

# When Moses Woke Up From the Dead



## SABBATH—DECEMBER 18

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Numbers 20:1–13; Deuteronomy 34:1–12; Jude 1:9; 1 Corinthians 15:13–22.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “At one time Michael the chief angel had a quarrel with the devil about who should have the body of Moses. But he did not dare to judge the devil and say wrong things about him. He said, ‘May the Lord tell you to stop!’ ” (Jude 1:9, WE).



“Moses knew that he must die alone.”

**MOSES IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HUMAN** in the book of Deuteronomy. Yes, Deuteronomy is really about the Lord, not Moses. At the same time, God showed His love for Israel by the messages He gave Moses to give to His people.

Now we come to the end of our study of Deuteronomy. We also come to the end of the life of Moses, too. That is, we come to the end of his life here on this earth.

“Moses knew that he must die alone. The Lord did not allow any human friend to take care of Moses at this time. The death of Moses was an awful mystery. Moses did not want to die. He did not want to be separated from his people. He loved them and cared for them. His life and happiness were joined with their lives for so long. During that time, Moses learned to trust God. Now, Moses did not question the Lord. Moses trusted in the love and mercy of God. Moses trusted God to take care of him and Israel.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 470, 471, adapted.

For sure, the life of Moses and his work for God shows us who God is. As we shall see, the death of Moses and his waking up from the dead show us Bible truth about God, too.

## THE SIN OF MOSES: PART 1 (Numbers 20:1–13)

Again and again, the Lord takes care of Israel in the desert. God gives His people everything they need during this time. The desert is very dry and hot. So, the gift of water is a miracle. Without water, the children of Israel will die very fast in the desert. Paul writes about the experience of the children of Israel in the desert: “They all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that spiritual rock that was with them, and that rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4, ERV). Ellen G. White adds, “When the children of Israel needed the water, the water poured out of the rock and flowed next to their camp.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 411, adapted.

**Read Numbers 20:1–13. What happens in these verses? Why does the Lord punish Moses?**

We can see why Moses gets upset, right? Look at everything the Lord does for His people. He does miracles. He gives them signs that show His power. He frees them in a mighty way from Egypt. And then, what? When the people do not have enough water, they turn against Moses and Aaron. The people make a secret plan to remove Moses and Aaron as their leaders. Do the people make this plan because the Lord cannot give them water now as He did in the past? Of course not! The Lord can give them water now just as He gave them water in the past.

Look at what Moses says right before he hits the rock twice: “Moses and Aaron told the people to meet together in front of the rock. Then Moses said, ‘You people are always complaining. Now listen to me. I will cause water to flow from this rock’ ” (Numbers 20:10, ERV).

Moses is angry because the people complain. The problem is not really that Moses is upset. The problem is that he loses his temper when he says, “ ‘I will cause water to flow from this rock’ ” (Numbers 20:10, ERV). How can Moses, or any other human, cause water to come from a rock? In his anger, Moses forgets that only God has the power to do this miracle.

**How often do we say or do things when we get mad that we are sorry about later? How can we learn to stop, pray, and ask God to help us say and do the right thing before we say and do the wrong thing first?**



“ ‘I will cause water to flow from this rock’ ”  
(Numbers 20:10, ERV).

## THE SIN OF MOSES: PART 2 (Numbers 20:8–11)

Read again Numbers 20:12, 13. What reason does the Lord give Moses about why he may not enter the Promised Land? Read also Deuteronomy 31:2 and Deuteronomy 34:4 for the answer.

These verses show that the sin of Moses is very bad. When Moses hits the rock twice, he shows that he wants to be the same as God. This sin is bad enough. But Moses also does something much worse. He shows no faith in God. Moses is the leader of Israel. So, his sin is more awful when we think about all the special favor God showed him. God talked with Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:2–16), remember? For sure, Moses has an experience with God that few people have. So, Moses has no excuse for his sin. The Lord says that Moses “ ‘did not trust me enough to honor me’ ” (Numbers 20:12, ERV) in front of the people. Moses shows no faith in the words of the Lord. So, Moses fails to “ ‘show the people that I am holy’ ” (Numbers 20:12, ERV). What if Moses stayed calm and did the right thing while the people complained against God? What if Moses showed his own faith and trust in God at that time? Then the story would be very different, right?

Do you also see that Moses disobeys exactly what the Lord asks him to do?

**Read Numbers 20:8–11. What does the Lord tell Moses to do? What does Moses do instead of that?**

We read that “Moses took the walking stick from the tent. He did just as the LORD had commanded him” (Numbers 20:9, NIV). Everything is fine, so far. But by verse 10, Moses hits the rock. He does not talk to the rock. The Lord commanded Moses to talk to the rock to make water come out. Worse, Moses does not hit the rock only one time. Moses hits the rock twice. Yes, hitting a rock and causing water to flow out is a miracle. But what if Moses talked to the rock instead of hitting it? That is a bigger miracle!

So, God punishes Moses very hard for his sin. Moses is not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

**What lesson do you think the children of Israel should have learned from the hard punishment God gave Moses?**



God talked with Moses from the burning bush.

## MOSES DIES (Deuteronomy 34:1–12)

Poor Moses! He came so far. He went through so much. Now he will be left out of the promise God made to Abram long ago: “ ‘I will give this land to your family who comes after you’ ” (Genesis 12:7, NlrV).

**Read Deuteronomy 34:1–12. What happens to Moses? What does the Lord say about him? How do the words of the Lord show us that Moses was a very special person?**

“Alone, Moses thought about everything that happened in his past since he left Egypt and chose to be a part of the people of God. Moses thought about his long years in the desert taking care of the sheep of Jethro. Moses remembered the Angel in the burning bush. The Angel commanded Moses to free Israel from slavery. Moses also remembered the many miracles God did for His chosen people. Moses remembered that God was very patient whenever His people turned against Him. God showed them so much mercy during their time in the desert. Moses prayed for the people. He worked hard for them. But only two of the men who left Egypt are alive. They are the only ones from the group that left Egypt who will enter the Promised Land. Moses thinks about his past and all he did. He feels that nothing he did really changed things for the better.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 471, 472, adapted.

Deuteronomy 34:4, NlrV, says something very interesting: “Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, ‘This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I told them, ‘I will give this land to your children and their children.’ Moses, I have let you see it with your own eyes. But you will not go across the Jordan River to enter it.’ ” The Lord says to Moses almost the same thing He said to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about giving them this land.

Do you also see that the Lord lets Moses see the whole land? There is no way Moses with normal eyes can see all this land. Ellen G. White helps us understand that God causes Moses to see what normal human eyes cannot see. Yes, God helps Moses see all the land from Moab to Dan to Naphtali, and more. God also shows Moses the future. Moses sees how the land will look after the Israelites live there. The Lord wants Moses to see that He will keep His promise to Israel. He will bring them into the land. As we will see, God has planned something better for His servant Moses.



**Moses thought about his long years in the desert taking care of the sheep of Jethro.**

**MOSES WAKES UP FROM THE DEAD (Jude 1:9)**

“Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in Moab. It happened just as the LORD had said. The LORD buried the body of Moses in Moab. His grave is in the valley across from Beth Peor. But to this day no one knows where his grave is” (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6, NIV). For sure, the death of Moses helps us remember the promise from Revelation: “Then I heard a voice from heaven. ‘Write this,’ it said. ‘Blessed are the dead who die as believers in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Holy Spirit. ‘They will rest from their labor. What they have done will not be forgotten’ ” (Revelation 14:13, NIV). For sure, the good work Moses did will live on after his death. But as we shall see, the death of Moses is not the final chapter in his story.

**Read Jude 1:9. What is happening in this verse? How does this verse help explain why Moses shows up later in the New Testament?**



**Jesus woke Moses up from the dead and gave him everlasting life.**

Michael is another name for Jesus. Michael argues with the devil about the body of Moses. What is that all about? We know that Moses was a sinner. His last sin that we know about was taking for himself the glory that belongs only to God. This sin is the same one that got Lucifer thrown out of heaven in the first place. Lucifer bragged, “ ‘I will go up to the altar above the tops of the clouds. I will be like [the same as] God Most High’ ” (Isaiah 14:14, ERV). So, why do Jesus and Satan fight about the body of Moses? No doubt, Jesus wants to wake Moses up from the dead.

But how can Jesus do that for a sinner? Moses broke His law. The answer, of course, is the Cross. The Lord argues that the body of Moses belongs to Him because of what will happen on the cross. Jesus looks to His own death in the future on the cross. By His own death, Jesus will win the war for humans against death and sin. “Because of his sin, Moses came under the control of Satan. His own behavior caused him to die. He should stay in the grave forever. But Jesus woke Moses up from the dead and gave him everlasting life. Moses awoke covered in glory. Then he went up to heaven with Jesus to the City of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 479, adapted.

**How does this story about Moses show us that the plan of God to save sinners is very powerful?**

## WHEN WE WAKE UP FROM THE DEAD (1 Corinthians 15:13–22)

When we read in Jude about what happens to Moses, the punishment God gave him is really not so bad, right? Yes, Moses does not get to go to the Promised Land on earth. But he goes to the one in heaven (Hebrews 12:22). Today, he is alive in his new home. A much better home, for sure!

Moses is the first example we know about in the Bible of someone who wakes up from the dead. God took Enoch to heaven (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah, too (2 Kings 2:11). But these men did not die first. Moses is the first person we know about who died and woke up from the dead.

How long was Moses in the grave before that happened? We do not know. Did he stay in the grave for three hours or 300 years? Is that information important? Not really. Moses closed his eyes and died. When he opened them again, he saw Jesus. The same thing will happen for us when we die. The next thing we will see when we open our eyes is Jesus as our King or Jesus as our Judge (read Revelation 20:7–15).

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:13–22. What promise do you read in these verses? Why must we know that the dead sleep until Jesus wakes them up from the dead? Why will we not understand these verses without this Bible truth?**

If we do not have the hope of waking up from the dead, we have no hope at all. When Jesus woke up from the dead, His life was a promise that we, too, will wake up from the dead. Jesus “made people clean from their sins” (Hebrews 1:3, ERV) when He died on the cross as our Lamb. Then He woke up from the dead. That is why we have hope for the future. Moses is the first example of a sinner who wakes up from the dead. Moses woke up because of what Jesus will do in the future. Because of what He did, we, too, will wake up from the dead.

This story about Moses is an example of how God saves us by His mercy. Yes, Moses made a mistake at the end of his life. But God saved Moses anyway. All through Deuteronomy, Moses encourages the people to choose this same life of faith. We, too, are on the borders of the Promised Land. Should we not also choose a life of faith?

**God invites us to live by faith in Him. What can we do to make sure we do not make the same mistakes we are warned about in Deuteronomy?**



When Jesus woke up from the dead, His life was a promise that we, too, will wake up from the dead.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “When Moses and Aaron cry, ‘Must we get you water out of this rock?’ they try to behave the same as God. They show the people that the power to work this miracle comes from them. But they are men. They have the human weakness and strong feelings of sinners. Moses and Aaron are tired and worn out because the people never stop complaining and turning against God. So, Moses forgets about God in that moment. He fails to remember that God is his Mighty Helper. Moses makes a mistake that goes on the record of Bible history for everyone to read about it. Moses shows human weakness because he does not trust in the strength of God. In that moment, Moses does not choose to stay clean in his heart. He does not stay firm or unselfish to the end of his lifework for God. Moses should have given God glory and shown Him respect. But he is beaten down by sin. He does not honor God in front of the people.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 418, adapted.



God the Father sent Moses and Elijah to Jesus the Son.

“Moses was there with Elijah on the very high hill. There, Jesus was changed until He shone with bright glory. God the Father sent Moses and Elijah to Jesus the Son. Moses and Elijah brought Jesus light and glory from the Father. Moses prayed about this time hundreds of years before. Now everything he prayed about was finally happening. Moses stood on the very land that God gave to His people. Moses talked with Jesus there and encouraged Him. Jesus was the One that all the Bible promises were about. This picture of Moses is the final one we see of his life. He is a man who is honored very much in heaven.”—Page 479, adapted.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How does the story about the death of Moses show us the teaching about the resurrection, or waking up from the dead, in the New Testament?
- ② How is the story about the life of Moses an example of what it means to live by faith? How does his life show us that we are saved by the mercy of God and not by our own good behavior?
- ③ In class, talk about the promise of the resurrection. Why is this teaching so important to everything we believe? If we can trust God to wake us from the dead, should we not trust Him for everything else?

## TEEN MAKES CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Miharu Shimizu, 19, goes to church in Tokyo, Japan. Every year, her church holds a special Christmas program. Every year, Miharu wishes she can somehow be part of the program. She wants to share her joy about Jesus and His coming to this earth as a Baby. During the first year that Miharu is in college, her music teacher asks her to write the words for a play that will be set to music.

Her play will be the final exam for all 30 students in her class! Miharu must write the play and the words to all the songs. Her teacher will write the music. Then her classmates will learn the play and sing the songs.

After much prayer, Miharu writes a short story about singing Christmas songs. The songs praise Jesus. Miharu is not sure what the teacher or her classmates will think about her play. None of them is Christian. When Miharu gives her teacher the eight-minute-long play, the teacher does not change a single word. "The songs are very beautiful," he says.

The students learn their parts and practice the songs. Then Miharu remembers the Christmas program at her church. Maybe her play can be part of the Christmas program?

That Christmas at Setagaya Seventh-day Adventist Church, Miharu plays the piano while seven of her classmates sing the play she wrote. Setagaya is a church for young people in Tokyo. Young Adventists also help manage the play.

Miharu saw many people come to watch the play. Only 25 church members filled the church every Sabbath. But that night, about 75 people crowd into the small church building.

Miharu is so happy. She feels close to the people who come. She sees how they share in the spirit of Christmas with her. They see that Jesus loves people so much that He came to this earth as a Baby. Miharu is also happy to see a classmate watching. After the play, the classmate asks for Bible studies.

Miharu decides to write another musical play for next Christmas. Her new play is about how her grandfather becomes a Seventh-day Adventist. They liked the first Christmas play so much they want to join her second play. One of the new people in the play is the classmate who asked to study the Bible. Miharu prays that Jesus will use her musical talents to lead her classmates to Him.

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering three years ago. Your offering helped the Setagaya Church start a training center for youth. The training center teaches the youth about Jesus and how they may share Bible truth with other people. Part of the 13th Sabbath Offering for this quarter will help more Japanese young people learn about Jesus online.

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Miharu prays that Jesus will use her musical talents to lead her classmates to Him.**

