

## Finishing Well: *Moses and His Final Words (Deuteronomy 31:24-34:8)*

“He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith.”  
~ Thomas Watson

### I. Investigation: Lessons from a Dying Saint (Deut 31:24-34:8)

#### A. Introduction

The final chapters of the Pentateuch entail Moses' parting words to the Israelites. Moses provides the people with two poems - “the Song of Moses” (Deut 32) and “the blessing of Moses” (Deut 33). These final words recorded from this great leader are laced with honesty, candor, blessing, and even joy. This legacy of encouragement and exhortation is couched in prophetic language as Moses looks to the future of the Israelite nation.

#### B. Moses understood the importance of God's Word (31:24-26).

One scholar writes, “The song functioned as a part of the witness to the renewal of the covenant; when the Israelites sang it, they would bear witness to their understanding and agreement to the full terms and implications of the covenant” (Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 373).

Past experience demonstrated knew that the Israelites would need to be reminded of the importance of the Word of God (cf. 9:6, 13; 10:16).

From his actions to his words, Moses places extreme importance on Scripture. In fact, Moses concludes this song by reminding them that these *very* words are life (32:46-47)! Their existence and prosperity depended on it (cf. 5:16; 6:2; 11:9; 25:15).

#### C. Moses reminds the people of God's attributes and actions (32:3-4; 33:26-29).

In many ways, the Song of Moses records a graphic contrast between the nature of God and the nature of the Israelites (cf. Hamilton, *Handbook to the Pentateuch*, 468).

In verses 3-4, observe how Moses depicts the Lord in his song:

“The path lying ahead was not one of peaceful existence and quiet solitude, but it was one beset on every side with danger. Yet it was within this danger and war that Israel would find its safety (v. 28), because the path of danger was the path in which the presence and help of God would be found” (Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 403).

D. Moses recognized the importance of obedience (32:39-43).

By commanding the Israelites to sing this song, Moses sought to show that (1) they were obligated to obey the Lord; and (2) they would face certain judgment if they failed to walk in righteousness (cf. J. S. Deere, "Deuteronomy," in *BKC*, 1:318).

These final words of Moses were meant to serve as a serious deterrent to future rebellion and apostasy.

How were these truths of these words been seen in their journey to the Promised Land?

E. Moses accepts God's will (34:1-8)

Not once do the Scriptures record Moses complaining or arguing with the Lord concerning His decision. Moses graciously accepted the verdict from the Lord.

The text makes it clear that Moses was not frail or incapable of leading. He was in full possession of his faculties (34:7).

Despite the judgement that was given, Moses still enjoyed intimacy with the Lord until the end. Instead of a State funeral, the Lord granted Moses a divine funeral!

## II. Intersect

A. These final chapters of Deuteronomy reminds us of the importance of God's Word in our lives—our present state and our future depends upon it!

Psalm 119:97-104 -

B. Despite the failures and judgements of the past, we need to be like Moses and seek to glorify the Lord now and in the future.

John 21 -

C. Our lives need to foster, in others, a passion to serve God. Examine your check book and calendar to see how you are doing!

2 Corinthians 9:11-15 -

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**Psalm 90:12-17 - A Prayer of Moses**

“So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

Turn, O LORD! How long?

Have compassion on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us,  
and as many years as we have seen evil.

Let your work be manifest to your servants,  
and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and prosper for us the work of our hands—

O prosper the work of our hands!”

**Doxology**

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

“Live in Christ and the flesh need not fear death.”

~ John Knox