
DEUTERONOMY 34:1 Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. The LORD showed him all the land of Gilead, to Dan,

Moses goes up Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah, and God shews him the whole extent of the land which he promised to give to the descendants of Abraham, Deu 34:1-4. There Moses died, and was so privately buried by the Lord that his sepulcher was never discovered, Deu 34:5, Deu 34:6. His age and strength of constitution, Deu 34:7. The people weep for him thirty days, Deu 34:8. Joshua being filled with the spirit of wisdom, the Israelites hearken to him, as the Lord commanded them, Deu 34:9. The character of Moses as a prophet, and as a worker of the most extraordinary miracles, both in the sight of the Egyptians, and the people of Israel: conclusion of the Pentateuch, Deu 34:10-12.

Verse 1

And Moses went up - This chapter could not have been written by Moses. A man certainly cannot give an account of his own death and burial. We may therefore consider Moses's words as ending with the conclusion of the preceding chapter, as what follows could not possibly have been written by himself. To suppose that he anticipated these circumstances, or that they were shown to him by an especial revelation, is departing far from propriety and necessity, and involving the subject in absurdity; for God gives no prophetic intimations but such as are absolutely necessary to be made; but there is no necessity here, for the Spirit which inspired the writer of the following book, would naturally communicate the matter that concludes this. I believe, therefore, that Deu 34:1-12, should constitute the first chapter of the book of Joshua.

On this subject the following note from an intelligent Jew cannot be unacceptable to the reader: - "Most commentators are of opinion that Ezra was the author of the last chapter of Deuteronomy; some think it was Joshua, and others the seventy elders, immediately after the death of Moses; adding, that the book of Deuteronomy originally ended with the prophetic blessing upon the twelve tribes: 'Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord,' etc.; and that what now makes the last chapter of Deuteronomy was formerly the first of Joshua, but was removed from thence and joined to the former by way of supplement. This opinion will not appear unnatural if it be considered that sections and other divisions, as well as points and pauses, were invented long since these books were written; for in those early ages several books were connected together, and followed each other on the same roll. The beginning of one book might therefore be easily transferred to the end of another, and in process of time be considered as its real conclusion, as in the case of Deuteronomy, especially as this supplemental chapter contains an account of the last transactions and death of the great author of the Pentateuch." - Alexander's Heb. and Eng. Pentateuch.

This seems to be a perfectly correct view of the subject. This chapter forms a very proper commencement to the book of Joshua, for of this last chapter of Deuteronomy the first chapter of Joshua is an evident continuation. If the subject be viewed in this light it will remove every appearance of absurdity and contradiction with which, on the common mode of interpretation, it stands sadly encumbered.

DEUTERONOMY 34:2 and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, to the western sea,

DEUTERONOMY 34:3 and the south, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, to Zoar.

DEUTERONOMY 34:4 The LORD said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your seed.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there."

DEUTERONOMY 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the LORD's word.

Verse 5

So Moses - died - according to the word of the Lord - על פי יהוה al pi Yehovah, at the mouth of Jehovah; i. e., by the especial command and authority of the Lord; but it is possible that what is here said refers only to the sentence of his exclusion from the promised land, when he offended at the waters of Meribah.

DEUTERONOMY 34:6 He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor, but no man knows where his tomb is to this day.

Verse 6

He buried him - It is probable that the reason why Moses was buried thus privately was, lest the Israelites, prone to idolatry, should pay him Divine honors; and God would not have the body of his faithful servant abused in this way. Almost all the gods of antiquity were defiled men, great lawgivers, eminent statesmen, or victorious generals. See the account of the life of Moses at the end of this chapter, Deu 34:10 (note).

DEUTERONOMY 34:7 Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died. His eye was not dim, nor his strength gone.

Verse 7

His eye was not dim - Even at the advanced age of a hundred and twenty; nor his natural force abated - he was a young man even in old age, notwithstanding the unparalleled hardships he had gone through. See the account of his life at the end of this chapter, Deu 34:10 (note).

DEUTERONOMY 34:8 The children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended.

DEUTERONOMY 34:9 Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands on him. The children of Israel listened to him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Verse 9

Laid his hands upon him - See on Num 27:18-23 (note).

DEUTERONOMY 34:10 Since then, there has not arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

Verse 10

There arose not a prophet, etc. - Among all the succeeding prophets none was found so eminent in all respects nor so highly privileged as Moses; with him God spoke face to face - admitted him to the closest familiarity and greatest friendship with himself. Now all this continued true till the advent of Jesus Christ, of whom Moses said, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me;" but how great was this person when compared with Moses! Moses desired to see God's glory; this sight he could not bear; he saw his back parts, probably meaning God's design relative to the latter days: but Jesus, the Almighty Savior, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who lay in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared God to man. Wondrous system of legal ordinances that pointed out and typified all these things! And more wonderful system of Gospel salvation, which is the body, soul, life, energy, and full accomplishment of all that was written in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning the sufferings and death of Jesus, and the redemption of a ruined world "by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his death and burial, by his glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost!" Thus ends the Pentateuch, commonly called the Law of Moses, a work every way worthy of God its author, and only less than the New Covenant, the law and Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now to the ever blessed and glorious Trinity, Father, Word, and Spirit, the infinite and eternal One, from whom alone wisdom, truth, and goodness can proceed, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

DEUTERONOMY 34:11 in all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

DEUTERONOMY 34:12 and in all the mighty hand, and in all the awesome deeds, which Moses did in the sight of all Israel.
