

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

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה ה	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	וְ	קָרַב ו	יָמִיךְ
said	And the LORD	H413	And Moses	H2005	approach	Behold thy days
H559	H3068		H4872		H7126	H3117
לָמוֹת	קָרָא	אֶת	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וְ	וַתִּצַּב ו	
that thou must die	call	H853	Joshua		and present	
H4191	H7121		H3091		H3320	
בָּא הֵל	מוֹעֵד:	וְ	אֶצְוֶנוּ	וְ	לִי לָרֶ	
themselves in the tabernacle	of the congregation		that I may give him a charge			H1980
H168	H4150		H6680			
מֹשֶׁה	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וְ	וַתִּצַּב ו	בָּא הֵל		
And Moses	Joshua		and present	themselves in the tabernacle		
H4872	H3091		H3320	H168		
מוֹעֵד:						
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 swear unto them: and I will be with thee.