

Deuteronomy 31, 32, 34 The Death of Moses

Deuteronomy 31:1-4, 14-16; 32:48-52; 34:1-9

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition: *The 40 years have finished. Moses has led the people to the river where they will enter into the Land that God* had promised to Abraham. Moses brought the people together and gave them their final instructions.*

Deuteronomy 31:1-4

When Moses had finished giving these instructions to all the *descendants of Abraham**, he said, “I am now 120 years old, and I am no longer able to lead you. God has told me, ‘You will not *enter the Promised Land*.’ But...your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua will lead you across the river, just as God promised.

Deuteronomy 31:14-16, 23

Then God said to Moses, “The time has come for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the *Tent of Worship* so that I may commission him there.” So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at *Tent of Worship*. And God appeared to them in a pillar of cloud that stood at the entrance to the sacred tent...and he commissioned Joshua to be the next leader of the *descendants of Abraham*.

Transition: *Moses wrote down all the instructions that God had given. Then Moses wrote a song for the people.*

Deuteronomy 32:48-52

That same day God said to Moses, “Go...to the mountains east of the river, and climb a *certain mountain*...Look out across the land ...I am giving to the *descendants of*

Abraham as their own special possession. Then you will die there on the mountain. You will join your ancestors, just as...your brother, died...and joined his ancestors, *because* both of you betrayed me...You failed to demonstrate my holiness* to the *descendants of Abraham* when you struck the rock to bring them water. So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the *descendants of Abraham*.”

Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Then Moses went up to *the mountain*...And God showed him the whole land, from *the east to the west and from the north to the south*. Then God said to Moses, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham...when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have now allowed you to see it with your own eyes, but you will not enter the land.” So Moses, the servant of God, died there...just as God had said. God buried him in a valley...but to this day no one knows the exact place. Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever. The *descendants of Abraham* mourned for...thirty days, until the customary period of mourning was over.

Deuteronomy 34:9

Now Joshua...was full of the spirit of wisdom, *because* Moses had laid his hands on him. So the *descendants of Abraham* obeyed him, doing just as God had commanded Moses.

Why This Story?

Chronological evangelistic story sets usually need an Old Testament character to show how a person who has found great favor with God can still fail. The Old Testament character sets up the need for a savior. This story is the fifth story in a Moses set that can be used for such a story set. This story shows the consequences of Moses' act of disobedience. God kept his word.

Story Crafting

You will need to indicate that time has passed since the previous story.

We did not include the names of the places. The people were now camped at a different border to the Promised Land.

If your audience is familiar with the geography and knows the place names, you may include them.

In this story, the **Tent of Worship** is the Tabernacle where the people went to worship God. We used simpler terminology for those who may not recognize "Tabernacle."

The instructions that Moses wrote down were the Laws that God had given. This story set does not address the Law. If your audience is familiar with the Law, you may use that term. Be sure that your audience understands that these were God's instructions and were to be obeyed.

Join your ancestors is a figure of speech to indicate that Moses was going to die. If your audience has a figure of speech that conveys the same meaning, you may use it.

Moses wrote a song to help the people remember what God had done for them. If your audience uses music in this way, you

may want to have them put the song to music and learn it.

Be sure that your audience understands that the **spirit of wisdom** is from God himself. If using this phrase would confuse your audience, you may choose to simply say that Joshua was full of wisdom from God.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the master glossary for a full explanation of these words.

Abraham's Descendants*

We've chosen to use this in place of "Israelites," "Jews," and "Hebrews" to show the epic storyline from Abraham. This term helps connect the stories, and helps the audience see that all of these different terms for the Jews really refer to the same people. In addition, it alleviates any prejudices people or cultures might have towards the Jews.

God*

Some languages have a word for a god which is not the "creator/almighty God." For example, English differentiates the all-powerful, sovereign God from a "lesser" god by the use of a capital letter. When talking about the Creator God (Yahweh), use a term that is recognized as a title for the all-powerful, creator, sovereign God so that there are no misunderstandings about which god is being referred to. In this story we've used "creator God" and "true God" as a way of showing that he is sovereign. If your audience has a name for God like the descendants of Abraham did (Yahweh, meaning "I am that I am"), you may use it here.

Holy*

The word **holy** or **holiness** refers to a separation from what is unclean and a

consecration to what is pure or clean. When **holy** refers to God himself, it signifies that he is distinct from his creation, and that he is morally perfect. It refers to his majesty and power. If your audience does not understand the full definition of the word **holy**, you may choose to include a description in your story.

Worldview

Laid hands on him

In this culture, this was a way of conveying God's blessing and appointment to an important task. This was not magic. Be sure to explain this so that the audience understands that God had selected Joshua to lead the people.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **God**, **descendants of Abraham**, **holy**, **Tent of Worship**, and **Promised Land** that you have used in other stories.

Use the same description of the place where Moses struck the rock as you used in the previous story. You may choose to omit the official name, as we did.

Story Set Themes

Relationship

Character of God

God keeps promises

Prayer

Obedience