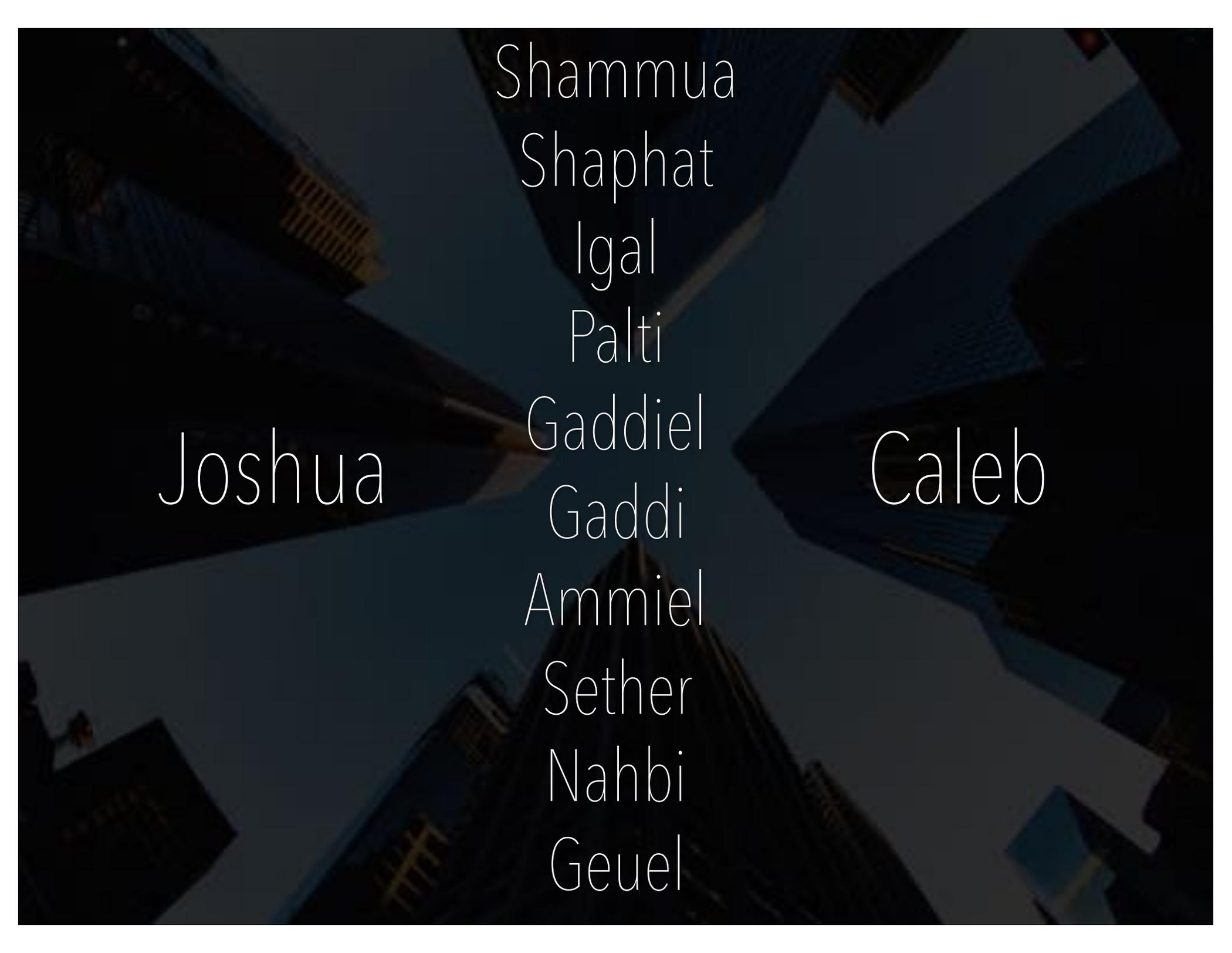


A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several tall skyscrapers in a city, with the word "PERSPECTIVE" overlaid in large white letters. The buildings are dark with blue-tinted glass facades, and the sky is a clear, light blue. The perspective is from a low vantage point, looking up at the towering structures, creating a sense of height and scale. The word "PERSPECTIVE" is centered horizontally and vertically across the image, rendered in a clean, white, sans-serif font with a slight drop shadow.

PERSPECTIVE

# PESSIMISTIC PERSPECTIVES

- "My marriage is terrible. All we experience is conflict. There is no love, and never will be again."
- "My children are out of control. I am completely out of my depth dealing with this phase of parenting."
- "Churches are in decline in America. Christianity is losing the battle for our young people."
- "I'm working a dead-end job. What's it all for?"
- "I can't seem to beat this sinful habit. It's just too big for me to ever defeat it, I guess."
- Remember, you aren't the first person to feel discouraged when you stare into the face of an enemy that seems too big for you.



Shammua

Shaphat

Igal

Palti

Gaddiel

Gaddi

Ammiel

Sether

Nahbi

Geuel

Joshua

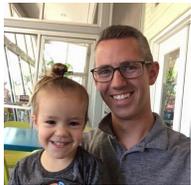
Caleb



Ryan Goodwin

December 20 at 12:15 pm

70 degrees and sunny here in paradise! Wait... what's that? You're shoveling snow from your driveway?! Oh, poor baby! Ha ha #Azisbetterthanwhereyouarerightnow #weatherenvy #palmtreesinsteadofsnowmen



Ryan Goodwin

June 20 at 3:27 pm

I'm melting! I'm meeeelting! Who would ever want to live in Arizona?! I can't take the torture! The agony of it all... #packingmybagsandleavingASAP #nobodytoldmePHXwashot #ididntknowsummerhappenseveryyear

# BAD TIMES & GOOD TIMES

- Every life goes through phases of "good" and "bad." We need to have enough perspective to remember what we learned from the bad times. Fixation on "where you are now" obscures the lessons of "where you've been" (patience, learning to live with less, the fleeting nature of time, etc.)
- It works both ways, too, since your good times taught you life lessons that you will need to face an impending crisis (you are surrounded by friends, this world is filled with beneficial resources, the Bible works, prayer works, gratitude works, God's moral code works, etc.).
- Don't fall into extremes (cockiness and self-reliance during good times or despair and impatience during bad times).

# APPLICATIONS

- Just like a pleasant Arizona winter makes us forget about the extreme summer, abundance and ease can make us forget about the value of hard work, perseverance, discipline, and patience. James 1:22ff talks about a man who doesn't remember his own face in the mirror.
- Forgetting life's hard lessons causes us to fall into a cycle of discontent. For example, when your spouse is angry with you, do you only do what needs to be done to appease him/her at the moment? Then, when the anger subsides, you fall into the same behaviors as before? If so, you have failed to learn the lesson from the conflict. As soon as times are good again, you forget what brought your spouse to the point of exasperation.

# APPLICATIONS

- We must never forget the mistakes that caused hurt to others. The bad times in life, especially those that are self-inflicted, are loaded with wisdom if we are only willing to reflect and apply what we have learned.
- This does not mean we spend our lives feeling guilty for every mistake we have made. But there must be an abiding awareness of our past as it helps shape us into better people.
- The people of Nehemiah's time understood this very well! In Nehemiah 9, this occasion came with a dose of sober reflection as the Levites recounted Israel's history of disobedience. Instead of hating themselves or their forefathers, they took responsibility for their sins and acknowledged what it was that brought them to their lowest point.



# LIFE FROM 30,000 FEET

Acts 26:9ff, 22:1ff, 1 Tim. 1:12ff, Acts 9:15f