

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing Part VIII: Planning For Maintaining God's Treaty With Israel Beyond The Life Of Moses A. Functioning To Provide Eternal Value To One's Temporal Earthly Life (Deuteronomy 31:1-32:43 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The way the spiritual life works of even devout folk can be viewed by others can make them seem futile:

(1) Consider last Sunday's canonizations of two popes of the Roman Catholic Church. The process usually starts five years after death when one is beatified for a certified miracle credited to him and he is canonized following a second certified miracle. (Liam Moloney, "Two Popes to Be Declared Saints," The Wall Street Journal, April 26-27, 2014, p. A8; Liam Moloney, "Popes Celebrate Canonization of Two Predecessors," Ibid., April 28, 2014, p. A7)

However, unusual short-cuts to the process occurred with *both* of last Sunday's canonizations: (a) Pope John XXIII was approved for sainthood with **one** certified miracle (Ibid., Moloney, April 26-27, 2014, p. A8) and (b) Pope Benedict XVI "dispensed with the need to wait five years from death before starting the sainthood process" for Pope John Paul II when he died and his mourners chanted, 'Santo subito!' (Saint immediately)," Ibid.

Why the rush to canonize them? The answer is Vatican II: Pope John XXIII "launched Vatican II" while Pope John Paul II "oversaw the implementation of large parts of the reforms" (Ibid., Maloney, April 26-27, p. A8), and Pope Francis is expected later this year to beatify Pope Paul VI, who "presided over the Council's closure in 1965," Ibid. Why is Vatican II so important to Pope Francis? He firmly backs its "decentralization of power in the Church" (Ibid.) and its modernized rituals and politically correct stands that make the Church appear relevant to the world. (Ibid.; John Moody, "We ain't saints. John XXIII and John Paul II are. Here's why," foxnews.com, April 26, 2014)

Thus, the canonizations and beatification serve the Church's agenda, not really honor the dead, leaving a void in the pomp! Evidence of this is seen in how the media had a field day calling Pope John XXIII "a liberal" and Pope John Paul II "a conservative," so Jesuit priest, James Martin tried to erase this distinction, writing they were "holy in a different way," J. Martin, "Two Different Saints March In," Ibid., The Wall Street Journal, April 26-27, 2014, p. C3.

(2) However, if we would be honest with ourselves, each of us may at times wonder about the value of our own life's work in God's estimation. We each may wonder if God will be happy with what we have done in our lives.

Need: We thus ask, "If I see others failing to see real value in the life's work of other even devout folk, or if I fail to see lasting value in my own life's work, what would GOD TODAY direct that I DO about it?!"

I. Deuteronomy 31:1-29 contains "features" of "the vassal treaties of the ancient Near East" (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 316) with three exceptions that make the life work of Moses humanly appear to be futile:

- A. Typical of other Ancient Near Eastern suzerain treaties, (1) Deuteronomy 31:24-26 directed the keeping of the "treaty document in a sacred place" (here, beside the ark), (2) Deuteronomy 31:7-8 provided for "dynastic succession" (here, Joshua's replacement of Moses) and (3) Deuteronomy 31:9-13 provided for the "future reading of the covenant and other covenant ceremonies" (here, the reading of the Law by the priests to the nation at each Feast of Tabernacles [Sept.-Oct.] and each seventh year of the cancellation of debts), Ibid.
- B. However, there are **three notable exceptions** to the **usual** suzerain treaty format in Deuteronomy 31:1-29:
 1. First, Deuteronomy 31:1-6 shows Moses had to commission Joshua to replace him because he was to die soon since God had prohibited him from entering Canaan due to his past personal sin, cf. Num. 27:12-14.
 2. Second, Deuteronomy 31:14-23 shows God's call to commission Joshua to replace Moses, with the revelation that Israel would inevitably go apostate from God after Moses had passed away!
 3. Third, Deuteronomy 31:27-29 shows Moses telling Israel of God's prediction of her future apostasy, and of Moses' need to teach Israel a song as a testimony against her for God justly to judge her for that future sin.
- C. These **notable exceptions** to the typical vassal treaty **format** make **Moses' life's work humanly** appear **futile**:
 1. Moses was going to die soon due to God's judgment, unable to take Israel into his long-desired goal of the Promised Land due to his personal sin of faithlessly striking versus speaking to the rock, Num. 20:7-13.
 2. Then, regardless of all of his efforts to get Israel to heed God in his miracles performed in Egypt, at the Red Sea and in the 40 years of travel in the wilderness, Moses learned Israel would still go apostate!
 3. Finally, Moses had to tell Israel of her future apostasy and to teach her a song as a witness against her!
 4. In each case, from the **human** viewpoint, Moses' **whole life's work** seemed to be and exercise in **futility!**

II. However, Moses EARNESTLY ASKED GOD to ESTABLISH the LIFE'S WORK of His PEOPLE:

- A. Psalm 90 is a prayer by "Moses, the man of God" regarding his awareness of the brevity of man's earthly life with its corruption by sin that leads to a failure to enjoy God's richest blessings in that life, Psalm 90:1-11.
- B. Thus, Moses asked God to teach His people "to allot our days wisely" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psa. 90:12), that they might apply their hearts to the wisdom of heeding the Lord for blessing, Psalm 90:12.
- C. Moses then asked God to have compassion on His servants so they might be blessed (Psalm 90:13-17a), and **closed** with a *climaxing intense, repeat* petition for God to "establish the work of our hands," Psalm 90:17b:
1. "Establish" (*kun*) appears twice here, in the **active intensive** Po'lel stem, and means, "**firmly** establish" (B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 465-467; J. Weingreen, A Prac. Gr. for Class. Heb., 1969, p. 201).
 2. Also, both times *kun* is in the imperative mood (Ibid., B. D. B.) and both times with the **-ah** suffix for emphasis (Ibid.; G. K. C., Ges.' Heb. Gram., 1970, p. 132), so **both** times it reads, "**very firmly** establish!"
 3. Since Moses *repeated* this **emphatic active intensive** verb in Psalm 90:17b, he exposed a **very INTENSE desire** that his life's work and that of Israel might be **firmly established by God**, to carry **lasting value!**
- III. Well, God used Moses' ensuing obedience to make His ministry of great long-term value, Deut. 32:1-43:**
- A. The **song** Moses was to teach Israel near the end of his life depicts God as faithful but Israel as corrupt (Deut. 32:1-9) and God as good to create Israel (Deut. 32:10-14) though her wealth would lead her to depart from Him (Deut. 32:15-18). God would then judge Israel (Deut. 32:19-27) and she would lack discernment (Deut. 32:28-33), but, in the end, He would judge Israel's foes and have compassion on her and save her **when she finally ceased trusting in herself and false gods and sought God for help**, Deut. 32:34-43; Ibid., p. 317-320.
- B. Remarkably, it is this "Song of Moses" that people who come to faith in Christ in the future Great Tribulation era will sing as overcomers of the trials under the horrific reign of the antichrist in Revelation 15:2-3!
- C. These folk will be believers from all the world's people groups who learn to trust in God opposite themselves or other false gods, including the antichrist, cf. Rev. 7:9-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 965-966, 949-950.
- D. Thus, **God in GRACE established the life work of MOSES, ESPECIALLY giving him the task near the END of his life to TEACH ISRAEL a SONG that would ONE DAY equip people of ALL NATIONS who TRUST in CHRIST in the GREAT TRIBULATION to look to GOD ALONE for BLESSING!**

Lesson: *As Moses faced the seeming futility of his human life's work near the end of his earthly life, and that amid of his great desire to have God give his life's work lasting value, his decision THEN to OBEY GOD in GIVING ISRAEL the "Song of Moses" will be USED of GOD to produce GREAT ACHIEVEMENT for GOD'S GLORY!*

Application: *If concerned about the seeming futility of our earthly lives and works, may we like Moses FOCUS on OBEYING God in His PRESENT assignment(s) for us. That (1) INITIALLY means trusting in Christ to be saved, Acts 17:30; John 3:16. (2) Then, may we HEED God with what HE ASSIGNS US TODAY, trusting HIM to ESTABLISH that work we perform TODAY, making IT really VALUABLE through all ETERNITY, 1 John 2:17.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We need to answer questions here that could be raised in our introduction section on God's evaluation of our life's work, especially relative to the beatification and canonization of "saints" as practiced by the Catholic Church.

(1) First, 1 Corinthians 6:2 with 1:2 reveals that every person who trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation is thus **already** a "*saint*" in God's view. No "beatification" or "canonization" by man after one's death can better that status!

(2) Second, when a believer dies, his work ends, and he only awaits God's judgment of his earthly life's work, Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10. No believer can thus be credited with doing any miracle on the earth after he dies!

(3) Third, when the believer dies, he does **not** enter purgatory to suffer for his sins until he either pays for them or is canonized and goes to heaven, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8. The instant any believer dies, he immediately goes to heaven to be with Jesus Christ, cf. Luke 23:39-43.

(4) When our life's work is evaluated by God at the "bema" (*bema*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 630) seat of Christ, the Lord will evaluate it based on its spiritual quality, whether we performed it to glorify God in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, or whether we performed our work with sinful motives and enabling, 1 Corinthians 3:10-13. If God approves of our workmanship, He will reward us, but if we have done nothing right as a believer, though we will receive no reward, our souls will still be saved by God's grace, 1 Corinthians 3:14-15.

May we trust in Christ as Savior for eternal life. Then, may we perform the BIBLICAL works GOD ASSIGNS US TODAY, doing them in HIS ENABLING (spiritual gifting, Romans 12:3-8; reliance on the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:16), knowing He will establish THOSE works, giving them LASTING value! (1 John 2:17)