

ISRAEL'S NEW LEADER

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Moses was a prophet and the man through whom God chose to give His law to the nation of Israel. Moses also served as the first of the Judges of Israel (Exod 18:13). As Moses' life on this earth neared its end, it was time for the leadership of the nation to transition from Moses to another man. In Numbers 27:12-14, God called Moses up into mount Abarim (also known as Pisgah, Deut 3:27-28), to show him the land of Canaan before he died. At that time, Moses asked the Lord to choose his successor (Num 27:16-18). God then chose Joshua the son of Nun to be the man to lead Israel into Canaan, to conquer the land, and to serve as the next Judge of the nation (Num 27:18-23). When Moses died, the Lord said to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Josh 1:2). Next, God gave Joshua the vital instructions he needed to be the kind of leader that God's sheep needed. From these God-given instructions, we can also learn how to please our Maker and be a vessel unto honor meet for His use (2 Tim 2:20-21).

Instructions to Joshua: "Meditate and observe to do"

In Joshua 1:7-8, God said to Joshua, "*Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success*" (Josh 1:7-8). First, God told Joshua to be "strong and very courageous" so that He could "observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Josh 1:7). Second, God told Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh 1:8). There is a direct correlation between the two instructions that God gave Joshua. In order to *do* everything in God's law (Josh 1:7), it was necessary for Joshua to first study that law, to *meditate* on it day and night until it was continuously in his mouth (Josh 1:8). It is not

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possible to do what God says until one knows what God says.

Instructions by Christ: "Hear and do"

The same two instructions that God gave to Joshua are also given by the Lord in the New Testament. The same principles we learn in Joshua 1:7-8 apply to us today. The New Testament teaches that only those who obey Christ will receive eternal salvation (Matt 7:21; Luke 6:46; Acts 10:34-35; Rom 6:16-23; Heb 5:9; 1 John 2:17), while all those who disobey will receive eternal destruction (Rom 2:8-9; 2 Thes 1:7-10; 1 Pet 4:17). But ignorance of God's word makes repentance (Acts 17:30) and obedience impossible (Rom 10:1-3; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Pet 1:14). That is why the Lord says that ignorance will alienate us from the life of God (Eph 4:17-18). As Joshua was instructed to hear (meditate) and then do all that God said, the New Testament also teaches us to hear and do what God says in order to be saved. For example, Jesus said that those who *do* the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21; Luke 6:46). Jesus taught what we must do to be like a wise man whose house is built on a rock, rather than like a foolish man who builds his house on the sand which is destroyed by a storm (Matt 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49). "*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*" Matthew 12:46-50 says, "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*" (see also Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:20-21). Hearing and doing God's word will cause a man to be justified by God and be blessed by Him (Rom 2:13; Jas 1:22-25). As Joshua was commanded to know God's word and do it, so Christians are also told the same.