



... the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended ...

1 And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah (Nebo), that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. 4 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. (Deut 34:1-8)

God has a role for every one of His children. Moses was one of those whose light burns brilliantly across the ages until this day. However, Moses was not a priest, or a high priest – he was a prophet and leader of God’s people “*And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*” Moses had come a long way from his humble birth in Goshen. He now stands on his last mountain, or does he? His mind and body are sound and clear even at the age of 120 years. He may have mused on the peak of Nebo of his long-standing relationship with his God, and our God. In his mind’s eye, his memory probably went back to the little ark of reeds upon which his mother sent him adrift in the mighty Nile River of Egypt. He remembered, with warm affection, the eyes of Miriam (his sister) watching him carefully as the ark drifted among the reeds. He knew, too, that another pair of eyes was watching over him – the eyes of the Lord – who directed his vessel to the warm-hearted Princess of Egypt who lifted him from the flood and took him into the palace as her own. The next forty years had been years of opulence and learning, but Moses had a primitive awareness of his people and their God. The memory of them was fixed in his mind by an omniscient and all-powerful Father in Heaven.

Moses remembered leaving Egypt under circumstances as surely ordained by God as was his rescue from the Nile Waters. He remembered days of comfort and bliss in the mountain wilderness of his father-in-law, Jethro, for the next forty years. God

was training Moses for an important mission. He placed Moses in the very wilderness through which he would later lead the Children of Israel after their departure from Egypt. He remembered the shocking encounter on Mount Horeb (the Mountain of God) when he witnessed the burning bush that was not consumed, and the voice of the Lord commanding him to remove his shoes for the ground upon which he stood was holy.

Then Moses remembered his ordeal in Egypt once more when God sent him to share the Lord's warnings with Pharaoh – the nine plagues, and then the tenth of those plagues in which the oldest child of every household in Egypt, except those in Goshen whose doorposts were covered by the blood of the Lamb, had died. He remembered the beginning of a forty year pilgrimage in the Wilderness. Most astonishing to him was the memory of the Provident Hand of God in leading the Children away from Egypt, seemingly stranding them on the Red Sea Banks, but then sending a Pillar of Cloud by Day and Fire by Night, to follow and protect them. He remembered the awe of seeing the Sea parted by the power of the Lord for the escape of God's people, and to the eternal detriment of the hosts of the armies of Pharaoh. He recalled all of the amazing miracles of provision of the Lord across those forty years of Wilderness journey – the split Rock from which poured forth Water, the wonderful Manna that came down from Heaven, the awe-inspiring giving of the Law from the very hand of God atop Sinai of Horeb – all seemed as a long and wonderful dream now to Moses. Most of all, Moses remembered that the Lord his God had been with him every step of the way – even now to the peaks of Nebo – and most certainly, beyond! Moses was a great prophet, but Moses was also a man of the same frailties as all other men. But when he faltered, the Lord was always faithful to lift him up. The constant murmuring of an obstinate people were now fading on the verge of Jordan Banks over which Moses looked with longing and a pining heart because the Lord had said: *"I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."*

How stinging was this last counsel of the Lord to my young mind when I read them as a child. Poor Moses! He has led this grumbling group for forty years to the Land of Promise, but will not be privileged to cross over. That was my interpretation, but just how wrong I had been I would not know until I had matured in my understanding. In due time, God cleared up the matter for me by the Gospel of Matthew and Mark: *1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, **behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*** (Matt 17:1-3) On another Mount not far removed from Nebo, and separated by hundreds of years, Moses appears in the presence of that Lamb prefigured by the ancient sacrifice in Egypt – the Lord Jesus Christ. Tears streamed down my face when the Lord opened this wonderful mystery to me that had plagued my mind since a child of less than ten years. Would Moses have found that dirty little spot of land across the troubled waters of Jordan so appealing if he had any idea of that Land of Promise to which the Lord would take him, by and by? Not a single soul that had come out of Egypt would cross over Jordan Banks – except for the faithful Joshua and Caleb. The others, according to the promises and dictate of God, died in the Wilderness; but their children would pass over those rude waters.

Today, there is a lonely grave somewhere in a valley of Moab – the grave of Moses where his earthly remains were secretly buried by God. No man knows the place of his burial but the Lord. God did not allow any opportunity for the people to make an idol out of Moses' bones or gravesite. It is true that Moses was a great man of God, but Moses was great because of the God that he followed and not by any power of his own possession. This is true of every Christian reading this message. God can use your talents and skills (which He has given you) in amazing ways if you will attune your ear

to the Voice from the Burning Bush, and follow. Have you heard the thunderings from Sinai's Heights, or the still small voice that thundered in the heart and whispered in the ear of Elijah on Mount Horeb in a later age? (1 Kings 19) *5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.*

As you will recall, the Lord had Aaron stripped of his vestments prior to taking him to *"be with his fathers."* We all shall alike go from this life without the trappings of raiment of the world, stripped and naked; but Moses was not stripped because he wore no priestly vestments. He had a calling, but no title. So many fine Christians fill the annals of the church who have had no grand title but have risen to a prominence in God that far outpaces that of their contemporary clergy and priests. How many rivers of blood fill the Coliseum of Rome, and the arenas of the world, whose owners go unsung and unheralded except in the treasure trove of the Heart of God? It is a far greater blessing to be known of God and forgotten of the world, then to be acclaimed by the world and forgotten by God.

So of what significance is a lonely grave, unmarked and unrenowned, somewhere in the land of Moab? Of none whatsoever, but of what gravity is to be paid to that one which emerged (as did Moses), unscathed and undimmed with age or mortality, in an instant of time from that lonely grave? This is the promise of God to all who place their faith and trust in Him, and in the Redeeming Blood of His only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! Have you done, friend?

In considering the lonely grave of Moses, we should remember the words of the Wisdom Writer, Solomon: *1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.* (Eccl 3:1-8)

. . . . and there is a prescribed time for you and me, my friends. How shall we use the time that remains?