

**Forward: Claiming The Life God Gave You  
The Price To Succeed  
Joshua 1:10-18**

**Introduction:** In Joshua 1:1-9 God commissioned Joshua to lead the people to cross the Jordan to conquer and claim the land of Canaan. There were three distinct parts to that commission.

- (1) God told them the land they were going to conquer and claim, was the land He had already given them! (1:1-4)**
- (2) God promised Joshua He was never going to leave Him or forsake Him. (1:5)**
- (3) God told Joshua why and how to lead the people with strength and courage to accomplish this seemingly insurmountable task! (1:6-9)**

What happened after that commission has literally changed human history. We are going to spend the next few months walking through the record of those events, not just so we can know some really cool history, but rather because it points us straight to Jesus and how we can move forward to claim the eternal life HE has already given us!

So, what is Joshua going to do now that God has told him to lead the people to go take the land. Well, he gets started! In Joshua 1:10-18 we see the two initial commands Joshua gives to get the ball rolling and in them we can't miss the call for the kind of unity you would expect God to demand of His people, the "all in" kind of unity that's willing to put everything on the line for the team to succeed.

**Proposition: The two commands of Joshua in Joshua 1:10-18 give us an incredible picture of the "all in" team unity we should have in the body of Christ.**

**The first command that demonstrates this kind of unity was a general command to all the tribes.**

- (1) Joshua gave the tribal leaders three days to prepare their people to go to war. - (1:10-11)**
  - A. 10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"**
  - B. "10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11"Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people," (1:10a)**
    - 1. When a leader dies or steps down, it is very common to see division caused by those trying to ascend into that position of authority. We see this reality**

played out numerous times in the Bible. There was an absolute mess after David died! However, Moses obeyed God before he died and made sure the people all knew and believed that God had called Joshua to be their next leader. Many scholars believe this happened the year before Moses died.<sup>1</sup> In Numbers 27 we read,

2. **18 So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. 19 Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. 20 You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation." 22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation, 23 and he laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the LORD directed through Moses. (Numbers 27:18-23)**
3. Therefore, the people knew Joshua was God's man to lead them after Moses. In addition, after wandering in the wilderness for forty years, Joshua now not only knows God has called Him to lead the people, but Joshua 1:1-9 makes it clear that he also knew what God wanted him to do in leading the people—cross the Jordan to conquer and claim the land God had promised!
4. To do this we immediately see Joshua's wise leadership. He organizes the tribal leaders and commands them on how to lead their people. Great leaders lead great movements that do great things because they lead great leaders within the organization to do great things with the organization. Whether its ministry, business, or sports, for any organization to accomplish great things, it has to have great leaders throughout the organization leading it to do great things.
5. Need proof? There has never been a leader any greater than Moses, yet he couldn't lead the people to conquer and claim the land God have given them because he had bad leaders under him! So the moment of truth for Joshua is right here. Will the leaders under him rise to greatness or will they continue the tradition of bad tribal leadership that resulted in the previous forty years of wandering in the wilderness?
6. I'll let you know up front, Joshua 1:6 already told us how this was going to go. God told Joshua he had every reason to be strong and courageous

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<sup>1</sup> <https://biblehub.com/timeline/numbers/1.htm>

because God Himself was guaranteeing the people would follow Joshua to conquer and claim the land.

**7. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. (Joshua 1:6)**

C. So, with great strength and courage Joshua issues a pretty radical order. He tells them,

**1. 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" (1:10b)**

2. You and I need to understand the significant opportunity this command created for revolt and division! These were nomadic people so it wouldn't be like you and I picking up and moving in three days, nor was it as fast as the exodus from Egypt, but it doesn't take away from the fact that this challenge was daunting from every vantage point, and as such it could have easily been a point of division.

3. Furthermore, after 40 years of wandering in the desert and winning multiple battles on the east side of Jordan so that they now had fertile lands they could possess and rule, Moses died and God commissioned Joshua to lead the people west to cross the Jordan to conquer the land that almost 700 years prior to this moment, God had promised Abraham He would give to his descendants—and Joshua is now telling them they are only allowed to have three days to get ready!

4. Think about that for a minute. Unless you're a descendent of a Native American or one of the few Vikings that had already been to North America, there's a good chance that 700 years ago not a single one of your ancestors even knew North America existed! The Aztecs, which we consider to be an ancient civilization, were just moving into what is now called Mexico City! The Protestant reformation hadn't even happened yet—that was still 200 years away! My point is 700 years is an extremely long time in human History. For seven centuries the descendants of Abraham had told each other about a promise God made about a land, and now Joshua is saying, "ya'll got three days to get ready to go to war to claim it," and he does so while they stood on some of the most fertile soil in the region, soil they now owned! They've been homeless for almost seven centuries, and now they're not. So why risk losing it?

5. To add opportunity for division, Joshua gives the tribal leaders three days to have their people ready to cross a now flooded Jordan River! Many scholars agree that this was all going down during, or right after, the rainy season, the one time of year that all the creeks were filled with water and the Jordan

was at flood stage. This was literally the most difficult time of year to go to war in Canaan and the most dangerous time of year to try and cross the Jordan River. Remember they don't have bridges or boats! In addition, this river crossing is going to create an additional opportunity for division that we will talk about in a minute—there were some people who were not going to cross.

6. So, what happened? I don't think anybody would be shocked if the next thing we read was the tribal leaders saying, "Yo bro! Are you crazy? We are all about going in and taking the land but 'a' why we got to leave in three days, and 'b' have you seen the Jordan! Can we wait a few weeks maybe, or a couple months, then go?" This could have EASILY been a point of division among a people who have had a history of undermining and questioning Moses' authority. But it wasn't! Just as God promised Joshua, the people followed him, and in this instance, the timing of this command set the stage for a massively significant miracle in Joshua 3.

**The second command that demonstrates an "all in" kind of team unity was the specific command to two-and-a-half tribes.**

**(2) Joshua calls for the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to uphold the commitment they made to Moses. – (1:12-18)**

- A. This all got started in Numbers 21:21-30. While the Israelites were still wondering around east of the Jordan, they needed to pass through land ruled by Sihon King of the Amorites. They requested permission to pass through his lands, but Sihon not only refused, he also sent his army to destroy them. This ended really bad for the Amorites. The Israelites completely destroyed Sihon and his army and took all their land and cities. Not long after that, Og the King of Bashan sent his army to attack Israel and it ended the same way it did for Sihon. Israel defeated him and took all his land and cities as well.
- B. Meanwhile, Zippor, the King of Moab, heard about all this and was scared to death to engage the Israelites in battle, but he also didn't want them anywhere near his lands. So Zippor tried to get the prophet Balaam to put a curse on the Israelites so, unlike Sihon and Og, he could go out and defeat the Israelites in battle. It's a crazy story that even has God using a donkey to tell Balaam not to submit to Zippor's desires. Every time Zippor tried to get Balaam to pronounce a curse on Israel, Balaam instead prophesied how God was with Israel and what all God was going to do with them. Interestingly however, Revelation 2:14, as well as rabbinic history, tells us that Balaam advised Zippor to defeat the Israelites from the inside out, that is to use the Law God gave Moses against the Israelites by getting them to violate it. This plan manifested itself in Numbers 25. The daughters of Moab seduced enough Israelite men into having ritualistic sex with them to worship Baal, that God turned His anger on Israel. Moses ordered the men who committed these acts to be executed and it included

captains of every tribe who had apparently either participated in the acts or knowingly permitted it.

Note: “Though Balaam had been unsuccessful in cursing the people of Israel, he evidently managed to play a role in their seduction by **the Baal** cult at **Peor** (cf. 31:16; Rev. 2:14). When **Israel was in Shittim**, immediately east of the Jordan River where they camped before crossing the river (Josh. 2:1), Israelite men engaged in **sexual immorality with Moabite women**. This was an integral part of the Canaanite fertility rites (cf. Deut. 23:17–18; 1 Kings 14:22–24) and was practiced in connection with the regular services of their temples (Num. 25:2). The physical, carnal aspects of this idolatry tempted the Israelites and led them into the spiritual apostasy of **worshipping ... Baal**. So serious was this breach of covenant, especially when Israel was on the threshold of the land of promise, that **the Lord** commanded **Moses** to **take** serious action—**all the** guilty individuals involved must die.”<sup>2</sup>

- C. Finally in Numbers 31, God sent the Israelites to destroy the Midianites as judgment on them for how they had seduced so many men of Israel into worshipping Baal. It’s not really clear how the Midianites and Moabites were unified in all this, but nonetheless the Bible makes it real clear that they were, and God held the Midianites accountable. As a result, the Israelites completely destroyed the Midianites and even killed the prophet Balaam in the process. They not only acquired their lands, but they also took tremendous wealth and livestock from them. Numbers 31 explains how all that was divided up among the tribes.
- D. So, at this point, after all that fighting from all the tribes of Israel against these Transjordan peoples, the east was basically won! There was a peace in the land on the east side of the river for the Israelites. But the heart of the promise land was on the west side of the river, and they all knew it.
- E. However, right after all these victories, in Numbers 32, the tribal leaders of Reuben and Gad approached Moses about letting them settle on the east side of the Jordan. Apparently, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and as we later see, the half-tribe of Manasseh, had a lot more livestock than any of the other tribes. Here’s how it went down.
  - 1. **1 Now the people of Reuben and the people of Gad had a very great number of livestock. ... “4 the land that the LORD struck down before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” 5 And they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Do not take us across the Jordan.” (Numbers 32:1-5)**

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<sup>2</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). [Numbers](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 245–246). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2. Many scholars believe the events in Numbers 32 happened the year before Moses died. Therefore, if Moses died in 1406BC<sup>3</sup> this would have happened in 1407BC<sup>4</sup>.
3. Understandably, Moses took this proposal all the wrong way. He went off on them about the last time people were to chicken to cross the Jordan to claim the land God had given them—it resulted in them wandering the wilderness until the entire generation of fighting men that refused to go fight died off! Moses sums up his rebuke by saying,
4. **14 And behold, you have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel! 15 For if you turn away from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all this people." (Numbers 32:14-15)**
5. However, the tribes of Reuben and Gad apparently had no intention of not continuing on with their brothers to conquer the lands in the west, so they are the ones who proposed what you're going to see Joshua bring back up after Moses died. Here's how Reuben and Gad responded to Moses's rebuke,
6. **16 Then they came near to him and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17 but we will take up arms, ready to go before the people of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. And our little ones shall live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return to our homes until each of the people of Israel has gained his inheritance. 19 For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan to the east." (Numbers 32:16-19)**
7. Moses agreed to this proposal, and he added a severe warning to the tribes of Reuben and Gad if they didn't uphold their end of the bargain. Moses said,
8. **23 But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out. (Numbers 32:23)**
9. Moses then made these arrangements official by bringing Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and all the tribal leaders of Israel in on it. For reasons we don't know, Moses also added the half-tribe of Manasseh into the arrangement. Here's how it ended,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://biblehub.com/timeline/numbers/1.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://biblehub.com/timeline/deuteronomy/1.htm>

10. **31 And the people of Gad and the people of Reuben answered, "What the LORD has said to your servants, we will do. 32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us beyond the Jordan." 33 And Moses gave to them, to the people of Gad and to the people of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land and its cities with their territories, the cities of the land throughout the country. (Numbers 32:31-33)**

11. Now, despite the fact this agreement was made public, you can't help but imagine that everybody was wondering if these 2 ½ tribes were actually going to uphold their end of the bargain and go to war with them. It's also not hard to imagine that the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had to be wondering if Joshua would uphold the agreement to let them have the land on the eastside of the Jordan; after all, he just told "all" the tribal leaders to have their people ready to cross the Jordan and go to war in three days! So, what happened next in the book of Joshua was HUGE!

F. **12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, 15 until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."**

**Note:** There are a couple of really important things to notice here.

1. Verse 12 tells us Joshua is the one who took the initiative to make sure it was understood this agreement was binding! There was no going back on it by either side.
2. He also made it clear that nobody in Israel was going to get to experience "rest" until they could all experience rest together! Rest was a big part of the promise God had made to Israel and it's a massive part of what we have in the Gospel as well!
  - a. C. J. Barber noted, "The idea of "rest" looms large in Scripture. The whole concept is fascinating. God Himself is said to have rested on the seventh day from all His work (Genesis 2:2-3). Since He is omnipotent, this "rest" was not necessitated by fatigue. His "rest" would seem to imply



the satisfaction He experienced after having completed His work of creation. The word “rest” is also used in Scripture of death (Genesis 47:30; Deuteronomy 31:16), and of the peace individuals experience when they rest from their own work and trust implicitly in the work of Christ on their behalf (Matthew 11:28–29). In the Book of Joshua “rest” speaks of peace and freedom from fear or warfare (cf. Deuteronomy 12:10; 25:19; Joshua 11:23).”<sup>5</sup>

b. B.K. Waltke noted, “The promise of *rest* comes out of the covenant relationship with God (Ex. 33:12–16). The rest into which Moses and Joshua led Israel prefigures the final and perfect rest into which Jesus leads his faithful church (Heb. 4:1–11).”<sup>6</sup>

3. Joshua was essentially saying, the very thing we all long for, we can all have, as long as we can all have it together!

G. So how did the leaders of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh respond? I mean, they have Joshua in a real opportune place to try and renegotiate this for an even better deal. Joshua knows he’s going to need all the fighting men of Israel to conquer the land west of the Jordan, and they know Joshua knows that. This happens all the time in sports and business. In sports players try to renegotiate a contract they are in the middle of because the team has become more dependent on their talent. It happens in business as well when a company realizes they are worth more to a business relationship than when the contract started. They may not be able to pull out of the existing contract, but they can start threatening what they will do when the contract expires if things are not changed in their favor now. But this is NOT how the leaders of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh responded. They responded ALL IN for the team. The Bible says,

H. **16 And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! 18 Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous."**

**Note:** They end up not only saying they are all in for the team, but that they are also 110% behind Joshua as their leader, to the extent that they commit to put to death anybody who goes against Joshua, no matter what he commands to do! Even if he commands them to follow a battle strategy as seemingly ridiculous as

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<sup>5</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 10–11). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Waltke, B. K. (1994). *Joshua*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 238). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.



walking around the great walled city of Jericho for multiple days with the band, then they were prepared to put to death whoever rebelled against it!

**Conclusion: Great causes require great unity to succeed, but great unity always requires great sacrifice to achieve it.**

- (1) The arrangement with the eastern tribes was a huge sacrifice for all twelve tribes! First off, this arrangement created real problems for the 9 ½ tribes. Yes, they were taking with them the fighting men of the 2 ½ tribes, but they were also losing practical access to the vital resources provided by the 2 ½ tribes! In leaving behind these 2 ½ tribes they were leaving behind the largest producers of livestock and as such, all that was provided through that livestock – meat, curds and all sorts of things that their fur and hides would be used to make. The tribes that didn't have an abundance of livestock would have traded with these tribes to get what they needed.
- (2) On the other side of this arrangement was the sacrifice of the 2 ½ tribes. Yes, they were given land before anybody else, land that everybody had helped conquer, but with all the fighting men going to fight on the other side of the Jordan, that meant all that was basically left were women, children, and older adults who were not physically able to fight anymore. These were the ones left behind to hide in the walled cities Israel had conquered in the east until the fighting men returned. But they also had to figure out how to do all the day to day labor these fighting men typically did. Israel didn't have a standing army that only fought battles; therefore the fighting men were also the working men! So, when they left, the women, children and elderly had to not only figure out how to protect themselves, but also do all the labor those men did, which included the massively important task of raising and protecting the huge herds of livestock that all twelve tribes were dependent on!
- (3) In addition, the nature of trading benefits both parties, therefore, I would imagine Joshua set up some sort of supply line back across the Jordan to help keep the 9 ½ tribes supplied, and as such, likely brought items to the 2 ½ tribes that they needed as well. However, we don't know if that happened or not, and no matter if it did or not, the 2 ½ tribes were still losing all their fighting men, and as such, were being left completely vulnerable to any King who wanted to march into the Transjordan and conquer them! It's no wonder why the eastern tribes prayed, **"Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses" (1:17)**. They knew they were all ultimately dependent not on Joshua, but on the Lord to do what only the Lord could do!
- (4) Now here's the key. This is what it looks like for God's people to be "all in" together, so there can be no doubt this points us to what Jesus did for us, as well as what He demands of us! There is no greater cause than the cause of Christ, and therefore, no greater cause to lay our lives down to be united with all who are in it to win it for His glory! Its why Jesus laid his life down for it! Jesus said,

- (5) **11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:11-15)**
- (6) Its why the early church was willing to literally share all that they had with one another.
- (7) **32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. (Acts 4:32)**
- (8) In a time of great spiritual movement and financial desperation, the people of the local church in Jerusalem didn't cling to what they had, but were willing to sell everything if that's what was needed to take care of their brother and sisters in Christ and keep the cause of Christ rolling! They were all in for the cause of Christ and His body, therefore they were all in with their time, money, and talent as well so that they could be united in it!

### **Challenge:**

**(1) What sacrifices are you making for the cause of Christ?**

- A.** How are you sacrificing your time, money and talent so that other people in the body grow in their faith and so that those who don't know Jesus come to know Jesus? Let's just get real, most Christians probably shouldn't use the word "sacrifice" when it comes to how they are investing their time, money and talent into body of Christ or His cause.
- B.** Now most are ready for others to make sacrifices for their spiritual health and the cause of Christ, but very few are willing to step up and say, "Lord, I'm surrendering my time, money and talent to you, so how can you put them to work to help my brothers an sisters in Christ in my local church and around the world, as well as to bring Your life to the lost in my life and around the world."

**(2) What sacrifices are you making so that your family can have unity?**

**Note:** Most of us seem to be willing to make all kinds of sacrifices for our families to have stuff, but what sacrifices are we making for our families to have unity? Unity is far more valuable than stuff, and way more powerful, but it seems to be the first thing we want others in our family to sacrifice for our sake, but it's the last thing we want to do ourselves.

**(3) What sacrifices are you making so that your marriage can have unity?**

- A.** God has designed marriage to be the unity of a man and a woman in a covenant relationship with Him and each other. However, to experience that unity, both the man and the woman have to fully give themselves to each other, which means both let go of their rights to themselves and surrender those rights first to God, and in so doing, surrender them to their spouse as well. When only one person actually does that, they end up being trampled on by the other person.
  
- B.** Men, I'm not suggesting you're not called to lead your home, but I am saying Ephesians 5 makes it real clear that a successful marriage starts not with your wife surrendering herself to you for your benefit and glory, but with you surrendering yourself to your wife for her benefit and glory. This is exactly what Christ did for His church. It all started with His sacrifice to give us His life, not ours to Him. It started with Him giving the glory and honor to us of being adopted children of God through His death, burial and resurrection. Now, His sacrifice will most certainly result in every knee bowing before Him and glorifying Him, but it started with Him surrendering His life to the brutal mockery of His death! Ephesians five tells us this is what God expects of men who enter into marriage. This doesn't let wives off the hook to do the same, but it does present a serious question for us men! Are we demanding our wives surrender themselves to us, or leading our wives to do it because of how we are surrendering ourselves to them?

Great causes require great unity to be successful, and great unity requires great sacrifice to achieve it. At the end of your life, what's the cause you will have sacrificed your life to be unified with, and will it matter 100 million years from now in eternity? Make no mistake, you are sacrificially united to some kind of cause for sure, if nothing else the cause of your own glory, so the question is will it be worth it for eternity?