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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Vezot Habracha - Honoring Those Who Have Died

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Vezot Habracha, which is Hebrew for “This is the blessing,” and it goes from Deuteronomy 33:1 to Deuteronomy 34:12.

This Torah Portion contains Moses’ final blessing upon each of the tribes of Israel and concludes with the death of Moses.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about honoring those who have died:

Deuteronomy 34:5-6

So Moses the servant of the Lord [YHWH] died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord [YHWH], **and he buried him** in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.

Our Torah Portion speaks of the death of Moses. What’s especially remarkable about Moses’ death is his burial. The text says, “and he buried him.” God himself took Moses’ body from the mountain where he went to die and buried him. While the text does not declare YHWH’s motive for burying Moses, one could propose, that in part, this was God’s final act of kindness toward his servant Moses.

God taking responsibility to care for the body of Moses is perhaps an example of how we should care for others when they die. After all, we are called to imitate God:

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

We walk in holiness because God is holy (Leviticus 19:2). We rest on the seventh day because God rested on the seventh day (Exodus 20:11). We love the widow, orphan, and sojourner, because God loves them (Deuteronomy 10:18-19). In the same way, we care for the bodies of those who die because

God himself cared for the body of his servant.

Taking care of the dead could be understood as a great act of kindness. Why? Because the dead cannot repay you. While a living person could reciprocate acts of kindness in this life, a dead person obviously cannot. So the things we do in caring for the dead—memorial and funeral services, burial, and so forth—are often done entirely out of love and respect for those who have passed on.

In the midst of the deep pain that comes from loss, we can imitate the Lord by honoring those who have died. In doing this, we honor God, the one who gave life to their body to begin with, and will resurrect the body in the world to come, where death will be no more.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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