

Deuteronomy 31 Commentary

PREVIOUS

CLICK VERSE
To go directly to that verse

NEXT

- Deuteronomy 31:1
- Deuteronomy 31:2
- Deuteronomy 31:3
- Deuteronomy 31:4
- Deuteronomy 31:5
- Deuteronomy 31:6
- Deuteronomy 31:7
- Deuteronomy 31:8
- Deuteronomy 31:9
- Deuteronomy 31:10
- Deuteronomy 31:11
- Deuteronomy 31:12
- Deuteronomy 31:13
- Deuteronomy 31:14
- Deuteronomy 31:15
- Deuteronomy 31:16
- Deuteronomy 31:17
- Deuteronomy 31:18
- Deuteronomy 31:19
- Deuteronomy 31:20
- Deuteronomy 31:21
- Deuteronomy 31:22
- Deuteronomy 31:23
- Deuteronomy 31:24
- Deuteronomy 31:25
- Deuteronomy 31:26
- Deuteronomy 31:27
- Deuteronomy 31:28
- Deuteronomy 31:29
- Deuteronomy 31:30

Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)
Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

Deuteronomy by Irving Jensen- used by permission
deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy		
Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises

Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel				Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel		
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant		Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1- 30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
Plains of Moab							
ca. 2 Months Moses: Author (Except Dt 34)							

Deuteronomy 31:1 So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.

- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LAST WORDS OF A 120 YR OLD MAN OF GOD

Wiersbe - Moses could have closed his life under a dark cloud of discouragement. Instead, he gave encouragement to his people as they faced the challenge of a new life in a new land under a new leader. ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

Wiersbe - The old generation had died off, except for Caleb, Joshua, and Moses; and now Moses was to move off the scene. These are "transition chapters" as Moses gives his final words to the people he has loved and led for forty years. It is amazing that Moses remained so loyal to his people, for they were guilty of criticizing him, rebelling against him, and lying about him. Moses knew that he himself would not enter Canaan, yet he did everything possible to enable Israel to enter! Of course, Moses was faithful to the Lord (Heb. 3:1-6), and this is why he was so faithful to Israel. ([Expository Outlines of the Old Testament](#))

So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel - refers to the following discourse. Note the audience is ALL Israel. Note also that these are LAST WORDS, and the last words of any man are worth listening to very carefully, especially if that man's name is Moses, the servant of the LORD (Dt 34:5+, cf 1 Chr 6:49, 2 Chr 24:9, Da 9:11+, Rev 15:3+ = "the song of Moses" [play his song](#))!

NET NOTE on **he went** - For the [MT reading](#) וַיֵּלֶךְ (vayyelekh, "he went"), the LXX and Qumran have וַיֵּכֶל (vaykhal, "he finished"): "So Moses finished speaking," etc. The difficult reading of the MT favors its authenticity.

Deuteronomy 31:2 And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.'"

- **I am** : De 34:7 Ex 7:7 Jos 14:10,11 Ps 90:10 Ac 7:23
- **no** : De 34:7 Nu 27:17 2Sa 21:17 1Ki 3:7
- **not**: 32:48-52 Nu 20:12 27:13,14 Ac 20:25 2Pe 1:13,14
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 34:7 Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated.

Numbers 20:12+ But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Deuteronomy 3:26-27 "But the LORD was **angry with me** on your account, and would not listen to me; and the LORD said to me, 'Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter. 27 'Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north and south and east, and see it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan.

Deuteronomy 4:21-22 "Now the LORD **was angry with me** on your account, and swore that I would not cross the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 22"For I will die in this land, I shall not cross the Jordan, but you shall cross and take possession of this good land.

NO LONGER ABLE TO LEAD

And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go-

and the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan- This was first declared in Nu 20:12 because of unbelief resulting Moses as not treating Yahweh as holy before Israel.

TSK note - The life of Moses, the great prophet of Jehovah and lawgiver of the Jews, was exactly the same in length as the time Noah employed in preaching righteousness to the antediluvian world (Ge 6:3). These one hundred and twenty years were divided into three remarkable periods. Forty years he lived in Egypt, in the court of Pharaoh, acquiring all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians (Ac 7:20, 23); forty years he sojourned in Midian, in a state of preparation for his great and important mission (Ac 7:29, 30); and forty years he guided, led, and governed the Israelites under the express direction and authority of God: in all 120 years.

Deuteronomy 31:3 "It is the LORD your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the LORD has spoken.

- **God:** De 9:3 Ge 48:21 Ps 44:2,3 146:3-6
- and Joshua: De 31:7,8,14,23 3:28 34:9 Nu 27:18-21 Jos 1:2 3:7 4:14 Ac 7:45 Heb 4:8
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD CROSSES AHEAD OF ISRAEL

It is the LORD your God who will cross ahead of you- While Moses will appoint a man (Joshua) to lead Israel across the Jordan, the truth is that Yahweh would cross ahead of Israel. This recalls how He guided Israel day and night in the wilderness and now leads them into His promise to them. This would serve to encourage Joshua that he was not completely responsible for success of the conquest but that the LORD "[had his back](#)" as we say today. Notice the truth that the LORD will go before him is repeated three times - Dt 31:3, 6, 8.

He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them - The Hebrew verb for **dispossess** ([yarash](#)) is the same word that means to possess, so Moses is telling Israel in essence "You will dispossess them so you can possess their land." This is not stealing. The pagan idol worshipers had been give four generations to repent and seek God, but stubbornly continued their sinning reaching depths of depravity that are unspeakable (but were an abomination to God's holiness) until their "iniquity was...complete (Heb - [shalem](#); Lxx - [anapleroo](#) in perfect tense)." (Ge 15:18).

THOUGHT - Note the powerful spiritual principle - **100%** Dependent ("He will...") and **100%** responsible ("You shall..."). God's power, our part. This is the way of victory for Israel and also for every believer today (cf Ro 8:13+). See "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)"

Destroy (Lxx = [exoletreuo](#); demolish, exterminate) (08045) [shamad](#) is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can

include death of a person or extinction of an entity." ([Swanson](#)) The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. For example in Dt 6:15 God says He will "**wipe**" Israel off the face of the earth, so great was His anger against them! It is worth noting that the last OT use of **shamad** is one of the greatest for the nation of Israel, the prophet **Zechariah** recording "And in that day (WHAT DAY - Read Zechariah 12:1-14⁺) I (JEHOVAH/YAHWEH HIMSELF) will set about to destroy all (HOW MANY?) the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:9⁺) [Anti-Semitism](#) will be obliterated!

Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the LORD has spoken- What a beautiful picture of God's sovereignty (cross ahead of you) and Human Responsibility (Joshua...will cross ahead of you).

THOUGHT - God uses men to accomplish His purposes. Are you cleansing yourself, for if you are you can be assured you "will be a **vessel for honor**, sanctified (SET APART), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (EVEN AS JOSHUA HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR THE GOOD WORK OF LEADING ISRAEL INTO THE PROMISED LAND)." (2 Ti 2:21+)

Related Resource:

- [Why was Abraham promised land that belonged to others \(Genesis 12\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 31:4 "The LORD will do to them just as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them.

- De 2:33 Dt 3:3-11,21 7:2,16 Ex 23:28-31 Nu 21:24-35
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 2:32-33+ "Then Sihon with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz. 33 **"The LORD our God delivered him over to us**, and we defeated him with his sons and all his people.

Deuteronomy 3:3+ "So the **LORD our God delivered Og** also, king of Bashan, with all his people into our hand, and we smote them until no survivor was left.

REMEMBER GOD'S PAST VICTORIES

The LORD will do to them just as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed ([shamad](#)) them - What did the LORD do for Israel? In the two passages above (Dt 2:32-33+, Dt 3:3+) Yahweh **delivered** them **over**. (Heb - [nathan](#) - give; Lxx - [paradidomi](#) - give over to the power of another!) That is always be the pathway to victory over Israel's enemies (and our enemies). These pagan kings were well-fortified and had strong armies, but were no match for Israel's inexperienced army, because God fought for them. Ultimately the Promised Land was a gift from God, but Joshua had to "reach out" and take it.

THOUGHT - Note it says **He destroyed them**, but we know the Israelites literally carried out the destruction, once again emphasizing the critical importance of man's dependence on God's power. This same immutable principle comes into play in the lives of NT believers who are continually at war with the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)! This begs the question - Are you trying to wage spiritual war in your strength or are you learning to rely on the power of the Spirit to wage war and achieve victory (see Ro 8:13+). [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#) (**LORD WILL DELIVER <> YOU SHALL DO**)

MEMORY OF GOD'S PAST VICTORIES IS ENCOURAGEMENT IN PRESENT BATTLES.

Related Resources:

- [Who was Sihon, king of the Amorites? | GotQuestions.org](#)
 - [Who was Og king of Bashan? | GotQuestions.org](#)
-

Deuteronomy 31:5 "The LORD will deliver them up before you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you."

- **The LORD:** De 7:2,18
- **according:** De 7:23-25 20:16,17 Ex 23:32,33 34:12-16 Nu 33:52-56
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE LORD THE DELIVERER

The LORD will deliver them up before you - Yahweh will give a "special delivery" of Israel's enemies into their hands. See [passages above](#) where Yahweh **delivered** Sihon and Og to the hand of Israel. **Deliver** is [nathan](#) which in the Lxx is [paradidomi](#), this Greek verb depicting handing someone over to the power of another (as in Jn 19:11)

And you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you- Basically Yahweh had commanded Israel to destroy all remnants of the pagans and their idolatrous practices which would be like "spiritual flypaper" to which they would be attracted and become stuck (aka, enslaved!)

Earlier Moses had described what Israel was to do to their enemies...

When the **LORD your God delivers** them before you and you defeat them, then **you shall utterly destroy them**. You shall **make** (CUT) **no covenant** with them and show no favor to them. 3 "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. 5 "But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. (Dt 7:2-5+)

"But the **LORD your God will deliver** them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. 24 "He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them. 25 "The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. (De 7:23-25+)

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

- **Be strong and courageous:** De 31:7,23 20:4 Jos 1:6,7,9 10:25 1Ch 22:13 28:10,20 2Ch 32:7 Ps 27:14 Isa 43:1-5 Hag 2:4 Zec 8:13 1Co 16:13 Eph 6:10 2Ti 2:1
- **do not be afraid or tremble:** De 1:29 7:18 20:1,3,4 Nu 14:9 Ps 27:1 Isa 41:10 51:12 Lu 12:32 Rev 21:8
- **he will not fail:** De 4:31 Jos 1:5 1Ch 28:20 Isa 41:13-17 Heb 13:5
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Dt 3:21-22+ "I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 22 'Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.'

STAY STRONG AND BE BOLD

Be strong - This is a command. **Strong** is [chazaq](#) which basically means to be firm speaking primarily of maintain one's moral strength of resolve. The Septuagint uses the rare NT verb (only 1 Cor 16:13+) [andrizo](#) which means literally to **act like a man** (today we might say "**man up**") being brave as a grown man should be as opposed to how a child would respond. [Andrizo](#) is in the [present imperative](#) which calls into play one's [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). While Joshua did not have the Spirit indwelling him, the power of the Spirit was definitely present to enable him to do supernaturally what he could not do naturally.

The [present imperative](#) calls for this "manly attitude" to be Joshua's lifestyle!

COMMENT - Aristotle uses [andrizo](#) to indicate the display of courage which he describes as the mean between fear and confidence. [Andrizo](#) was also used in the papyri in an exhortation, "therefore do not be fainthearted, but be courageous as a man." [Andrizo](#) also appears in the Roman [General Titus](#)' speech of encouragement to his soldiers as they are discouraged in their siege of Jerusalem (Josephus Jewish Wars, 6:50). In the [Septuagint](#), [andrizo](#) is repeatedly in Moses' exhortational commands to Joshua to be strong (Dt 31:6-7+) and to and to be courageous (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18). It is not surprising that Joshua issued the same command to those under his leadership in Joshua 10:25. All 7 uses of [andrizo](#) in Deuteronomy and Joshua are in the [present imperative](#) and [middle voice](#) (calling for one to do it yourself but I submit Joshua could only to do it as he was enabled by the Holy Spirit - yes, even in the OT the Spirit was active in enabling godly behavior albeit exactly how He worked is somewhat mysterious since He did not permanently indwell the OT saints).

Be...courageous - This is also a command using the Hebrew verb [amets](#) which means to be stout, to be strong (Ge 25:23), to be bold, to be alert. Be determined. In short it means to be strong and courageous (2 Chr 13:18). In Job 4:4 it spoke of strengthening feeble knees, not a bad thought in context of men going into war against fortified cities and equipped armies.

Do not be afraid or tremble at them - Fear and trembling are not to be entertained. In a positive light in the New Testament **fear and trembling** in the presence of our holy God is the way believers are to work out their salvation! (Php 2:12+)! Paul explains that it is possible to "work out our salvation" because "it is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Php 2:13+).

For - This is a great term of explanation which justifies the preceding quartet of instructions -have strength and courage and not fear and trembling. Moses actually gives 3 reasons.

THOUGHT - This entire passage is imminently applicable to our lives as Christians for we are continually engaged with formidable opponents and are many times assailed by variegated trials (1 Peter 1:6-7+) which threaten to overwhelm us and undo us. We need to remember the truth that "If God is for us who can be against us?" (Ro 8:31+ = John Calvin's life verse!) which when truly believed and seriously applied should stimulate us to heights of confidence and courage. It means more than God being graciously disposed toward us. It means He is for us in all that He does. We may be defeated at this moment, but evil will never prevail. We are always being led to victory in Christ. "God is for us." We can write our names in the verse: "God is for _____." All fear of successful opposition is removed. It is not that there is no opposition. As the record has it, when Melancthon sensed he was dying he asked to be placed on the traveling bed in his study because that is where he was happiest. When the pastor read Ro8:31, Melancthon exclaimed, "Read those words again!" The pastor read, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Melancthon murmured in a kind of ecstasy, "That's it! That's it!" This text had always been the greatest comfort to him. In the darkest hours of his life when death's cold stare threatened, he comforted himself again by reciting, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" When **Chrysostom** was brought before the Roman Emperor, the Emperor threatened him with banishment if he remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, "Thou canst not banish me for this world is my father's house." "But I will slay thee," said the Emperor. "Nay, thou canst not," said the noble champion of the faith, "for my life is hid with Christ in God." "I will take away thy treasures." "Nay, but thou canst not for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there." "But I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left." "Nay, thou canst not, for I have a friend in heaven from Whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee; for there is **nothing** that thou canst do to hurt me."

The LORD your God is the One who goes with you - Your personal God will personally go with you Israel. Frankly, it does not get much better than that!

He will not fail you or forsake you - The [Omnipotent](#) God is not weak and **He will not fail you** (for **fail** see same verb [raphah](#) below). The **Faithful** God is not fickle and **He will not** abandon you. Keeping in mind the writer of Hebrews is addressing Jewish believers (or those who are being attracted to the Messiah) who are undergoing persecution and "push back" for their faith and in this context he quotes this passage (quoting the Septuagint not the [Hebrew Masoretic Text](#))

Hebrews 13:5+ Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "**I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU**"

Comment - The Greek reading is even more emphatic - "**ou me** se ano ([aniemi](#)) **oud ou me** se [egkatalipo](#)." Notice there are **5 negative particles** in the Greek with two "**ou me**" combinations (see [note](#) and [here for other great uses of "ou me"](#)), which is the strongest way to state a negative in the Greek

("This is the strongest way to negate something in Greek."—Daniel Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics). One might read it "I will **never, never, never** leave you." As a believer, we all have times when we feel far from God or maybe even feel like He has "left" us but in those moments when our faith sags, we need to recall Hebrews 13:5+ to mind (you might write it on a card and/or memorize it). Remember faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. (Ro 10:17+). Another good verse to recall when our faith dips is Mark 9:24b+ "**I do believe; help my unbelief.**" Then just wait upon the LORD and exchange His strength for your flagging strength and the Spirit will enable you to mount up on wings like an eagle (Isaiah 40:31+).

Fail (let you alone cease, fall limp, become lazy, relax) (07503) **raphah** means to sink, to become slack, to relax, to cease (Jdg. 8:3; 2 Sa 24:16; Neh. 6:9; Ps. 37:8), to desist or leave alone (Ex. 4:26; Dt. 9:14; Jdg. 11:37; Job 7:19), to become discouraged, to become disheartened, to become weak, to become feeble, to let drop or let go (Job 27:6; = figuratively; Pr. 4:13 = figuratively; Song 3:4 = literally), to discourage, to leave alone, to let go, to forsake or abandon someone (Deut. 4:31; 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5; 10:6; Ps. 138:8), to be lazy (Ex. 5:8, 17; Josh. 18:3; Prov. 18:9).

Forsake (Lxx = [egkataleipo](#) = abandon, desert, leave behind) (05800) **'azab** basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x; "left" 22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. One significant concept that underlies the usage of this term is that of "abandonment," particularly in regard to Israel's neglect and rejection of their covenant obligations towards God. Theologically speaking, the idea of "forsaking" one's covenant responsibility, in the sense of abandoning or neglecting it, is of prime importance.

His Loving Presence

Never will I leave you. Hebrews 13:5

Today's Scripture & Insight: Hebrews 13:1–6

Our hearts sank when we learned that our good friend Cindy had been diagnosed with cancer. Cindy was a vibrant person whose life blessed all who crossed her path. My wife and I rejoiced when she went into remission, but a few months later her cancer returned with a vengeance. In our minds she was too young to die. Her husband told me about her last hours. When she was weak and hardly able to talk, Cindy whispered to him, "Just be with me." What she wanted more than anything in those dark moments was his loving presence.

The writer to the Hebrews comforted his readers by quoting Deuteronomy 31:6, where God told His people: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). In the darkest moments of life, the assurance of His loving presence gives us confidence that we are not alone. He gives us the grace to endure, the wisdom to know He is working, and the assurance that Christ can "empathize with our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15).

Together let's embrace the blessing of His loving presence so we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid" (Heb 13:6). By: Joe Stowell ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, thank You for the promise that You will never leave me. May the reality of Your constant supporting presence fill my heart with comfort, confidence, and courage.

During hard times, tough questions often arise such as "Where is God?" For help, read Out of the Ashes at discoveryseries.org/q0735

There is peace in the presence of God.

Standing with Courage

Be strong and courageous. . . . Do not be afraid or terrified. Deuteronomy 31:6, 8

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 31:1–8

While most German church leaders gave in to Hitler, theologian and pastor Martin Niemöller was among the brave souls who resisted Nazi evil. I read a story describing how in the 1970s a group of older Germans stood outside a large hotel while what appeared to be a younger man bustled about with the group's luggage. Someone asked who the group was. "German pastors," came the answer. "And the younger man?" "That's Martin Niemöller—he's eighty. But he has stayed young because he is unafraid."

Niemöller wasn't able to resist fear because he possessed some superhuman antifear gene, but because of God's grace. In fact, he had once held anti-Semitic views. But he had repented and God restored him and helped him speak and live out the truth.

Moses encouraged the Israelites to resist fear and follow God in truth. When they'd become fearful after learning Moses would soon be taken from them, the leader had an unflinching word for them: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified . . . for the Lord your God goes with you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). There was no reason to tremble before an uncertain future because of one reason: God was with them.

Whatever darkness looms for you, whatever terrors bombard you—God is with you. By God's mercy, may you face your fears with the knowledge that God "will never leave you nor forsake you" (vv. 6, 8). By: Winn Collier ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What fears are you facing? How does God's presence bring courage to your heart?

Living unafraid doesn't mean that we don't feel fear but that we don't obey it.

He Is There

He will not leave you nor forsake you. — Deuteronomy 31:6

Today's Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12

Tanya's fiancé David was lying in the intensive care unit after a delicate procedure to repair a brain aneurysm. David's eyes focused on Tanya, who had hardly left his side in several days. In wonder, he said, "Every time I look up, you're here. I love that. Every time I think of you, I open my eyes and you are there."

That young man's appreciation for the woman he loves reminds me of the way we should feel about God's presence in our lives.

He is always there. The Lord's presence gives us comfort and security. He has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). Who knows us more completely? Who loves us more fully? Who cares for us so well?

In Psalm 139, we read what King David thought of God's precious presence. He wrote, "O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; . . . and are acquainted with all my ways. . . . If I ascend into heaven, You are there" (vv. 1-3,8).

No matter what happens to us, we have this assurance: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). Open your eyes and your heart. He is there. By: Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Just Keep Pounding

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid. —Deuteronomy 31:6

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Author and pastor John Maxwell writes of a seminarian who was overwhelmed by his workload. The volumes to read, the research papers to write, the Greek words to learn—it seemed impossible! His despair was obvious to his classmates.

Then an upperclassman put his arm around the young man's shoulder and said, "Friend, it doesn't matter how big the rock is; if you just keep pounding, it's gonna bust." The student began to see that his tasks were manageable if he took them one at a time. Eventually the "rock" broke. The overwhelmed seminarian graduated and is now a pastor.

Living the Christian life can be like trying to break a rock. We keep pounding but nothing happens. We get discouraged bearing the same burden, resisting the same temptation.

The book of Deuteronomy begins and ends with a message of hope. Moses told the people of Israel, "Do not fear or be discouraged" (Dt 1:21). "The Lord . . . will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed" (Dt 31:8). Those words of encouragement apply to us as well.

If your "rock" seems too big, heed the advice of that upperclassman: "Just keep pounding." If you're relying on the Lord, eventually "it's gonna bust." By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When long and steep the path appears
Or heavy is the task,
Our Father says, "Press on, My child;
One step is all I ask."
—DJD

We conquer by continuing.

Deuteronomy 31:7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, '**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

- **Be strong**: De 31:6,23 1:38 3:28 Jos 1:6 Da 10:19 Eph 6:10
- **for**: Dt 31:3 Dt 1:38 Dt 3:28 Joh 1:17
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MOSES COMMISSIONS JOSHUA

Then - Marks progression. And here the progression is from one leader to another!

In Dt 34:9+ we read that

Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

God changes His workers but continues His work.
-- Warren Wiersbe

Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel First all Moses addressed the people and now the leader of the people. **In the sight of all Israel** was important that the people would recognize the passing of the baton so to speak and would acknowledge and receive Joshua as their new leader in Moses stead.

Be strong and courageous - The same commands Moses had given to the entire nation. The leader obviously need these traits. This promise was repeated to Joshua by God Himself in Josh 1:9 ("Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.") and is given to every believer in Hebrews 13:5+

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

For - Term of explanation. Why Joshua needed to be strong and courageous.

You shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them Referring to Yahweh's sworn declaration to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) Moses is again alluding to the Abrahamic Covenant with promise of land. **To give** them emphasizes again the land is a gift of God's grace, for Israel had certainly not earned it!

And you shall give it to them as an inheritance - Obviously God was the ultimate Giver, but Joshua would be His instrument to dispense the gift of the land.

Deuteronomy 31:7 Thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

Joshua is ever the type of our blessed Jesus. Joshua not only won Canaan for his people by his faith in the gift of God, coupled with his strenuous efforts, but he caused them to inherit it. Jesus not only won the wealth of the heavenlies for his Church by his death and resurrection, but He waits to cause us to inherit it through the Holy Spirit which He gives.

How great is our heritage! Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! All things that pertain to life and godliness await our appropriation! All spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! There is no conceivable grace or virtue, no fabric of the Divine looms for the soul's dress, no ornament of heavenly jewelry for the soul's adorning, no weapon of celestial temper for the soul's equipment, no salve or balm of Divine comfort for the soul's healing, which is not ours in Jesus. The Father has given Him to have life in Himself that He might give us life more abundantly. He is full of grace and truth, that out of his fulness we all may receive. He received of the

Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, that He might pour Him forth in Pentecostal fullness. But we do not possess our possessions. We are like people who have sent all their valuables to the strong-room of a bank, and never by any chance make use of them.

This is a lack which Jesus can also supply. He can cause us to inherit: first, by his Spirit He reveals the lavishness of the Divine possession; next He excites an appetite of desire; next, He begets the expectant faith that claims; and, lastly, He becomes to us each one of these things, so that we are enriched in Him, and possessing Him, find that all things are really ours.

Deuteronomy 31:8 "The LORD is the One Who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

- **The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you:** De 31:3 9:3 Ex 13:21,22 33:14
- **He will be with you:** De 31:6 Jos 1:5,9 1Chr 28:20 Isa 8:9,10 43:1,2 Ro 8:31
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ASSURANCE OF LORD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you- So Yahweh goes before and goes with him. Joshua's job was like the game we used to play as children "follow the Leader." This exhortation is virtually identical to the one Moses declared to the entire nation, basically reminding Joshua of God's presence and power. In the Septuagint **forsake** is preceded by a strong double negative [oude me](#) signifying absolutely positively no way (so in effect this passage is also quoted in Hebrews 13:6+)! **Fail** is raphah and is translated in the Lxx with [aniemi](#) meaning literally relaxation of tension, so the picture is of Joshua in God's hand and God not release His grip and abandon him.

Fail (07503) [raphah](#) means to sink, to become slack, to relax, to cease (Jdg. 8:3; 2 Sa 24:16; Neh. 6:9; Ps. 37:8), to desist or leave alone (Ex. 4:26; Dt. 9:14; Jdg. 11:37; Job 7:19), to become discouraged, to become disheartened, to become weak, to become feeble, to let drop or let go (Job 27:6; = figuratively; Pr. 4:13 = figuratively; Song 3:4 = literally), to discourage, to leave alone, to let go, to forsake or abandon someone (Deut. 4:31; 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5; 10:6; Ps. 138:8), to be lazy (Ex. 5:8, 17; Josh. 18:3; Prov. 18:9). **Raphah** is used 14x with yad = hand (Josh 10:6 = do not abandon = "slack not thy hand", 2 Sa 4:1KJV, 2 Sa 24:16, 1 Chr 21:15, 2 Chr 15:7KJV, Ezra 4:4KJV, a (good) prayer in Neh 6:9, Isa 13:7 = in the Tribulation; Jer 6:24 read Jer 6:24KJV; Jer 38:4 read Jer 38:4KJV, Jer 50:43 = hands **hang limp**, Ezek 7:17, Ezek 21:7 = hands will be **feeble**; Zeph 3:16+)

Raphah - 4x in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:31; Deut. 9:14; Deut. 31:6; Deut. 31:8

Deuteronomy 4:31+ "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not **fail** you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

Do not fear or be dismayed- The natural reaction to looming battles against strong enemies would be **fear** and dismay, where **dismayed** describes a feeling of discouragement even implying fear and terror, and/or panic and confusion. **Dismayed** ([chathath](#)) is the same verb used in Dt 1:21+ where Moses reviewed his exhortation to the first generation at Kadesh-Barnea, in preparation for going into the Promised, telling Israel **"Do not fear or be dismayed."** Of course the first generation did become **dismayed** and subsequently did not believe the LORD was really giving them the land (see Dt 1:22-31,32+) The Septuagint translates **dismayed** ([chathath](#)) in Dt 31:8 with the rare verb **deiliao** (cf [deilia](#) - timidity) which means to be cowardly, in a shameful state of fear from lack of courage ([phobeo](#) - fear and deiliao are both commands in [present imperative with a negative](#) which means to stop an action which is in progress - in other words stop being fearful and cowardly. It can also mean do not allow either of these emotions to begin.)

In Joshua we see three exhortations on fear and dismayed

Dismayed (discouraged) (02865) [chathath](#) basically refers to breaking or shattering like a bow (Jer 51:56) or ground cracked by drought (Jer 14:4). This idea of shattering is used figuratively of God shattering nations (Isa 7:8). It can also mean to fright or terrify (Isa 30:31, Job 7:14)

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! **Do not tremble or be dismayed**, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 8:1 Now the LORD said to Joshua, **"Do not fear or be dismayed.** Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his

land.

Joshua 10:25 Joshua then said to them, **‘Do not fear or be dismayed!** Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”

Deuteronomy 31:8 Lifetime Guarantee

Three years ago I bought a suitcase with a lifetime guarantee. “We don’t care who breaks it,” the manufacturer said, “we’ll repair or replace it free—forever.” To its credit, the company repaired it twice, just as promised. But a few weeks ago I learned that the business had filed for bankruptcy and its future was in doubt. If the company goes under, so does the guarantee.

In a world where we can’t always depend on guarantees, there is one promise we can trust. Throughout Scripture we find the Lord’s pledge to be with His people. In Deuteronomy 31 we read Moses’ assuring words to Joshua: “The Lord ... will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed” (v.8).

This promise is repeated in the New Testament: “He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#)). The promise of God’s unfailing presence with us is the key to living with confidence and contentment.

No matter how many pledges are broken by people, God’s promises will last through all time and eternity. Because He is eternal, He can give us an eternal guarantee. — by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sweetest of all life’s blessings,
Communion with Christ above,
Assurance of His presence,
His matchless, eternal love. —Anon.

Every promise of God comes with an eternal guarantee.

Dad, Where Are You?

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Deuteronomy 31:8

Today’s Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 31:1–8

“Dad! Where are you?” I was pulling into our driveway when my daughter, panicking, called me on my cell phone. I’d needed to be home by 6:00 to get her to play practice; I was on time. My daughter’s voice, however, betrayed her lack of trust. Reflexively, I responded: “I’m here. Why don’t you trust me?”

But as I spoke those words, I wondered, How often could my heavenly Father ask that of me? In stressful moments, I too am impatient. I too struggle to trust, to believe God will keep His promises. So I cry out: “Father, where are you?”

Amid stress and uncertainty, I sometimes doubt God’s presence, or even His goodness and purposes for me. The Israelites did too. In Deuteronomy 31, they were preparing to enter the Promised Land, knowing their leader, Moses, would stay behind. Moses sought to reassure God’s people by reminding them, “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (v. 8).

That promise—that God is always with us—remains a cornerstone of our faith today (see Matthew 1:23; Hebrews 13:5). Indeed, Revelation 21:3 culminates with these words: “God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.”

Where is God? He’s right here, right now, right with us—always ready to hear our prayers. By: Adam R. Holz ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What Scripture brings to mind the truth of God’s presence? Place it somewhere easily visible to remind you.

Father, help us to see how much You love us!

Deuteronomy 31:8 God Is in the Front Line - Faith’s Checkbook

“The Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear

not neither be dismayed.”—Deuteronomy 31:8

IN the presence of a great work or a great warfare, here is a text which should help us to buckle on our harness. If Jehovah Himself goes before us, it must be safe to follow. Who can obstruct our progress if the Lord Himself is in the van? Come, brother soldiers, let us make a prompt advance! Why do we hesitate to pass on to victory?

Nor is the Lord before us only; He is with us. Above, beneath, around, within is the omnipotent, omnipresent One. In all time, even to eternity, He will be with us even as He has been. How this should nerve our arm! Dash at it boldly, ye soldiers of the cross, for the Lord of hosts is with us!

Being before us and with us, He will never withdraw His help. He cannot fail in Himself, and He will not fail toward us. He will continue to help us according to our need, even to the end. As He cannot fail us, so He will not forsake us. He will always be both able and willing to grant us strength and succor till fighting days are gone.

Let us not fear nor be dismayed; for the Lord of hosts will go down to the battle with us, will bear the brunt of the fight, and give us the victory.

Preserved

The Lord himself goes before you. Deuteronomy 31:8

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 31:1–8

While I was clearing out the garden in preparation for spring planting, I pulled up a large clump of winter weeds . . . and leapt into the air! A venomous copperhead snake lay hidden in the undergrowth just below my hand—an inch lower and I would have grabbed it by mistake. I saw its colorful markings as soon as I lifted the clump; the rest of it was coiled in the weeds between my feet.

When my feet hit the ground a few feet away, I thanked God I hadn't been bitten. And I wondered how many other times He had kept me from dangers I never knew were there.

God watches over His people. Moses told the Israelites as they prepared to enter the promised land, “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deuteronomy 31:8). They couldn't see God, but He was with them nonetheless.

Sometimes difficult things happen that we may not understand, but we can also reflect on the number of times God has preserved us without our ever being aware!

Scripture reminds us that His perfect, providential care remains over His people every day. He's always with us (Matthew 28:20).

By: James Banks ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How does the biblical truth that God watches over His people comfort you? Who can you tell about His faithfulness today?

Faithful Father, thank You for watching over me every day. Please give me grace to walk closely with You in everything I do today.

Deuteronomy 31:9 So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.

- **Moses:** De 31:22-24,28 Nu 33:2 Da 9:13 Mal 4:4 Mk 10:4,5 12:19 Lu 20:28 Joh 1:17,45 5:46
- **gave:** De 31:24-26 17:18
- **the priests:** Hos 4:6 Mal 2:7
- **which:** Nu 4:15 Jos 3:3,14-17 6:12 1Ki 8:3 1Ch 15:2,12-15
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WRITTEN LAW TO PRIESTS AND ELDERS

So - Or "then" (NET, ESV). Marking progression in the narrative. After declaring the law, he recorded the law.

Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel - This law is not the song of Moses but the entire Law. The written law was given to the spiritual and political

leaders. The priests not only transported the valuable cargo of the ark, but the valuable cargo of the Word. Later in this chapter we read

Moses commanded the **Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD** saying, 26 “Take this book of the law and place it beside **the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God** that it may remain there as a witness against you.(Dt 31:25-26)

Joy To The World

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. —John 1:14

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:9-13

When Christmas displays go up before Halloween displays come down, I long for the days when people didn't think about Christmas until after Thanksgiving. However, there may be a legitimate reason to celebrate Christmas in October.

No one knows the exact day when Jesus was born, but December 25 is unlikely. His birth may have been in autumn, when the weather was still warm enough for shepherds to be outdoors with their flocks. We know that Jesus was crucified on Passover, and that the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. So some scholars have reasoned that Jesus' birth may have occurred on another Jewish holiday, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot.

Although we cannot know for sure, we do know that it would be in keeping with God's way of working to send His Son—the Word made flesh who “dwelt” (“tabernacled”) among us (John 1:14)—on the Feast of Tabernacles. Sukkot was a time when observant Jews lived in temporary dwellings and listened to the Word of the Lord being read (Deut. 31:10-13).

For Jews, Sukkot is “the time of our rejoicing.” For all of us, our time of rejoicing is the birth of Christ, who brings the joy of salvation to all the world. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Tidings, glad tidings! God is love,
To man He sends His salvation!
His Son beloved, His only Son,
The work of mercy hath begun.
—Montgomery

The date of Christ's birth may be debatable, but the fact of His life is indisputable.

Deuteronomy 31:10 Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths,

- Dt 15:1-2 Lev 23:34-43
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 15:1-2+ “At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts. 2 “This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the LORD'S remission has been proclaimed.

"TORAH TEACHING" EVERY SEVEN YEARS

Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission(Lxx - [aphesis](#) - forgiveness in Mt 26:28; Mk 1:4; Lk 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Ac 2:38; 5:31) of debts, at the Feast of Booths- The feast of Booths is described in Lev 23:34-43. See also notes on Deut 16:13–15. It is interesting that the Feast of Booths will be celebrated yearly in the coming Messianic Kingdom (Zechariah 14:16-19+).

Keep in mind that when one needed to borrow money, there were no banks but only fellow Israelites from which to borrow. This

continues the theme of caring for underprivileged (Dt 14:28-29). Notice it does not say "some of your debts" but simply "debts," implying all of their debts are to be remitted. This practice tends to facilitate socio-economic balance. It does not make the poor rich, but does help them to get a new start in their economic life. The word **remission** is **shemittah** and is used only 4x (Dt 15:1,2,9, 31:10) which the primary sense of a letting drop and simply means the cancellation of a debt that was owed to another person. In other words, in a normal business setting this was a loan that the person would have been expected to and even be obligated to repay. In Ex. 23:10–11 "the seventh year" is used for the land lying fallow. There is a type of fishing called "catch and release," which in a sense pictures this practice. The debtor is caught in the net of the creditor, but the creditor has to release him at 7 years! At that time the debtor has absolutely no obligation to pay back what had been loaned to him.

Wiersbe - the Sabbath Year involved much more than rest for the land (Ex. 23:10–11). It also meant canceling debts (Deut. 15:1–11) and setting free the servants who had served for six years (vv. 12–18). Bible students don't agree on whether the entire debt was cancelled or just the interest on the loan for that year (31:10). "He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother" (15:2, NIV). However, they could collect interest from foreigners. Since people weren't getting any income from their land, they wouldn't be able to pay their debts easily. But what was a test of faith for some would be an answer to prayer for the poor and the needy. They were permitted to eat freely from the fields and orchards and were given an extra year to raise money to pay their debts. ([Be Equipped](#))

The message of this commandment is clearly to serve as a reminder to Israel that they had experienced the grace of God when He released them from their enslavement in Egypt and then He provided a sacrificial system whereby their sins could be atoned for by offering a proper sacrificial animal, all of this of course ultimately pointing to the forgiveness of sins available only in the Messiah and His sacrifice as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+).

THOUGHT - Do we not see a similar pattern in the New Testament? I think we do. How do others owe us? If they have sinned against us, they in essence owe us a "debt." And yet what did Jesus tell us to pray? "Forgive us our debts, just as we have forgiven our debtors." (Mt 6:12+, Lk 11:4+). Of course the request to **forgive us our debts** (the fifth petition) does not mean that believers need to ask daily for justification, since believers are justified forever from the moment of initial saving faith (Ro 5:1, 9; Ro 8:1; Ro 10:10). Rather, this is a prayer for the restoration of personal fellowship with our Father when our fellowship has been hindered by our sin. Those who have received such forgiveness are (or should be) so moved with and motivated by gratitude toward God that they also (enabled by the Spirit giving us the desire and power - Php 2:13NLT+) are then able to forgive those who are their (sin) debtors. We see this pattern for forgiveness in Paul's command to "**Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, (HOW?) **JUST AS** God in Christ also has forgiven you." (Eph 4:32+, cf Lk 7:47+). Christ-followers should (and can, enabled by the Spirit) forgive others their (sin) debts against us, remembering how great was our sin debt to God (unforgiven it would have taken us to eternal death and separation) which He has graciously forgiven us.

Remission (08059) **shemittah** {shem-it-taw} feminine noun meaning a remission, a release, a suspension. (1) letting drop of [exactions](#), (temporary) remitting, release (from debt) canceling debts, remitting of a debt, i.e., the act. of restraint from exacting an amount of money which is owed to a lender, so releasing a debtor from an obligation. Shemittah is attached to the designation of the seventh year of Sabbath, that is, the **year of remission** in which all debts were released (Deut. 15:1-2, 9; Dt 31:10). The Year of Jubilee was the forty-ninth year, the seventh of a series of seven Sabbath years. The fiftieth year was then hallowed, the fields were to be left fallow, all debts were to be released and every person would return to the property of his family. Thus, an Israelite could buy another's land for a maximum of forty-nine years and then must return it to the family (similar to a long-term leasing of land rather than a modern sales contract; see Ex. 23:10; Lev. 25:1–38). This word signifies the cancellation of a debt that was owed to another person. This was a debt which a person would, under ordinary circumstances, be obligated to pay back. In Israel, at the end of every seven years, the people were to **release and forgive** their fellow people from debts owed to them. The thought of forgiveness is significant as it is picked up in the Lxx's use of [aphesis](#) which speaks of forgiveness of our sin debt in the NT (cf uses in Mt 26:28; Mk 1:4; Lk 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Ac 2:38; 5:31). This word was used in this context of the seventh year to show that the debtor was released from any obligation to pay back what had been loaned to him before that time (Deut. 15:1, 2, 9; 31:10). In the Old Testament, this noun was used only in the context of forgiving debts at the end of every seven years. Deut. 15:1; Deut. 15:2; Deut. 15:9; Deut. 31:10

NET NOTE The Hebrew term שְׁמִטָּה (shémittah), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַט (shamat, "to release; to relinquish"), refers to the procedure whereby debts of all fellow Israelites were to be canceled. Since the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths celebrated God's own deliverance of and provision for his people, this was an appropriate time for Israelites to release one another. See note on this word at Deut 15:1 = The Hebrew term

שְׁמִיטָה (shémittat), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַט (shamat, “to release; to relinquish”), refers to the cancellation of the debt and even pledges for the debt of a borrower by his creditor. This could be a full and final remission or, more likely, one for the seventh year only.

NET NOTE - the Feast of Booths The Hebrew phrase [חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת] ([khag] hassukot, “[festival of] huts” [or “shelters”]) is traditionally known as the Feast of Tabernacles. See note on the name of the festival in Deut 16:13.

Related Resources:

- [What is the Feast of Tabernacles / Booths / Sukkot? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the different Jewish festivals in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the Lord's appointed times \(Leviticus 23\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What is a sabbatical year?](#)

ANSWER - The [Sabbath](#) is the seventh day of the week, a day of rest for the Hebrew people under the Mosaic Law. But the Law also spoke of a sabbatical year. Leviticus 25:1–7 provides instructions for the sabbatical year to be observed after the Israelites moved into the [Promised Land](#).

Leviticus 25:3–5 explains what to do—or, rather, what *not* to do—on the sabbatical year: “For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest.” Every seventh year, then, was to be a time of no planting or pruning of crops. The Sabbath day was a rest every week, and this rest was applied to farmland once every seven years (the sabbatical year is also mentioned in Exodus 23:10–11).

If the Israelites were not to plant during the sabbatical year, what were they to eat? Leviticus 25:6–7 explains: “Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.”

The food for the Israelites, their servants, and livestock was to come from harvesting the sabbatical year’s “volunteer” crop—reaping the harvest that grew on its own accord in the seventh year. Leviticus 25:20–22 anticipates the people’s question: “You may ask, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?’ I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.” In other words, the Israelites had no reason to worry. God promised to take care of them, if they would only trust Him.

Deuteronomy 15 also speaks of the sabbatical year. In this passage, a further command is given: forgive all debt and release all Hebrew servants. If the Israelites obeyed this command, they had another promise: “The LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you” (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Observing the sabbatical year was an important sign of trust in the Lord, and it was accompanied by great blessings. Refusing to obey this command, God warned, would lead to a curse: “I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it” (Leviticus 26:33–35).

Sadly, Israel failed to observe the sabbatical years. They continued cultivating and harvesting their land on the seventh year just as they had the other years. As a result of that and other sins, God brought the [Assyrians](#) and the [Babylonians](#) against Israel, and God’s people were removed from the Promised Land for a period of time. The biblical historian notes the significance of the deportations: “The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested” (2 Chronicles 36:21). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 31:11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.

- **to appear:** De 16:16-17 Ex 23:16,17 34:24 Ps 84:7

- **in the place:** De 12:5
- **shalt read:** Jos 8:34,35 2Ki 23:2 Ne 8:1-8,13,18 9:3 Lu 4:16,17 Ac 13:15 Ac 15:21
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 16:16-17+ **"Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God** in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17 "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Deuteronomy 17:18-19+ (INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL FUTURE KINGS - CLEARLY MOST "DROPPED THE BALL" CONCERNING THIS VITALLY IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION! e.g. see Dt 17:17+ - if Solomon wrote it out and read it, clearly he did not heed the warning! Compare 1 Ki 11:1-12!) "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.19 "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes,

REQUIRED READING

When all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of (before) all Israel in their hearing - Normally only **all** the males had to attend the Feast of Booths (see "Related Passage" above), but here Moses says **ALL Israel** is to hear the reading indicating the seventh year was different and all had to come to the place of God's choosing. Moses knew that only God's Word could make the people the kind of nation God wanted them to be. And that principle is still true today -- only God's Word can spiritually grow a man or woman of God. Not devotionals, not Christian books, but THE BOOK!

Deuteronomy 31:11 (Deuteronomy 17:19) **Send Me a Man Who Reads!**

Recently the International Paper Company ran an ad which read in part as follows: "We asked 100 company officers, 'How many magazines, books, and newspapers have you read in the past week?' The total of their answers: magazines, 338; books, 53; newspapers, 1,490. Then we asked 100 men in the same age group whose salaries had never reached \$7,500 a year: 229 magazines for them, and 28 books — about a quarter of a book each. The conclusion is as clear as print: Men who read more achieve more!" Even if their income had failed to rise, their interests had been stretched to new dimensions!

Yes, "send me a man who reads" — and especially one who rates the Bible as the most treasured Book in his library. Secular volumes are valuable, but how sadly lacking is the person who neglects the world's greatest Book — the one that helps us in this life and prepares us for the next.

It is said of **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** that one Sunday when the time for reading Scripture came, he left the Bible closed. "Some have found fault with me," he said, "contending that I'm too old-fashioned. I am always quoting the Bible and do not say enough about science. Well, there's a poor widow here who has lost her only son. She wants to know if she will ever see him again. Let's turn to science for the answer: Will she see him? Where is he? Does death end all?" There was a long pause. "We are waiting for an answer," he said. "This woman is anxious." Another long pause. "Nothing to say? Then we'll turn to the Book!" Spurgeon clinched his point by reading the wonderful promises concerning Heaven and eternal life. Are you a man who reads? Do you include the most important of all Books? I hope so! Oh, open your heart to His precious Word; Drink deeply its treasures rare. Your soul will be cleansed and your life transformed, By meeting the Savior there! —G. R.

In all literature there is nothing that compares with the Bible!—John Milton

Deuteronomy 31:12 "Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.

- **Assemble** : De 4:10
- **men:** De 6:6,7 Ezra 10:1 Ps 19:7-11 Joh 5:39 2Ti 3:15-17
- **that:** De 29:29 Ps 34:11-14

- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PURPOSE OF THE READING

Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town- Not only were adult Israelites to attend this reading, so too were children and aliens.

This charge reminds one of Moses' words in Dt 30:14 that "the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it."

so that - Introduces a purpose clause.

They may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law- A proper, **reverential fear** of God does not come naturally to the fallen, selfish heart (cf Ro 3:18+). **Fear** must be learned. We learn godly fear best by reading God's Word! Note the pattern of the verbs - hear > learn > fear > be careful > observe. How important is the reading of the Word? That is rhetorical which is an understatement! Clearly reading was (AND STILL IS) critical for it was like the "headwaters" of a river.

THOUGHT - Jesus' words still resound down through the ages "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON **EVERY WORD** THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD." (Mt 4:4+, quoting Dt 8:3+) If your spiritual life is a bit sluggish, Jesus' words might just be the remedy you need to refresh and revive your spirit (cf Ps 119:25+). Do not procrastinate. Get in the book so God's supernatural, energetic (Heb 4:12+), life giving words (Dt 32:47+) can get into your heart and soul where the Spirit will use them (cf 2 Cor 3:18+) to supercharge personal revival! Remember, the last thing the devil and his minions want you to do is to get into God's perfect law, for he knows it has the power and potential to restore your soul (Ps 19:7+). and make you a formidable foe against his lies and his kingdom of darkness!

The fear of the LORD is a strong motivator to obey the LORD.

Deuteronomy 31:13 "Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

- De 6:7 11:2 Ps 78:4-8 Pr 22:6 Eph 6:4
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HEARING BRINGS FEARING

Their children, who have not known - In context what they had **not known** was the Law. NIV = "who do not know this law"; TEV = "who have never heard the Law of the Lord your God".

Will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess -Note the repeat emphasis on learning godly fear of God! It is critically important (then and today!) It was important that the next generation was raised with a holy fear of Yahweh. When they heard stories of His great power and His great wrath against unfaithfulness, rebellion and disobedience, it would be serve (at least potentially) to stimulate in their heart and soul a healthy, holy fear of God. This was to be carried out as long as they lived on the land.

Did Israel obey Moses' instruction? I think not, because if they had, they would have turned so quickly to idols. We see the tragic declension in Judges 2

When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. 7 The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. (THEY KNEW GOD AND HIS POWER BUT FAILED TO PASS THE BATON TO THE NEXT GENERATION!) 8 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose **another generation after them who did not know the LORD** (ED: AND I WOULD SUBMIT DID NOT HAVE A HEALTHY FEAR OF HIM - HOW COULD THEY IF THEY DID

NOT "KNOW HIM?"), **nor yet the work which He had done for Israel**. (THEY DID NOT KNOW YAHWEH OR HIS WORKS! IN SHORT, THEY DID NOT KNOW HIS **PERSON** OR HIS **POWER**!) 11 Then (MARKS PROGRESSION IN A NARRATIVE) the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD (WHAT WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THEM FROM DOING EVIL? SEE Pr 8:13) and served the Baals (CAN MEAN "HUSBAND" See Excursus on Israel the Wife of Jehovah and Yahweh as Husband of Israel), 12 and they forsook the LORD (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY/HARLOTRY), the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. 14 The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. (Jdg 2:6-14+)

Deuteronomy 31:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting.

- **the time for you to die is near:** De 31:2 34:5 Nu 27:13 Jos 23:14 2Ki 1:4 Ec 9:5 Isa 38:1
- **I may commission him:** De 31:23 Nu 27:19,20 Ac 20:28-31 2Ti 4:1-4
- **presented:** Ex 34:2 Jos 24:1 1Sa 10:19 Job 1:6 2:1 Ro 12:1 Jude 1:24
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YAHWEH COMMISSIONS JOSHUA

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." - Yahweh speaks to Moses informing him his death was near and he needed to bring his replacement to God presence to be commissioned.

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting - In preparation for commissioning by the LORD Himself.

NET NOTE - The LXX reads "by the door of the tent" in line with v. 10 but also, perhaps, as a reflection of its tendency to avoid over-familiarity with Yahweh and his transcendence. Heb **"tent of assembly"** (מִוֶּעֶד אֶהְיֶה לָּם, 'ohel mo'ed); this is not always the same as the tabernacle, which is usually called מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan, "dwelling-place"), a reference to its being invested with God's presence. The **"tent of meeting"** was erected earlier than the tabernacle and was the place where Yahweh occasionally appeared, especially to Moses (cf. Exod 18:7-16; 33:7-11; Num 11:16, 24, 26; 12:4).

Related Resource:

- [What was the tent of meeting? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 31:14-30 MUSIC'S POWER

Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. Deuteronomy 31:22

A college student was troubled by sinful thoughts. Even though he regularly read his Bible and prayed, he continued to struggle, so he sought help from a Christian counselor.

"What kind of music do you listen to?" asked the counselor. The student said it was secular rock. The counselor then commented, "Think of your mind as a big sheet of paper. Each song you hear is a match burning the edges. You ask God to heal the burn, and He begins applying the salve of His Word. But you keep adding matches. Listen to Christian music and see what happens." The student did, and the truth set to music began to heal his mind.

God combines music's power with truth to draw His people closer to Himself. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses taught a new generation of Israelites a long song of 43 verses. It proclaimed God's faithfulness, but it would also become a witness against them when they settled in the Promised Land and forsook Him. The song's purpose was twofold: It would show the Israelites that God had a right to their love, and it would call them back to Himself when they had come to the end of their own strength (Dt 30:36-39).

Never underestimate music's power. It can either hinder the Spirit's work or increase your love for Christ. -D J De Haan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There is a music from above
That takes away our tears;
It is God's melody of love--
It quiets all our fears.
-- DJD

If there's no harmony in your life,
try changing your tun

Deuteronomy 31:15 The LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent.

- Ex 33:9,10 40:38 Ps 99:7
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S SHEKINAH GLORY

The LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent- The visual manifestation of Yahweh was a **pillar of cloud** at the tent of meeting. This was a "face to face" meeting between Yahweh and Moses.

Related Resources:

- [Shekinah glory cloud](#) - see Garland's [The Abiding Presence of God](#)
- [What did the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night signify? \(Exodus 13:21-22\) | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is a glory cloud? Is a glory cloud biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the Shekinah glory? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 31:16 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.

- **you are about to lie down** Ge 25:8 2Sa 7:12 Isa 57:2 Ac 13:36 Job 20:11
- **play the harlot** : Ex 32:6 34:15 Lev 20:3-6 Jdg 2:17-20 Ps 73:27 106:39 Isa 57:3-8 Jer 3:1-3 Eze 16:15,25-36 23:5-8,9-21 Ho 2:2-5 Rev 17:2-5 19:2
- **forsake** : De 32:15 Jdg 2:12 10:6,13 Jer 2:11-13
- **break** Lev 26:15 Jdg 2:20 Jer 31:32
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked— You are grown fat, thick, and sleek— Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation.

Judges 2:12 and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **My covenant which they broke**, although I was a **husband** to them," declares the LORD. (See [Excursus on Yahweh as Husband of Israel](#))

GOD'S PROPHECY OF PEOPLE PLAYING THE HARLOT

Grant Grieve - The message that fell on the ears of Moses at the time when the Lord stated that he would shortly die was one that would have discouraged a lesser man. The people would sin grievously. It is a mark of the darkness of the hearts of men and women that, despite many clear warnings regarding the sorry consequences of sin, they would still turn away from the Lord and engage in conduct that would bring judgment on them individually and as a nation. It was as true in these days as it is today that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor 4:4). ([What the Bible teaches – Leviticus and Deuteronomy](#))

John MacArthur rightly says "This is one of the saddest texts in the OT. After all God had done, He knew they would forsake Him." ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

One writer quips that Israel began to violate the covenant with Yahweh almost before the ["ink was dry"](#) on the covenant agreement (so to speak). What a remarkable swing of the divine pendulum (so to speak) for in Dt 31:6 Yahweh promises He would never forsake them (speaking of an obedient nation), but now decrees He would forsake them even to the point of hiding His face from them! God is faithful to His covenant promises but He is also faithful to inflict punishment on disobedience. This principle still holds true for believers who choose to persist in disobedience (they will soon be taken out to "God's woodshed" in Hebrews 12:5-11+!)

The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers - Recall this is to be Yahweh commissioning Joshua but He begins with a description of the apostasy of Israel. Can you imagine the thoughts that went through Joshua's mind! He never forgot these words for as he is about to die, he makes a similar prophetic pronouncement in Note the euphemism **lie down** (not die) much like the NT's allusion to the death of a believer as falling asleep. There is a principle here -- the death of a godly leader can potentially leave a void and to a decline in the spiritual health of the people who followed this leader. An antidote is to make certain that people do not depend on the leader per se but the God of the leader and that godly leaders are well disciplined to continue to carry the baton. Joshua was well prepared for we read in Judges "The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel." (Jdg 2:7+) ([See previous discussion](#) of what happened after Joshua passed on).

Behold ([02009](#)) [hinneh](#) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" [Hinneh](#) is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection [idou](#) (strictly speaking a command in the second person [aorist imperative, middle voice](#)) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: "**Behold! See! Lo!**" (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

Moses had previously alluded to Israel's apostasy (see Dt 4:25-31+ = "you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it", Dt 7:1-4+ "He will quickly destroy you."), but now it is stated clearly by God Himself.

And this people will arise and play the harlot (prostitute themselves - **NET**; whore after - **ESV**; commit adultery - **CSB**) **with the strange** (foreign; Lxx - [allotrios](#) - not one's own) **gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake** (["leave in a lurch"](#); Lxx = [egkataleipo](#)) **Me and break My covenant** ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) **which I have made** (cut - [karath](#)) **with them** - There is an interesting contrast in this verse - Moses is about to **lie down** and Israel would "**rise** and whore after other gods" (Dt 31:16ESV)! Israel did not just accidentally slip into adultery with lifeless lovers (idols), but actively rose up (they would make a choice of their rebellious wills) and knew full well what they were engaged in with the empty idols! **Play the harlot** is the Hebrew verb [zanah](#) rendered in the Lxx with [ekporneuo](#) meaning to indulge in gross immorality! This prophecy must have broken the heart of Moses! It is like someone telling you that the men you have disciplined will apostasize when you pass on! I know this feeling all too well, for two men I disciplined, one even an elder, in essence "played the harlot" with other women and both broke their marriage covenants and it broke my heart. They had both heard deep truths but both chose to default to their fallen flesh and temporary pleasure. Were they truly born again? Only God knows for sure! In Israel's case Yahweh Himself initiated the Mosaic Covenant. Israel swore to obey (Ex 24:3,7+ "will do"), but broke their "marriage vows." (so to speak - see Israel the Wife of Jehovah).

Merrill comments that "The imagery of prostitution (zānā) conveys the very essence of covenant violation, namely, to forsake the

Lord and embrace other gods (cf. Exod 34:15–16; Lev 20:5; Judg 2:17; 8:27; Ezek 6:9; 20:30; Jer 3:1; Hos 2:7; 4:15). Nothing could more clearly communicate disloyalty. ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#))

Play the harlot (02181) **zanah** is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of **zanah** are figurative describing Israel 's (Jehovah's "wife") commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1, 2, 3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1, 2, 3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4+; Rev 2:4+). In addition **zanah** describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied. A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." (TWOT)

Phrase - play the harlot - 47x in 42v - Gen. 38:24; Exod. 34:15; Exod. 34:16; Lev. 17:7; Lev. 20:5; Lev. 20:6; Num. 15:39; Num. 25:1; Deut. 22:21; Deut. 31:16; Jdg. 2:17; Jdg. 8:27; Jdg. 8:33; Jdg. 19:2; 1 Chr. 5:25; 2 Chr. 21:11; 2 Chr. 21:13; Ps. 106:39; Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 6:9; Ezek. 16:15; Ezek. 16:16; Ezek. 16:17; Ezek. 16:26; Ezek. 16:28; Ezek. 16:34; Ezek. 16:41; Ezek. 20:30; Ezek. 23:3; Ezek. 23:5; Ezek. 23:19; Ezek. 23:30; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1

Wake-Up Music

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. —Colossians 3:16+

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:16-22

In a suburb of Nairobi, Kenya, a group of international refugees has been singing songs that they hope will wake up their homeland. According to the BBC, the group Waayah Cusub has been enjoying extensive airplay on radio stations and television channels by using bold lyrics to address social issues. One of the musicians says, "We are not happy with what is happening back home; in fact we have recorded a thought-provoking song that we hope will bring our leaders back to their senses."

Long before Waayah Cusub began using songs to call for an end to social pain and violence, God taught Moses to use music in a bold and provocative way. Knowing that His people's sinful inclinations would distract them when they began to enjoy the prosperity of the Promised Land (Deut. 31:21), God told Moses to teach them the song of chapter 32. **It is a shocking song of warning, designed to get the attention of those who would forget God and fill their lives with trouble.**

Could our wise and loving God be repeating that strategy with us? Is there a psalm, a hymn, or a spiritual song that is calling us back to His faithfulness and amazing grace? What song might He be using to get under the radar of our natural defenses and renew our hearts today? By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

[Come, Thou fount of every blessing.](#)

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
—Robinson

Where words fail, music speaks.
—Hans Christian Andersen

Deuteronomy 31:17 "Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?'"

- **anger:** De 29:20 32:21,22 Jdg 2:14,15 Ps 2:12 90:11
- **I will forsake:** 1Ch 28:9 2Ch 15:2 Jer 23:33,39 Ho 9:12
- **hide my face:** De 32:20 Job 13:24 Ps 27:9 Ps 30:7 Ps 89:46 Ps 104:29 Isa 8:17 Isa 64:7 Eze 39:23,24,29

- **will come upon them:** Heb. find them, Ne 9:32 Job 34:11
- **Is it not because our God is not among us** De 29:24-27 Nu 14:42 Jdg 6:13 Isa 63:17
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:20 "Then He said, '**I will hide My face from them**, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness.

Isaiah 8:17 And I will wait for the LORD Who is **hiding His face from the house of Jacob**; I will even look eagerly for Him.

Isaiah 64:7 There is no one who calls on Your name, Who arouses himself to take hold of You; **For You have hidden Your face from us** And have delivered us into the power of our iniquities.

Ezekiel 39:23; 24; 29 "The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and **I hid My face from them**; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. 24 "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and **I hid My face from them**" ...29 "**I will not hide My face from them any longer**, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel (cf Zech 12:10+)," declares the Lord GOD.

YAHWEH'S JEALOUSY BREAKS FORTH LIKE A FIRE!

Then - Marks progression in the narrative. In this context it functions almost like a term of conclusion. Time phrases always can be interrogated with a simple query - "When is then?" In this case it is when Israel commits spiritual adultery and breaks her "marriage covenant" with Yahweh. Israel quickly forgot that Yahweh's Name (pointing to His character) is "**Jealous!**" (Ex 34:13-14+; See notes on God's jealousy.)

My anger ([aph](#) = nose:Lxx - [orgizo](#) - become angry) **will be kindled** ([charah](#); Lxx - [thumos](#) - outburst) **against them in that day, and I will forsake** (['azab](#); Lxx - [kataleipo](#) - abandon, leave behind) **them and hide** (Lxx - [apostrepho](#) - turn away from) **My face from them, and they will be consumed** (Lxx - [katabroma](#) - devoured), **and many** (not a few but many) **evils and troubles** (Lxx - [thlipsis](#) - tribulation) **will come upon** (find, encounter) **them** - Note the progression - God's anger burns like a fire > He forsakes > He hides His face > Israel is consumed. Israel's adultery removed them from under protection of Yahweh's tender, loving care. **Grant** adds Yahweh "would hide His face from them. He would not intervene in saving them from the calamities that would befall them. He would conceal Himself so that He could not be found." (Ibid) Is this not a horrible thought -- the paradox of the omnipresent God Who could not be found by His adulterous "wife!"

Kalland makes a great point that '**Hiding His face** (Dt 31:17-18; 32:20) is the converse of making His face to shine on His people and turning his face toward them as in the Aaronic blessing (Nu 6:25-26+ = "The LORD make His face shine on you"). It is equal to saying that the Lord would hide himself from his people so that he and the help he could give them would not be available to them. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 3: Deuteronomy](#))

This is a prophecy that would be fulfilled after Moses died. It was partially fulfilled in the exiles to Assyria and Babylon and later with oppression by the Greeks (like Antiochus Epiphanes) and the Romans.

COMMENT - In my opinion this prophecy will finally and fully be completed when the Antichrist seeks to destroy Israel in the Great Tribulation ([thlipsis](#) in Mt 24:21+) (Rev 12:6, 13-17+). Da 12:1+ speaks of these last horrendous days for the nation of Israel ""Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of **distress** ([thlipsis](#)) such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

THOUGHT - It is tragic that the verb '['azab](#)' meaning forsake is used 4 times in this chapter, twice of God's promise not to forsake the people ("all Israel" in Dt 31:1) or Joshua (Dt 31:6,8), once of Israel forsaking God (Dt 31:17) and finally of Yahweh forsaking Israel (Dt 31:16). This illustrates the law of reaping what one sows. Israel forsook God and He forsook them. However because of His everlasting covenant with Abraham, He would and could not forsake Israel forever and one day will restore the nation.

TSK on hide my face -Though this may allude to the withdrawing of the {Shechinah,} or visible appearance of Jehovah, yet the general meaning of the expression in Scripture is, the withdrawing of his approbation and protection, of which his visible appearance

was formerly the sign and pledge.

The Jewish writer [Maimonides](#) had an insightful thought on God hiding His face writing that when people are deprived of Divine protection, they are exposed to all dangers, and become the victim of circumstance, their fortune dependent on chance — a terrible threat. Further, Maimonides taught that the hiding of God's face results from human choice. When people do not meditate on God, they are separated from God, and they are then exposed to any evil that might befall them. For, Maimonides taught, the intellectual link with God secures the presence of Providence and protection from evil accidents. Maimonides argued that this principle applies equally to an individual person and a whole community.

So that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' Their rhetorical question was correct - God was not among them! Their reasoning is true, but they leave out the crucial point that God had hidden His face from them because they had forsaken Him and played the harlot with the pagan idols. While Israel's understanding was clouded in many ways (cf Dt 29:4), they did understand that the reason for their disasters was because Yahweh was not with them. One would have thought this would have made them confess their sins and repent, but such was not to be the case. That is indeed one effect of sin, to blind one to the truth that they need to confess and repent!

Stephen Andrews writes "These problems would be designed to awaken the people and cause them to wonder if their trials were connected with God's displeasure. The recognition of the connection between pains and prior behavior would be the first step on the road to repentance. God's tribulations are remedial rather than punitive. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary – Deuteronomy](#))

Vance Havner - Day by Day - We Asked for It

Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Jeremiah 2:17

Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? Deuteronomy 31:17.

Our plight today is our own fault. We asked for it. All our modern evils are come upon us because God is not among us. Of course, He is omnipresent, but He is not among us in that we have not His favor, the smile of His approval.

God has been among us in blessings unnumbered, but we have forgotten Him. And to be lost it is not necessary for a nation to blaspheme God. "The wicked shall be cast into hell and all nations that forget God."

Even God's people sometimes ask, "Is the Lord among us or not?" And in the absence of Him we are faced with the presence of evils galore.

We have lost the sense of God in the nation, in the churches, in our lives. The biggest business of the hour is to draw nigh to God that He may draw nigh to us. His presence with us is too often an assumption in our heads instead of an awareness in our hearts.

Deuteronomy 31:18 "But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.

- De 31:16,17
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD WILL HIDE HIS FACE

But I will surely hide My face in that day - **Surely hide** is the Hebrew verb [satar](#) used twice for emphasis, thus depicting God's strong reaction to their idolatry. Ps 34:16 says "The face of the LORD is against evildoers."

because of - God is not fickle, but factual. He is objective and here explains why He would hide His face from Israel!

All the evil which they will do - God cannot look upon evil. As Hab 1:13+ says "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they? ."

For they will turn to other gods ([elohim](#)) - Explains the nature of the **evil** God knows they will commit when they get into the Promised Land. In Lev 19:4+ God clearly commanded Israel "Do not turn ([panah](#)) to idols." In Lev 19:31+ He said "Do not turn ([panah](#)) to mediums or spiritists." They would shift their attention (from God) to idols. The Septuagint translates **turn**

with [epistrepho](#) which speaks of a moral change, a change of belief and/or conduct.

Unbelief always leads to disobedience!

Turn (turn to face, to look) ([06437](#)) [panah](#) can mean literally to move in another direction or to turn so as to face or look at something. Figuratively of **turning to** idols, mediums, etc (Lev 19:4, 31, Lev 20:6), and when used of intellectual and spiritual turning, it signifies attaching oneself to something.

Deuteronomy 31:19 "Now therefore, **write** this song for yourselves, and **teach** it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel.

- **this song:** De 31:22,30 32:1-43,44,45
- **and teach it:** De 4:9,10 6:7 11:19
- **put it :** Ex 4:15 2Sa 14:3 Isa 51:16 59:21 Jer 1:9
- **a witness:** De 31:21,26 Eze 2:5 Mt 10:18 Joh 12:48
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MOSES' SONG - WRITE , TEACH AND SING IT

Now therefore, **write** this song for yourselves, and teach ([lamad](#)) it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel - NET = "Put it into their very mouths." NIV = "have them sing it." This reminds me of Joshua 1:8+ "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth." If it was in their mouths and they were singing it, the implication is that they had in effect memorized the words of the song. It was Moses' song to be passed from generation to generation. Yahweh was preparing **this song** to take the stand as a **witness** in the future against Israel!

Moses calls **three witnesses** (2 would have been sufficient to convict - Dt 19:15+) to the stand in chapter 31 - (1) His Song (Dt 31:19, 21), (2) The Law next to the Ark (Dt 31:26) and (3) The heavens and the earth (Dt 31:28).

Stephen Andrews writes "This song would become a witness to Yahweh's faithfulness and Israel's disloyalty through the years. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary – Deuteronomy](#))

G Campbell Morgan - Deuteronomy 31:19

Write ye this song—Deut. 31.19

For forty years Moses had led the people. During that time he had constantly communed with God, and in the course of that communion had received many changes. This was one of the last things he was told to do. He was to write a song, and the purpose of it was distinctly stated. A great song once embodied in the life of a people will remain from generation to generation. In days of disaster it will be a haunting memory testifying to truth concerning God. In days of difficulty it will be a messenger of new courage. In days of victory it will be a means of expression. Songs often remain after commandments are forgotten. Therefore Moses was commanded to write a song and teach it to the people. The song itself is found in our next chapter. This is a very suggestive story, bringing to our hearts anew a sense of the value of poetic expression, and showing that it is also a gift of God. There are people who seem to imagine that if we speak of poetry, we are referring to some-thing speculative, imaginative, probably untrue. As a matter of fact, poetry is the highest method of human language, giving expression, as prose never can, to the deepest and truest things of the soul. The Church is more enriched in her catholic songs, than in all her systematic theologies. In the former she realizes her unity, where-as in the latter she too often creates her divisions. The Wesleys did more for experimental Christianity in their hymns, than in all their printed explanations. A great song is a great possession, and not for Israel only, but for us also this song of Moses is among the most beautiful and most strong. (G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

Deuteronomy 31:20 "For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.

- **when:** De 6:10-12 7:1 8:7
- **flowing:** Ex 3:8,17

- **eaten:** De 8:10-14 Ne 9:25-26
- **become prosperous:** De 32:15 Ne 9:25,26,35 Ps 17:10 73:7 119:70 Jer 5:28 50:11 Eze 34:16,20 Ho 13:6
- **then:** De 31:16,17
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DANGEROUS INFLUENCE OF AFFLUENCE!

For - Yahweh explains why He is preparing this song to be His witness against Israel in the future.

When I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers- Note **WHEN**, not **IF** indicating the certainty of God's bringing them into the land. God keeps His promises (even when the first generation refused to believe them)! Note also that it is God's sovereign will and power that brings Israel into the land which was first promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous - **NET** renders it "they eat their fill and become fat." **ESV** = "are full and grown fat." God knew Israel would become **prosperous** in the promised land but that this would lead to their spiritual declension and eventually their destruction.

Moses had warned Israel of the danger of prosperity and satisfaction

"When you have eaten and are **satisfied**, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. 11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; 12 otherwise, when you have eaten and are **satisfied**, and have built good houses and lived in them, 13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies (**aka prosperity**), 14 **THEN** (PERFECT PARALLEL WITH "**THEN**" HERE IN Dt 31:20) your **HEART** will become **PROUD** and you will **FORGET** the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Dt 8:10-14+)

Then - When? When they are satisfied. In the passage above note the heart of the problem is the heart, for when Israel would become "full and fat" this would be fertile soil for pride (LOOK WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED!) and God's promise, presence and power to bring them into the Promised Land would become a fading memory.

THOUGHT - Prosperity is always potentially dangerous spiritually because it can lead to pride and spiritual amnesia regarding why one is prosperous. God can quickly take a back seat in this setting. The problem is that our hearts are made to worship God and if we do not, we will worship a god of our own making. In sum, when we are satisfied with things and not with God, we are treading on "[thin ice](#)" spiritually!

They will turn ([panah](#)) to other gods ([elohim](#)) and serve ([abad](#)) them, and spurn (Heb - [naas](#); NET - "reject" NLT, ESV = "despise") **Me and break My covenant** ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) - **Turn** is the same verb ([panah](#); Lxx - [epistrepho](#)) as in Dt 31:18. Israel's prosperity would set them up for the abominable practice of idolatry. The trouble with idolatry is that it is not a neutral spiritual activity and it eventually would enslave Israel (**serve them**). The Hebrew verb for **spurn** is [naas](#) which means to treat with contempt. The people who were chosen by God would despise Him and spurn Him. In playing the harlot after their idols, in their spiritual adultery, they would in effect **break** their "vows" ("we will do" - Ex 24:3,7+) and thereby break their "**marriage**" **covenant** with their "**Husband**" Yahweh (see note [below](#)).

Jehovah was the "**Husband**" of Israel as described in Je 31:31, 32+, Isa 54:5 (cf Ho 2:2, Jer 2:2NET = "I remember how you loved me like a new bride; you followed me through the wilderness" Jer 3:14KJV = Yahweh says "I am **married** [[baal](#)] unto you."). Note that the word "**husband**" is [baal](#) (master, owner - see related words below) and is the same word used for Israel's "lover" with whom she had an adulterous affair, for these idols were often named "**Baal**!" (cf Jdg 2:11-13+) In the **OT**, under the Old Covenant, Israel formally became Jehovah's "Wife" in the "ceremony" at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1,2+) when God gave Moses the Law and Israel said "**Yes**" (cf marriage ceremony where bride says "I do" - Israel the "bride" of Yahweh said "We will do"! - Ex 24:3,7+) to the vows. Note that the solemn, binding nature of their entrance into this covenant was ratified by the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8+, see also Heb 9:18-21+). Israel was (repeatedly) an unfaithful, adulterous wife and was thus disowned by Jehovah, but will she will one day in the future repent (cf Zech 12:10-14+) and be restored (Isa 62:4-5 - where the verb "**married**" = [baal](#)!), a prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Messianic Age - see [\[a\] Events Leading up to the Millennium](#); [\[b\] OT Promises of God to Israel which will finally be fulfilled in the Millennium](#)).

- Israel the Wife of Jehovah

- **Baal** (verb)(husband, marry, rule)([01166](#)) [baal](#)
- **Baal** (noun)(husband, lord, master, owner, possessor)([01167](#)) [ba'al](#)
- **Baal** (proper noun)([01168](#)) [ba'al](#)
- **Baal** - See [uses in combination with other Hebrew words](#)
- [Did God divorce Israel? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 31:21 "Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify before them as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore."

- **this song:** De 31:19
- **I know:** Ge 6:5 Ge 8:21 Ps 139:2 Isa 46:10 Eze 38:10-11 Hos 5:3 13:5,6 Amos 5:25-26 Joh 2:24-25 Ac 2:23 4:28
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Psalms 139:2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE TROUBLES

And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give." (Dt 31:21ESV)

Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify before them(ESV = shall confront them) **as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants)-** **NET** = "when many disasters and distresses overcome them" **NLT** = "This song will stand as evidence against them." Note the word is **WHEN**, not **IF**, pointing out that the **evils and troubles** are coming in the future! Isn't it true how we often recall the words of songs, but can't recall Bible memory verses. So God wants them to learn Moses' Song so they would recall it to mind when the evils and troubles came upon them. The song would serve as a witness does in the court today, and it would testify not just "before" them but against Israel. Note the fact that Israel would not be able to escape the testimony of Moses' Song because it would not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants. Although there is no record of Israel singing Moses' Song, the implication is that it may have been sung and this is what facilitated it from being forgotten. As they recalled the words of the song, they would surely see that they were guilty of the very treachery the song had prophesied about Israel (Read song in Dt 32:1-43).

Moses calls **three witnesses** (2 would have been sufficient to convict - Dt 19:15+) to the stand in chapter 31 - (1) His Song (Dt 31:19, 21), (2) The Law next to the Ark (Dt 31:26) and (3) The heavens and the earth (Dt 31:28).

For I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore([shaba](#)) - "I know the intentions they have in mind today, even before I bring them to the land I have promised." (Dt 31:21NET) God is saying in effect He knew Israel's future ([foreknowledge](#)) forsaking of Himself and He knew that their thoughts were already beginning to develop before they entered the Promised Land!

Intent ([03336](#))(**yaser** from **yatsar** = to form or fashion) means a form, framing, purpose. The primary translation is "form," which can refer either to the shape of an object or the object itself as a thing which has been formed (Leviathan in Ps 104:26). Isaiah 29:16 uses it for the actual piece of pottery: "Shall what is formed say to him who **formed** it" that the work was not done properly? The rhetorical question serves as a metaphor for humans questioning God's actions. Habakkuk 2:18, on the other hand, uses the noun to describe the shape of a graven image ("its maker trusts in his own **handiwork**"). In Ps. 103:14, the word is used figuratively, as David exclaims, "He Himself knows our **frame** [our shape or form]; he is mindful that we are but dust" Since He created us, He is well aware of the frailty of our construction. The remaining uses of the word describe the way a thought is formed in the mind, often translated "imagination," "device" or "purpose." Genesis 6:5 describes the moral pollution of the world before the flood by saying that "every **intent** of the thoughts of [the human] heart was only evil continually." Compare "for the **intent** of man's heart is evil from his

youth" in Ge 8:21. Moses used the same word to describe the tendency of the Israelites to develop yearnings for other gods (Dt. 31:21). In a more positive note, David exhorted his son Solomon to serve God with his whole heart, because the LORD understands every inner intention of the mind (1 Chr. 28:9 = "understands every **intent** of the heart."). David later prayed that God would preserve the integrity of Israel's inner thoughts (1 Chr. 29:18 = "understands every **intent** of the thoughts"). The final use of the word is a description of the trusting state of mind, "The steadfast of **mind** You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3).

Yeser - formed(1), frame(1), handiwork(1), intent(4), intentions*(1), mind(1), what(1). Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Deut. 31:21; 1 Chr. 28:9; 1 Chr. 29:18; Ps. 103:14; Ps. 104:26; Isa. 26:3; Isa. 29:16; Hab. 2:18

Deuteronomy 31:22 So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.

- De 31:9,19
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MOSES WROTE THE DIVINELY INSPIRED LYRICS

So - Functions like a "therefore," a term of conclusion.

Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught ([lamad](#); Lxx = [didasko](#)) **it to the sons of Israel**- No arguments from Moses. Simply unhesitating obedience even in his last days on earth. If he taught to them, it means or certainly implies all Israel learned this song. If Moses taught it one assumes they "caught" it. Clearly they missed the import of the warnings of their apostasy.

THOUGHT - It is one thing to have a song in your head, but another to have it in your heart. Clearly, Israel's subsequent history of persistent disobedience and idolatry signifies it was not in their heart, not controlling their thoughts and intentions, not affecting their will and their ways. The take home message is don't just sing words praising God, but submit to God and make your life a living sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15+, Ro 12:1+).

A Song To Remember

Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect. — Deuteronomy 32:3-4

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:16-22

I was delighted when I received a free gift in the mail—a CD of Scripture set to music. After listening to it several times, some of the melodies took root in my mind. Before long, I could sing the words to a couple of verses in the book of Psalms without the help of the recording.

Music can help us recall words and ideas we might otherwise forget. God knew that the Israelites would forget Him when they entered the Promised Land (Deut. 31:20). They would forsake Him, turn to idols, and trouble would follow (Dt 31:16-18). Because of this, He asked Moses to compose a song and teach it to the Israelites so they could remember their past closeness with Him and the sin that hurt their relationship (Dt 31:19-22). Perhaps most important, God wanted His nation to recall His character: "[God] is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He" (Dt 32:4).

Consider what God might want you to remember about Him today. Is it His power, His holiness, His love, or His faithfulness? Can you think of a song that celebrates God's character? Sing it in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Give me a spirit of praise, dear Lord,
That I may adore Your name,
Sing praises from the depths of a grateful heart
To the One who is always the same.
—Dawe

Remembering God's goodness puts a song in your heart.

What's Your Song?

So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites. Deuteronomy 31:22

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 31:15–22

Most Americans knew little about Alexander Hamilton—until 2015, when Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote his hit musical Hamilton. Now schoolchildren know Hamilton's story by heart. They sing it to each other on the bus and at recess. He's their favorite founding father.

God knows the power of music, and He told Moses to "write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it" (Deuteronomy 31:19). God knew that long after Moses was gone, when He had brought Israel into the Promised Land, they would rebel and worship other gods. So He told Moses, "This song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants" (v. 21).

Songs are nearly impossible to forget, so it's wise to be selective about what we sing. Some songs are just for fun, and that's fine, but we benefit from songs that boast in Jesus and encourage our faith. One of the ways we "[make] the most of every opportunity" is when we speak "to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit." So "sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" (see Ephesians 5:15–19).

Songs can be an indicator of the direction of our heart. Do the words make much of Jesus? Do we sing them wholeheartedly? What we sing will influence what we believe, so choose wisely and sing loudly. By: Mike Wittmer ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What should you look for in a worship song? Is there a favorite song you can sing more often? Why?

Father, this song is my prayer to You. (Sing your favorite.)

MUSIC'S POWER

Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. [Deuteronomy 31:22](#)

A college student was troubled by sinful thoughts. Even though he regularly read his Bible and prayed, he continued to struggle, so he sought help from a Christian counselor.

"What kind of music do you listen to?" asked the counselor. The student said it was secular rock. The counselor then commented, "Think of your mind as a big sheet of paper. Each song you hear is a match burning the edges. You ask God to heal the burn, and He begins applying the salve of His Word. But you keep adding matches. Listen to Christian music and see what happens." The student did, and the truth set to music began to heal his mind.

God combines music's power with truth to draw His people closer to Himself. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses taught a new generation of Israelites a long song of 43 verses. It proclaimed God's faithfulness, but it would also become a witness against them when they settled in the Promised Land and forsook Him. The song's purpose was twofold: It would show the Israelites that God had a right to their love, and it would call them back to

Himself when they had come to the end of their own strength (Dt 30:36-39).

Never underestimate music's power. It can either hinder the Spirit's work or increase your love for Christ. -D J De Haan (Our Daily Bread)

There is a music from above
That takes away our tears;
It is God's melody of love--
It quiets all our fears.
DJD

**If there's no harmony in your life,
try changing your tune.**

Deuteronomy 31:23 Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

- **He commissioned Joshua:** De 31:7,8,14 Jos 1:5-9
- **shalt bring:** De 31:3 3:28 Ac 7:45
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then - Marks progression in the narrative.

He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun - Commissioned is [tsavah](#) which is most often rendered commanded but in this context speaks of Joshua's assignment to his role as the new leader of Israel.

And said, "Be strong and courageous" - Third time this identical double command is given in this chapter (Dt 31:6, 7, 23). [See notes](#) on Dt 31:6.

for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you - In the parallel passage in Dt 31:7 it is rendered "go ([bo](#)) with this people" and here it says "shall bring ([bo](#)) the sons," but the same Hebrew verb ([bo](#)) is used in both passages. The Septuagint verb here is eisago which means to bring or lead in or into (e.g., Acts 9:8+).

NET NOTE - The LXX reads, "as the LORD promised them, and he will be with you." This relieves the problem of Moses apparently promising to be with Joshua as the MT reads on the surface ("I will be with you"). However, the reading of the LXX is clearly an attempt to clarify an existing obscurity and therefore is unlikely to reflect the original.

Joshua the son of Nun - 27x in 27v - Ex. 33:11; Nu 11:28; Nu 14:6; Nu 14:30; Nu 14:38; Nu 26:65; Nu 27:18; Nu 32:12; Nu 32:28; Num. 34:17; Deut. 1:38; Deut. 31:23; Deut. 32:44; Deut. 34:9; Jos. 1:1; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 2:23; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 14:1; Jos. 17:4; Jos. 19:49; Jos. 19:51; Jos. 21:1; Jos. 24:29; Jdg. 2:8; 1 Ki. 16:34; Neh. 8:17

Deuteronomy 31:24 It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete,

- De 31:9 Dt 17:18
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MOSES FINISHES THE BOOK OF THE LAW

It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book(on a scroll) **until they were complete** (NRSV, ESV = "to the very end") - **HCSB** = "every single word of this law." In Dt 31:9 we read "So Moses wrote **this law** and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel." Now we read that Moses **has finished** writing the Book.

Deuteronomy 31:25 that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying,

- **the ark:** De 31:9
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MOSES COMMANDS LEVITES CARRYING THE ARK

that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying - Earlier Moses recorded "So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi **who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD**, and to all the elders of Israel.(Dt 31:9) Note that this writing is not the law on two tablets of stone that were on the **INSIDE** the Ark.

Deuteronomy 31:26 "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.

- **side:** 1Ki 8:9 2Ki 22:8-11 2Ch 34:14,15

- **witness:** De 31:19 2Ki 22:8,13-19 Ro 3:19,20 Ga 2:19
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BOOK OF LAW BESIDE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you - The purpose of placing the book of the law beside the ark was to be a continual witness against Israel.

Moses calls **three witnesses** (2 would have been sufficient to convict - Dt 19:15+) to the "witness stand" in chapter 31 - (1) His Song (Dt 31:19, 21), (2) The Law next to the Ark (Dt 31:26) and (3) The heavens and the earth (Dt 31:28).

Deuteronomy 31:27 "For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death?"

- **I know:** De 32:20
- **your rebellion and your stubbornness:** De 9:6 Dt 32:20 Ex 32:8 2Ch 30:8 Ps 78:8 Isa 48:4 Ac 7:51
- **you have been rebellious against the LORD:** De 9:24
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Acts 7:51+ "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

MOSES CALLS OUT ISRAEL'S REBELLION AND STUBBORNNESS

For - Moses explains why the book of the law need to be in a prominent place to be a witness -- it was going to in effect be a witness against "high crimes and misdemeanors" of the Israelites.

I know your rebellion and your stubbornness(stiffness of neck) - We read a similar accusation in Dt 9:6+ "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people."

Rebellion (04805) **meri** from **marah** = to be contentious) obstinacy, stubbornness, rebelliousness. Baker writes that **meri** "most often describes the Israelites' determined refusal to obey the precepts laid down by the Lord in His Law or Torah. This characteristic attitude was a visible manifestation of their hard hearts. Moses had the Book of the Law placed beside the ark of the covenant to remain there as a witness against the Israelites' rebelliousness after he died (Deut. 31:27; Nu 17:10). The Lord rejected Saul as king over Israel because of his rebellion against the command the Lord had earlier given him (1 Sam. 15:23). Continually in Ezekiel, the Lord refers to Israel as the "house of rebelliousness" (= rebellious people; Ezek. 2:5-8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2, 3, 9)."([Word Study OT](#))

Stubbornness (harsh, obstinate, stiff) (07186) **qasheh** means hard, harsh, cruel, severe, strong, violent, fierce. This term's basic function is to describe something as hard. The root qāshî apparently arose from an agricultural milieu. It emphasizes, first, the subjective effect exerted by an overly heavy yoke, which is hard to bear, and secondarily, the rebellious resistance of oxen to the yoke. Thus we see hard labor (Ex 1:14, Ex 6:9, 1 Ki 12:4, 2 Chr 10:4, Isa 14:3), Joseph's hard words (Ge 42:7, 30), Nabal was harsh (1 Sa 25:3), Israel was often described as stubborn or obstinate (Ex 32:9, 33:3, 33:5, 34:9, Dt 9:6, 13, Dt 31:27, Jdg 2:19), obstinate (Is 48:4, Ezek 3:7), oppressed ("hard") in spirit (Hannah in 1 Sa 1:15), hard or difficult legal question (Ex. 18:26), severe battle (2 Sa 2:17), wind (Isa. 27:8), vision (Isa. 21:2); difficult times (Job 30:25), a relentless sword (Isa. 27:1) and fierce jealousy (Song 8:6).

The Septuagint translates **qasheh** here in Exodus 6:9 with **skleros** meaning literally hard, dry, rough; figuratively in the NT; (a) of words harsh, unpleasant, hard to take, intolerable

behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death? - Moses' presence served as a brake on a car to keep Israel from driving out of (spiritual) control and crashing and being

destroyed. But as the old adage says "[When the cat's away the mice will play!](#)" Sad but true! We saw a "preview of coming attractions" in Exodus 32:1-6+!

NET NOTE "The Hebrew text has a sarcastic rhetorical question here; the translation seeks to bring out the force of the question."

Adam Clarke - NEVER was a people more fully and faithfully warned, and from this very circumstance we may see that they were under no fatal constraining necessity to commit sin against God; they might have avoided it, but they would not. God was present to help them, till by their repeated provocations they forced him to depart: wrath therefore came upon them to the uttermost because they sinned when they might have lived to the glory of God. Those who abuse God's grace shall not only have that grace taken away from them, but shall be punished for the abuse of it, as well as for the transgression. Every sin is double, and must have a twofold punishment; for 1. Grace is resisted; 2. Transgression is committed; and God will visit for both.

Rebellious (04784) **marah** means to be contentious, rebellious, and openly defiant to an authority by not obeying commands. Most of the uses of **marah** refer to rebellion by Israel or Judah against Jehovah (exceptions = Dt 21:18, 20, Job 17:2, Job 23:2, Pr 17:11). There is repeated focus on Israel's rebellion in the wilderness after being set free from slavery in Egypt (Nu 20:10, 24; 27:14; Deut 1:26, 43; 9:7, 23), summed up by the statement "You have been **rebellious** against the LORD from the day I knew you." (Deut 9:24) Marah is used with similar descriptive words - stubborn (Dt 21:18, 20, Jer 5:23, Ps 78:8), to grieve (Isa 63:10, Ps 78:40), to refuse (Isa 1:20, Neh 9:17), to transgress (Lam 3:42), to sin (Ps 78:17), to test (Ps 78:56), to rebel (marad in Neh 9:26), to reject or profane (Ezek 20:13).

Deuteronomy 31:28 "**Assemble** to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them.

- **Assemble**: De 31:12 29:10 Ge 49:1,2 Ex 18:25 Nu 11:16,17
- **call the heavens and the earth**: De 4:26 30:19 32:1 Isa 1:2 Lu 19:40
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CALLING ALL CREATION AS WITNESS

Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them - This word is not to all the nation but to the elders and officers. Calling **the heavens and the earth** adds a note of solemnity and certainty to Moses' following discourse.

Moses calls **three witnesses** (2 would have been sufficient to convict - Dt 19:15+) to the stand in chapter 31 - (1) His Song (Dt 31:19, 21), (2) The Law next to the Ark (Dt 31:26) and (3) The heavens and the earth (Dt 31:28).

Deuteronomy 31:29 "For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands."

- **you will act corruptly**: De 32:5 Jdg 2:19 Isa 1:4 Ho 9:9 Ac 20:30 2Ti 3:1-6 2Pe 1:14,15 2Pe 2:1,2
- **evil**: De 28:15-68 29:18-28 Lev 26:14-46 2Ch 34:24 Lu 19:42-44 21:24
- **latter days**: De 4:30 Ge 49:1 Job 19:25 Eze 38:8 1Ti 4:1 2Ti 3:1 Heb 1:2 2Pe 3:3
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deut 4:26-30+ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today (SEE Dt 31:29 ABOVE), that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. 27 "The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you. 28 "There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29 "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. 30 "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in **the latter days** you will return to the LORD your God and listen to

His voice.

Ezekiel 38:8 "After many days you will be summoned; in **the latter years** you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.

Moses is #1 and "C" is Second Coming

DYING MOSES GIVES A DEADLY DISTANT PROPHECY

In fairness, it should be stated that some writers see **in the latter days** as simply a general reference to some future time. And while that is reasonable, if we compare the only other place in Deuteronomy where a similar phrase is used (Dt 4:30+), it also seems fair to propose that the latter days in this passage refers to a partial fulfillment in Israel's two exiles and then a future final fulfillment in the time of Jacob's Distress (Jer 30:7+).

For - Moses explains why he calls all creation to be witness to his words to the leaders. One would think his words would have gripped their hearts and minds and souls as they heard these prophetic warnings.

I know that after my death you will act corruptly ([shachath](#)) **and turn from the way which I have commanded you**- "you will totally corrupt yourselves" (Dt 31:29NET) The NET is a good rendering because the verb for **corrupt** is repeated in the Hebrew for emphasis on their evil action. He is addressing the elders and officers, who represented the nation. One can only imagine what went through their minds as they heard Moses' prophetic declaration. **Turn from** in the Septuagint is [ekklino](#) meaning to incline from, turning from godly behavior to morally deviant behavior. In the Greek [ekklino](#) is in the active voice signifying they will make a volitional choice, a choice of their will to go after godless idols instead of the true God!

And evil will befall you in the latter days - "Disaster will confront you in the days to come (Deu 31:29 NET) While this was partially fulfilled in their exiles from the land (to Assyria in 722 BC and Babylon in 586 BC), ultimate and final fulfillment of this prophecy would be in the last of the latter days, in the time known as **Jacob's Distress** (corresponding to the time of the **Great Tribulation**). Moses used the phrase **latter days** earlier in Dt 4:30+ declaring in another prophecy "'When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the **latter days** you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice."

While the diagram above has several points that are not of interest to this passage, what is of interest is Moses (#1) and "C" the Second Coming, because just prior to the Christ's return "evil will befall" Israel and comparing with Deut 4:26-30+ (see above) it seems reasonable to associate the phrase in this earlier prophetic passage ("the latter days") with the same phrase here in Dt 31:29. If this is a valid comparison, then this prophecy refers to the **time of Jacob's distress**, that time in the future when Antichrist's **evil will befall** Israel.

MacArthur comments on the phrase **latter days** (Lit. "the end of days) in Dt 4:30 writing that "Moses saw in the distant future a time when repentant Israel would turn again to the Lord and obey Him. Throughout the Pentateuch, "**the latter days**" refers to the time when Messiah will establish His kingdom (see Ge. 49:1, 8-12; Nu 24:14-24; Dt. 32:39-43). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Warren Wiersbe in comments on Daniel 2:28 - The phrase "**latter days**" ("last days," "last times") is found frequently in Scripture, beginning with Genesis 49:1 and ending with 2 Peter 3:3. Our Lord ushered in the "last days" with His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven (Heb. 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20), so we are living now in that period of time when God is "wrapping things up." **God has plans for the "latter days" of Israel** (Gen. 49:1; Dt. 31:29; Da 2:28) which will climax with Messiah returning to earth and being received by His people (Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; Joel 2:28-29). The "last days" for the church include perilous times (2 Ti 3:1), the apostasy of many, and the rise of scoffers and deniers of the truth (2 Peter 3:1ff); and this period will end when Christ takes His church to heaven (1 Th. 4:13-18). ([Be Resolute](#))

Paul Tanner - This expression, "**the latter days**," occurs ten times in the Old Testament (Deut 4:30; Dt 31:29; Isa 2:2 (= Mic 4:1); Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan 10:14.). It more often has in view the far distant future involving the events just prior to the messianic era, as well as the days when Messiah rules in his kingdom (see esp. Deut 4:30; Isa 2:2; and commentary at Dan 2:28). ([Daniel: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary](#))

For - Moses explains that Israel would receive evil because of their evil practices.

You will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands The work of **your hands** in context is clearly a negative allusion referring to idols (cf Dt 4:28+ = "There you will serve gods, **the work of man's**

hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.") **Work of his hands** is used in a positive sense in Dt 33:11 referring to a blessing on the Levites.

Wiersbe - Moses was not permitted to lead Israel into Canaan for two reasons: (1) he had sinned against God at Meribah (Num. 20:7–13; Deut. 3:23–29); and (2) Canaan is a type of the “rest” we have in Christ, and Moses the lawgiver could never bring rest. Only Joshua, the type of Christ the conqueror, could do that (Heb. 4; and note that Heb. 4:8 calls Joshua “Jesus,” which is the Gk. spelling). ([Expository Outlines of the Old Testament](#))

Hindson, et al - To the Jews, history consisted of two ages. The first was this present age, the age in which Israel was waiting for the coming of the Messiah. The second was the age to come, the age in which God would fulfill all promises and covenants, and Israel would enter into her promised blessings as a result of Messiah’s coming. A time of judgment and devastation, leading up to the Messiah’s advent and Israel’s deliverance, was to terminate the present age and introduce the coming age. When we look at the Old Testament usage of end-times terms, we see that it does not refer to the church age. The Old Testament uses end-times language to refer to the Tribulation period—the time leading up to the coming of the Messiah to set up His kingdom on earth. A clear example of this is Deuteronomy 4:30, which says, “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.” The English word “distress” translates the Hebrew word for tribulation—in this context, the Tribulation—which means that this text equates the Tribulation with the “latter days.” Thus, the “latter days” are the Tribulation period, which we are not currently living in but may be on the brink of entering. (The church will be raptured before the world enters the Tribulation.) Deuteronomy 31:29 also uses “latter days” as a reference to the Tribulation when it says, “Evil will befall you in the latter days.” ([The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy](#))

G K Beale - Deuteronomy 4:30; 31:29

The next occurrences of the phrase “the latter days” are in Deuteronomy. After Israel commits idolatry, God will expel them from their land and scatter them throughout the nations, from where they will seek God (Dt 4:25–29). At this time, “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days [bē’āḥārīt hayyāmīm] you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice” (Dt 4:30). Here “the latter days” includes both the distress that is to come upon Israel and its returning to God as a result of that distress. The basis for Israel’s return to God lies in that he will not “forget the covenant with your fathers which he swore to them” (Dt 4:31). This covenant, of course, is the covenant made with the patriarchs, the core of which, as I have argued earlier, is a repetition of Gen. 1:28. Thus, this covenant involves a mandate to the patriarchs and Israel to do what Adam should have done and a promise that their seed will ultimately carry this out to bless the world and spread God’s glory throughout the earth. And, as I have also contended, the concluding fulfillment of this mandate in Gen. 1:28 is eschatological in nature, which is in mind in 4:30, as it refers to Israel “returning” in faith to fulfill this covenant.

Commentators sometimes do not see Deut. 4:30 as “eschatological.” However, if I am correct in linking this verse with the pattern that begins in the early chapters of Genesis and is repeated, and if this pattern is eschatological, then Deut. 4:30 can be considered so. Other commentators consider Israel’s restoration to the land in repentance to be eschatological because conditions inextricably linked with that restoration are a radical break with prior conditions.⁴⁶

Consequently, Deut. 4:30 understands that Israel’s judgment and exile for not fulfilling its part of the covenant and its return to begin to fulfill its covenantal obligations again are eschatological. This is why the repeated reference later in Deut. 31:29 is to be understood as part of an end-time process: “For I know that after my [Moses’s] death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days [bē’āḥārīt hayyāmīm], for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.” Although, more precisely, exile has been construed to be part of a de-creation pattern, it may be viewed also either as an eschatological-like judgment against violation of the Adamic mandate or a judgment anticipating the final judgment of exile from God’s presence and the consummated form of the cosmos. This is the idea in Deut. 31:29, though likely an intense time of tribulation toward the end of exile may be the focus, so that the “latter days” there presumably overlap with the conclusion of the exilic period, when the “return” of Deut. 4:30 begins (cf. Ps. 107:6, 13). However, since Israel’s restoration from Babylon after seventy years of exile did not eventuate in truly decisive and irreversible eschatological conditions of new creation, the end-time prophecy of Deut. 4 and Deut. 31 still awaited a future time when Israel would again do eschatological evil and then repent and turn to God. Accordingly, Israel’s sin, exile, and restoration would become a historical pattern pointing to the true eschaton, a perspective that, as we will see, is taken up by NT writers. ([A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New](#))

Deuteronomy 31:30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete:

- De 4:5 Joh 12:49 Ac 20:27 Heb 3:2,5
- [Deuteronomy 31 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF MOSES

Then - This follows the dire prophecy spoken to the elders and officers, but apparently not to the entire assembly.

Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete- Moses now turns to the entire assembly (cf Dt 31:12). He wants to make sure that Israel comprehends the dangers they will face in the future if they forsake their "Husband" Yahweh (Israel the Wife of Jehovah).

- [Play this version of Moses Song](#) which is sung by Jewish believer Paul Wilbur