

JOSHUA'S CHARGE

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Near the end of Moses' life, he was concerned about having a successor to lead the children of Israel after his death. Therefore, in Numbers 27:15-17, "Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, *Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.*" God responded to Moses' request by choosing Joshua the son of Nun. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. *And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses*" (Num 27:18-23). Moses gave Joshua a charge. Later, after Moses' death, God also gave Joshua a charge. 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). God also 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).

Meditate to be able to observe to do

There is a direct correlation between the two instructions that God gave Joshua concerning the law. 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 possible to do what God says until one knows what God says. Sadly, after Joshua died, the children of Israel forgot this point, and then forsook the Lord. Judges 2:7-13 says, "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the

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Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: *and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*" The same mistake was repeated by many more generations of Israelites. Hosea 4:6 says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*"

New Testament: Hear and Do

The same two instructions that God charged Joshua with in Joshua 1:7-8 also 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 and obedience impossible (Acts 17:30; 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), and he said that those who 1) *hear*, and 2) *do* what he says are like a wise man whose house is built on a rock (Matt 7:24-25; Luke 6:47-48). Those who hear but do not do what the Lord says are like a foolish man who builds his house on the sand which is destroyed by a storm (Matt 7:26-27; Luke 6:49). Jesus said his family (mother, brothers and sisters) consists of those who hear his word and do it (Matt 12:46-50; 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). That principle has not changed from the beginning of time, including from Joshua to now.