

Stand Firm!
Joshua 1:1–9

February 20, 2005

SERMON NOTES

- A. Joshua
 - 1. his background
 - a. Num 13:16, his names:
 - b. Exodus 17:9, his first task:
 - c. Exodus 20:13, his is called:
 - d. Exodus 33:7, 11, he stayed by the:
 - e. Numbers 14:6-10, he with Caleb was:
 - 2. his new situation
 - a. Moses, who was the greatest prophet to be found in all the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 34:10–12) was D_____
 - b. Numbers 20:12, Deuteronomy 1:37–38, Moses could not enter into Canaan because:
 - c. Deuteronomy 31:14, 23; God commissioned Joshua to:
 - d. Deuteronomy 31:24–29; the people Joshua was to lead were:
- B. God has said He is with us Joshua 1:5
 - 1. because God was with Israel
 - a. Deuteronomy 32:30, numbers:
 - b. Psalm 46:1, His Presence brings
 - 2. For those who know Jesus as their Saviour
 - a. 1 John 4:15–16, they have the same
 - b. Romans 8:10–11, God also dwells with us in the Persons of
 - c. Matthew 28:19–20, Our commission as Christians assures us:
 - d. Hebrews 13:5b–6, so we should not fear because
- C. God has sworn His promise to us Joshua 1:6
 - 1. Hebrews 6:13–14, 17; Genesis 22:15–18, 13:14–17; God assured Abraham of the certainty of His promises by
 - 2. Hebrews 6:17–19a; we have the same assurance as Abraham since
- D. God has taught us the way to live Joshua 1:7
 - 1. Joshua's dangerous times had taught him
 - 2. 1 John 5:3, our dangerous times should teach us
- E. God has disclosed to us His revelation Joshua 1:8
 - 1. Joshua had the books that Moses wrote
 - a. he needed to know these thoroughly if he was to
 - b. Deuteronomy 17:18, later, Israel's kings were supposed to
 - 2. the revelation of God that we have
 - a. is
 - b. Christ's coming to earth has made it
- F. God has given to us His command Joshua 1:9
 - 1. Joshua commanded Israel under orders from:
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 4:7–9
 - a. we ourselves are
 - b. because we under His power, we

A. Joshua

1. first, some background about Joshua

- a. his father's name was Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim
- b. his original name was Hoshea (Oshea) meaning, "salvation;" but Moses renamed him Joshua (Jehoshua, Jeshua) meaning "Jehovah is salvation" (Numbers 13:16); this is Jesus' name
- c. Joshua drops onto the pages of Scripture in Exodus 17:9;
 - (A) shortly after the Red Sea crossing,
 - (B) God had just supplied manna and water from the rock.
 - (C) new opposition appeared, the Amalekites
 - (D) Moses, at God's command, chose Joshua to lead an army against Amalek, which he did successfully
 - (E) all this happened in the first three months of leaving Egypt, before the law had been given from Sinai
- d. in Exodus 20–24 the law is given and affirmed by Israel; immediately afterwards, God summons Moses up the mountain: Exodus 24:13 (NAS): "So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God." — so Joshua is named as Moses' servant or minister
- e. as Moses and he returned from the mountain, Joshua points out the war-like clamour of worship of the golden calf
- f. Exodus 33:7, before the tabernacle proper was built, Moses set up the tabernacle or tent of meeting outside of the camp where, as we read in verse 11 (NAS), "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent."
- g. and Joshua, along with Caleb, was a faithful spy who knew that Israel could, by God's hand, enter the land of Promise even though there were giants living in the land
- h. so for almost 40 years, Joshua was Moses' assistant, serving him constantly throughout the wandering in the wilderness

2. Joshua's new situation

- a. but now Moses is dead
 - (A) the Moses of whom we read in the closing verses of the book of Deuteronomy — probably written by Joshua himself — 34:10–12 (NAS): "Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, for all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel."
 - (B) what an act to have to follow!

(C) Joshua had been faced with this prospect since the time at Meribah (that was where Moses disobeyed by striking the rock twice to bring forth water) and Moses was denied the privilege of entering the land (Numbers 20:12, Deuteronomy 1:37–38)

b. so, at the very end of the 40 years, as the children of Israel sit poised on the border of the promised land

(A) God summons Moses and Joshua to the tent of meeting, which is now the completed tabernacle in Deuteronomy 31:14 (NAS):
“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.’ So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting.”

(B) then, in verse 23, “Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, ‘Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you.’”

(C) well, we all like promotions, and what a promotion this was ... to be the leader, leading Israel into the land!

c. but listen, as I am sure that Joshua did, to what Moses says next in verse 24–29 (NAS): And it came about, 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 the Lord, saying, “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more, then, after my death? Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.”

d. well! That’s the group Joshua has to lead!

e. no wonder Joshua needs encouragement this day

3. So, in this first chapter of Joshua, from which we read today, I find five distinct encouragements — reasons, not to stand still, but to stand firm in relationship and service to the Lord

a. God has said He is with us

b. God has sworn His promise to us

c. God has taught us how to live

d. God has disclosed to us His revelation

e. God has given to us His command

B. God has said He is with us Joshua 1:5 (NKJV)

1. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. (v. 9 repeats this; 3:7, 4:14 people are shown it)

2. It has been said that God plus one is a majority
 - a. that had been Israel's experience throughout the 40 years
 - b. in the song the Moses gave to Israel for them to remember this period, in Deuteronomy 32:30 (NAS) he sings: [How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?](#)
 - c. God was with them, ever present: a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night . . . leading, guiding, teaching
 - d. as Psalm 46:1 puts it so eloquently, ["God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble"](#)

3. so it is also with you here this morning who know the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour
 - a. for we have this promise: 1 John 4:15–16 (NAS): ["Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."](#)
 - b. and in Romans 8:10–11 (NAS) we find that God also dwells in us in the Persons of the Spirit and the Son: ["And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you."](#)
 - c. thus in Christ's commission to us, he gives the promise, Matthew 28:19–20 (NAS): ["Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."](#)
 - d. so it is small wonder that the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us (13:5b–6, NAS): [" . . . for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"](#) quoting from the passages in the Old Testament that we have already read
 - e. God is always with you: Stand Firm!

C. God has sworn His promise to us Joshua 1:6 (NKJV)

1. [Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.](#)

2. as you read through the books of Moses, and particularly the book of Deuteronomy, you will come across this statement over and over:
 - a. "the land which I swore unto your fathers"
 - b. "the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob"
 - c. "the land which I swore to give"
 - d. "the good land which I swore to give to your fathers"

- e. and so on
- f. now the swearing of which we are talking here is that solemn affirmation of truth and purpose by God Himself
- g. Hebrews 6:13–14, 17 refers to the promises to Abraham of which this was a part (NAS): “For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply you.’ ... In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath”
- h. thus confirming the promise previously made to Abraham concerning the land of Canaan in Genesis 13:14–17
- i. Joshua was to be strong and of good courage since what he was about to do had already been confirmed by God in the most powerful way imaginable some 400 years before

- 3. and we likewise, in our Christian walk with and for God, are to be strong and courageous, because Hebrews 6:17–19a (NAS) tells us that this same solemn promise applies to us, “In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a [hope] both sure and steadfast ...”
 - a. God’s promise is an anchor to your soul: Stand Firm!

D. God has taught us the way to live Joshua 1:7 (NKJV)

- 1. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.
- 2. Joshua lived in dangerous times
 - a. he saw the sin at Baal-Peor and the resulting plagues that destroyed many Israelites — because of straying from God
 - b. he had seen Nadab and Abihu consumed by fire — because they worshipped in a way that was not right
 - c. he had seen the Israelites, refusing to enter the land, changing their minds and being beaten in battle — because they disobeyed the command of God
 - d. so he knew
 - (A) by observation and experience
 - (B) and now by the word of the Lord Himself
 - (C) that true strength and courage only can come in obedience to God and to His commands

3. we, too, live in dangerous times
 - a. when all around people live in a moral malaise
 - b. confused, blissfully ignorant of the punishment to come
 - c. but God has given to us His commandments so that we may serve Him aright, and we are told, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3 NAS)
 - d. God has shown us how to live; Stand Firm!

E. God has disclosed to us His revelation Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)

1. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
2. Joshua had the first five books of the Bible as written by Moses
 - a. which revealed the Lord God of Heaven and His purpose for His people Israel – at least as much as Joshua needed to know – sufficient for Joshua to carry out God’s plan
 - (A) this was entrusted to the Levite’s care
 - (B) but God intended it for all of His people to know
 - (C) and this was particularly true of their leader
 - b. It is interesting to note the command that God has for the one day king of Israel in Deuteronomy 17:18 (NAS): “Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.”
 - (A) this might be a good task for every Christian leader — no; no cut and paste, thank you ... write in long hand!
 - (B) yes, I know that our completed Bible is more than what they had, but after all, it’s easier to write in English!
 - c. then the promise was, that in all of Joshua’s endeavours as the leader of the people of God, he would prosper
3. we, as just noted, also have God’s Revelation —
 - a. the Bible: full, complete, tried, tested, true
 - b. Christ’s coming has revealed, clarified, and demonstrated what was but a mystery to the Old Testament prophets
 - c. We have God’s Holy Word to read; Stand Firm!

F. God has given to us His command Joshua 1:9 (NKJV)

1. *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

2. It is the “I” of “Have I not commanded you” that is important

a. Joshua was under marching orders

(A) he who had given such orders in war against Amalek

(B) he who had for forty years followed such orders

(1) who had watched as God led daily for that time

(2) who had seen Moses led through every difficulty

(3) who had beheld God defeating their every foe

b. and knowing the God, the great “I AM” was going to be his Commander, his Leader

(A) someone has said that God’s name “I AM” is the great blank cheque of the Bible; already signed by God . . . you fill in your need and it will be honoured in full

(1) I AM your Help

(2) I AM your Rock

(3) I AM your Salvation

(4) I AM your Everything

(B) so, if this is the case,

(1) if threatened, why should the child of God be timid?

(2) if perplexed, why should he be overcome?

(3) 2 Corinthians 4:7–9 (NAS) still stands true: *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*

c. so, based on the last 40 years, Joshua could look forward to service under the same Great and Mighty God of Israel

3. and we, too, are operating under God’s command

a. *Stuart Briscoe tells this story: ⁻⁽²⁾. “One of my young colleagues was officiating at the funeral of war veteran. The dead man’s military friends wished to have a part in the service at the funeral home, so they requested the pastor to lead them down to the casket, stand with them for a solemn moment of remembrance, and then lead them out through the side door. This he proceeded to do, but unfortunately the effect was somewhat marred when he picked wrong door. The result was they marched with military precision into a broom closet, in*

full view of the mourners, and had to beat a hasty retreat covered with confusion.

(A) Stuart added, "This true story illustrates two cardinal rules:

(1) First, if you're going to lead, make sure you know where you're going.

(2) Second, if you're going to follow, make sure that you are following someone who knows what he is doing!"

(B) when you are following God's command there is never any doubt on either score; you know where you're going because you know Whom your are following

G. Conclusion

1. So then, this week, as you go back out into a secular world seeks to afflict, to perplex and to persecute you, stand firm, for
 - a. God has said He is with you
 - b. God has sworn His promise to you
 - c. God has taught you how to live
 - d. God has disclosed to you His revelation
 - e. God has given to you His command

2. ... Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you ... Stand firm!

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by "Kerux" followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. "Everyday Discipleship for Ordinary People," Stuart Briscoe – Kerux illustration #1919