

DEUTERONOMY 31-32

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 31 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Back in High School I ran cross country and track. So I love to watch those sporting events, I love to watch the strategy that is used in long distance races.

Bottom line is that I love watching racing. You probably don't remember this, but this took place way back in 2004 with the American Women's 4 x 100 relay team. This team was awesome, and they were favored to win the gold medal and not just win but set a new world record for this event! All four runners were very fast, and no one was going to be able to catch them! It was a done deal, they would win, only how fast would they be as they won!

But that is not what happened. On the second leg of the relay Marion Jones and Lauryn Williams botched the baton pass!

Marion failed to get the baton to Lauryn within the 20-meter handoff zone and they were disqualified.

With the Americans out of the race, the Jamaican team won the gold medal!

What is my point?

My point is this. It is not just how fast you can run, but the ability to pass the baton of faith to that next generation that matters.

And what we will see this evening is Moses ending his leg of the race and passing the baton, you might say, to Joshua!

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 31, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

DEUTERONOMY 31**VERSES 1-2**

Now as you read this it seems like Moses could not enter the Promise Land because of his age and his health. But I don't think that was the point. I don't believe that was the reason he could not enter the Promise Land.

In Deuteronomy 34:7 we are told, **“Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was perfect and he was as strong as a young man.”**

This was not a matter of physical strength that prevented him from entering in and leading the people!

Then why did God tell Moses he could not lead the people into the Promise Land? Why couldn't he enter in?

The reason is simple. Moses misrepresented God before the people and God held him accountable. And not only did he misrepresent God before the people, but he disobeyed God, he did not trust in the Words of God but did as he thought, and he was wrong and God was right, go figure! (Numbers 20:7-12)

So he will not be able to lead the people and he will not be able to enter into the Promise Land.

And let me be clear on this. No man is going to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land.

Then who will lead them? Let's read on and see!

VERSES 3-6

Who was going into the land before them?

Yes, Joshua would lead them, but it is God who is the one who goes before them and thus, if God is for them, who can be against them?

And the answer is that no one can stop the work of God and His people because He is leading the way!

One more point here and that is God doesn't want them to be fearful.

Yes, Moses has been their leader for forty years now, and many of them knew no other leader and thus, they could have been fearful of what was to come.

But God is for them, He will lead them, and He will work through their new leader, Joshua just as He worked through Moses, don't be afraid.

Yes, Moses was going to die, but God is not dead!

That is important for us to understand, it is not the leader but God who is working through that leader that matters!

Leaders will come and go but God is always with us!

VERSES 7-8

God is the one who will bring the people into the Promise Land but don't forget that God uses common people to do His work through, and here we see God raise up Joshua!

What we see here, in a sense, is Moses is passing the baton to Joshua in the race of faith.

And for Moses, no bitterness in his words, he is encouraging the people that God will fulfill His promises to them through Joshua.

And thus, they needed to follow his leadership as they enter into the Promise Land!

VERSES 9-13

The Levites were to minister God's Word to the people and every seven years these words of Moses were to be read to them so that they may continue to fear the Lord and obey His Words to them.

In a sense, Moses is passing the baton, and that baton is the Bible. Moses writes down the words that God gave to Him and he then gave it to the Levites who were to read it and pass this on to future generations.

And we see this played out by Joshua and future generations.

The first we know of a public reading of the Law is in Joshua 8:34-35.

This is what we are told, "**And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.**"

How important it was for them to read God's Word as they begin their journey in the Promise Land!

Interestingly enough, we don't see any record of another public reading of the Law until the days of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17:9-10, some 500 years later.

And here we are told, "**So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.**"

Then, in the reign of Josiah there was another public reading of the Law and that is found in II Chronicles 34:29-33, more than 250 years after Jehoshaphat.

And here we are told, **“Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. The king went up to the house of the Lord, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem - the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.”**

And then, after their captivity we do see this played out once again in Nehemiah 8:1-8.

And here we are told, **“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.”**

How important is that for us to do today, to read from the Bible, to give them a sense of what was going on and then to apply those things to our lives, make an application!

Now of course there might have been public readings of the Law as commanded here which are not recorded; but the fact that some are recorded probably means they were unusual, not typical.

And think about this for a minute. When you have this kind of neglect of God's word there is no wonder Israel was so often in trouble and I truly believe that is true for our own lives as well!

My point is simple. It is best to use the Bible as a *means of prevention* than an *act of desperation*.

Now there is one more point that I think is important for us to look at.

Today God's Word is neglected. In most churches it is not a priority and many times it is lost in everything else that is being done.

Listen carefully to what one person wrote regarding the church and where it is at. He wrote,

The Word of God is not loved and studied, either privately or publicly. Trashy literature is devoured in private, and music, ritualistic services, and imposing ceremonies are eagerly sought after in public. Thousands will flock to hear music, and pay for admission, but how few care for a meeting to read the Holy Scriptures!

These are facts, and facts are powerful arguments. We cannot get over them. There is a growing thirst for religious excitement, and a growing distaste for the calm study of Holy Scripture and the spiritual exercise of the Christian assembly.

It is perfectly useless to deny it. We cannot shut our eyes to it. The evidence of it meets us on every hand.

Thank God, there are a few, here and there, who really love the Word of God, and delight to meet, in holy fellowship, for the study of its precious truths. May the Lord increase the number of such, and bless them, "till traveling days are done."

- C. H. Mackintosh, "Deuteronomy", in Notes on the Pentateuch, p. 895

Let me say this. What this man wrote was not written five years ago, ten years ago, even 50 years ago, but C. H. Mackintosh wrote this over a century ago.

If he wrote this back then, can you imagine what he would say today!

Think about this. How many churches today teach verse by verse through the Bible from Genesis through Revelation, and yes, even the book of Leviticus! Not many do.

When you see people going into a church how many are carrying their Bibles with them?

Again, not many!

There are more cell phones going into churches today than Bibles and that should not be!

You see, God's Word is not valued any longer and then people wonder why they are a mess, depressed, have no hope! It is because they have neglected God's Word in their lives and they are spiritually starving themselves to death, they are not spiritually healthy!

The solution is to get back into God's Word!

VERSES 14-15

Here we see Moses' retirement ceremony and Joshua's inauguration ceremony you might say!

VERSES 16-22

This has not been easy for Moses leading the children of Israel these forty years!

And now the Lord is telling Moses what is ahead for Joshua and the children of Israel.

They will play the harlot; they will turn from the Lord!

Not very encouraging words and yet, they were a warning. They did not have to go down that path but if they chose to, then the consequences would be devastating to them!

As a leader, my heart breaks when I see people turn from God, disobey His Word to them, do their own thing and thus, I can't imagine how Moses felt knowing that the nation itself would turn from the Lord!

But Moses also witnessed this those forty years of wandering in the wilderness. How easily circumstances caused them to turn from the Lord when they should have caused them to turn to the Lord!

Let me ask you this.

Why did they need a song when they had God's Word to remind them of their future idolatry?

Because we tend to remember songs better than we do the Scriptures. Think about it.

We may have not heard a song for some 20 or 30 years and once it starts to play you are singing along with it! You remembered the words!

Thus, this song of Moses was to remind them of God's warning to them and what would happen as they turned from Him.

And we will see this song as we get into Deuteronomy chapter 32.

VERSE 23

Notice the Lord didn't say to Joshua, *"You da man Joshua! You are so strong, so brave, so tough. You don't know how long I have been waiting for a man like you!"*

No, the Lord saw the weaknesses of Joshua and thus, He told him to be strong, not in himself but in the Lord.

And as we get into the book of Joshua, we see this played over and over again, *"Don't be afraid. Be strong."*

In fact, in Joshua 1:6-9 we see the Lord tell Joshua to **"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."**

Then, by the time we get to Joshua 10:25 we are told, **"Then Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.'"**

Because Joshua learned lessons of faith, he was able to encourage those who were fearful, didn't feel strong in the Lord.

That is a great lesson for us because we can't encourage anyone unless we believe and have experienced it ourselves, that we can walk by faith in the Lord!

VERSES 24-27

Notice that a copy of Genesis through Deuteronomy was placed next to the Ark of the Covenant as a witness to them and against them when they rebelled against the Lord.

Folks, God's Word is a witness to us and against us when we rebel against the Lord!

Yes, we can find refuge, comfort in God's Word as we walk with Him, as we obey His Word, but there is the correction for disobeying Him and judgment for unbelievers!

VERSES 28-30

Even at the end of his life Moses has a love for his people and he wanted them to walk with God, even though he knew they would enter into a time of rebellion against Him.

J. Vernon McGee put it like this in his commentary on Deuteronomy.

He wrote,

May I say that this statement which Moses made about 3500 years ago is still accurate, still true. It has been fulfilled quite literally. It is also true of the entire human family, for God has said that mankind apart from God will utterly corrupt itself. All we need to do is look around us today and we can see that this is true.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible – Vol. I, p. 607

May we learn the lessons and heed the warnings and walk with God and see the blessings that will flow into our lives and through our lives touching the lives of others for His glory!

As we read on, we will see the Song of Moses, you might call this one his third song.

The first song of Moses is a song of praise unto God for delivering them from their bondage in Egypt, for destroying Pharaoh and the Egyptian army who were coming after them. (Exodus 15)

Psalm 91 was written by Moses, and probably the oldest of the Psalms, and it was written, most likely, during the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel.

As Deuteronomy chapter 31 closes, we are told, **“Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended.”**

And here is this song of Moses!

DEUTERONOMY 32

VERSES 1-3

What is Moses saying here?

He is saying that even if the ears of Israel fall silent to what is being sung, then all creation will be a witness of their rebellion against God.

Songs even today play a big role in Israel, in their history, their deliverance, their heritage and-so-on. We might call them ballads today, but they are just songs to remember their history.

And I think that the point Moses is making is that as they would sing this song, they would understand it was speaking of them and the condition they were in and thus, they would repent and return to God!

VERSE 4

Moses is establishing who God is before he moves on to where the children of Israel were at.

First, our God is a Rock. That speaks of stability, strength.

In Psalm 18:2-3 we read of this, **“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.”**

Also, in II Samuel chapter 22, starting in verse 1 we are told in a song of David, **“Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said: ‘The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. . . . For who is God, except the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God? God is my strength and power, And He makes my way perfect. . . . The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation!’”** II Samuel 22:1-4, 32-33, 47.

In other words, place your feet upon ***THE ROCK*** and when the foundations of this world begin to shake, and I think they have started, you will not be moved!

I think we would be wise to understand that today. Everything is going to be shaken and yet, if we place our feet up ***THE ROCK***, we will not be moved! There is stability in the midst of chaos when we rest in Jesus!

Not only is our God a Rock, a stable force in our lives, but His ways are perfect, He is just in His actions, He is truthful and righteous.

In II Samuel 22:31 we are told, “**As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.**”

It truly amazes me the number of people who refuse to put their trust in God who is good, who is faithful, righteous, just and-so-on, and instead place their trust in man, who is not!

Look at the political arena and see how many times man has placed his trust in man, only to be disappointed in the outcome. We need to put our trust in the Lord!

In Psalm 146:3 the Psalmist makes this very point of who we are not to put our trust in. He tells us, “**Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.**”

Folks, the Lord reminds us very clearly that, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**” John 14:6.

May we not forget that because the reality is, who are you going to believe?

And yet, in spite of all that God had shown them. In spite of all that God did for them, they forgot the Lord and went after pagan god’s that are not really gods!

Listen to what Moses says next.

VERSES 5-6

In Italy we would say, “*What’s a matter you?*” I think that would fit in very well here!

Moses is telling them to look at all God has done for them and yet they have turned away from Him.

In fact, here in Deuteronomy 32:6 Moses reminds them, “**Has He not made you and established you?**”

Look at all that He has done for you and yet you are turning from Him!

How foolish, how unwise and yet, we too can easily turn away from God.

Now, in a few minutes we will see one of the primary reasons people do turn away from God.

But first, Moses is going to recap for them what God has done for them, for the children of Israel, His children and His nation that He birthed, the ones He brought to life!

VERSES 7-14

“*Remember the days of old*” or remember all that God has done for you is what Moses is saying!

We need to remember that this song was meant to be a witness against a rebellious Israel. To do that Moses reminded Israel of all God’s goodness to them. This was to both bring a greater conviction of sin, and to remind them of God’s love and grace they could return to.

As I have said, Moses wants them to remember God’s love for them. How He would bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. How he was the One leading them on their journey and when it got tough, He carried them along, encouraging them and helping them to fly, to soar as they spread their wings knowing that God was under them!

Let me make this point. When Moses speaks of “**The apple of His eye**” he is speaking of His pupil! The pupil is very sensitive.

Now, to protect your pupil your eyelid moves at 1/50th of a second! Your eyelid, on average, blinks some 25 times each minute!

Let me put that into perspective for you. If you drove 55 mph and when on a 10-hour road trip, you would have driven some 33 miles with your eyes closed! A little scary to think about.

But God is attentive to their care, and He is attentive to our care as well.

Think of it like this. God is attentive to our care just as your eyelid is attentive to your eye.

And yet, in spite of all that, they turned from Him!

Please understand that Moses did not want to lay some big guilt trip on them, but as they sang this song conviction would grow in their lives and they would return to the Lord.

Restoration is the idea, not destruction, but many times people will have to be brought low before they will look up!

As we read what they did, how they turned from the Lord, you may be wondering how can a people that have been so blessed by God do that!

The answer is simple, and we will see that as we read on, the reason for their turning from God, their backsliding!

VERSES 15-18

After reading of how Israel turned from God, rebelled against Him, the Lord still calls them Jeshurun, why?

First of all, Jeshurun means "*the upright one.*"

We just read that this is not the case and thus, why does God do that?

Because God is looking at them in a positional sense and not the practical sense of where they are at on a daily basis. He sees them as they will be, that one-day all Israel will be saved as Paul tells us in Romans.

God does the same with us as Christians. Because of the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all our sins, God sees us positionally as perfect, as white as snow even though in a practical sense we still do sin! He sees the finished product as the work He has begun in us He will complete!

Now here is the reason they fell away from God – ***PROSPERITY!***

You see, when things are going well you really don't need God, at least that is what many think. You have everything you need.

You have your two-camel garage. Your four wheel or leg transportation with a sunroof and I guess it is all open, and-so-on.

Israel was very blessed, and they turned from God, thought they did not need Him any longer and thus, in their prosperity they turned away from the true and living God and turned to idols, to demons!

I like the words of Agur in Proverbs 30:7-9, "**Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches - Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.**"

In other words, "***Lord, give me just what I need, not too much or too little so I don't turn from you.***" Wise words. Keep it simple, right!

And isn't it interesting what people turn to when they turn away from the true and living God!

They turn to idols, false gods, really demons, like I have said, those things who can't do anything for them, anything that will bless them, be good for them.

Demons will kill and destroy people's lives because their master, Satan does that!

In Jeremiah 2:13 God warned His people, **“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.”**

In other words, these false doctrines, these false religious teachings, these false religious systems can't hold water, they are empty, they are full of holes.

While God's truths, His Word is pure, it is living, it is powerful, it is life giving and life sustaining.

You see, the philosophies of this world are truly empty, the world's religions are empty, and yet when you turn away from the true and living God this is what you are left with, and this is where you will gravitate towards!

We see this in the church today, a drift away from the truths of God found in the Word of God and a move towards a false spirituality, New Age teachings and-so-on.

We need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us because the Church, in her prosperity, is turning away from God.

Apart from the cross, apart from the blood atonement, we are still dead in our sins. And now they want to take away the work that Jesus has done for, the love that He has shown towards us, and with their false gospel they are sending people to Hell in a basket or should I say casket!

VERSES 19-27

Okay, not an upbeat song but definitely the Blues!

God is saying that every area of their life will be affected as He removes His hand from them. And judgment did come by the hands of the Babylonians, an even more wicked nation than they were!

But I think there is a veiled reference to the Church here.

As the Jews turned their backs to Jesus, God is now dealing with the Gentiles and in doing so, He is making Israel jealous because the Gentiles are being blessed with the hope that it would cause the Jews to return to Him and one day they will!

Paul, in Romans 11:11-15 makes this point as he wrote, **“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”**

Again, the idea of this judgment is for restoration!

VERSES 28-29

Here is a great deterrent to backsliding, knowing what the end of it will be like!

God will let us run and it is amazing how far, how low, how destructive our running can be.

But the reality is that His arms are always open to us and all we need to do is turn and run back into His arms!

That is the love of God for us, He wants what is best, but He will not force us, He will let us run, but don't!

It truly is not worth it and there truly are consequences to our actions!

That was the problem for Israel, they were short-sighted or didn't see the long-term consequences for their actions!

Let me give you this example.

When the city planners were drawing up the streets of New York City, they were figuring in its future growth. So they laid out the streets from the center of the city outward.

And they let their imaginations run wild and they figured they would never need more than 19 streets. So 19th street was called "***Boundary Street.***"

This missed it by just a little because today New York City has a 284th Street!

But that is man, they don't consider the long-term consequences of their actions and they pay dearly for that as the children of Israel will do!

VERSES 30-35

In other words, when God let's go, look out!

You see, once we could drive out the enemies in our lives, not by our strength, but by His working in us and through us.

Now the enemies of our lives are overtaking us because we are fighting them in the flesh and not with the power of God. We thought we could do it on our own, and we failed.

And yes, the Bible does say that if God is for us who could be against us, and the reality is, there is no one who can be against us except one – *US!*

You see, we can remove ourselves from the blessings of God by walking away and the only solution is to return to Him!

And yes, as God is speaking to the children of Israel through Moses in this song, He is speaking of the physical enemies that God will drive out even if the children of Israel are outnumbered if they are walking with Him.

If they are not, just a few will cause the children of Israel to flee!

Deuteronomy 32:35 is the text that Jonathan Edwards used for his now famous sermon, *SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD*, that was delivered on July 8, 1711, in Enfield, Connecticut.

You see, men had fallen away from God and God used Jonathan Edwards and others during this period of time knowing as *The Great Awakening* to call the nation to repentance, to return to God.

I think it is something we need to consider as a people of God and as a nation, a call to repentance and getting right with God. Not blaming others but looking inward so that God can work outward in our lives and in our nation.

Listen to a portion of this famous sermon as he is speaking to sinners,

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours.

You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment.

It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up.

There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in; it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder, and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

- Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in The Hands Of An Angry God, pp. 11-12

I guess Jonathan Edwards did not understand the concept of a *Seeker Friendly Church*, or maybe he did and realized they needed to hear the truths of God found in the Word of God.

They did not need to have their ears tickled. They needed to be convicted of their sin and return to the Lord!

Guess what! As he was reading this sermon, which he had to hold the notes close to his face because his eyesight was so bad, he spoke in a monotone voice, and yet, people were crying out to God during the service, falling on their knees and asking God to forgive them.

They turned to God, to Jesus because they saw the reality of where they were going!

May pastors today not only teach God's Word but by the power of God's Spirit bring it to the people and I know that lives will be transformed!

Isaiah 55:11 tells us, **“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”**

And I believe that, and I think you do as well!

VERSES 36-43

In other words, when you come to the end of yourself, when all your strength, all your resources are gone, when you can't do it on your own any longer, then try calling out to those god's you were serving and see if they can help!

Now God is not being mean here, He just wants them to see what they were holding onto can't hold any water so that when they turn back to Him, they will stay because they have already tasted and seen the emptiness of what they were holding on to!

You see, there are no other god's, there is no God like ***YAHWEH!***

He is God; all the other so-called gods are demons, fallen angels, created beings!

Thus, don't be foolish, you have no strength, return to the Lord, place your foot upon ***THE ROCK***, for your heavenly Father loves you!

VERSES 44-47

Moses shared this song with the people, he wanted them to remember it to help them in their walk with God or when they do turn away from God and they are humming this song, they remember that it is speaking of them, and they would return to the true and living God!

Now here is one of those great and sad lies that the Devil likes to tell us. It has been spoken throughout time and it is just this simple and yet powerful: ***IT IS A FUTILE THING TO SERVE THE LORD!***

In other words, what's the use in serving God, it is still hard, it is still difficult!

Let me say this. It is not a futile thing to serve the Lord. Yes, there is no doubt that at times it can be very difficult and when you look at the wicked, it seems like they are doing well.

But remember what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:58, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**"

And The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord], knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose].**"

May we not forget that!

Not only is serving the Lord important, but reading God's Word, studying God's Word, obeying God's Word is important in our lives as well. That is really what this song was all about.

Moses is telling them to follow the Lord, obey His Word or there will be consequences in their lives if they don't!

Some of you may remember the old telephone books. They were big and full of names and numbers and addresses.

In a telephone book for the South Central Bell Yellow Pages, they had this ad in there, which is very interesting.

It read, ***"Born to be battered . . . the loving phone book. Underline it, circle things, write in the margins, turn down page corners, the more you use it, the more valuable it gets to be."***

I wonder if that is how we feel about the Bible, the Word of God?

God's Word is to be dug into, we are to love it, underline in it, circle things, put things in the margins, even turn down page corners and make no mistake about it, the more you use it, the more valuable it will be to you!

As Moses says the Bible is not **"a futile thing"** – it's **"your life."** It will prolong and prosper your days both for now and forever. It helps us possess God's blessings.

VERSES 48-52

Because Moses did not represent the Lord correctly, he would not be allowed to enter into the Promise Land, but God would allow Him to see all that the children of Israel will inherit under the leadership of Joshua.

At the age of 120 Moses will climb up this 4500-foot mountain, not an easy climb for a 120-year-old, and there he will die.

Let me leave you with this. God's Word is living, and it is powerful, and it is able to change people's lives if we allow it.

Remember what Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 3:16, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**"

God's Word is profitable for telling us what is right.

God's Word is profitable for telling us what is wrong.

God's Word is profitable for telling us how to get right when we have gone astray.

And God's Word is profitable for telling us how to stay right.

And if we allow it, Paul says this is what will happen in your life, "**that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" II Timothy 3:17.

You see, as you read and apply God's Word to your life you will be complete!

May we believe it and apply it to our lives so that we may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!