

~~whom is the spirit~~ (18). Joshua had long been associated with Moses (Ex.xvii.9-14,xxiv.13,xxxii.11; Nu.xi.28). He was one of the two faithful spies (xiii.16, xiv.6,30,38). What a joy it must have been to Moses, when God appointed as his successor that one who had been his right-hand man so long! Moses did not seek this dignity for his own sons, but left the decision entirely in God's hand. Few men with the ability to be great leaders have the humility to occupy a second place as Joshua did for so many years, and to serve a long apprenticeship before themselves taking command. Few men comparable in power to Moses are able to work with a man of like calibre under them, without ruining the subordinate's individuality. The relationship does much honour both to Moses and to Joshua, as does the great record of accomplishment by Joshua after Moses' death. While Moses was still living, Joshua was installed as his successor (20-23), thus ~~at~~ ensuring against any misunderstanding or uncertainty at Moses' death.

The command in verse 12 does not state how soon it is to be carried out. In this case several weeks intervened before the command was executed. Moses proceeded to do the work described in the remaining chapters of Numbers, and to give the great farewell addresses contained in the book of Deuteronomy. At their conclusion, God repeated the command, together with His judgment on Moses' sin (Dt. xxxii.48-52). It is not unusual in the Bible for a command to be given some time before it is intended to be carried out (cf. 1 Ki.xix.15-16 with 2 Ki.viii.13 and ix.5-6). Some critics claim that Dt. xxxii.48-52 and Nu. xxvii.12-14 ~~are~~ are variant accounts of the same thing. However, there is nothing unreasonable in the Lord repeating the command in amplified form when the time came to carry it out. The material from here to the end of Deuteronomy reads continuously and there is no legitimate reason for breaking it up and parcelling it among various documents.