

“Moses is Dead”

There are many today that will spend time reflecting on this year gone by. Many will ponder how well the year went or how difficult it was. I submit that on the tongues of most will be thankfulness that the year is over, due to the fact that for countless this was truly a very challenging year. The lows certainly outnumbered the highs. In fact, in most of my recent “end of the year” topic conversations, the common denominator among every conversation was the acknowledgment that this year brought hardship, struggles, and trials in many forms. There is no question that the last twelve months have been riddled with a steady diet of legitimate concerns ranging from spiritual warfare, financial pressure, emotional tailspins, physical pain, unemployment scares, a divisive political season, family stress, disappointments, and well... you can add a few here of your own. Although we can also celebrate victories and accomplishments this year as well, the tone is that this has not been the year for many of those. I gather that many will be so burdened by this year’s woes, letdowns, and losses that they will carry them into this New Year. It is easy to do that. Quite frankly, it is what most people do. They allow the negatives experiences (*or positives*) to overstay their welcome way too long and therefore miss the new experience or instruction that awaits them. Their prolonged mourning period can overshadow an optimistic outlook. God has a lot to say about wallowing too long in the past especially when there is much work to get done for the future. On the close of a difficult year, God has the same message for us today as we usher in a new year that He had for Joshua... “Moses is dead.”

Joshua and the Israelites had been mourning the loss of their great leader, Moses, for thirty days when God spoke to Joshua and told him that Moses was dead (Jos 1:1-10). In other words, God wanted Joshua to know the reality that Moses was not coming back and that the past was in the past. He wanted Joshua to understand that He had great plans for him and His people. God was telling Joshua that the time for mourning was over and that it was time to get up again and get after it. He needed Joshua focused on the present and not belaboring on what he was familiar with which was no more. Joshua needed to put aside the disappointments in order to receive his new instructions. He had to release whatever spiritual, mental, and emotional hindrances he might have been clinging to that would have presented obstacles to God’s mission. God had an immediate plan of action for Joshua and the Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land and He needed everyone to be unified and future-focused. He asks the same of you and me today.

It is easy to let this past year’s accomplishments, or moreover, difficulties and disappointments, cloud our ability to see the greater events, possibilities, and achievements that lie ahead for the New Year. Just like Joshua had to break away from what he was comfortable with and familiar with when Moses was alive, and then overcome his loss in order to accomplish great things, so too we must do the same thing this year. The pages of this year’s chapter of your life have been written and cannot be erased. However, here begins another 365 pages of the next chapter of your life that can be filled with extraordinary victories and blessings. I am convinced that God understands the struggles and hardships that many have been through this year. He is keenly aware of it all and wants us to know that He is still on the throne and has not forsaken us in any way. He reminds us through the events of Joshua that we can and will conquer when we lay down the mourning of the past and focus on the future that lies ahead.

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