**The Best Is Yet To Come**

**Deuteronomy 34:1-12**

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***1*** *Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan,* ***2*** *all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea,* ***3*** *the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.* ***4*** *And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.”* ***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 the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.* ***7*** *Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated.* ***8*** *And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.*

***9*** *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD commanded Moses.* ***10*** *And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,* ***11*** *none like him for all the signs and wonders that 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 for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.*

January 31, 1892 marked the end of an era. That was the day we lost one of the greatest spiritual leaders the world has ever known. His unique gifting was clear even from a young age. Before his 20th birthday, he had already preached over 600 times. It was his booming voice and skill with words that thrust this English minister into the global spotlight. His church services were often visited by foreign politicians and British royalty. When he arrived there in 1854 the congregation was 232 members. But by the end, 38 years later, they were the largest independent congregation in the world. During that time, some estimate that he preached to over 10,000,000 people. His sermons were translated into more that 20 languages and sold 25,000 copies every week. He would preach at times, 13 occasions per week. The 25,000,000 words of his sermons are equivalent to 27 volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica’s 9th Edition. His words stand as the largest set of books by a single author in the history of Christianity.

He founded a major orphanage. He launched a distinguished seminary and trained nearly 900 students during his lifetime. He typically read 6 books a week and routinely worked 18 hour days. He was a man of uncommon conviction. His boldness against slavery at the time was so strong that American publishers began deleting his words on the topic. Rare in history is this feat of addressing a crowd of 23,000 plus without any microphone or amplification. In fact, in one story, a woman was converted through reading a single page of one of his sermons wrapped around a recently purchased stick of butter. He was a leader of leaders, a pastor of pastors, the prince of preachers. It almost seemed as though heaven was arriving on earth; that he was leading the church into the Promised Land, until news spread that the minister was sick. Thousands began to gather three times daily for special prayer. But on the 31st, the unthinkable happened. Black clouds covered the English countryside as acute kidney failure brought this chapter in church history to a close. As thousands mourned his passing, international headlines the following morning bore three simple words: “Death of Spurgeon.” It was the end of an era. In a sad way, the overpowering feeling for many was a sense of disappointment.

From the moment he was born, it was clear that Moses was different. He was special, unique, chosen. He is one of the most important figures of all time. In fact, his life altered the course of human history in profound ways that affect every one of us every day. And here is a moment no one dreamed would come. This great man of God who had delivered a nation from captivity, who had mediated God’s Law to His people, who had performed supernatural signs and miracles, the one who was at the edge of the Promised Land, on the verge of fulfillment, at the place of deepest longing, at the point of highest anticipation, he who spoke with God face to face, was gone. All that was left to complete this story was just the exclamation point of entering into the land of Canaan. But his life ends without that punctuation. Instead, it finishes with just this incomplete dot, dot, dot. What’s next? The fulfillment toward which the story was driving, not merely his life but from Genesis, the beginning of creation on, human history is building. And it’s left unrealized, almost like a disappointment.

But if that’s the only thing we feel when we read this chapter, then perhaps we need to read a little bit closer. When disappointment stands alone as the final word, to be sure, we are right to despair, but I believe there is more here than mere disappointment. There’s a sense of anticipation, a longing for what is to come. There’s an expectancy on future fulfillment. It is this anticipation that goes into the mix that turns the chapter from bitter to bittersweet. There’s something ahead. If we believe that any particular man or woman or experience or thing, no matter who they are or what they’ve done or what it provides for us, if we believe that that is the ultimate answer to our longing, then we are destined for disappointment. Those things can never provide the hope and satisfaction that we need.

We’re told to get used to disappointment. It may be even the defining mark of our day, where $10,000,000 go into the hype and then 11,000,000 tweets follow with gripe. There is disappointment and disillusionment. The promises just come like a steady barrage. There’s a new product to enrich you; the phone, the car, the shoes. Or there is a fresh relationship to complete you; this roommate, or that spouse, or those friends. Or maybe there is a prominent career to fulfill you; the promotion, the raise, or the projects. Maybe there is a fun experience to entertain you; the vacation, the movie, the restaurant. Or there is a popular book to transform you; the diet, the workout, the tips. Or there is a fearless leader to deliver you; this nation, that judge, those candidates. Or there is even a friendly church to inspire you; this devotional, that preacher, those ministries. We’ve heard them all, haven’t we? These are many good gifts, each one, but if they are viewed as ends in and of themselves, they will always lead to the same dead end of unfulfilled disappointment. There is an ache. There is a longing. There is an expectancy that can only rightly and finally be fulfilled in a certain way, at a certain time, by a certain someone.

The problem is that what often stands between us and that time are these two little words: Not yet! How do we respond to those two words? Because we’re not just talking about not yet as in minutes or hours or days or weeks or months or years. We’re talking about not yet as in the other side of death. We’re talking about something that we’re waiting for that may never come to fulfillment in our lifetime. And for people who don’t believe in what happens after death, that would send them into a spiral of despair. If the best that we have is what is here, it ends up at some point being behind us in the past or beyond us out of reach, and we feel stuck. To them, those words “not yet” seem like never. But there’s a world of difference between not yet and never, and the difference is faith. It’s the way that we weather the storms of disappointment and not have hope wash overboard into the depths of despair. So the question is: Faith in what? That’s a question that is answered at the top of this mountain, at this end of an era.

But before we get to the mountain in chapter 34, we’re just going to take a step back and remember this key figure, this person of Moses. We’re going to look at his life from three angles. We’ll overview his life through Exodus and Numbers. And then we’ll summarize the end of his life, which is in Deuteronomy. We’ll pay special attention to the end of his life there. And if we have time, we’ll take a look at what happens after his life. All three of these angles provide sort of a 3D picture that can stand firm as sort of a lighthouse of anticipation in times of disappointment.

**Angle #1: An Extraordinary Life To Explore—(Ex-Num)**

It’s a life we’ve explored for several months. We’ll just take a look first at the uniqueness of his life. I’ll touch on three elements that we’ve explored: his origin, his calling, and his challenges. So we’ll look at where he came from, who he became, and then what he faced. First, his origin; his dramatic origin, where he came from. You think back at his harrowing arrival. He was born at a time when Pharaoh was trying to murder all the baby boys. His mother stuck him into a reed basket and snuck him down the Nile River. Miraculously, he was drawn out of the water by Pharaoh’s own daughter and given his name, Moses. He grew up with the education and the privileges of the royal house, barely escaping that infanticide that took the lives of countless other males of his generation. It was a harrowing arrival. And you see the drama of his unlikely choice. In Hebrews 11:24 we’re informed that

**Hebrews 11:24-26** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

He rejected the sin in front of him, and instead trusted God and sought the care for His people. There was a harrowing arrival, an unlikely choice, and then we saw a reckless act

where Moses was viewing his people being mistreated and he stepped in, in what seems to be maybe a premature attempt at rescue. He struggles and ends up striking an Egyptian and kills him. And then in fear, he buries him in the sand, hoping no one had seen. But the matter becomes known and Pharaoh decides to try to kill Moses. And so that reckless act is followed by a shameful exile.

Moses is trusting God in a sense, but he’s uncertain as to where this will lead him. He’s in the land of Midian for decades as a shepherd, waiting. And then that lead to the drama of a sovereign encounter. It was a sovereign encounter where shepherding on the mountain, he saw this bush that was on fire, but not consumed. As he drew near, he discovers that this was God Himself. A name is given to him, “I Am,” Yahweh, the God who is! Moses’ arrival, his choice, his reckless act, his shameful exile, a sovereign encounter; this is his dramatic origin. It was a unique life

But his life was also unique in terms of his calling. It’s not just where he came from, but who he became. This encounter drives him to take on first, a role as a chosen rescuer. He was reluctant, but he was commissioned by Yahweh to go and rescue his people out of slavery in Egypt. Through ten plagues, through a Passover, through this miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, he is this chosen rescuer from God for his people. But not only does he have that role, he has another role as a covenant mediator. He led the people through the wilderness to this great mountain, and at Sinai he receives the Law from God. He alone is called to the top to receive these words and to bring them back to the people from a God so holy that if even any of the animals touched the mountain, they would die. Moses is the covenant mediator, the chosen rescuer.

And then we see throughout their journeys that he is a contested leader. Everywhere he goes, they’re fighting against him, making it hard. They complain time and again. Few leaders have been contested as much as he was. He was a man of dramatic origin and of distinct calling. That’s where he came from and who he became, and that leads us into what he faced. What he faced were just his overwhelming challenges.

We can think of a few here. First, it was just the constant spiritual rebellion. The people didn’t want to trust him when they were leaving Egypt. They didn’t want to trust him at the edge of the sea. They didn’t want to trust him in the wilderness. They didn’t want to trust him at the mountain. These people, even while Moses was with God, they rebelled and were worshiping a golden calf. It was constant spiritual rebellion. The second challenge was just the persistent mutiny or uprisings. These people kept trying to take over. They rejected God’s call of Moses; whether it was Korah or Dathan or the rabble or even his own brother and sister. Talk about a challenge! They tried to take over.

And third, sort of undergirding all of this was just this constant unbelief. The reason for the rebellion and the uprisings was that the people did not believe God. They didn’t believe His warnings. They didn’t believe His promises. They were a generation that was stubborn and faithless, so much so that when they got to the edge of the Promised Land the first time, they disobeyed, rejected, and they were sent for forty years wandering in the wilderness more. And this time of unbelief just built and built. It influenced Moses and Aaron so much that at one moment, they couldn’t take it anymore, and they themselves disobeyed God. Moses, in a moment that is so reminiscent of the past, strikes a rock in anger and yells at the people. He disobeys. And because of that moment, unbelief at its worst, God disciplines Moses and says, “You will not enter the Promised Land.” We recognize God’s holiness. We’re afraid of it. But we also sympathize. Moses had some overwhelming challenges. He had a dramatic origin. He was a man of unique calling who faced overwhelming challenges. That was his life that we explored. But we take a second angle here and we look at the book of Deuteronomy and we look at just the end of his life.

**Angle #2: An Extraordinary End of Life To Consider (Deut)**

The whole book really takes place over a short amount of time, right there at the edge of the Promised Land. It’s just Moses talking to the people before they enter. The bulk of the book is really Moses’ final message. We’ll do a quick overview and then we’re going to focus on what happens at the end. The message leads all the way to chapter 33. We’re going to focus on chapter 34, but we’ll just do a quick overview to remind us of what’s happening here.

**His Final Message (CH 1-33)**

Moses, at the end of his life, in the final message here in chapters 1-11, he gives this speech that is a summary of where the people have come from and what God has done and where they are going. The speech of summary is in chapters 1-11. At the center, which is where Pastor Ritch preached from last week, in chapter 6, there is this key passage called the Shema, which means “hear” or “listen.” In Deuteronomy 6:4-5 the nation understood this as the heart of the Law.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5** “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Moses is explaining that this is where they came from, what God has done for them, and what he wants them to do to listen and to love Him. And so after the summary, he just takes the next several chapters, chapters 12-26, to unpack the law of God and what listening and loving God looks like. Here’s what it looks like to follow God in this context.

So he gives a speech and then a law. And then chapters 27-29 are sort of a charge to allegiance. Some people call this the “life and death chapters;” the blessings and the curses. He basically is saying, “This is what happens if you obey and this is what happens if you don’t, and it’s a matter of life and death.” If you ever read the Old Testament and you kind of think, “What is going on? I don’t quite understand,” a really good hint often is to go back to these chapters. When you read them, you start to understand that this is the backbone of why God deals the way He does with this people. It’s because of the choices that they’re making and what He promised to do as a result. It’s a heavy charge. But it’s followed by a word of hope in chapter 30. There is an offer of forgiveness and restoration if they were to repent and come back. Moses gives that to them.

And at this point, he turns in chapter 31 to the heir in leadership and what it looks like moving forward. He has Joshua step forward as a successor. And the last two words of his message are a song and a poem. Now the song is not a light song. It’s a heavy song. It’s sort of a national anthem for Israel. But this is a song that is a witness against them. It’s basically telling the nation what is going to happen as they choose to disobey God and follow sin. He tells them of all of the consequences that will result, and yet the faithfulness of God in the midst of it. This is to be their song. It’s a heavy song. And Moses follows that up with a poem of blessing to each tribe, emphasizing where they’ve been and where they’re going. And this is his final message. It’s a pretty heavy, weighty thing. So it brings us to chapter 34, and we move to Moses’ final moments and his legacy. At the edge of the Promised Land, as he goes up the mountain, here’s the final moments and legacy of Moses.

**His Final Moments (Deut 34:1-6)**

Nelson Mandela was a revolutionary. He was a political leader. He was very famous and appreciated and respected in South Africa as the first elected president in a fully representative democratic election. He led what many call the “bloodless revolution.” He was honored by millions. At the time of his death in 2013, many people were afraid of what was going to happen next. They were afraid he was going to shake the nation to its core. They recognized the influence that he had and thought, “What is happening next?” There was an article that said that this was going to be a source of bewilderment. Here’s the article quote. “Robbed of the founding father who defined its sense of self, South Africa’s teenage democracy suddenly stands alone.” There was concern about where this nation was going to go. It’s not unlike where we’re at with Israel.

They’ve just formed and they’re just about to acquire the land, and they’re losing their key leader. They’re on the edge of the unknown. What’s going to happen? Is God going to keep His promise or has all this been a waste? Is this whole exodus experiment just going to end in disappointment? Chapter 34 gives us a brief look into Moses’ final moments and legacy. We’re going to look at the end of his life. Here are just three lessons I want to draw out that are so simple, and yet so helpful. You can write them at the bottom of your sheet or on the back.

Lesson 1: We can trust God.

Moses is at the top of the mountain by himself. God shows him the land and there’s just a simple sentence of, “Nothing has changed. You can trust Me.”

One of my favorite places in California is this place called Yosemite Valley. There are these beautiful mountains and valleys. There are places that you can hike and climb. It’s always exhausting trying to get to the top of these mountains. And as you go up, they feel like further and further away. But you make your way to the top, and if you’re able to make it to the top, the view is beautiful. It’s just spectacular! You can see for miles, and you kind of catch a glimpse of where everything is at around you. When you’re a young guy, you get up there at the top. For sure, you sit there and you take it in, but what do you do when you’re at the top of a cliff? You kind of go over to the edge, don’t you, just to look over? And what do you do? You grab a rock and take a look. At a spot that there’s no one there to be able to climb or hike, you just want to see what happens. You just toss the rock and watch it fall. The thing is, gravity is the same up there as it is down here, in the general sense. You appreciate gravity down here, but when you’re up there, you just appreciate it with a much fuller depth, don’t you?

There’s this sense about God where we understand, we appreciate something very simple like we can trust Him. But He brings us to these moments in life and even sometimes at the end of life, mountaintop experiences that may or may not be on the top of a mountain, but it’s a unique point from which we get perspective and we appreciate what it truly means that we can trust God. And it’s powerful! We appreciate it in a much fuller sense. And it seems like this is one of those moments for Moses. He’s appreciating that he can trust God. We see that in the private final moments here of Moses. They tell how he died and show why we can trust God. We’ll look at two brief occasions that help us understand that.

First, is Moses’ special viewing. It’s not a viewing of Moses, but it’s a viewing by Moses. It’s a look into the land of Canaan. Moses gets to look at what God had promised to give Abraham and his descendents, and we see that God sticks to His word. We see God’s unchanging goodness through His promise, this promise of this land. And we recognize that Moses gets to see and watch and hear God say, “I’m going to keep My word.” He goes to the top of Mount Nebo and to the top of Pisgah, this prominent peak, and he can see the bulk of the land opposite Jericho. He looks kind of counter-clockwise to see the land that God has promised. It’s a viewing of what God had said. And God reminds him in verse 4

***4*** *And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’*

This is the place! God’s unchanging goodness is promised. This is what Moses gets to see. It’s a land where God’s people would one day belong. It’s a home. Think about Moses’ life for a moment. He was born as a refugee infant in this alien land of Egypt. He didn’t even stay with his mom. He was floated down the river, grew up in a foreign household with Egyptian culture. His people worked as slaves. And then, because of some circumstances, he had to flee the wrath of his adopted grandfather and he lived in exile in another foreign nation for decades. And then he returned to Egypt, got his people, and they left and were in the wilderness. He was never truly home. There was never really a place where he belonged for his entire life. And here, he gets a view into God’s goodness, a place to belong, a home. And he starts to recognize the promise that lay ahead. And God’s word hasn’t changed. He can see it. “This is the goodness that I can treasure, this promise of God.”

But we not only see God’s goodness. We also see His holiness. We see it not only through the promise, but also through the penalty that Moses faces here. This viewing is remote. Do you see what God says in verse 4?

*I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.”*

That’s heavy! We recognize that yes, we treasure God’s goodness, but we also have to honor His holiness. Because of what Moses did in striking that rock in unbelief and dishonoring God before His people, the concession is that he can see with his eyes. But the enforcement is clear. “You will not go over there in this life.” So this viewing helps us see that God keeps His word; both the unchanging promise through His goodness, and also through the unchanging penalty here, through His holiness. He keeps His word. You can trust Him to be who He is. He will keep His word.

And yet, God being God, He puts Moses into a place of forced anticipation where it’s a “not yet.” And this is that bittersweet sense where Moses is waiting. This is a wait in which God’s goodness and holiness are going to come together and he can be home, fully. And there’s a curious sense of anticipation that we’re left with here, too. What is that going to look like? When is he going to belong? When is he going to be home? What is that going to be like? This is where Moses is. It’s a waiting, a longing. And this longing, this looking forward is not a foreign description. We see it marked all the way through, even up to this point.

It’s an ongoing sense of anticipation, of not yet, of where is the belonging? Where is the home? When is this going to be over? This was the same thing that Abraham felt, that Isaac felt, that Jacob felt. And just to summarize it like this. You take the end of the first book of the Bible, Genesis. It’s a death and a burial where Joseph is looking forward and saying, “Take me to the Promised Land. It’s going to happen sometime.” They’re looking forward. You go to the end of the first unit of Scripture, the Pentateuch, the first five books, right here, and it’s the same thing. You see Moses dying and looking forward to what is going to happen. You go to the end of the first half of the Bible, the Old Testament, and at the very end, Malachi is sitting there looking forward to what is going to happen. You go to the end of the very entire Bible to Revelation and see what happens. There is a looking forward and saying, “Come, Lord Jesus.” There is this looking forward. It’s a faith that is awaiting the home. It’s a home that has been promised to God’s people. We’ll think about that in a few moments.

For now, we recognize with Moses there’s just a simple truth. From this perspective, on this mountaintop, we can trust God. We can trust Him on what we might call the edge of home. We can embrace that anticipation and we can encourage each other in that, whether it be texting each other Bible verses or having conversations or times of prayer or times of worship. In these moments where we feel the gravity of that truth and we trust God together and there’s a sense of anticipation, we embrace it. We’re saying, “We can trust God.” That’s the first lesson. But the second lesson, found in verses 5-7 is this.

Lesson 2: We need God.

I was in third grade, playing basketball. I landed on someone else’s foot and rolled my ankle. It had happened before, but this time it hurt a little bit more. I went to gym class the next day and my teacher was making me do exercises. I thought, “This hurts a lot.” They called my mom and we went to the doctor. I came back with a cast, and I felt justified. I broke my ankle. My cast was on there for a while, all through summer. It was kind of a burden. I remember we tried to go bowling one time and I couldn’t really balance. I accidentally threw the bowling ball in the other guy’s lane and gave him a gutter ball. He was so upset, and we were so embarrassed that we just left before our game was over. I had this cast on my foot, but eventually it was taken off and we got an air cast. I have the air cast and I have some crutches. As I’m going, I’m still feeling uncomfortable, but at some point, the doctor is telling me, “It’s time to take that cast off. It’s time to get rid of those crutches because these things are preventing you from healing. You’re depending on them so much that they’re actually affecting your ability to grow and develop the way that you’re supposed to.”

I was trusting in these supports and not learning to trust the bones and muscles that I truly needed. And sometimes, we’re depending on the gifts that God gives, and we forget our need for God and how He wants our faith to grow. And sometimes He has to remove some of those gifts and supports that we’re clinging to, to remind us that we need Him. And this is a lesson we see happening here with God’s people. Moses is taken away and we realize that what we need is not Moses, but we need God. Look at what happens here. We move from the special viewing to the secret burial that Moses has. We see in his burial, highlighted is Moses’ position before God and his placement by God. So first, we see his position before God. We see his title.

 ***5*** *So Moses the servant of the LORD*

This is his position. It’s a special title. It’s a unique name only shared by a few like Joshua, David, Isaiah, Job. There’s not many, but at the end of the day, it’s still “servant.” It indicates that Moses, at the very best, is still subservient to Yahweh. He’s just a servant. It’s an honored position, but it’s not an irreplaceable one. And you see in verse 5 that Moses

*died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD,*

That was his humble position before God. He was a servant. And we see his placement by God in verse 6.

***6*** *and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.*

His burial was unique. God is the one who buries him, and He buries him in a way that no one else knows where He is. Now that’s kind of unique. What’s going on there? Well, we’re not exactly sure. We can speculate a few reasons, perhaps. Here are a few. First, if the nation knew where Moses was buried, they might have been tempted to take his remains out and bring him into the Promised Land. This seems to be why God was trying to bury him in Moab. Moses wasn’t supposed to go in there. Second, maybe God was making sure that the people didn’t try to enshrine his body or ascribe some special meaning to it or venerate it so that they’d make a pilgrimage back to it and worship outside the land, or something like that. There’s then perhaps another reason which is more curious. Maybe God had a special purpose for Moses’ body that was not yet revealed. Maybe something was going on here that is curious to us. But we’ll keep moving. There is a special burial.

I think this is the key thought. God wanted people to know that they needed not Moses, but they needed Him. We’re so easily prone to trust in people and gifts and things and experiences, and to think this is what we need. This is the answer to our longing or our ache; whether it’s a politician or an athlete or a celebrity, things that we define as American idols or icons, things that we feel are irreplaceable. But none of these things can take the place of God. No parent, no friend, no mentor, no pastor is irreplaceable. There’s one God and we need Him. And we need to beware of putting anything on a pedestal, even an experience or a certain environment, or a certain place or a feeling or a group of people that we think “this is the answer.” No, what we need is God. There’s only room for one hero and it can’t be anything other than Him.

Now this moves us toward a third lesson which we’ll hit in a second. Let’s build toward it. Basically, there’s a need for a true chosen one, a true answer to our longings. This is the need that we have. We’ll answer this by looking at Moses final legacy.

**His Unique Final Legacy (Deut 34:7-12)**

Look at how Moses died. We see the gravity of this legacy. First, we see that he has a legacy of incredible health.

***7*** *Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated.*

This is a guy of unshaken vitality. He had perfect visual acuity and a vibrant physical energy. He was ready to go. Moses didn’t run out of gas. He was ready to go. But what happened was God decided that it was time to stop. God was driving home the point of His holiness. One commentator puts it like this. “Moses did not fail to enter the Promised Land because he died. He died because he failed to enter.” There was a sense of God stopping him before the time because He was making a point and showing the people that they needed Him. But there’s also this sense of, what does that look like? Moses had incredible health, but he was not enough. What more do they need? Well the people come together and there is this honorable grief on Moses’ behalf; this legacy of grief.

***8*** *And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.*

There’s a brief lesson here about the fact that people often appreciate leaders far more in their death than during their life. Isn’t that true? Whether it’s a parent or a pastor or a politician, people often appreciate leaders far more in their death than during their life. I think there’s some encouragement here that as much as we get consumed with people’s sin and weaknesses, here is this people, and they’re able to show honor and appreciate this leader. It was a sinful people, a sinful leader, but they’re able to appreciate what God has done through him. And that’s a precious moment, this grief that is shown.

And then you look at his noble heir; his successor.

***9*** *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD commanded Moses.*

So we see that Moses was not irreplaceable. What was powerful about Moses was that God was with him all the time. And now God is with Joshua and He is going to go forward with them into the land. They have God! And yet, verses 10-12 leave us with this sense of void. There is a noticeable void or vacancy. Something is still missing.

***10*** *And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,* ***11*** *none like him for all the signs and wonders that 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 for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.*

There is this void. And it’s not just this sort of looking backward like sort of a nostalgia for the golden days. There’s something deeper, here. There is this expectancy of a promise that has not yet been fulfilled. Back when God gave the Law, He spoke something very clearly, and Moses reminded them of it in Deuteronomy 18.

**Deuteronomy 18:15-18** “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

There is this prophet that we’re waiting for like Moses. And we’re told right here that that prophet has not yet come. Who is that going to be? Well, hundreds of years later, there is a miracle child born. He is a baby boy who was born to a barren woman. He grows up to be a mighty teacher in the wilderness. Crowds come to him and say, “Are you the prophet?” He said, “No, but there is one coming; one whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

You see, there was another miracle child of dramatic origin. He was born not merely to a barren woman, but to a virgin. He was an infant who made his own harrowing arrival, narrowly escaping infanticide, and spending his childhood actually as a refugee in Egypt. He was one who, at his baptism, was publicly affirmed by God with a unique calling as the Chosen One, the Son of God. He was a prophet who performed countless miracles of great power. He was a man who gathered together all who would listen, to the top of a mountain, and picked up right upon God’s words and began speaking and expounding upon God’s love and teaching with precision and power like no one had ever seen before. Everyone was astonished because He spoke not like other teachers. He spoke with authority, such that people said, “A great prophet has arisen among us.” He not only reminds the nation of Yahweh’s words, the apostle John would claim He is the Word. He was in the beginning with God and He was God. This is the man who brings together both God’s goodness and holiness in perfect view by facing the overwhelming challenge of coming and suffering a sacrificial death on the cross. He is the perfect payment for our sin in our place. So people who are sinful could look at a holy God and yet experience His goodness and have hope of a home, of belonging. They have hope of belonging not here, not yet, but a kingdom of the future. This is the One who is to come, the prophet, the One to whom Moses is looking toward. He is a man whose divinely given name was Jesus, which means “Yahweh saves.”

Lesson 1 is we can trust God. Lesson 2 is we need God. Lesson 3 is

Lesson 3: That God is Jesus.

Well, we have only a moment to consider the afterlife of Moses. We’ll just touch on it for a moment here. In Luke 9:28, there’s a moment where Jesus is up on a mountain and He takes His disciples there, and they’re praying. And as they’re praying, Jesus is transformed. His face is altered, His clothing becomes white, and two men appear and are talking with Him. They are Moses and Elijah. Interesting! Now, Peter is with them and he hears. What they’re speaking about is Jesus’ departure, what He’s about to accomplish in Jerusalem. What Moses is looking for, what Elijah is looking for, what they’re excited about is what Jesus is about to do. They are fascinated by it, and that’s what they’re talking about. Now, in case you thought that the warning about God’s people making a shrine for Moses…Well, Peter has a couple minutes with Moses and he’s ready to build him a tent and make a tabernacle right there. And what does God say?

**Luke 9:34-35** As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

This is Jesus. He’s the One that we’re looking forward to. He’s the answer to the “not yet.” He’s the one who told His disciples on the eve of His own being betrayed and about to go to die, He said, “I am going to prepare a place for you. And if it weren’t so, I would have told you, but I’m going to prepare a place.” This is the Jesus who is coming back. He’s the One that we await. And the very end of the Bible ends with that anticipation of not yet. Come Lord Jesus! We can trust God. We need Him, and that God is Jesus. And even in Deuteronomy, we see it pointing forward to Him.

England had suffered some major defeats. One of the more famous failures was at Dunkirk. And one of the further losses was out at Singapore. It was a dark time for the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. It was seeming as though the second World War was threatening the entire royal kingdom. It was a moment of disappointment. But in the course of the fight, there was a slight skirmish that caused a sense of turning of the tide. The Allies began to experience this glimmer of anticipation. One such clash that he identified was at El Alamein. There were some forces that won this triumph, and it was what Churchill called “the Battle of Egypt.” And so afterwards, he had this speech, and here’s what he said: “This is not the end. It’s not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning.”

When we find ourselves in Deuteronomy, we realize this is not the end, nor is it the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning. And we can start to get a taste of the victory that lies ahead. The question “Faith in what?” is perhaps better stated, “Faith in who?” We believe in Jesus. He is the One who promises the victory. And because of Him and through faith in Him, we can say the best is yet to come.