

Message #40**Deuteronomy 31:14-30**

There are 193 nations in the world that have national anthems. A national anthem is a musical composition that symbolizes the history and traditions of a nation and promotes a national identity and national patriotism for that nation.

The national anthem of the United States is “The Star Spangled Banner.” The national anthem of Canada is “O Canada.” The national anthem for the Bahamas is “March On Bahamaland.” The national anthem for Egypt is “My Country, My Country, My Country.” The national anthem for Israel is “The Hope” (Ha Tiqva – Hebrew).

The lyrics were written by Naphtali Hertz Imber in 1878 and the music was written by Samuel Cohen in 1887-88. This was adopted as Israel’s national anthem in 1948.

Several thousand years before this national anthem was written for Israel, God told Moses to write one. In fact, in this portion of Scripture, God tells Moses to write a National Anthem Song for Israel and it will turn out to be one of the strangest national anthems you will ever see, sing or study.

So God gives him his final assignment before he would die:

MOSES WAS TO BRING JOSHUA BEFORE GOD, HE WAS TO SHOW THE LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING AND OBEYING THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, AND HE WAS TO WRITE A NATIONAL ANTHEM SONG FOR ISRAEL THAT TELLS THE TRUTH OF THEIR REBELLION.

This is what God wanted Moses to do and this is what Moses will do. Now the actual National Anthem Song that he writes we will examine next week in Deuteronomy 32. But this sets the stage for it.

Now there are key observations we want to make in these verses:

OBSERVATION #1 – God informs Moses it is time for him to die. **31:14a**

In **verse 14**, God came to Moses and actually said, “it is time for you to die.” God sets the boundaries of every human’s life, including the days and months, and no one, even a great man like Moses, goes beyond those boundaries (Job 14:5). It was time for Moses to leave this world. His job was done. As Paul said, the time of his departure was at hand.

OBSERVATION #2 – God tells Moses to get Joshua and present themselves at the Tent of Meeting. **31:14b-15**

The Tent of Meeting was a mobile, portable tent that became a special place where people could appear before God and seek His counsel, prior to the construction of the Tabernacle.

Now the reason why God told Moses to bring Joshua was so that He could commission him. Moses had already presented Joshua to the people (Deut. 31:7-8); now God would visibly appear in the tent in a pillar of cloud so people would know this was His choice.

Joshua had been a very loyal servant of Moses for years. In fact, we learn in Exodus 33:11 that he would not leave that tent. So he had a high level of commitment to Moses and God.

Actually, when we go back to the spy episode, it was Caleb who appeared to be the stronger leader between him and Joshua (Numbers 13:30). Eventually, Joshua did speak up and say we can take that land, but Caleb was the first (Num. 14:6-10).

But Joshua was God's choice and that point is brought out clearly right here.

OBSERVATION #3 – God speaks to Moses. **31:16-21**

These are critical messages that God gives to Moses, that obviously God wants us to see and know. He appeared at the tent and gave Moses these six messages:

Message #1 - Moses is about to lie down with his fathers. **31:16a**

This of course is another way of saying you are about to die. When God tells Moses it's time to lie down, he is speaking of what will happen to his body. Moses himself wrote that in death the soul leaves the body (Gen. 35:18). It is the body that lies down.

The image of lying down and going to sleep is an image used in the Bible for dead. Going to sleep does not mean going into oblivion. In fact, we know that Moses was very much alive because he actually shows up at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:3).

Now the idea of lying down with fathers is certainly the idea of being reunited with relatives who have also died.

Message #2 - When these people get into the Promised Land, they will be immoral, they will worship other gods and they will forsake Me and My covenant. **31:16b**

God is not giving Moses happy news about these people he led, but He is giving them truthful news. When a strong, godly leader leaves, the potential to drift away from God and His word is very real.

Think of this. These people would turn away from the God who did so much for them to worship false things. God desires to impart grace and blessings to His people, but if they turn away from Him, they will experience devastating judgment.

We sing a song America, America, God shed His grace on thee. God has shed His grace on this country, but this country is turning away from God and His word and what is right and decent, and God will not bless a nation that does that. He hasn't with Israel and He won't with us.

Message #3 - God's anger will burn against His own people. **31:17-18**

There are six realities of what happens when God's anger turns against His people:

(Reality #1) - God will forsake them. **31:17a**

(Reality #2) - God will hide His face from them. **31:17b**

(Reality #3) - God will see to it they are consumed with many evils. **31:17c**

(Reality #4) - God will see to it they are consumed with many troubles. **31:17d**

(Reality #5) - God's people will say God does not exist among us. **31:17e**

(Reality #6) - God will hide His face from His people. **31:18**

God says My own people will drift so far away from Me and My word that I will not bless them in any way but will see to it that their existence is miserable.

This is not just an O.T. teaching. Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." That is said in the context of the Lord "will judge His people" (Heb. 10:30).

Message #4 - Moses and Joshua are to write a national anthem song for Israel. **31:19**

The actual lyrics will show up in chapter 32. It is the strangest national anthem song that has ever been written. It is so foreign to the way men think because this comes from God, and His ways are not our ways.

God wanted a song written for the purpose of showing His people that their rebellion is the cause of His angry judgment. This song was not just to be sung, it was to be taught.

God wanted this song memorized so that the people could speak it. **This song is a witness of the fact that God is AGAINST His own people.**

Can you imagine some National Anthem that is sung to acknowledge it isn't God's grace that is shed on us, but God's anger? The Jewish national anthem has missed this. They don't sing this. Here are their lyrics to their national anthem:

As long as within our hearts
The Jewish soul sings

As long as forward to the East
To Zion looks the eye
Our hope is not yet lost
It is two thousand years old.
To be a free people in our land.
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Message #5 - God will bring them to the land and bless them and prosper them and they will turn against God. **31:20**

God says I brought them into a land filled with My blessings and prospered them and what did they do? They will worship other gods and serve them and spurn Me and break My covenant.

Message #6 - God knows what the people will do and there will come a day when they will remember this song. **31:21**

Their national anthem will not be one of hope, but one that realizes we need help. God says I know what these people are. I know what they will do so write it in a song.

In **verse 22**, we learn that Moses did write it down. He wrote it in one day and he taught it to the sons of Israel. He didn't just write down lyrics, but he taught the meaning of those lyrics.

Imagine being Moses. You are about to die and God tells you this is what will happen to the people you have led all these years. They will move away from your teaching and move away from Me.

OBSERVATION #4 – God commissioned Joshua. **31:23**

There is a chronology here. After Moses wrote the song, God, Himself, commissions Joshua, who must have been thrilled to learn that he was about to take over the lead of a bunch of spiritual duds. God gave Joshua three admonitions:

Admonition #1 - Be strong and courageous. **31:23a**

Joshua needed this admonition for it is repeated multiple times (31:6, 7, 23; Josh. 1:6, 7, 23). Moses gave Joshua this charge and so did God. This did apparently help Joshua because he would challenge others with the same admonition (Josh. 10:25). Leaders have a responsibility to lead in accordance with God's word and they need to be strong and courageous to do it.

Admonition #2 - You will bring Israel to the land I promised to Israel. **31:23b**

God says I promised to lead Israel into the Promised Land and you are the leader I will use to do it. It is a big job. It is a key prophetic moment when God is fulfilling a Promise made to Abraham. What a privilege to be the one who fulfills it and what a responsibility.

Admonition #3 - I will be with you. **31:23c**

God wanted Joshua to realize that even though Moses would be dead and gone, he was not alone. God would be with Joshua every step of the way.

OBSERVATION #5 – Moses finished writing the words of the Law. **31:24**

I don't think this could be any clearer; it was Moses who wrote the Law. God used Moses to write the O.T. law. He wrote it down; he put it in a book and it was complete.

OBSERVATION #6 – Moses commands the Levites to display the written word of God in the most sacred place of all. **31:25-26**

The ark of the covenant contained the two stone tablets. Moses says you take this written word and you put it beside the ark of the Covenant because God's written word is that sacred.

People need to know and see that God's written word is very sacred. Having a visible manifestation of God was not enough; they needed the written word of God.

Notice the written law is a "witness against you." Do you see that? God's written law and word will show all are guilty and sinful. The law of God cannot save anyone. It establishes the guilt of all and as Paul said, "close every mouth" (Rom. 3:19).

OBSERVATION #7 – Moses knew these people would become more rebellious after he died. **31:27**

Moses knew these people. You know who is faithful and who isn't. Moses knew what would happen. He knew they would rebel and turn against God. They were rebellious against God and His word when he was alive, so he sure knew what would happen when he was dead.

OBSERVATION #8 – Moses addresses the elders. **31:28-29**

Moses said I want to address all the elders; the leaders. I want to confront them with truth and tell them how God will be against them. Moses says again, I know that after I die you will act corruptly and turn away from the word and will of God. You will so anger God that you will provoke Him to anger.

OBSERVATION #9 – Moses speaks to all Israel. **31:30**

The National Anthem Song will be presented in chapter 32 and it will not be a patriotic song. This anthem will tell the truth about the corruption that has brought a nation to the judgment of God.

This song will be a song about the people's perversions and depravity and idolatry. It will be a song in which God says, "I will cut them to pieces."

God wants to bless His people. He wants to shed His grace on them, but if they turn away from Him and His word, He will cause trouble and turmoil to dominate their lives.

That Law is a written testimony against every one of us. Only one way out—believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved for Christ is the end of the Law to all who believe (Romans 10:4).