



AN INNER-TEXTURE ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP IN DEUTERONOMY 31:1-23

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This inner-texture analysis highlights the transfer of leadership in Deuteronomy 31:1-23 and the effect transitional leadership has on followers within an organization. The author argues for the understanding that these passages provide an organization with the necessary framework to serve followers by successfully transitioning leadership. Through Deuteronomy 31:1-23, the author builds the case that organizations can successfully transition leaders by following the biblical framework outlined in the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Through the passage, one understands that it is God who releases the old leader while also calling the new leader. Deuteronomy 31:1-23 provides an organization with the ability to outline how to serve followers through a successful succession plan for leadership transition. Through Deuteronomy 31:1-23, one can ascertain that the necessary steps to a healthy transition are: identifying the incoming leader, privately indicating to leadership whom the new leader is, a public declaration of the new leader to followers, and waiting on the Lord for the final call into leadership.

SERVING THROUGH LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Agard (2010) defined transitional leadership as the ability to effectively assemble an organization or an individual, to identify, encounter, and focus on a situation in such a way that productively enacts a positive transitional course forward. Laver (2017) described the four necessary components of a transitional leader as: forward-thinking and inspirational; an innovator, self-assurance; and a creator of an environment for future organizational change. The transitional leader understands their duty to followers

in organizing and preparing the organization toward a healthy transition, while knowing challenges will come within the change that they are enacting. Geiger (2016) stated that an essential component of a transitional leader is developing leaders and preparing an organization for the impending transition. Without identifying a succession plan, can an organization successfully transfer leadership without hindering the health of the organization and its people?

Agard (2010) explained that transitional leadership has a foundation on the idea that leadership is about assembling an organization toward change. Ngomane (2013) stated that organizations that utilize ongoing transitional procedures are less likely to descend into an organizational emergency when the current organizational leader is called to move on. Poon (2006) detailed that transitional leadership is the pursuit of future objectives for organizational health.

The incoming leaders require qualified teachers to provide them with numerous developmental training opportunities (Ngomane, 2013). A portion of every leader's energy should be focused on the development of an organization's future leaders and increasing their capacity. Miller (1990) explained that the commissioning of leaders within the Old Testament is seen as an obligation to continue the work the Lord has commissioned the Israelites to complete. The Old Testament commissioning and authority of a called leader are contingent upon the weight of the assignment. When an organization goes through a transition in leadership with an equally knowledgeable leader assuming the role of leader, the organization and its people are not disrupted through the transition, nor does it lead to immediate advances within the organization.

Gebhart (1999) explained that Scripture lays the groundwork for organizations going through a transition by providing them with narratives to assist with foundational standards of truth that guide them through the struggles of transitional leadership. From Genesis to Revelation, the Lord's design was to assign leaders into positions of authority who are faithful and glorify His name for the accomplishments of the organization (Geiger, 2016). Agard (2010) stated that transitional leaders focus on their objectives. When an organization that is going through change loses focus on the Lord's purpose, they begin to experience conflict and struggle. Within Deuteronomy 31:1-23, we witness the Lord warning the Israelites of their wandering, they lost their purpose, and the consequences of doing so were devastating. The biblical narrative of the Lord's called servants is a description of God continuously building and transforming followers into people who live out their purpose here on earth.

McCabe (2008) stated that transformational leadership embodies four identifiable traits: influence, inspiration, intellect, and individual attention, which he explains as the Gestalt cycle of experience. Gebhart (1999) explained that transitional leaders are used throughout Scripture to guide followers through challenges and struggles that are vital for the necessary faithfulness to complete the calling that the Lord calls people to. Agard (2010) described that transitional leaders support and challenge followers to develop their leadership skills to engage issues within the organization positively. Moses understood the challenges that the Israelites (followers) would face as they crossed into

the Promised Land, and he went to great lengths to ensure his followers' and Joshua's success. Understanding the challenge of the Israelites' unfaithfulness, the Lord reveals to Moses a song that he is to teach the people. Geiger (2016) explained that people who are not continually made aware of their identity become laden with obligations and face their challenges without the strength and understanding of a good and gracious God. Through this research, the question remains: how can the leadership of an organization successfully prepare its followers for a transition of leadership and organizational change?

McCabe (2008) described that the heart of a transition is moving an organization and its followers through change while simultaneously reducing the conflicting compelling forces that are resisting the change. Agard (2010) explained transition as the movement of an organization from one organizational position to another. Miller (1990) detailed that through Deuteronomy 31:1-23, we understand the foundation of a transitioning leader is exemplifying strength and courage in the Lord to deal with the challenges and struggles that lie ahead. Within Deuteronomy 31:1-23, Moses is leading his followers, the Israelites, through both the transition of leadership to Joshua and their transition into the Promised Land. Poon (2006) stated that transitional leadership increases follower readiness and efficiency when dealing with upcoming struggles. Ngomane (2013) explained that within every successful transition, a competent leader is waiting to take the organization into a place where the Lord is calling them. Grumet (2014) stated that Moses understands the necessity of a new leader for the Israelites and does not want them to jeopardize their foundational truth in the Lord. Deuteronomy 31:1-23 highlights that Joshua must continue his faithfulness to the Lord as the new leader of the Israelites.

INNER-TEXTURE ANALYSIS OF DEUTERONOMY 31:1-23

Deuteronomy 31:1-23 serves as the transfer of leadership between Moses and Joshua. Tigay (1996) described that within the passage, one witnesses two independent accounts of Moses' transitioning leadership to Joshua. One is the account of the Lord installing Joshua as the leader at the Tent of Meeting, while the other is Moses, adhering to the Lord's command, and appointing Joshua (Tigay, 1996). Through a repetitive texture analysis of Deuteronomy 31:1-23, one understands that though Moses is obedient to the Lord's command, it is the Lord who installs Joshua as leader of the Israelites. Throughout the passage, we witness Moses's follower, Joshua, patiently waiting on the Lord to install him as the leader and respecting Moses as the current leader by allowing him to address his followers, the Israelites. Throughout Deuteronomy, from the first mention of Joshua transitioning into the leadership role, he waits patiently for the Lord to call him. Thompson (1974) stated that Deuteronomy 31 is the Lord's ceremonial installation of Joshua as the leader of the Israelites. Through a pattern analysis on Deuteronomy 31:1-23, one concludes that Moses is publicly announcing to his followers that through the transition of leadership to Joshua, the Lord will remain with them. The transition of leadership within Deuteronomy 31:1-23 serves as both an encouragement to the Israelites and as an installation of Joshua as their leader.

Progressive Texture and Pattern

An inner textural pattern of Deuteronomy 31:1-23 highlights the progression of a transition of leadership within an organization. Edersheim (1975) stated that throughout the wilderness wanderings, Moses never proclaimed the strength and faithfulness that the Lord has for his followers, the Israelites, as he does within Deuteronomy 31. Norman (2007) explained that Moses's encouragement comes from his understanding of the Israelites' fear of their opposition from the history of the spies returning in Numbers 13.

Through a progressive texture analysis, one witnesses the compassion that both the Lord and Moses have for the Israelites. Moses encourages his followers to remain strong and courageous, preparing an incoming leader for them, giving them the written Law. Within Deuteronomy 31, one gains insight into Moses's progression through the transition by the encouragement he gives to the Israelites following the news of his impending death (Norman, 2007). Moher (2012) stated that the people within an organization are aware if an incoming leader is prepared, courageous, and faithful to the vision of the organization. The progression of Deuteronomy 31:1-23 identifies the importance of the followers within an organization, understanding that the Lord is with them during a transition.

Narrative Texture and Pattern

Deuteronomy 31:1-23 is a historical narrative of God informing Moses that he will not enter the Promised Land and God calling Joshua to lead the people of Israel. The narrative focuses on Moses encouraging both his followers and Joshua that God is with them and giving them the Song of Moses to inform the Israelites of a righteous way of life. The historical context of Deuteronomy 31:1-23 is that Moses has led his followers out of Egypt and through 40 years of wilderness wanderings. Thompson (1974) explained that through these passages, Moses is giving instructions to his followers, Joshua, and the priests, with a focus on how they shall live within the covenant they made with God during this time. Knowles (2001) stated that Deuteronomy 31 is Moses' understanding that he would not lead his people into the Promised Land, and then planning his exit. Moses will not lead the Israelites into the Promised land so he encourages and instructs both his followers and Joshua that they will enter the land that the Lord had promised them through His strength, not their own. Miller (1990) outlined that the Lord is the only thing with which the Israelites find the strength and confidence to complete the upcoming battles upon entering the Promised Land.

Miller (1990) stated that the narrative of Deuteronomy flows between the wilderness wanderings, Israel's entering the Promised Land, and God transitioning Israel's leadership, which is an essential theme throughout Deuteronomy. The repetitive nature of the narrative within Deuteronomy 31:1-23 details the importance of the circumstances surrounding the transfer of leadership (Miller, 1990). Before the transfer of leadership, God instructs Moses to encourage his followers and Joshua to be strong

and courageous. The Lord gives Moses a song to teach the Israelites about their disobedience, breaking the covenant between them and the Lord.

Opening-Middle-Closing Texture and Pattern

This public reading of the Law becomes the foundation of biblical religion, which focuses on the discipline and followership of the Israelites; it is an invitation for comprehensive instruction for all people. God's motivation for the written Law and having it recited was so that God's veracity would be passed on through generations. Gilchrist (1995) stated that after approximately 120 years on earth, the beginning of Deuteronomy details Moses conceding to his followers that he is not able to lead them into the Promised Land.

Tigay (1996) explained that the Lord had informed Moses that he was to climb the mountain where he would perish, and he was commanded to install Joshua as Israel's leader. Moses's formal addresses to his followers are coming to an end within Deuteronomy 31, and the Lord's promise that the Israelites will cross the Jordan into the Promised Land is soon realized (McConville, 1994).

Tigay (1996) stated that Moses utilizes Israel's past conquests and doctrinal ideologies to reassure them that the Lord is their leader, Joshua is His voice for the people, and God's power is evident by Israel's defeat of Sihon and Og. McConville (1994) explained that Moses details that the Lord had promised the Israelites victory; their part was to exemplify faith that embodied strength and courage, which they failed at when attempting to take the land in Deuteronomy 1:26-36. Geiger (2012) explained that a removal from the Lord eventually leads all people to destruction, and this failure becomes identified through the Israelite's unfaithfulness. Knowing this, the Lord encourages the Israelites and Joshua to remain strong in the faith and courageous when facing their enemies, because He is with them.

Tigay (1996) detailed that once Moses delineates the Law to how followers verbally, he writes it and establishes a regular public reading, so Israel understands the covenant, and subsequent generations would learn it. This mechanism of writing would ultimately lead to the Bible, which is at the center of Judaism. Previously, the Israelites' religion maintained a foundation on the epiphanies and rituals of their forefathers (Calvin, 2010).

Merrill (1996) described that the backdrop for Joshua's appointment is private, in the Tent of Meeting, giving this interaction a different setting from the public declaration of Joshua's succession as the leader in Deuteronomy 31:1-8. Brown et al. (1997) detailed that the Lord's revelation to commission Joshua as the leader is the only mention of the tent or pillar within Deuteronomy. Merrill (1996) asserts that the pillar of cloud guarded Moses and Joshua against the extreme radiance of God's transcendence and revealed to them His presence. The importance of Joshua's public appointment is evident due to the public declaration of Moses's impending death and the Lord's prophecy concerning Israel abandoning Him after Moses's death.

Miller (1990) explained that the Song of Moses would serve as a testimony against Israel when they ignore the Lord and begin worshipping foreign gods. Brown et al. (1997) state that the Israelites held a high regard for national songs due to the remembrance of the past and the ability to rekindle feelings and emotions. The song reiterates the disobedience of the Israelites and details two of the dominant representations for judgment within the Old Testament: God's anger and God hiding His face (Miller, 1990). McConville (1994) stated that through the Song of Moses, the Lord warns the Israelites about their inability to maintain the covenant.

Norman (2007) explained that Deuteronomy 31:23 is the first time the Lord speaks to Joshua, thus approving him as the new leader of Israel. McConville (1994) described that Joshua was qualified to receive the authority to lead from the Lord because he had gained God's blessing when he was not intimidated by the enemy as a spy. Deuteronomy 31:23 reiterates that it is God who both releases the current leader and calls the new one. Miller (1990) states that the reciting of Joshua's commissioning within Deuteronomy 31 (vv. 7-8, 14-15, 23) mirrors the ceremonial commissioning of leadership transition.

Argumentative Texture and Pattern

Deuteronomy 31:1-23 is God and Moses encouraging the people to be strong and courageous. Engelbrecht (2009) explained that the Lord's encouragement to be strong and courageous is the foundational encouragement to Joshua's succession as a leader, which is an understanding that Israel would face opposition crossing into the Promised Land. The phraseology of Deuteronomy, moving between Moses and the Lord, expresses the importance of the Israelites' command to be strong and courageous. Miller (2009) explained that this type of commissioning encapsulates essential components useful to all circumstances of transitional leadership. Tigay (1996) articulated that the appointment of Joshua flows through the entire book of Deuteronomy, with both the Lord and Moses speaking about his appointment as the leader and the command for the Israelites to remain strong and courageous.

Miller (1990) stated that the encouragement Joshua receives to be strong and courageous is both affirmation and a command, knowing the challenging conquests that lie ahead. Engelbrecht (2009) detailed that Joshua, unlike Moses, did not hesitate to receive the appointment to leadership from the Lord. Miller (1990) details that this command synchronously charges Joshua to take the land the Lord had promised and assures him that the Lord will do the work He had done before. Thompson (1974) stated that the commissioning of Joshua within Deuteronomy 31:23 informs the reader that the Lord appointed Joshua. Since his admonishment in Deuteronomy 3:21-23 (English Standard Version), "And I commanded Joshua at that time, 'Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings. So will the Lord do to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. You shall not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you.'" Joshua does not speak again until his appointment from the Lord in Deuteronomy 31:23. Since we understand Deuteronomy 31 from the vantage

point of the Lord and Moses, one can assume Joshua is both waiting on the Lord and honoring Moses, the current leader of Israel.

Miller (1990) stated that the process by which the Lord encourages Joshua contains within it that this strength is both transmitted and mandatory; it is both a call for and an installation for courage. By allowing Moses and the Lord to commission him, Joshua allows Moses to exit his leadership position with honor and gives himself the authority of the Lord. Whereas if Joshua had taken control of the leadership position of Israel by force, Israel would have suffered devastating defeats, and the Lord would not have been with them.

Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern

Miller (1990) explained that though Deuteronomy does not describe how the people of Israel experienced the transition of leadership, we gain insight into their feelings through Deuteronomy 31:1-23, and that opening is a pledge to the Israelites that the Lord who delivered them will continue to lead them. McConville (1994) explained that Deuteronomy 31:1-23 bookends the encouragement of the Lord leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, and they can have strength and courage because the Lord is with them, and He will not neglect them. The only way the Israelites overcome their fear is by continuing to hold steadfast to the understanding that the Lord's strength is with them. Tigay (1996) articulated that the Israelites' strength is in the Lord, not themselves, and this is what will enable them to conquer their enemies and enter the Promised Land. Miller (1990) stated that those who hold steadfast to the strength of the Lord, the fear or dismay of the future becomes set aside. Moses, understanding the fear of the Israelite spies in Numbers 13, encourages the people and reminds them of the Lord's conquest over Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. Miller (1990) declared that nothing is more continual or unrelenting throughout all of Scripture than the understanding of the Lord's faithfulness to His people.

DISCUSSION

Geiger et al. (2016) state that the foundation of Deuteronomy 31 is the encouragement Moses receives in Exodus 18 from his father-in-law Jethro, who admonishes him not to lead alone but instead choose leaders to serve with him. Within Exodus 18, Jethro encourages Moses to teach his followers, the Israelites, righteous living (before the Law), provide them with a vision, and select leaders to distribute the weight of leadership. An integral component of transitional leadership is the leader's ability to communicate to followers the direction of the organization effectively. The Israelites' success has a foundation in Moses's ability to successfully detail to his followers what would lie ahead when he dies.

Poon (2006) detailed the importance of leaders developing both emergent leaders and their followers to create a healthy culture where individuals and the organization reach their potential. Ngomane (2013) stated that people transitioning into leadership, trained through counterproductive leadership structures, transmit the

negative learned behaviors to the organizations they lead. Throughout Deuteronomy 31, Moses encourages the Israelites to remain strong and courageous, facing the difficulties that lie ahead. Moses continues this encouragement to Joshua, whom he had mentored for years. Organizations that successfully transition leadership understand the effect that negativity has on followers and the success of the organization moving forward. The negative behaviors that unhealthy leaders pass on within the organization influence their followers for generations.

Poon (2006) explained that leaders should strengthen the organization and encourage them to attain what the Lord is calling them to. Geiger (2016) stated the importance within today's church, much like the Israelites within Deuteronomy 31, to both equip both emerging leaders and our followers to conduct the calling that God has laid out for His people. Poon (2006) stressed that leaders during the transitional process must grant people a space to discern their vision to allow their followers to formulate their thoughts on the direction of the organization. God's people find themselves in leadership roles through God placing them there, not by something that they did (Crosson, 2014). Bass (2008) described that a leader must successfully communicate the direction of the organization to their followers so that they understand and are committed to the direction.

Geiger (2016) explained that Moses comprehended that developing leaders must happen within an organizational structure that develops their followers. Understanding this, Moses successfully transitions leadership to Joshua and encourages the Israelites not to fear or be dismayed at the changes that will take place. Poon (2006) articulated that healthy leaders construct a vision for the organization, whereas followers understand their direction and how they fit within the direction of the organization. Dotlich et al. (2004) state that though Moses's reality of failure was demoralizing as a leader, he successfully led the Israelites through the struggle of transition. Moses details to the Israelites not only the direction that they will go without him. He states that the Lord has provided them with a capable and called leader to take them. We understand the direction of Moses's leadership when we comprehend his knowledge of the Lord's love for the Israelites and His persistence for them (Poon, 2006). Geiger (2016) stated that leaders must focus on both serving the people and providing them with a replacement for themselves as the leader.

Geiger et al. (2012) explain that Moses's faithfulness gave him the opportunity for transformation, and through his faithfulness, he identified the spaces where the Lord moved, and he placed himself and the Israelite's within those spaces. Poon (2006) described that the motivation that drives a leader is his love for the people with whom he is called to serve. Geiger et al. (2012) state that the Lord transformed Moses, and Moses played a significant role in the process by being faithful. Future research on the personality and leadership traits of successful leaders during leadership transition is necessary for a better understanding of the leadership styles within the study of transitional leadership.

Geiger (2016) explained that leaders form the foundation of their organization more than any other outside force. Bass (2008) stated that a leader's vision is the foundation for encouraging followers; it allows them to understand the social constructs of the organization and the vision for moving forward. Geiger (2016) detailed that when leaders identify themselves as temporary, it moves within them an urgency to provide their people with a leader for where God is calling the organization in the future. Through the research of the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua within Deuteronomy 31:1-23, we gain insight into the followers' need to handle change successfully. Moses, in his love for the people, faithfully builds the Israelites a new leader, while reminding them of the Lord's favor during their previous conquest. An important motivational tool for any leader is past success, and Moses uses this tool when encouraging the Israelites. Dotlich et al. (2004) describes successful leaders as those who continue to lead an organization toward its goals through personal adversity. Bass (2008) described a successful leader as one who shares their vision with the organization and equips their people to accept responsibility for their part of the vision moving forward.

CONCLUSION

Norman (2007) stated that the leadership of Moses confronts all leaders to encourage the people they are blessed to lead through challenges. Ngomane (2013) detailed that healthy transitional leadership requires equipping the incoming leader and followers with the necessary tools to reduce simple mistakes within the organization. Grumet (2014) explained that leaders are measured by the transformation of their people, and one of the more significant examples of a transformation is Moses transforming Israel into the people who would move to where God had called them to, the Promised Land.

Grumet (2014) described that Moses understood the role of leaders within the kingdom of God, to proclaim the message of the Lord, and understood that He takes care of the struggles. Crosson (2014) stated that Moses did not nominate himself to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses's encouragement to the Israelites throughout Deuteronomy 31, do not fear or be dismayed, remain strong and courageous, is a testament to the encouragement all leaders should exemplify to the people they are called to serve. Moses's greatest talent lies in the fact that he was open to being used as a vessel for God's Word to the Israelites (Grumet, 2014). Mohler (2012) explained that no leader can fill every position within an organization. Moses cultivated himself as a leader who could overcome obstacles and translate his failures into opportunities to grow his followers. He understood that continuous acts of courage enact change.

About the Author

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