–Save This Page as a PDF–

The Successor to Moshe
27: 12-23

The successor to Moshe DIG: Why was Moses not permitted to enter the Promised Land? Why were Moshe's sons not considered as his successors? What characteristics was the LORD looking for? What experiences and qualities in Joshua made him a great choice to succeed Moshe? Why do you think Joshua was chosen instead of Caleb? Why were the two additional ceremonies needed?

REFLECT: Faith and obedience were crucial for Isra'el's success. What is a current circumstance in your life that calls for both of these? Who was your "Moses?" What problems arose when your "Joshua" succeeded you? How could those problems have been avoided by using this passage? Are you indispensable to the ministry you are a part of? Who are you training to take your place? If not, why not?

A new generation of leadership.

Moshe's death (27:12-14): The contrast of the story regarding **the daughters of Zelophehad** with **their** request for an inheritance **in the Land** (**to see link click Eu – The Five Daughters of Zelophehad**), and **ADONAI's** denial of **Moshe's** entrance **in the Land** is touching indeed! Exceptions were made for **the daughters of Zelophehad**, but there was no exception made for **Moses**, the (usually) faithful servant of **the LORD**. **His** sin at **the waters of Meribah** was always before **him** (see **Dd – The Sin of Moses and Aaron**). **Aaron** had already died (see **Df – The Death of Aaron**), and **Moshe** was soon to follow. Both had to die before **the people** could enter **the Promised Land**. **Moses** would be allowed a panoramic view of **the Promised Land** (see **Deuteronomy Gj – The Death of Moses**), but would not be allowed to step foot on **the Land itself**.[623]

ADONAI said to Moshe, "Climb Mount Nebo in the 'Avarim Range, and look out at the land which I have given the people of Isra'el. After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your

brother was gathered; because in the Desert of Tzin, when the community was disputing with me, you rebelled against My order to uphold my holiness by means of the water, with them looking on." This was Meribah in Kadesh Spring, in the Desert Tzin. But **YHVH** is merciful. Centuries later, **Moses** and **Elijah** would stand in glory on **a mountain** when **they** talked with **Yeshua** about **His** impending death on the cross (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Gb – Jesus went up a High Mountain and was Transfigured**), so **Moshe** did finally make it to **the Promised Land**![624]

Moshe's request (27:15-17): Moshe then requested, in light of **his** own impending death, that **God** appointed a successor to **him**, just like **He** clearly indicated a successor for **his brother Aaron (20:22-29)**. Rather than lapsing into self-pity as a lesser man might have done, **Moshe** expressed **his** concern that **Isra'el** have a competent leader to take **his** place.[625] Without such a designated leader, **the people** would be **like sheep without a shepherd. He said to ADONAI, "Let ADONAI, God of the spirits of all mankind** (**His** ultimate sovereignty over all)**, appoint a man to be over the community, to go out and come in ahead of them, to lead them out and bring them in."** The successor to **Moses** was not chosen because of a blood relationship to **Moshe**; **he** was not a king. Nor was **he** chosen by popular election, for **Moses** had not been elected by **the people**. The successor was to be appointed by **God**. **ADONAI** was (and is) **King**; **Moses** was only an agent. The successor was not to be a figurehead or a symbol, but a leader who would stand before his **people** and lead **them** in the direction **they** should go. He is pictured as **a shepherd**, one needed by the flock. So, **Moses'** concern was that **his** flock not be left without **a shepherd**.[626] But **God** had a certain person in mind even before **Moses** made the request. Interestingly enough, **he** would also be called a "Yeshua" for **the people**; it was *Yehoshua*, or **Joshua**! The list of **Joshua's** qualifications for this enormous task is seemingly endless.

The first thing **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** does is list **God's** qualifications for who would replace **Moses**. One of the most outstanding qualifications that was essential for a successor for **Moshe** was that **he** be a military man. This is indicated by the phrase, **to go out and come in.** This idiom was used to speak of army commanders. **Isra'el's officers were not like others who send out their troops first and they come last. Rather, they were to lead their troops into the battle. In fact, even to this day, the officers of the IDF are noted for their battle cry *aharai*, or *follow me*.**[627] Almost from the very beginning of our

familiarity with **Joshua**, **he** was the leader of **Isra'el's** army. Now, in this passage, **Joshua** has had intensive military experience for about forty years.

The next most important qualification for **the one** who was to walk in **Moshe's** sandals was that **he** had to be **a shepherd**. It is hard to picture a man who would have the strength and boldness of a general yet possess the kindness and gentleness of **a shepherd**. Yet, the leader of **ADONAI's** holy nation was to be just such a person. One of the best-known examples of these characteristics was King David, **the shepherd** king who made **Isra'el** into a formidable military power. However, by far the best example of such a person was **Yeshua Messiah**. **He Himself** said that **He** is **the Good Shepherd** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Gu – The Good Shepherd and His Sheep**). As such, **He** provides food, protection, community, and the comfort of **His** presence to guide **His sheep**. On the other hand, we know from **Revelation** that this kind and tender **Shepherd** is also **ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot, the LORD God** of heaven's angelic **armies** (see **Joshua 5:13-15; Second Kings 19:31; Psalm 24:10; Second Corinthians 6:18**), coming to wage victorious war over the enemies of **Ha'Shem** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ex – The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon**).

Ever since we first met **Joshua**, **he** was always at **Moshe's** side, especially in Sinai. One cannot be that close to such a great Torah teacher as **Moses** and not be a diligent student of **God's Word** himself. I am sure that **Joshua** studied every move **Moshe** made as **a shepherd** of the flock of **ADONAI** and learned **his** calling well. **YHVH** knew this man, **he** was a tender warrior like **God Himself**. Based on these two factors alone, no one among all of **Isra'el** had more qualifications for following **Moses** in the leadership of the nation. But **the Holy One** also sought to give **him** even more essential qualifications for the job. Therefore, **the LORD** instructed that **two additional ceremonies** be performed.[628]



Joshua anointed (27:18-21): First, ADONAI told **Moses** to **lay his hands on him**, symbolizing the fact that **Moshe's** authority was to rest upon **Joshua**. This was done in front of **all Isra'el** so that there would never be any question that **Joshua** was the man whom **Moses** designated to succeed **him**. **God spoke to Moshe,** saying: **Take Joshua, who is filled with the Spirit (Deuteronomy 34:9), and lay your hand on him. Put him in front of Eleazar the high priest and the whole community, and anoint him in their sight. Place your authority on him, so that he will be obeyed by the entire community of Isra'el.**

Second, He is to present himself to Eleazar the high priest, who is to find out by means of the Urim and Thummim (see the commentary on **Exodus Gb – The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions**) **what ADONAI's will is for Joshua's decisions.** The political and military leader needed to work closely with the religious leader. **Then, at Joshua's word they will go out, and at his word they will come in, both he and all the people of Isra'el with him, the whole community.** This was most likely done to confirm to **all Isra'el** that not only was **Joshua Moshe's** choice, but **he** was also **God's** choice.[629]

Just as **David** had been **anointed** three times to lead **the nation (First Samuel 16:1-3, Second Samuel 2:1-7** and **5:1-5)**, and **his son Solomon** was **anointed** three times to lead **the Israelites** after **his father's** death **(First Kings 1:28-53; First Chronicles 17:1-15** and **29:21-25), Joshua** was also **anointed** three times. We have just seen above how **Joshua** was **anointed** by **Moses** and then presented to **Eleazar the high priest** to find out by means of **the Urim and Thummim** what **God's** will was for **his** decisions. Finally, **YHVH** would **anoint Joshua** privately in the Tent **of Meeting** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Fu – The Tent of Meeting**)**.** It would still be a little while before the final anointing of **Joshua** would take place there. What I mean is that **Moses** still had much more teaching of the Torah to give to **the people**. Not only that, **he** also needed to give **his blessing** to **the tribes** on **his** deathbed (see **Deuteronomy Fy – This is the Blessing**).[630]

Moshe's obedience (27:22-23): Moshe did as ADONAI had commanded him. He took Joshua, put him before Eleazar and the whole community, laid his hands on him, and commissioned him, as ADONAI had said through Moshe. Moses followed **God's command** to the letter. But each time we read of **Moshe's** complete obedience to **the LORD** in **Numbers**, we wistfully glance back to **the waters of Meribah** and wish that **he** had done so there as well.[631]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being such a wonderful **Father**! Being a leader requires many important skills and qualifications. **Yeshua** models how to be the perfect leader. The skill of being a military leader is important, and it must be balanced by being also a loving and wise **Shepherd**. Some people excel in just being good at fighting or just being good at being a kind **Shepherd**, but **Yeshua** scores 100% on both. **He** is the perfect military leader and also the best loving and kind **Shepherd**.*

*It is such a comfort to know that when problems come, **Yeshua** is right there living within me. **Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23).** No matter what time of the day or night when the trouble comes, you God are always right there. **For God Himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you," (Hebrews 13:5c). You** are never too busy nor do you ever fall asleep and have to be awakened. **My help comes from ADONAI, Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip. Your Keeper will not slumber (Psalm 121:2-3).***

*Even when all the powers of the world come against **You**, **You** win a complete victory without even fighting. It is not a battle, it's a slaughter. **You** totally defeat the enemy by the **sword** of **Your mouth**. **From His mouth comes a sharp sword – so that with it He may strike down the nations – and He shall rule them with an iron rod, and He treads the winepress of the furious wrath of Elohei-Tzva'ot (Revelation 19:15).** In a battle that seems so big for me, **You** have already won it.*

*I love to praise and to worship **You**, my almighty **King of kings**. **On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Revelation 19:16)**. **You** are also our tender **Shepherd**. **ADONAI is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake (Psalm 23:1-3).** I look forward to praising **You** forever in heaven. In **Messiah Yeshua's Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*