

Deuteronomy 31:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Analysis

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die—God's direct announcement of Moses's imminent death, removing any ambiguity. **Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge**—the leadership transition required divine commissioning in God's presence. The command for both Moses and Joshua to appear together symbolized continuity and divine authority passing from one leader to another.

This formal commissioning paralleled Moses's own call (Exodus 3-4) and Joshua's earlier appointment (Numbers 27:18-23). Leadership in Israel wasn't hereditary or democratic but theocratic—God chose and commissioned His servants. The tabernacle setting emphasized that Joshua's authority derived from divine appointment, not Moses's personal choice. This pattern continues in the church: leaders receive calling and gifts from Christ, not merely human organizations (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Historical Context

Occurred circa 1406 BC in Moses's final month at age 120. Joshua had served as Moses's assistant for forty years (Exodus 24:13, 33:11, Numbers 11:28), prepared for this moment. Moses's death at 120 years was predicted earlier (Deuteronomy 31:2, 34:7)—judgment for striking the rock at Meribah (Numbers 20:12) meant he could see but not enter the Promised Land. The leadership transition was orderly, not crisis-driven, modeling succession planning that honors both retiring and incoming leaders.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's direct involvement in leadership transition differ from purely human succession planning?
2. Why was public commissioning in the tabernacle important for Joshua's credibility and authority?
3. What principles govern healthy leadership transitions in churches and Christian organizations?

Interlinear Text

וְיִאָמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מֹשֶׁה קָרְבֵּן הַזֶּה יְמִינְךָ בְּיַמִּינְךָ
said And the LORD And Moses approach Behold thy days
H559 H3068 H413 H4872 H2005 H7126 H3117

לְמוֹת לִתְצַא בְּאַת כִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְיִהְשָׁעַ
that thou must die call Joshua and present
H4191 H7121 H853 H3091 H3320

בְּאַת בְּאַת מַעַד יְאָצֵא כִּי לְךָ
themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation that I may give him a charge H1980
H168 H4150 H6680

מַעַד בְּאַת לִתְצַא בְּאַת כִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ מֹשֶׁה
And Moses Joshua and present themselves in the tabernacle
H4872 H3091 H3320 H168

מַעַד:
of the congregation
H4150

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 27:13 (Parallel theme): And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

Deuteronomy 31:23 (Parallel theme): And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee.