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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1840 ~ Joshua, Israel's New Leader.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Once again, God's people, the Israelites, were at the border of Canaan and ready to cross into their Promised Land. Moses was by now 120 years old, but in the Bible book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 34, we're told that Moses' eyes hadn't aged, nor had his natural physical vigour reduced. God had preserved Moses just as God had preserved the clothing and footwear of all the Israelites during their desert wanderings.

In Numbers, Chapter 27, God reminded Moses that his death was approaching; also the reason God was preventing Moses from going into the Promised Land with the Israelites. Moses at Meribah had angrily struck the rock to bring out water for the thirsty people after God had told him to speak to the rock instead. Moses had disobeyed God and dishonoured Him. Whenever we disobey God, we fail to honour Him as holy.

From this sad time in Moses' life, we're once again reminded that the holiness of God isn't something of little value. We must highly respect it as God's holiness is absolute: it doesn't bend this way or that to accommodate our sinfulness. However, we believers in Jesus Christ's forgiveness for all our sins, have God's Son personally as our great High Priest. Jesus is in heaven interceding for us before His Father, who is rich in kindness, justice and mercy. One day, Jesus Christ will come back for all those who trusted in His saving work on their behalf, whether they're still living or buried in their graves.

Moses respected God's decision to forbid him to enter Canaan, and he asked God to appoint a new leader for the Israelite people. This leader wasn't to be chosen by Moses or elected by the people. Whether our Christian leaders are chosen by election or appointment, they must all be chosen by God through His Holy Spirit as people pray; or else, they will not be successful in advancing God's purposes. God told Moses that his successor would be Joshua.

Joshua had been a natural choice, as he'd been Moses' assistant right from the time of God's rescue of the Israelites from forced slavery in Egypt. Since then, Joshua had proven himself in battle and he was noted by God that he had a 'good spirit' within him. When Moses died, Joshua and Caleb were the only two Israelites left of the slaves that had come out of Egypt 40 years earlier. Because this next generation of Israelites hadn't heard the law that Moses had given at Mt Sinai, the whole Bible book of Deuteronomy was repeated for their sakes so that they would live righteously when they possessed the land of Canaan.

In his final instructions to the Israelites while they camped on the plains of Moab, Moses reminded them of the following instructions that God had given to the Israelites: 1st, the Israelites must drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan; 2nd, they must destroy all the Canaanite images and idols that they find and demolish all of their worship places; and 3rd, they must take possession of the land of Canaan and distribute it to the Israelite tribes as their inheritance. Moses also reminded the people of his central theme in the book of Deuteronomy: if the people obeyed God's laws, they would enjoy His covenant blessings and live life to the full. Obedience to God would bring them security in the Promised Land. However, Moses also then followed this with a severe warning: if the Israelites failed to drive the Canaanites out of the land, in time the Israelites would become so corrupted by the Canaanites that God would end up driving out the Israelites instead! And of course, we know from the events recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible that this eventually happened.

Moses' last battle at God's command was to destroy the Midianites. These people had tried to seduce the Israelites into idolatry and immorality under the guidance of an evil prophet named Balaam. This particular war was God's war and not one of the Israelite soldiers lost their lives from the battle.

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Of all the people who have ever lived and walked on this earth, Moses is one of the greatest. His words in the first five Old Testament books have been read by multitudes of people right up to the present time. He was the greatest of the prophets up until the time of the Lord Jesus. And he himself spoke of Jesus as a greater prophet than himself. Now how could this be?

Within the Old Testament books, there are many prophecies about the coming of one Person who would save His people from their sins. Some 61 prophecies in the Bible about this are considered major, with more than 330 prophecies altogether pointing out that one Person would come as the future Messiah to defeat Satan. These prophecies are very specific in detail and were not just generalisations.

For example, where was the Messiah to be born? In Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judea, the prophet Micah tells us. This village was estimated to only have about 1,000 people living there at that time and situated only a few miles away from Jerusalem. When the wise men from the east came looking for Jesus as a new baby king born in Herod's territory, the religious leaders of the day knew where the child's birthplace had been prophesied. Jesus Himself came to fulfil these prophecies, including where He would be born, when He would die and be resurrected.

Prophecy is God's own method of proving His truth. Who could have given such a detailed account of a life before that person was even born? Only God and God alone could have done such a thing. Nobody knew 500 years before the birth of Shakespeare that he would be known as a great literary writer or that Abraham Lincoln would rise up from nearly no education to become respected as a wise president. Sceptical mathematicians like to think that probability was key to prophecies about Jesus Christ coming true. However, any odds over 1 in a 100 are considered to be impossible odds. But these same mathematicians tell us that for 1 person to fulfil even 8 of the Messiah's prophecies would be in the order of 1 to 10^{17} (i.e. 10 with 17 zeros after it). In other words, it would be impossible for another person to arise and say they are the Messiah by fulfilling even a few of the prophecies given in the Bible about God's Son, Jesus.

Prophecy is an indication of the divine authorship of the Scriptures. This testimony to the trustworthiness of the message of the Bible is due to its extremely low probability of any fulfilment. No other holy or religious book has these patterns of prophecy and then fulfilment written in it. God so thoroughly justified Jesus Christ that unbelievers will be speechless at the world's final Judgment Day. Yet so many people seem to be preoccupied with the present, that they don't make time for the essential knowledge of Biblical history and God's requirements to live as His people.

When God gave Moses His law, Moses taught the Israelites all its parts and also the penalties for breaking it. God had first given His covenant and promises to His people. He then added the law to show the people how far short human transgressions fall below His righteous standard. However, the law was only a temporary measure. As it says in Galatians, Chapter 3, “It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is, and it was meant to last until the coming of Abraham’s descendant (that’s Jesus).” If a person broke one part of the law, all parts were subsequently broken. It was impossible for any person (except Jesus) to keep God’s law and each one needs help from outside the law. This paved the way for the Gospel of Christ, as people became more aware of their sin and their separation from God resulting from it.

Psalm 19 says: “The law of the Lord is perfect.” Even though there was no weakness in the law, God’s law couldn’t give life or save helpless sinners from having to pay back for their sins in eternity. God’s holy nature cannot be adjusted to suit the moral weakness of sinners, no matter how good or bad a person appears to be in the eyes of others. There could be no tampering with God’s law, not even by God Himself. No one can escape God’s law, as all people are sinners in God’s sight, born to sinful parents and with the sinful nature Adam and Eve inherited by sinning in the Garden of Eden.

So God had a plan before the beginning of the world to save sinners without any relaxation of His perfect law. The sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, took God's punishment for sin on Himself while nailed on a Roman cross at Calvary. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse that the law brings." In Isaiah, Chapter 53, it says: "The Lord made the punishment fall on Him, the punishment all of us deserved." Jesus' death fulfilled God's plan and God raised Jesus back to life again in mighty power. God offers free pardon from judgement for sin to all people who believe that they need this pardon and they ask Jesus for it. This amazing sacrifice of Jesus shows the love of God for sinners like us and how we should appreciate all that He's done for us! This undeserved mercy and favour by God the Father through Jesus is called 'God's grace' and it applies to all people, both Jews and non-Jews, who put their trust in Jesus's forgiveness for their sins.

In His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Chapter 5, the Lord Jesus never abolished the Mosaic Law but instead, gave God's intended meanings to parts of it. Jesus said that He came to fulfil the Mosaic Law and He obeyed it in His own life. No person is justified by the Law of Moses in God's sight because "only the person who is put right with God through faith shall live."

In Romans, Chapter 10, it says: "For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes (in Him) is put right with God." Christians aren't under the law but because that law is inspired Scripture of God, it's full of valuable doctrine and useful lessons for us. Therefore, we shouldn't ignore much of the Old Testament or think of it as irrelevant to us.

If an atheist or non-believer tells you that there's no life after death, and refuses to accept the resurrection of Jesus or Jesus as God's Son, point them to Moses. In Deuteronomy, Chapter 34, we're told that Moses died at the top of the mountain and God Himself buried him. However, in the New Testament in Luke, Chapter 9, Jesus took three of His closest disciples up to a mountain to pray. There Jesus' appearance was changed and His clothing was transfigured into dazzling white. Moses and Elijah also appeared transfigured and they spoke with Jesus about His soon-coming death. Moses wasn't dead but very much alive.

The transfiguration gave them the reassurance that they needed when they heard the shocking news of His coming death. Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented both the Law and the Prophets. But God's voice from heaven said: "Listen to Him!" Clearly this showed that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus as the superior fulfilment of God's plan to save people from destruction. Jesus fulfilled the Law and the many Messianic prophecies listed in the Old Testament. Jesus satisfied God's requirements for sin and separation from Himself. Jesus is God's Messiah. Do you believe this? Can you truthfully say: "Jesus is mine and I am His?"

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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