

Deuteronomy 31:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

Analysis

The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee (YHWH Eloheikha hu over lefaneikha)—the emphatic hu ("he himself") stresses God's personal presence and leadership. Though Moses cannot cross Jordan, Yahweh will. **He will destroy these nations from before thee**—shamad (destroy) refers to divine judgment on Canaanite wickedness, not ethnic genocide. God Himself wages holy war against idolatry and moral corruption (Leviticus 18:24-28).

And Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said—Joshua is explicitly named as Moses' successor, fulfilling God's command in Numbers 27:18-23. The phrase "as the LORD hath said" grounds leadership transition in divine appointment, not human ambition. Joshua doesn't replace Yahweh's leadership but serves as His human representative. This establishes the pattern of Spirit-empowered, divinely-appointed leadership that continues through judges, kings, prophets, and ultimately Jesus (Yeshua), whose name Joshua bears in Hebrew.

Historical Context

Joshua (Hebrew Yehoshua, "Yahweh is salvation") was Moses' assistant since the exodus (Exodus 24:13), leading Israel's army against Amalek (Exodus 17:9-13) and

entering the tabernacle with Moses (Exodus 33:11). Forty years younger than Caleb (who was 85 at conquest's end, Joshua 14:10), Joshua was among the twelve spies and one of only two (with Caleb) who trusted God's promise (Numbers 14:6-9). His public commissioning here before "all Israel" transfers authority transparently, preventing succession disputes.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to "go before" Israel encourage you when facing overwhelming challenges?
2. What does Joshua's forty-year preparation period teach about God's patient development of leaders?

Interlinear Text

הָא	לֹפֶת	יְבָ	עַבְרָ	הַ	וְאַ	אֱלֹהִים	יְהֹוָה
The LORD	thy God					he shall go over	before
H3068	H430					H5674	H1931
יְשָׁמַם יְדָ	אֵת	מִ	הַגּוֹיִם	לְהָ	פָּאֵת	לֹפֶת	יְבָ
thee and he will destroy			these nations			before	
H8045	H853		H1471			H428	H6440
וְיַרְשָׁתָּם	עַבְרָ	הַ	וְאַ	יְהֹוָשָׁ	לֹפֶת	יְבָ	הָא
thee and thou shalt possess	them and Joshua				he shall go over	before	
H3423	H3091				H5674	H6440	
דָּבָר	עַבְרָ	הַ	וְאַ	יְהֹוָה	לֹפֶת	יְבָ	הָא
hath said	The LORD						
H1696	H3068						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 9:3 (References God): Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

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.

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.

Joshua 4:14 (References Lord): On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

Joshua 1:2 (Parallel theme): Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Hebrews 4:8 (Parallel theme): For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.
