

**Deuteronomy**  
**November 16, 2008**  
**God's Leadership**  
**Chapters 31**

**I. The End of the Book**

The last four chapters appear to be an appendix. Some have stated, "If one read chapters 1-4 and then jumped to 31-34, then it would seem like one continuous flow."

In Chapters 31-33, we see the final words recorded by Moses. What is his message? How is this message important to us today?

**II. Chapter 31:1-8: Joshua as Successor**

**Deut 31:1-8**

**31:1 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: 2 "I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' 3 The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. 4 And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. 5 The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."**

**7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. 8 The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."**

**NIV**

- Verse 1: The exact timing of this verse cannot be totally ascertained. It could be before or after the earlier chapters. In any case, it was about the same time given that Moses is 120 years old in the next verse.
- Verse 2: Moses is dying not because he is old and tired (although this is the case), but because of God's punishment for him because of Meribah (See Num 20:10-12).
- Verse 3: The LORD will go ahead of the Israelites, but the Israelites must follow closely behind to show their trust in Him. This is a major theme in these final chapters. Is it important to us today? (Hint: Heb. 13:5).
- Verses 6 or 8: If you want to memorize one verse in the book of Deuteronomy, I would suggest one of these two parallel verses. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Actually, a lot of people and situations can be against us, but they do not matter when compared with the power of God.)
- Verse 7: As the overall leader, Joshua will particularly need to be strong and courageous.
- Verse 7: The dividing up of the land means that each tribe must take the area allocated to it and not the territory of another tribe or some nation outside of

the Promised Land. The Danites were an example of a tribe that has a hard time winning its territory and which then moved to a territory outside of its allotment and outside the Promised Land.

### III. Chapter 31:9-13: The Law to Be Read Every Seven Years

#### Deut 31:9-13

**9** So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. **10** Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, **11** when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. **12** Assemble the people — men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns — so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. **13** Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

NIV

- Verse 9: Some of the ancient rabbis speculated that Moses wrote thirteen copies of the whole Pentateuch; that he gave one to each of the twelve tribes, and the thirteenth was laid up by the ark. Other believes that he wrote two copies, per Deut. 17:18. Perhaps, he only wrote one copy.
- Verse 10: At seven years increment, all of it would be read. This would a reminder for the older folk but perhaps the first time for all of it for younger people at one time. This did not preclude the teaching ministry of the home as in Deut. 6:6-7 or other teaching ministries of the Levites as in Lev 10:8-11.
- Verse 12: One recorded example of this happening is in Neh. 8:13-9:38.

### IV. Chapter 31:14-29: Moses and Joshua Receive God's Charge

- Verse 14: There is a bit of confusion concerning the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle. Many have these as separate locations, but they might be the same place. Certainly both are separated from the main camp of the Israelites, whether it is at their center or outside their perimeter.
- Verse 16: The Israelites will not follow the covenant and will therefore be made appropriate for punishment. Notice the contrast with verses 6 and 8 above.
- Verse 18: This means that God's providence to bless the Israelites will be repealed as in the following:

#### Num 6:24-26

**24** "The LORD bless you and keep you; **25** the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; **26** the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." '

NIV

- Verses 19/21: Verses 19 and 21 are witnesses against the Israelites. They identify what the Israelites are to do; if they do not do them, then they are guilty of sin; they have no accuse. Verse 26 identifies the book of the law as witness as well. The song (Chapter 32?) will come back to haunt the Israelites.
- Verse 21: One of the primary teachings of Deuteronomy is the need to teach people from generation to generation. When that fails, then the nation will fail. When that happens, Israel cannot stay in the land any longer.

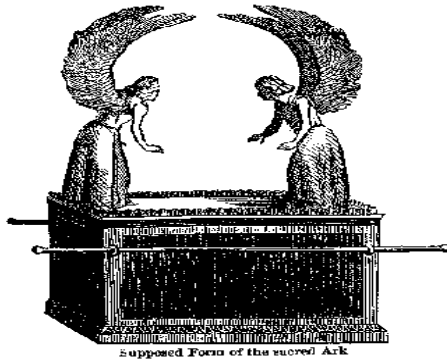
Verse 23: Since the Israelites will fail to accomplish all that God is commanding, Joshua must be strong and courageous. Even Joshua's own tribe of Ephraim was not entirely successful in the land.

### **Judg 1:29**

**29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them.**

NIV

Verse 26: The exact location of the book of the law relative to the ark is not fully disclosed. We know that the Ten Commandments are in ark; perhaps they represented the entire book of the law.



Verse 28: Heaven and earth are unchanging witnesses. They will still be there when the Second Coming occurs. Moses is going to personally read the law to the leaders so that they will have no excuse in following it completely.

Verse 29: Moses points out to the elders that they will fail. "Become utterly corrupt" means that they will follow their own thoughts/words of those of the world and not that of God.

## **V. Chapter 31:30**

Chapter 32 will contain the song.

## **VI. Why Do We Have a Tendency for Fear and Discouragement?**

What is the antidote for these tendencies?