

# Joshua-Portrait of the Man God Uses

Joshua Before the LORD

## JOSHUA PORTRAIT OF THE MAN GOD USES

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Some evangelical pastors (e.g., [Andy Stanley](#)) say the Old Testament is of no value for New Testament living. So why should we meditate on the "old, old story" of the life of Joshua and even seek to imitate his example? I'm glad you asked! Let's see how Scripture answers this question.

Romans 15:4NET+ For everything (**HOW MUCH?**) that was written in former times was written for our instruction ([didaskalia](#)), so that ([hina](#) - purpose clause - Prompts question "What purpose?") through **endurance** ([hupomone](#)) and through **encouragement** ([paraklesis](#)) of the Scriptures ([graphe](#)) we may have (present tense - continually **have**) hope ([elpis](#) = "*Hope sure, not hope so!*").

**Phillips paraphrase** - "For all those words which were written long ago are meant to teach us today; that when we read in the Scriptures of the endurance of men and of all the help that God gave them in those days, we may be encouraged to go on hoping in our own time."

**COMMENT** - The principles we learn from the teachings ([didaskalia](#)) of Joshua's life when believed and practiced will be used by the Spirit to energize supernatural encouragement, endurance, and hope.

Psalm 101:6 My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; **He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me.**

**COMMENT** - The Hebrew word for "**minister**" ([sharath](#); Lxx = [leitourgeo](#)) is the same word used in Joshua 1:1+ to describe Joshua as Moses' servant or attendant! Joshua clearly walked **in a blameless way**, for he (and Caleb) followed the Lord fully (Nu 32:12+). And in the following notes, we will discover how it was supernaturally possible for Joshua to follow the Lord fully. Joshua is one of those Old Testament men of God like Joseph about whom nothing negative is written. He was not a perfect man but he diligently sought to follow the perfect Lord. It was not about Joshua's *perfection*, but his *direction* and the same is true of us, beloved.

Hebrews 6:11-12+ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence ([spoude](#)) so as to realize the full assurance ([plerophoria](#)) of hope ([elpis](#)) until the end (of this age or your life), 12 so that [hina](#) - purpose/result) you will not be sluggish ([nothros](#)), but imitators ([mimetes](#) - see 1Co 11:1+) of those who through **FAITH** and **PATIENCE** inherit the promises.

**COMMENT** - How much **faith** did Joshua manifest? He had...**Faith** enough to counter the bad report of the 10 faithless spies (Nu 14:11+, contrast Nu 32:11+ and Nu 32:12+) and stand firm even when threatened with death by stoning (Nu 14:10+)....**Faith** enough to believe God would make a way across the flooded Jordan so that he boldly declared "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." (Josh 3:5ff+). "**Faith** enough to believe God's word that He had given Jericho into Israel's hands and all they had to do was march around Jericho! (Joshua 6:2-3+)....**Faith** enough to ask God to cause the sun to stand still (Joshua 10:12,13+).

Note also the **patience** of Joshua, who waited 38 years during the wilderness wanderings before he was allowed to enter the [promised land](#). And there is no record of Joshua grumbling or complaining during this difficult season in the wilderness (Are you in a "wilderness season"? Then [imitate](#) the example of Joshua!). Notice also that even when Joshua had miraculously crossed the Jordan into the [promised land](#), he patiently, faithfully fought against the Canaanites for 7 years. Joshua's **patience** is also seen in the fact that he was the last Israelite to receive his allotment of the land. He patiently waited for his land "doing nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regarding others as more important than himself!" (Php 2:3+). How many years Joshua waited for his personal allotment is difficult to discern with certainty, but the distribution of land is estimated to have taken 18 years, so it is conceivable he waited all this time to receive God's promise! In summary, it is clear that Joshua was a superlative example of the **faith** and **patience** we are called to imitate in Hebrews 6:12! How are you doing fellow follower of Christ?

I agree with the respected commentator **W H Griffith Thomas** who wrote

"The relation of the Spirit of God to certain men whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament is **worthy of careful study**. Joseph, Joshua, and Daniel in particular are referred to as men in whom the Spirit of God dwelt (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 5:11).

**James Hastings** writes that "There are in the Bible a few men who were so extraordinary in their moral stature that no higher tribute could be rendered to their unique personality and services than this, that **they were "hard to follow."**

## TIMELINE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE

Some of the dates below are certain, but others are approximations.

**THOUGHT** - You can surely place yourself somewhere on Joshua's timeline as he prepared to take Israel into the [Promised Land](#)! The question is what aspect of the "**Promised Life**" in Christ (Jn 10:10b, cf Col 3:4+) remains for you to possess? Dear follower of Christ, if you are still breathing, God is not finished with you yet. What changes do you need to make in your life or better yet what changes will you allow the Lord to make in your life so that you might be able to say "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD?" (Joshua 24:15+) [Let me encourage you to look at the first 15' of the testimony of a modern day "Joshua" named John MacArthur](#), where he recounts an incredible story of the impact of his life on another soul. I can assure you that you will be amazed and may just be challenged to look at the remaining days of your life from an entirely different perspective. See also Redeem the Time.

- **Age 1-44** - Born in Egypt and suffered as a slave until the LORD's Redemption on the Passover (Ex 12:1-50, 51+)
- **Age 45** - Moses' attendant for 40 days on Mount Sinai (? if Joshua was there the second 40 days); the Battle with the Amalekites  
+ 2 years Israel encamped at Mount Sinai
- **Age 47** - 12 spies sent to [Promised Land](#) from [Kadesh Barnea](#) (Nu 13:1-14:45+)  
+ 38 years of wilderness wandering (time certain) (Deut 2:14+)
- **Age 85** - Joshua Leads Israel into [Promised Land](#)  
+ 7 years of war (time certain)(**Explanation:** In Josh 14:6+ Caleb was 40 yo when he was sent out as a spy. Then he as in the

wilderness for 38 years which made him 78 when Israel entered the [Promised Land](#). In Josh 14:10+ Caleb states he is 85 as he prepares to receive his promised land. So from age 78 to 85 Israel fought against the Canaanites, a total of 7 years.)

- **Age 92** - distributes the promised land to the tribes on the western side of the Jordan (Joshua 13:1-21:45+, Josh 13:7+) + 18 years (an approximation) of work as an "administrator" distributing the land
- **Age 110** - (this time is certain = Josh 24:29+) In his last words Joshua gives 3 Farewell Speeches (Joshua 22+, Joshua 23+, Joshua 24+) including warnings (Josh 22:5+, Josh 23:6-11, 12, 13+, three times in Josh 24:14,15, 19,20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27+) and dies. Joshua's last words were "*lasting words*" testifying to the faithfulness **OF** God and his faithfulness **TO** God (a good example for all of us as followers of Christ to imitate before we fall asleep in Jesus!)...

"Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed. "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14+, cf Joshua 21:45+).

## JOSHUA'S NAME CHANGE

Often in the Bible, a person's name was related to their "attributes" (character) or actions ([See Getz's note](#)) and a change in a person's name was often an indication of a change in one's nature (e.g, **Abram** = "exalted father" but at age 99 and childless God changed it to **Abraham** = "father of a multitude" - Ge 17:5). In the book of Numbers we see Moses changes Joshua's name from Hoshea to Joshua.

Numbers 13:8+ from the tribe of Ephraim, **Hoshea** the son of Nun...

Numbers 13:16+ These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called **Hoshea** the son of Nun, **Joshua**. (Note: Most versions have "and" instead of "but")

**COMMENT** - Numbers 13+ of course is the famous chapter in which Moses sent 12 men to spy out the [Promised Land](#). Note that in the listing of the 12, the name is **Hoshea** (Hebrew = Hoshea), which means "he will save." Notice that after the listing of the 12, there is almost an "addendum" which for some reason separates out Hoshea/Joshua from the other 11 spies. While the text does not give a definite explanation for the name change from Hoshea to Joshua, it could be related to the fact that Hoshea brought back a favorable report on the [Promised Land](#) (this is conjecture on my part). His new name **Joshua** (Hebrew = Jehoshua) means "Jehovah is salvation" or "Jehovah is help"

**James Smith** writes that "The old name, **Hoshea**, implied that salvation was in himself; the new name, **Jehoshua**, taught that the "Lord is salvation."

In the Septuagint translation **Joshua** is always rendered as [Iesous](#), the same word which is translated in the New Testament as **Jesus** and also means "Jehovah is salvation." Since **Jesus** is [Iesous](#), in a sense the OT "[Iesous](#)" (Joshua) was a faint foreshadowing of the "Greater Joshua." Joshua gave his people a **PROMISED LAND**, but our "NT Joshua Jesus," gives us a **PROMISED LIFE**. Matthew 1:21+ "explains" the Name of **Jesus**, the angel declaring "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His Name **Jesus** ([Iesous](#)), for (Explains the meaning of the Name) He will save His people from their sins."

**Gene Getz** adds this comment on the **Name Change from Hoshea (Oshea) to Joshua** - At some point in time—perhaps after the twelve tribes returned from their mission in Canaan—Joshua received a "**medal of honor**" bestowed on very few people in God's great army. Originally, his name was Hoshea (or Oshea, Nu 13:8), but Moses changed his name to Joshua (Num. 13:16). Like Barnabas in the New Testament, **the reason for this name change is explained in the names themselves**. The apostles changed Joseph's name to "Barnabas," which means "Son of Encouragement," simply because he was such an unselfish, caring leader during the early days of the church. Moses' reasons were similar to the apostles. **Hoshea** means "salvation." From a human point of view, "Hoshea" would be Israel's savior. But **Joshua** means "the Lord is salvation." **From a divine point of view, God would lead Israel into Canaan**. Though the Lord would definitely use what this young man had learned at Moses' side—in Egypt, in the war against Amalek, on Mount Sinai, his experience as a spy and his subsequent and

frightening encounter with Israel when they tried to kill him (Nu 14:10)—yet **it was God Who would indeed lead Israel into Canaan**. It was He Who would roll back the waters of Jordan, Who would cause the walls of Jericho to fall down, and enable Israel to defeat the people of Ai. It was God who would fell the giants in Canaan. **Consequently, Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua to emphasize and illustrate that God alone was Israel's salvation**. Joshua learned this lesson well! In God's time, he became ready to allow the Lord to use his abilities and skills and all that he had learned during his years of preparation. ([Men of Character: Joshua](#))

**COMMENT** - As Getz explains Joshua was a holy instrument or vessel in the hands of the LORD, as are all of God's servants which He can use for His Kingdom work and His glory. One is reminded of Paul's words in 2 Timothy 2:21+ "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these [*things*], he will be a **vessel for honor**, sanctified ([hagiazo](#) - perfect tense = state of being set apart), useful ([euchrestos](#)) to the Master, prepared ([hetoimazo](#) - perfect tense) for every good ("God") work." Beloved follower of our Greater Joshua Jesus, these truths beg the question - Are you daily presenting your body as a "vessel" holy to the Lord (Ro 12:1,2+) like Joshua (cf 1Pe 1:14-17+)? If you are, then rest assured that you will be used by the Lord and will experience great victories over the "Canaanites" in your life.

"The vessels which are meet for the Master's use are pure ones.

Cleanness, rather than cleverness, is the prime condition of successful service."

-- F B Meyer

## JOSHUA'S TRAINING AS A DISCIPLE OF MOSES

This is a beautiful OT example of the power (and importance) of discipleship. What if Moses had not discipled Joshua? I realize that is hypothetical and that God is sovereign and His good purposes are never thwarted (Job 42:2). But I ask this question to stir your sincere mind by way of reminder (2Pe 3:1+) of Jesus' command to **make disciples** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) Mt 28:19+) and thereby to motivate you to think about who you should be discipling. Remember that a good example is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. Moses knew not only the way but also the ways of the LORD (Ps 103:7) and he taught them to his disciple Joshua. Are you a "good example" to the "Joshua" in your sphere of influence? Do you have a "Joshua" to disciple?

A person who is not willing to follow  
is not prepared to lead.

Joshua 1:1 Now it came about after the death of **Moses the servant of the LORD**, that the LORD spoke to **Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant**, saying,

**COMMENT** - Joshua was a "follower" of Moses (Jn 9:28 describes disciples of Moses in a negative sense), a servant of **the servant of the LORD**. The Hebrew word describing Joshua as Moses' **servant** ([sharath](#)) is different than the Hebrew word describing Moses as **servant** ([ebed](#)) of the LORD. [Sharath](#) describes Joshua as a personal servant, an attendant, an apprentice, a personal assistant to Moses, always following in his shadow. This same Hebrew word was used of the workers in the tabernacle who served the Levites in worship. Thus the word [Sharath](#) was clearly a title of subservience (willingness to obey others unquestioningly) and of submission to authority. The Hebrew word describing Moses as **the servant of the LORD** was [ebed](#) which describes a slave or bondservant, one who held a position of trust under their master. [Ebed](#) was used especially of a number of godly men in the Old Testament - Abraham (Ps 105:6), Job (Job 1:8), David (Ps 89:3, 20), Caleb (Nu 14:24), Isaiah (Isa 20:3), Messiah (Isaiah 53:11), et al. Moses had big sandals to fill but he had trained his understudy well, so the work would go on...

"God buries His workman,  
but His work goes on."

In Numbers 11:28+ we read that "Joshua the son of Nun (was) the **attendant** ([sharath](#)) of Moses **from his youth**." The Septuagint translates "**attendant**" with the verb [paristemi](#) which means to stand by (bystander), to be supportive or to come to the aid of. [Paristemi](#) is in the perfect tense which indicates that at some point in time in the past Joshua had become the **attendant** of Moses and he persisted in that state or frame of mind. The Hebrew word for "**youth**" ([bechurim](#)) is only used 3x in the OT but the use in

Eccl 12:1 indicates this refers to a relatively young man. This would support the premise that almost certainly Joshua was an **attendant** of Moses before Israel was set free from Egyptian bondage.

**Here is the point:** For at least 40 years (probably longer in view of Nu 11:28 as discussed above) Joshua was the willing, patient, non-complaining, subservient personal attendant of Moses who himself was the bond-servant of the LORD. Joshua learned what it meant to be humble (Nu 12:3+), how to take instruction (Ex. 17:10+), and how to be a true servant of God. Even a display of Moses' temper (Nu 20:7-12) was an opportunity to watch and learn. By spending time with Moses, Joshua learned things that could not be learned from a book. And although, Joshua began as a humble "servant" [sharath](#) (Joshua 1:1+) of Moses, he would finish like a general promoted to the highest rank ([five stars](#)) and would come to the end of his life of faithful service, designated as **the servant (ebed) of the LORD**, just as Moses had been (Joshua 24:29+). The Septuagint translates [ebed](#) here with the word [doulos](#) ([see note below](#) for the character of a doulos).

People who become great leaders  
Usually need to learn  
How to serve and follow others—  
Then they'll get their turn.  
—Sper

#### RELATED PASSAGES ON DISCIPLESHIP:

Deuteronomy 31:7 (**MOSES PASSES THE BATON TO JOSHUA**) Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

2 Timothy 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 3:10 Now you (TIMOTHY) followed my (PAUL) teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

2 Kings 3:11 (**ELIJAH'S PUPIL ELISHA**) But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?" And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, "**Elisha** the son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands of **Elijah**."

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#### Related Resources:

- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2](#) - [Begins study of Five Most Important Passages for Believers](#)
- [Make Disciples 3](#) - [Chart comparing Filled with the Spirit and the Word](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)
- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

#### JOSHUA'S PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

**JOSHUA'S EARLY EXPERIENCE OF YAHWEH'S PRESENCE AND POWER** - At the age of 45 Joshua followed his leader Moses up Mount Sinai and for 40 days experienced proximity to the LORD (Moses went up higher) and multiple manifestations of His power in "the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking." (Ex 20:18+)

Exodus 24:12-14+ Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." 13 So **Moses arose with Joshua his servant**, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 But to the elders he said, "Wait here for **us** (MOSES AND JOSHUA) until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them."

**JOSHUA'S DAILY DEVOTION TO YAHWEH** - Presumably this took place throughout the wilderness experience. Imagine the effect on Joshua's heart and soul and mind by daily lingering at the Tent of Meeting with Yahweh over the next 40 wilderness years, from age 45 to age 85.

Exodus 33:9-11+ Whenever Moses entered the tent, the [pillar of cloud](#) would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. 10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. 11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

**COMMENT** - "The men God has used most through the ages bear one common mark—at some time in their lives they came to a ["tryst"](#) with God, to a secret understanding with the Most High. They had a private meeting with the Eternal, a rendezvous with the Almighty. The Bible carries a series of such experiences, from Genesis to Revelation. The pages of church history abound with such records. Such men come to God alone, like Jacob at Jabbok, Moses in Midian, John on Patmos (**ED: JOSHUA ABIDING AT THE TENT OF MEETING!**). Eagles do not fly in droves. After waiting on God, these men mounted on wings as eagles. "When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:10+). The vision does not come to the crowd but to the individual. Moses met God, and then the people followed Moses. (**ED: JOSHUA FOLLOWED MOSES LEAD**). No man is prepared to meet the people until first he has met God. Our Lord Himself began a busy day in the desert alone at prayer (SEE FOLLOWING NOTE). Begin your life work, begin your day, with God." (Vance Havner)

**JOSHUA ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING** - Three times the book of Joshua records Joshua arising early in the morning - (1) before Israel miraculously crossed the Jordan River (Joshua 3:1ff), (2) before Israel conquered Jericho (Joshua 6:12) and before Israel avenged the loss at Ai (Joshua 8:10). Joshua was an early riser as have been many of the men God has used greatly (Abraham Ge 19:27, Jacob - Ge 28:18, Moses - Ex 8:20, Ex 9:13, Ex 24:4, Ex 34:4, Job - Job 1:5; Samuel - 1Sa 15:12, David 1Sa 17:20; Jesus - Mk 1:35, Jn 8:2) (See [Thoughts on the Quiet Time](#))

**THOUGHT** - Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows that it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows that it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle: **WHEN THE SUN COMES UP, YOU HAD BETTER BE RUNNING.** **Matthew Henry** adds "Those who would bring great things to pass, must rise early. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty."

Depending on God does not preclude proper preparation on our part

**JOSHUA PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD** - Note the timing of this event. Israel has crossed the Jordan and is preparing for their first battle with a Canaanite stronghold at Jericho. The aging (85 yo) general Joshua needs to receive instructions from the **Captain of the LORD's host!** In this amazing event we see Joshua experience an up close and personal encounter with what I believe is unquestionably an appearance of the Pre-incarnate Christ, a Christophany if you will (or Theophany). For more detailed discussion of Old Testament Christophanies see the study on the **Angel of the LORD**.

Joshua 5:13-15,6:2+ Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes (ED: ONE HAS TO BELIEVE HE WAS IN PRAYER BEFORE THE BIG BATTLE BUT THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY) and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as **captain of the host of the LORD**." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" 15 The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (**CHAPTER 6 IS A BAD CHAPTER BREAK**) (Joshua 6:2+) The LORD (**THIS IS STILL THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST!**) said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. 3 "You shall

march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days.

Joshua learned that he was second in command!

**COMMENT** - Joshua is now about 85 years old and here receives instructions from Yahweh in how Israel was to possess Jericho their first possession of the [Promised Land](#). For both Joshua (and Israel) to obey this seemingly "ridiculous" command would test their faith in Yahweh's Word of promise. And yet we see they obeyed, apparently without grumbling or complaining or doubting (WHICH WAS FREQUENT WITH THE FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAEL). And so the writer of Hebrews testifies that "**By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days." (Hebrews 11:30+) Joshua believed and confidently passed on His LORD's unusual strategic orders and Israel obeyed and together they experienced the power of God and the victory by God. Once again we see the principle that unhesitating obedience to God's Word (even when it does not seem to make good sense) is the way to experience His Spirit's supernatural power which enables victory over our strong "Canaanite" foes.

**J Oswald Sanders** - Isaac Stern, the famous musician, once said that of all the instruments in the orchestra, the second fiddle is the most difficult to master. But in this role Joshua displayed great virtuosity. He began his career as second to Moses, and as we shall see later he had no sooner been commissioned to succeed him that he was charged to surrender his command and become second to the new Commander-in-Chief of the Lord's army (Joshua 5:13-16+). Not everyone has the stature to cheerfully accept demotion and be superseded in leadership. But Joshua would sooner be second-in-command of the Lord's army than commander-in-chief of his own. **Few Christian leaders pass this test with flying colors as did Joshua.** (ED: DO I PASS THIS TEST?)

**JOSHUA CONTINUED EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE** - Throughout the next 25 years, 7 years of battles and 18 years of distributing the land, Joshua experienced the presence of the LORD, just as Jehovah had promised him.

Joshua 1:5+ "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, **I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.**

**New Testament Parallels** - The promise of our Lord's persistent presence is given to every believer today. As you have often heard, "If you don't feel close to God, guess who moved!"

Hebrews 13:5+ Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

**COMMENT** - There are actually 5 negatives in God's promise to never desert or forsake. It could hardly be stated much stronger! "I heard of a young seminary student who learned that (FIVE NEGATIVES) in seminary. He went out to his country church and was trying to tell a little lady this, who had known and loved the Bible all of her life; and, she'd lived by the promise, "I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee." And, he was explaining to her how it should be, "[I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not..." She said, with a twinkle in her eye, "God may have to say it three times for you Greek fellers, but once is enough for me." (Source Unknown)

The Gospel of Matthew beautifully describes God's presence from beginning to end writing of the Gospel -

BEGINNING = "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME **IMMANUEL**," which translated means, "**GOD WITH US.**" (Matthew 1:23)

ENDING = And in the we read Jesus' promise "lo, **I am with you always**, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) From the beginning of our life to the end of our life He is with us and will never leave us nor forsake us.

**JOSHUA EXPERIENCED GOD'S PROTECTION** - In an incredible passage describing Yahweh's timing to protect His servants, Joshua and Caleb. God's men prove to be immortal until their work for Him is accomplished. God had unfinished business for both Joshua and Caleb (see Joshua 14:6-14). Moses records God's perfectly timed protection for Joshua and Caleb...

Numbers 14:10+ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. **THEN** (NOT LATER, BUT "THEN!") the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

This has been alluded to earlier but bears repeating. The man God uses must understand the principle that leaders who serve will serve as good leaders. It is those men who are willing to bow low (cf Josh 5:14+) who God will lift high.

## JOSHUA'S MODEL - MOSES' HUMILITY

Numbers 12:3+ (Now the man Moses was very **humble** ([anav](#)), more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

**COMMENT** - [Lxx](#) translates **humble** with the adjective [praus](#) used for example in Mt 5:5 "Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth." [Praus](#) is used to describe the character of Jesus in Mt 11:29+ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

Another "OT" saint's example of humility is **John the Baptist** who declared "He must (present tense - continually) increase, but I must decrease (present tense - continually)." (John 3:30+)

**NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL** - Humility is the pathway to reception of God's grace. God in effect "stiff arms" the proud and they do not receive His grace. Joshua understood this principle and all who would be used greatly by the LORD must also grasp this vital truth as described by Peter and James.

1 Peter 5:5+ You younger men, likewise, **be subject to your elders**; and all of you, clothe yourselves with **humility** toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED** ([antitasso](#) - present tense - continually "range in battle against") **TO THE PROUD** ([huperephanos](#)), **BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE** ([tapeinos](#)).

James 4:6+ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, **'GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.'**

## THE EXAMPLE OF OUR GREATER JOSHUA JESUS...

Mark 10:45+ "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, **but to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Philippians 2:3-7+ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

**COMMENT** - We see attitude of a humble servant in Joshua for he made sure all the other tribes had received their allotments of the promised land until he took his allotment. And even when he did, he did not seek the "best place" for himself. Read Joshua 19:49-50+.

## JOSHUA'S MILITARY TRAINING

### Aaron & Hur Hold Moses' Hands

Israel's First Battle involved a trained army attacking the untrained Israelite army which which in human terms was a [recipe for disaster](#)."

Exodus 17:8-16+ Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So **Moses said to Joshua**, "**Choose** (**MOSES ISSUES 3 COMMANDS - IN RED**) men for us and **go out, fight** against Amalek (**NOTE MOSES ALREADY TRUSTED GOD'S LEADERSHIP ABILITY TO SELECT QUALIFIED MEN**). Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with **the staff of God in my hand**." 10 (**NOTICE JOSHUA DID NOT QUESTION MOSES' UNUSUAL STATEMENT ABOUT SITTING ON A HILL!**) Joshua did as Moses told him (**NOTICE JOSHUA'S UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE EVEN THOUGH HE HAD NEVER FOUGHT A BATTLE!**), and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 Then the LORD said to

Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

**COMMENT** - It is interesting that this is the first mention of Joshua in Scripture, but undoubtedly was not Moses' first interaction with him.. As Nu 11:28+ says Joshua had been the "**attendant** ([sharath](#)) of Moses from his youth (normally describes a relatively young adult, most likely younger than 45 yo which is what Joshua was at this time). Joshua had no prior military training before his commission, no military drills, no West Point courses in war strategy or even any experience as a soldier. This would have been his first time in battle, and yet here he is commissioned by Moses as the commander in charge of Israel's forces! Think about the chances of victory in such a setting with the **odds stacked against** Israel! But isn't this often God's way of showing His children that it is not by (human) might nor power, but by His Spirit that one attains victory (Zech 4:6, cf [Gideon](#) - Jdg 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 2Co 12:9+)! Clearly Moses had some past history with Joshua for he trusted him to muster a task force ("choose men for us"). To be a leader Joshua needed the ability to discern qualities in others that would be of value in completing the task. Clearly this providential occurrence of attacking Amalekites was sent (or allowed) by God and was His way of beginning to train Joshua to be the future military leader of Israel as they entered the promised land where warfare would be necessary to possess their possessions.

**Ligon Duncan** has an excellent comment - "Now, in this passage if you look at Ex 17:9 you'll note that unlike at the Red Sea, God instructs the people to play an active role in their own defense. At the Red Sea, the people of God were to **stand still and see the salvation of the Lord** (Ex 14:13+) Here at Rephidim the people are to have an appointed army to respond to the Amalekites and they themselves must be faithful in defending Israel against the attackers. Isn't it interesting how even in the Pentateuch, even in the Torah, even in the first five books of the Bible, **there is a nice balance between the active and the passive elements of the believing life**. There is the **passive element** of depending upon the Lord, trusting in the Lord, resting in the Lord, watching the Lord work, depending on His power, and there is the **active element** of doing the responsible things that God calls us to do. Both of those elements are part of healthy Christian growth. If you have a totally passive approach to the Christian's life, you'll be in "**the let go and let God**" camp (**ED**: A better and balanced "camp" is "**Let God and let's go**"). You will sort of sit in the pew and see what He's going to do. If you're in the totally active camp, then you will have a hard time trusting on Him to do it and you will be trying to figure out the way you are going to do it for Him. There is a balance in the Christian life between depending on God and on acting in accordance with those things He has called us to do, and you see that balance even here as the children of Israel are called to play an active role in their own defense. ([Sermon](#))

**Francis Schaeffer** echoes this truth noting that "God was teaching these people a serious lesson in their first warfare, and no one was to learn it better than Joshua the general. In the midst of battle, is one to fight? Yes. To be a good general? Yes. But when everything is done, the power is to be understood as God's, not man's." (**ED**: And all God's people said "Amen!")

**SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE OF MOSES' STAFF** ([matteh](#)) - Joshua had already repeatedly witnessed the "*supernatural character*" of the **staff** in the hand of the servant of the LORD, for example, as when Moses "**lifted up the staff and struck the water** that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to **blood**." (Ex 7:20+. cf bringing forth hail in Ex 9:23+, locusts in Ex 10:13+) In fact in the immediate context of Exodus 17, Joshua had just witnessed Moses strike the rock with the staff and bring forth water...

Exodus 17:5-7+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and **take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile**, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

Exodus 14:13-16+ But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and **see the salvation of the LORD** which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. 14 "The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent." 15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. 16 "**As for you, lift up your STAFF and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it**, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.

**THOUGHT** - What is God training you for right now remembering that you are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which He prepared beforehand that you should walk in them (Eph 2:10+)? Do the trials seem to never end, to be without an obvious purpose? Could it be that God is training you in and through the trial? (cf Jas 1:2-4,12+) God does not waste the obstacles in our lives but desires that we might see them as opportunities to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be** (present imperative = command to make this our lifestyle attitude to be) steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (1Co 15:58+)

**JOSHUA LEARNED THE SECRET OF VICTORY** - Joshua had seen Moses use this **STAFF** to turn the Nile River red and then to open the Red Sea and then drown the mighty Egyptian army. And now in Exodus 17 Joshua in the flurry of the physical battle came to see the association of the raised **STAFF** in Moses' hand and the victory over the Amalekites. He learned that while he must fight the physical battle, the ultimate Warrior was the LORD God Who would win the victory over the often stronger foes. David voiced this same truth in his victory over Goliath

1 Samuel 17:47 And that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for **the battle is the LORD'S** and He will give you into our hands."

#### **RELATED PASSAGES:**

Proverbs 21:31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But **victory belongs to the LORD.**

Psalms 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But **we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.**

#### **JOSHUA HAD WITNESSED THE POWER OF YAHWEH AGAINST THE TWO STRONG AMORITE KINGS**

Deuteronomy 3:21-22+ "I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, **Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings;** so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 'Do not fear them, for **the LORD your God is the one fighting for you'**

**COMMENT** - Observe that while Joshua was to lead Israel into battle, he was to believe that the LORD would fight for Israel and He would win the victory! We see a perfect NT parallel in the spiritual warfare every believer is called to fight daily as discussed below.

#### **APPLICATION OF THESE TRUTHS IN OUR BATTLE AGAINST THE POWERFUL ENEMY, OUR FALLEN FLESH...**

Romans 8:13+ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but **if by the Spirit (GOD'S PART) you are putting to death (OUR RESPONSIBILITY) the deeds of the body, you will live.**

**COMMENT** - This passage is one of the most important passages in the New Testament for saints who are in the incessant battle against their fallen flesh. The secret of victory is in learning to depend on the Lord (just as Joshua had learned) and to kill the sin that attacks with furious temptation. Repeatedly we see the vital principle for spiritual victory - God's sovereign power and provision and our responsibility to fight the good fight of faith (believing the Spirit is giving us the power to kill the sin). See also the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)" (100/100)

[Killing the Amalekites](#) - a picture of fighting our fallen flesh

#### **JOSHUA UNDERSTOOD THAT A GOOD SOLDIER MUST BE SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD**

Exodus 32:17+ Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a sound of war in the camp."

**COMMENT** - Moses and Joshua have been on Mount Sinai for 40 days. While Israel was rebelling against God, Joshua was being protected by God by remaining on Mount Sinai. The LORD protected Joshua and in effect kept him separated from the sin of the people. The man God uses must determine to be holy (separated) as God is holy.

**NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL** - Paul describes the separation that characterizes a good soldier.

2 Timothy 2:3-4+ Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (See [A Good Soldier](#))

**JOSHUA UNDERSTOOD HIS NEED TO BE SPIRITUALLY STRONG** - He understood the principle obedience led to spiritual

strength. Joshua was strong because Joshua was obedient. That is always the secret to spiritual strength. Are you experiencing spiritual strength? Are you able to defeat the "Canaanites" of the the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) that are continually attacking your mind? If not, you might want to do an "obedience checkup."

Deuteronomy 11:8+ "You shall therefore **keep every commandment** (OBEDIENCE) which I am commanding you today, **so that** (PURPOSE OR RESULT OF KEEPING COMMANDMENTS) you **may be strong** (STRENGTH) and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it.

**COMMENT** - Clearly obedience was key if Israel was to possess their promised possessions. It is still the key for believers to possess their promised possessions in Christ.

Joshua 1:6+ "**Be strong** (Lxx - [andrizo](#) used only in 1Co 16:13 below = "act like men") and **courageous**, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

#### NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS -

Ephesians 6:10+ Finally, **be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

2 Timothy 2:1+ You therefore, my son, **be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14+ (Note 5 [present imperatives!](#)) **Be on the alert, stand firm** in the faith, **act like men, be strong**. Let all that you do **be done** in love.

Be strong! It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,  
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;  
Faint not—fight on!  
Tomorrow comes the song.  
—Babcock

## THE "SECRET" OF JOSHUA'S POWER

### FILLED WITH FAITH - EVIDENCED BY HIS OBEDIENCE

**COMMENT** - Faith and obedience are like a horse (faith) and cart (obedience). Faith that is genuine will issue forth in love motivated obedience from the heart (a circumcised heart - see explanation of meaning of circumcision of the heart in the Old and New Testaments).

Joshua 1:7+ "Only **be strong** and very **courageous**; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, **so that** (purpose clause) you may have success wherever you go.

**COMMENT** - Notice Yahweh's charge to His young general Joshua, to obey the Word (**be careful to do**). Joshua's success in accomplishing his mission to defeat the Canaanites and distribute the land to the tribes was contingent on his obedience to His Commander Yahweh (cf Joshua 5:13-16+)

**THOUGHT** - We all have "*Canaanites*" (the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)) of one type or another in our lives. God promises us success in conquering those strong enemies, but our part to assure the victory He enables is to obey His Word. If we are experiencing defeats in our spiritual life, guess who failed? It is not God, but us. Like the words of the old hymn say "[Trust and obey](#) for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey!"

Numbers 32:11-12+ None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they **did not follow Me fully**, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for **they have followed the LORD fully.**'

Numbers 14:7-9+ and they (**CALEB AND JOSHUA**) spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 **"If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us**—a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey.

Their protection has been removed from them, and **the LORD is with us; do not fear them**"

Numbers 14:10+ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel. (When facing a crisis, trust God and stand firm.)

**Followed Fully** - He who would be Holy is he who is Wholly (His)!

**Faith** - believed God's promise of the land in spite of obstacles (Nu 13)

At the time of murmuring, fear and dissention, Joshua and Caleb, boldly took their stand upon the Word of God. They testified that the land was all that God had said it was. It was quite evident that he was on the Lord's side.

Numbers 14:24+ "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

Joshua 14:7-9+ "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. 8"Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully. 9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.'

### FILLED WITH FAITH - EVIDENCED BY HIS PRAYER

Joshua 10:12-13+ Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.

**COMMENT** - Joshua's bold (Spirit led-cf [Praying in the Spirit](#)) prayer, asking God to stop the sun and moon in their tracks so that he could win the battle, reminds us of the startling words Jesus spoke to his disciples about the power of faith:

Mark 11:23+ "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him."

Because Joshua believed every word God spoke (cf Josh 21:45+, Josh 23:14+) and because he acted on that faith, he became Israel's deliverer, leading God's people into all the good land the Lord had promised.

### FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND FILLED THE WORD

Numbers 27:18-23+ (**JOSHUA'S COMMISSIONING BY MOSES**) So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, **a man in whom is the Spirit**, (NOTE THIS IS THE LORD'S ASSESSMENT AND IT IS GOD WHO ACTUALLY APPOINTS JOSHUA TO BE MOSES' SUCCESSOR!) and [lay your hand on him](#); 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 20 "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 22 Moses did just as the LORD commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

**COMMENT** - Joshua was humble and filled. It is hard for the Spirit to "fill" a man filled with himself. Pride "stiff-arms" grace ([see above](#)), specifically the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29b+ - grieves - Eph 4:30+, Isa 63:10, quenches - 1Th 5:19+). [Wayne Grudem](#) writes "In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit frequently empowered people for special service. He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom (Nu 27:18; Dt. 34:9)" And as it was with Joshua, so too it is for every follower of Christ, that they will be empowered to accomplish what God intends, for...

God's work done in God's way  
will never lack God's supply.

This commissioning passage is the OT parallel of Paul passing the "spiritual baton" to his young disciple (and soldier) in 2 Timothy 2:2+.

**THOUGHT** - To whom are you passing the baton? If you are not intentionally making disciples, you are being disobedient to one of Jesus' parting commands in Matthew 28:19+! Ponder the coming day when you will stand at His Bema Seat (2 Cor 5:10+) and let that thought motivate loving obedience energized by His Spirit! You will not regret your decision in time (making disciples is a truly joy filled experience now) or eternity!

Deuteronomy 34:9+ Now Joshua the son of Nun was **filled with the spirit of wisdom**, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**COMMENT** - The phrase "**filled with the spirit of wisdom**" is a description of a man filled with the Spirit as supported by the following passage which prophesies of the Spirit resting on the Messiah and giving Him the spirit of wisdom.

**Jensen** adds this comment - "Joshua feared God, believed God, obeyed God, and glorified God. He was a great ruler, commanding the respect of all his subjects (Deut 34:9), maintaining order and discipline, putting the worship of God central in the nation's government, encouraging his people to press on to claim God's best. He was also a great military leader, using his God-given traits of wisdom, confidence, courage, and a spirit of challenge to manipulate his army in strategies that consistently led to triumph. And Joshua was a humble man who thought highly of others and most gloriously of God." ([Survey of the Old Testament](#))

**Raymond Brown** - The phrase **spirit of wisdom** may well be a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit (NIV margin). In Old Testament times the Spirit of God equipped certain people for precise tasks. He did not indwell every believer (as now) but came upon particular individuals for a limited period to give them the necessary qualities for their specialist ministries. **No man could possibly take over Moses' responsibilities unless he possessed resources which far transcended his inevitably limited natural gifts. What Joshua was able to accomplish in Canaan was due entirely to the fact that he was a Spirit-filled man.** Indeed, the Spirit's indwelling seems to have been fully evident in Joshua's personality at the time he was formally appointed as Moses' successor. The old man is instructed to 'Take Joshua ... a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him'. It is as though the Lord is emphasizing that he was not Spirit-filled because of the prayer of Moses (DT 34:9) but because of the gift of God. ([The Message of Deuteronomy: Not By Bread Alone](#))

Isaiah 11:2+ **The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him(MESSIAH), The spirit of wisdom** and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

**COMMENT:** Note the same phrase describes our NT "*Joshua*" as have **the Spirit of the LORD**, which includes the spirit of wisdom.

## **SPIRIT FILLED AND EMPOWERED MEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**COMMENT** - The Holy Spirit was very active in the Old Testament (beginning in Genesis 1:2). No soul was saved (no heart "circumcised") in the OT apart from the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit! No person was able to obey Yahweh from the heart of loving obedience without the enabling, sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. These truths are somewhat obscured in the Old Testament but the following passages support the fact that He was actively involved in every Old Testament believer's life!

Exodus 28:3+ "You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me.

Exodus 35:31+ "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;

Exodus 31:3+ "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship,

Genesis 41:38 Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this (JOSEPH), in whom is a divine spirit?" (**ESV** = with the Spirit of God")

1 Peter 1:10-11+ As to this salvation, the (**OLD TESTAMENT**) prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time **the Spirit of Christ within them** was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

Nehemiah 9:30 "However, You bore with them for many years, And admonished them by **Your Spirit through**

**Your prophets,** Yet they would not give ear. Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.

Micah 3:8+ On the other hand I (MICAHA AN OT PROPHET) am **filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD—** And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.

Luke 1:15+ (JOHN THE BAPTIST - AN "OT" SAINT) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit** while yet in his mother's womb.

## THE NECESSITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Joshua 1:7-8+ "Only **be strong** and very **courageous**; be careful to do according to **all the law which Moses My servant commanded you**; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate (Heb - [hagah](#); Lxx - [meleto](#)) on it day and night, so that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) you may be careful to do according to **all that is written in it**; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

**COMMENT** - Note that Jehovah charged Joshua to be careful to obey **ALL THE LAW** (and ALL THAT IS WRITTEN IN IT). Think about that for a moment. God would not charge Joshua with an impossible task without enabling him! There is no way a natural man could obey **ALL THE LAW**. But a man like Joshua who was filled with the Holy Spirit, would be supernaturally enabled to keep **ALL THE LAW**. Of course this passage is not speaking of complete *perfection* but of general *direction*. And this is why Joshua could be characterized as a man who "followed the LORD fully." (Nu 32:12+)

Here is another OT example illustrating the power of the Word and obedience to that Word...

Ezra 7:9+ For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him**. 10 For (**TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHAT DOES IT EXPLAIN?**) Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it (OBEDIENCE), and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel (MAKE DISCIPLES).

**COMMENT** - Note the pattern in both passages - spiritual success is a product of taking in the Word of God and living it out in obedience. The [good hand of the Lord](#) is on the man who studies and meditates on the Word and (enabled by the Spirit) is careful to do according to all that is written in it.

## JOSHUA'S SECRET OF SUCCESS

**HE WAS A MAN GREATLY USED BY GOD BECAUSE  
HE WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND FILLED WITH THE HOLY WORD.**

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**Compare the New Testament Pattern of a man filled with the Spirit and filled with the Word.** The "fruit" of both fillings is virtually identical. See the chart comparing [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#). The Holy Spirit uses the Holy Word we take in to renew our mind and transform our hearts more and more into the image of our Greater Joshua Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18+ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (**TAKING IN THE WORD**), are being transformed (PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) into the same image from glory to glory, just as **from the Lord, the Spirit**.

Ephesians 5:18+ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) with the Spirit,

**ONE "FRUIT" OF FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT** - Ephesians 5:25+ **Husbands, love** ([present imperative](#) = continually, loving like God loves unconditionally - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) - YOU CANNOT DO THIS IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH!) **your wives**, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

Colossians 3:16+ **Let** the word of Christ richly **dwell within** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

**ONE "FRUIT" OF FILLING WITH THE WORD** - Colossians 3:19+ **Husbands, love** ([present imperative](#) = continually, loving like God loves unconditionally - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) -

YOU CANNOT DO THIS IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH!) **your wives** and do not be embittered against them.

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**F B Meyer** - We must meditate on the words of God, because it is through the Word of God that the Spirit of God comes in fullness to be the mighty occupant of our inner man. This, after all, is the secret of strength—to be possessed of the strong Son of God, strengthened by his indwelling might, and filled by his Spirit.

**Herbert Lockyer - Moses** and the seventy elders were endowed with the power of leadership (Num. 11:17-29). The Spirit divided the burden of the people among Moses and the chosen elders. **Joshua** was prepared by the Spirit as the successor of Moses (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9). Filled with the Spirit of wisdom, Joshua became famous as the leader and guide of Israel. It is ever good when one Spirit-endowed leader follows another. (All About the Holy Spirit) (See also [Herbert Lockyer on the Spirit in the OT](#))

**The Holy Spirit IN OT believers** - Compare Ex. 28:3 ("the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom") and Ex 31:3 (see also Ex 35:30-31) = "I have filled [Lxx = empiplemi] him [Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah] with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship."

**Irving Jensen** - No greater commendation of Joshua's character was made than that made by God: **a man in whom is the Spirit,**" that is, Joshua was filled with the Spirit (Num. 27:18; cf. Deut. 34:9). This determined everything else that he was. ([Joshua-Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**John MacArthur** comments on Nu 27:18 - Joshua already had the inner endowment for leadership. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. This inner endowment was to be recognized by an external ceremony. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**HCSB** says "Possession of the Holy Spirit in the OT was for the purpose of carrying out the specific tasks to which a person had been appointed by the Lord."

**NET Note** on Nu 27:18 - The word "spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit, in which case it would be rendered "in whom is the Spirit." This would likely be a permanent endowment for Joshua (I AGREE WITH THIS BUT STILL NOT IN THE SAME SENSE AS IN NT BELIEVERS). But it is also possible to take it to refer to a proper spirit to do all the things required of such a leader (which ultimately is a gift from the Spirit of God). The Hebrew text simply says "in whom is a spirit." ([Numbers 27](#))

**J Vernon McGee** - There is to be a successor appointed to take the place of Moses. He must be a Spirit-filled man . Now I want to make it clear that the laying on of hands did not make him Spirit-filled, nor did it give him any power. The only thing that can be communicated by the laying on of hands is disease germs. What this does indicate is succession or partnership in an enterprise.....I must tell you that the Books of Joshua and Judges have always been a great encouragement to me. I love those two books because they reveal what God can do with ordinary men. If a person will be yielded to Him, God can take him and use him. That means He can use me, because He can use the ordinary. It means He can use you. ([Joshua 1](#))

**Paul Enns** - People were born again in the Old Testament just as they are in the New Testament. No one can get to heaven other than through belief in God, and the only way they can believe and receive eternal life is for the Holy Spirit to regenerate them. God is merciful in every age. ...When Moses faced imminent death, Joshua faced the task of leading the rebellious Israelites. But God called and equipped Joshua. He told Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him" (Numbers 27:18). God placed His Spirit in Joshua to em-power him to lead the Israelites into battle for the land they had been promised, and they were victorious. What was the key? The Holy Spirit's indwelling and empowering Joshua. ([Approaching God: Daily Reflections for Growing Christians](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Joshua's qualification was the Spirit's power manifested in his life (v. 18; cf. requirement for selection of the men to wait on tables in Acts 6:1-5+).

**Jonathan Leeman** on Nu 27:18 - What's the one character trait that God told Moses to look for in Joshua? The Spirit was in him. What particular aspect of shepherding is noted here? Leadership—leading them out and bringing them in. Why would Joshua need the Spirit to do that kind of work? Because leading God's people in and out was really an exercise in helping them to follow God as the ultimate Shepherd of Israel. As Laniak sums it up, "Human leader[ship] of God's people is nothing other than God leading his own people through an anointed servant." That doesn't make the human leader infallible or unable to be corrected. But it does make him the human instrument by which God shepherds his flock. ([9 Marks Journal Volume 4, No. 3, Page 5 - Elder Training](#))

**Raymond Brown** - The Holy Spirit (Nu 27:18, NIV margin) would provide the new leader with the necessary equipment for challenging tasks. **Those who respond to God's call are always guaranteed adequate resources.** As a public confirmation of this Spirit-endued assignment, Moses was to lay his hand on his successor, commissioning him for his new ministry. The imposition of hands was a visible token of the transference of blessing from one to another (Nu 8:10). The Lord provided the resources for the task, but Moses was also commanded, 'Give him some of your authority' (Nu 27:20). The retiring leader had to be willing to hand

over some of those responsibilities that he had carried for the past forty years. Old leaders have sometimes been less than enthusiastic about handing over the Lord's work to younger successors. Moses was a man of fine spiritual stature to hand over the reins so lovingly. ([The Message of Numbers: Journey to the Promised Land](#))

**J Wesley Adams** on "In whom is the Spirit - "Spirit" here refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. NIV text note). **The greatest qualification among Joshua's many leadership skills was that he was led by the Spirit of God.** He was anointed and had proven himself to be open to the leading of the Spirit of the Lord. This is among the most important qualifications for his being commissioned (v. 19) and being invested with the authority to lead the people (v. 20)." (Fire Bible)

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**Sam Storms** - Aside from the saving activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the empowering ministry by which believers are sanctified and enabled to live holy lives, the Holy Spirit was poured out on select individuals to equip them to perform important tasks in the covenant community of Israel:

- 1) Craftsmen who worked on the tabernacle/temple (Ex. 31:1–6);
- 2) Civil administrators such as Moses and the seventy elders (Nu 11:16–17, 25–26);
- 3) Military commanders such as Joshua (Nu 27:18);
- 4) Judges appointed and empowered to rule over Israel (Jdg. 3:10; 6:34);
- 5) Samson (Jdg. 14:5–6, 19; 15:14; 16:20);
- 6) Prophets (1 Chr 12:18; Mic. 3:8);
- 7) Kings over Israel such as Saul (1 Sa 10:1, 6, 10; 16:14) and David (1 Sa 16:12–13).

Thus, there was a ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, unrelated to personal salvation or character, designed solely to empower, enable, and equip someone for a task to which God had appointed him or her. Such, I believe, is what David has in mind in Psalm 51:11. His prayer is that God would not withdraw the enabling anointing of the Spirit that empowers and equips him to lead Israel as king. Indeed, he may well have had in mind that disturbing scene where "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul" (1 Sa 16:14) and prays that such would never befall him. ([10 Things You Should Know about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament](#))

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#### Related Resources:

- Circumcision of the heart in the Old and New Testaments
- [Meditate](#)
- [Primer on Biblical Meditation](#)
- [The Hand of the Lord](#)
- [Thoughts on the Quiet Time](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Memory Verses by Topic](#)

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## JOSHUA'S REST FORESHADOWS A GREATER REST

As we have stated the Old Testament Joshua brought the people into their [Promised Land](#), but our New Testament "Joshua" brings us into a Promised Life.

Joshua 11:23+ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses (I.E., JOSHUA BELIEVED GOD'S PROMISE AND CLAIMED IT [TOOK IT] BY FAITH), and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had **REST** from war.

Joshua 23:1+ Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given **REST** to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years,

Hebrews 4:7-9 He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." 8 For if Joshua had given them **REST**, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath **REST** for the people of God.

The NT Joshua offers this "Sabbath rest," a perfect rest in Himself...

Matthew 11:28-30+ "**Come** to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you **REST**. 29 "**Take** My

yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND **REST** FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

**THOUGHT** Jesus said "I came that they may have **life**, and have it **abundantly** ([perissos](#) = over and above, more than enough, beyond measure!)." (John 10:10) Are you possessing your superabundant possession? Are you experiencing the abundant life in Christ Jesus, our Joshua? Don't miss your [once in a lifetime opportunity!](#)

## JOSHUA PASSED THE BATON



The race of faith (Heb 12:1-2+, 1Cor 9:24-27+) is like a relay race in which each runner is charged with the job of handing off "the baton" to the younger runners (2Ti 2:2+). But what happens (or has the potential of happening) if we fail to pass on the baton? Sadly the last passages in Joshua give us a "*preview of coming attractions*" in the Book of Judges which immediately followed the Book of Joshua.

Joshua 24:31+ Israel served (Lxx - [latreuo](#) - Mt 4:10+) the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Judges 2:7+ is almost verbatim repetition of Joshua 24:31 - And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. (Jdg 2:7)

So what happened to the elders who were peers of Joshua and clearly were to some degree "discipled" by him? What happened to their "disciples?"...

Judges 2:8-11+ Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD (HIS PRESENCE), nor yet the work which He had done for Israel (HIS POWER). 11 **Then** (MARKS PROGRESSION IN A NARRATIVE - BUT HIS TIME A "DIGRESSION" = NOT KNOWING GOD LEFT A SPIRITUAL "VACUUM") the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served (Lxx - [latreuo](#) - Mt 4:10+) the Baals (NOTE IF YOU DON'T SERVE GOD, THEN "LOOK OUT" - BOB DYLAN WAS RIGHT - "[YOU GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY](#)" - JESUS OF COURSE HAD THE ULTIMATE WORD - Mt 6:24+), 12 and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

Moses had repeatedly exhorted Israel regarding the pattern of Old Testament discipleship, so they were without excuse. And yet the generation after Joshua seems to have dropped the "baton."

Deuteronomy 4:10+ "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and **that they may teach their children**.' (PASS ON THE BATON!)

Deuteronomy 6:4-9+ ([THIS IS THE FAMOUS SHEMA](#)) "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "**You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.** (PASS ON THE BATON!) 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

## JOSHUA FINISHED

## THE RACE

Joshua tasted heaven on earth, for in heaven it is said **His bond-servants ([doulos](#)) shall serve Him** (Rev 22:3+). Joshua's faithfulness on earth gained him the highest title, the **servant of Jehovah**, the same title given to his mentor Moses. Moses had trained him well!

Joshua 24:29+ It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the **servant ([ebed](#); Septuagint - [doulos](#)) of the LORD**, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

**COMMENT** - Note the servant ([sharath](#)) of Moses has "graduated" to be the servant of Yahweh. In Joshua 1:1 Joshua began as a servant's servant willingly submitting to Moses' leadership. There is never a word recorded that Joshua was jealous, envious, critical, slanderous, etc of his "disciple maker" Moses.

**THOUGHT** - When your race is finished, will you be able to say like Paul (words that would have been apropos for Joshua)...

"I have fought the **good fight ([agon](#))**, I have finished **the course** (race - [dromos](#)), I have kept **the faith ([pistis](#))**; in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Ti 4:7-8+).

## APPENDIX

**Septuagint - [doulos](#)** as Paul repeatedly referred to himself (cf Ro 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God)

**Doulos** speaks of submission to one's master The [doulos](#) had no life of his own, no will of his own, no purpose of his own and no plan of his own. All was subject to his master. The bond-servant's every thought, breath, and effort was subject to the will of his master. In sum, the picture of a bondservant is one who is absolutely surrendered and totally devoted to his master.

**Doulos** conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties w/ his master, belonging to him, obligated (& desirous) to do his will, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, HIS WILL BEING ALTOGETHER CONSUMED IN THE WILL OF THE OTHER.

A businessman I know once asked his Bible study group, "How can you tell if you have a servant attitude?" "By the way you react when you are treated like one," was the reply. It's not easy to find an attitude like that. But for a disciple, servanthood is one of the keys to growing in Christlikeness.

**Servant (05650) 'ebed** from 'abad = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant. Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). Of prime significance is the use of "my servant" for the Messiah in Isa 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12. The "servant" was not a free man. He was subject to the will and command of his master. But one might willingly and lovingly submit to his master (Ex 21:5), remaining in his service when he was not obliged to do so. Hence it is a very fitting description of the relationship of man to God.

**Servant (08334) (sharath)** basically means to minister to or wait on another, human or divine. Those who so minister are usually human beings, but may include the heavenly host (Ps 103:21) or even the nonhuman (Ps 104:4). **(1) personal service** rendered to important person, usually ruler - Joseph to imprisoned officials (Gen 39:4; 40:4); Joshua to Moses (Ex 24:13; Josh 1:1); Elisha to Elijah and the youth to Elisha (1Ki 19:21; 2Ki 4:43; 6:15); the Levites to Aaron (Num 3:6; 13:2) and the congregation of Israel (16:9) and **(2) ministry of worship** of those in special relationship to God, eg priests (2/3's of uses are in this category). In royal contexts, **sharath** has reference to personal attendants (2 Sa 13:17-18; 1 Kgs 1:4; 10:5; 2Chr 22:8; Xerxes in Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:3; cf. Ps 101:6). Occasionally, the word is used of political or military officials (1 Chron 27:1; 28:1; 2 Chron 17:19; cf. Prov 29:12). The verb, therefore, has to do with serving a superior by one of lower rank. The service is continuous but limited in duration. It is the service of free people, not slaves. The first two uses describe Joseph as servant, first to Potiphar (Ge 39:4) and then over other prisoners (including the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt - Ge 40:4).

**Sharath** is a title of subservience, of submission to authority. Joshua was called the "sharath" of Moses and spent 40 years under Moses' leadership learning how to obey as a servant, as a man under discipline, before he commanded as a general. He was first a servant, and then God made him a leader.

**1. He Gives Life.** In the realm of nature it is the role of the Holy Spirit to give life to all animate creatures, whether on the ground or in the sky and sea, for “When you send forth your Spirit, they are created” (Ps. 104:30). Conversely, if God “should take back his spirit to himself, and gather to himself his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust” (Job 34:14–15). Here we see the role of the Spirit in the giving and sustaining of human and animal life. Parallel with this is the role of the Holy Spirit to give us new life in regeneration. Jesus told Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born anew”” (John 3:6–7; cf. Jn 3:5, 8; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6). He also said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing” (John 6:63 NASB; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6; Acts 10:44–47; Titus 3:5). Consistent with this life-giving function of the Holy Spirit is the fact that it was the Holy Spirit who conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary his mother (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35). And on the day when Christ returns, it is the same Holy Spirit who will complete this life-giving work by giving new resurrection life to our mortal bodies: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). **2. He Gives Power for Service.**

**ADDENDUM COMMENT FROM JOHN PIPER** - New Birth and Indwelling of the Spirit - the OT believers experienced the new birth and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When Nicodemus was bewildered about Jesus’ demand for new birth by the Spirit, Jesus responded (John 3:10), “Are you a teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand this?” In other words, I’m not teaching or requiring anything new. Any Israelite who has ever been saved had to be born again by God’s Spirit. Otherwise how would they ever overcome their natural hostility to God? How could they have ever submitted to God’s law and pleased him—as many did, like Abel and Noah and Abraham and Moses and Rahab and Ruth and Deborah and David? Paul says in Romans 8:7–9, “The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed, it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God really dwells in you.” There are two groups of humans: those in the flesh (born of the flesh) and those in the Spirit (born again of the Spirit). Those in the flesh are devoid of the Spirit and cannot submit to God’s law or please God. Those in the Spirit are indwelt by the Spirit and are enabled by him to fulfill the just requirement of the law. **This means that all the saints of the OT who trusted God and followed his ways in the obedience of faith were born again by the Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit. (ED: BUT CLEARLY NOT IN THE SAME WAY NT BELIEVERS ARE INDWELT!)** For example, Numbers 14:24 says of Caleb, “My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into this land.” And Numbers 27:18 says, “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him.’ ” The OT believers were saved the same way we are: they were born of the Spirit, they trusted in God’s promises, and they followed his commandments in the obedience of faith. **(ED: IN OTHER WORDS, THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NECESSARY FOR REGENERATION AND DAILY SANCTIFICATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, JUST AS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT).** (Excerpt from John Piper - [“How Believers Experienced the Spirit Before Pentecost”](#) - in this article he discusses “Ten Ways OT Saints Experienced the Holy Spirit”)

## 2. He Gives Power for Service

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit frequently empowered people for special service. **He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom** (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9) and empowered the judges to deliver Israel from their oppressors (note how “the Spirit of the LORD was upon” Othniel in Judg. 3:10, Gideon in 6:34, Jephthah in 11:29, and Samson in 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). The Holy Spirit came mightily upon Saul to arouse him to battle against the enemies of Israel (1 Sam. 11:6), and when David was anointed as king, “the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16:13), equipping David to fulfill the task of kingship to which God had called him. In a slightly different kind of empowering, the Holy Spirit endowed Bezalel with artistic skills for the construction of the tabernacle and its equipment (Ex. 31:3; 35:31) and with the ability to teach these skills to others (Ex. 35:34).

The Holy Spirit also protected God’s people and enabled them to overcome their enemies. For example, God put his Spirit in their midst during the exodus (Isa. 63:11–12) and later, after their return from exile, put his Spirit in their midst to protect them and keep them from fear (Hag. 2:5). When Saul was attempting to capture David by force, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul’s messengers (1 Sam. 19:20) and eventually upon Saul himself (v. 23), causing them involuntarily to fall to the ground and to prophesy for hours, thus defeating Saul’s purpose and humiliating him in response to his malicious show of force against David and Samuel. In a similar way, while Ezekiel was prophesying judgment by the power of the Holy Spirit against some of the leaders of Israel (Ezek. 11:5), one of the leaders named Pelatiah actually died (Ezek. 11:13). In this way the Holy Spirit brought immediate judgment on him.

Finally, the Old Testament predicted a time when the Holy Spirit would anoint a Servant-Messiah in great fullness and power: “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 the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD” (Isa. 11:2–3). Isaiah prophesied that God would say of this coming Servant, “I have put my Spirit upon him” (Isa. 42:1), and he himself would say, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me” (Isa. 61:1; cf. Luke 4:18).

Before leaving this discussion of the empowering of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, we should note that it sometimes is said that there was no work of the Holy Spirit within people in the Old Testament. This idea has mainly been inferred from Jesus' words to the disciples in John 14:17, "He dwells with you and will be in you." But we should not conclude from this verse that there was no work of the Holy Spirit within people before Pentecost. Although the Old Testament does not frequently speak of people who had the Holy Spirit in them or who were filled with the Holy Spirit, there are a few examples: Joshua is said to have the Holy Spirit within him, for he is called "a man in whom is the Spirit" (Num. 27:18; cf. Deut. 34:9). Others in the Old Testament who have the Holy Spirit within them are Bezalel (Exod. 31:3), Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), Daniel (Dan. 4:8–9, 18; 5:11), and Micah (Mic. 3:8). This means that when Jesus says to his disciples that the Holy Spirit "dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17), he cannot mean that there was an absolute "within/without" difference between the old and new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Nor can John 7:39 ("as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified") mean that there was no activity of the Holy Spirit in people's lives before Pentecost. Both of these passages must be different ways of saying that the more powerful, fuller work of the Holy Spirit that is characteristic of life after Pentecost had not yet begun in the lives of the disciples. The Holy Spirit had not come within them in the way in which God had promised to put the Holy Spirit within his people when the new covenant would come (see Ezek. 36:26, 27; 37:14), nor had the Holy Spirit been poured out in the great abundance and fullness that would characterize the new covenant age (Joel 2:28–29). In this powerful new covenant sense, the Holy Spirit was not yet at work within the disciples.

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## **Herbert Lockyer - All the Doctrines of the Bible -**

As we leave the Spirit's activities in the Old Testament, it may be found profitable to indicate His names of equipment as He prepared certain individuals for their specific tasks. He acted in free sovereignty, coming upon men and even a dumb beast as He willed.

### **1. The Spirit "Comes" Upon Men**

The word for "come" literally means "clothes Himself with men" and is used in three instances—

Gideon—"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon" (Judges 6:34). The name means, "He that bruises, cuts off iniquity." With Gideon, the Spirit became the mantle of exhortation.

Amasai—"The spirit came upon Amasai" (I Chronicles 12:18). His name signifies, "Burden of the Lord," and with Amasai the Spirit became the mantle of courage. Zechariah—"The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah" (II Chronicles 24:20). A suggestive name this, it means, "Remembrance" or "man of the Lord." The Spirit came upon Zechariah as the mantle of rebuke.

### **2. The Spirit "Comes Mightily Upon" Men**

The phrase, "comes mightily upon," literally implies that He attacked men. As a greater force He compelled them to accomplish His task. It was thus He came upon—

- Samson—"The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Him" (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14).
- Saul—"The Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul" (cf. I Samuel 10:6, 10).
- David—"The Spirit of the Lord came upon David" (I Samuel 16:13).

### **3. The Spirit Is "Upon" Men**

"Was upon" is a milder phrase and expresses a divine enduement for the time being. For illustrations of this action turn to Numbers 11:17; 24:2; Judges 3:10; 11: 29; I Samuel 19:20, 23; II Chronicles 15:1; 20:14; Isaiah 59:21; 61:1.

### **4. The Spirit Is "in" Men**

Such an incoming was not an indwelling. Entering a person He inspired them to act under His internal promptings.

Joseph—"a man in whom the Spirit of God is" (Genesis 41:38).

Joshua—"a man in whom is the Spirit" (Numbers 27:18).

Daniel—"a man in whom is the Spirit" (Daniel 4:8, 9).

Prophets—"The Spirit of Christ... in them" (1 Peter 1:10, 11; Nehemiah 9:30).

Israel restored—"I will put a new spirit within you" (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26).

### **5. The Spirit "Rests" Upon Men**

"Rests" is a gentle word suggesting the dove-like character of the Holy Spirit. It signifies "to be at rest" as in Isaiah 57:2: "They shall rest in their beds."

Seventy elders—"The spirit rested upon them" (Numbers 11:25, 26).

Elisha—"The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (II Kings 2:15).

The Messiah—"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" (Isaiah 11:2).

## **6. The Spirit "Enters" Into Men**

As the Creator-Spirit (Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30), He has the right of entry into His own creation. He has the prerogative of doing what He likes with His own. "The Spirit entered into me" (Ezekiel 2:2; 3:24).

## **7. He "Moves" Men**

The word "moves" can be taken to mean "cause to step," and, let it be said, the Spirit can cause us to "stop" as well, as "step." We read that "the Spirit of the Lord began to move Samson at times" (Judges 13:25).