

Lesson 4 July 24, 2011

Moses' Farewell Message

Lesson Scope: Deuteronomy 31-34

Lesson Focus

Our lesson today is Moses' farewell to the children of Israel. He had led them these forty years and had faithfully given them God's laws. He reminded them of his age and that he would not be leading them into Canaan. Moses assured Israel that, even though he was leaving them, God would continue to provide for their needs and lead them by the hand of Joshua. Joshua would bring them over Jordan, direct their subduing of the land, and divide it among the tribes for an inheritance. In the presence of the people, Moses gave Joshua a charge and encouraged him.

Moses gave Israel a copy of the Law and directed that it be read publicly every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). The Lord also gave Moses a song, which he taught the people. This song would continually remind the people and their posterity of the debt of gratitude they owed the Lord and of the fearful consequences that would follow if they turned from Him. God provides for His people through tender care as well as through stern discipline. He longs for them to receive His Word and to rest in His everlasting arms.

Before starting briefly review how God called Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, how He gave the Law at Mount Sinai, and how God proved Himself faithful again and again in the wilderness.

Moses' farewell shows his love for God's people and his desire for them to follow God after he died. This lesson is applicable for today by pointing out how God cares for us and how we can turn from Him as Israel did. In closing look at the joy that thankful people can have with the blessing of God.

Lesson Aim: To identify principles of God's dealings with His people.

Theme Verses: Psalm 28:8-9. The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Lesson Text

Doctrine Dropping as Dew

Deuteronomy 31:30 ³⁰ And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

Deuteronomy 32:1-4 ¹ Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. ² My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: ³ Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. ⁴ *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12 ⁹ For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance. ¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: ¹² *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

Judgment Falling as Fire

Deuteronomy 32:15-16 ¹⁵ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶ They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

Deuteronomy 32:21 ²¹ They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

Deuteronomy 32:23 ²³ I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.

Deuteronomy 32:28-29 ²⁸ For they *are* a nation void of counsel, neither *is there any* understanding in them. ²⁹ O that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *that* they would consider their latter end!

Deuteronomy 32:43 ⁴³ Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people.

Blessings Crowning the Faithful

Deuteronomy 33:1-3 ¹ And this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. ² And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them. ³ Yea, he loved the people; all his saints *are* in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; *every one* shall receive of thy words.

Deuteronomy 33:26-29 ²⁶ *There is* none like unto the God of Jeshurun, *who* rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. ²⁷ The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*. ²⁸ Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob *shall be* upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. ²⁹ Happy *art* thou, O Israel: *who is* like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and *who is* the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

Questions for Study

Doctrine Dropping as Dew

1. What characteristics of God does the term Rock reveal?
2. In what way does God's doctrine fall as dew?
3. What are some methods God uses to instruct His people?

Judgment Falling as Fire

4. Why was Jeshurun "waxed fat"?
5. In what way did Jeshurun kick, and what were the results?
6. What special challenges accompany material blessings?

Blessings Crowning the Faithful

7. How is God portrayed in Deut.33:26?
8. What is the foundation for God's children's joy?

Analyzing the Passage

The song that Moses taught Israel (Deut.32:1-43) reviewed important facts of history. Their thoughts of this song would help them remember their responsibility to God, and, if they turned away, it would be a witness against them.

Doctrine (Deut.32:2) is instruction. God had given His message in a gentle manner that enlightened and refreshed His people.

The apple of an eye (Deut.32:10) is the pupil, the most sensitive part, which the other members of the body guard jealously. The intense interest of the Lord in His people results in His jealous care for them.

Jeshurun (Deut.32:15) means "upright." God knew that Israel could and would grow self-sufficient in the land of plenty. In their prosperity, they would forget the Giver of their blessings and turn from Him.

Principles and Applications

Doctrine Dropping as Dew

1. The Lord is the Rock of His people (Deut.32:4). First Corinthians 10:4 identifies the Rock of Israel as Christ. It was this Rock that provided them with refreshing water in the desert. Christ is the foundation of our faith and the chief Cornerstone of the church (Ephesians 2:20), providing stability and security to those who trust in Him.

2. God chose His people as His portion (Deut.32:9). It was not because Israel chose God but because they responded when God chose them that He blessed them with strength to fulfill His purpose in this world (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; John 15:16). If God did not draw us, we would not come seeking Him. It was God who chose to provide salvation and draw men to Himself. God continues to call men and women, offering them power to be a holy people and to glorify Him among the heathen.

3. God is intensely interested in the welfare of His people (Deut.32:10-12). Just as God tenderly cared for Israel as He led them through the great and terrible wilderness, He monitors our life, adding the right amounts of trial and blessing for our good. Like the eagle, God may push us out of our nest so that we develop spiritual strength. When our strength fails, He bears us back to the nest for a rest and then repeats the lesson. Christians who trust Him can weather the storms of life and remain faithful.

Judgment Falling as Fire

4. God is provoked to jealousy by the rebellion of His people (Deut.32:15-16). He created man to glorify Him; if man does not do that, he is not fulfilling his purpose. Man's divided loyalty is unacceptable. Furthermore, God knows and wants what is best for man. His anger is stirred by man's foolish and destructive choices prompted by unbelief.

5. God provokes His people to jealousy by those who were not a people

(Deut.32:21). God used the Gentile Christians to help the unbelieving Jews understand the promised blessings in Christ. As often happened with the Israelites, we can easily get the idea that we have a special place with God because we have faithful forefathers. A repentant thief or drunkard has God's approval more than a person who appears right outwardly while harboring pride, covetousness, and hatred (Luke 18:9-14).

6. God will heap judgments upon a disobedient people (Deut.32:23). He allowed Israel's enemies to carry them away captive. He used drought, sickness, and pestilence to call attention to their disobedience and bring them to repentance (Deuteronomy 28).

God uses the hard times in our life for our spiritual profit. It is good that we sometimes need to reap for our sins or mistakes. Divine chastening is not pleasant at the moment, "nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" to those who respond rightly to it.

7. God pleads with His people to consider the end of their ways (Deut.32:28-29). Our deeds have consequences; how we live determines our destiny. If we are wise, we will choose our deeds by their consequences. God is not willing that anyone would perish (Ezekiel 33:11). He reveals His will clearly so that man can make right choices.

8. God is merciful to a repentant people (Deut.32:43). When Israel cried to the Lord in their trouble, God heard, forgave, and delivered them (Deuteronomy 4:29-31; Nehemiah 9:13-17). Many times we too fail Him, and He needs to chastise us. When we respond in repentance, He forgives our sin and blesses us, remembering that we are but dust (Psalm 103:12-14). Jesus commanded His disciples to forgive others seventy times seven. How much more is God willing to forgive!

Blessings Crowning the Faithful

9. God's people are His by a holy covenant (Deut.33:1-3). God sets the terms of man's relationship with Him. As man obeys the immutable laws of God, he enjoys divine mercy and love. Disobedience places men outside the covenant and subjects them to the curses that come to those who know not God.

10. God undergirds His people with His everlasting arms (Deut.33:26-28). No detail of our life escapes His eye; no difficulty ever surprises Him. He monitors each trial for our good and remains by us with an overwhelming supply of resources for our help. He rebukes the devourer and superintends the events of our life to help us reach heaven at last.

11. God's people are happy in the salvation of their God (Deut.33:29). He released us from the bondage of sin and gave us freedom to do right. He made us His own sons and daughters. Even in time of difficulty, He fills our hearts with peace. The joyful praise that fills and overflows our hearts will continue in eternity.

Important Teachings

1. The Lord is the Rock of His people (Deut.32:4).
2. God chose His people as His portion (Deut.32:9).
3. God is intensely interested in the welfare of His people (Deut.32:10-12).
4. God is provoked to jealousy by the rebellion of His people (Deut.32:15-16).
5. God provokes His people to jealousy by those who were not a people (Deut.32:21).
6. God will heap judgments upon a disobedient people (Deut.32:23).
7. God pleads with His people to consider the end of their ways (Deut.32:28-29).
8. God is merciful to a repentant people (Deut.32:43).
9. God's people are His by a holy covenant (Deut.33:1-3).
10. God undergirds His people with His everlasting arms (Deut.33:26-28).
11. God's people are happy in the salvation of their God (Deut.33:29).

Answers to Questions

1. What characteristics of God does the term Rock reveal? Like a rock, our God is unmoving and eternal. He offers a solid foundation and a place of refuge.
2. In what way does God's doctrine fall as dew?
God tenderly enlightens men, introducing a little at a time of His will for them. He gently leads men to holiness.
3. What are some methods God uses to instruct His people?
God reveals His will through His written laws. He places His people in difficult circumstances to teach them lessons (Deuteronomy 8:3). God instructs His New Testament people by the preaching of the Word and by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit (John 14:26).
4. Why was Jeshurun "waxed fat"?
Jeshurun became dull and insensitive because of a wrong response to God's blessings. Instead of gratitude for God's goodness, they felt proud and self-

sufficient.

5. In what way did Jeshurun kick, and what were the results? Israel kicked by refusing to obey God's commands. They turned to other gods. As a result, God turned against them and brought judgment.

6. What special challenges accompany material blessings?

When material blessings increase, they call for more of our time and attention. They bring the temptation to live in ease and luxury. Abundance tends to make people feel proud and self-sufficient. Yielding to these tendencies makes people insensitive to the needs of others.

7. How is God portrayed in Deut.33:26?

God is sovereign. He has the power to help His people. God also is above all, seeing what men do and rewarding them accordingly.

8. What is the foundation for God's children's joy?

Salvation from the bondage of sin brings His children joy. They find rest in their Rock, who can deliver and protect. God's children find joy in anticipating a future in heaven with God.

Summarizing the Lesson

"Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hash broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder" (Psalm 107:10-16)

Research Guide

1. Study other Scriptural references to God as the Rock.
2. Read Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 1:31; Isaiah 31:5; 46:4; 63:9; Hosea 11:3 for inspiration from the Lord's care for His people.
3. Look up jealousy in Nave's Topical Bible to understand how the word is used in Scripture.
4. Find other references to Israel as "Jeshurun."