

# “Joshua – Man of Faith!”

## Joshua 1:1-9

**Intro.** – True story is told that took place around Super Bowl Sunday (1-15-78). An elderly woman was asking people at New Orleans airport for help. She was telling people that she was the grandmother to Tony Dorsett, the talented running back of the Dallas Cowboys. She had lost her money; thus, she was asking would that anyone would take her to the hotel where her dear grandson, Tony would gladly repay them. No one would. Finally, the police took her into custody. As she rode in the back of the police car, she complained how terrible it was that people didn’t care and help anymore. When she asked the officers if they were taking her to see her grandson, they replied “Lady, Tony Dorsett is black and you are white!”

I use this to illustrate that people today have definite ideas as to what makes a person *great*. Obviously, this lady thought Tony Dorsett was *great* or she would not have tried what she did. I hope, however, that you see a vast difference between how this lady viewed greatness and how God views greatness! We can use this lady to represent how the world views greatness: wealth... success... position = Tony Dorsett = *greatness*.

This, however, is not the criteria for which God counts *greatness*. Today, we will be looking at one of God’s examples of *greatness*. His name is Joshua:

*Purpose: to learn where in lies the greatness of Joshua*

By looking at the life of Joshua, we will learn of God’s idea of *greatness*. The life of Joshua can easily be split up into three stages:

### I Joshua as a SON

- first 40 years or so of his life are in this first stage – although little is known about his early life, we do know enough to come to some conclusions that explain his *greatness*.

#### A. His Parents

1. Son of Nun
  - a. meaning = “prosperity” “durable”
  - b. few references = 1 Chronicles 7:25-27 (Exodus 33:11; Nehemiah 8:17)
2. Concerning his mother, we are told absolutely nothing...
3. We do know he was born in Egypt in captivity... and that his parents must have been God fearing and God honoring people.

#### B. Born in Slavery

- just made reference to fact that Joshua was born while Israel was under Egyptian bondage...
- 1. Joshua knew something about the hardships of slavery. He lived as a slave....
- 2. He also knew about the terrible idolatries of that time – cf. Joshua 24:14 “*Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.*”

Thus, in quick summary, Joshua knew the Lord, and he knew the peoples’ response to the Lord; thus, we see the makings of Israel’s future leaders was already underway.

### II Joshua as a SERVANT

- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of Joshua’s three-stage life – there are several references telling us Joshua was a servant:

#### A. Commander of the Army – Exodus 17:8-14

1. Amalek (son of Eliphaz who was the eldest son of Esau) and his forces attack.
2. Moses places Joshua in charge of choosing men...
3. Joshua fights – while Moses holds up his arms (with help from Aaron and Hur).
4. Moses rehearses/trains Joshua – later we’ll see Joshua as a military leader, who knew how to plan, discipline, and use spies, but most of all we’ll see Joshua learning – learning to trust/pray to God!

#### B. Companion at Sinai

1. God calls Moses to come to the mount (place of the giving of the Law)

2. Exodus 24:13 – Moses arises with Joshua (the only one who went with Moses... just part way)
3. Returns with Moses
  - a. Exodus 32:18 – Joshua thought the noise was a battle, when actually Israel worshipping calf...
  - b. point: Joshua was not participant in worshipping with the golden calf!

#### C. Spy of Canaan

1. Sent representing tribe of Ephraim along with 11 others representing other tribes to spy out the land... What they found was stunning...
2. Numbers 13:1ff gives account of what happens upon their return:
  - a. Joshua and Caleb were the only two with a favorable report...
  - b. Numbers 14 states these 2 about to be stoned but vv 36-37 record the other 10 died with a plague and the children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the wilderness...

Because of his unswerving loyalty and devotion as a “servant of Moses” the necessary preparations were made for the third stage of Joshua’s life:

### III Joshua as a LEADER

- the greatness of Joshua can best be seen in this role that he held:

#### A. Commissioned from God

1. Our text is a direct commission from God to Joshua
2. God calls upon Joshua to “...meditate on it (book of the law) *day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*”
3. Note: only time the term “*success*” translated in Scripture – if we are going to have “success” we are going to have to heed the Word of God... Are we listening to His Word?!

#### B. Conquered the Land

1. Crosses the Jordan – in the exact fashion instructed to do so...
2. Defeats Jericho in a fashion that had God’s hand all over it...
3. Kings defeated... of nations literally exterminated...
4. Land divided up according to tribes...
5. Setting up the Tabernacle and the cities of refuges established...

#### C. Closing Years

- Joshua knew his time was short so in 24:14-15 we find these important matters:
1. He gives an urgent request to the Israel – “...choose you this day whom you will serve...”
  2. He gives a definite affirmation – “...as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”
  3. Joshua 24:31 “*And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel.*”

It wasn’t long after making this covenant with Israel that Joshua died. No doubt there was much mourning over the death of their leader, simply because there is no doubt that Joshua was a great man of God!

**Conclusion:** The lady who claimed to be Tony Dorsett’s grandmother may not have known all the facts about him, but she did know that he was great in so far as the world counts greatness. As stated before, Tony Dorsett had wealth, success, and position – three vital ingredients to greatness, right?! Wrong, in the eyes of God all the wealth, all the success, all the position doesn’t make a man great. What is it through the life of Joshua that made him stand out as a GREAT man in the eyes of God?!

I HE BELIEVED GOD – Joshua 1:8 – look again at the entire life of Joshua and there you will see a man who never wavered in his belief/trust of God...

II HE OBEYED GOD – Numbers 32:12 – “...for they had followed the Lord fully.” Do take note that Joshua never swerved in obeying God...

Thus, God be thanked for a GREAT man such as Joshua, who proved what greatness is. A man who proved that we all have opportunity to be *great* in the eyes of God.