

# Numbers 11:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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The theophany 'And the LORD came down in a cloud' demonstrates divine initiative in empowering leadership. The cloud represents God's glory and presence (Exodus 13:21; 40:34-38), and its descent indicates special divine intervention. God didn't merely approve Moses' organizational plan but actively participated in commissioning the elders. This teaches that genuine spiritual leadership requires divine calling and empowerment, not merely human appointment or natural ability.

The remarkable statement 'and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders' describes the distribution of the Spirit. The language doesn't imply Moses lost any of the Spirit or that the Spirit was divided like a material substance. Rather, God who gave His Spirit to Moses now extended the same Spirit to the seventy, enabling them to share his ministry. This anticipates Pentecost, where the Spirit given to Christ was poured out upon His church (Acts 2), enabling believers to continue His mission. The Spirit cannot be diminished by being shared—divine resources multiply through distribution.

The result 'when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease' (or 'but did not continue'—the Hebrew *velo yasafu*, וְלֹא יָסַף, is ambiguous) describes the visible sign of Spirit-reception. Prophesying indicated Spirit-empowerment, providing public confirmation of their divine appointment. Whether

they prophesied only initially or continually, the point is that Spirit-reception produced observable evidence. This pattern—Spirit-giving accompanied by visible manifestation—appears throughout Scripture (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6), demonstrating that genuine spiritual empowerment produces real effects.

## Historical Context

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This Spirit-distribution event parallels later biblical instances of leadership commissioning: Joshua received Moses' spirit (Deuteronomy 34:9), Elisha received double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2:9-15), and the apostles received the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). The concept of seventy leaders with shared spiritual authority prefigured both the Sanhedrin in Judaism and the plurality of elders in New Testament churches. The visible manifestation (prophesying) served apologetic purpose—proving to Israel that these men were genuinely called by God, not merely Moses' personal choices.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the distribution of the Spirit to the seventy elders demonstrate that divine resources multiply through sharing rather than diminishing?
2. What does the visible manifestation of Spirit-reception (prophesying) teach about the importance of observable evidence confirming genuine spiritual calling and gifting?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיָּכַד	וַיְהִי הוּא	בְּעָנָן	וַיִּדְבֹּר	אֵלָיו	וַיֵּאָצֶל	מִן
came down	And the LORD	in a cloud	and spake	H413	unto him and took	H4480
H3381	H3068	H6051	H1696		H680	
וְהָיָה כִּי יָבֹא הוּא			עַל יוֹ אֲשֶׁר	וַיֵּתֵן		
and it came to pass that when the spirit			H834	H5921	that was upon him and gave	
H7307					H5414	
עַל	שִׁבְעִים	אֵלָיו	הַזִּקְנִים	וַיֵּשְׁבוּ	כֵּן וַיָּחֲ	עָלֵיהֶם
H5921	it unto the seventy	H376	elders	H1961	rested	H5921
	H7657		H2205		H5117	
וְהָיָה כִּי יָבֹא הוּא			וַיִּתְנַבְּא	וְלֹא		
and it came to pass that when the spirit			upon them they prophesied		H3808	
H7307			H5012			
וַיִּפְּסֹ:						
and did not cease						
H3254						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 11:17** (Spirit): 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.

**Numbers 12:5** (References Lord): And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

**1 Samuel 10:10** (Spirit): And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

**2 Peter 1:21** (Spirit): For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

**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.

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