

July 14

Scriptures: Read Deuteronomy 31

Key Verse: “The Lord... goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do no fear...” (31:8)

Overview

From this point on, Moses gives a brief summary of the final stages of his life. He has finished his formal lectures to Israel, and now he speaks more personally. He is one hundred and twenty years old and yet still mentally and physically strong (34:7). When he says, “I can no longer go out and come in” (v.2), he means he can no longer be Israel’s active leader because the Lord had forbidden him to cross over the Jordan (cf. Num.20:12).

Soon Moses would no longer be with Israel, so he wanted to encourage them and assure them God would still be among them and go before them into Canaan. He gave three charges, first to the people (vv.1-6), then to Joshua (vv.7-8), and finally to the priests (vv.9-13). In each charge he expressed a concern for the keeping of the covenant. In each charge he expressed a concern for the keeping of the covenant. He exhorted the people not to fear but to be brave and boldly enter Canaan, for God would give them the victory. Indeed, a victorious life can come only when the power of God is at work in one’s life; then we are promised, “He will not leave you nor forsake you: (v.6; cf. Heb.13:5).

In this chapter, we see the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua brought to fulfillment. This transfer was sanctioned by God who called both of them into the Tabernacle to hear His words and see a revelation of Himself (v.14, 23; 1:28; 3:28; Num.27:18-23). Moses challenged Joshua publicly with an exhortation to courage, for he would be responsible to lead Israel into the Promised Land. When God calls someone to do a task, He will be with him and give him the qualities he needs. God gave Joshua the courage and strength he needed, but most importantly He gave His presence so that victory would be assured.

The next and most important thing for Moses to do was to hand over the torah (the written Law) to the priesthood. This symbolized the responsibility of the priesthood to teach and instruct Israel in the ways of the Lord. The Word of God was to be honored and respected. The Law Moses wrote was to be put into the Most Holy Place (v.26) and read every seventh year of release as an important part of the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated at the central sanctuary (vv.10-11). But, this was not the only time it was to be read. They were to meditate constantly on the Law and teach it to their children so they would not fall into temptation. The reading of God’s Word is just as important today for keeping one strong in the faith.

Israel’s faith did not remain strong, however, and with His foreknowledge, God told Moses and Joshua that Israel would “play the harlot” in turning to idol worship and they would forsake Him and break His covenant (v.16). The inevitable consequence would be the wrath of God upon Israel. In their sin He would forsake them, but not without warning. God ordered Moses to write and teach the Song of Witness so it would be passed down from generation to generation and would help Israel remember the warnings and understand that their troubles were justly deserved

for breaking God's covenant. The fact that God would choose to use a song shows the power of music as a means to communicate a message and have an effect on people. We must take care to be selective in the kind of songs we sing and listen to, for the messages they contain can affect our thoughts. Let us only sing and listen to those songs, which bring glory to God.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for the courage and strength to march boldly into ach new day. May we live our lives as a "Song of Witness" to others, especially our own family.