

# MOSES, JOSHUA, AND CANAAN

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Joshua 1:1-2 says, “*Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.*” In these verses there is a clear link between the timing of Moses’ death and his subsequent commandment to Joshua.

## **Moses not allowed to enter Canaan**

God waited until Moses was dead before instructing Joshua to cross the Jordan river into the land of Canaan to possess it because God had forbidden Moses from entering into that promised land (Num 20:12-24; 27:14; Deut 1:34-38; 3:23-29; 4:21-22; 31:1-2). In Numbers 20:1-6, Israel complained bitterly about having no water. God then commanded Moses and Aaron to gather Israel together and to speak to the rock that was there to bring forth water for all the people and animals (Num 20:7-8). Moses did gather the people together at the rock (Num 20:9-10), but instead of speaking to the rock as God said, Moses “*lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice*” (Num 20:11). The water did come out of the rock (Num 20:11), but God was displeased with Moses for not obeying Him. In Numbers 20:12, God said to Moses and Aaron, “*Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*” These waters were called Meribah, which means “quarrel” in Hebrew, “because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them” (Num 20:13). Soon after this, Aaron died at mount Hor (Num 20:22-29), God refusing to allow him to enter the land of Canaan because of the incident at the water of Meribah (Num 20:24). After defeating Og the king of Bashan and Sihon king of the Amorites (Deut 3:1-22), Moses begged God to allow him to enter Canaan, but God refused and told him not to speak about the matter again (Deut 3:23-26).

## **Joshua succeeds Moses**

Although the Lord would not allow Moses to cross the Jordan and

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enter the land because of what happened at the water of Meribah, He did call Moses up into mount Abarim (Pisgah) to show him the land of Canaan before his death (Num 27:12-14; Deut 3:27-29). As Moses knew his death was imminent, he asked God to appoint someone over the nation to lead them in his stead and God chose Joshua to be the next leader of Israel. Numbers 27:15-23 says, “And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.” God indeed showed Moses all the land of Canaan from the top of Pisgah, and then Moses died at the age of 120 (Deut 34). God ordained that Joshua would enter the land of Canaan and would cause Israel to inherit it (Deut 1:37-38; 3:28-29). *“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses”* (Deut 34:9). Now that Moses was dead, God was ready for Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the promised land (Josh 1:1-2), and lead them there he did!