

Preparing for the Death of Moses
Deuteronomy 31:1—34:12
Veritas Class, College Church
April 2, 2017

Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 in Romans 10:6–8

<p>For this commandment that I am commanding you today is not excessive or far away; It is not in heaven above, saying 'Who will go up to heaven for us and get it to us so hearing it we may do [it]?'</p> <p>Nor is it beyond the sea, saying, 'Who will cross over beyond the sea for us and bring it to us so hearing it we may do [it].'</p> <p>The word is very near in your mouth and in your heart and in your hand to do it.</p>	<p>Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven that is, to bring Christ down?'</p> <p>or</p> <p>'Who will go down to the Abyss that is, to bring Christ up from the dead?'</p> <p>But what does it say, 'Near you is the word, in your mouth and in your heart.'</p> <p>That is, the word of faith that we proclaim.</p>
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Introduction

1. Other Death Narratives in the First Testament:

Sarah (Gen 23:1–20); Abraham (Gen 24:1–25:11); Jacob (Gen 47:28–50:14); Joseph (Gen 50:24–26); Aaron (Num 20:22–29); Moses (Deut 31:1–34:12); Joshua (Josh 23:1–24:30); David (1 Kgs 1:1—2:11; 1 Chr 23:1–29:20); Elisha (2 Kgs 13:14–20); Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:1–21)

2. Features of First Testament Death Narratives

- a. A declaration of the person's length of life (from Moses' own lips and noting his age, 31:2)
- b. An announcement of impending death (by YHWH, 31:14, 16, in both instances introduced with "Behold")
- c. A pronouncement on the life of the person (by YHWH, 32:51)
- d. A description of putting the house in order (Moses' appointment of Joshua as his successor and his provision of a national anthem for Israel (31:3—32:47)
- e. A report of blessing/charging those who remain behind (33:1–29)
- f. A declaration of the length of life (34:7)
- g. The death notice (34:5)
- h. An announcement of the burial (34:6)

- i. A description of the response of the bereaved (34:8)
- j. The narrator's eulogy (34:9–12)

3. Features of this "Death Narrative"

- a. The Two-part Division
- b. The Center of Gravity of the Two Parts
- c. Narrative Framework of the Poems

4. The Prose Preamble to the Song

- a. The Dominance of Speech:
- b. The Complexity of the Structure
 - A The Appointment of Joshua as Moses' Successor (vv. 1–8)
 - B The Torah (vv. 9–13)
 - A The Appointment of Joshua as Moses' Successor (vv. 14–15)
 - C The National Anthem (vv. 16–22)
 - A The Appointment of Joshua (v. 23)
 - B The Torah (vv. 24–27)
 - C The National Anthem (31:28–32:44)
 - B The Torah (32:45–47)
- c. Rearranged according to Topic
 - (1) The Installation of Joshua as Moses' Successor (vv. 1–8, 14–15, 23; 186 words)
 - (2) The Deposition of the Torah (vv. 9–13, 16–22, 28–30; 156 words)
 - (3) Preparation for the National Anthem (vv. 16–22, 28–30; 212 words)
- d. The Three Witnesses to YHWH's Commitment to Israel and the Response Required of His Vassals
 - (1) The Key Word: "Witness" (*ʿēd*, תִּשָּׁעַד) 5x!
 - (2) The Identity of the Three Witnesses

A. The Installation of Joshua as Moses' Successor

1. The Structure of the Text

- a. Moses' Commissioning of Joshua (vv. 1–8)
 - (1) His First Encouragement Speech (vv. 2–6)
 - (a) His Announcement of His Impending Demise (v. 2)
 - (b) His Promise of YHWH's Continued Presence (vv. 3–5)
 - (c) His Appeal for Courage and Confidence (v. 6)
 - (2) Moses' Second Encouragement Speech (vv. 7–8)
- b. YHWH's Commissioning of Joshua (vv. 14–15, 23)
 - (1) The Context of the Commissioning (vv. 14–15)
 - (2) The Nature of the Commissioning (v. 23)

For further reading:

Roy Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017 (August).
 Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.