

## Lesson 29

Moses dies and Joshua becomes the new leader

Deuteronomy 34  
Joshua 1



**Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.**

Contents:

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
3. Theme
4. Lesson introduction
5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
7. Attention grabbers
8. Activities
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

### **1. Preparation**

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

### **2. Memory verse**

#### **Joshua 1:8**

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

### **3. Theme**

Let us serve God with faithfulness. We need not fear, for God is with us.

### **4. Lesson introduction**

In this last chapter of Deuteronomy, the life of Moses comes to an end. Warren Wiersbe once said, "When your time comes to die, the important thing is not the grandeur of your funeral but the greatness of your life. In fact, how you live now will determine how you will die then." Let us serve God with faithfulness as did Moses.

Forty years have passed since the children of Israel first started wandering in the wilderness. It is now time for them to march into Canaan and take possession of the land God had promised them. God will appoint a new leader. Leading God's people into battle could seem pretty scary. But, God will encourage His new leader, just as He encourages us. We need not fear, for God is with us.

## 5. Verse by Verse Commentary

### Deuteronomy 34:1-4

Moses climbed to the top of Mount Nebo where the Lord showed Him all of the land He would give to the children of Israel—the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Remember, Moses had failed to represent God’s heart to the people at the waters of Meribah; and as a consequence of that sin, he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. God is always faithful to keep His promises, and though Moses could not enter, he now beholds the land God had promised and is assured of the future of the nation he loved and led out of bondage.

### Deuteronomy 34: 5-8

Moses died. The Lord buried His righteous servant in a valley in the land of Moab. No one knows where he was buried, but it was somewhere in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor. This was the valley where the children of Israel camped while Moses gave them the instructions and blessing from God (Deuteronomy 5:33).

Moses was 120 years old when he died, and yet he exhibited strength and vitality until the day he went to be with the Lord. The children of Israel mourned for thirty day for Moses. They recognized His years of faithful leadership and undiminished love for them. He would be greatly missed.

Note, Moses was not called the Pharaoh of Egypt as he could have been, he is called, “the servant of the Lord.” How much greater to be a servant of the Almighty God than even a Pharaoh in Egypt! In the book of Hebrews, we are told, “Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season...” (Hebrews 11:24-29). We, too, can choose to be a servant of the Lord. Someone once stated, “Only one life will soon be past; only what’s done for the Lord will last.” May the temporary things of this world never allure us away from pursuit of what will matter in eternity. Let us serve God with faithfulness.

*Suggested activity: Simon Says*

*Play a short game of Simon Says. Use it to illustrate faithfulness to obey only what Simon said.*

*Moses was faithful to obey everything that the Lord asked him to do. God desires us to be faithful too.*

### Deuteronomy 34:9

Joshua, another faithful servant of the Lord whom Moses had trained, would now be the leader of the children of Israel. Remember, Joshua was one of the spies who brought back an encouraging report to enter into the land God had promised, not fearing the difficulties (“giants,”) to overcome. Joshua was an older man, now; yet God had been preparing him through many experiences with Moses for this important call on his life. We read that he was “full of the spirit of wisdom.”

Though we may not see God’s full purpose and plan for each of us unfold tomorrow, or even twenty years from now, we can be confident that God is working and preparing us to fulfill His calling. Let us serve God with faithfulness.

We also see an interesting picture of God’s salvation in our story, today. We see that Moses brought Israel to the borders of the land but died and could not take them in himself. Moses, through whom the Lord gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, represented the Law. In Hebrews 7:19, we read that “...the

law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God." Unable to attain to the righteous standard of law, we remain on the border of the Promised Land— "the rest and peace" we could enter into. Joshua was a type of Jesus Christ, the "better hope," who would do for us what the law could not do; now made righteous through of faith in Jesus Christ, we can enter into God's full richness and the blessings.

In other words, we can never get to the place that God wants us to be by being a good person or by keeping all of the rules of the Bible or the law. Now, in Christ Jesus, we are "accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6). Having met God's righteous standard, through our faith in Jesus Christ, God now works "inside" of us to make us what He wants us to be. He enables us to do what we cannot do in our own strength. Romans 7:6 states, "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

The Children of Israel recognized the authority was now upon Joshua and gave "heed" to him.

The scriptures now reflect on the life of Moses.

### **Deuteronomy 34:10-12**

Not only was Moses a righteous man, he had an intimacy with the Lord that no one else at that time had. The Bible describes Moses, "whom the Lord knew face to face as a friend" (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:7, 8). Moses was used by God to do miraculous signs, wonders, and awesome deeds. He was used by God to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, to deliver His law to His people, to build the Tabernacle, and much more. Yet, the greatest thing said of him was that he was the "friend of God." Through Jesus Christ, we can now experience a special friendship and intimacy with the Lord.

Moses was a great example of a faithful servant of God who devoted himself to fulfill God's calling on his life. God desires to use each of us who will commit our futures to Him. May we, as Moses did, turn from the things the world offers, become intimately acquainted "friends" with God, and devote ourselves wholly to His will for our lives. We, too, can be faithful servants of God! Let us serve God with faithfulness.

*Suggested activity: A Lifetime of Example*

### **Joshua 1:1-9**

After the death of Moses, God spoke to Joshua and commissioned him to be the new leader. God promised him the land of Canaan, just as He had promised Moses. He told him that every place the sole of his foot touched would belong to the children of Israel! He assured Joshua that as long as He was with him, no man could stand against him. God promised to be with him all the days of his life, "as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."

What an awesome promise! Joshua may have felt overwhelmed by his commission. It was probably scary to look out at those millions of people knowing the responsibility for leading them rested on his shoulders. Was Joshua to do this by himself? No, that's why God promised to be with him and told Joshua not to be afraid. We need not fear, for God is with us.

How would Joshua know what to do? How would he know he was making wise decisions? God commanded him to meditate on His Word day and night and not to turn from His Word to the right hand or to the left. If he followed God's law, he would become prosperous and have good success.

We, as children of God, have the very same promise that God gave to Joshua! God will never leave us nor forsake us. He is always with us; we need not be afraid. It says in Romans 8:31b, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We need not fear, for God is with us.

As Joshua, we need direction for our lives. As God commanded Joshua to meditate on His Word day and night, so we will know His will as we read our Bibles and make His Word our meditation.

What kind of person can God choose to be a leader? A person cannot just jump in and lead a group of people in his own strength. First, one who leads must be led, submitted to God--a person who will follow God's Word; he must be a person who knows who God is and represents God to others. Joshua was one of the twelve spies sent to scout out the land of Canaan; he and another spy (Caleb) were the only ones to give a favorable report (see Numbers 13:8, 16, 17; 14:6-9). Joshua spent over 40 years watching God work. He spent years by Moses' side humbly learning all that he could—sort of like a "school of faith" that would prepare him to handle difficult situations in the future and to lead God's people.

God will take us through situations where the only thing we can do is trust God. He uses tough times to take us through a "school of faith" just as He took the great people of the Bible through a school of faith. We need not be afraid, for God is with us and will strengthen us to fulfill His calling for our lives. We need not fear, for God is with us.

*Suggested activity: 4-Ever Bracelets*

### **Joshua 1: 10-15**

Joshua assumed the position God gave to him. Stepping out in faith, he gave commands to the tribes of Israel to prepare themselves for the conquest of Canaan. He also reminded the tribes of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh (tribes that chose to remain and settle outside the promised land) that, according to the word of Moses, they must help their brethren with their conquest of Canaan.

Note: Moses exhorted the tribes (those who chose to remain settled outside the land) to help their brethren though the tribes would gain nothing themselves for their efforts. We should always be willing to help others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus said that people will know that we are His disciples by our love for one another.

### **Joshua 1: 16-18**

Here we see the people promising Joshua their obedience, not only as a people, but as soldiers facing the battle. Whenever we step into God's promises for us, we must realize that we have a very real enemy who will try to do everything he can to stop us.

Just as the people promised they would obey in all things, without questioning him or murmuring against him, so when our "General," the Lord, gives us a command, we must obey without questioning or murmuring.

The people cried, "Only the Lord your God be with you, as He was with Moses." The people trusted that God would be with Joshua and that God would be the source of his power.

Then, the people encouraged Joshua with the same encouragement that the Lord gave to Joshua, "Only be strong and of a good courage." If we feel like our 'enemy' is attacking us, we too can take comfort as did Joshua and "be strong and of good courage." In Ephesians 6:10, we are exhorted "to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).

*Suggested activity: Memory Verse Reminder*

## **6. Prayer**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to faithfully serve the Lord all of their lives and to ask the Lord to help them remember that He will never leave them nor forsake them; they have nothing to fear. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

## **7. Attention Grabbers**

What you will need:

- 1) Four or five students as volunteers.
- 2) A magnet, paper and paper clips.

Carrying out the attention grabber:

### **1) Faithful Service**

As you begin to teach, choose four or five students who would like to volunteer to serve you. Tell them to stand up and hold some things for you (it could be the trash can, ruler, your Bible). You can also be creative and come up with some “strange” requests but do not tell them why you are asking them to do this.

At some later point in the lesson, use this as an illustration. The children who were the servants did the request no matter how strange it seemed. We are called to be faithful to everything that the Lord asks us to do, even if it seems strange to us. As we will see in our final lesson on Moses, he was a faithful servant to the end. We will review his life of faithful service to the Lord in today’s lesson. Let us serve God with faithfulness.

### **2) Not Seeing Is Believing**

You will need a magnet and some paper clips. Using a sheet of paper, put some paper clips on top of the sheet of paper and the magnet underneath. Move the paper clips around using the magnet. You can also allow some of the children to experiment with this, as time allows.

As you are moving the paper clips explain that even though we do not “see” the magnet it is still there moving the paper clips. It is like that with God. We may not actually “see” Him, but we know that He has always promised to be with us because He has promised to never leave nor forsake us in His word.

## **8. Activities:**

What you will need:

- 1) Small cardboard tablets (to represent the Ten Commandments), a stick (representing Moses’ staff) and a pair of sandals (to represent Moses at the burning bush).
- 2) As many 6” - 8” strips of leather, or 6” - 8” strips of string as the number of children in your class.

- 3) As many copies of the enclosed artwork sheets as the number of children in your class, markers or crayons, scissors and brads (paper fasteners).

**How to carry out the activities:**

1) A Lifetime of Example

Bring some props that help indicate the ways Moses was faithful to God in his lifetime. For example: Bring in some small cardboard “tablets” with the Ten Commandments on them and have a child stand and hold it up. Remind them that Moses faithfully went up the mountain and spent 40 days receiving the commandments from God.

Bring in a stick to represent a rod and have the children guess which acts of faithfulness it represents (dividing of the Red Sea, water from the rock, turning into a snake, etc.)

You can also bring in sandals that a child can place on the ground in front of him reminding the class of Moses’ early faithfulness at the burning bush. Try to think of one or two other ways to illustrate faithfulness.

2) 4-Ever Bracelets

You will need strips of leather or string. The age group of your class will determine how much assistance will be needed to do the craft. Tie the strip or string around the child’s wrist according to the diagram below. Slide knots apart to tighten; slide knots together to loosen.

During this activity, explain to the children that their bracelets are in the shape of circles. Like a circle that has no beginning or end, God has promised to be with us forever.

Example of tying knot:



3) Memory Verse Reminder

Refer to the enclosed artwork. Have the children cut out the memory verse rectangle with the memory verse on it. Then, color and cut out the sun, moon, and stars disk. Attach with a brad to the back of the sheet with the window. Pictures should show through the cut-out window to represent day and night. Option: Gluing the rectangle to construction paper will make it sturdier.

As the children are constructing, remind them, “God will always be there for us, day or night, all of the time!”

## 9. Bible text (NIV):

### Deuteronomy 34 : 1-12

#### The Death of Moses

1 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, 2 all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea, 3 the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. 4 Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it.”

5 And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. 6 He buried him[a] in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. 8 The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over. 9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit[b] of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.

10 Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 11 who did all those signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. 12 For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

### Joshua 1:1-18

#### Joshua Installed as Leader

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: 2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

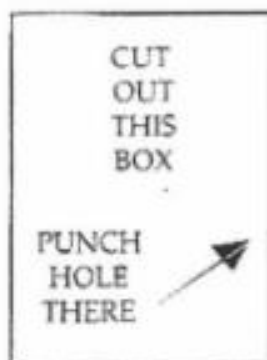
10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’”

12 But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, 13 “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you

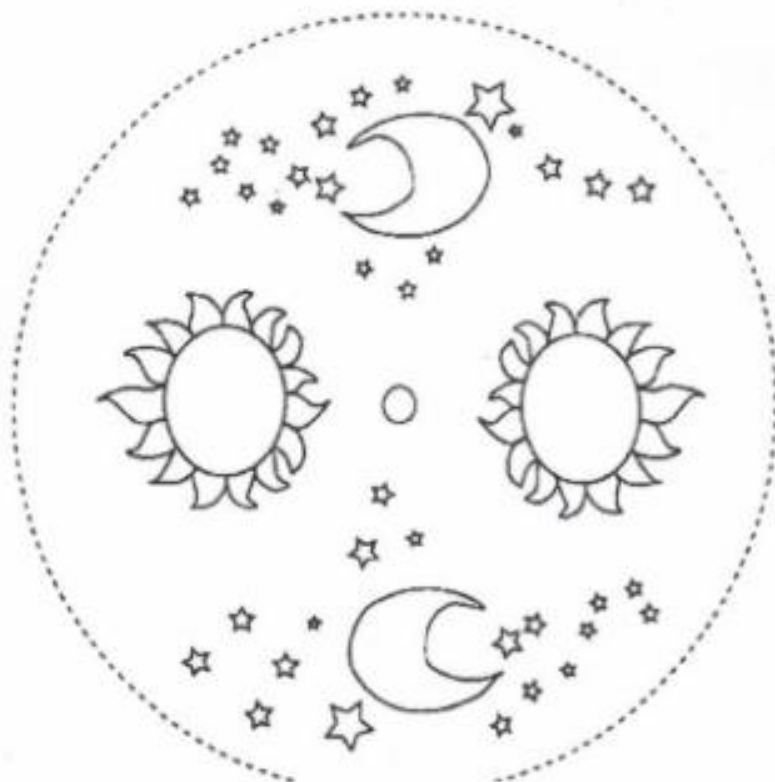


rest by giving you this land.' 14 Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them 15 until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

16 Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"



This Book of the Law  
shall not  
depart from your  
mouth, but you shall  
meditate in it day  
and night, that you  
may observe to do  
according



1. Cut along outer dotted line of rectangle containing memory verse and cut out inner window.
2. Color sun, moon, and stars. Cut along outer dotted line of circle.
3. Punch a holes where indicated on the rectangle and the circle.
4. Using a brad, attach the circle to the back of the rectangle aligning holes.
5. The pictures on the circle should show through the window representing day and night when turned.