

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**11-16-22**

**Deuteronomy 31**

**Moses At One Hundred And Twenty – Verses 1-2**

**31 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: <sup>2</sup>“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.’**

**31:1-2** I am one hundred and twenty years old today: Moses, at 120 years, was not limited by his physical condition (in a short time he will climb to the top of a mountain). Instead, he could no longer go out and come in because he was limited by God’s command — the decree that Moses would not enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:7-12).

**31:1-2** This may seem an excessively harsh punishment for Moses; after all, with only one slip-up, he now must die short of the Promised Land? But Moses was being judged by a stricter standard because of his leadership position with the nation, and because he had a uniquely close relationship with God. It is right for teachers and leaders to be judged by a stricter standard (James 3:1); though it is unrighteous to hold teachers and leaders to a perfect standard. It is true the people’s conduct was worse than Moses’ but it is irrelevant.

**The Charge To The Children Of Israel – Verses 3-6**

**<sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. <sup>6</sup>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.”**

**31:3** The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you: Moses had led Israel for 40 years; he was the only leader most of these people had ever known. Yet the nation could be confident, and Moses could go his way in peace because He knew God was with Israel. Israel, Moses, or Joshua did not have to be afraid. Instead, they could Be strong and of good courage, because the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. Moses was a great man; one of the greatest to ever walk this earth. But Moses was not irreplaceable. God being with them, Israel was in good hands, with or without Moses.

**31:6** Be strong and of good courage: It was now time for the nation to take courage in the LORD and not fear nor be dismayed. Moses passes from the scene, but God has not abandoned Israel.

**The Charge To Joshua – Verses 7-8**

**<sup>7</sup>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**

**ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance.**

**<sup>8</sup> 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.”**

**31:7** Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: Bringing the people into the Promised Land was God’s work. He was going to do it. But God almost always does His work through men and women who make themselves available to Him. Sometimes people wrongly say, “It is all the LORD, it’s all the LORD.” True, God does His work, but He does it through people.

**31:7-8** Be strong and of good courage: Since God was going to use Joshua, he must be strong and of good courage. But Moses knew Joshua and knew that he would. So he confidently said, you shall cause them to inherit it.

**31:7-8** Men of encouragement like Moses are a blessing. Moses knew that Joshua might be wavering, so he encouraged him, and pushed him forward to be more than he perhaps thought he could be. God uses encouraging people to help us fulfill the destiny He has for us. Joshua was the man; but the work was the LORD’s: He is the one who goes before you.

### **The Charge To The Priests – Verses 9-13**

**<sup>9</sup> So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. <sup>10</sup> Then Moses commanded them: “At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. <sup>13</sup> 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.”**

**31:10-13** The laws were to be read to the whole assembly so that everyone, including the children, could hear them. Every seven years the entire nation would gather together and listen as a priest read the law to them. There were no books, Bibles, or newsstands to spread God’s word, so the people had to rely on word of mouth and an accurate memory. Memorization was an important part of worship because if everyone knew the law, ignorance would be no excuse for breaking it. To fulfill God’s purpose and will in our lives, we need the content and substance of his Word in our hearts and minds. For the Hebrews, this process began in childhood. Teaching our children and new believers should be one of our top priorities. Our finest teachers, best resources, and most careful thought should be directed toward showing young believers how to follow God in all life’s situations.

### **The Preface To Joshua’s Inauguration As Leader Of Israel – Verses 14-15**

**<sup>14</sup> The LORD said to Moses, “Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, where I will commission him.” So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. <sup>15</sup> Then the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent.**

**30:14** Present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting: Through the wilderness journey, we find Moses and Joshua together before the LORD often. Exodus 33:11 says, his servant Joshua the son

of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle. Joshua was qualified to serve because he was at home in the presence of the LORD.

**30:15** Now the LORD appeared: This begins a solemn and important chapter in the history of God's people. This will be Moses' retirement ceremony and Joshua's inauguration ceremony.

### **A Song Of Moses To Warn Israel In A Time Of Future Apostasy – Verses 16-22**

**<sup>16</sup> And the LORD said to Moses: "You are going to rest with your ancestors, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. <sup>17</sup> And in that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and calamities will come on them, and in that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come on us because our God is not with us?' <sup>18</sup> And I will certainly hide my face in that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods. <sup>19</sup> "Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. <sup>20</sup> When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their ancestors, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. <sup>21</sup> And when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath." <sup>22</sup> So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.**

**31:16** This people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land: Because of this future idolatry in Israel, God instructed Moses to compose sort of a national anthem for ancient Israel.

**31:22** Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel: Yet this was a strange national anthem, because the purpose of this anthem was to testify against them as a witness. God knew that words are more memorable when set to music, so He told Moses to compose the sermon in a song found in the following chapter, Deuteronomy 32.

### **The Inauguration Of Joshua – Verse 23**

**<sup>23</sup> The LORD gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."**

**31:23** Joshua had been appointed to take over the leadership of Israel and guide the people into the Promised Land (Moses could not enter the land due to his disobedience—Numbers 20:12). Joshua, first mentioned in Exodus 17:9, had been Moses' assistant for many years (Joshua 1:1). One of his key qualifications was his faith. As one of the 12 scouts to first enter Canaan, only he and Caleb believed that God could help Israel conquer the land (Numbers 13:1–14:30). Moses told Joshua to be strong and courageous twice in this chapter (31:7, 23). Indeed, this was a frightening task with three million people to care for, settle disputes for, and lead into battle. Finding courage would be Joshua's greatest test. He was strong and courageous because he knew God was with him and because he had faith that God would do all he had promised Israel.

## **Moses Preserves The Law Of God As A Witness Against Israel – Verses 24-27**

**24** After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, **25** he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: **26** “Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. **27** For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!

**31:24** When Moses had completed writing the words of this law: Moses finished the first five books of the Bible and gave this to Israel, and to all creation, as the inspired words of God.

**31:26** Put it beside the ark of the covenant: The Ten Commandments were placed inside the ark of the covenant (Hebrews 9:4). But the whole book of the law — Genesis through Deuteronomy — was placed beside the ark of the covenant.

**31:26-27** That it may be there as a witness against you: Moses knew Israel would rebel. He knew this both from the promise of God (Deuteronomy 31:16-17), and from common sense (If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, how much more after my death?). Therefore, the law would stand as a witness against a rebellious Israel.

We love to find refuge in God’s word in our times of stress and trouble, but we don’t often consider that God’s word, if we reject Jesus and rebel against God, is no friend to us. It is a witness against us, a witness that rises up to testify against us.

## **The Elders And Officers Of Israel Gather For The Song Of Moses – Verses 28-30**

**28** Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials, so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to testify against them. **29** For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD and arouse his anger by what your hands have made.” **30** And Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

**31:28-30** Moses knew that the Israelites, in spite of all they had seen of God’s work, were rebellious at heart. They deserved God’s punishment, although they often received his mercy instead. We, too, are stubborn and rebellious by nature. Throughout our lives we struggle with sin. Repentance once a month or once a week is not enough. We must constantly turn from our sins to God and let him, in his mercy, save us.