

Deuteronomy 34:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Analysis

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him. The phrase male ruakh khokhmah (full of the spirit of wisdom) indicates not native intelligence but divine endowment for leadership. Khokhmah here means practical skill for governance and warfare, not merely philosophical insight. The samakh yadav (laying on of hands) symbolized authority transfer and Holy Spirit impartation, a pattern continued in apostolic practice (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 4:14).

Joshua's filling follows Moses' hands-laying (Numbers 27:18-23), demonstrating that spiritual authority must be transmitted according to divine order. The Spirit's wisdom wasn't automatic or inherent but came through ordained succession. **The children of Israel hearkened unto him**—obedience followed legitimate spiritual authority. Their submission fulfilled God's command to Moses, showing that honoring human leadership is ultimately obedience to God who appointed them.

Historical Context

Joshua had been Moses' assistant since the exodus (Exodus 17:9-14; 24:13; 33:11), receiving forty years of preparation for leadership. His commissioning (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 31:14-23) established continuity between Moses' and Joshua's ministries while acknowledging the unique supremacy of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). The laying on of hands became a standard practice for

ordaining leaders in both Jewish and Christian traditions, signifying authority transfer and Spirit impartation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Joshua's long apprenticeship under Moses inform your understanding of leadership development and spiritual maturity?
2. In what ways can you submit to spiritual authority as an act of obedience to God who appoints leaders?

Interlinear Text

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| וַיַּהֲוֹשֵׁ עַ | בָּנִי | נֵהֶל | מְלָא | רְגִם | סֻכָּם | סְמִינָה | יְ | סְמִינָה | וַיַּהֲוֹשֵׁ עַ | בָּנִי | נֵהֶל | מְלָא | רְגִם | סֻכָּם | סְמִינָה | יְ | סְמִינָה | |
| And Joshua | the son | of Nun | was full | of the spirit | of wisdom | | H3588 | had laid | | | | | | | | | | |
| H3091 | H1121 | H5126 | H4392 | H7307 | H2451 | | | H5564 | | | | | | | | | | |
| וְשָׁבָא לְ | בָּנִי | אֶל | וַיִּשְׁמַע | וְ | עַל | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | וְ | |
| Moses | his hands | | hearkened | | H413 | the son | of Israel | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H4872 | H3027 | | H8085 | | | H1121 | H3478 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| מֹשֶׁה: | רְגִמְשָׁה | בְּאֶשְׁר | צָוָה | יְהִי הָ | אֶת | מֹשֶׁה: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unto him and did | | H834 | commanded | as the LORD | H853 | Moses | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | H6680 | | H3068 | H4872 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 11:2 (Spirit): And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Acts 6:6 (Parallel theme): Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

John 3:34 (Spirit): For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Daniel 6:3 (Spirit): Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

1 Kings 3:12 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

1 Kings 3:9 (Parallel theme): Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

2 Kings 2:9 (Spirit): And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

2 Kings 2:15 (Spirit): And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Colossians 2:3 (Parallel theme): In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Exodus 31:3 (Spirit): And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,