

The Book of Deuteronomy

Lesson 18: The Song of Moses, His Blessing, and His Death -- Deuteronomy

31:1–34:12

Every great story comes at last to its ending, and the ending of Moses is one of the most moving in all of Scripture. For forty years this man has carried a stubborn, beloved people on his shoulders. He has argued with Pharaoh, parted the sea, climbed the mountain, broken the tablets and climbed again, pleaded for the people when God's anger burned, and walked every dusty mile of the wilderness. Now, on the far side of the Jordan, an old man of a hundred and twenty whose eye is not dim and whose strength is not gone hands over the work to another and climbs a mountain to die.

There is something achingly honest about how the Bible tells it. Moses does not get to enter the land. He sees it spread out before him from the top of Nebo, every hill and valley of the promise he has lived for, and God says, "I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there" (34:4). The greatest of the prophets, the friend whom the Lord knew face to face, finishes his course outside the land, and God Himself buries him in a valley, and no one knows the place to this day.

But before he goes, Moses sings. God gives him a song to teach Israel, a song about the Rock who is perfect in all His ways and a people prone to forget Him, a song that will outlive Moses and stand as a witness when the nation strays. And he blesses the tribes one by one, like a father gathering his children for a final word. The book that began with a backward look at the wilderness ends with a forward look at a Rock who does not change.

This is the capstone of our whole study, and as we stand with Moses on Nebo we are meant to feel two things at once: the grandeur of this servant of God, and the limits of even the greatest servant. For Moses, the unequaled prophet, still points beyond himself. There is a Prophet like him yet greater, a Leader who brings His people all the way home, a Rock who is our life. Let us climb the mountain with Moses one last time, and look where he is pointing.

Group Discussion: Moses, the greatest prophet of the old covenant, finishes his life outside the promised land and points beyond himself to One greater. Why is it significant that even Israel's mightiest leader was not the final answer, and where does he direct our hope?

Personal Reflection: Moses spent forty years pouring himself out for people who often resisted him, and he died with the work unfinished and the land unentered. What does his faithful, unfinished life teach you about how you are spending your own?

Read Deuteronomy 31:1–34:12

Study Questions

1. Moses commissions Joshua publicly, telling him “be strong and courageous” because “it is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you nor forsake you” (31:7-8). What does this transfer of leadership teach us about how God’s work continues beyond any one servant?
2. Moses writes the law and commands that it be read to all Israel every seven years so that they and their children “may learn to fear the Lord” (31:9-13). How faithfully are you keeping God’s word before your own heart and the next generation?
3. God tells Moses plainly that after his death the people “will turn to other gods” and break the covenant (31:16-21), and He gives the song as a witness against them. What does it reveal about God that He provides for Israel’s future failure even before it happens?
4. The Song of Moses opens by calling God “the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice” (32:4). When life feels unstable, what difference does it make to you to know that God is an unchanging Rock?
5. The song laments that Israel “scoffed at the Rock of his salvation” and “forgot the God who gave you birth” (32:15-18). What does the song teach us about how comfort and prosperity can lead God’s people to forget Him?
6. The song warns of a people who “are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them” and pleads, “Oh that they were wise, that they understood this,

that they would discern their latter end" (32:28–29). Where do you need to grow wiser about where your present choices are leading?

7. Even in judgment the song turns to hope, declaring "I kill and I make alive" and "vengeance is mine, and recompense", and finally that God "atones for his land and his people" (32:39–43). What does this blend of judgment and mercy reveal about God's ultimate purposes?
8. Moses blesses the tribes like a father, beginning "there is none like God" who "is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (33:26–27). How have you known the everlasting arms underneath you in a hard season?
9. Moses climbs Nebo, sees the promised land he may not enter, and dies, and Scripture says "there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (34:10). Yet Moses himself foretold a Prophet like him to come (18:15–18), fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 3:22–23), and Hebrews shows Jesus as greater than Moses (Hebrews 3:1–6). How does the unequalled Moses point us beyond himself to Christ, and how should we read the promised land and the rest he longed for in light of the gospel?
10. Looking back now across the whole book of Deuteronomy, the wilderness retold, the great commandment to love God, the warnings and blessings, the call to choose life, and now the song, the blessing, and the death of Moses, name one specific way the Lord Jesus has been forming you through this entire study, and one thing you will carry forward.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Acts 3:22–23, where Peter declares Jesus the Prophet like Moses; Hebrews 3:1–6, Jesus is faithful over God’s house as a son, greater than Moses the servant; Hebrews 4:1–11, the rest Israel sought in the land remains and is found in Christ; Hebrews 11:13–16, the faithful sought a better, heavenly country; Joshua 1:1–9, God confirms to Joshua the very promise Moses gave him

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