

Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 4, Joshua 1:1-9

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 4, Joshua 1:1-9, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Howard's lecture analyzes Joshua 1:1-9, focusing on God's charge to Joshua. **Howard interprets the passage** not primarily as a military conquest narrative, but as **God's bestowal of the Promised Land** as an inheritance. He emphasizes **obedience to God's law** as the key to success, contrasting this with the "prosperity gospel" that links material wealth to faith. **The lecture uses Hebrew linguistics** to support this interpretation, and **it also explores the theme of God's unwavering presence** with Joshua and his people.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 4 – Double click icon to play
in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org
[BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old
Testament → Historical Books → Joshua-Ruth).**



**Howard_Josh_Ruth
_Session04.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 4, Joshua 1:1-9

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Howard_Josh_Ruth_EN_Session04_Josh1_1_9.pdf":

Briefing Document: Joshua 1:1-9 Analysis

Overview: This document analyzes Dr. Howard's interpretation of Joshua 1:1-9, focusing on the book's broader themes and the specific charge God gives to Joshua. Howard highlights the theme of inheritance over conquest and carefully examines the meaning of "prosperity" in the context of God's promises.

I. Book of Joshua Structure & Theme:

- **Four-Part Structure:** Howard outlines the book of Joshua into four sections:
 - Chapters 1-5: Preparations for inheriting the land.
 - Chapters 6-12: (Not detailed here).
 - Chapters 13-21: (Not detailed here).
 - Chapters 22-24: (Not detailed here).
- **Inheritance vs. Conquest:** Howard emphasizes the theme of inheritance, arguing that the book is more about God *giving* the land rather than Israel's *conquering* it. He explicitly states, "I think it's more God's giving of the land and the inheritance and so on. And then really the conquest doesn't start till chapter six."
- **Emphasis on God's Gift:** The use of the word "Natan" (to give) is crucial throughout the book and highlighted in the first couple of verses of God's charge to Joshua as the book is focused on God's gift of the land.

II. Joshua 1:1-9: God's Charge to Joshua:

- **Narrative Framework:** The chapter is structured around dialogue, including God's speeches to Joshua and Joshua's instructions to the people.
- **Succession and Transition:** Verse 1 notes Moses' death and Joshua becoming his successor, but highlights that Joshua is initially seen as Moses' "assistant", signaling that he isn't quite the worthy successor yet. God says, "after the death of Moses, servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' assistant."

- **God's Promise and Command: Giving the Land:** God states he is "giving" the land to them, while acknowledging it is an ongoing process. "Moses, my servant, is dead. Therefore, arise, go up to Jordan. You and all those people in the land that I am giving to them." There is an emphasis on the land as both a present reality and a future promise. Howard points out that the Hebrew verb forms imply both an in-process gift and a completed possession. "every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you". It is already theirs.
- **Territorial Scope:** God describes the land's boundaries, extending from the wilderness to Lebanon, and the Euphrates River to the sea, although he notes that Israel's actual physical reach has never extended that far northeast, "from the wilderness in this Lebanon, as far as the Great River, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea, toward the going down to the sun shall be your territory."
- **God's Presence:** God promises his constant presence and support: "just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you, forsake you." Howard connects this to God's covenant with Abraham and the consistent promise to be with his people.
- **Be Strong and Courageous:** The command to "be strong and courageous" appears repeatedly in verses 6, 7, and 9. Howard emphasizes that these verses frame the central theme of the charge, with verses seven and eight acting as the emphasis. He argues that this isn't just about physical bravery but about being steadfast in obedience to God's law. "be strong and courageous because you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to your fathers to give them." and "Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous? Don't be afraid, don't be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

III. Obedience to the Law as the Key to Success:

- **Focus on Obedience, Not Military Strategy:** God doesn't offer military advice but stresses obedience to the law: "be careful to do according to all the law that Moses, my servant, commanded you. Do not turn from the right or the left so that you may have good success wherever you go." The key to Joshua's success is faithfulness to what God has already commanded rather than military prowess.
- **Meditate on the Law:** God instructs Joshua to meditate on the law day and night: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it." This implies that internalizing God's word is crucial.

- **Promise of Prosperity:** God promises that by following the law Joshua will have "good success" and "make your way prosperous" if they are obedient. Howard connects this to Jesus' words about seeking first the kingdom of God. "For then you will make your way prosperous. Then you will have good success."

IV. Debunking the "Prosperity Gospel":

- **Misinterpretation of "Prosper":** Howard strongly refutes the idea that the promise of prosperity in these verses refers to material wealth. He criticizes interpretations that suggest financial success is a sign of God's favor. He says, "There are some groups of Christians that have taken verses like this here and elsewhere, Psalm one for example...and they've taken these verses, I would say, out of context and run with them in terms of interpreting that a true follower of the Lord will have material success and should essentially strive toward material wealth and riches."
- **Biblical Counter-Examples:** Howard cites Proverbs 23:4-5, which warns against the pursuit of riches, and Proverbs 30:7-9, which asks for neither poverty nor riches, as counterpoints. He shows verses which paint a picture of riches as temporary and a potential distraction from God.
- **Success as Divine Favor and Relationship:** Howard argues that the words "prosper" and "good success" in the Old Testament consistently refer to success in one's endeavors due to God's grace, particularly in relationships with God and others, not financial gain. He shares that through his research he found no cases of the words relating to financial prosperity.
- **Rejection of False Foundations:** He concludes that the "prosperity gospel" is based on a misinterpretation of scripture and a distortion of the meaning of these words. He says that those who do "misunderstanding, if not a deliberate distortion of the meaning of these words themselves and also the teaching of other parts of Scripture."

V. Conclusion:

- **Setting the Stage:** Joshua 1:1-9 serves as a crucial introduction to the book, highlighting the themes of divine inheritance, obedience, and the nature of true success.
- **Importance of Obedience:** God's charge to Joshua underscores the priority of obedience to his law over military strategy and worldly measures of success.
- **True Prosperity:** The briefing underscores that true "prosperity," as seen in the text, is not about accumulating wealth but about aligning oneself with God's will and experiencing success due to his grace in all areas of life.

This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of Dr. Howard's interpretation of Joshua 1:1-9, emphasizing the core themes and offering a critique of common misinterpretations of biblical teachings on prosperity.

4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 4, Joshua 1:1-9

Joshua 1:1-9 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. How does Dr. Howard divide the book of Joshua into four main sections and what is the overarching theme he identifies?
2. According to Dr. Howard, what is significant about the change in verb tense regarding God's giving of the land in Joshua 1:2-3?
3. What is the geographical extent of the land God promises to Joshua and the Israelites, according to Joshua 1:4?
4. What reassurance does God give to Joshua in Joshua 1:5, and to whom else did God give similar assurances in the Old Testament?
5. What key command is repeated in Joshua 1:6-9, and what is the primary focus of this charge in verses 7 and 8?
6. How does Dr. Howard explain the connection between obedience to the Law and military success in Joshua 1:7-8?
7. How does Dr. Howard describe the relationship between Joshua's actions and God's provision of success?
8. What biblical evidence does Dr. Howard use to argue against a "prosperity gospel" interpretation of "success" in Joshua 1:7-8?
9. What is the main point of Proverbs 30:7-9 and how does it connect with Dr. Howard's interpretation of prosperity in Joshua?
10. According to Dr. Howard's study, what is the central meaning of "prosper" and "good success" in the Old Testament?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Howard divides the book into four sections: 1-5 (preparations), 6-12, 13-21, and 22-24. Each section involves "inheriting" the land, which is the overarching theme he identifies.

2. The change from a participle ("giving") to a perfect tense ("I have given") indicates God's land is both a process and a completed deal. The land is not yet taken, but it is already theirs legally through God's promise.
3. The land promised extends from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon and the Euphrates River in the north, encompassing all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea. This area includes present day Israel and parts of Syria.
4. God promises Joshua that He will be with him as he was with Moses and that he will not leave or forsake him. This promise echoes previous promises made to Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and David.
5. The key command repeated is to be "strong and courageous," but the focus in verses 7-8 is on obedience to the law rather than military strategy. Joshua is not given military advice.
6. Dr. Howard explains that Joshua's courage and success are tied to obedience to God's law. God promises that if Joshua is obedient, He will ensure their military success, rather than through worldly strategy.
7. Dr. Howard argues that if Joshua and the people are obedient to God, God will bring about success. This is much more important than military strategy as God will take care of the victories.
8. Dr. Howard argues that Proverbs 23:4-5 and 30:7-9 argue against material success being the main goal of the believer. These passages caution against striving for wealth and emphasize a more balanced approach to life.
9. Proverbs 30:7-9 is a prayer for a middle path, neither poverty nor riches, but daily bread. This connects with Dr. Howard's view as it contrasts the idea that success should be defined by material gain.
10. The terms "prosper" and "good success" in the Old Testament primarily refer to success in one's endeavors and relationships through God's grace and presence, not financial or material gain.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the shift in Dr. Howard's understanding of the book of Joshua. How does his change from emphasizing "conquest" to "inheritance" shape his reading of the text?

2. Analyze the various ways in which God's promise of the land is portrayed in Joshua 1:1-9, paying special attention to the use of different verb tenses in the original Hebrew, according to Dr. Howard's interpretation.
3. Explore the relationship between divine command, obedience, and leadership as depicted in Joshua 1:1-9, with specific focus on the role of the Law and the connection between obedience and success.
4. Critically evaluate Dr. Howard's argument against the "prosperity gospel" in light of his understanding of the Old Testament usage of terms like "prosper" and "good success." How does his use of other scripture inform his perspective?
5. Considering the context of Joshua 1:1-9, analyze the idea of "being strong and courageous" from Dr. Howard's point of view, noting its connection to obedience and God's promise of presence, and how this contrasts with typical notions of courage.

Glossary

Canaanites: The inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the land promised to the Israelites by God.

Inheritance: The land promised to the Israelites by God; it is the central theme of the Book of Joshua, according to Dr. Howard.

Jordan River: The river that the Israelites crossed to enter the promised land.

Law (Torah): The divine commandments given to Moses by God at Mount Sinai; central to Israelite life and obedience, and a key element of Joshua's charge.

Natan: The Hebrew word meaning "to give." Dr. Howard emphasizes that this word is used repeatedly in the book of Joshua, highlighting God as the giver of the land.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Old Testament, which form the foundation for the narrative and promises found in Joshua.

Perfect Tense (Hebrew): A verb tense in Hebrew that indicates a completed action.

Prosperity Gospel: A theological belief that teaches that God desires financial wealth and material success for believers and that they should strive for it.

Participial Form (Hebrew): A verb form that indicates a continuous or in-process action.

Rahab: A Canaanite woman who is a "shining example of a true believer" according to Dr. Howard. Her actions in Joshua 2 show faith.

5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 4, Joshua 1:1-9, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Book of Joshua (Based on Dr. Howard's Lecture)

1. **How does Dr. Howard divide the Book of Joshua, and what is the central theme he emphasizes?**
2. Dr. Howard divides the Book of Joshua into four major sections: chapters 1-5, 6-12, 13-21, and 22-24. Each of these sections, in his view, centers on the idea of "inheriting" the land, which he believes is a more accurate description than "conquering" the land. He emphasizes that the book is about God giving the land to Israel as an inheritance, a theme rooted in promises made to Abraham and the fulfillment of those promises.
3. **Why does Dr. Howard see the first five chapters of Joshua as "preparations" for inheriting the land rather than part of the conquest?**
4. Dr. Howard views chapters 1-5 as preparations for inheriting the land because they focus on the necessary steps that need to be taken before the actual "conquest" begins. These preparations include God's charge to Joshua, the preparation of the tribes, the crossing of the Jordan River, and a focus on holiness. The conquest itself, according to Howard, doesn't truly begin until chapter 6. He also notes that God is in the process of giving and has already given the land to Israel as an inheritance.
5. **What is the significance of the change in verb tense regarding God "giving" the land in Joshua 1:2-3?**
6. In Joshua 1:2, the verb form used for "giving" the land suggests an ongoing process, while in verse 3, the verb form suggests a completed action, a past event. Dr. Howard emphasizes that this change indicates that from one perspective, God is in the process of giving them the land, as they haven't even entered it. But from another perspective, the land is already legally theirs, an inheritance promised long ago, thus it is a done deal, already theirs since the time of Abraham.

7. **What does God emphasize in his charge to Joshua in verses 1-9, and what is surprising about it?**
8. God's charge to Joshua focuses on being strong and courageous, fulfilling the promise to give Israel the land, and being obedient to the law of Moses. Surprisingly, God does not give any specific military strategies or advice. Instead, he directs Joshua towards obedience and steadfastness in following God's law, which implies that success in battle will follow naturally if they are right with God.
9. **How is Joshua's courage tied to obedience to the law, according to Dr. Howard's analysis of Joshua 1:7-8?**
10. Dr. Howard emphasizes that Joshua's courage and steadfastness are directly linked to obedience to the law of Moses. The passage does not suggest that courage stems from military prowess but from a faithful adherence to God's commands. He points out that God's instruction is not to focus on military plans, but on meditating on God's law and being careful to obey it. Success is seen as a consequence of obedience, not merely through strategic military might.
11. **How does Dr. Howard refute the "prosperity gospel" using the verses about success and prosperity in Joshua 1:7-8?**
12. Dr. Howard argues that the verses regarding "good success" and "prospering" in Joshua 1:7-8 are often misinterpreted by proponents of the "prosperity gospel." He points out that these words, as used throughout the Old Testament, do not refer to financial or material prosperity. Instead, they signify success in one's endeavors due to God's grace and presence. He emphasizes that biblical prosperity is about success in relationships with God and others, not material wealth.
13. **What other scriptural passages does Dr. Howard use to counter the idea that God's favor guarantees material wealth?**
14. Dr. Howard uses Proverbs 23:4-5, which warns against striving to get rich, and Proverbs 30:7-9, where the prayer is for neither poverty nor riches, but only daily bread. These verses highlight the ephemeral nature of riches and the potential dangers of wealth, both in terms of disconnecting from God and succumbing to the temptation to steal in poverty. He emphasizes the idea of finding a middle way instead of seeking extreme wealth.

15. What is the overall message that Dr. Howard sees as central to understanding the book of Joshua?

16. Dr. Howard stresses that the central message is that the book of Joshua is primarily about God's faithfulness in giving the promised land as an inheritance to the Israelites. This inheritance is secured not through military might alone, but through obedience to God's laws and reliance on His presence. This message of God's grace in giving the land and demanding obedience as a key to their success and their inheritance, underscores the deeper spiritual themes of the book, rather than just military conquest.