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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**“GATHER THE PEOPLE TOGETHER”**

**Deuteronomy 31:1-28**

***Deuteronomy 31:1-2***

***1 "And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel."***

***2 "And he said unto them, I [am] an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan."***

To prepare for his approaching death, Moses had previously associated himself in public settings with the elders (27:1) and the priests (27:9), and now he would confer the leadership on Joshua. Moses was 40 years old, when he fled Egypt the first time. He was 80 years old, when the wilderness journey began, and now, after the wilderness wanderings, he is 120 years old. He has lived a very full life. It is time for him to go to heaven and receive his reward. Moses reminded the people that he was no longer able to come and go. At the time of his death, “his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated” (34:7). So even at his advanced age he still had full use of his faculties. The reason he could not go with them is because the LORD had told him he would not go over into the promised land, because of his disobedience.

***Numbers 20:10-12***

***10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?***

***11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.***

***12 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.***

Moses had to accept that his season of leadership was completed. Sadly, it ended in an act of emotional disobedience. Moses is hailed as the great leader of the Exodus, the one through whom God delivered His people from Egyptian slavery. To Moses God entrusted the Law. Jesus demonstrated that Moses foreshadowed His own work as the Messiah (John 3:14-15). He is a type of Christ!

***Deuteronomy 34:10-12***

***10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,***

***11 In all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,***

***12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.***

Yet Moses, for all his blessings, was not allowed to enter the [Promised Land](https://www.gotquestions.org/Promised-Land.html). The people had angered Moses so much, that he struck the Rock twice, instead of speaking to it as God commanded. To add insult to injury, he pridefully called God’s children “rebels” insinuating that he had power to bring forth water out of the rock. The water-giving rock is used as a symbol of Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:4. The rock was struck in Exodus 17:6, just like Christ was crucified once in Hebrews 7:27. Moses’ speaking to the rock in Numbers 20 is a picture of prayer. Jesus was “struck” once, and He continues to provide living water to those who pray in faith to Him. When Moses angrily struck the rock twice, he destroyed the biblical typology and, in effect, crucified Christ again. The command symbolized Moses’ obedience to what God “has said”, or what He “is” saying! Yes, the people were rebellious, but God was still gracious! Many of the Israelites who witnessed the miracle in Exodus 17 had died in the wilderness. These were their children. But because of “anger” and “pride” Moses was not “in tune” with and failed to sanctify God before Israel. Subsequently, his leadership was terminated immediately.

***Deuteronomy 32:51-52***

***51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of MeribahKadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.***

***52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.***

The punishment may seem harsh to us, but, when we look closely at Moses’ actions, we see several mistakes. Most obviously, Moses disobeyed a direct command from God. God’s instructions were different here. God wanted Moses to trust Him, especially after they had been in such close relationship for so many years. Moses didn’t need to use force; he simply needed to obey God and know that God would be true to His promise. Also, Moses took credit for the miracle himself (and Aaron), instead of attributing it to God. Moses did this publicly. God could not let it go unpunished and expect the Israelites to understand His holiness. Moses’ punishment for disobedience, pride, and the misrepresentation of Christ’s sacrifice was steep. Yet we do not see Moses complain about his punishment. Instead, he continues to faithfully lead the people and honor God. Moses’ failure at the rock did not negate or break his relationship with God. God continued to use the prophet and continued to love him with tenderness. He was a great leader who was no longer able to lead effectively. Though glorious, his season had passed. In His holiness, God is also compassionate. He invited Moses up to [Mount Nebo](https://www.gotquestions.org/mount-Nebo.html) where He showed His beloved prophet the Promised Land before his death and then personally and privately, buried him in the mountain.

***Deuteronomy 34:4-5***

***4 And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.***

***5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.***

***6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.***

***Deuteronomy 31:3 "The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, [and] he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: [and] Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said."***

Moses’s messages were over. He had come to the end of his leadership. But Moses didn’t dwell on that. He knew the important thing was that the Lord would cross ahead of Israel, clearing the way before them. As important as a human leader was, the LORD would be the one who would cross ahead of them to destroy the nations. Nevertheless, Joshua was the human figure God approved as their leader in the conquest. Under his leadership, Israel would defeat their enemies because God would deliver them over.

***Deuteronomy 3:27-28***

***27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.***

***28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.***

***Deuteronomy 31:4 "And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed."***

This is God's battle. Moses is reminding them, again, that God had anointed Joshua to lead them into the promised land. The LORD will be with them and go before them. They have nothing to fear. God will destroy the strong nations that lie before them in the way. They shall go in and possess the land of promise. He had already shown them an example of what He would do, when He destroyed Og.

***Deuteronomy 31:5 "And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you."***

In the earlier chapters, Moses went into great detail about what they were to do with the people before them. They must just carry out those commands now. The LORD will do the same thing with Joshua as leader, that He would have done with Moses as leader.

***Deuteronomy 7:1-5***

***1 When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;***

***2 And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:***

***3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.***

***4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.***

***5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.***

***Deuteronomy 31:6-7***

***6 "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."***

***7 "And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it."***

Moses charged the people to be strong and courageous, for the Lord was with them, and He would be faithful so that they need not be afraid. Moses then gave the same message to Joshua. The Lord later repeated these same words Himself to Joshua, just before the nation crossed the Jordan River (Joshua 1:6-9). They should realize by now, that it is not their strong arm that has gotten them this far. The strength they have is in their God. He will continue to be with them, and they have nothing to fear. He will not forsake them.

***Deuteronomy 31:8 "And the LORD, he [it is] that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."***

Joshua was one of the two spies, who thought they should have taken the promised land before. He and Caleb were the only two, of the twelve spies who had searched the promised land, who thought they could take it. He will not fail, because he places his trust in God, and not his own strength. God will be with them; Joshua will not fail.

***Deuteronomy 31:9-11***

***9 "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel."***

***10 "And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of [every] seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,"***

***11 "When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing."***

To ensure its continuity, Moses wrote down this law and safeguarded it with the priests, who carried the ark of the covenant, the sacred possession of the Israelites. This law in verse nine refers either to the entire book of Deuteronomy. Moses gave instructions that this law was to be read publicly every seven years at the Feast of “Booths” or “Tabernacles” or “Ingathering’s” at the central sanctuary. The seventh year was when they freed their Hebrew brothers. This reading of the law was a reminder to them of the importance of keeping the law of God. This was not just the ten commandments, but the law that covered secular life, as well as religious life. This Feast took place at the end of the year. It was a reminder of God’s provision for his people. It was specified that on the Feast Days no one was to attend empty-handed (Exodus 23:14-17). If the point of these Feasts was to celebrate what the Lord had provided, it would be a contradiction to appear with nothing. Requiring everyone to attend the feasts three times a year would foster unity and devotion in the nation grounded in their mutual faith in the Lord, national and theological unity.

***Deuteronomy 31:12-13***

***12 "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that [is] within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:"***

***13 "And [that] their children, which have not known [anything], may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."***

This public reading of Deuteronomy was not just for the men but also for the women and children, as well as any foreigners in their midst. All people were to have access to this law so that they might not only hear it but also learn through it to fear the Lord and carefully observe God’s law. It was the obligation of each person to know and keep the law. The law, spoken of here, is the law in its entirety. The public gathering of all God’s children was the primary mission of Jesus. In his own words, Jesus says he “came to gather” and thus is an essential component of the Gospel. He saw this “gathering” work as so important, so central, that everyone either took part in it with Him or was actively working against Him.

***Matthew 12:30 “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.***

***Matthew 18:19-20***

***19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.***

***20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.***

***Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”***

***Matthew 24:31 “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”***

***Mark 13:27 “And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”***

***Ephesians 1:10 “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”***

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who did Moses speak to in verse 1?  
2. How old was Moses, when he spoke these words?  
3. He had gotten \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
4. How old was Moses, when he fled Egypt the first time?  
5. How old was Moses, when the wilderness journey began?  
6. Why would he not go into the promised land?  
7. Who did the Rock symbolize?  
8. Who will go before them into the promised land?  
9. Whose battle is this?  
10. What instructions were given to them in verse 6?  
11. What was Joshua to cause these Israelites to do?  
12. What kind of person will it take to lead them into the promised land?

13. Who, besides Joshua, had thought they could take the land the first time they spied it out?  
14. How many of the spies did not believe they could take it?

15. Who did Moses deliver the law to?  
16. When were they to read it aloud to the people?  
17. Why were they to read the law aloud?  
18. Who kept it safe between the times they read it?  
19. Who was brought together to hear the law?  
20. Why was it important for the children to hear it?  
21. Who did the LORD tell Moses to meet with Him?  
22. Where did they meet?