

# The Christian Arsenal

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## DEUTERONOMY 31:1-34:12

We've come now to the last section of the **Book of Deuteronomy**. Not only are we coming to the end of **Deuteronomy**, we are also coming to the end of the life of Moses.

### 31:1-8...

Moses reminds the people that God will fulfill all His promises...

- 1) God will **cross over ahead of them...**
- 2) God will **destroy their enemies...**
- 3) God will **not fail them...**
- 4) God will **not forsake them...**

God has promised the same thing to us, hasn't He?

I believe the most significant thing about being a Christian...the main thing that sets us apart from those who worship other gods is that

- our God **goes with us...**
- our God  **fights our battles...**
- our God **will not fail us or forsake us...**

**And He hears us when we pray and He answers us!!**

**Chapter 31** goes on and tells us that God called Moses and Joshua before Him. God told Moses that he was about to die. He also told Moses that the people would be unfaithful to Him...that they would forsake Him and break His commandments.

**God told Moses that His anger would be kindled against the people and that His face would be hidden from the people because of their evil ways.**

Then God told Moses to write a song and teach it to the people as a witness for God against the sons of Israel. God commissioned Joshua to take over at Moses' death...

Moses finished writing the words of the Law in a book and commanded the Levites to carry it to the Ark of the Covenant...

And finally...Moses spoke the words of his song so that all the assembly of Israel could hear...

We'll not read all this song, but let me just say this...this song really addresses four different subjects...

#### 1) The character of God...

##### Verses 1-4...

In **verse 4** alone, we see several attributes of God's character addressed...

His **perfection**...His **justice**...His **faithfulness**...His **righteousness**...His **uprightness**...

As I was studying this I was reminded of the fact that there are attributes of God's character that *we can almost reach out and touch*, aren't there? Think about God's **love** and **faithfulness** and **mercy** and **compassion** and **patience** and **longsuffering**...and we cannot forget His **peace** and His **grace**.

Then, there are attributes of God's character *that seem so far above us*...His **holiness**, His **majesty**, His **righteousness**, His **sovereignty**...

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And there are also those attributes of God's character that *we cannot even begin to understand...*

His **omniscience** (He knows all), His **omnipresence** (He is present everywhere), His **omnipotence** (He is all-powerful), His **eternality** (He has no beginning and no end), His **immutability** (He never changes), His **self-existence**, His **transcendancy**...*the fact that He is above His creation and would exist if there were no creation...and we could go on and on...*

**A. W. Tozer** said this: "No religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God."

**What a mighty God we serve!!!**

Not only do we see the character of God in the song of Moses, we also see

2) **The goodness of God to His people**  
**Verses 5-14...**

In these verses Moses reminds the people again how God has so lovingly cared for them. These verses tell us that even though His chosen people have not been faithful to Him and even though they have been foolish and unwise...God has still established them.

**Even though God is Lord over history and geography and divided the nations and put them on the earth where He wanted them to be...**

**He was still concerned about little Israel and He made certain He gave them a land that was adequate for them.**

**God chose Israel to give the world the Scriptures...**

**God chose Israel to give the world the Savior...**

**And He encircled Israel and cared for Israel and He guarded Israel as the "apple of His eye"...**

Then, Moses uses the imagery of the eagle and its young to portray how God has cared for Israel...

**Verse 11...**

The eagle is a fierce bird of prey, but it's a very compassionate parent to its young...both the male and the female take care of the baby eaglets.

They build their nests high upon the mountain cliffs and when the eggs hatch and the baby birds grow, there comes a time for them to leave the nest. But, the babies don't think much of this idea.

The mama and the daddy eagle "stir up the nest"...they literally tear the nest up. Then if the little eaglet still won't fly, then Mama and Daddy Eagle push him off the side of the mountain.

By God-given instinct, the little eaglet awkwardly flops his little wings, but he soon "runs out of gas." And as he is on his way to his death at the rocky bottom of the mountain, the parent spreads its strong, graceful wings underneath him and catches him and carries him back up the mountain.

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Then, if the little eaglet still won't take off on his own...the same thing happens...and it keeps happening until the little eaglet finally gets the hang of it and says, "Hey, this is fun! I can do it! I can fly all by myself!!"

I want to ask you...has God ever stirred up your nest? Maybe it was the nest

Of **complacency**...

Or **half-hearted obedience**...

Or **whole-hearted disobedience**...

Or **laziness** or even **circumstances over which you had no control**...

## Has God ever pushed you off the cliff?

God never promised us that we wouldn't have trials, testings, heartaches...in fact, He allows all of them and even orchestrates some of them. WHY?

He does this in order to show His care for us...to show us and others how He can spread His wings and carry us. God wants us to be high flyers and if we are truly His children, He'll never allow us to hit the bottom, He will always be there to catch us and carry us to safety.

Well, we've seen the **character** of God and the **goodness** of God in caring for His people...Let's see

### 3) The faithfulness of God in chastening His people

**Verses 15-25...**

Isn't it a sad thing that this song that Moses wrote was not a happy song? In fact, it was a sad song. God wanted Moses to tell the people that a day of reckoning would indeed come to them.

And do you realize you and I are in this song?

This people...this nation that Moses speaks of in **verse 21**...this speaks of the Gentiles who will one day accept the Messiah. God told Israel even way back then that He would make them jealous and He would provoke them to anger and He used the heathen Gentile nations back then to do this and He uses believing Gentile individuals to do this now.

But, **verse 39** tells us that one day He will heal...He is sovereign over Israel and He can wound them and He can also heal them.

In **chapter 33**, we see Moses giving a blessing to all the tribal leaders...and in **chapter 34** Moses dies. Moses went up on Mt. Nebo and the Lord showed Moses all the land.

**34:4-12...**

What a servant of God Moses was! Moses had led these folks for over 40 years. And he was faithful to God even to the end of his life. Moses wrote the **Book of Deuteronomy** so the people could remember...

John Newton, who wrote "Amazing Grace" wrote these words at the age of 82...

**"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things**

**1) that I am a great sinner**

**2) that Christ is a great Savior."**

Well, Moses wanted these folks and us to do some remembering as well...

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In fact, 23 times in this book Moses warns the people not to forget or to remember what has happened in the past. We certainly don't have time to look at all of these verses, but let's just consider a few...

## 1) **Remember the Lord...(8:18)**

Everything we've seen in the **Book of Deuteronomy** is a revelation of the mind and heart of God.

Each law, each ceremony, each prohibition, each memory of past events pointed to Jehovah.

Israel was to remember the Lord was one Lord.

God knew the temptation to follow gods that they could **see** would be overwhelming...and they were commanded by God to have no other gods before them and to make no graven image...

And all through **Deuteronomy** Moses reminded the people of God's glory and grace. He reminded them that God is a covenant-keeping God. He reminded them He was a chastening God and he reminded them of God's mercy and love and faithfulness.

**And I believe Moses would want you and me to remember the Lord as well. Moses would say to you and me... "Put away your idols. Know the God of the Word by knowing the Word of God."**

Moses also wanted the people to

## 2) **Remember that they were slaves...(5:15)**

The Jews were to remember that it was the Lord who brought them out of slavery. And Moses would remind you and me that once we were slaves to Satan but we were set free by the blood of the Lamb.

## 3) **Remember how God led you...(8:2)**

God didn't lead the people out of Egypt only to abandon them. God led them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

**The Jews didn't always understand the route the Lord took, but God never led them astray.**

And Moses would remind you and me that the will of God will never lead us where the grace of God cannot keep us or the power of God cannot enable us to glorify the Lord!

Israel was to obey God because of her **past experience** of God's deliverance, provision, and judgment...

Israel was to obey God because of her **present experience** of God's sufficiency in supplying her needs and in fighting her battles...

Israel should obey God because of His **future promises** of blessing or cursing to her, all hinging on her proper response to God's pointed commands.

One of the hardest lessons for us (in fact it is an ongoing lesson that a believer keeps learning over and over) is to **accept** God's will and **obey** God without protest or complaint.

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I don't know that I'll **ever** learn that...but all I have to do is see that He's been faithful to me **yesterday** and is faithful to me **today** to know that He'll be faithful to me **tomorrow!**

**Which of God's past, present, or future dealings in your life could you point to as proof positive that God ought to be obeyed?**

**Can you think of times He has *delivered you and provided for you in the past?*  
Can you think of ways He is *supplying your every need today?*  
Can you think of promises He has made for your future?**

**Of course we all can...and we'd be here all day long if we were to list them, wouldn't we?**

## **4) Remember Mt. Sinai...(4:9-13)**

What happened at Mt. Sinai? The Law was given!

God didn't give the people the Law to save them. He gave them the Law to show them they **needed** saving. He gave them the Law to teach them about their sinfulness and His holiness.

And when you and I look at the Law of God, we know we've broken them all. God says if you're guilty of breaking one, you've broken them all.

Thank God for the Law, because Paul tells us in **Galatians** that it's our schoolmaster to lead us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Law demands...grace gives.  
The Law says "do" – grace says "believe."  
The Law exacts – grace bestows.  
The Law says "work" – grace says "rest."  
The Law threatens, pronouncing a curse...  
Grace entreats, pronouncing a blessing.**

**The Law says, "Do, and thou shalt live"  
Grace says, "Live and thou shalt do."**

**The Law condemns the best man...the grace of  
God saves the worst man.**

Thank God for His amazing grace!!!

Moses wanted the people to also

## **5) Remember their enemies (25:17) "Remember Amalek"**

This isn't a command to carry grudges but to recognize the enemies of God that oppose the Lord and His people.

And we need to be reminded time and again of the fact that there are forces out there that oppose us and are against the things of God.

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May I say this...you're not going to be bothered much by these enemies unless and until you get serious about serving God. But when we really commit to live for Jesus, Satan's going to start firing his darts at us and the world is going to start enticing us and our flesh is going to be tempted every day.

**God's Word says, "Remember and recognize and rebuke your enemies!"**

## **6) Remember what the Lord did to Miriam (24:9)**

Do you remember what the Lord did to Miriam? He struck her with leprosy. WHY? Because she rebelled against the leader God had appointed over her.

**God knows our hearts. That's a very scary thing, isn't it? God sees all the pride and envy and jealousy in our hearts. He knows when our hearts lack compassion and forgiveness. He knows our ugly thoughts and He hears our ugly words.**

**And He can discipline us just as He did Miriam if He chooses to...**

**Deuteronomy 34:1-12...**(time permitting)

**Deuteronomy 34** tells us of the death of Moses. God's Word tells us that God buried Moses in the land of Moab...that's the present day land of Jordan...and that no man knows his burial place to this day.

WHY? Why didn't God want the people to know where the body of Moses was buried? Well, I believe it was because God knew how prone the people were to make a god of anything. I mean, if they made a worshiped a golden calf, how much more tempted would they be to worship at the grave of Moses?

There's a little verse way over in the **Book of Jude** that tells us that Michael, the archangel and Satan argued over the body of Moses. I've often wondered just exactly what that argument was about, haven't you?

**Maybe Satan wanted to be sure Moses' body was buried where a shrine of worship could be made of his grave...and maybe Michael was sent by God to make certain this did not happen.**

We **do** know that Moses didn't get to enter the Promised Land with his people, and we're tempted to feel really sorry for Moses because of that...but on the Mt. of Transfiguration, he appeared with Elijah and the Lord Jesus Christ...**in the Promised Land!**

**What a more glorious way to be there than he could ever have imagined!! God really is able to do exceeding, abundantly beyond what we can ever ask or think, isn't He?**

Well, in closing, let me just say this...

We've seen the **first** generation that God brought out of Egypt.

We've seen the **second** generation that didn't really learn from their parents.

We've also seen that God knew **beforehand** that they would disobey His commandments and be thrown out of the land.

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He also knew even way back then **how** and **when** the people would be restored to the land more importantly to Himself.

We've said it before...but **WHAT A MIGHTY GOD WE SERVE!!**

Let me ask you this in closing...

How has **Deuteronomy** related to our lives today and will it make a difference in the days ahead?

Are we striving **day by day** to be obedient to God's commandments?

Are we teaching **day by day** our children by word and example?

Are we living **day by day** in the Promised Land or are we afraid like these folks to even enter the abundant and victorious Christian life?

Everything God has ever written in His precious Word has been for our benefit. It has been for our edification. It has been for an example to us of how we are to live.

I believe we live in a day of instant gratification. We want everything and we want it now. We even want instant results in our spiritual life.

God's timing is not ours. God could have given these folks all the land of Israel in a day, but He instructed them to move step by step...He told them in **chapter 7** that He would give them the land "**little by little.**"

***And most of the time it's the same for you and me...***

Where are you hoping for *instant results* in your Christian life? Maybe it's victory over a habit...maybe it's knowledge of God's Word...maybe it's simply spiritual maturity. **God's way is not rush, rush, rush...but "little by little."**

So, I believe the principle here is that we should look for the small steps of growth you can take today: **a verse to memorize...**

**a command to obey...**

**a promise to claim...**

**a lesson to learn...**

**a blessing to enjoy...**

**a sin to avoid**

**a thought to carry and share...**

The main thing is for us to take that step... If we don't step forward in our walk with God, we'll step backward. It's impossible to just stand still!!

I hope **Deuteronomy** has not been a dry and dusty book to us.

I hope we know Moses better.

I hope we understand the Law better.

And I hope we know better what God expects of us.

Now, let's go and live in the light of what we've learned in this precious old book.