

Message #43**Deuteronomy 32:44-52**

Back in the 70's, when I worked in radio, I used to play songs that were called "one hit wonders." They became a #1 big hit for the artist then they never had another big hit that was #1.

For example:

From the 60's there was: "Rhythm of the Rain" by the Cascades and "Silence is Golden" by the Tremeloes.

From the 70's there was 1) Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle"; 2) Don McLean's "American Pie"; 3) Carl Douglas' "Kung Fu Fighting."

I used to play those songs and people would sing along with them. Even when you hear those songs today, they are enjoyable to listen to and sing along and they bring back memories.

Not this song of Moses. This song that Moses wrote has never been a big hit with anyone. It was Moses' one time song and it was his last song, but it never took off. This song was supposed to be seen, sung, studied and applied. It didn't happen and still hasn't happened. Israel has not studied this song. Most churches have not studied this song. Most individuals have not studied this song. Not too many even care if they ever see it or hear it again. No one wants to sing it or learn it.

What a tragedy. By not learning this song, life has become a tragedy. Moses did not just sit down one day and write this song, this song given to him by God. **Verse 44** says Moses came and he spoke this song to all the people with Joshua right at his side.

Israel did listen to it once. But Israel did not learn it and she did not apply it and sadly, even though the lyrics are here in Deuteronomy, most people of the world don't ever read it or think about it or apply it to this day.

AFTER MOSES WROTE THIS SONG FOR ISRAEL, HE WARNED HER TO TAKE GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY BECAUSE NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WORDS OF THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

After Moses had completed this song of chapter 32:1-43, God wanted all to know exactly what happened:

HISTORICAL FACT #1 – Moses finished speaking all these words of this song to all the people with Joshua at his side. **32:44-45**

This verse brings to a conclusion the last hymn words ever spoken or written by Moses. Now in most cases if you learn that a song writer wrote a song and then died shortly after writing it, it makes an impact on you.

For example, back in the 70's one of the most prolific song writers was Jim Croce. Jim Croce, who actually converted to Judaism, died in a plane crash on September 20, 1973.

Word spread that he had written some new songs that would be released after his death. One of those songs was "I'll Have to Say I love you in a Song." When you know he wrote that song not too long before he died, you listen to the lyrics of it.

Moses wrote this song just before he died and not too many even care if they ever hear it again. It was a solemn moment when Moses and Joshua came out and read this song to them. It didn't faze them. You would think that someone would remember it. You have men, women and children there. You would think someone would say this is the last thing he wrote; we need to know this. But that didn't happen.

If the Lord tarries, there will come a day when we will sing our final hymn with the people of God. When it comes time for us to attend our last worship service, I hope God's assessment will be they took My word seriously.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – Moses gives a final admonition to Israel. **32:46-47**

This is it. Moses has this one last moment to communicate to Israel. This 120-year-old man of God has had an incredible life and he gets to address the nation one more time. Moses is thinking through his life and what to share with others.

Admonition #1 - Take to heart all the words of which I am warning you. **32:46a**

Two things are immediately obvious: 1) God's word is comprised of words (debarim); 2) God's word is comprised of solemn warnings. God's word is not written to be a fun book for entertainment. It is a book that is to be taken very seriously.

Notice "all the words" are important. As Moses was nearing his death, he knew the value of knowing and observing "all the words" of the law of God, all the words of the word of God.

Over and over again Moses has stressed the point that "man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). This was something Jesus Himself reinforced in quoting this very book of Deuteronomy (i.e. Matt. 4:4).

Most people do not understand this point, but it is the word of God that is inspired by God and it is the word of God that is living and active and is sharper than a two-edged sword. It is the word of God that can cut open souls (Heb. 4:12). It is the word of God that can create faith. It is the word of God that can change lives.

It is one thing to read the words in the Bible; it is another to take those words to heart.

Admonition #2 - Command your sons to carefully observe all the words of the law. **32:46b-47**

There are four facts Moses brings out about the written word of God:

(Fact #1) - There is not an idle word in God's word. **32:47a**

The word "idle" means that there are no words in God's word that are light, fluffy, flippant or meaningless. There are no words in the Bible that don't have "meaningful content." All words have meaningful content.

The Hebrew "idle words" (dabar req) mean, as Earl Kalland said in his commentary, that there are no words that are empty, worthless and unprofitable in God's word (*Deuteronomy*, p. 217).

In fact, Proverbs 30:5 says that "Every word of God is tested." Every word has been carefully put into the Scriptures by God and Moses wanted the people to realize that.

(Fact #2) - God's word is your life. **32:47b**

Do not miss this critical point. God's word is the key to life. All other things will come up short, not the word of God.

The word of God is the key to physical life, spiritual life and an abundant life. By living a life focused on God's written word, one may expect to live a good, long, productive life and have a life blessed by God Himself.

(Fact #3) - God's word will prolong your life. **32:47c**

Obedying God's word has tremendous medicinal effects. Undoubtedly there have been many who have gone to an early grave because they would not take God's word seriously.

Generally speaking, if you purpose to take God's word seriously and obey it, God will see to it that you have a good, long, productive and enjoyable life.

(Fact #4) - God's word will be the key to you possessing your land. **32:47d**

It is a shame that Israel does not get this point even to this day. For Israel to possess the land and prosper in the land, she needs to focus on God's word and seek to obey it.

Israel's religious leaders for the most part do not take God's word seriously and they do not study it systematically. I have told you this before, but it is worth repeating. One of the oldest synagogues in the United States is in Savannah, Georgia. It was founded in 1733. We went and toured it when we were staying at Tybee Island. I asked the Jewish tour guide, do your Rabbis ever take you through a book like Isaiah? His answer I will never forget. He said, "No, that would be too much work."

He said our Rabbis are mostly into ritualistic things, not carefully studying the Scriptures. Yet here is Moses telling Israel studying the Scriptures is the key to you getting your land.

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – God gave Moses his final instructions. **32:48-52**

It was time for Moses to leave. His work was just about done. He had written his last song and it was time for him to die. His death was not a surprise. God revealed it to him. This was direct revelation between God and Moses. God spoke to Moses.

Instruction #1 - Go up on the mountain which is opposite Jericho. **32:49a**

There is grace here as God is permitting Moses to see the Promised Land from a distance. Mount Nebo has a peak elevation of over 2,600 feet and is about 20 miles from Jericho. When one is on that mountain you may look into the valley across the Jordan River and see the Promised Land.

Instruction #2 - Look at the land I am going to give to Israel for a possession. **32:49b**

God wanted Moses to realize, you made it. You led them here to the Promised Land. You got them here. It took 40 years, but you made it.

Instruction #3 - You will die up on that mountain. **32:50a**

This information about Moses dying is not only given here, but also in Numbers 27:12-14.

Aaron had died on a mountain which was located about 10 miles NE of this spot. He died on Mt. Hor (Num. 20:22-29). These high places were typical places for pagan worship, and since Aaron and Moses were so critical to leading God's people to true worship, it is very fitting that they die up on top of two of these places.

Instruction #4 - You will be gathered to your people when you die. **32:50b**

Death is not the end. Death means you leave this earth and relocate to a family gathering. Moses had revealed this in his writings:

- 1) Abraham died and was gathered to his people. Gen. 25:8
- 2) Ishmael died and was gathered to his people. Gen. 25:17
- 3) Isaac died and was gathered to his people. Gen. 35:29
- 4) Jacob died and was gathered to his people. Gen. 49:33
- 5) Aaron died and was gathered to his people. Num. 20:24-29

Now it was Moses' turn. What he had taught about death, he would experience. It doesn't matter how great the man or impacting the man or woman; death eventually tracks them down. If it tracked down Moses, it will sure track us down.

Instruction #5 - You will not go into the land because you did not revere Me before the people in the water issue in the wilderness. **32:51-52**

There are two issues for which God holds Moses accountable:

(Issue #1) - He had broken faith with God. **32:51a**

This word “broke faith” (ma al) in Hebrew is a very serious word. It is a word that describes what God considers to be a treacherous and faithless act (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 494). This word is used in the context of a wife being unfaithful to her husband (Nem. 5:12) and of Israel forsaking God (Lev. 26:40). This word will be used in regard to Achan’s sin (Josh. 22:16, 20).

God did not view what Moses did publicly as a light issue. Instead of speaking to the rock, which is what God told him to do in front of the people, he hit the rock twice.

(Issue #2) - He did not treat God as Holy.

God’s leader has a responsibility to reverence God in front of the people. God does not want His leader treating Him lightly or disrespectfully.

When Moses struck that rock twice at Meribah Kadesh (Numbers 20:11), after God had specifically told him to speak to that rock (Numbers 20:8), it was a major and blatant disregard for God and His word. It is critical that God’s leader treat God and His word with reverence before the people and Moses did not do that and it cost him (Numbers 27:14).

God had actually spoke to Moses and told him to stand before the people and speak to that rock so it may yield its water.

Speaking to the rock would demonstrate the power of God by the spoken word. For a sinful man to interject his works such as striking the rock was a true disregard of the holiness of God.

Moses momentarily neglected to realize how Holy and sovereign God was.

As a result, God said in **verse 52**, you will see the land but you will not go into the land.

One thing is crystal clear from this passage; God’s words need to be viewed reverently and taken seriously.

No one has kept all the words of the law perfectly. The law cannot save you. What the law will do is condemn you. That is why Jesus Christ came to this world to redeem us from the law and sin. Believe on Him and you shall be saved. Take God’s words to heart and you will be blessed.