

Numbers 11:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

Analysis

God's promise to 'take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them' reveals that leadership ability is a divine gift, not merely natural talent. The Spirit's distribution did not diminish Moses' portion (as physical division would) but multiplied Spirit-empowerment to others. This demonstrates the Holy Spirit's sufficiency for all God calls to service. The phrase 'they shall bear the burden with thee' shows that Spirit-enabled ministry involves sharing responsibility, preventing burnout and fostering community leadership.

Historical Context

This represents one of the Old Testament's clearest examples of the Holy Spirit distributing gifts for ministry service. The Spirit's coming upon the seventy elders caused prophetic utterance (verse 25), validating their divine calling. This anticipates Pentecost's greater outpouring where the Spirit was given to all believers, not just select leaders. Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29), cited at Pentecost, promised this broader Spirit distribution.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the Spirit's distribution without diminishing Moses' portion illustrate the Spirit's sufficiency for all believers today?
2. In what ways can you participate in shared ministry that prevents burnout and utilizes diverse spiritual gifts?

Interlinear Text

וְיָרֵדְתִּי י'	וְדִבַּרְתִּי י'	עִמָּךְ	שָׁם	וְאָצִלְתִּי י'	
And I will come down	and talk	H5973	H8033	with thee there and I will take	
H3381	H1696			H680	
מִן	הָרוּחַ	אֲשֶׁר	עַל יָדְךָ	וְשָׁמַתִּי י'	עָלֶיךָ ׀
H4480	of the spirit	H834	H5921	which is upon thee and will put	H5921
	H7307			H7760	
	נָשָׂא א	אֶתְכֶם	בְּמִשָּׁא א	הָעָם ׀	וְלֹא
it upon them and they shall bear		H854	the burden	of the people	H3808
H5375			H4853	H5971	
	נָשָׂא א	אֶתְכֶם	לְבִדְכָּ:		
it upon them and they shall bear		H859	H905		
H5375					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 11:25 (Spirit): And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders:

and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

1 Samuel 10:6 (Spirit): And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

1 Corinthians 2:12 (Spirit): Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

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.

Joel 2:28 (Spirit): And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

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.

Romans 8:9 (Spirit): But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Nehemiah 9:20 (Spirit): Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

Exodus 18:22 (Parallel theme): And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 (Spirit): He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.