

LESSON 10



THE DEATH OF MOSES

Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 34

Among many great prophets of God in the Bible, Moses stands out as a leading one. What made him great? It was not his natural ability. The first forty years of his life while living by his natural ability provides proof of this fact. His greatness began with the change made in him at his meeting with God at the bush. After that experience, God was able to use Moses to the extent He did, because he yielded himself in complete surrender to Him.

Forty years had passed since God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses had been their leader all those forty years. Now they had come to the land of Moab on the east side of Jordan.

MEMORY VERSE: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

—*Psalm 116:15*

Moses Views the Land

Deuteronomy 34:1-4 Moses went up . . . unto the mountain of Nebo . . . It was east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho. From this height **the Lord shewed him all . . .** God showed kindness in showing him the land to which his efforts had brought Israel. **Unto Dan** to the north, **the utmost sea** (the Mediterranean) on the west, **and the south**, from Jericho before him to Zoar at the south end of the Dead Sea, Moses looked.

Moses, of course, yearned to go in and have part in that great land to which he had looked forward for forty years. See Deuteronomy 3:23-27. He **besought the Lord . . . I pray thee, let me go over . . . The Lord said . . . speak no more unto me of this matter.** Moses submitted. Not in bitterness but in loving obedience, he set about preparing Israel for the change.

1. He gave Israel a charge (a burden, trust, responsibility laid upon one) to obey the Lord (Deuteronomy 29-30).
2. He set Joshua, their new leader, before the people and gave him a charge to **be strong and of a good courage** and follow the Lord (Deuteronomy 31:7-8, 23).
3. He wrote God's Law in permanent form to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 31:9-13, 24-26).
4. At God's direction, he wrote and gave to the people a song as a witness to show them their wrong should they turn from the Lord to other gods (Deuteronomy 31:19-22, 30; 32:1-47).
5. Finally, before going onto the mountain, he gave a blessing to Israel (Deuteronomy 33).

Punishment is not pleasant. There are many ways to meet it—with anger, resentment, bitterness, revenge, despair, hope, submission, repentance, etc. What kind of attitude did Moses form toward punishment? He besought the Lord, the answer was no, and he turned his attention to the welfare of Israel after his departure (Numbers 27:16-17). When a person has a commission from God, he cannot lightly cast off the burden that it lays upon his heart. Moses did not think of himself in self-pity, but he thought of the people God had placed in his charge. He was thinking of the honor of God. We can learn much from Moses for our own meeting of disappointments or punishment.

Moses Dies

Deuteronomy 34:5-8 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there. No sickness, no violence, just the spirit leaving the body to be with God. There are only two kinds of people—servants of the Lord and servants of Satan. Each master takes his servants to be with him. God settled the question of where Moses went when He inspired the writer to call him **the servant of the Lord**. Then **he buried him**. Who did? The Lord, for **no man knoweth of his sepulchre**. See Jude 9. **Moses was an hundred and twenty years old . . . his eye was not dim, nor his natural force—health and strength—abated.** Hence he did not die of natural weakening of the body, but by the direction of God. **The children of Israel wept for Moses . . . thirty days** as they did for Aaron.

The penalty of the second death, of damnation, was removed by forgiveness, but Moses could not enter Canaan. In this, God gave us a type. Moses represents the Law, being the one through whom the Law was given. As Moses could not lead Israel into Canaan, so the Law cannot justify us or make us perfect (Acts 13:39; Hebrews 7:19). Joshua represents the Gospel of Christ, and as he led Israel into their inheritance in Canaan, so Jesus leads us into our spiritual inheritance, life in Him.

Joshua Succeeds Moses

Deuteronomy 34:9 Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom. This came from God. God directed the impartation of this by the laying on of Moses' hands (Numbers 27:18, 23). **The children of Israel hearkened unto him**, for he was to be their leader now. Their listening to him was not by chance but by the design of God. God chose him and told Moses. God directed Moses to give him a charge in the sight of the people (Numbers 27:19-22). Moses obeyed, and Joshua was established in his position as the Lord intended.

Moses, a Great Prophet

Deuteronomy 34:10-12 There arose not a prophet since . . . like unto Moses—this is the Lord's evaluation of Moses' life and His comparison of it with others up to the time of this writing. Moses' greatness lay in his relationship to God. **The Lord knew him face to face.** He was sent by the Lord to do **signs and wonders** (miracles) **in Egypt**. He was great **in all that mighty hand** and **great terror** that he **shewed in the sight of all Israel**. There were the wonders of Sinai, of the miraculous giving of food and water, destruction of rebellious sinners, and many others.

Moses was great, but without his complete surrender, God could not have used him. His yieldance opened the way for other virtues to work—obedience, prayer, and listening to God's voice, faithfulness, and many others. Moses was human, but he went far beyond the human as he drew near to God. Others can draw as near to God as Moses did if they will allow the Spirit of God to direct their lives. Moses was a great prophet. Jesus Christ is the greater Prophet.

JUST A THOUGHT

**"Nothing is so strong as gentleness,
nothing as gentle as strength."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
It is revised and posted here with written permission from
(c) Bible Paths Publications, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047