

Lesson 15: Moses' Final Discourse

Reading Preparation:

- Deuteronomy 26-32; 34
- Leviticus 26

Outline:

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Lesson Notes:

[1. Deuteronomy 26](#)

We begin this chapter with the concluding remarks of Moses' second discourse. His concern for the children of Israel knows no limits, yet he knows them well, both their strengths and weaknesses. They have been together for approximately forty years. It has been a long journey, but now they are about to enter into the Promised Land. They would not, however, have arrived at this point unless the Lord had preserved them.

Deuteronomy 26:1-3

1 And it shall be, when thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein;
2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.
3 ...I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us.

The Israelites are to remember they have been given this land, not because of their efforts, but out of the mercy of the Lord, and they should always express their gratitude unto him.

Deuteronomy 26:11-12

11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.
12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing,...and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

The children of Israel show their gratitude to the Lord for the bountiful blessings they have received by offering a tithing of their increase which is to then be distributed to those who are less fortunate.

The importance of caring for the needy and the naked is an essential part of the teachings of the prophets. Note its importance as revealed to Alma, a prophet on the American continent, as recorded in the Book of Mormon.

B/M, Alma 34:28-29

28 And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the

naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need-I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.

29 Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out (it being of no worth) and is trodden under foot of men.

These words compliment those of Moses thereby underscoring the importance of caring for those who are less fortunate as a necessary requirement of our love of the Lord.

Israel, having shown their gratitude to the Lord for the many blessings He has given them, show their appreciation by caring for others. They can then petition the Lord in their prayers to look down upon them.

Deuteronomy 26:15

15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land they floweth with milk and honey.

Before we proceed regarding Moses' teachings to Israel regarding their covenant, it is important we understand what a covenant entails.

The Guide to the Scriptures notes,

A covenant is "[a]n agreement between God and man, but they do not act as equals in the agreement. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and men agree to do what he asks them to do. God then promises men certain blessings for their obedience." (The Guide to the Scriptures. Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2001, 11).

With this understanding in mind, read Moses' words to Israel.

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.
17 Thou hast avouched [promised] the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:
18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;
19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

In this instance, the covenant is between a nation (Israel) and God. It is God, not Israel, who sets the conditions in the agreement and Israel who agrees. God then promises them certain blessings for their obedience. Through their obedience to His statutes, commandments, and judgments, Israel can become a holy people unto the Lord, above all nations, and also qualify themselves for further blessings.

[2. Moses' Third and Final Discourse](#)

Moses begins his final discourse with a simple preface,

Deuteronomy 27:1

1 ...Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.

The directives he will give them are not to be taken lightly, but instead are framed as "commandments." It is not to be assumed that this directive applies only to his third discourse, but instead to all the words of admonition he has given them in each of his discourses.

Once across the Jordan they are to build an alter of uncut stones in commemoration of the day the children of Israel "become the people of the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 27:9), and as a token of Israel's gratitude to God for his many kindnesses. The stones are to be inscribed with the words of God given to Moses (Deuteronomy 27:3).

Moses again reminds Israel of his visual images involving the mounts of Gerizin and Ebal. For even further emphasis, he divides the members of the twelve tribes and locates six on mount Gerizin [to bless the people] and six tribes on mount Ebal [to curse the people] (Deuteronomy 27:12-13). He reiterates this imaginary in order to instill upon the hearts and minds of the people how their obedience will lead to blessings and their disobedience will lead to their being cursed. He begins with the acts that will bring cursings upon them.

Deuteronomy 27:15-26

15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image...
16 Cursed be the he that sitteth light by his father or his mother...
17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark...
18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way...
19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow...
20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife...
21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast...
22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother...
23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law...
24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor secretly...
25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person...
26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them...

To each of the cursings, the people are to say aloud, "Amen," thereby acknowledging their willingness to be obedient or accept the required punishment. The sins which Israel are to avoid include: worship of graven images (vs.15); boundary disputes (vs.17); false teachings (vs.18); ill treatment of strangers, fatherless, and widowed (vs.19); sexual perversion with family members or animals (vs.20-23); acts of violence (vs.24-25), and disobedience to the law of the land (vs.26).

He now states the numerous blessings that will come to them through their obedience.

Deuteronomy 28:3-8

3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.
4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.
5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.
6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.
7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: thy shall come out against thee in one way, and flee before thee seven ways.
8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The blessings that will come to the children of Israel are conditional upon their obedience to the statutes and commandments of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 28:9-10

9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God and walk in his ways.
10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

Previously having stated the blessings that will be theirs through their obedience, Moses now reiterates the relationship between disobedience and the cursing which shall come up them.

Deuteronomy 28:15, 20

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

Moses reminds Israel the great blessing that will come to them if,

Deuteronomy 29:10, 12-13

10 Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God;

...

12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day:

13 That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

All the blessings that had been promised to the previous patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would be given to them. These promises extend to those not even present.

Deuteronomy 29:14-15

14 Neither with you only do I make with covenant and this oath;

15 But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day;

I believe the Lord is extending these blessings and cursing to their generations to come.

Deuteronomy 29:18, 20

18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations;...

20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book [the book of Deuteronomy] shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

Both the blessings and cursings have application not only to Israel in the present and in the future, but it is also in force upon each individual today who is willing to make and keep sacred covenants with the Lord.

Moses now places special emphasis upon what he knows that will bring about their downfall... the worship of other gods and the consequences of that choice.

Deuteronomy 29:23-27

23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein...

24 Even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?

25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:

26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them:

27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

One result of the cursings by the Lord will be that they will be “cast... into another land” (Deuteronomy 29:28). They will lose their land of promise for a period of time as a result of their displacement.

The Lord in his mercy holds out to the children of Israel the possibility of restoration to their land in the future. This promise, however, is conditional upon their obedience.

Deuteronomy 30:2-3, 5, 7

2 And [when they] shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it;...

7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

At the conclusion of his third discourse, through the power of prophetic vision, Moses is able to see the events of Israel's future. He has repeatedly admonished the children of Israel to be obedient. He has been specific regarding the blessings that will come to them or if they choose not, the cursing. He has repeatedly warned them of the temptations they will experience, and how to combat them. He has warned them of the consequences if they ignore his commandments. Through vision, he knows how they are going to respond and that finally, due to their disobedience, they will be scattered among the nations of the earth. He reminds them once again how just and merciful the Lord is toward his covenant children. He holds out to them the promise that though they will be scattered, if they will again turn to the Lord, and be obedient to his commandments, he will return them again to their promised land and will curse those who are their enemies. As we study the history of Israel, we will see Moses' vision verified and the fulfillment of many facets of his promise.

3. Moses and Joshua

Knowing of his pending departure, Moses calls Israel together in order to transfer his authority to Joshua. Joshua and Caleb are the only two individuals who began the exodus from Egypt and who will enter the promised land. Moses calls Joshua in front of all the children of Israel and gives him, and them, his final instructions as to how they will possess the land of promise.

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

“Be strong and of good courage; The Lord... will be with thee; fear not,” are words for Israel, as well as us, to remember. In order to help them to remember, Moses gives Israel an important commandment.

Deuteronomy 31:10-11

10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,

11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

As Israel reads the words of the book of Deuteronomy every seven years, it will help them to remember both the blessings and cursings that will come to them, depending upon their obedience to the law. It is also important their children or anyone who is unaware of the law will be taught.

Deuteronomy 31:12

12 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear [reverence] the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

The Lord instructs Moses to call Joshua and to present themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. The purpose of the Lord's visit is to give Joshua "a charge" (Deuteronomy 31:14). This is the charge the Lord gave to Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31:23

23 And he [The Lord] gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I [The Lord] will be with thee.

The Lord has now anointed Joshua to be his prophet and to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. In view of the previous verses (Deuteronomy 31:16-17), the Lord knew in advance that the Israelites will be unfaithful to their covenants just as Moses had previously warned them (Deuteronomy 29:25-27). Joshua's task would not be easy, however, the Lord promised that He would be with him.

The Lord instructs Moses to teach the Israelites a song.

Deuteronomy 31:19

19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

From the chapter heading of Chapter 32, we learn that this song has six main parts:

1. "God speaks to heaven and earth;
2. "Israel was known in the pre-existence;
3. "God chose them [Israel] in this life ;
4. "[T]hey forgot the Rock of their salvation;
5. "[H]e sent terror and a sword and vengeance upon them;
6. "[T]here is no God beside him "

(The Holy Bible. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 303, numbers added).

Why was Moses directed to write a song? So they would yet have another reminder of the efforts the Lord had made to bless their lives and yet they turned from him. In fact, we learn from Genesis 49:24, that the "God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:" refers to Jesus Christ. This truth was reaffirmed to the Prophet Joseph Smith by the Savior himself in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:44

44 Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel. He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fail.

From the very beginning, even in the pre-existence, they were known to Him and He had chosen them to be his people. He was the good shepherd who was willing to stand by them, regardless of their challenges and adversities, if they would only turn to Him. They instead rejected Him as the rock upon which they were to build.

[4. Leviticus 26](#)

Leviticus 26 is one of the most powerful chapters of the books in the Old Testament. The Lord puts the options facing Israel so clearly they could not be misunderstood. If Israel was obedient, they would be blessed with the bounties of the earth, safety and security, peace, and protection from enemies. The Lord makes this promise to them.

Leviticus 26:11-12

**11 ...my soul shall not abhor you.
12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.**

These promises could be summarized in one word: Zion. Zion is defined "as the pure in heart." If Israel was obedient, she would achieve a Zion condition. However, if Israel refused, the following would occur.

Leviticus 26:14

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

The blessings would be withdrawn, and sorrow, hunger, war, disease, exile, tragedy, and abandonment [by the Lord] would result.

In the winter of 1976-77, the western United States faced a serious drought. A living prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, saw in that event and other natural phenomena, a warning that had been given during the time of the Old Testament.

Spencer W. Kimball states,

"The Lord uses the weather sometimes to discipline his people for the violation of his laws (see Leviticus 26:3-6)... Perhaps the day has come when we should take stock of ourselves and see if we are worthy to ask or if we have been breaking the commandments, making ourselves unworthy of receiving the blessings...In Leviticus 19:30, the Lord gave strict commandments;

Leviticus 19:30

**30 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary:
I am the Lord.**

He continues, "Innumerable times we have quoted this, asking our people not to profane the Sabbath; and yet we see numerous cars lined up at merchandise stores on the Sabbath day.

Leviticus 26:22

22 ...your high ways shall be desolate.

"Can you think how the highways could be made desolate? When fuel and power are limited, when there is none to use, when men walk instead of ride?

Leviticus 26:25

25 And I will bring a sword upon you...

"Would that be difficult? Do you read the papers? Are you acquainted with the hatreds in the world? What guarantee have you for permanent peace?

Leviticus 26:25

25 ...and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

"Are there enemies who could and would afflict us? Have you thought of that?

Leviticus 26:31, 34-35

31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation,...

34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest [when it could] your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

"These are difficult times and very serious situations, but they are possible.

Leviticus 26:46

46 These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

Spencer W. Kimball continues,

"This applies to you and me. Would this be a good time to deeply concern ourselves with these matters? Is this a time when we should return to our homes, our families, our children: Is this the time we should remember our tithes and offerings, a time when we should desist from our abortions, our divorces, our Sabbath breaking, our eagerness to make the holy day a holiday? "Is this a time to repent of our sins, our immoralities, our doctrines of devils? Is this a time for all of us to make holy our marriages, live in joy and happiness, and rear our families in righteousness?

"Certainly many of us know better than we do. Is this a time to terminate adultery and homosexual and lesbian activities, and return to faith and worthiness? Is this a time to end our heedless pornographies? Is this the time to set our face firmly against unholy and profane things, and whoredoms, irregularities, and related matters? Is this the time to enter new life?" ("The Lord Expects His Saints to Follow the Commandments" in Ensign, May, 1977, 4-6).

The words of a modern Prophet are no less difficult to hear and follow than are the words of past prophets. However, if we want to enjoy the blessings of the Lord, and not suffer his cursing, we too must be obedient to his commandments and to separate ourselves from the hedonistic practices of those around us. The time to do so is now is the message of Leviticus as well as Deuteronomy.

5. Deuteronomy 34

We read that the Lord showed Moses the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 34:4

4 And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

What did Moses see?

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

Moses was given, "...a complete view of the promised land to the Mediterranean Sea, which was hidden from view by the mountains of Jerusalem. The view was given to him, perhaps through a vision or revelation." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 232).

6. Moses' Death or Translation?

We read in the book of Deuteronomy of Moses' death.

Deuteronomy 34:5-6

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 a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

It seems clear from the book of Deuteronomy that Moses, like many before him and after him, died and that he was buried by the Lord. Why is there any question?

Let us explore another option for your consideration.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Moses and Elijah were translated so that they could come with bodies of flesh and bones to confer keys upon Peter, James, and John on the mount of transfiguration, an event destined to occur prior to the beginning of the resurrection." (Mormon Doctrine. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 805).

In other words, it was necessary for him to be translated as he yet had work to do in the future that required him to have a body of flesh and bones. It was therefore necessary for his existence to be prolonged so that he was able to perform further labors as part of his heavenly ministry.

Ellis T. Rasmussen states,

"This chapter [Deuteronomy 34] was probably written by Joshua. [He] understood that Moses 'died' and that the Lord buried him, but he simply may not have known how Moses departed from this earth..." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 191-192).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"Moses, like Elijah, was taken up without tasting death, because he had a mission to perform...The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, 'The priesthood is everlasting. The Savior, Moses, and Elias [Elijah, in other words] gave the keys to Peter, James, and John, on the Mount when they were transfigured before him...From that we understand why Elijah and Moses were preserved from death: because they had a mission to perform, and it had to be performed before the crucifixion of the Son of God, and it could not be done in the spirit. They had to have tangible bodies...The Lord preserved him, so that he could come at the proper time and restore his keys, on the heads of Peter, James, and John, who stood at the head of the dispensation of the meridian of time.'" (Doctrine of Salvation, Vol. 2. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955, 107, 110-111).

The event to which Joseph Fielding Smith refers is the appearance of Moses and Elijah upon the Mount of Transfiguration found in the New Testament. This event is recorded by three of the four gospel writers (Matthew 17:3-4; Mark 9:4-9; Luke 9:30).

Mark 9:2, 4

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

**4 And there appeared unto them Elias [Elijah] and Moses:
and they were talking with Jesus.**

It was necessary for Moses and Elijah to be translated as they were to restore keys to Peter, James, and John, which had to occur before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. As they could not perform this action in the spirit, they had to have bodies of flesh and bones. Finally for your consideration, I offer the following from the Book of Mormon.

B/M, Alma 45:18-19

**18 And when Alma had done this he departed out of the
land of Zarahemla, as if to go into the land of Melek.
And it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as
to his death or burial we know not of.
19 ...and the saying went abroad in the church that he
[Alma] was taken up by the Spirit, or buried by the hand
of the Lord, even as Moses. But behold, the scriptures
[The Brass Plates] saith the Lord took Moses unto
himself;...therefore, for this cause we know nothing
concerning his death and burial.**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"It should be remembered that the Nephites had the Brass Plates, and that they were the 'scriptures' which gave the account of Moses being taken by way of translation." (Mormon Doctrine. Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 805).

While the book of Deuteronomy makes it clear that Moses died, latter-day revelation suggests that he was changed by the Lord so that he would be able to yet perform future responsibilities prior to his being resurrected.

7. Moses' Departure

The time has now come for Moses to depart from his beloved Israelites. While the past forty years had been most difficult, there were also times when Moses must have been most proud of them. I believe that he loved them as a father loves his children, even during the times when they are rebellious.

Ellis T. Rasmussen states,

"There is pathos in the scene of the old prophet's climb to the top of the peak in the bleak, white mountains rising up from the Dead Sea south and east of the last encampment place, there to see and survey all the hills and the valleys of the land that would be Israel. The last fond looks and the last farewell of the people of their prophet must have been moving, even poignant, for one comes with reluctance to the end of an era and this had been an epoch, this mortal life of Moses." (Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1964, 208).

Deuteronomy 34:8

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

Ellis T. Rasmussen notes,

"There was probably much more than mere ceremonial weeping and mourning for Moses during those thirty days. The people must have been sad indeed as they watched their great leader depart for the last time from camp." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993. 192).

A fitting tribute is given by the Lord himself regarding His prophet known as Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:10

**10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like
unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,**

Joshua was well able by nature, endowment, and divine appointment to take over as leader of the Israelites. Each prophet the Lord calls will have or be given unique attributes for his special calling. None, however, will be the equal of Moses in intimacy with the Lord.

8. Conclusions

Keith H. Meservy states,

"One might think of Deuteronomy, ...as the Gospel of Moses, i.e., the good news or story of God's need for and care for Israel [Ancient and Modern] and through them his care for the world." ("The Good News of Moses" in Studies in Scripture , Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 208).

Another way to think about the book of Deuteronomy is as a wake-up call for Modern Israel, you and me.

Spencer W. Kimball observes,

"The Israelites failed to heed the warning. They ignored the prophets. They suffered the fulfillment of the every dire prophecy. Do we twentieth century people have reason to think that we can be immune from the same tragic consequences when we ignore the same divine laws?" (Miracle of Forgiveness. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969, [13th printing, 1972], 321; see also Daniel H. Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 173-174).

The question he poses is an excellent one for each of us to consider. Do we sincerely think we can continue to ignore the directives of the Lord and yet still be eligible for the promises He offers to those who are obedient? I do not know of any circumstance in life where the benefits come equally to those who fulfill the necessary requirements as well as to those who do not. Do you? I truly believe the Lord is merciful to those who seek to be obedient to his commandments, but to those who rebel or disregard them, they receive no benefit. As I read the Old Testament, the message of the Lord is consistent—either obedience and blessings or disobedience and cursing. What will be our decision? Now is the time for us to decide.