

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story
Lesson #41 - "Moses & His Legacy" • Part I
[Deuteronomy 31:7-30 • Deuteronomy 32 • Deuteronomy 33:1-5]

• H A N D O U T •

► This lesson begins with Verse 7 of Chapter 31, and will cover Joshua's inauguration and Moses' admonishments for Joshua not to fear or become dismayed. These admonishments are said in front of, and within the hearing of, the people. Moses wants Israel to witness the transfer of responsibility from Moses to Joshua. He reminds Joshua that it will not be his efforts that will bring success; it will be the Lord, who will go before Joshua; it will be the Lord who will be with him, never to leave or forsake him.

We have now arrived at the moment Moses has been waiting for – probably with dread.

► Deuteronomy 31:14-15 • The LORD said to Moses, "Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission him."

So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the Tent of Meeting. Then the LORD appeared at the Tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the Tent.

Q: In essence, what two things does this gathering at the Tent of Meeting represent?

1.

2.

► After the Lord told Moses he would soon die, He also told Moses and Joshua that Israel would prostitute themselves to foreign gods of the Land they were about to enter, thus breaking the Covenant-treaty with God. Because Israel would forsake God, God was forsaking them. Instead of God turning His face toward the people in blessing, [the Aaronic blessing in Number 6:25] God would hide His face from them in rejection. Many disasters and difficulties would follow and the people would come to understand that the disasters were the result of God not being with them.

God told Moses to write a song – a national anthem of sorts – to warn Israel of their future apostasy. Together, Moses and Joshua were to teach the song to Israel. Furthermore it was to be read to their descendants from generation to generation.

Q: What is the Song of Moses?

► There are _____ separate songs called the Song of Moses in the O.T.

The most well-known of these songs is: recorded here: _____

The other two songs of Moses appear in Exodus 15 and Psalm 90

► Exodus 15:1-21 was sung: _____

The first two verses gives us the essence of this song of victory: *"Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; he has hurled both horse and rider into the sea.2 The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him -- my father's God, and I will exalt Him!"*

► Psalm 90:1-6 _____

"Lord, through all the generations you have been our home! Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, You are God. You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals!" For you, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours. You sweep people away like dreams that disappear. They are like grass that springs up in the morning. In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered.

► In Revelation 15:3, we find those who are victorious over the Beast, singing the _____

“Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed.”

► The inauguration of Joshua followed the teaching of the Song of Moses to Israel. Once again, Lord admonished Joshua: *“Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”*

One of Moses' last acts was to write the words of the law into a book and give it to the Levites who were responsible for the care of the Ark of the Covenant. That book would become known as the Torah – the first five books of our Old Testament. He commanded them to put the book of the Law he had just completed and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant. It was to stand as a witness against any future rebellion in Israel. No one would be able to say they didn't know what God said and what He expected of His people.

Q: This passage establishes Moses as the author of the Torah – the first five books. But what about the last three chapters of Deuteronomy? The scripture says Moses finished the writing here. But the last three chapters include Moses' death so he couldn't write those. Does that put the authority of the scripture at risk?

The chapter closes with the elders and officers of Israel gathering together to hear the Song of Moses – which brings us to Chapter 32 ...

► Deuteronomy's magnificent Song of Moses nearly fills the entire chapter. It is structured with six distinct sections, beginning with an Introduction. It begins with words of beauty, but ends with a warning that is dire, filled with raw emotion. The introduction is given word for word, but the remainder is redacted to provide a summary of intent for the purposes of this study. However, it would be very worthwhile to read the Song of Moses in its entirety.

1. Introduction:

“Give ear O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. Let my teaching drop as rain, my speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass. For I proclaim the Name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

2. The Accusation:

The child has forsaken its father and has become corrupted.

3. God's Past Faithfulness to Israel:

Remember the days of old – the years of many generations
Not only does Moses remind Israel of all God's goodness to them.
He gave them an inheritance
He alone led them through the wasteland and howling wilderness.
He protected them and instructed them.
He carried them on wings, and gave them honey from the rock

4. Israel's Response to God's Kindness is Apostasy:

Israel forsook God, scornfully esteemed the Rock of their salvation.
With abominations Israel provoked God to anger.
They sacrificed to demons, not to God.
Israel has forgotten their Father, the Lord God

5. God's Reaction: Withdrawal and punishment of Israel:

God said, I will hide my face from them.
They are a perverse generation.
They have moved Me to anger and jealousy
I will heap disasters on them;
The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within.

6. The LORD states His case and makes a plea to Israel:

They are a nation void of counsel; there is no understanding in them.
Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand.
For the LORD will judge His people and Have compassion on His servants
There is no God besides Me;
Now I raise my hand to heaven and declare as surely as I live
I will take revenge on my enemies and repay those who reject me.

► Moses and Joshua stood before the people and Moses spoke the words to them. Then Moses gave Israel words of encouragement. *"Take to heart all the words of warning I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions. These instructions are not empty words -- they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River."*

God Gives His Final Command to Moses ...

Deuteronomy 32:48-52 • That same day the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Moab, to the mountains east of the river, and climb Mount Nebo, which is across from Jericho. Look out across the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the people of Israel as their own special possession. Then you will die there on the mountain. You will join your ancestors, just as Aaron, your brother, died on Mount Hor and joined his ancestors. For both of you betrayed me with the Israelites at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there.

So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

Q: What are the most significant aspects of this passage of scripture?

Q: Where was Mount Nebo?

Chapter 33 records the blessings Moses pronounced on Israel prior to God sending Moses to the top of Mt. Nebo.

► The chapter opens with the Introductory words: “Now this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death.” This blessing is placed after the Song of Moses, between God’s directive to Moses regarding his death and the narrative of his death in Chapter 34.

The blessing is also stated in the third person, referring to Moses as “the man of God,” a terminology used by Joshua when referring to Moses. [Joshua 14:6] Prior to this notation, it was never used. Later, it was used as the superscription in Psalm 90.

Though Chapter 33 has been subjected to debate, it is the general consensus of scholars that the contents of the blessings, though written by Moses, was inserted into the narrative after the fact – probably by Joshua.

► Following the Introduction, the Blessing proceeded with statements regarding the Glory of God’s revealed to Israel at Sinai.

Q: How was the Lord’s Glory revealed to Israel at Sinai?

► The Blessing continues by declaring the Lord’s love toward his People. It is the Lord, not some other god, who loves his people, who are in His hand--a hand that both controls and supports them. He is their King and the ruler over the leaders and the tribes. At His feet they bow down and worship, and at His feet they receive the law that Moses gave them--the law that was now their possession.

Q: The conceptual ideology that Israel did not need an earthly king to represent them because the Lord God was their King, was of supreme importance to early Israel. When did this ideology change?

► **Now Moses addresses each individual tribe, speaking personally to each one. The Blessings might seem more like Advice with Warnings but each does contain a prayerful blessing. This is where we will pick up the story next...**



Next Time • Lesson #42

“A Blessing For Each Tribe” • Part I
Deuteronomy 33:6-19

