

Messianic Rabbi: The Last Words of Moses, Yeshua—and You

As I get older, I find myself reading the Bible and seeing the text as if I was wearing a different pair of glasses. I am not talking about the fact that as I have gotten older, I have actually had to start wearing glasses. I am speaking more of the way I view the text through the lens of my life's experiences.

For instance, after I got married, I read verses dealing with husbands and wives with greater understanding. As I had children, it changed the way I read verses dealing with children and parents.

For instance, in reading about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, as I read the narrative, I would insert myself and my son into the roles of Abraham and Isaac and try to imagine how I would have felt if I was Abraham.

Now that I am getting older, the reality of mortality has become much more real. Many more of my friends and family, some older, some my age, and some younger have now passed from this life to the next. So, as I read verses dealing with the end of life, my perspective as I pass my milestone years.

So, as I read the Bible, it seems like there are many more stories about the ends of people's lives than I remember being in the Bible when I was younger.

Recently, as I was reading the end of the book of Deuteronomy and came to the conclusion of Moses' life and read his parting words to Israel, it made me think about two things. The first thing was that I noticed just how similar Moses' last words were to Yeshua's last words.

The second thought I had was: "If I knew I was dying, what would I want my last words to be?"

We read some of Moses' last words in Deuteronomy 31:3-6:

"Adonai your God—He will cross over before you. He will destroy these nations from before you, and you will dispossess them. Joshua will cross over before you, just as Adonai has promised. "Adonai will do to them just as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them. Adonai will give them over to you, and you are to do to them according to all the mitzvot that I commanded you. 6 Chazak! Be courageous! Do not be afraid or tremble before them. For Adonai your God—He is the One who goes with you. He will not fail you or abandon you."

We read some of Yeshua's last words in Matthew 28:10:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

While the circumstances of these two sets of passages may seem different, they also are surprisingly similar. Just think about it: Moses is sending the Israelites into the nations to take the promised land. Yeshua is sending His disciples into the nations to make disciples.

Both Moses and Yeshua tell those they are speaking to that when G-D gives over people from the nations, they should do according to the Mitzvot, or commandments. Moses tells the Israelites to be strong and courageous, while Yeshua simply tells His disciples to remember.

But, what is it that Yeshua tells them to remember? The same thing that provided courage to the Israelites: *"He is the One who goes with you. He will not fail you or abandon you."*

To be honest, I hope I live many, many more years and that I am able to dance at the weddings of my great-grandchildren. Regardless of when my time comes, I pray that my last words would follow the same pattern as Moses and Yeshua. If I am blessed to have the opportunity to speak some closing words of encouragement to my family and friends, I sincerely hope that on that day my last words are:

“Dear ones, go into the world and make disciples of all nations for Yeshua. When G-D gives you disciples, teach them to observe all that Yeshua commanded. I pray that you will always remember to be strong and courageous in your faith, trusting that G-D will always be with you even to the end of the age.”

The more I think about the subject of my last words, the more I realize that the truth is that I probably won't know when my last words will be my last words. So, I wrote the words above today so that whenever I cross from this world to the next, everyone who knows me will know what words I wanted to be my last words.

Eric Tokajer is the author of *Overcoming Fearlessness*, *What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?*, *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer*, *Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.