

# MOSES

## *A Man of Selfless Dedication*

### STUDY NINETEEN

## Obituary of a Hero

*Deuteronomy 34*

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*Moses knew the Lord face-to-face. He left behind a beautiful legacy before the people and before the Lord.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**Y**ou can learn a lot about life by visiting a cemetery. For example, an inscription on one tombstone says, “Beloved Husband and Father.” The man may have scaled the heights of success in business. He may have ridden a wave of acclaim in public service. In the end, however, the love of his family was all that mattered.

Some grave markers share a message of hope even in sorrow: “Our little lamb, now in the arms of Jesus.” The tears of the parents still dampen this stone. But knowing that their little one is safe with the Lord brings comfort to them and to anyone who has lost a child.

Other inscriptions offer a touch of humor. The headstone of Ruth Graham, wife of evangelist Billy Graham, reads with a smile: “End of Construction—Thank you for your patience.” She read these words on a road sign and wanted them for her grave marker!

Tombstones teach many lessons, but a common reality reflected in all of them is this: *life is short*. Two dates on every gravestone measure a person’s time on earth—the date of birth and the date of death. All the years the person lived are reduced to a dash in between.

No tombstone marks Moses’ grave. But if he had one, based on his obituary in our passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, it would probably read: “Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face” (Deuteronomy 34:10). His close relationship with God defined his “dash.” What a legacy!

Let’s hike up the mountain with Moses and join him in his final moments. His death teaches vital lessons about living and dying that are too important to miss.



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### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Open your heart to what the Holy Spirit has in store for you today by inviting the Lord to reveal His truth through His Word.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The death of Moses signaled a rite of passage for the young nation. Israel's childhood years were over. If the people were to conquer Canaan, they must grow up in their faith and courage. But what would Israel do without the patriarchal founder of their nation?

To prepare the nation for the next phase, Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy to rehearse God's holy and compassionate law for them and to renew God's covenant with them. He also reminded them of the blessings that would follow their total commitment to Yahweh—and the curses that would result from faithless disobedience.

Most of all, throughout the three sermons given over his last forty days, Moses stressed the nature of the people's role as God's chosen people. How did Moses sum up God's relationship to Israel in [Deuteronomy 7:6–9](#)?

Moses had done all he could to help the new generation of Israelites to enter the land and live for God. His work was done, and now he was ready for his final journey.



### Observation: Moses' Final Journey

By the Lord's leading, Moses "went up to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho" (Deuteronomy 34:1). Locate Mount Nebo in your Bible maps or in the online map, "[Twelve Tribes of Israel](#)," at [insight.org](http://insight.org). You can find Mount Nebo in the tribe of Reuben on the east side of the Jordan River, near the northern tip of the Dead Sea.

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From this vantage point, Moses had a panoramic view of Canaan. Read [Deuteronomy 34:1–3](#) and pinpoint the locations mentioned. Note that Moses viewed the land from east to west. Gilead is the region east of the Jordan. Dan refers to the tribal area west along the Mediterranean coast. And then he scanned the territory north to south, from Naphtali to the Negev, and all the regions in between.

What did the Lord say to Moses about this vast expanse of land in [34:4](#)?

About five hundred years earlier, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob traversed these same rugged hills and green valleys. Now their descendants, as a mighty nation, had gathered at its border, poised to claim the inheritance God promised their forefathers. What thoughts and feelings do you imagine Moses was experiencing?

How does [34:5–8](#) describe what happened next? Was anyone with Moses when he died? How was he buried? Why do you think the Lord made his burial site a secret?

Joshua is mentioned in [34:9](#) as Moses' successor, anticipating the next chapter in Israel's history. What qualifications did Joshua have as the new leader?

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With Moses' obituary in *Deuteronomy 34:10–12*, the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, draw to a close. What key points summed up Moses' legacy? Of these, which do you think is the most significant?

*The only man God buried personally in all the Bible was Moses. He hid the tomb, but He let us read Moses' tombstone. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### **Interpretation: Lessons from Moses' Life**

Moses' legacy passes on crucial lessons for walking faithfully with God. First, *Moses faced death alone but secure*. No one accompanied Moses to death's door. And yet, Moses was at peace. What lesson do these contrasting concepts, *alone yet secure*, teach you about death?

Second, *Moses died serving the Lord and following His Word*. According to the text, Moses was called "the servant of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 34:5), and he died "in accordance with the word of the LORD" (34:5 NASB). What lesson do you learn from this verse?

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Third, *the Lord knew Moses face to face*. Moses didn't look "directly at [the Lord's] face," because, as the Lord told Moses, "no one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). And yet, "the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend" (33:11). What does a face-to-face relationship with the Lord imply? What lesson does Moses' walk with God teach you?

*I want to know people who know the Lord. Moses knew Him face-to-face. That's his legacy. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### **Correlation: Precious in the Sight of the Lord**

The psalmist was at peace with dying because he knew how deeply the Lord cares for His children:

*Precious in the sight of the LORD  
Is the death of his godly ones.* (Psalm 116:15 NASB)

Job also faced death secure in the Lord. What confidence did this suffering man declare in [Job 19:25–27](#)?

Does the thought of death's dark unknown frighten you? How do you feel about your own death? Here are a few assuring verses you can cling to: [John 5:24](#); [1 Corinthians 15:54–56](#); [2 Corinthians 5:6–9](#). What truths from Scripture give you security?

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*Moses died exactly as God arranged him to die. God knows my time on earth; therefore, I do not fear when I get on an airplane! I know that, in God's plan, He has arranged the number of my days. So I do not fear death.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### Application: Concluding Lessons from Moses' Life

What take-aways from Moses' unique relationship with God can we glean? Let's focus on three.

From the fact that Moses lived 120 years and was "as strong as ever" (Deuteronomy 34:7), we first learn that *involvement makes a life full*. So, don't withdraw from people or activities as you age.

Second, from the statement, "Now Moses was very humble" (Numbers 12:3), we learn that *humility makes life real*. Moses was not the type of person who strutted his stuff. He was down-to-earth, available, and teachable. So, stay real.

Third, from his acceptance of God's plan for his life, we learn that *the secret of happiness is perspective*. Moses never sunk into self-pity, even when God told him he could not enter the promised land. But what a view God gave him! The last scene Moses saw before he closed his eyes was the home he'd longed for his entire life. And when he opened his eyes, He saw his Savior's welcoming face!

*Involvement, humility, perspective.* Which of these concepts touches you today? What lessons from Moses' life and death is the Spirit teaching you?

Other prophets heard God's voice, but to Moses alone the Lord spoke "face to face, as one speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11). Remarkably, Christ brings us near the Lord in a way that even Moses never experienced.

Take a few final moments to reflect on your relationship with the Lord through Christ. Meditate on these words of assurance: Once, "you were living apart from Christ," wrote Paul. He continued,

*You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12–13)*

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What does the nearness of God mean to you?

In the end, Moses did enter the promised land—not a place on earth but a place in heaven in the presence of the Lord. How much better is that!



### **A FINAL PRAYER**

Close your study thanking God for the nearness He offers you in Christ. Use your concluding prayer to speak to the Lord as one speaks to a friend . . . because that is who He is.

#### ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2024–2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1975, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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