

Deuteronomy 31:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage—Moses's commissioning echoed God's earlier words (31:7-8), now delivered personally. The Hebrew chazaq ve-ematz (חַזָּק וְאַמַּת) means 'be strong and resolute/steadfast.' **For thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee**—the promise of divine presence accompanied the daunting commission. Joshua would succeed not through personal capability but God's enabling presence.

This charge established a pattern repeated throughout Scripture: God assigns humanly impossible tasks accompanied by promise of His presence. The combination of command (be strong) and promise (I will be with you) appears with Moses (Exodus 3:12), Joshua repeatedly (Joshua 1:5-9), Gideon (Judges 6:12-16), and ultimately with the Great Commission: 'Go... and surely I am with you always' (Matthew 28:19-20). Human strength alone fails; divine presence makes success certain despite overwhelming odds.

Historical Context

Delivered circa 1406 BC in Moses's final month. Joshua had waited forty years for this moment—since spying out Canaan as a young man alongside Caleb (Numbers

13-14). Only he and Caleb from their generation would enter the Promised Land. Joshua faced enormous challenges: conquering fortified cities, leading a new generation, maintaining covenant faithfulness. Yet God's presence assured success. Joshua's subsequent career vindicated this promise: he conquered Canaan, divided the land, and served faithfully until his death (Joshua 24).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God's commission to difficult tasks always include promise of His presence? What does this reveal?
2. How does 'be strong' differ from self-reliant confidence versus God-dependent courage?
3. What impossible tasks has God assigned you, and how does His promised presence empower obedience?

Interlinear Text

וְיֹאמֶר לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יְצָרָתִי
a charge H853 And he gave Joshua the children of Nun and said H559 Be strong H2388
H6680 H3091 H1121 H5126 H559 H2388

בְּנֵי אַתָּה תַּבְיא אֶת־בְּנֵי אַתָּה
and of a good courage H553 H3588 H859 for thou shalt bring H935 the children H1121
H553 H3588 H859 H935 H1121

אֲתִי הָאָנָכִי לְבָם נִשְׁבַּע עִתִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּא־כֵץ
of Israel H413 into the land H776 which I swear H834 H0 H595 H1961
H3478 H776 H834 H7650

עֲמָדָה:
H5973

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 31:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

Acts 7:45 (Parallel theme): Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

Deuteronomy 3:28 (Parallel theme): But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.