

DEUTERONOMY 32-34

April 29, 2012

Introduction:

Today we will study **chapters 32 through 34** and concluding the book of **Deuteronomy**. It is important to recognize that most of **chapter 32** and all of **chapter 33** are poetry. Poetic language is used. For example, the imagery used in **32:11** does not mean that God actually has “wings”.

The life of Moses comes to an end in **chapter 34**. Moses “penned” the first five books of the Bible; God authored them. Whenever the Bible speaks of *THE Law*, it’s referring to these books. They are also called the Pentateuch (*PENT-uh-tuke*), which means “five scrolls, jars, or boxes”.

Some say that Moses could not have written **chapter 34** because he was dead. How would you answer that claim?

- If Moses was the author of the book, he obviously couldn’t write detail after his demise. But, since the eternal, all-knowing God was the author, then God could clearly tell Moses what to write. See **Isaiah 46:9-10**. [9 remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. 10 Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.] NLT

32:1-43 In verses **1 to 43 of chapter 32**, Moses pens a song that is a prophecy of what will happen to Israel in the years to come. Who can tell us what he is referring to?

- In **verses 1 to 7** they are reminded that God’s greatness and deliverance from slavery in Egypt. In **verses 8 to 14** we see His goodness to them as He gives them the Promised Land. In **verses 15 to 33** Israel will provoke God to anger with their idolatry and disobedience. In **verses 34 to 43** we see that God will have compassion and many of the Jews will be able to return to the Promised Land (the books of Ezra and Nehemiah). In **1948**, the Jews were granted statehood by the United Nations; this was the first time that the land was actually in their possession since the Babylonian captivity in the **590s B.C. (over 2,500 years)**.

32:3-4a What do we learn about God in the first part of **verse 4** and how would you explain that to someone?

- God’s work is perfect. Being perfect means that this is nothing wrong in what He does and it means that there is no way that He could possibly do what He does any better than the way He does it. From our human viewpoint we might assume that God could do something better than the way He has done it. We have limited knowledge, God has complete knowledge. We make choices hoping they will turn out as we think; when God chooses, He knows exactly how it will turn out before He makes the choice. See **Isaiah 55:7-9**. [7 Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously. 8 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.] NLT

Is God more interested in our current convenience or in our character?

- We usually choose what is easy or convenient; God works instead to produce character in us. God will almost always sacrifice our comfort to build our characters. Comfort is what we will know forever in heaven; character is what God seeks to develop in us here. See **Romans 8:28-29**. [28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. 29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.] **NLT**

How does God develop our character?

- God uses EVERYTHING that happens to us to make us like His Son. See **Hebrews 5:8**. [8 Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.] Character is developed in difficulty, not in ease. See **Proverbs 27:17**. [17 As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.] **NLT**

32:47 What do we learn about God's Word in the first part of **verse 47**?

- The whole of our lives is determined by how obedient we are to God's Word. See **Psalms 1:1-3** [1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. 2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. And **Joshua 1:8**. [8 Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.] **NLT**

32:48-52 What do we learn from **verses 48 to 52**?

- We can make mistakes that completely change what God was going to do for us and with us. Moses could and should have led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. He should have lived there and died there. His disobedience cost him what God wanted to do for Him.

How does this principle (**48-52**), apply to us?

- We never know what our sin will cost us (or others) when we commit them. When Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, he did not know that it was the final test to his becoming the Father of the Jews (**Genesis 22:12,15-18**). It is God's will that every child grow up with his mother and father (**Mark 10:9**). The sins of parents cost the children God's best for their childhood years.

Chapter 33 – Chapter 33 contains the last words of Moses to the children of Israel. In his case, he knew this was his last chance to cast any vision or to pass on any legacy. Many of us will not have the opportunity later in life to say what we want to say to those we love because our lives will end suddenly. Take some time this week to write a note to your mate, children, and grandchildren and tell them what you want them to know in the event that you are not physically able to tell them before you die. These notes would include describing your love for them and gratitude to them. They would also include your hope for their future. Bring one of these notes to class to share with your group. It would be okay to read those notes to them now and then seal them up in an envelope to be opened and read in the event of your death. If you read give some great thought to this and read them now, expect some special things to happen.

33:27 Verse 27 is the “seed” of our hymn *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*.

34:1-3 In **chapter 34 verses 1 to 3** God shows Moses *all* of the Promised Land from the top of Mount Pisgah (*PISS-guh*). It is impossible to see all of the land from there. God somehow miraculously allowed Moses to see all of the land, even the furthestmost parts of Israel.

34:10 Verse 10 says that *the Lord knew Moses face to face*. How do you reconcile this verse with **Exodus 33:20**?

- **Colossians 1:15 and 1 Timothy 1:17** both say that God is *invisible*. See the following verses: **John 1:18 and 1 Timothy 6:15-16**. [18 No one has ever seen God. But the one and only Son is himself God and is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.] [15 For at just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 16 He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen.] Some writers say that the phrase *face to face* was just a Hebrew phrase for intimacy. It is possible, though, that Moses did see and speak with the pre-incarnate Jesus. When the Lord *appeared* to people in the Old Testament, they saw the visible God – Jesus, not the invisible God the Father. **See Isaiah 6:1-5**. [1 It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. 2 Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 3 They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" 4 Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. 5 Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the **King**, the **Lord of Heaven's Armies**."] Who is the King of kings? **Jesus**. Who is the Lord of lords? **Jesus**.