



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

DEUTERONOMY

Week 4

National Embarrassment

Deuteronomy 24:1–25:19

OPENING
up to the Word

What would you consider some of the “national sins” of your country?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Notice the acts of kindness and compassion commanded in chapter 24. If you knew nothing about ancient Israel what could you conclude from this chapter?
2. What privilege did a newly married man enjoy (24:5)? How would this strengthen a marriage?
3. In your opinion, which verse provides the most important spiritual lesson in chapter 25?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What privileges and benefits are offered to newly married couples in our culture? How do they strengthen the marital relationship? Are there other benefits newlyweds ought to receive?
2. Why is it important to recall a past time of sadness, deprivation and powerlessness (24:22)?
3. “The Lord your God *detests* anyone...who deals dishonestly” (25:16). Why is dishonesty detestable? Have you been a victim of dishonesty? Were you able to correct the wrong? If not, why not?

WINDOW
on the Word

The **millstones** cited in 24:6 reveal God’s demand that the Israelites show justice and mercy to someone owing a debt. This verse addresses the subject of collateral against a loan. The mill consisted of two stones and may have been a tempting object to claim in the event of a loan default. The millstone was used to grind grain into flour and thus make bread, a staple of ancient life. Because the millstone was an essential article in every household, a debtor would likely become desperate to retrieve it. In order to prevent such a hardship, the Bible bans this practice entirely, thus protecting the poorest of the poor.

16 MAJOR SOCIAL CONCERNS IN THE OLD COVENANT

- 1. Personhood** - Everyone's person is to be secure (*Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17; Ex. 21:16-21, 26-31; Lev. 19:14; Dt. 24:7; 27:18*).
- 2. False Accusation** - Everyone is to be secure against slander and false accusation (*Ex. 20:16; Dt. 5:20; Ex. 23:1-3; Lev. 19:16, Dt. 19:15-21*).
- 3. Women** - No woman is to be taken advantage of within her status in society (*Ex. 21:7-11, 20, 26-32; 22:16-17; Dt. 21:10-14; 22:13-30; 25:1-12*).
- 4. Punishment** - Punishment for wrongdoing shall not be excessive so that the culprit is dehumanized (*Dt. 25:1-5*).
- 5. Dignity** - Every Israelite's dignity and right to be God's freedman and servant are to be honored and safeguarded (*Ex. 21:2, 5-6; Lev. 25; Dt. 15:12-18*).
- 6. Inheritance** - Every Israelite's inheritance in the promised land is to be secure (*Lev. 25; Nu. 27:5-7; 36:1-9; Dt. 25:5-10*).
- 7. Property** - Everyone's property is to be secure (*Ex. 20:15; Dt. 5:19; Ex. 21:33-36; 22:1-15; 23:4-5; Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 22:1-4; 25:13-16*).
- 8. Fruit of Labor** - Everyone is to share the fruit of his labors (*Lev. 19:13; Dt. 24:14; 25:4*).
- 9. Fruit of the Ground** - Everyone is to share the fruit of the ground (*Ex. 23:10-11; Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt. 14:28-29; 24:19-21*).
- 10. Rest on Sabbath** - Everyone, down to the humblest servant and the resident alien, is to share in the weekly rest of God's Sabbath (*Ex. 20:8-11; Dt. 5:12-15; Ex. 23:12*).
- 11. Marriage** - The marriage relationship is to be kept inviolate (*Ex. 20:14; Dt. 5:18; see also Lev. 18:6-23; 20:10-21; Dt. 22:13-30*).
- 12. Exploitation** - No one, however disabled, impoverished or powerless, is to be oppressed or exploited (*Ex. 22:21-27; Lev. 19:14; 25:35-36; Dt. 23:19-20; 24:6, 12-15-17; 27:18-19*).
- 13. Fair Trial** - Everyone is to have free access to the courts and is to be afforded a fair trial (*Ex. 23:6, 8; Lev. 19:15; Dt. 1:17; 10:17-18; 16:18-20; 17:8-13; 19:15-21*).
- 14. Social Order** - Every person's God-given place in the social order is to be honored (*Ex. 20:12; Dt. 5:16; Ex. 21:15, 17; 22:28; Lev. 19:3, 32; 20:9; Dt. 17:8-13; 21:15-21; 27:16*).
- 15. Law** - No one shall be above the law, not even the king (*Dt. 17:18-20*).
- 16. Animals** - Concern for the welfare of other creatures is to be extended to the animal world (*Ex. 23:5, 11; Lev. 25:7; Dt. 22:4, 6-7; 25:4*).

Living Means Giving

Deuteronomy 26:1-19

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

What does your pattern of giving say about you?

1. What was the difference between “firstfruits” and “tithe”? Who received the firstfruits and who receives the tithe? Would these contributions be easy or difficult to make?
 2. Why were the Israelites commanded to review their spiritual history (vs. 5-10)?
 3. What do God’s expectations from his people (vs. 12-19) reveal about him and his attitude toward humanity?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. “Rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household” (v. 11). What good things have you and your family received? How do you rejoice in them?
 2. How does one observe God’s laws with “heart” and “soul”? Why the distinction?
 3. The Israelites are commanded to review their history. Describe the history of your relationship with God. How has his grace transformed your life?
 4. Do you have spiritual goals? Are they one and the same as those of Christ living his resurrected life in you?
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WINDOW
on the Word

The phrase “walk in his ways” (v. 17) is important in Judaism and Christianity. For the people of ancient Israel, careful obedience to all of God’s laws amounted to walking in his ways. Centuries later the early followers of Christ did not refer to themselves as “Christians” but people who belonged to “the Way” (Ac 9:2). Periodically we should ask ourselves if we are, indeed, walking with Jesus—who is himself the Way.

*“So the Lord brought us out of
Egypt with a mighty hand
and an outstretched arm, with
great terror and with
miraculous signs and wonders.”*

Deuteronomy 26:8



Artwork by Mike Wimmer

Obedience or Consequences

Deuteronomy 27:1-26

OPENING
up to the Word

True or false: We are free to choose our actions but we are not free to choose the consequences. Do good consequences always flow from good choices and bad consequences from bad choices?

DIGGING
into the Word

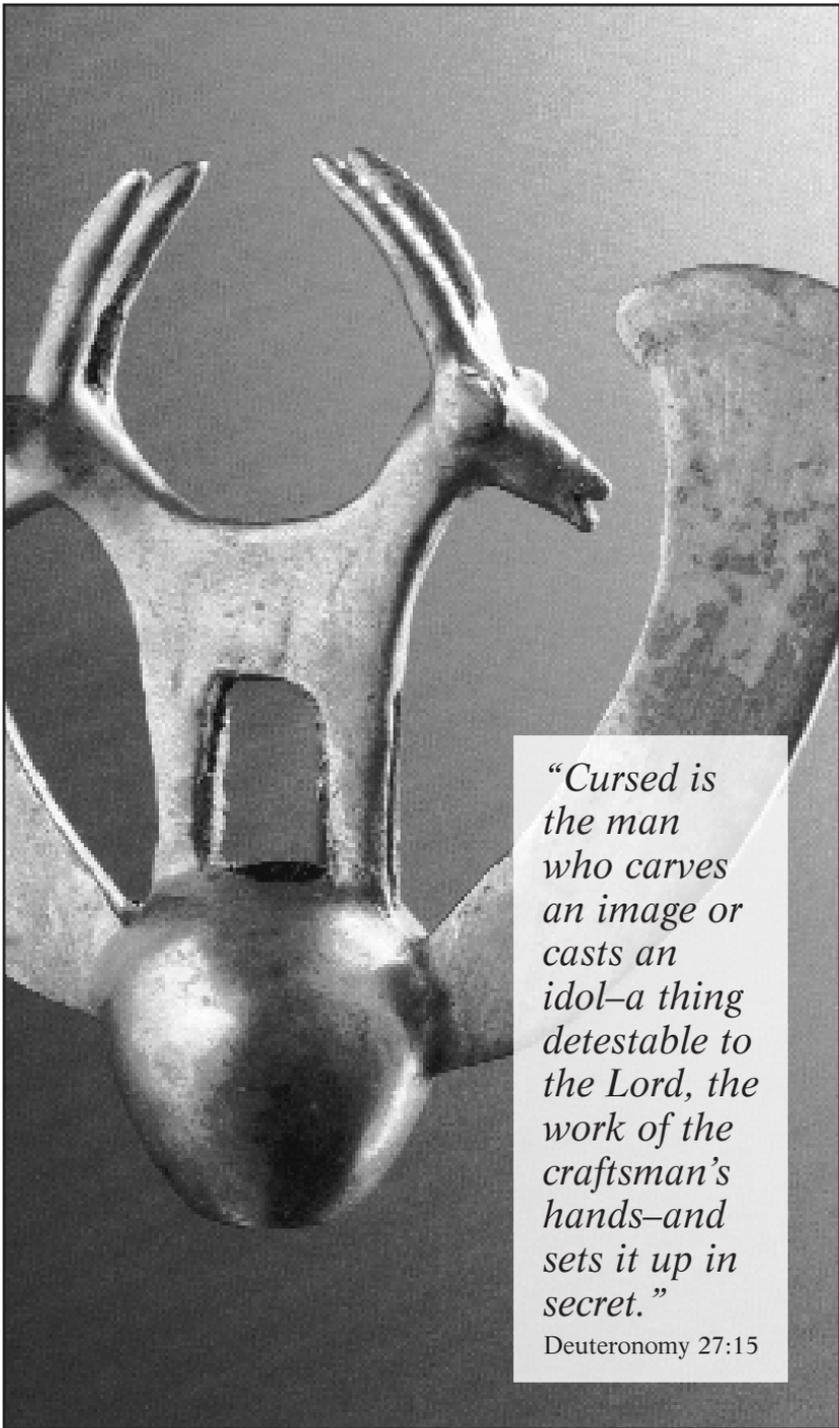
1. What were the people of Israel to do when they crossed the Jordan River—and why?
2. The 12 “curses” in verses 15-26 are actually 12 promises that the people of Israel are making. Which were the most important and which should have received the most severe penalty if broken?
3. What did it mean to be “cursed”? (a) loss of physical possessions, (b) loss of health, (c) alienation from loved ones, (d) loss of salvation.

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever made a transition from a time of anxiety and trouble to a time of relative comfort and ease? Did you honor God for leading you from one place to another?
2. What kinds of promises or vows have you made in your life? Have you been able to keep them all? What happened when you failed to keep a promise?
3. In our society, which vows are most often broken? What is the result?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The idea of having a ceremony of cursing—“**cursed is the man...**”—sounds foreign to us. However, in the ancient world this was a common custom. For example, when two nations drew up a treaty, it included various curses. If one party broke the treaty, that party was inviting divine retribution.*



“Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of the craftsman’s hands—and sets it up in secret.”

Deuteronomy 27:15

“The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.”

Deuteronomy 28:8



Photo by G. A. Belluche Jr. —PTM

Obedience and The “Good Life”

Deuteronomy 28:1-68

How does this chapter summarize the radically different basis of the old covenant as compared to the new covenant?

1. Notice the blessings that flow from obedience (vs. 3-13). Why do you think God offered these rewards for obeying? Did God *send* the blessings?
2. Why were there more curses than blessings? Did God *send* the curses? Was life under the old covenant more of a burden than a joy?
3. Do these old covenant curses and blessings apply to Christians today? Why or why not?

1. When you veered off your spiritual path, “to the right or to the left” (v. 14)? What consequences resulted? Who is the Path?

2. Verses 16 through 68 contain a long list of negative consequences for disobedience under the old covenant. Are the burdens and joys under the new covenant always consequences of our behavior (1Pe 4:13)?

*Some Christians mistakenly believe that God guarantees **health and wealth** under the new covenant. However, a careful study of the Bible and of both covenants reveals that God offered blessings and cursings under the old covenant only. That is, the old covenant was physical and God offered physical motivation to the nation of Israel. But under the new covenant, the abundant life God promises is the new life in Christ. God spiritually motivates Christians, rather than only offering physical blessings and cursings.*

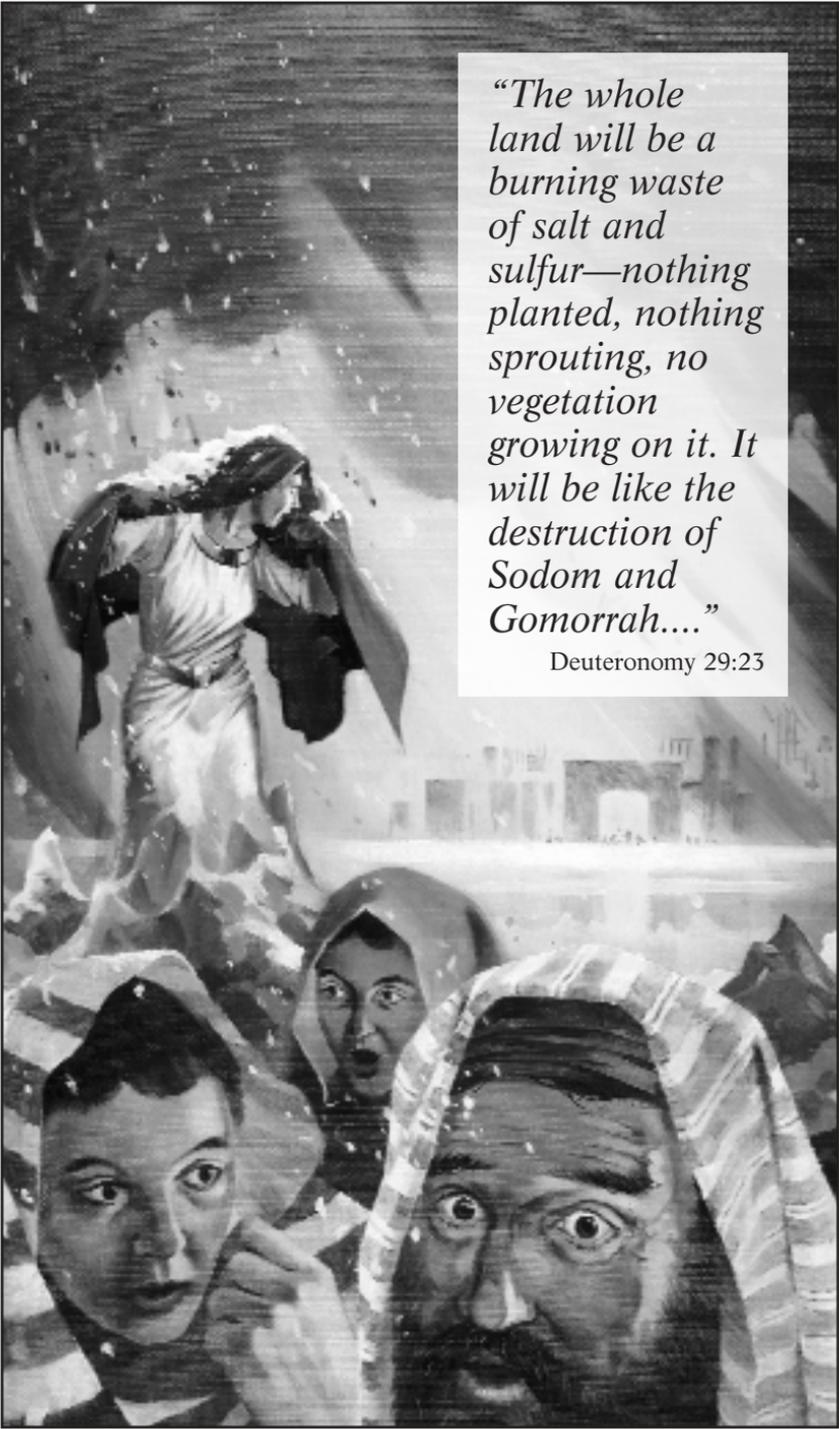
DAY 25

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word



*“The whole
land will be a
burning waste
of salt and
sulfur—nothing
planted, nothing
sprouting, no
vegetation
growing on it. It
will be like the
destruction of
Sodom and
Gomorrah....”*

Deuteronomy 29:25

Sowing Seeds of Disaster

DAY 26

Deuteronomy 29:1-29

Have you known someone who planted his or her own seeds of disaster? What were the circumstances and the end result? Could it have been avoided?

1. What was the point of this repetition of the covenant?
2. What were the penalties of disobedience as outlined in verses 19-28? If you were present when Moses spoke these words how would you have felt?
3. Verses 16-21 imply that “bad” religion can be contagious. Do you agree? Have you witnessed this yourself?

1. Have you ever made a vow or promise? Do you ever review it in your mind? Why or why not?
2. Can it help us spiritually to review God’s past working in our lives? Is there a spiritual event from your life that you feel is worth passing on to your children or friends?
3. Much of this chapter deals with spiritual reconsecration. Are there areas of your life God has transformed and sanctified?
4. Why would idolatry be attractive to anyone (v. 18)? Do you know anyone who has turned away from faith to something false? What motivates you to be a Christ-follower?

*The destruction of **Sodom and Gomorrah** is well known. However, the fiery destruction was so massive that it absorbed other nearby cities including Admah and Zeboiim (v. 23).*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Let's Live!

Deuteronomy 30:1-20

OPENING
up to the Word

Are there really people who choose death over life? Who might they be? How about people who take life-threatening risks like breaking the speed limit, using tobacco products, abusing drugs or alcohol, eating unhealthy foods or never getting medical check-ups?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What was the offer in verses 1-10? What is promised? How does one “return to the Lord” (v. 2)? What is involved in this return?

2. What does it mean—“God will circumcise your hearts” (v. 6)?

3. Contrast the negatives and positives that were offered to the Israelites. Is this a section of hope and promise, or one of doom and gloom? Why?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you experienced a reversal of misfortune? What was God’s role? What was your role?

2. In what area of your life has the Great Physician performed spiritual “heart surgery”?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The old covenant repeatedly warned against turning to **other gods**. Cultural values of that day presumed military defeat meant that the god of the conquerors was greater and more powerful than the god of the conquered. Israel would be tempted to turn to other gods whenever they were defeated in a battle. Another attraction of paganism was the idea that pagan gods could be manipulated to grant agricultural and personal fertility.*

Last Will and Testament

DAY 28

Deuteronomy 31:1-29

Do you recall a time when a revered leader retired or died? How did you feel when you heard the news?

1. What was Moses saying to the people? Why did Moses speak to Joshua publicly? What were his instructions to Joshua?
2. Why was the law read again? What instructions were given concerning future readings of the law?
3. What did God predict in verses 14-18? What would be the result of Israel's rebellion?
4. What did Moses command the Levites to do in verses 24-29? What was the point of this exercise?

1. Paraphrase Moses' opening speech to the people of Israel. What tone would you try to set for the people in announcing this change of leadership? What tone does Moses set?
2. Have you ever been able to predict when a family member or friend would rebel? What did they do—and why—and what was the end result?
3. Have you ever received an inheritance? Has anyone about to die ever left you final words of wisdom? How did you respond? What impact did those words have on you then and now?

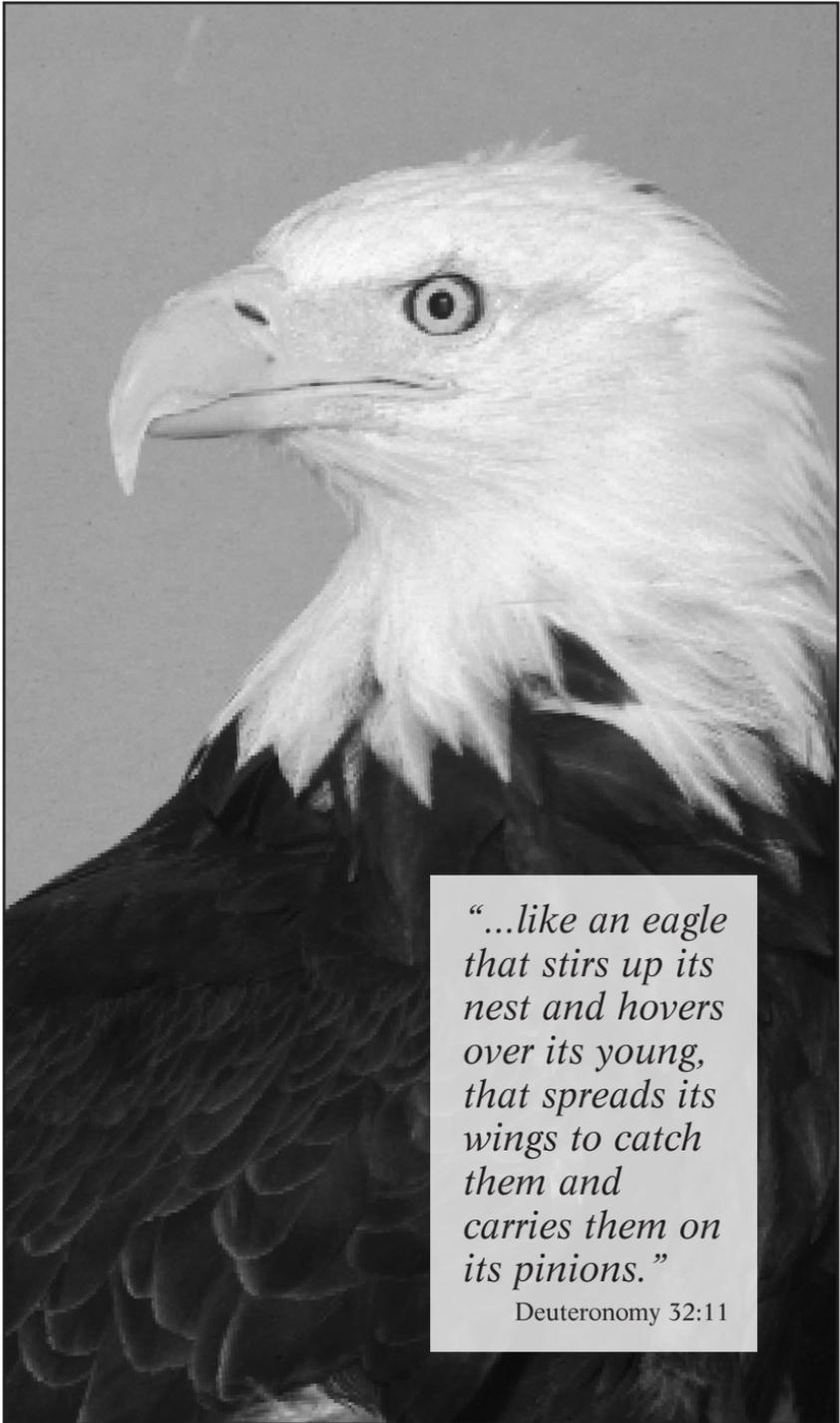
Joshua was the celebrated successor of Moses. He was the son of Nun and is first mentioned in the Bible soon after the departure from Egypt. Moses selected him to lead Israel's defense against the Amalekites. As Moses watched from a hilltop—Aaron and Hur steadying his arms raised for victory—“Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword” (Ex 17:13). Originally known as Hoshea, meaning “may God save,” the young man was renamed Joshua (“God has saved”) by Moses, acknowledging that all his future victories would depend on God's help.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word



*“...like an eagle
that stirs up its
nest and hovers
over its young,
that spreads its
wings to catch
them and
carries them on
its pinions.”*

Deuteronomy 32:11

Sermon in Song

Deuteronomy 32:1-52

Music can be a powerful tool. What kind of music and what kind of songs do you enjoy most?

1. Read through the Song of Moses. If this were your only “Bible,” what would you learn from it about God? What would you learn from it about the people of Israel?

2. Why is God described as a rock (vs. 4, 15, 18, 30-31)?

3. Why would God describe himself as jealous? What does it mean that God can be aroused to jealousy (v. 21)?

4. Why would Moses care what the enemy of Israel thought (v. 27)?

1. Pretend you are a modern-day Moses. What kind of song would you write for the next generation?

2. Identify three important lessons in Moses’ song for you.

*God is called a **rock** five times in this short song. Moses is trying to reinforce Israel’s future trust in God by using a word that suggests strength, consistency, firmness, power. Rock is a popular title for God in many of the Psalms as well, where it often suggests safety and shelter.*

DAY 29

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Footprints in the Sand

Deuteronomy 33–34

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

How would you *like* an obituary to describe you?

1. What specific blessings were given to each tribe? What do these different blessings suggest about God? What do the different blessings suggest about the people who received them?

2. Think about this sentence: *Moses dies but God lives on.*

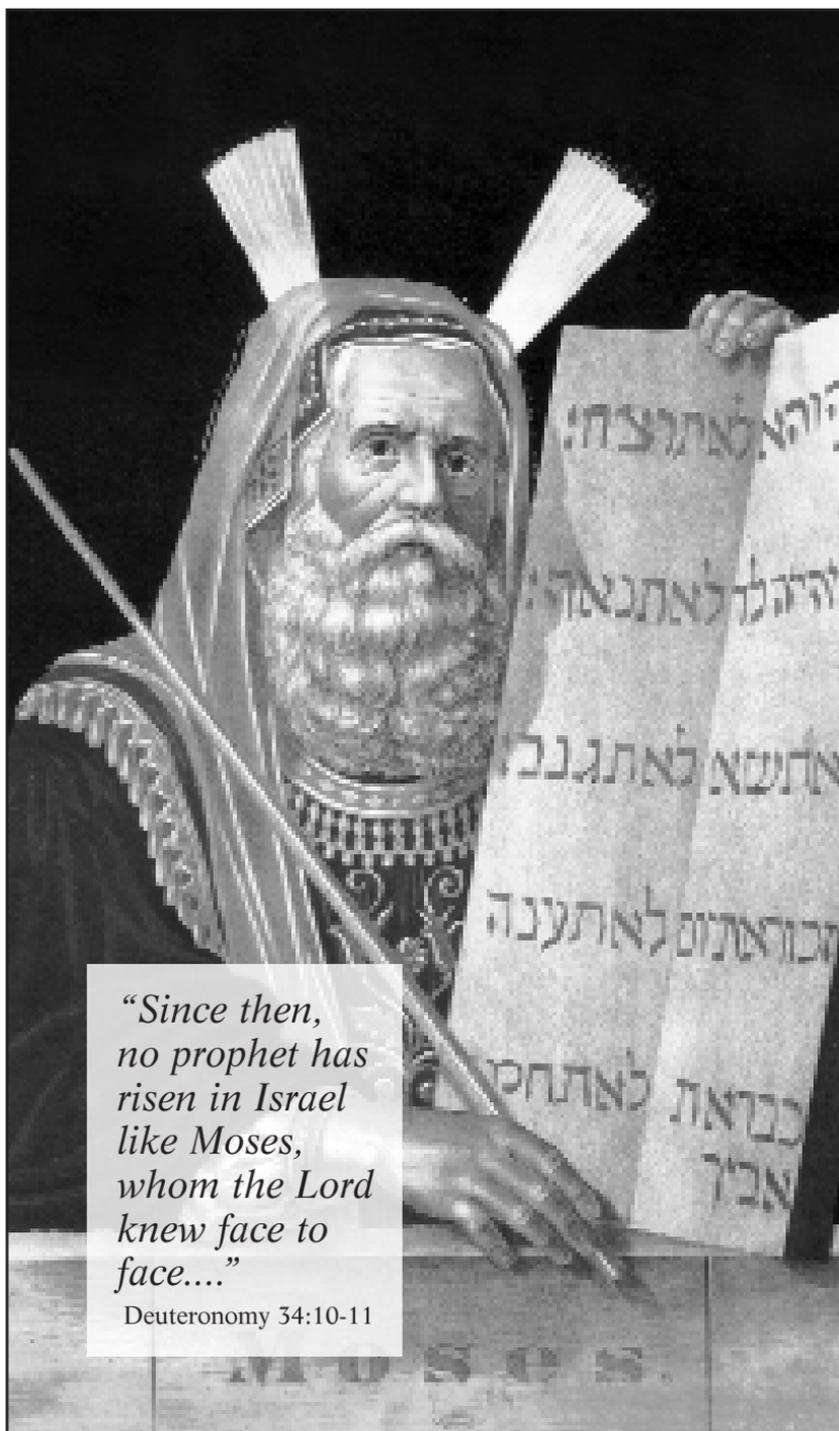
1. Of the people you know, whose death would hit you the hardest? Why? Have you ever been blessed by someone shortly before their death?

2. The spiritual footprints Moses left behind were such that he is described simply as “the man of God.” What kind of spiritual footprints is Jesus empowering you to leave behind?

3. One of the most well-known Bible verses is in chapter 33—“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (v. 27). Why is this verse so popular?

4. Review the blessings given to the tribes. What blessings or gifts or talents have you been given? Are you making good use of them?

Deuteronomy 33:24 notes that the sons of Asher will enjoy having their feet bathed in “oil.” Today this does not seem like much of a blessing, but in ancient times, people constantly wore sandals or went barefoot. Thus, the feet were subject to bruises, cuts and blisters. It was a luxury to have one’s feet bathed or massaged with oils which not only cleansed them but facilitated healing. Only wealthier or more prosperous families could afford to use oil in this way—regarded as both generous and luxurious.



*“Since then,
no prophet has
risen in Israel
like Moses,
whom the Lord
knew face to
face....”*

Deuteronomy 34:10-11