

**DT. 3:23-25 -- GOD, WHO IS JUST AND HATES THE SIN OF MISREPRESENTING HIM, IS ALSO A MERCIFUL GOD!**

*"Deu 3:23 'Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: [24] 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? [25] I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'"*

**The Biblical Setting:** - Have you ever sinned while doing the work of the Lord and being told/shown you would not be the one to see its completion; then seeing Him continuing the work in a marvelous way; and you praying to let you finish? Then being told "Enough of that, speak no more of this matter"! That you are to encourage someone else (Joshua) who will complete the work?

- In Numbers, chapter 20 at Kadesh, at the waters of Meribah, we saw Moses' error, which would preclude him from entering the promised land. Num 20:8 *"Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock before their eyes**, and it will yield its water.....Num 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Num 20:11 Then Moses lifted his hand and **struck the rock twice** with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.*
- **In Num 20:12** *Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "**Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel**, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."*
- In **Deu 1:37- 38** *The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. [38] Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. **Encourage him**, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.*
- Moses is told to go the the top of Mt. Nebo - Deu 32:49-51 *"Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; **view the land** of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; [50] and die on the mountain which you ascend, and **be gathered to your people**, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; [51] **because you trespassed against Me** among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah*
- In Deu 3:21-22 *"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, '**Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings**; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. [22] You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.' **The encouragement which Moses gave to Joshua, who was to succeed him in the government.** Moses reminds Joshua of what God has done. Joshua had seen what a total defeat God had given by the forces of Israel to the two kings, Og and Sihon, and thence he might easily infer, so shall the Lord do to all the rest of the kingdoms upon which we are to make war.*
- Moses also reminds Joshua of **what God had promised**. *The Lord your God he shall fight for you; and that cause cannot but be victorious which the Lord of hosts fights for. If God be for us, who can be against us so as to prevail? We reproach our leader if we follow him trembling.*

Now Moses prays: ***“Deu 3:23 "Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: [24] 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?"***

- **The prayer which Moses made for himself, and the answer which God gave to that prayer.**
- His prayer was that, **if it were God's will, he might go before Israel over Jordan into Canaan.** At that time, when **he had been encouraging Joshua to fight Israel's battles**, taking it for granted that he must be their leader, he was **touched with an earnest desire to go over himself**, which expresses itself not in any passionate and impatient complaints, or reflections upon the sentence he was under, **but in humble prayers to God for a gracious reversing of it.**
- *I pleaded with the Lord. We should never allow any desires in our hearts which we cannot in faith offer up to God by prayer; and what desires are innocent, let them be presented to God. We have not because we ask not.*
- Moses **pleads two things here:**
- [1.] **The great experience which he had had of God's goodness to him in what he had done for Israel:** *“You have begun to show your servant your greatness. Lord, perfect what You have begun. You have given me to see Your glory in the conquest of these two kings, and the sight has affected me with wonder and thankfulness. O let me see more of the outgoings of my God, my King! This great work, no doubt, will be carried on and completed; let me have the satisfaction of seeing it.”* Note, the more we see of God's glory in His works the more we shall desire to see. *The works of the Lord are great*, and therefore are sought out more and more of *all those that have pleasure therein.*
- [2.] **The good impressions that had been made upon his heart by what he had seen:** *For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?* The **more we are affected with what we have seen of God**, of His wisdom, power, and goodness, the better we are prepared for further discoveries. Those shall see the works of God that admire Him in them. Moses had thus expressed himself concerning God and His works long before ([Exo 15:11](#)), and he still continues of the same mind, that there are no works worthy to be compared with God's works, [Psa 86:8](#).

***Deu 3:25 I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.”***

- **Moses pleads: I pray, let me cross over**, God had said he should not go over; yet he prays that he might, not knowing but that the threatening was conditional, for it was not ratified with an oath, as that concerning the people was, that they should not enter. Just as **Hezekiah prayed for his own life**, and **David for the life of his child**, after both had been expressly threatened; and the former prevailed, though the latter did not. Moses remembered the time when he had by prayer prevailed with God to recede from the declarations which he had made of his wrath against Israel, [Exo 32:14](#). And why might he not hope in like manner to prevail for himself? *Let me go over and see the good land.*

***Deu 3:26 "But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.***

- God's **answer to this prayer had in it a mixture of mercy and judgment**, that Moses might sing unto God of both.
- **There was judgment in the denial of his request, and that in something of anger too:** *The Lord was angry with me on your account, God not only sees sin in his people, but is much displeased with it;* and even those that are delivered from the wrath to come may yet lie under the tokens of God's wrath in this world, and may be denied some particular favor which their hearts are much set upon. **God is a gracious, tender, loving Father; but he is angry with his children when they do amiss, and denies them** many a thing that they desire and are ready to cry for.
- But how was God angry with Moses *on your account?*
- Either, **for that sin which they provoked Him to;** see *Psa 106:32 They angered Him also at the waters of strife, So that it went ill with Moses on account of them;*
- *Psa 106:33 Because they rebelled against His Spirit, So that he spoke rashly with his lips.*
- Or, the **removal of Moses at that time, when he could so ill be spared, was a rebuke** to all Israel, and a punishment of their sin.
- Or, **It was for their sakes, that it might be a warning to them to take heed of offending God** by passionate and unbelieving speeches at any time, after the similitude of his transgression; for, if *this were done to such a green tree, what should be done to the dry?* He acknowledges that God would not hear him. God had often heard him for Israel, yet He would not hear him for himself. Moses, their great prophet, prevailed for others, but for himself he could not prevail. Though Moses, being one of the wrestling seed of Jacob, did not seek in vain, yet he had not the thing itself which he sought for. God may accept our prayers, and yet not grant us the very thing we pray for.
- **Here is mercy mixed with this wrath in several things: -**
- God quieted the spirit of Moses under the decree that had gone forth by that word, *Enough of that.* With this word, no doubt, **a divine power went to reconcile Moses to the will of God**, and to bring him to acquiesce in it.
- **He put an honor upon his prayer in directing him not to insist upon this request:** *Speak no more to Me of this matter.* It intimates that what God does not think fit to grant we should not think fit to ask, and that God takes such a pleasure in the prayer of the upright that it is no pleasure to him, no, not in any particular instance, to give a denial to it.

***Deu 3:27 Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan.***

- **God promised Moses a sight of Canaan from the top of Pisgah,** Though he should not have the possession of it, he should have the prospect of it; not to tantalize him, but such **a sight of it as would yield him true satisfaction**, and would enable him **to form a very clear and pleasing idea of that promised land.**

***Deu 3:28 But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'***

- **God provided Moses a successor, one who should support the honor of Moses and carry on and complete that glorious work** which the heart of Moses was so much

upon, the bringing of Israel to Canaan, and settling them there. *Command Joshua and encourage him* in this work. **Those to whom God gives a command, He will be sure to give encouragement to.**

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### **SUMMARY:**

- When he was told he should die, and Joshua should succeed him; or when the two kings were slain, and their kingdoms conquered; this being the beginning, pledge, and earnest of what God had promised to do for the people of Israel; **Moses was very desirous of living to see the work completed**, and therefore **sought the Lord by prayer and supplication**: – **Are you doing that? How strong is your desire to finish well?**
- Moses **sees the greatness of God's power in subduing the two kings** and their kingdoms, and delivering them up into the hands of the Israelites. Moses **had seen instances of the mighty power of God in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness**; but this was the **beginning of His power, in vanquishing the Canaanites**, and putting their land into the possession of the Israelites, as He had promised. Caught up in this, Moses asks once again to go into the land. **Do you often think of yourself as being somewhat indispensable in your area of ministry?**
- We see here the Lord is just and gracious. He means what He says and says what He means! - *'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.* **When God is just in the things in your life, do you understand in submission or rebel in not getting your own way?**
- Notice His graciousness - *Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes.* **Do you really see His graciousness in all things toward you?**
- Even though Moses will not finish the work of actually leading them into the Promised Land, he is to and will encourage Joshua to continue and complete the work! - *But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'* **When disappointed in not getting your way regarding the finishing of God's work do you encourage the one or ones who God will use to complete His work?**

### **"How Great Thou Art"-Phil Wickham**

*Then sings my soul*

*My Savior, God, to Thee*

*How great Thou art*

*How great Thou art (4x)*