a definite article; we do, however. The Euphrates River takes us much further East than Israel has ever gone. So far, in modern terms (as of 1998), we have taken in Israel, the Sinai, Jordan, Lebanon, the southern portion of Syria and most of Iraq.

Then God throws in *all [the] land of the Hittite*. ZPEB mentions that this is a problem. They claim that this refers to Syria, which is southwest of the Euphrates, which was not taken over by the Hittites until circa 1350 B.C. by King Suppiluliumas.¹² Now, according to the maps I use, we have suddenly moved very Northward to what is today Turkey; if we took in Turkey, this would automatically enclose the rest of Syria. However, that may not have been what was meant. The land of Canaan was still called *Hatti-land* (land of the Hittites), although the Hittites had withdrawn from this land centuries before. As God spoke to Moses, “I have come down to deliver them [the Jews] from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.” (Ex. 3:8). It would also be reasonable to suppose that even though the Hittites were the ones who occupied northern Canaan, Phoenicia, and what is today Turkey, this may have been a catch-all term which included the Canaanites who lived in Canaan proper.¹³ Keil and Delitzsch: *The expression “the Hittites”...is used here in a broader sense for Canaanites in general, as in 1 Kings 10:29; 2 Kings 7:6; Ezek. 16:3.*¹⁴ Finally, one thing that my sources did not mention, surprisingly enough, is that this phrase is not found in the Septuagint. So it is possible that all of this discussion is overkill and that this was added later. My only thought is that who on earth would have the nerve to insert an extra phrase or two into a quote from God? However, this apparently was not found in the Hebrew manuscripts used by those who translated the Septuagint, or that they chose to leave it out, which strikes me as being unlikely as well. The upshot of all of this is that we need not be troubled by this particular phrase. It does not disprove the authorship of Joshua, whether it belongs here or not.

This is followed by *as far as the sea the great* [i.e., the Great Sea]. Then this become difficult; we have the construct of *mā^bvō’* (מָבֹוֹ) [pronounced *maw^b-VOE*], which means, according to BDB, *entrance, a coming in, an entering*; according to the KJV, it means *a going down, an entrance into, a coming in, an entry*. [Its verbal cognate, above, means *to go, to come, to go in, to come in*. Strong’s #935 BDB #97]. Strong’s #3996 (& 3997) BDB #99. This is followed by the definite article and the feminine singular noun *shemesh* (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced *SHEH-mehsh*], which means *sun*. Strong’s #8121 BDB #1039. This is rendered *the going in of the sun* (Young), *toward the going in of the sun* (Rotherham), *toward the going down of the sun* (KJV), *toward the setting of the sun* (NASB). Although I am not completely convinced, I will go with the western movement of the sun. This takes us west across the Mediterranean possibly into Spain, and, perhaps, toward the United States. We don’t know how much is included in this dramatic westward sweep of the hand. In any case, the Israelites have never had control over even a fourth of the most conservative estimate of the land given them by God. We have several instances of God’s promise to Israel of the land that they would possess: Gen. 15:7, 18–21 Ex. 23:31 Num. 34:2–12 Deut. 1:8 11:24 34:1–4.

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.*¹⁵

¹¹ Barnes’ Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 353.

¹² *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 704.

¹³ This is from Barnes’ Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 353. 1 Kings 10:29 is noted by Barnes in support of this.

¹⁴ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 22.

¹⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 13.

So that there is no confusion, the land was given to Israel forever. However, as we have also seen, even before they went into the land, God promised that they would be thrown out of the land and scattered throughout the world (Lev. 26:33–35). What we have today is not the possession of the land as God would have it. A few Jews occupy a portion of the land in conjunction with various Arab groups, but by far the greater Jewish population is scattered among the Gentile nations (as God had promised they would be). In the Millennium, the Jews of the tribulation will occupy the land.

“A man will not be able to take a stand with reference to your faces all [the] days of your life; as which I was with Moses, I will be with you; I will not forsake you and I will not leave you.

Joshua
1:5

“No man will be able to stand in opposition to you in your sight 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.

We have five verbs in this verse, the first, fourth and fifth have negatives and the middle two are the same verb. We begin this verse with a negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect of *yâtsa*^{bv} (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TSAHB^v*] means *to set oneself or to station oneself, to take a stand*. The Hithpael is the reflexive of the Hiphil (causative) stem. #3320 BDB #426. The subject is *a man*. What follows is *with reference to* (the *lâmed* preposition) *your faces*. *Your* is in the singular and these words together mean *in your presence, before your face, in the sight of*. Strong’s #6440 BDB #815. God takes those who would be in opposition to Israel and rolls them into the figure of one man; God also, in this, takes any man who might stand in opposition to Joshua and refers to him as one man. The context of v. 4 suggests that we are dealing with all of Israel, but the context of v. 5b implies that we may include internal dissension as well. Despite the continued rebelliousness of the people of Israel, Moses was their undisputed leader. Whenever this was seriously challenged, as it was in the Korah rebellion, God intervened and crushed that rebellion immediately, giving great credence to the leadership of Moses. God has promised the same to Joshua. This gives us: **“A man will not be able to take a stand with reference to your [plural] faces all [the] days of your life.”** Less rigorously, we have: **“No man will be able to take a stand [in opposition to you] in your presence for the remainder of your life.”** Moses, speaking in the Spirit, told Israel: **“And 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.”** (Deut. 7:24).

We have a second, but related thought which follows. We have the kaph preposition and the relative pronoun together, which mean, literally, *as which*. As we have seen in v. 3, this can be rendered *who, like when, as when*. It may not sound like good English, but it’s good Hebrew. We have the verb *to be* used twice; first in the Qal perfect and second in the Qal imperfect; the first notes a completed action and the second is an action which has begun and continues. Following the first *to be*, we have *with Moses*; and secondly, we have *with you*; giving us: **“As when I was with Moses, I will be with you.”**

The third line begins with a negative and the Hiphil imperfect of the verb *râphâh* (רָפָה) [pronounced *raw-FAW*], a verb which means, in the Hiphil, *to lose interest in a person or a project and therefore abandon that person or project, to forsake*. Strong’s #7503 BDB #951. With the 2nd person masculine singular suffix, it means **“I will not forsake you.”** The second phrase is identical, except the verb is the Qal imperfect of *ʿâza*^{bv} (עָזָב) [pronounced *ʿaw-ZA^{bv}*] means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong’s #5800 BDB #736. McGee: *Joshua, average man that he was, needed to be encouraged. God encouraged him here in a most wonderful way. God says, “I won’t desert you. Just as I was with Moses, I’ll be with you.”*¹⁶

Moses to Israel: **“And Jehovah will deliver them up before you, and you will do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong a courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for Jehovah your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”** (Deut. 31:5–6). This is also God’s promise to us: **Let your character be free from the love of money. Keep on being content with what you have, for He Himself has said, “I will never, no not ever, desert you, nor will I forsake you.”** (Heb. 13:5 Deut. 31:6).

¹⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 13.

“Be strong and be firm, for you [even] you will cause this people [lit., the people the this] to inherit the land which I promised to their fathers to give to them.

Joshua
1:6

“Be strong and firm because you, even you, will cause this people to inherit this land which I promised to give to their fathers.

God gives Joshua two imperatives, the first being the Qal imperative of *châzaq* (חַזַּק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*] which means *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. It is used in the Qal imperative to mean *be of good courage, be strong*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. The second Qal imperative is *ʾâmêtz* (אַמְצֵ) [pronounced *aw-MATES*], which means *to be strong, firm, alert*. Strong's #553 BDB #54. Joshua would occupy the highest position of leadership in the Jews, who stood as God's people. These men were stiff-necked and disagreeable. Joshua had to be firm in his dealings with them. Moses was decisive and firm. Although his people rebelled against him often, Joshua was about to step into his shoes and they would look upon Moses as being their great ruler. For that reason, there would be times that they would look upon Joshua as being second best.

This thought continues with the preposition *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. What follows is the 2nd person personal pronoun; this is used for great emphasis, as the 2nd person singular is also found in the verb, and Hiphil imperfect of *nâchal* (נָחַל) [pronounced *naw-KHAHL*], which means, *to cause to inherit*. Strong's #5157 BDB #635. I have split this up and inserted the direct object, *the people, the this*. This gives us, so far: **“Be strong and be firm for you will cause this people to inherit...”**

What the will inherit is *the land which* and then we have the Niphal perfect of *shâ'va'* (שָׁוַע) [pronounced *shaw-VAHQ*], which means *to swear, to take a solemn oath*. Strong's #7650 BDB #989. What follows is literally, *to their fathers to give to them*. This gives us: **“Be strong and be firm for you, even you, will cause this people to inherit this land which I solemnly swore to their fathers to give to them.”** God promised Isaac: **“Stay in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”** (Gen. 26:3). To Jacob, God said, **“And observe, I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”** (Gen. 28:15). You will notice as we cover these verses that there is a tremendous consistency between the book of Joshua and what has come before. I believe that the history recorded in Genesis was written several hundred years prior to the birth of Moses; however, it is in complete concordance with what Moses said and wrote and what Joshua said and wrote. **“For Jehovah your god is a compassionate God; He will neither fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.”** (Deut. 4:31).

“Only be strong and be extremely firm, to keep [or, to observe], to do according to all of the Law which Moses, my servant, commanded you. You will not turn aside from it right hand and left hand to the purpose that you will behave wisely in all which you go.

Joshua
1:7

“Let me repeat: be strong and unwaveringly firm, carefully keeping all that the Law which Moses my servant commanded you to do. You will not deviate from it whatsoever, so that you will behave wisely wherever you go.

Because this is narrative, the verses are generally much longer than we found in Job, but much easier to unravel. We begin with the adverb *only* and the Qal imperative of *be strong* again and *be firm*. Along with the adverb *m^eʾôd* (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^e-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong's #3966 BDB #547.

Then we have an interesting construction of the Hebrew. We have the *lâmed* prefixed preposition (*to, for*) used twice with two Qal infinitive constructs. The first one is *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *to do*, giving us: **“Only be strong and be extremely firm to keep, to do...”** The Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate and two early printed editions of the Massoretic text have *to observe to do*.¹⁷

¹⁷ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 236.

Next we have the preposition kaph or k^e (כ) [pronounced k^e], which means *like, as, according to*. Strong's #none BDB #453. This is followed by the word kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kole], which means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. After this, we have the phrase *which Moses, my servant commanded you* (in the Hebrew, the verb precedes the subject, as usual). This gives us: “**Only be strong and be extremely firm to keep, to do all of the law which Moses, my servant, commanded you.**” This might be better understood if we placed the second Qal infinitive construct at the end of this phrase, giving us: “**Only be strong and be extremely firm to keep all of the law which Moses, my servant, commanded you to do.**” Moses had already told Joshua: “**Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land which Jehovah has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you will give it to them as an inheritance. And Jehovah 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.**” (Deut. 31:7b–8). In fact, a thought which I had was that God had not spoken directly to Joshua, but He had spoken to him through His Word. A case could be made for that in the first chapter; however, in subsequent chapters, we have God speaking to Joshua on particular issues and events, making this an interesting albeit, inaccurate theory. In any case, this is the first book of the Bible which looks back to a revealed canon of Scripture. This is the first time when we already have some Scripture recorded and God's first words to Joshua encourage him to study and obey the Scripture which is available to him.

The next line begins with the negative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of çûwr (סוּר) [pronounced soor], which means *to turn aside*. Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. We might want to render this *don't turn aside*, but it is not the imperative mood, so it means: “**You will not turn aside...**” This is followed by *...from it, right hand and left hand...*

The final line begins with the conjunction l^oma^{an} (לְמַעַן) [pronounced l^o-MAH-ğahn], which means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that*. This conjunction emphasizes the cause or purpose of the action. Strong's #4616 BDB #775. The next verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of sâkal (שָׂכַל) [pronounced shaw-KAHL], and, although there are problems with determining its exact meaning, it does not mean *to prosper*. The first time this word is found is in Gen. 3:6 where the woman sees the Tree of Knowledge in the midst of the garden and sees that it would be a tree **to be desired to make wise**. We find this word as a part of the title of several Psalms (Psalm 32, 41, 42, 44, 47, etc.). It is often transliterated Maschil, but it means *giving instruction, to give instructions*. Moses uses this word again in Deut. 32:29 and it is translated *to understand*. All of these examples come from the Hiphil of this verb. What has happened is *they behave wise as those who have been properly instructed*. It is the word of God which will give them the proper instruction to act wisely. Strong's #7919 BDB #968. Therefore, this means, *to the purpose that you behave wisely [as one who has been properly instructed]*. So far, we now have, “**Only be strong and be extremely firm to keep all of the Law which Moses, my servant, commanded you to do. You will not turn aside from it, [to the] right hand and [to the] left hand, to the purpose that you will behave wisely...**” In Deut. 31:23, we read: **Then He commissioned Joshua ben Nun and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”** Moses made essentially the same promise to Joshua in Deut. 31:7–8. The testimony concerning Joshua: “**Just as Jehovah had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah had commanded Moses** (Joshua 11:15). You will notice that in all of this, success was not promised unconditionally. It required obedience and spiritual growth from studying God's Word. “**You will therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross over to possess...For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you, to do it, to love Jehovah your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him, then Jehovah will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you...I am seeing before you today a blessing and a cursing: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, to follow other gods which you have not known.**” (Deut. 11:8, 22–23, 26–28). “**You will not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor will you take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.**” (Deut. 4:2; see also Deut. 5:32 Joshua 23:6 I Kings 2:3 Jer. 26:4–6 44:10).

Finally, we have the *bêyth* preposition and the masculine substantive *kôl* again, and the relative pronoun. Owen and the NASB translates these three words *wherever*; Young: *in every [place] whither*; Rotherham and the KJV: *whithersoever*. Literally, this is *in all which*; and *wherever* is a good modern rendering. The final verb is *you go*.

You will notice there are no tricks and no gimmicks. God is speaking to the ruler of His people and He tells Joshua to study His Word. He is not told to seek visions with God, to desire to prophesy, to speak in tongues, to seek God the Holy Spirit; Joshua is told to spend his time with God's Word.

“A scroll of the Law the this will not depart out from your mouth and you will study [by repeating it to yourself] in it daily and night in order that you may preserve to do according to all the writing in it for then you will make prosperous [or successful] your way [or, journey].

Joshua
1:8

“The scroll of this Law will not depart from your mouth; furthermore, you will continue to study it carefully every day and every night and you may accord your actions to all that is written therein, which will result in success and prosperity in your journey.

This next verse is long and a bit more trouble, so I'll give you some other renderings first:

The Amplified Bible

This book of the law shall to depart out of your mouth, but yo shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe *and* do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall deal wisely *and* have good success.

The Emphasized Bible

This scroll of the law must not cease out of thy mouth, but thou must talk to thyself therein day and night, that thou mayest take heed to do according to all that is written there,—for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success.

NIV

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Young's Lit. Translation

...the book of this law doth not depart out of thy mouth, and thou hast meditated in it by day and by night, so that thou dost observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then thou dost cause thy way to prosper, and then thou does act wisely.

This verse begins with the verb *mûsh* (מוּשׁ) [pronounced *moosh*], which means *to depart, to remove*. Strong's #4185 BDB #559. What will not depart is *a scroll [or, book] of this Law*. What it will not depart from is *from out of your mouth*. What is meant that in everything that Joshua says, the Law will not placed second to what he has to say. In what Joshua says, he will not depart from speaking the Law. In all the judgments that he must make, he will not depart from speaking the Law.

The next phrase begins with the *wâw* conjunction and the Qal perfect¹⁸ of *hâgâh* (הִגָּה) [pronounced *haw-GAW*], which means *to moan, growl, utter, speak, muse*; this word has a variety of uses. We find it used with the growl of a lion over his prey (Isa. 31:4); of the sound of low thunder (Job 37:2); of the muttering of enchanters (Isa. 8:19—in the Hiphil); of the sound of a harp when struck (Psalm 9:17 92:4); of the cooing of doves (Isa. 38:14); of the groaning and sighing of men (Isa. 16:7 Jer. 48:31). Because all of these meanings deal with actual sounds being made, we will have to assume where this is found in Scripture and rendered *meditate* (Joshua 1:8 Psalm 1:2 63:7 77:13 143:5), that we have someone who is reading the Law carefully and saying it softly to himself. Some of you who have studied things have found that saying it out loud when you study is beneficial. When I used to give my students the opportunity to quickly study some things prior to a test or quiz, I would hear half of them reciting theorems and formulas to each other or others. So we are speaking of more than just reading, but studying with the idea of retaining what is studied. What this does not mean is the *meditate* as in *transcendental meditation*. As Thieme once said, that is like trying to gain insight and inspiration from your old sin nature. Strong's #1897 BDB #211. This verb is inot in the imperative but in the imperfect. It is an action

¹⁸ Owens has that this is the 1st person, but I think that is a typo; I discover about 1–2 typos per page.

which is to be continued throughout the lifetime of Joshua, something which he had obviously begun sometime before. There are times in Scripture where the imperative is used to focus one upon the study of God's Word; this is delivered as both a command, an expectation and as a continued action. This verb is followed by the phrase *in it*. God does not instruct Joshua to hang out and wait for more revelations; Joshua lives in the time of continued revelation, when we do not have a complete canon of Scripture, but God does not tell him to sit around and be ready to receive more information which is more pertinent to his generation and to his personal life; he is to study the *Scroll of this Law*. God does not tell Joshua to hang out for a bit, while He puts together a more accurate Law, but God places the authority in the Law of Moses. There is no editing, no changing; God is right there speaking to Joshua and He tells Joshua to study the *scroll of this Law*. Few believers have even a clue as to how important the Word of God is. They give it some lip service and memorize a handful of verses, and think that they have done their duty in that area.

The time frame in which Joshua is to study the Law is covered next. First we have the substantive/adverb *yômâm* (יֹמָמָם) [pronounced *yoh-MAWM*], which means *daily, by day, daytime, in the daytime*. Strong's #3119 BDB #401. Then we have a *wâw* conjunction and the substantive *layêlâh* (לַיְלָאֵה) [pronounced *LAY-law*], which means *night*. Because the previous word is used primarily as an adverb, and they are tied together with a *wâw* conjunction, this takes on adverbial qualities; *nightly* would be a reasonable rendering here. Strong's #3915 BDB #538. This gives us: "A scroll of the Law the this will not depart out from your mouth and you will study [by repeating it to yourself] in it daily and night..." Or, less literally: "The scroll of this Law is not to depart from your mouth; furthermore, you will carefully study it every day and night..." This would refer to at least four books of the Pentateuch, and possibly five, as we find written in Deut. 31:24: *And it came to pass, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you."* Along this line, Psalm 1:1–3 reads: *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sin in the sea of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season; and its leaf does not wither and in whatever he does, he prospers.* Deut. 6:6–7: "And these words, which I am commanding you today, they will be on your heart, and you will teach them diligently to your sons and you will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." (see also, Deut. 11:19 30:9–14).

The next thought is begun with the conjunction *l'ma'an* (לְמַעַן) [pronounced *l'-MAH-gahn*], which we had in the previous verse; it means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that*. Strong's #4616 BDB #775. This gives us the logical result. This is followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which we had in the previous verse and which means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. It is often used for observing or keeping God's commandments. It means to know the law, the precepts, the Word of God, to *observe* it and to *obey* it and to *guard* it. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *to do* and the phrase *as [or, according to] all the writing in it*. This gives us: "...in order that you may preserve to do according to all the writing in it..."

This is an extremely important line. There are those who teach that the Law of Moses was an oral tradition that was carried on throughout the ages and finally written down centuries later by a veritable cornucopia of priests and holy men. However, this is not the testimony of the Bible. Back in Deut. 31:24, God's Word was written down. Right here, we are speaking of God's Word as having already been written down. These people can have all the theories that they want, but these theories are in direct opposition to what the Bible actually says about itself.

We have a second result introduced by the conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because* (Strong's #3588 BDB #471) and the adverb *'âz* (אָז) [pronounced *gawz*], which means *then, at that time, in that case (when following an if or though), now, as things are; that being so*. (Strong's #227 BDB #23). Together, they can be used for consecution and effect, allowing it to be rendered *so that*. Together, they can be rendered *so that at that time, for then, so then, so at that time*. Then we have the Hiphil imperfect of *tsâlach* (צָלַח) [pronounced *tsaw-LAHCH*], which means *advance, prosper*. Strong's #6743 BDB #852. In the Hiphil, the studying of God's Word—the Law of Moses—causes Joshua to be prosperous and successful. We end with the

untranslated word for a direct object and the words *your way* or *your journey*. This gives us: “...so that you will cause your journey to be successful.” McGee: *Joshua is to take the Word of God in one hand and a sword in the other. He is to move out by faith. God encourages him again to be strong and courageous. Friends, like Joshua, we as believers need to be strong and courageous. We need to possess our spiritual possessions by faith. Remember we are in enemy territory.*¹⁹

“Did I not command you, ‘Be strong and be firm; do not be terrified and do not be discouraged?’ For with you, Y^ehowah your God in all which you go.”

Joshua
1:9

“Did I not command you to be strong and to be firm? Do not be terrified and do not become discouraged. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.”

Let’s see what others have done here:

The Emphasized Bible

Have I not command thee, Be firm and bold, do not start nor be dismayed,—for with thee is Yahweh thy God, whithersoever thou goest?

NJB ‘Have I not told you: Be strong and stand firm? Be fearless and undaunted, for go where you may, Yahweh your God is with you.’

NRSV I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

REB ‘This is my command: be strong, be resolute; do not be fearful or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.’

Young’s Lit. Translation ‘Have not I commanded thee? be strong and courageous; be not terrified nor affrightened, for with thee *is* Jehovah the God in every *place* whither thou goest.’

As you have no doubt noticed, this passage appears to be very repetitious. We have two possibilities: (1) this is all that God said to Joshua; or, (2) this is the gist of what God said to Joshua; meaning that He said more, but Joshua was dumbfounded and frightened, and wrote this down later, recalling that which was repeated and recording that. We begin with *hă* (הַ) [pronounced *heh*], which is one form of the interrogative particle (the difference is just the vowel point). Strong’s #none BDB #209. So this is a question (our other possibility is that this is a definite article, but we won’t see a definite article preceding a normal stemmed verb). *Hă* is affixed to the negative, followed by the 1st person, Piel perfect, 2nd person masculine singular suffix of *tsâwâh* (צַוֶּה) [pronounced *tsaw-WAW*], which means *to lay charge upon, give charge to, charge, command, order, to commission, to mandate*. This is a verb found only in the Piel. Strong’s #6680 BDB #845. In saying, *have I not commanded you*, God is making a rhetorical question of emphasis. Joshua is not supposed to suddenly say, “Oh, yeah, You’re right—you did command me in this way.” It is simply a way of re-emphasizing what Joshua needs to know.

Now, this suggests that God is going to repeat Himself, something which we require. Some ministers have let that excuse allow them to be lazy in their studying and do little but repeat; but that does not negate the fact that we should get some repetition. Since God is quoting Himself, we should put some portion of this within quotes. Now, that is a judgment call. The first phrase comes directly from v. 6a and v. 7a (without the *only* and the *extremely* on v. 7a). This gives us: “**Have I not commanded you, ‘Be strong and be firm.’**” I have ended the quotation right here, but that is not necessarily the end of God quoting Himself. Although we do not have God telling Joshua not to be frightened in any previous verse, that does not mean that God did not tell him that. In fact, it is more likely that when God appeared to Joshua that was one of the first things He told him. This would suggest that we do not have all of what God said to Joshua written here. There is another thing that I should mention here. God is not just referring to a minute ago when He first began speaking to Joshua. Through Moses, God has told Joshua to be strong and firm: **Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him, in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land which Jehovah has sworn to their fathers to give to them, and you will give it to them as an inheritance. And Jehovah is the One Who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear and do not be dismayed.”** (Deut. 31:7–8). Recall that it was in the book of Deuteronomy where Moses first realized that he was speaking the Word of God to his people. Now

¹⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 14.

this does not imply that Moses was in any way divine; but he was filled with the Holy Spirit and God carefully guided him—both through his extensive study of God’s Word and through God the Holy Spirit—through the last week or two of his life.

We have a negative and then the next verb is generally correctly rendered, but I want to mention it anyway. It is 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ʿârats* (אָרַט) [pronounced *ʿaw-RAHTS*], which means *to cause to tremble, to tremble, to terrify*. Strong’s #6206 BDB #791. We find it with the negative. What is interesting about this verb is that God has not used it in speaking to Moses. In fact, prior to this point in Joshua, we only find this verb used four times in the Pentateuch and all of those times in the book of Deuteronomy where Moses is urging the people not to be afraid. Then we have the *wâw* conjunction, the negative and the verb *châthath* (חָתַת) [pronounced *khaw-THAHTH*], which means *dismay, discourage* and, on occasion, *broken in pieces* and even *to be afraid*. Strong’s #2865 BDB #369. “Do not be terrified and do not be discouraged.” Two major occupation hazards in the life of someone like Joshua would be becoming frightened and discouraged. The first applies to his movement into the land and directing his forces against the other people in the land. The second has to do with his relationship to his own people. Moses faced these people again and again, spending 38 years camped out in the desert with them, listening to them complain and watching them die off one by one. We have seen how discouraged Moses became in his one Psalm, which we have already studied (Psalm 90). Through Moses, God said this to Joshua. When he was in the congregation and Moses began to first speak with his people, Moses said: “See, Jehovah your God, has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as Jehovah, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deut. 1:21). God will later reassure Joshua: And Jehovah said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them will stand before you.” (Joshua 10:8). Joshua can say with the psalmist, David: Jehovah is my light and He is my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the refuge of my life; whom shall I dread? (Psalm 27:1).

Then God reassures Joshua, as He had done with Moses many times: “For with you, Y^ehowah your God in all which you go.” These last few words are for all of us. For He Himself has said, “I will never, no not ever, leave you or forsake you.” (Heb. 13:5 Deut. 31:6). “Listen, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20).

In the previous nine verses, we have God’s commission to Joshua, and you should notice that it is a very specific commission. God did not appoint Joshua as the ruler of Israel or as some sort of king. Joshua was the commander-in-chief of Israel’s army in charge of leading Israel into the Land of Promise and taking control of same. I point this out because suddenly, at the end of Joshua 22:9, Joshua drops out of the history of Israel. He will pop back in to give two messages, but he seems to disappear after that. I will refer to him as being semi-retired, but the key is that he finished what God had for him to do. What remains is for him to take his family to his plot of land and to occupy that land. In addition to that, it will be his responsibility to continue the recording of God’s Word, most of which he will do in this state of semi-retirement. On the one hand, you would think that after his successful campaign in Canaan that he would assume some sort of a position of leadership over Israel, but that was not given by God as Joshua’s assignment. He was to simply lead Israel across the Jordan, take the land, and then God gives him no further commands, because after the wars, he has no position as anything other than an elder.

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Joshua Assumes Command

Some expositors would prefer to see chapter end with v. 9 and begin Joshua 2 right here. At this point, Joshua assumes control, mobilizes the people, speaks to the 2½ tribes to remind them of their agreed upon obligation, and sends the two spies into Jericho to scope out the situation his first three actions as commander-in-chief of Israel’s military forces.

Then commanded Joshua [the] officers of the people, to say,

Joshua
1:10

Then Joshua commanded the commission officers of the people, saying,

The wâw consecutive is used next. Given that the Israelites had a tendency toward rebellion, God had carefully seen to it that the control of the troops by Joshua was without any contesting. Joshua had been a man who was quiet, remained in second place for a very long time, without giving any clue that he desired to lead his people. Moses chose him and with good reason. His only serious contender for this leadership position would have been Caleb, the only other of the twelve spies originally sent into the land the first time they had reconnoitered it who was still alive. Caleb was a grace man and apparently understood full well that Joshua was now commander in chief. Given their advanced ages, this meant that Caleb would never lead all of the troops as Joshua would or as Moses had. Moses chose Joshua to be second in command, and Joshua took the post of commander in chief just as naturally as a vice president assumes power in our country after the assassination or impeachment of a president. The word for *commanded* is the same word found in v. 9.

A precedent was set back when the Ten Commandments were first given and a good one at that; prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, God spoke directly to His representatives who then spoke to the people. There has always been a definite structure and line of command in God's plan. God did not go to Charlie Brown, brand new recruit, and begin giving him orders. God does not appear to brand new Christians today or immature Christians today while they are washing dishes or watching "Lavern and Shirley" on television.²⁰ In fact, it is highly unlikely that God manifests Himself in any dramatic way to believers today. I have heard one person say to me, "God is a big God." What she meant is that God is able to appear to man and He is able to heal and He is able to do miracles; and, her conclusion is that God is performing miraculous healings through various healers, He is doing miracles through various *Christian* miracle workers, etc. Now, there is no doubt about it—God is fully able to instantly, miraculously and completely heal any person of any disease in an instant and there are certainly times that God has healed some people apart from modern medicine. God can appear to any person and manifest Himself in any way that we could imagine. However, what we must realize is that ancient history is not filled with God manifesting Himself to man nor are ancient times filled with the healings of thousands of people. The Bible primarily records God's direct dealings with man, and accompanying those dealings will certainly be some miracles. However, when it comes to a plethora of miracles, we only find four major instances: (1) When Moses led the people from Egypt into the Land of Promise. We have a handful of miracles prior to the exodus (some of which were more likely incredible, pre-planned works) and a handful of miracles while going through the desert. Over a period of forty years, we probably have fewer than 30 miracles, some of which were not works which defied science. This is at a time when we have little or no Scripture. This is not the same as holy roller churches getting together and witnessing a half a dozen so-called miracles and healings each night they gather. (2) During the time of Elijah's ministry, we also will see a half-dozen miracles. (3) During the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have an incredible number of miracles performed by our Lord, most of which are in direct opposition to medical science. And, finally, (4) during the early time of the church, we have fewer than 30 recorded miracles (although there were certainly more) performed by the Apostles. There are several indications that these miracles ceased (Paul, who had the gift of healing, prescribed medicine for Timothy and he also left Trophimus behind sick during the latter portion of his ministry). Given that these are all of the miracles recorded over a period of two thousand years and given that the Bible is specifically a book dealing with God's direct dealings with man, and given that we now have the Holy Spirit and we now have the completed canon of Scripture, the occurrence of miracles in our lives is not going to be a daily process. In fact, for 99.9% of the believers, there will be no actual miracles which will occur in their lives. And I am not sure about the other 0.1%. Let's be logical about this. If the Bible records miracles occurring in the lives of less than 0.1% of the population of the earth prior to 100 AD, then it would follow that, in an age where we are promised that Satan would appear as an angel of light with the ability to perform wonders that could mislead the elect, that fewer than 0.1% of our population would experience miracles, and most of them at the hand of Satan, as has been promised us. You see, the problem with holy rollers and those taken in by holy rollers, is they have no perspective of what really happened in ancient times and they have no concept of logic. They only look at a few Scriptures, most of which they take completely out of their historical and literal context.

Now, Joshua does not speak to all of the people. He communicates first to shôṭêr (שׁוֹטֵר) [pronounced *sho-TARE*] which means *official, officer, commissioned officer*. Strong's #7860 BDB #1009. These are very likely the officers which Moses first appointed as per Ex. 18:21 and Deut. 1:15. Keil and Delitzsch list their duties as follows: to keep

²⁰ These are actual claims of two charismatics.

an accurate family register of the families under their command, to be in charge of military men under them, which included some sort of a draft (which included all men of age) and the circulation of the orders from above.²¹

“Pass through in [the] midst of the camp and command the people, to say, ‘Prepare yourselves provision(s) for yet three days, you are passing over the Jordan the this to go in, to take possession of the land which Y^ehovah your God is giving you to possess it.’

Joshua
1:11

“Pass through in the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare yourselves enough provisions because within three days, you will be passing over this Jordan and you will go in to take possession of this land which Jehovah your God has given you to possess.’

At this point in time, the Israelites are encamped on the east side of the Jordan river. Edersheim gives a marvelous description of this area: *A wide, rich plain at the foot of the mountains of Moab, carpets with wild flowers springing in luxuriant beauty, watered by many rivulets and rills, here and there covered by acacia trees, where birds of brightest plumage carol, and beyond, to the south, by the banks of streams, where scented oleanders rise to a height of twenty-five feet, their flower-laden boughs bending like those of the willow—such is Abel-Shittim, “the meadow of acacias.” Beyond it are the fords of the Jordan, and the western heights; in the distance southwards, the hills of Judaea, on which the purple light rests. Climate and vegetation are tropical, on the eastern even more than on the western banks of the Jordan. Many memories hallow the place. Somewhere here must Elijah have smitten the waters of Jordan, that they parted, ere the fiery chariot wrapt him fro the companionship of Elisha. In this district also was the scene of John’s baptism, where the Saviour humbled Himself to fulfil all righteousness. And on this “meadow of acacias” did an early summer shet its softness when, about the month of March, forty years after the Exodus, the camp of Israel kept thirty days’ solemn mourning for Moses (Deut. 34:8). Behind them rose that mountain-top, from which “that saint of God” had seen his last of Israel and of the goodly land, which they were so soon to possess; before them lay the Land of Promise which they were presently to enter.*²²

Let’s deal with the time frame here. I am accustomed to thinking in strictly a linear fashion. That is, when I recall or tell a story, I generally put it altogether chronologically. This is how we think in the western world. The Israelites did not think that way. First clue is the fact that the Bible is not arranged chronologically—neither in the Hebrew or in the English. My interest is teaching Scripture as it was received, chronologically, so we get a feel for the way truth was revealed, a bit at a time. So, the fact that we have all of this in the first chapter does not mean that all of this preceded chapter 2. In chapter 2, the spies will be sent out. That took several days to perhaps a week (see Joshua 2:22). Then the officers went throughout the camp to stir up the people. There were possibly several times when the officers went throughout the camp. As we will see, this is not something that would require several days to do, despite the fact that we are dealing with a tent city of two million people. Now, having said all that, I have given you the *party line* of most Christian and Jewish expositors.²³ At first, it appears as though these first three chapters were all very chronological. The officers go throughout the camp, speaking to those under them, giving the people three days to prepare. At that time, the spies cross over the Jordan and spend two days gathering information and return to Joshua. By the end of those three days, the spies have returned, the people have mobilized, and the officers will go through the camp once again to give specific marching orders. **And it came to pass at the end of three days that the officers went through the midst of the camp and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, your God, with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you will set out from your place and go after it.”** (Joshua 3:2–3). However, because the spies have to spend three days in hiding (Joshua 2:22) after the completion of their mission (which took a few days), these *three days* mentioned here and in Joshua 3:2 can’t be the same three days on both sides of the mission. Or, if these are the same *three days*, then this account cannot be entirely chronological. Furthermore, Joshua is not going to mobilize his forces and move out until he has spoken to the spies, this particular command was issued after

²¹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 24.

²² Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 298.

²³ See *Barnes’ Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 354.

the spies from chapter 2 returned (in fact, Keil and Delitzsch place the spy mission at 8 days).²⁴ So, it is the same three days—Joshua here is speaking at the beginning of these three days and Joshua 3:2 is at the end of the same three days; and the spies are sent out prior to that which is said in Joshua 1:11. That is, the actions of Joshua 2, precede this order of Joshua 1:11. So, the orders given by Joshua in chapter 1 are simply an enumeration of his first commands, not given in any kind of chronological order. Joshua 2 deals with the sending out of the spies and good military sense would dictate that the spies would return and first file a report and then Joshua would issue the marching orders of Joshua 1:11. They march three days after Joshua 1:11, as per Joshua 3:2.

Let's summarize and look at the chronological order: (1) Joshua orders the spies to go into Jericho to scope it out (Joshua 2:1). (2) The spies go into the land; one day has passed. (3) Almost immediately, their presence has been broadcast to the king of Jericho and his servants are sent out to look for them (Joshua 2:2). (4) Rahab, a prostitute, hides the men from the soldiers and suggests that the men hide out in the hills for three days. Therefore, three more days have passed (Joshua 2:6–23). (5) Having heard the report, Joshua calls for his forces to be mobilized, giving them three days to prepare (Joshua 1:11). Perhaps another day has passed. (6) At the end of those three days, the army of Israel moves out (Joshua 3:2). Three more days have passed. This gives us 7–8 days later, after the beginning of the book of Joshua.

Next, let's deal with the provisions: the manna, which was certainly not the entirety of the diet of the Israelites (recall, they had a great deal of livestock and they had just conquered a people and an area where there were certainly foodstuffs to maintain that people), was about to end. **And the sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan** (Ex. 16:35). They needed to slaughter some livestock, gather whatever food was available, cook up some casseroles, etc. Their food had to be prepared for traveling and for warfare.

Now let's examine the nuts and bolts of mobilizing the people: recall that we are dealing with two million people. There is no way that Joshua can meander through the camp and tell everyone it is time to get ready to move out. At present, Joshua is speaking to somewhere between 200 and 2000 men who are commissioned officers of varying rank. They will each need to communicate to 1000 to 10,000 people. This doesn't mean they need to speak to all of them, but they need to speak to the heads of families or to the officers under them. Whereas a simple nuclear family might have 5–10 members in it, we are probably dealing here with extended families where we have aunts, uncles, grand parents, etc., all living under the same roof, so to speak. These extended families probably have somewhere between 20–50 (or more) people in any extended family. Therefore, each officer might have to speak to 20–500 sets of people, which is something that could be done in a day. Now, if this were done in strictly military fashion, then we would have officers speaking to those under them, who would speak to those under them, and this would be accomplished within an hour or two. Recall that God had required Moses to set up a very organized military system. **“Furthermore, you will select men out of all the people who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain, and you will place these men over the people, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.”** (Ex. 18:21). Our God is a God of order and structure. He is not a God of chaos and confusion. When you walk into a church and twenty people are speaking in tongues at the same time, this is not a church of God—these are not people being directed by the Holy Spirit. **For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints** (I Cor. 14:33).

Now, the reason that I mention this and go into such detail here, is that I want to show that, in terms of numbers, what is being done is do-able. We have too many people who are confused when they think about two million people standing in line to get a drink of water from a rock with a stream of water coming from with a stream of

²⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 24. In a footnote on p. 25, Keil and Delitzsch give an alternative explanation which says that the *three days* mentioned in Joshua 1:11 and 3:2 are not the same *three days*. Whereas that is not a problem to accept, the whole tenor of Joshua's command here then makes less sense. “Get your provisions ready, because we are shipping out in three days. But, let's send out those spies first and then talk about time.” You see, it doesn't make sense. However, what would be an alternate possibility was that this was Joshua's intention, but the delay of the spy mission caused a delay in their moving out and deployment of troops. This would allow for these chapters to all be chronological, as long as you understood that Joshua's command to the people was not and could not be carried out. However, there is nothing in these chapters which implies that Joshua revised his orders.

water like a garden hose (a picture they saw illustrated in some children's book of Bible stories). In any case, the Israelites had to have a tight organization in order for information to be disseminated.

What Joshua commands his officers to do is the Qal imperative of $\text{ʿā}^{\text{b}}\text{var}$ (עָבַר) [pronounced *aw-BAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. What follows this verb is the *bêyth* preposition (*in, into, against*) and the masculine singular construct of $\text{qere}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (קָרַב) [pronounced *KEH-re^bv*], which means *midst, inward part*. Strong's #7130 BDB #899. Along with the word *the camp*, this gives us: "Pass through into [the] midst of the camp..."

This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction and the Piel imperative of *command*, and the direct object *the people*, and the *lâmed* prefixed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *to speak, to say*. In proper English, we would render this as a participle (*saying*) and not as an infinitive (*to say*). What follows is the text of what the officers are to say to the people; we begin with the Hiphil imperative of kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*], which can mean *establish, prepare, stabilize*. Strong's #3559 BDB #465. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *for yourselves*. What they are to prepare is the feminine singular of *tseydah* (צֵידָה) [pronounced *TSAY-dah*], which means *provisions taken on a journey*. Strong's #6720 BDB #845. This gives us: "...Command the people, to say, 'Prepare for yourselves provision(s)..."

Then Joshua explains why. He uses the explanatory preposition *for, because* and the adverb ʿôwd (עוֹד) [pronounced *ôhd*] (it is also written ʿôd), which means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet*. Strong's #5750 BDB #728. Then we have the words *three days*.

Joshua will then use a participle of the verb *to pass over, to pass through*, perhaps just to break up the monotony of the phrasing; and to indicate that this is a verb to be performed by the hearers, he precedes it with the 2nd person masculine plural personal pronoun. "...for yet three days you will be passing over..." What follows, is literally, *the Jordan the this [this Jordan] to go in to take possession of the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you to possess*. McGee: *Israel's ownership of the land is unconditional, but Israel's possession of it is conditional. Israel had to take the land. The key word of the book of Joshua is not "victory"—it is God who gets the victory. The key word is "possession." Israel was to possess the land.*²⁵

And to the Reubenite and to the Gadite and to [the] half of a tribe of Manasseh, said Joshua, to speak,

Joshua
1:12

And to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,

As you will recall, immediately prior to coming to this encampment on the east side of the Jordan, Israel had been in a military conflict with Midian. The tribes named in this verse had chosen the areas which had been conquered on the other side of the Jordan to be their land. Moses had granted them their wish to allow their women and children to remain there, as long as the men assisted the other tribes when it came to taking the rest of the land given them by God. If you don't recall, see Num. 31–32 for more information (and Moses recounts this information in Deut. 3).

"A recalling: the word which Moses, servant of Y^ehowah, commanded you [all], to say, 'Y^ehowah your God is causing you to rest and He has given you the land the this.

Joshua
1:13

"Recall the word that Moses, servant of Jehovah, commanded you, saying, 'Jehovah your God is providing you rest and He has given you this land.

The first verb in this verse is the Qal infinitive absolute whereas we would expect the imperative (which is how most translators render this verb). Joshua is not necessarily giving an order here, but he is reminding these tribes of what they have already agreed to. The translation of this verse is fairly straight forward, with the exception of the first verb with Y^ehowah as its subject. This is the Hiphil participle of nûwach (נָוַח) [pronounced *NOO-ahk*], which means *rest, cause to rest, set down, lay down, deposit, leave*. Strong's #5117 (and #3240) BDB #628.

²⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 15.

Moses agreed that God had given them the land and had given that particular land to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh.

With reference to the word *rest*, Zodhiates writes: *It is important to realize that the term “rest,” as used elsewhere, does not mean total peace; it is a relative term.*²⁶ NIV notes: *Rest [is] an important concept...implying secure borders, peace with neighboring countries and absence of threat to life and well-being within the land.*²⁷ **And He [God] said, [to Moses] “My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.” (Ex. 33:14). For thus the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, has said, “In repentance and rest you will be delivered; in quietness and trust is your strength—but you were not willing!” (Isa. 30:15). And My people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places (Isa. 32:18).**

There are some Bible expositors, e.g., J. Vernon McGee, who make a big deal over these 2½ tribes taking possession of the land east of the Jordan. Their problem is that it symbolically does not line up. That is, crossing over the Jordan is analogous to our believing in Jesus Christ. Therefore, those who crossed over, but went back, are like those believers who have faith in our Lord, but then return to their previous life. Symbolically, I have no problem with this interpretation. Whether we can fault these 2½ tribes for choosing to occupy the land which they helped conquer, I will reserve judgment. However, as you will recall from earlier in this chapter, the Israelites had been given the land all the way over to the Euphrates River, which takes in a great more room to the east of the Jordan than it does to the west.

“Your wives, your little one and your cattle will remain in the land which Moses gave to you in a region across the Jordan; and you, [even] you will pass over in ranks by fifties before [the] faces of your brothers, all of mighty men of the valour, and you will have helped them.

Joshua
1:14

“Your wives and your children and your cattle will remain in the land which Moses gave to you in the region across the Jordan; however, you will pass over the Jordan in organized groups in the sight of your brothers—the heroic soldiers—and you will help them.

The vocabulary is fairly simple until we get to the bêyth preposition (*in*) and the word ʿêber (עָבַר) [pronounced ʕAY^b-ver], which means *region across, beyond, side*. Strong's 5676 BDB #719. The focus of the invasion was the west side of the Jordan, even though God had given much of the east side of the Jordan to Israel already.

Once the Israelites left their children, wives and possessions on that side of the Jordan, settled in, they were to pass over the Jordan and they are then described by the adjective chāmushîym (חָמֹשִׁים) [pronounced *kheh-moo-SHEEM*], which means *armed, in battle array, armed for battle*. Young renders this *fifties*; Scofield, *ranks by five*; Barnes, *arrayed in divisions or ranks*. Strong's #2571 BDB #332. This adjective is but one vowel point different from chāmishîym (חָמִשִׁים) [pronounced *kheh-mih-SHEEM*], which means *fifty*. Strong's #2572 BDB #332. This is why Young translated this as *ye pass over by fifties...*²⁸ The connection between the words is that we are dealing with a very organized movement of men, which is absolutely necessary in the military.

Then we have the lâmed preposition and the word for faces; together, they mean *in the presence of, before the faces of, in the sight of*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815 (lâmed is BDB #510). This will be *before the faces of all of* and then we have the masculine plural construct of gibbôwr (גִּבּוֹרִים) [pronounced *gib-BOAR*], which means *strong men, mighty men, soldiers*. Strong's #1368 BDB #150. They are *mighty men of chayil* (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*], which means *strength, valour, power*. Strong's #2428 BDB #298.

Help is in the perfect tense, indicating an action yet future but complete. That is, they were to work with their brothers until they had completely taken the land. These three tribes were always willing to be obligated by the conditions enumerated by Moses, as they had confirmed several times, and they obeyed these conditions in

²⁶ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 573.

²⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 290.

²⁸ Barnes says *marshalled by five* in *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 354.

Joshua 4:12. Now, what is important is that these men had a bond with the other Israelites and that they were willing to go to war on behalf of their brothers. These were not draft dodgers; they did not march for peace; although this war might not net them anything personally, they were willing to give their lives on behalf of their brothers. Furthermore, the simple application, apart from their willingness to accompany their brothers into war, is that you do not Welsh on an obligation and you pay back your debts as a Christian testimony.

“ ‘Until which Y^ehowah gives rest to your brothers as you and they take possession also they the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving them; and you will return to a land of your possession and you will possess it, which Moses, a servant of Y^ehowah, gave to you beyond the Jordan east of the sun.’ ”

Joshua
1:15

“ ‘Until the time when Jehovah allows you and your brothers to rest when they have also taken possession of the land which Jehovah your God has given them. Then you will return to the land which Moses gave to you—the land beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.’ ”

We begin this verse with a prepositional compound. We first have the preposition *ʿad* (אד) [pronounced *ʿad*] which means *as far as, until*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This is combined with the relative pronoun *ʾasher* (אשר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which means *that, which, when or who*. Strong's #834 BDB #81. Together, they mean *until that, until the time, until that time, until then*; referring generally to past time when used with a perfect tense and future, as here, when used with an imperfect tense.

Gives rest is in the Hiphil imperfect—God grants rest to the Israelites—God causes them to be at rest; they are in a position where they no longer need to be at war with the people in their near vicinity.

After brothers, we have the kaph preposition and the 2nd person masculine plural suffix, which is literally *as you [all]*; however, we may better grasp it rendered *as well as to you, as also to you, as to yourselves*. No Strong's # BDB #453.

After we have the phrase *and they take possession*, we have the adverb *gam* (גם) [pronounced *gahm*] which means *also, in addition to, moreover, furthermore*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. With this is the personal pronoun *they*. What is meant is that they will possess their land also, just as the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh possess their land already.

The only other difficult thing to translate in this verse are the final two words. The first is *miz^erâch* (מִזְרָח) [pronounced *miz^e-RAHKH*], which means *eastward, east, place of sun rising*. Strong's #4217 BDB #280. This is in the construct and is followed by the definite article and the word for *sun*. A word-for-word rendering is quite cumbersome: *east of the sun, eastward of the sun*. The meaning is obvious, however; we are simply looking at the land they captured on the east side of the Jordan (where they are encamped at this point in the book of Joshua).

This verse would be fulfilled in Joshua 22:1–4: *Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and he said to them, “You have kept all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, and you have listened [and obeyed] my voice in all that I commanded you. You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but you have kept the obligation of the commandment of Jehovah your God. And now Jehovah 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 Jehovah gave you beyond the Jordan.”*

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The Two and One-Half Tribes Speak to Joshua

And they answered Joshua, to say, “All that you have commanded us, we will do and to every [place] which you send us, we will go.

Joshua
1:16

“And they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you have commanded us, we will do and wherever you send us, we will go.

The only difficult portion of this verse to translate is in the second to the last phrase where we have the wâw conjunction and the preposition `el (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. This is followed by the noun kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*], which means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. This is followed by the relative pronoun. Young renders this *unto every [place] whither*; Rotherham, KJV: *whithersoever*; NASB, NKJV, NIV: *wherever*. As mentioned in the previous verse, these three tribes did exactly what was expected of them.

“According to all that we hearkened unto Moses so we will hearken unto you; providing [or, surely] Y^ehowah your God is with you as that He was with Moses.

Joshua
1:17

“Just as we obeyed Moses, so we will obey you—provided that Jehovah your God is with you as He was with Moses.

This verse begins with the kaph preposition, which is usually rendered *as, like*; it can also be rendered *according to*. No Strong's # BDB #453. The verse literally begins *as all which we hearkened unto Moses*; however, most translations simplify this to *just as we obeyed [or, listened to] Moses...* The next word is kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*] is generally rendered *so*. Strong's #3651 BDB #485. We have a repeat of the verb shâma' (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*] is the simple word for *listen*; but it really means *to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take not of, listen and be cognizant of*. The context that we can determine whether it is the simple act of listening or the act of listening attentively to and obeying. The very best single word for the latter meaning is the archaic *hearken*. The spokesmen for these three tribes first used this word in the Qal perfect, referring to a completed action in the past; they now use it in the Qal imperfect, indicating future continuous action. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033.

The next phrase begins with the adverb raq (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*], which means *only, altogether, surely*. Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956. I am conflicted here as to how to interpret this. Are they expressing a desire or a limitation on their obedience—that is, *as long as God is with you*; or, are expressing a wish or a desire—we *wish only that God is with you*: or, are they acknowledging what they believe to be true—*surely God is with you*? I have gone with the latter rendering and understanding, but I am expressing my other thoughts, as I don't feel 100% positive about this interpretation. The verb which follows is the Qal imperfect of the absolute statue quo verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] simply means *to be*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. Owen's expresses that as though this is a desire upon the part of the tribe leaders: *Only may be Yahweh your God with you as he was with Moses*. Young records this as an observation, as I have: *surely Jehovah thy God is with thee as He hath been with Moses*. Rotherham, the NASB and the NIV also render this as a wish or desire. The KJV and NKJV lean toward that (*only the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses*). However, Gesenius helps us here and says that this adverb generally implies restrictive force, and may also be rendered *provided*; this gives us probably the best understanding of what they were actually saying. **“We will listen to you, provided that Y^ehowah your God is with you as He was with Moses.”**

Now, the only thing that you would miss in the English translation is that prior to saying *He was with Moses*, we have both the kaph preposition (*so, as, like*) and the relative pronoun. Literally, this is *as which*; however, together, they mean *as which, as one who, as, like as*. Strong's #834 BDB #455.

“Every man who is caused to oppose your mouth and does not hear [and obey] your words; concerning all that you command him—he will be put to death; only be strong and firm.”

Joshua
1:18

“Everyone who stands in opposition to you and does not obey your words concerning all he is commanded—he should be executed. Only be strong and resolute.”

The first verb is Hiphil imperfect of *mârâh* (מָרָה) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*], and it means *to rebel, to rebel against, to oppose, to resist*. Strong's #4784 BDB #598. In the Hiphil, they are caused to rebel. There are very few people who, in and of themselves, become rebels. Most of them are sheep and they need a strong leader to lead them in rebellion. You remove the leader and those who want to lead and you often quash the rebellion. What they are caused to oppose is Joshua's *peh* (פֶּה) [pronounced *peh*], which means *mouth*. This is a Hebraism for the words or the commandments which come out of the mouth. Strong's #6310 BDB #804. Then we have the *wâw* conjunction, the negative, and the verb *hearken* again (in the Qal imperfect).

Stay with the context here—they are not just speaking of any Charlie Brown; they are speaking specifically of any male in the tribe of Gad, Reuben or Manasseh. Joshua is extracting from them a pledge to obey him as they would Moses and to fulfill their commitment to the other tribes and not only are they agreeing, but they commit themselves to agreeing to an execution or carrying out the execution themselves. What we have here is the Hophal imperfect of *mûwth* (מוּת) [pronounced *mooth*], which is the simple word for *die*. The Hophal is the passive causative. The subject of the verb, the one who is rebellious, will receive the action of the verb—in other words, he will receive death; he will be caused to die. In other words, this means, in the Hophal, *to execute*. Strong's #4191 BDB #559. The idea here is that they are agreeing that if any one of their tribesmen stands in opposition to this agreement, that the same should be executed. NIV: *Having taken the oath of allegiance to Joshua, they now agree to the death penalty for any act of treason.*²⁹

Again we have the adverb *raq* (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*], which means *only, altogether, provided, surely*. Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956. This is more the expression of a wish or a desire on the part of the leaders of the three tribes. What is well-established in the minds of these leaders is how stiff-necked and rebellious the Israelites can be. What is required is swift, clear action. Our criminal justice system has bent over backwards in hopes of being fair and equitable to the accused. We have gone so far as to our judicial system often being a game between the prosecutors and the defense attorneys. Justice is not served. Criminals with money certainly get a better deal than those without. We have hardened killers on death row who should have been executed decades ago. We have people serving abnormally long sentences for some relatively law-abiding citizens because some judge wanted to *send a message* that day. Here, those who rebel were to be faced with execution. Several times, Joshua has heard *be strong and firm*. With the people that he was dealing with, this was an absolute necessity. I would take these as words of encouragement and endorsement from these three tribes.

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²⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 290.