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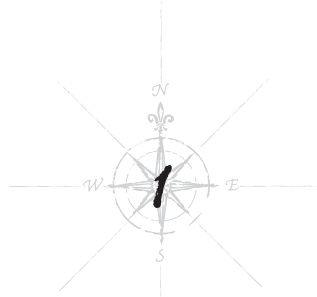


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# The Spirit and Israel

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# The Spirit and Israel's Leaders

WHERE DO WE find leaders? Are they born or are they made? What role do their background, their personality, and their training play? Where does God's enabling fit into the mix? At key times in Israel's history, God raised up individuals to lead his people. Their backgrounds, personalities, and preparation have few common elements. One had all the benefits of growing up in the king's palace; another was an illegitimate son and an outcast. One was brash and outspoken with his brothers; another was insecure and hid to avoid detection by his oppressors. One filled multiple ministry roles before becoming Israel's acknowledged leader; another was simply out looking for lost donkeys when God chose him to be king. One was a craftsman by trade; another was a shepherd.

Yet each man experienced divine enabling that surpassed his natural abilities. Together, these Spirit-empowered leaders preserved, organized, led into battle, delivered, judged, and ruled the people of Israel over a span of nearly a thousand years. As a result of their ministries, the descendants of Abraham grew from an extended family into a kingdom divinely situated at the crossroads of the nations and divinely ordained to be a blessing to those nations.

As we begin to listen to the wind of the Spirit in the Old Testament, we hear his work in the lives of these leaders:

- Joseph (Gen. 39:1–41:57)
- Bezalel (Ex. 35:1–39:43)
- Moses and the seventy elders (Num. 11:1–35)
- Joshua (Num. 27:15–23)
- Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson (Judg. 3:1–16:31)
- Saul (1 Sam. 9:1–16:23)
- David (1–2 Sam.; 1 Chron.)

### Joseph (Gen. 39:1–41:57)

The statement “These are the records of the generations of Jacob” in Genesis 37:2 marks the beginning of the final major section of Genesis (chaps. 37–50). Joseph plays a prominent role in those chapters as he preserves Jacob’s family in Egypt. The drama of Joseph’s career in Egypt has three acts: in Potiphar’s house (39:1–18), in prison (39:19–40:23), and in Pharaoh’s administration (41:1–57).

When his brothers sell him into slavery, Joseph becomes part of Potiphar’s household. Moses notes that “the LORD was with [Joseph] and . . . caused all that he did to prosper in his hand” (Gen. 39:3). As a result, Potiphar makes Joseph overseer of his entire household (39:6). Because Joseph was “handsome in form and appearance,” however (39:6), he catches the eye of Potiphar’s wife and must repulse her repeated advances—a response that enrages her and has serious repercussions for him.

When Potiphar’s wife unjustly accuses Joseph, Potiphar puts him in prison. Again, however, Moses notes that “the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer” (Gen. 39:21). As a result, the chief jailer makes Joseph overseer of all the other prisoners (39:22–23). While in prison, Joseph becomes acquainted with Pharaoh’s chief cupbearer and chief baker. When these two men have dreams in the same night, Joseph accurately interprets those dreams for them. The chief cupbearer resumes his position, but he forgets Joseph, who remains in jail (40:23).

Two years later, Pharaoh also has a dream, which none of his wise men can interpret. Belatedly, the chief cupbearer remembers Joseph's kindness to him and suggests that Pharaoh consult Joseph for the dream's interpretation. When Pharaoh summons him, Joseph interprets the dream and advises Pharaoh to look for someone "discerning and wise" to set over the land to deal with the coming seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine (Gen. 41:33). Pharaoh concludes, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are" (41:39). As a result, he sets Joseph over the entire kingdom (41:40–41).

Pharaoh identifies the key factor in all three episodes when he asks, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?" (Gen. 41:38). Much later, Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:8–9, 18) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:11, 14)—two other non-Jewish rulers—use a similar phrase to describe Daniel, who can also interpret dreams.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, the phrase describes Saul (1 Sam. 10:10; 11:6), Azariah (2 Chron. 15:1), and Zechariah (2 Chron. 24:20), where it is clearly translated as "*the Spirit of God*."<sup>2</sup> The use in subsequent narrative by the inspired authors therefore permits us to conclude that the phrase refers to the Holy Spirit when it describes Joseph.

Joseph's ability to interpret dreams brings him to Pharaoh's attention; his wisdom, discernment, and administrative ability cause him to stand out. Pharaoh recognizes those qualities as the product of the Spirit's working in and through Joseph, who exercises them in contexts of adversity and injustice. Joseph's faithful dependence on the Spirit in all sorts of circumstances leads others to recognize that something or someone out of the ordinary is at work in his life.

### Bezalel (Ex. 35:1–39:43)

The second half of Exodus records the establishment of God's covenant with Israel and the construction of the tabernacle. Those

1. In Daniel, the Aramaic phrase is *ruakh-elahin*. See the discussion in chapter 2.

2. The Hebrew phrase is *ruakh-Elohim*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew phrase occurs, it will be rendered *the Spirit of God* (in italics).

chapters consist of two sections separated by the golden-calf rebellion (chaps. 32–33). Before the rebellion Moses records the ratification of the covenant and the planning for the tabernacle (chaps. 20–31). After the rebellion he records the renewal of the covenant and the building of the tabernacle (chaps. 34–40). Close—sometimes verbatim—parallels connect the two sections, creating a strong contrast between rebellion and obedience.

Both sections highlight Bezalel and his central role in the construction of the tabernacle, using identical wording: “I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all workmanship” (Ex. 31:3; 35:31).<sup>3</sup> The idea of a person’s being “filled”<sup>4</sup> with the Spirit occurs for the first time in these verses. That filling is characterized by “wisdom,”<sup>5</sup> a quality that characterizes other individuals who experience the Spirit’s enabling.<sup>6</sup> Four hundred years later, Hiram possesses the same qualities as he works on Solomon’s temple: “He was filled with the wisdom, the understanding, and the knowledge, for doing the workmanship in bronze” (1 Kings 7:14; cf. 2 Chron. 7:13).<sup>7</sup>

Although Bezalel leads the project, others participate. In Exodus 28:3 the Lord gives Moses instructions regarding “all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom.” The phrase “skillful persons” translates the Hebrew phrase “wise of heart” throughout the chapters (Ex. 28:3; 31:6; 35:10, 25, 35; 36:2). Later books connect “the Spirit of wisdom”<sup>8</sup> with the Holy Spirit (cf. Deut. 34:9; Isa. 11:2). These considerations suggest that Bezalel was not the only individual filled with the Spirit during the work of designing and building the tabernacle. It appears,

3. Author’s own translation.

4. The Hebrew word is *male’*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew word occurs, it will be rendered *filled* (in italics). The phrase *the Spirit of God* that occurs in this verse is identical to that used of Joseph in Genesis 41:38.

5. The Hebrew word is *khokmah*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew word occurs, it will be rendered *wisdom* (in italics). The adjective “wise” that repeatedly occurs in Exodus 28–36 comes from the same root.

6. It has already been used of Joseph in Genesis 41:39.

7. Author’s own translation.

8. The Hebrew word is *ruakh-khokmah*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew phrase occurs, it will be rendered *the Spirit of wisdom* (in italics).

therefore, that Holy Spirit empowerment was at work early in Israel's history—perhaps on a wider scale than some suggest.

### **Moses and the Seventy Elders (Num. 11:1-35)**

Fifty days after the completion of the tabernacle, Israel sets out for Canaan (Num. 10:11). The people travel only three days before they begin to complain (10:33; 11:1-3). The incident at Taberah marks the fifth time they have complained since leaving Egypt (cf. Ex. 14:10-12; 16:1-3; 17:1-7; 32:1-10); another incident immediately follows (Num. 11:4-9).

Moses can take it no longer, and he asks God to kill him because he cannot bear the burden that the people place on him (Num. 11:10-15). God proposes a solution similar to that previously proposed by Jethro: distribute the burden to others (Ex. 18:13-27). This time, however, God's solution involves the Spirit's enabling. He "take[s] of the Spirit who is upon [Moses]" and puts that Spirit upon seventy elders (Num. 11:17, 25).

Moses initially refers only to "the Spirit," but he subsequently narrows that identification more precisely when he expresses the desire that "the LORD would put His Spirit upon [all of the LORD's people]" (Num. 11:29). The Spirit who has been upon Moses and who now rests upon the seventy elders is, therefore, the Spirit of the Lord, or the Holy Spirit. Isaiah confirms this identification when he refers to Moses' ministry in the wilderness and highlights the Numbers 11 incident:

Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses.  
Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?  
Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them,  
Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses,  
Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name,  
Who led them through the depths?  
Like the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble;



As the cattle which go down into the valley,  
 The Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.  
 So You led Your people,  
 To make for Yourself a glorious name. (Isa. 63:11–14)

Although prophesying marks the Spirit's coming upon the elders (Num. 11:25), their primary ministry is not prophetic. Instead, the Spirit comes upon these individuals to empower them to carry out their tasks of administration and leadership. Prophesying does, however, foreshadow similar manifestations in the Old Testament (e.g., Saul in 1 Sam. 10:10–13), Joel's prophecy of the Spirit's outpouring (Joel 2:28–32), and similar manifestations at crucial times in Acts (e.g., Pentecost in Acts 2:1–4). The fact that Eldad and Medad also prophesy elsewhere in the camp proves that location and proximity are not determining factors in the giving of the Spirit (Num. 11:26–27). In response to Eldad's and Medad's prophesying, Moses expresses his desire to see an even wider distribution of the Spirit upon God's people (11:28–30).

This incident contributes several pieces of evidence to the study of Spirit empowerment. First, it explains Moses' repeated demonstration of leadership and administrative ability as the product of the Spirit's enabling. Second, for that reason his endowment must have been a long-term experience. Third, in line with the conclusion reached about other craftsmen who worked on the tabernacle with Bezalel, the distribution of the Spirit to the seventy elders shows that the Spirit did not necessarily empower only one person at a time. Fourth, it at least hints at the future widespread empowerment by the Spirit about which Joel and others prophesy.

### **Joshua (Num. 27:15–23)**

Prior to his appointment as Moses' successor, Joshua filled a number of roles. He served as "the attendant of Moses from his youth" (Num. 11:28). He led the Israelites in their victory over Amalek (Ex. 17:8–16). He accompanied Moses on Mount Sinai

(24:12–18; 32:15–20). He stood watch over the tent of meeting (33:7–11). He entered Canaan as a spy—one of two who brought back good reports (Num. 13:1–14:38).

Training and experience qualified Joshua to succeed Moses as Israel's leader. He had demonstrated his commitment to Yahweh in that he, along with Caleb, had “followed the LORD fully” (Num. 32:12). Yet God mentions none of these factors when he responds to Moses' request to identify a successor who would lead the people into Canaan (27:15–17). Instead, God singles out a different characteristic: Joshua is “a man in whom is the Spirit” (27:18).

Some commentators question whether “the Spirit” mentioned in Numbers 27:18 refers to God's Spirit. Deuteronomy 34:9, however, says, “Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him.” The Old Testament connects the phrase *the Spirit of wisdom* with God's Spirit two other times, first in the description of the tabernacle craftsmen (Ex. 28:3) and then, more significantly, in the description of the shoot from the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:2). The conjunction “for” that introduces the second clause cannot denote the reason that Joshua was *filled* with the Spirit. Numbers 27:18 makes it clear that Moses laid hands on Joshua because of the Spirit's presence in him. Rather, God chose Joshua for leadership because he was *filled* with the Spirit.

Scripture does not record when Joshua's endowment with the Spirit occurs. Exodus 24:13–14 mentions him as distinct from the elders, and Exodus 33:11 specifically calls him “a young man.” It therefore must have taken place at a time other than the Spirit's coming upon the seventy elders, perhaps as early as the victory over Amalek. We may naturally infer that it was a long-term endowment similar to that which Moses experienced. At least one commentator calls it “permanent.”<sup>9</sup>

Joshua's success in a variety of ministry roles—from Moses' attendant to Israel's leader—paled in light of the Spirit's enabling.

9. Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (Waco: Word, 1984), 306.

Indeed, his success depended on the Spirit's empowerment. In Joshua's case, that enabling continued over an extended period and manifested itself in the faithful accomplishment of multiple tasks essential to Israel's establishment as a nation.

### **Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson (Judg. 3:1–16:31)**

Judges 3–16 record six well-known “cycles”: (1) Israel turns away from God; (2) Israel's apostasy leads to oppression by an outside power; (3) the oppression leads Israel to repent and call on God for deliverance; (4) God responds by providing a judge to deliver his people. Those cycles document the activities of thirteen judges—six major and seven minor. Four of them experience the Holy Spirit's empowering.

Othniel, the first judge, delivers Israel from an oppressive foreign king (Judg. 3:9–11). Gideon, the fifth judge, delivers Israel from the Midianites (6:1–8:28). Jephthah, the ninth judge, delivers Israel from the Ammonites (11:1–12:7). Samson, the final judge, experiences the Spirit's empowering multiple times as he combats the Philistines (13:1–16:31).

These four judges have different backgrounds, personalities, and situations. Othniel comes from a respected family (Judg. 3:9) and has previously demonstrated his ability and courage (1:12–15). He faces a centralized opponent who has oppressed Israel for eight years (3:8). Gideon is the youngest son in his family and has a strong sense of his own inadequacy (6:13–15, 36–40). With a small group of warriors (7:8) he employs the element of surprise (7:19–22) against a large host (8:10).

Jephthah is an illegitimate son and an outcast (Judg. 11:2) who has become a “valiant warrior” (11:1) by leading a band of “worthless fellows” (11:3). When Israel's leaders approach him for help (11:5–11), he uses careful preparation to defeat his opponents (11:29). Samson is the son of God-fearing parents who dedicate him to God before his birth (13:2–23). The Spirit begins “to stir him” as a young man (13:25), but his character is flawed.

He conducts guerrilla warfare against a decentralized opponent over the course of twenty years (14:1–16:31).

A variety of words describe the Spirit's activity in connection with these judges. The Spirit "was upon"<sup>10</sup> Othniel (Judg. 3:10) and Jephthah (11:29); the Spirit "clothed"<sup>11</sup> Gideon (6:34); the Spirit "stirred"<sup>12</sup> and "rushed upon"<sup>13</sup> Samson (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Each tackles the problem before him differently, but each time "the Spirit of the LORD"<sup>14</sup> acts in order to initiate decisive action by the judge in question. He remains the constant throughout the approximately three hundred years covered by their ministries.

### Saul (1 Sam. 9:1–16:23)

Although Saul's reign occupies most of 1 Samuel, the key events in that reign cluster in chapters 9–16. First, Samuel identifies and anoints Saul as king (chaps. 9–10). After the Spirit empowers Saul to act, Samuel installs him as king (chaps. 11–12). When Saul fails key tests (chaps. 13–15), Samuel anoints David as his replacement (chap. 16). The Spirit *rushes upon* Saul three times in these chapters—twice with positive results, the third time with negative results.

While searching for his father's lost donkeys, Saul encounters the prophet Samuel, who announces to him the Lord's decision that Saul will be Israel's first king. After anointing Saul, Samuel tells him that he will meet a group of prophets in whose presence Saul will prophesy. In fulfillment of that prediction (1 Sam. 10:6), *the Spirit of God rushes upon* Saul so that he prophesies (10:9–13).

10. The Hebrew phrase is *hayah 'al*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew phrase occurs, it will be rendered *was upon* (in italics).

11. The Hebrew word is *labash*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew word occurs, it will be rendered *clothed* (in italics).

12. The Hebrew word is *pa'am*.

13. The Hebrew phrase is *tsalah 'al*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew phrase occurs, it will be rendered *rushed upon* (in italics).

14. The Hebrew phrase is *ruakh-Yahweh*. From this point forward, when the same Hebrew phrase occurs, it will be rendered *the Spirit of the LORD* (in italics).

This endowment of the Spirit echoes the experience of the seventy elders in Numbers 11 in that the Spirit manifests his presence through prophecy. It authenticates Saul as God's choice for king.

Saul's public identification as king produces mixed reactions. Shortly thereafter, when he hears of the predicament facing the citizens of Jabesh-Gilead, *the Spirit of God* again *rushes upon* Saul so that he leads Israel to victory over Nahash the Ammonite (1 Sam. 11:6–11). This endowment of the Spirit enables Saul to organize and lead the people in a task of deliverance just as the judges did. It authenticates Saul as the one whom God has chosen to lead Israel.

Saul's failures in 1 Samuel 13–15 lead God to reject him as king (1 Sam. 15:26–29). As a result, *the Spirit of the LORD* departs from Saul, and an "evil spirit" terrorizes him (16:14). This departure of the Spirit from Saul coincides with *the Spirit of the LORD rushing upon* David when Samuel anoints him (16:12–13). The latter event authenticates David as Saul's replacement. The literary break between verses 13 and 14 is well documented.<sup>15</sup> From 1 Samuel 16:14 onward, the narrative shifts its focus from Saul to David, although Saul remains a major figure in it.

This latter experience has no parallel elsewhere in the Old Testament. Judges 16:20 comes closest when "the LORD . . . departed from [Samson]." The evil spirit that terrorizes Saul parallels the evil spirit that came between Abimelech and the men of Shechem (Judg. 9:23). Interestingly, God rejected and judged both of Israel's first two "kings" (cf. 9:6) for the same reason: neither demonstrated the quality that God wanted in a king—a heart like his own (1 Sam. 13:14). David Howard writes:

It is not that the Spirit could not have maintained a special presence with both but rather that this appears to be the pattern of his activity in the Old Testament. Particularly in this section of 1 Samuel the presence of YHWH's Spirit symbolizes, among other things, his favor on his chosen king . . . YHWH's Spirit

15. David M. Howard, "The Transfer of Power from Saul to David in 1 Sam 16:13–14," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32 (1989): 473–83.

and YHWH's special favor were not upon Saul and David at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

The final mention of the Spirit in connection with Saul occurs in 1 Samuel 19:18–24. In a repetition of Saul's initial experience (10:9–13), *the Spirit of God was upon* Saul so that he prophesies. The similarity to the first experience appears to be deliberate, and the question “Is Saul also among the prophets?” is best understood as ironic (cf. 10:11). In this incident, however, Saul strips off his royal robes and lies naked for an extended period (19:24). This incident serves to confirm that Saul has forfeited any legitimacy as king and marks the beginning of an increasingly rapid downward slide, which ends in his death (31:1–6).

Confronted with the seemingly impossible task of uniting the tribes of Israel after more than four hundred years of “every man [doing] what was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6), lacking any formal preparation to lead the people, and possessing little self-confidence (cf. 1 Sam. 10:21–22), Saul needs the Spirit's empowerment to lead God's people. Unfortunately, Saul fails to join the Spirit's enabling with a heart for God. The result is disobedience, disgrace, degeneration, and death.

### David (1–2 Samuel; 1 Chronicles)

No other Old Testament figure receives as much attention in the biblical record as David. Introduced as a teenager in 1 Samuel 16, David dominates the remainder of that book, all of 2 Samuel, and nineteen chapters of 1 Chronicles until his death (1 Kings 2:10–12; 1 Chron. 29:28–30). The Spirit's activity touches David's life at widely separated points and provides the backdrop for the reign of Israel's preeminent king.

Coinciding with his anointing by Samuel, *the Spirit of the LORD rushes upon* David (1 Sam. 16:1–13). The author uses words identical to those describing Saul's endowments with the Spirit (e.g.,

16. Ibid., 480.

10:10). Immediately following the Spirit's coming upon David, the Spirit departs from Saul (16:14; see the discussion above). David's endowment, however, differs from Saul's in that it was "from that day forward" (16:13). In an interesting side note, the Spirit later *clothes* Amasai, who announces that the sons of Benjamin and Judah have allied themselves with David during his exile in Ziklag, thus confirming David's leadership of all Israel (1 Chron. 12:16–18).

Much later, at the high point of his power, David commits sin with Bathsheba. Distraught and repentant when Nathan confronts him, David pleads with God, "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11). Saul's experience clearly influences David's thinking, and his prayer points to a long-term abiding of the Spirit on David. The Lord grants David's request for spiritual restoration, and the Spirit continues to empower him during the remainder of his years.

Although some scholars suggest that David's "last words" (2 Sam. 23:1–7) date from the time of God's covenant with him (7:8–17), the natural understanding is that they form a portion of his last testament. As part of those last words, David notes that "the Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (23:2). In so doing, David bears witness to the fact that *the Spirit of the LORD* inspired his psalms. Jesus confirms this testimony by declaring that David spoke "in the Spirit" when he wrote Psalm 110 (Matt. 22:43–44). Together, these statements provide evidence both of the inspiration of the Davidic psalms and of the Spirit's continuing presence with David.

Since 1 Chronicles 28–29 parallels 1 Kings 1–2, David's instructions to Solomon in preparation for building the temple must come from the last years of his life. That account also includes the comment that the plan was "of all that the Spirit had put in his mind" (1 Chron. 28:12 NIV).<sup>17</sup> Although debated by some, the similarities between this statement and the descriptions of Bezalel and the other craftsmen involved in the planning of the tabernacle are at least suggestive. If, indeed, the statement

17. Literally, "the Spirit with him."

indicates the Spirit's empowerment, it adds yet another activity that David performed by the Spirit's enabling.

For upward of fifty-five years the Spirit's presence remains with David. Properly repentant over his sin, David does not experience the same separation from the Spirit that Saul did. As a result, the Spirit enables David to accomplish all that God sets before him: he defeats Goliath, unites Israel, expands the nation's borders, develops plans for the temple, and writes numerous psalms. David provides not only the pattern for Israel's coming King but also an illustration of a Spirit-filled life for those who would follow that King.

## Summary

"Variety" best describes the empowerment of the Spirit in the lives of Israel's leaders. The Spirit has a variety of names. He empowers a variety of individuals in a variety of ways. Those individuals engage in a variety of activities, including administration, craftsmanship, leadership in battle, and governing God's people. They carry out those activities in a variety of circumstances, both in good times and in bad.

Although the seventy elders and Saul both experienced special outward manifestations of the Spirit's empowering, those instances were the exception rather than the rule. In both instances the manifestation was prophesying. More commonly, though, the Spirit's empowering manifested itself in wisdom and discernment (e.g., Joseph, Bezalel).

An unexpected element is the extended length of time during which the Spirit empowered some individuals (e.g., Moses, Joshua, David). This evidence runs counter to the common understanding that the Spirit's ministry in the Old Testament was temporary. Saul provides the only explicit instance of the Spirit's leaving a person upon whom he had come.<sup>18</sup>

18. Samson's empowerment appears to be episodic rather than perpetual. Because it is an isolated event, Saul's experience provides inadequate evidence regarding the question whether a person can lose his or her salvation.



## Lessons for Life

Throughout Israel's development as a nation, the Spirit empowered strategic individuals to preserve, organize, deliver, judge, and rule the people as preparation for their divinely ordained role to bless the nations. He did so using a variety of personalities in a variety of ways. From those individuals we learn a number of important lessons.

### *Joseph*

*The Spirit's empowerment might need to be exercised in contexts of adversity or injustice.* Sometimes God's people find themselves in difficult circumstances; that was Joseph's experience. Yet he never complained when things went against him, and he never wavered from faithfully pursuing the tasks assigned to him. Joseph's faithfulness teaches us that the exercise of the Spirit's enabling—regardless of the circumstances—honors God and brings him recognition through the person who exercises it.

### *Bezalel*

*We can expect the Spirit's empowerment to be exercised in ministries that extend beyond those commonly considered management or administration.* Joseph was an administrator, but Bezalel was an artisan. He superintended the design and construction of the tabernacle. His ministry teaches us that the Spirit's empowerment includes material and physical activities such as design, construction, and fashion. The experience of his fellow craftsmen makes it clear that the Spirit does not restrict his empowerment to a few special individuals.

### *Moses*

*Sound management techniques alone do not substitute for the Spirit's empowerment.* Organization and delegation are key

leadership principles that God's people must understand and implement. Jethro gave Moses his introductory lesson in management. Yet challenges continued to arise, and Moses continued to be overwhelmed. The Spirit's empowerment of the seventy elders reminds us that organizing people and work well is not enough; the individuals so organized also need the Spirit's enabling in order to do the work effectively.

### *Joshua*

*Whatever form service for God might take, effectiveness in it depends on the Spirit's empowerment.* The same person might well fill different ministry roles at different times in his or her life; that was Joshua's experience. The nature of our service might well change over time, but the Spirit provides adequate enabling for any task that time might bring our way. Joshua's extensive ministry background did not qualify him to be Moses' successor; his filling by the Spirit did.

### *The Judges*

*The exercise of the Spirit's empowerment is as unique as God's people are.* Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson represent as unusual a combination of personalities and backgrounds as can be found in Scripture. Together, their experiences teach us that the Spirit can and does empower different individuals in different ways to accomplish his purposes. Family background, personality, and previous experience are less important than the Spirit's enabling when God calls a person to serve him.

### *Saul*

*The Spirit's empowerment must be wedded to a heart wholly devoted to God.* Our response to times of testing discloses the true object of our trust. Saul's experience teaches that lesson negatively. Although the Spirit's enabling was available to Saul, he chose to trust in himself in times of testing. When he did, he failed. In that

regard, Saul stands in strong contrast to Joseph, whose dependence on the Spirit in times of adversity and injustice stood out even to individuals who were not part of God's people.

### *David*

*The Spirit's empowerment can continue over an extended time and in a variety of activities, even if the individual so empowered falls into sin.* David experienced great success during the early years of his reign, and there can be little doubt that his success was the result of the Spirit's enablement. Yet at the height of his prosperity, he sinned with Bathsheba. God's response to David's sin teaches us that he takes sin seriously. In contrast to Saul's example, however, David's experience also teaches us that sin, if confessed, does not disqualify a person from experiencing the Spirit's enabling from that point forward.