

Deuteronomy 34

The Message

Moses climbed from the Plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the peak of Pisgah facing Jericho. GOD showed him all the land from Gilead to Dan, all Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh; all Judah reaching to the Mediterranean Sea; the Negev and the plains which encircle Jericho, City of Palms, as far south as Zoar.

Then and there GOD said to him, “This is the land I promised to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with the words ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I’ve let you see it with your own eyes. There it is. But you’re not going to go in.”

Moses died there in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of GOD, just as GOD said. God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor. No one knows his burial site to this very day.

Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight was sharp; he still walked with a spring in his step. The People of Israel wept for Moses in the Plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end.

Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. The People of Israel listened obediently to him and did the same as when GOD had commanded Moses.

No prophet has risen since in Israel like Moses, whom GOD knew face-to-face. Never since has there been anything like the signs and miracle-

wonders that GOD sent him to do in Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land—nothing to compare with that all-powerful hand of his and all the great and terrible things Moses did as every eye in Israel watched.

Joshua 1

The Message

After the death of Moses the servant of GOD, GOD spoke to Joshua, Moses' assistant:

“Moses my servant is dead. Get going. Cross this Jordan River, you and all the people. Cross to the country I'm giving to the People of Israel. I'm giving you every square inch of the land you set your foot on—just as I promised Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon east to the Great River, the Euphrates River—all the Hittite country—and then west to the Great Sea. It's all yours. All your life, no one will be able to hold out against you. In the same way I was with Moses, I'll be with you. I won't give up on you; I won't leave you. Strength! Courage! You are going to lead this people to inherit the land that I promised to give their ancestors. Give it everything you have, heart and soul. Make sure you carry out The Revelation that Moses commanded you, every bit of it. Don't get off track, either left or right, so as to make sure you get to where you're going. And don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you'll get where you're going; then you'll succeed.

Haven't I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don't be timid; don't get discouraged. GOD, your God, is with you every step you take."

Then Joshua gave orders to the people's leaders: "Go through the camp and give this order to the people: 'Pack your bags. In three days you will cross this Jordan River to enter and take the land GOD, your God, is giving you to possess.'"

Then Joshua addressed the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He said, "Remember what Moses the servant of GOD commanded you: GOD, your God, gives you rest and he gives you this land. Your wives, your children, and your livestock can stay here east of the Jordan, the country Moses gave you; but you, tough soldiers all, must cross the River in battle formation, leading your brothers, helping them until GOD, your God, gives your brothers a place of rest just as he has done for you. They also will take possession of the land that GOD, your God, is giving them. Then you will be free to return to your possession, given to you by Moses the servant of GOD, across the Jordan to the east."

They answered Joshua: "Everything you commanded us, we'll do. Wherever you send us, we'll go. We obeyed Moses to the letter; we'll also obey you—we just pray that GOD, your God, will be with you as he was with Moses. Anyone who questions what you say and refuses to obey whatever you command him will be put to death. Strength! Courage!"

Joshua 2

The Message

Joshua son of Nun secretly sent out from Shittim two men as spies: “Go. Look over the land. Check out Jericho.” They left and arrived at the house of a harlot named Rahab and stayed there.

The king of Jericho was told, “We’ve just learned that men arrived tonight to spy out the land. They’re from the People of Israel.”

The king of Jericho sent word to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you to stay the night in your house. They’re spies; they’ve come to spy out the whole country.”

The woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, two men did come to me, but I didn’t know where they’d come from. At dark, when the gate was about to be shut, the men left. But I have no idea where they went. Hurry up! Chase them—you can still catch them!” (She had actually taken them up on the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax that were spread out for her on the roof.) So the men gave chase down the Jordan road toward the fords. As soon as they were gone, the gate was shut.

Before the spies were down for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof and said, “I know that GOD has given you the land. We’re all afraid. Everyone in the country feels hopeless. We heard how GOD dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt, and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under a holy curse and destroyed. We heard it and our hearts sank. We all

had the wind knocked out of us. And all because of you, you and GOD, your God, God of the heavens above and God of the earth below.

“Now promise me by GOD. I showed you mercy; now show my family mercy. And give me some tangible proof, a guarantee of life for my father and mother, my brothers and sisters—everyone connected with my family. Save our souls from death!”

“Our lives for yours!” said the men. “But don’t tell anyone our business. When GOD turns this land over to us, we’ll do right by you in loyal mercy.”

She lowered them down out a window with a rope because her house was on the city wall to the outside. She told them, “Run for the hills so your pursuers won’t find you. Hide out for three days and give your pursuers time to return. Then get on your way.”

The men told her, “In order to keep this oath you made us swear, here is what you must do: Hang this red rope out the window through which you let us down and gather your entire family with you in your house—father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Anyone who goes out the doors of your house into the street and is killed, it’s his own fault—we aren’t responsible. But for everyone within the house we take full responsibility. If anyone lays a hand on one of them, it’s our fault. But if you tell anyone of our business here, the oath you made us swear is canceled—we’re no longer responsible.”

She said, "If that's what you say, that's the way it is," and sent them off. They left and she hung the red rope out the window.

They headed for the hills and stayed there for three days until the pursuers had returned. The pursuers had looked high and low but found nothing.

The men headed back. They came down out of the hills, crossed the river, and returned to Joshua son of Nun and reported all their experiences. They told Joshua, "Yes! GOD has given the whole country to us. Everybody there is in a state of panic because of us."