

September 6, 2026

“Joshua Leads Courageously”
Lesson 1

Joshua 1:1-11

Intro

Moses was God’s leader, the one who brought the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt by God’s design. But the majority of the people had difficulty obeying God and Moses, so they wandered in the desert for 40 years instead of getting to go directly into the Promised Land. Towards the end of this time, Joshua is chosen by God to be the next leader of Israel and bring them into the Promised Land. By the time Moses dies, hundreds of years had passed since God first made promises to Abraham concerning this land. But now, all this time later, the people had yet to settle the land. Under the leadership of Joshua, they needed to follow God’s commands to possess the land that had been promised to them.

Read Joshua 1:1-11

1. vs. 1: Joshua here is called “the son of Nun” and “Moses’ aide”
 - Calling him “the son of Nun” shows his lineage as a descendent of Ephraim
 - The word “aide” in Hebrew is a verb, an action rather than a description
 - Joshua has been serving Moses, his elder and mentor
 - This is like Moses being called “the servant of the Lord”
 - The words for “servant” and “aide” are different, but the roles are similar
 - The name Joshua means “The Lord saves” or “The Lord is salvation”
2. vs. 2: God tells Joshua that Moses is dead (which he knows)
 - This is God telling Joshua that he is to be the leader of Israel
 - He is to get the people ready to go across the Jordan and enter the Promised Land
 - The Jordan is filled with water as it is the spring rainy season at this time
 - Crossing the Jordan might look difficult, but God will make it possible
 - He has chosen Joshua, who trusted God to deliver the land he saw as one of the spies
 - God is fulfilling the promise made to Abraham hundreds of years earlier
3. vs. 3: God reminds them that it is He who is giving the land to Israel
 - Everywhere they go in the land, it is theirs because God is with them
 - This echoes the promise He made to Moses in Deut. 11:24
4. vs. 4: This verse describes the extent of the territory that the Promised Land will contain
 - The desert is the southern end of Israel, and Lebanon is in the north
 - The Euphrates River is on the north and eastern side of Israel
 - The Mediterranean Sea is as far west as can be traveled in the land
 - The Hittites were in the north, a growing power than controlled what is now Turkey
5. vs. 5: God here reminds them of His presence in acquiring the Promised Land
 - They will take the land by His strength and power
 - “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you”

Joshua has already seen God deliver on this promise
Israel captured 60 cities east of Galilee at the end of Moses' days (Deut. 3:4)
When they fought the Midianites (Num. 31:49), they suffered no casualties

6. vs. 6: Forms of "be strong and courageous" appear 11 times in the OT

The general meaning of courage is this:

"the quality that enables one to meet danger and difficulties with firmness or valor,
despite feelings of fear or inadequacy"

Joshua may be fearful or feel inadequate; Moses certainly felt inadequate
God has chosen Joshua here, just like he chose Moses; he gave them both a task to do
They are to be confident in doing this task, because God will see His promises fulfilled

7. vs. 7: God repeats what He said in vs. 6, with one additional word

"Be strong and *very* courageous"

If Joshua trusts God, then he will be courageous in carrying out God's instructions

God tells him to "be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you"

What God told Moses is still His will and plan

Joshua models courage and success to Israel by obeying the Law given to Moses

Before Joshua can be a great military leader, he needs first to model spiritual leadership

8. vs. 8: Joshua here is called to do two things, which will result in a third thing

He is to meditate on the Law daily, and then obey what it says to do

If Joshua will do these two things, God promises him prosperity and success

The instruction is to meditate on the Law "day and night"—constantly

The word translated as "prosperity" literally means "flourishing"

God's promise isn't one of financial success, but of a life which is full and flourishing

9. vs. 9: God repeats his command to Joshua a third time, and adds assurance to it

He tells Joshua again to "Be strong and courageous"

If an idea is repeated three times by anyone, it's important

But God adds, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged"

No matter what comes up, Joshua is to avoid these negative mindsets

The reason is that "the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"

Why should Joshua be afraid, if God is with him in everything he does?

It's clear—he shouldn't be afraid. God has promised His presence and power

10. vs. 10: Joshua's first directions as leader are to the "officers of the people"

This group likely includes elders and administrative leaders (see Num. 11:16)

Joshua is using the people in place already who are leaders of smaller numbers

11. vs. 11: His instructions are to get the people ready

The people are to get food ready

They are given the timeline—3 days until they cross into the Promised Land

They are told to get ready to take possession of the land—God is giving it to them

Application: God can and will use anyone as His instrument to achieve His will. Being people whose hearts are open to God and soft to His directions makes us the most useful to Him. Also, God promises to provide what is needed as we follow His leading. Worldly success is not the measure. We are to seek God's will and His paths. Then He promises to us eternal, spiritual blessings when we do these things. Joshua exhibited courage and trust. In whatever role God has given us, we need to demonstrate the same qualities.

Prayer: Father God, we want to be strong and courageous, just like Joshua. Show us how to trust Your will in all situations. Grant us peace in uncertainty and in the times of waiting. In Jesus' name, Amen.