

I have begun my second round of reading the Bible all the way through. I absolutely love Genesis and Exodus found within the first two of the five chapters of the Pentateuch, or the Torah, written by Moses, himself. Leviticus and Numbers are very hard to get through without feeling like "I just don't get it." They are a hard read, I admit. Recently I have been in Deuteronomy, the last book of the Torah. The children of Israel are about to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land, and Moses is giving his final speech to the people, because he won't be allowed to join them in their new home.

When Moses struck the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17:6) to produce water after God told him to "speak to the rock", his disobedience resulted in his not being able to enter the Promised Land. Pretty harsh, right? On the surface, it does seem like extreme punishment, making one wonder about God's mercy. I can't go forty minutes without losing my temper when my grandsons start fighting or whining. Imagine how frustrating it must have been for Moses to lead a million people through the desert for forty years, listening to them groan and complain each step of the way. God, full of grace and patience, fed them and gave them water. He didn't let their clothes or sandals wear out. Yet they continued to fuss and whine, wishing they were back in slavery in Egypt. I'm afraid if I had a staff in my hand, I would have cracked a few heads, before striking the rock!

But the disobedience of Moses wasn't just in his actions, as much as in his heart. Unfortunately, by striking the rock when God told him to speak to it, it appeared as if the water was provided under Moses' power, not God's. It never works out when we take credit for something God has sanctified, intentionally or not. In that moment, Moses acted out of anger and frustration, not in faith and trust that God required. I have no doubt that God understood how Moses felt. He himself grew weary of hearing the constant complaining of the people and spoke of wiping them out often. But bless Moses, he continually interceded on behalf of the people.

The decision to keep Moses from entering the new land might seem cruel, but I see so many blessings too. Poor Moses must have been exhausted after such a long journey, filled with drama and complaining. He was allowed to see so many miracles and wonders of God firsthand. What stories he was able to share! My goodness, he is a published author and people are still reading his words!

God let him see the goodness of the land from afar, knowing that his people will cross over as they had been promised for so many years. Perhaps that was enough of a blessing for Moses. I know there are days when I don't feel like 'going with the crowd.' I am content to stay back and be satisfied knowing others are going to be blessed, while I just go somewhere quiet to rest.

On his last day on earth, God told Moses it was time to climb the mountain because it was time for him to rest forever. This is one of my favorite stories in the life of Moses. God himself buried his beloved servant. The first time I really took the time to get to know Moses and then read about the last day of his life, I cried like a baby. I grieved the death of Moses, thousands of years later. I believe God communed with him a while, perhaps they were sitting together on a patch of green grass taking in the long-awaited scene. I can see God pointing out to Moses the lush valley and flowing streams awaiting the people. I can imagine him asking Moses, "Well, are you ready to go home, my son?" I'd say Moses saw the ultimate Promised Land that day.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo



The Death of Moses

34 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, ² all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea, ³ the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. ⁴ Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it."

⁵ And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. **⁶ He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.** ⁷ Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. ⁸ The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.

[Deuteronomy 34 NIV - The Death of Moses - Then Moses climbed - Bible Gateway](#)