Deuteronomy 31:14-29

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Coming to a close. Really the life of Moses is coming to a close, which is a very transitional time and pivotal time in the nation of Israel. There are a few patriarchs or really key figures that we can look through the nation of Israel and see these individuals standing up and really having a great not only impact, but just influence of how God led his people, used his people, and moved his people.

Among those is Moses, one of the most influential throughout its history. It is Moses that says in Deuteronomy 18 that God will rise up a prophet like unto me, who is really pointing to Christ.

So he is a type of the Messiah. He is not the Messiah. He is not a complete picture of the Messiah. He is a type of the Messiah, one who would set his people free and lead his people in obedience and go before his people in the plans and purposes of God and to lead them to their promised land, to the possession that they were designed to inherit.

If you remember the Exodus event, he takes them out in order to bring them in. God doesn't just set people free to set them free. He sets them free to take them in to the promised land.

They went out in order to go in. God sets us free from sin and we are delivered from slavery to sin and slavery to Satan, not just so that we can run around in our new freedom.

[1:27] We are set free that we may be brought in to the family of God and brought in to the promises of eternal life and his presence and all these beautiful pictures.

But as with every other patriarch and every other instrumental figure in the nation of Israel, Moses' time and his ministry is coming to a close.

And it's really not only a pivotal time just because Moses is about to die, it's also because they're literally on the edges of the promised land. They're in the plains of Moab. They're looking at the Jordan River.

They're about to cross the Jordan River and take possession of that, which was their original destination, 40 years prior to this. This has been the hope of the nation of Israel.

This has been the hope of the nation of Israel. And it's hard for us to wrap our minds around it for 400 plus years because God had told Abram when he called him out of the land of the early Chaldeans and he became Abraham, a father of a nation of people, that he would give him the land that he walked around in.

[2:36] And that land is Canaan. But he also told Abraham that his descendants would be held captive in a land that was not their own for a period of 400 years. We call that the Egyptian slavery, enslavement.

We know that Joseph went before them. And we're just painting all these pictures because we have to put ourselves here so that we know kind of the importance of the event. And we know that they went down to Egypt's 70 number and they came out more than likely, by all good estimates, some 2 million plus.

We get these numbers from reading the book of Numbers and we get it from really just scientific math, I guess you could say. And assumptions of this is how many men there were.

Then we know how many Levites there were. And these men are this age. And if you assume there's families and so somewhere around, and that's a minute, 2 million people. And now this multitude of individuals has walked through the wilderness, literally.

They have failed God. They have succeeded in some place. They've seen God do amazing things. They've seen Him feed them and sustain them and give them water to drink in the most unlikely of places, from rock.

[3:45] And they've rose daily except for on the Sabbath day and they've gathered their manna in, right? And they've seen God defeat enemies, Sihon and Og and others.

And they've seen God just fulfill His word. And they're about to take possession or begin to take possession. It will take a number of years to take possession under the leadership of Joseph. And before they go into that, Moses seeks, according to the book of Deuteronomy, in the first chapter, to expound the law.

That is to clarify God's expectations of what life looks like living in relationship with Him. One of the repeated words or phrases or names that we use for God throughout the book of Deuteronomy is Yahweh, which is the covenant name.

Because this is the covenant of a holy God with His people. Now, what is astounding, we don't get it so much in our English scripture, but when we get into the 32nd chapter, Moses goes back and forth between Yahweh and Elohim and Lord God Almighty.

And he distinguishes the relationship of Almighty God living in covenant relationship with you, His people, and how life looks different. So Moses has really been instrumental in all of this, right?

He really was a basket case at birth and the most unlikely of people to be the deliverer and the redeemer. And as Stephen says in the book of Acts, He was rejected by His people, yet He was also the Savior of His people.

Does that sound like a type to you or not, right? These things aren't unintentional. But unlike Christ, the life of Moses is coming to an end.

And the nation has heard the law expounded and now He's really just tying up all the loose ends. The 32nd chapter going into chapter 33 will be the end of it.

Deuteronomy 34 is the mourning of the nation of Israel for the death of Moses. But here we see this transition in leadership, if you will, in Deuteronomy 31 verses 14 through 29.

The text says, And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.

[7:03] Now therefore, write this song for yourselves and teach it to the sons of Israel. Put it on their lips so that this song may be a witness for me against the sons of Israel. For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them and spurn me and break my covenant.

Then it will come about when many evils and troubles have come upon them that this song will testify before them as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants. For I know their intent, which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore.

So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the sons of Israel. That song, by the way, is chapter 32. We're not going to get to that tonight. Then he commissioned Joshua.

Pay attention to the he in verse 23. He should be capitalized. By the way, Moses did not commission Joshua. God commissioned Joshua. Then he commissioned Joshua, the son of Nun, and said, Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you.

It came about when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.

[8:34] For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness. Behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the Lord. How much more then after my death? Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them.

For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days. For you will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger with the work of your hands.

And just so you know, that's the end of our text, but verse 30 says, Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were complete. So that's what leads us into chapter 32, and that's why we stopped one verse short.

Here we see a transition in leadership. Not only is a nation in a time of transition, the leadership of God's people is in a time of transition.

We are moving from Moses' leadership, or Mosaic leadership, into the leadership of Joshua. Now this transition is more than what just appears on the surface because as we have discussed, Moses was both a political and a religious.

[9:48] I don't really like the term religious because it implies religion, but maybe we should say spiritual leader. So he was both a political and a spiritual leader. He is the one who dictated them the law and the standards and was also the judge, and he was the one that they would bring the matters before until they appointed the leaders and the elders, if you will.

And even the toughest cases came back to him, and he was the one who went to the tent of meeting and then dictated to the people the standard or ruling of God anytime something new happened and they didn't know what to do, it came to him.

The first time someone blasphemed and used the name of the Lord God in vain, they waited. Remember that? They waited a couple of days until Moses went out to the tent of meeting and said, God, what should we do? He didn't make a rash decision, and God said, stone the man.

So he came back and they stoned him. So anytime something new happened and they didn't know how to respond, it was Moses that they went to, and these were for political matters, right? And even, you know, how we should judge and how we should decide between these cases when there was no male descendant found for this family and the ladies or the daughters of this man wanted to inherit the land.

This was something new, so they brought that news. This is, you know, blaspheming in the name of God is a spiritual issue. Inheriting the land is a political or economic issue. They brought it to Moses and Moses said, wait here until I go meet with the Lord and I'll determine what we should do.

[11:05] And he comes back and God says, okay, this is what we should do. So Moses served in both capacities. Joshua will not because the descendants of Aaron, namely Eleazar, is now high priest because Aaron has already died by the time we get to this point.

So there are spiritual leaders. There are the Levites who are serving and the priests who are serving. The Arianic priesthood is there. So those spiritual matters are taken to know.

Joshua is a political leader. Okay? Now we have a tendency to look down upon political leaders and sometimes with good cause.

But in scripture, we meet some very, very good political leaders and some very, very bad ones, right? We don't have to go very long in the nation of Israel and we start seeing some who did wicked and we see some who did right.

But even, you know, some of them, Nehemiah is a political leader, not a religious leader. The book of Nehemiah, he was the king's cupbearer. That was kind of like in his inner cabinet.

[12:07] We look at it as a servant, but that means he was the guy who stood before the king, made sure the drink wasn't poisonous, but also was an advisor to the king. And this is why he had to bring Ezra along with him so that Ezra would stand and read the scripture.

Nehemiah was concerned about building the wall. So just because we're transitioning to Joshua's leadership on the political side doesn't mean we're separating them. because in the realm of God's kingdom or in the realm of his covenant, there is no separation of what we would call church and state.

Right? The spiritual impacts every aspect of society. But yet, this is a really monumental time of transitioning that is going on in the nation.

Really, it is just really tremendous time historically that they're about to take position. I mean, can you put yourself in that position? The hope of the nation, we can't put ourselves there because our nation hasn't existed this long.

Right? I mean, we just, we can't. The hope of a nation for 450 years has been to take hold of the promised land. And now the man that has brought us there is leaving.

[13:23] Astounding. Right? It would be astounding if the hope of mankind was found in man. But it's not astounding because the God who promised it so many years ago is still the God who's going to fulfill it with a new leadership.

God is not limited by the limitations of man. And we see this in this transition. To us, it seems like the most unlikely of times for God to dictate this transition.

Right? The most unlikely of times. Now we know Moses' sin. He struck the rock when he shouldn't have. And God says, you shall not enter the promised land. Well, that was like a couple years prior to this.

So why didn't God give them a year in the wilderness or at least a year in the plains of Moab to kind of get used to Joshua? Why does this have to happen right here?

Right now? Why this abrupt change? And, you know, we've seen the high priest. Aaron has died some time prior to this. So now we're used to that.

[14:29] But this is literally right before they go in. But still, God's in control. God is consistent. We look beyond man's change and we look to the security found in he who is really leading them and that is Yahweh.

We see the security found in the Lord God, not in man's appointment. So in this transition of leadership, the first thing we see is the final meeting. Mark this well.

This is the last meeting Moses has in the flesh before the Lord his God. The next time he sees him, the Lord will be carrying his body and burying it somewhere that no man knows where.

Because this is the last time God calls Moses to go out to the tent of meeting. The very last time. The Lord God says, Moses, the time for you to die is getting close.

Go get Joshua and come out to the tent of meeting. This is the final meeting that he will have there. How many times, I mean, I can't imagine how many times that Moses has went out to the tent of meeting.

[15:37] Remember the tent of meeting and the tabernacle? Picture how the camp would camp, right? The tabernacle was always in the center of the camp and you had this distribution. I know it's been some time since we've been in the book of Numbers.

If you're reading through the yearly plan that some of us are, you're in the book of Numbers right now and you're like, oh boy, here we go again. But you remember the encampment around it? Like there's those on this side and this side and this side and this side. There's kind of this, all these camping.

Who always went first? Anybody remember? Come on. Oh, you need to know this. He's always the forerunner. He's the largest of the tribes.

He's got more people. Some people say his symbol is a lion. Judah. Judah's always first. Judah's always prominent. Judah's always going out first. Judah's always leading the way.

Why? Because the lion from the tribe of Judah leads the way. The Bible says in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is our trailblazer. Right? He's our forerunner.

The little one reading of that, he said trailblazer. The lion from the tribe of Judah goes first. He is the first fruits. That's why when we look at that, we're like, so where do we get excited in the book of Numbers?

Man, look how big Judah is compared to everybody else. Man, look, Judah's the one going first. Man, look, it's always about Judah being the first one. Look, Judah has, Judah's the one that's taking on the enemies first. Well, that only matters when we know who is the hope of all mankind comes from Judah.

Right? Who's last? Anybody remember that? Dan. Do you know who introduced idolatry into the nation of Israel? Dan.

Dan. The one that was farthest from Judah. Oh, man. That almost preaches, doesn't it? Dan was at the end. Dan was at the end, too, because he was a mean rascal, and so anybody that tried to come up from behind, Dan could beat them off.

It was Dan who introduced idolatry, appointed a Levite, and they got their own priest in the book of Judges, right? They decided to get their own priest, and they appointed him, and they went and got their own land. So all this stuff, so the nation's camped out, and the tent of meeting is on the outskirts of the camp, like out there, right?

[17:36] And Moses would always going out there, out there, out there. Tabernacle's in the center, but the tent of meeting's out there. He's always going out there to meet with the Lord God. This is the last time he does it.

And you remember the picture that every time Moses goes out there, everybody in the camp stood up. You remember that? They would stand up, because Moses is going to meet with God.

And they would see the Shekinah glory, literally, the cloud cover the tent of meeting, and they would stand, and they would wait until Moses came out, because they knew when Moses came out, Moses had a word from God.

This is the last time this happens. Final meeting. God initiates it, right? In his last days, a little bit before he dies, God says, let's meet one more time.

Let's meet one more time. God calls a final meeting with him. And in this final meeting, he says, bring Joshua. Because this is not just to be a meeting of information, of fellowship.

[18:42] It's also a meeting of commission. Joshua has this dual purpose in his life. Joshua is called to lead, and Joshua is commissioned to lead. By the way, both of those come from God.

God calls him by name. I don't know if you've noticed that we see this a lot in the Old Testament. When God has a job to do, he always calls the individual by name. When God says, you're going to build the articles that go into the tabernacle, God knew the name of the craftsman who would build it.

Right? I have put this in the heart of, it's kind of a weird name or I would call it to name, right? God always calls them by name. God knows who they are. So God called them. God called Joshua.

Get Joshua. And then he commissioned because he, that is God, commissioned Joshua. So this change in leadership came at this final meeting where God is here with Moses.

And the Lord and Moses are really just fellowshipping. The Lord is telling Moses what's about to happen. He is dictating to him. We're going to get to that in just a moment. Joshua is kind of privy to this, but this isn't something new because Joshua has always been privy to this because when Moses would go into the tent of meeting, Joshua would go with him.

[19:45] When Moses came out, Joshua stayed in. We see this elsewhere in scripture. He hung out there. This is like, this is where he stayed, right? And then God commissions him here. So he is, he is used to this, but not all of Moses' mantle will be put upon him because he's not the spiritual leader.

He's just the political leader. And yet we have this final meeting where God is, it tells him this. And you know one thing that I noticed? Gone are the days of Moses questioning, but God, I want to go in.

Moses doesn't complain. He doesn't murmur. He doesn't get upset. He just responds to that invitation to have that final meeting before he dies.

And here we see that Moses realizes the hope of the nation doesn't rest on him.

The hope of the nation rests on the one who's calling him to meet him. And that's comforting. That's astounding.

[20:51] When you realize, I'm not the one who's holding it all together. You know the very first thing God freed me from when he saved me? The very first birth.

I was very young when we got married, so I was 20 years old when I came to Christ. It was about a month before my 21st birthday. And as a 20-year-old, I was sitting there thinking, man, I've got a wife and a kid and I've got all this responsibility and there's a lot of responsibility.

And I was trying to, how am I going to do this? We had a house. We had a couple of cars. It was just really just a crazy time. And I'm like, I don't know. And there's always this thought in the back of my mind, what if I die?

I don't know, it sounds kind of morbid. This is what God did. What if I die? Who's going to take care of Carrie and Hunter? He's a 20-year-old. Every day I wrestle with that. I lay awake at night, every night, trying to figure out that answer to that question.

You know where I found the answer is when I got on my knees and said, Lord, I'm going to give you my life. And I realized it was no longer my responsibility. Now it's still my responsibility to work and to provide and to labor. It's not my responsibility to secure.

[21:55] Because that's surrender. Because at that meeting, I surrendered everything to him. And here, we see this aspect in Moses' life where Moses is like, okay, I'll meet with you.

I mean, he brought his replacement with him. See that? He brought him with him. So that he could be present when God commissions him. And Moses will commission him to the people.

But God commissions him right here. What a final meeting we see. Not only we see a final meeting, we see a foretold failure. Because at this meeting, God says, Moses, it's time for you to die.

He's drawing near. You're going to lay down with your fathers. Lay down. I love that picture. You're going to rest, right? I feel like I'm about to sneeze, so I apologize if I do. You're going to lay down with your fathers, but the people will rise up to play.

And God begins to tell of the failures that are coming, which at one point may be even desponding or despairing to Moses and really just overwhelming.

But this is something Moses not only needs to hear, but Joshua needs to hear as well, right? Joshua needs to know what's coming, but it doesn't happen even in the generation of Joshua, the book of Judges. There arose another generation who knew not the God of Joshua and the elders, right?

So this is sometime in the future. And this is why Joshua gives this speech, choose you this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. That's near the end of Joshua's life, right?

We see encouragement from Moses to follow the Lord. We see encouragement from Joshua to follow the Lord. This is not coincidental. This is intentional because God tells him what's going to happen and I am about to sneeze and it's going to be a good one when it comes.

There's this trick I learned. I'm just totally sidetracked here. Carrie told me this a while back. If you take your tongue and you rub the roof of your mouth right underneath your nose, it keeps you from sneezing.

That's really cool if you're driving a bus. It's really bad if you're trying to preach because you can't do that while preaching. She told me that so that while I was driving a bus, I didn't have these sneezing fits and ran off the road because none of my roads have shoulders on them.

[24:11] It's really cool. It keeps you from doing it. At least it does me. Maybe it's a mental thing. I don't know. Can't do that while you preach. Anyway, you move on. If I sneeze, I'll back up. That way none of you guys get anything but I'm sorry.

Get back on track, Billy Joe. That wasn't a squirrel. That was a tickle in the nose is what that was. Here we go. At this meeting, he begins to foretell the failure of the people.

I find comfort in that because God knows they're going to fail. But this is what I find amazing. God knows they're going to fail but he also still leads them in.

He knows that their failure will be a result of the gods of the land that they're going to possess. But he still leads them in there. It's the same principle we get in the New Testament where God doesn't always lead us away from storms.

Sometimes we go right into the middle of them. I mean, the disciples got into the boat with Jesus when the waves started coming over and they thought they were going to die. Jesus sent the disciples in the boat that they were in the middle of a storm where he was walking on the water.

[25:19] Right? I mean, you're not always led away from those trials and those struggles. But God knows what's going to happen. God understands this. He begins to speak of the reality. He begins to speak of the truth.

And he tells them over and over again of all this failure that's going to take place. And then he makes this really amazing statement. But it shouldn't amaze us in light of the parable of the soils.

Because he makes this statement that one of the reasons they will fail will be the blessings God gives them. He says, When I bring them into the land that is flowing with milk and honey. I want you to see it.

Verse 20. For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey which I swore to their fathers. Okay? When he brings them in. Here it is. And they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous.

Then they will serve the other gods. The comfort and the blessing of the promised land is one of the things that leads them to forsake God and break the covenant.

[26:27] Why? Problems usually don't happen on the mountaintop. It's easy to follow him and surrender in the valley when everything's falling apart but when everything's going good it's hard to stay true.

And this is what he says. He reminds them of this reality that they will fail. That they will I gotta go find me a Kleenex. That's what I have to do. There it is. Found it. I got off camera for a minute.

Sorry about that. Don't follow me. I got it. There's somebody that's watching going that guy's nuts. Wish he'd quit talking.

Anyway love this time of year. God knows they're gonna fail. He knows some of the blessings that he gives them is gonna lead to their failure yet he still bestows all these upon them.

I find comfort in his realities is because listen our mistakes and our failures don't surprise God. They surprise us but they don't surprise him.

[27:32] When we mess up and when we stumble and when we fall short it's not an excuse for it. It's not an excuse. It's not we're not gonna be like we're not gonna do as Paul said use it as a crutch.

Well since God already knows I'm gonna go ahead and do it anyway. Let's not say that. I love the fact that God's not called off guard by my sinfulness. But he calls me in the midst of that sinfulness and that sin nature and he's calling me to something better.

He's calling me out of it understanding my humanity understanding my weaknesses understanding my tendencies and that is the greatest motivation to live obediently that I can find.

Because it would be one thing for a God who expected me to be perfect said he loved me it's a whole nother thing for a God who says you're gonna mess up and you're gonna fail but I love you.

That's the amazing principle. God loved them even though he knew they were gonna fail him. And when we can wrap our minds around that reality that's the greatest safeguard from failure that I can find.

[28:51] Because when I try to serve a God who expects me to be perfect and I try to serve a God who thinks that I'm perfect and when I try to serve a God who expects me to do everything just in perfection I can't do it.

But when I serve a God who knows I'm weak and he loves me it calls me to go beyond myself and say God I want to be perfect I want to love and I want to serve and I want to obey the best ability that I can because you love me in spite of me and you are still leading me to these blessings in spite of me because how easy it is to live in a land flowing with milk and honey and to become prosperous and comfortable and to live in houses we did not build and wells we did not dig in gardens we did not plant and then forget about the God who gave it to us how easy yet God still brought them there right and God's telling them in advance it's going to happen reminds me a lot of when Jesus looks at Peter and says pray for the enemy has asked to sift you as wheat pray that you may not enter into temptation he knew and he warned him and Peter fell asleep so did the others so we see this principle of foretold failure the third thing we see is the three faithful witnesses there is this three fold witness that God offers to the people to the reality that he is God that they are his people and they should live in faithful obedience to them the first one is the song that

God calls Moses and Joshua to write the text tells us now therefore write this song for yourselves the word write there is in the plural and it says for yourselves so this is not just the song of Moses Moses didn't Moses may have been the one who actually penned it but it is Moses and Joshua who wrote it together remember we're in a time of transition so Joshua is invested in this as well so Moses and Joshua write this song compose this song that is in the 32nd chapter and God gives a very clear reason for this you'll see when we get to it if the Lord allows us to which will probably be next Wednesday night because Sunday night we have another event going on this song reminds us of the greatness and the faithfulness of God and Yahweh and the splendor of Elohim Almighty God and the weakness and the failures of man that's what it does it reminds us that God loved them in spite of themselves God called them and redeemed them and they failed him it is just a song that tells everything that's going to happen and God says this song is to be given to the nation and they are to teach it each to the next generation to the next generation to the next generation and God makes this promise it will not depart from their lips that is they will remember it much like you have songs that are really embedded into your heart that if we were to start those songs out you would never be able to leave them some of them good songs some of them well not so good songs right songs that are just there and they are embedded to the very depth of your being and you can't get them out of your head and you can't get them out of your heart

God says this is what this song is going to be up to this time songs have not been really prominent in the nation of Israel they will become very prominent in the nation of Israel when they get to settled worship and they write the book of Psalms and they have all these spiritual songs but this song has a particular purpose it is to be a witness God says so that it can be a witness to them this song foretells everything that's going to happen and God says and since they will know it they will sing it someday and go these things are already happening these things are transpiring right before us and they will be reminded of the witness that God says I told you a reminder that God knew his people he is their God they are his people and he says their failures result of who they are to the very depth of their being he says for I know their thoughts I know their scheming and their planning and their already stiff necked and I know they are conspiring against me now they will conspire against me then and this song is a witness and then we meet the second witness because this is a three fold witness because where two or more are gathered it is settled but where three a strand of three is not easily broken right so you have the song and then it says so Moses wrote all this word of the law or the Torah here and he wrote the whole thing and when he had finished it he gave it to the Levites now in the Ark of the Covenant are the two tablets of stone right and the jar of manna and the rod of Aaron that budded and then Moses gives it to the

Levites who bore the Ark and he said put this beside the Ark beside the Ark I love what Warren Wiersbe says Warren Wiersbe says the Ark was that which always went before the nation of Israel because it was the kind of glory of the presence of God with the tribe of Judah right and it was the Ark went before them so the word of God went before them the word of God went before them but then Moses says put this word there so that it may be a witness so that is the word is a witness the song is a witness that God puts in their heart the word that Moses pens and writes down and says every seven years it needs to be read out loud the word is a witness and then Moses says now call everybody together so that I may call my third and final witness that I may call the heavens and the earth as a witness against them now that sounds kind of strange to us but this song will never change the word of God will never change and the heavens and the earth do not change and God says

I am your God you are my people walk in faithful obedience to me live in the covenant relationship with me these unchangeable witnesses stand as a reminder to the nation of Israel he is their God they are his people they have a responsibility to live faithfully to him though they may reject him and they will and they turn away from him and they do and they're forsaken by him and they are and they're dispersed to the nations around them and they are though all this he is their God and they are his people they still have a responsibility to obey him and to follow him and to trust him because God put a song in their heart a word before them and the heavens and the earth around them to remind them

I am God you are man you respond back to me and we see this threefold witness that comes at this time of transition in the leadership of the nation of Israel Deuteronomy 31 verses 14 through 29 thank you brother thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you