

PROMISED

DEUTERONOMY 32:48-52; 34:4-7

INTRODUCTION

I am becoming increasingly aware that the promises of God are declarations of war against the enemy. This is why the enemy works so hard to discount the Lord's promises working to cause us to disbelieve them. If we look elsewhere, away from the Lord, we will fail to stand firm. If we hold out that the hope of this world is in the idea of progress – it getting better and better with every passing year – we will fail to see that God's promises work in tragedy and in fits of darkness. The times are tough for the people of God at this moment. Moses is dying, unable to enter the land with them, but God is still good and faithful. We must never separate the beauty of God's promises from the dark times of life. Darkness makes the light bright. His faithfulness is best seen when He lavishes us with love in spite of our failures

A SIN RECALLED (DEUTERONOMY. 32:48-52)

None of us likes to be reminded of our sins. Whether the reminder be a scant memory or someone else referring to it. Either way we would choose not to remember our moments of departure away from our Lord. Yet, Moses is reminded, on the eve of his death, of his sin at Meribath-kadesh where he struck the rock (Numbers 20:11). At that moment, he knew his fate – he would not enter into the promised land – and now he is reminded of this, not by the people, but by the Lord Himself (Deuteronomy. 32:51)! The obvious question is why would God do such a thing? Why remind your chief servant of his sin and paint the picture of his pain of rebellion and sorrow? The answers may be many but there is one that is helpful to us all. This reminder of sin is couched between the two songs of Moses. The first speaks of the sin and deceitfulness of the people of God and the judgment such actions will incur (Deuteronomy 32:1-43). The second song, (Deuteronomy 33:1-29) is a celebration of the infinite and undying love of the Lord for His people on the basis of His unchanging character. God's reminding Moses of His sin is put between these two songs to highlight the beauty of His faithfulness in spite of Moses' sin. Sin cannot stop grace and grace will always triumph over sin. Many believers love the grace of God, as indeed we should, but we do so in ways that can minimize it. Grace is only as beautiful as the sin it overcomes. Beauty is seen in ashes because ashes remind us that God still loved us in those terrible places. Reminders of our sin are pointers to God's grace.

A FUTURE GLIMPSED (DEUT. 34:4)

Even in the reminder of his sin God still gives Moses a glimpse (Deuteronomy 34:4). Moses will get there, just not yet. He will have to wait for the full consummation of things. For now, in grace and as a promise, he gets to see it. Glimpses are sufficient for those who trust the Lord. The glimpse is the proof that what their eyes have seen actually wraps them into the receiving of the full picture when it comes. We see these glimpses in Simeon (Luke 2:2:25-35) and Anna (Luke 2:36-38). What is significant about these two *glimpses* is that each was waiting for the expected Messiah. The glimpse was enough! They never saw him grow up, heal the sick or raise Lazarus. They did not hear the sermon on the mount, nor were they privy to the display of his wisdom among the religious elite. They did not need to see all of this. The sight of the baby – the Messiah – was sufficient to know that God is a faithful God and will fulfill His promise to Abram. For Christians, today we await the full consummation of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ. We know it's coming and we believe it. We cannot see it fully but, in the Holy Spirit, we have been given a glimpse. We have been given eyes to see what the Lord has and is yet to do, through His Word. We do not need to be able to describe heaven in full detail. The glimpse given by the Spirit of the Lord is sufficient until the Messiah returns to wrap things up.

A MAN REMEMBERED (DEUT. 34:5-7)

And what a man Moses was, in the strength and power of the Lord. The eulogy given described Moses as *the servant of the Lord* (Deuteronomy 34:4). Above all things that could have been said of him that he was *the servant of the Lord* – one whose life was consumed with passion for God’s glory – was the first. Following this we find that even though Moses was 120 years of age when he died *his eyes were not weak and his vitality had not left him* (Deuteronomy 34:5). In essence, Moses, in death, was as strong as the Moses who was first called at the burning bush (Exodus 3) and the one who stood at the brink of the Red Sea ready to lead the people in miraculous fashion through it. This description is more than kind and powerful *last* words of a good man, however. They convey the significant place of Moses in the redemptive plan of God. Until Christ, there was no prophet like him among the people of God. The eulogy is fitting of such a man as Moses but it also speaks to the life that God gives to His people in the Lord. Even the feeble saints and those experiencing the tortures of martyrdom do not erase the vitality of the Spirit of God in moments of death. We may be old, wrinkled, feeble and have trembling voices, yet in Christ, in the face of death and transition, there is a power at work in us that communicates a strength the human eye and mind could never comprehend. Men may never utter the eulogy of Moses over you, but God does, because He sees Christ alone.