

Mission Accomplished: Lessons from the Life (and Death) of Moses

Deuteronomy 34

Mission Accomplished: Introduction

- This story began when a slave woman kept her infant son alive and sent him floating down the Nile.
- He was picked up by Pharaoh's daughter who raised her as her own son.
- He was on his way to a life of royalty, but God had other plans.

- That upbringing was only part of the preparation for the assignment that was ahead.
- God used Moses to give Israel his law and a national identity.

- He led his people out of Egypt and to the edge of the Promised Land.
- Moses taught his people to serve the Lord and leave behind the gods of the Egyptians.

- Moses didn't accomplish his final goal, which was to enter the Promised Land of Canaan.
- But he left behind a positive, godly legacy.

Deuteronomy 34:1-4

- 34:4 I have let you see it ... but you shall not go over there.
- Moses wanted to cross into the land, but God would not let him do so.
 - See Deuteronomy 3:23-29
- Moses could only view the land from a distance.
- Until, that is, he appeared with Elijah at the Transfiguration.
 - See Matthew 17.

Deuteronomy 34:5-6

- Moses died in the presence of God alone.
- Jude 9 informs us of a dispute between the devil and the archangel Michael over the body of Moses.

- In the end, the Lord buried him, but we don't know where.
- This is probably a good thing.
- His grave might easily have become a shrine and led to some form of idolatry.

Deuteronomy 34:7-8

- Moses died, but it was not the result of injury or disease.
- Even at 120, he was strong.
- Nonetheless, he had completed his journey.
- His mission was accomplished.

- The life of Moses divides into 3 periods of 40 years each.
 - The first 40 years were spent as a prince in Egypt.
 - The middle 40 years were spent as a shepherd in the wilderness of Sinai.
 - The final 40 years were spent leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, through their wanderings in the wilderness to Canaan, the Promised Land.
 - (The first two periods prepared Moses for the last one.)

Deuteronomy 34:9

- It's a sign of the strength of the leadership of Moses that the people fell in behind Joshua.
- Each of them were chosen by God to lead at a specific time.

Deuteronomy 34:10-12

- Moses played a unique role in Israel's history.
- But he could only take them so far.
- Joshua had to take them from here.
- In Deuteronomy 18:15-19, he revealed that another prophet like him would eventually arise.
- Not until Jesus would another arise that would fulfill all the same roles of prophet, ruler, judge and priest.

Lessons from the Life (and Death) of Moses

- Moses was Israel's lawgiver, but the law can only take us to the edge of the Land of Promise.
- It can point to the other side, but cannot lead us farther.
- It was never meant to do so.
 - See Galatians 3:24
- F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929) comments:
 - *But though the law fails, it is through no intrinsic feebleness. It is always holy, just, and good. Though the ages vanish, and heaven and earth pass away, its jots and tittles remain in unimpaired majesty. It must be fulfilled, first by the Son, then by His Spirit in our hearts.*
- Warren Wiersbe (b. 1929) explains:
 - *The Law sets forth a divine standard, but it cannot help us to attain it. Apart from the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, we cannot have the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in our lives. We can view the land but never enter it. Those who follow Moses (legalism) will never enter the land of blessing.*
- Moses did not get as far as he hoped, but he did get as far as the Lord asked him to go.
- He was subject to the law himself and, therefore, his sin led to his death.

- Moses did not fail in his assigned task.
- He was a faithful servant who led the people well.

- Historically, it was up to Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.
- Spiritually, it is Jesus (the later Joshua) who leads us beyond the law to a life of victory through faith.
 - See Hebrews 3:5-6.

- Moses prepared the way.
- That was his assigned task.
- There is a lesson for us in this.

- We live in a goal-oriented world.
- Moses was not allowed to accomplish all that he desired.
- The principle value of our own lives may not be in accomplishing all of our goals, but in preparing the way for others.

- The value of our lives may be in:
 - The example we set for others to follow.
 - The foundation we lay upon which others can build.
- By these standards the life of Moses was an overpowering and magnificent success.

- Joshua, Caleb and the rest would never have succeeded without the leadership that Moses provided.
- Let's set goals to:
 - Invest in the eventual success of others who are only beginning to come along now.
 - Lay a godly foundation upon which others can build.

- Let's consider:
 - The future of our own families.
 - The future of our church.
 - The future of our city.
 - The ministries that God may yet desire to build.
 - The people that God may yet desire to send out.

- Let's leave behind a positive, godly legacy.