

12.40b Moses' Final Words; Death (Numbers 27:12–14; Deuteronomy 32:48–52; 34:1–12)

(The teacher might combine this story with a shortened version of “12.40a Moses' Song.”)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials.
- Nancy Ganz’s treatment of this story is excellent in Volumes 4 (Numbers, 2012) and 5 (Deuteronomy, 2013) of her *Herein Is Love: A Commentary for Children* series, published by Shepherd Press. Ideas or quotes from these sources will be noted by (Ganz). Her treatment of the importance of the Book of Deuteronomy is very useful.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Mount Pisgah/Mount Nebo/Mount Abarim*: three terms denoting the same mountain [locate]
- *refuge*: a place of safety

Scripture: (NASB)

Numbers 27:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. 13 When you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; 14 for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water.” (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)

Deuteronomy 3:21 I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 22 Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.’

23 “I also pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, 24 ‘O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? 25 Let me, I pray, cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.’ 26 But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; and the LORD said to me, ‘Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north and south and east, and see it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he will give them as an inheritance the land which you will see.’ 29 So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.

Deuteronomy 32:45 When Moses had finished speaking all these words [of his song] to all Israel, 46 he said to them, “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, *even* all the words of this law. 47 For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

48 The LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, 49 “Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. 50 Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, 51 because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. 52 For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.”

33:1 [The following poetry is in prose form for the sake of space.] Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. 2 He said, “. . . 3 Indeed, [the LORD] loves the people; All Your holy ones are in Your hand . . . *Everyone* receives of Your words. 4 Moses charged us with a law, A possession for the assembly of Jacob. 5 And He was king in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people were gathered, The tribes of Israel together.

[Verses 6–25 tell of specific blessings to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. We will not consider these specifics.]

26 “There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. 27 The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, ‘Destroy!’ 28 So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew. 29 Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their high places.”

34:1 Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2 and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3 and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day. 7 Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated. 8 So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses came to an end.

9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. 10 Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Introduction/Review:

Moses had lived 120 years—forty years in Pharaoh’s palace, forty in the wilderness taking care of Jethro’s sheep, and forty leading the Israelites out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. As the time of his death drew near, Moses commissioned a new leader, Joshua. He composed a song for the people to learn so that a record would remain that God would punish His people when they forsook Him and followed other gods.

Story:

Life-giving words

✓As a kind of refrain to his song, Moses said, “Take to your heart all the words that I warn you today. You shall command your sons to observe all of this law carefully. For it is not an idle word; indeed it is your life. By this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess” (Deuteronomy 32:46, 47).

We, too, need to consider seriously four elements of this refrain. [Teacher, display the enlarged version found below of the following points.]

- (1) Take to heart all the words Moses gave in warning. If God speaks, what He says is of utmost importance and should not be taken lightly.
- (2) Command your children to observe these words carefully. Why?
- (3) These are not idle words; they are your life. They tell how to live, and they keep one alive. (4) By this

word you will prolong your days.

Up-coming death

Moses was still strong and keen-minded: “his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated” (Deuteronomy 34:7). He did not want to die but rather to lead the people into Canaan. In fact, he earnestly pled with God to let him go into the land. “Please let me cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan.”

But the LORD, being angry with Moses, would not listen. He said, “Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter. Go up to the top of Mount Pisgah and look to the [point in these directions] west, north, south, and east. You may see all that land with your eyes, but you shall not cross over this Jordan River. When you have seen the land, you, too, will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died, because you did not honor Me as holy before the people.” God was telling Moses when and where his life would end: he would soon see the land from the top of Mount Pisgah/Nebo before dying.

Encouraging blessing for Israel

However, Moses had one more message to give to the people, a message of blessing. In these final words he specifically blessed each of the twelve tribes of Israel.* (This lesson will not cover those blessings to the tribes but will review some of the other things Moses said to the people.) [Teacher, display the enlarged version found below of the following points.] Consider how encouraging these words must have been to Israel.

- (1) “Indeed, the LORD loves the people.” Our God loves His own people.
- (2) “There is none like the God of Israel, Who rides the heavens to help, and rides through the skies in His majesty.” Didn’t God in a sense “ride through the skies” when he brought hail and darkness upon Egypt to help Israel?
- (3) “The eternal God is your refuge (KJV), and underneath are the everlasting arms.” He is a place of safety and support.
- (4) “Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD.” He had saved them from the Egyptians and many other difficulties.
- (5) “The LORD is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies will cringe before you, and you will tread upon their high places.” Even the places for worshiping heathen gods would be trampled down by Israel.

Encouraging blessing for believers

Although these blessings were bestowed upon Israel, believers in Jesus Christ can apply them to their own lives, for we who have trusted Him for eternal life are His people as much as Israel was. Look at the list again and claim the words for yourself if you know Christ as your Saviour.

- (1) “Indeed, the Lord loves the people.” “[Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).
- (2) “There is none like the God of Israel, Who rides the heavens to help, and rides through the skies in His majesty.” Jesus came to earth from heaven so that He could die on the cross to save His own.
- (3) “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” *Eternal* means everlasting—in the past and in the future. That is our God. He is our place of safety and our support.
- (4) “Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD.” *Blessed* includes the idea of being happy. “[A]ll such must be happy, whose covenant God is the Lord; since they must be beloved of him, chosen by him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings; and in the faith, hope, and view of eternal happiness” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/deuteronomy-33-29.html>).

(5) “The LORD is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies will cringe before you, and you will tread upon their high places.” Christians have enemies—other people who do not love the Lord and those sins within that so easily beset us. The LORD is our shield of help; He can make those adversaries cringe before us.

Final ascension

The same day that Moses spoke all these and many more words, he climbed to the top of Mount Pisgah from the plains of Moab [locate]. This time, unlike the times before, when Moses climbed the mountain, he would not return (Ganz).

Once Moses reached the summit, the LORD showed him all the land—north, east, south, and west. [Locate all places listed on the map below and show photos, found below, when indicated in the text.] ✓God might have said something like [point northeast], “Look. That’s Gilead [show photo of Gilead] as far as Dan. [Point northwest.] There are Naphtali [show photo], the land of Ephraim [show photo], and Manasseh. [Point southwest.] See the land of Judah, and [point west] you can see as far as the western (Mediterranean) sea. Look south [point south] to see the Negev [show photo] and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees. You can see as far as Zoar in that direction.”

Moses ✓must have been in tremendous awe as he looked on all these sights. After giving Moses this ✓miraculous, long-distance, telescopic tour, the LORD said to Moses, “There it is; I have let you see it with your eyes. This is the bountiful land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, telling them, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’”

Thirty-day mourning

Moses had seen the land; ✓his heart was full. Now it was time for him to die. “So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab. No one knows his burial place to this day” (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6).

When Moses did not return from the mountain and Israel knew he was dead, they mourned for him in the plains of Moab thirty days. They did well to mourn their great loss for such a long period because never was there so great a prophet as Moses. Why did God consider Moses to be so notable? Because no other prophet knew the LORD face to face, because all the signs and wonders that the LORD performed through him in Egypt were so spectacular, and because the mighty power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel was so awesome.

*“No mention is made of Simeon, because of the affair of Baalpeor, in which that tribe had a great concern, (Numbers 25:1-18); as Aben Ezra observes; or because, according to Jacob's prophecy, it was to be scattered in Israel; though the same is also said of Levi, who yet is here blessed; rather therefore the reason is, because Simeon had his inheritance in the midst of the tribe of Judah, and so was blessed in it, see (Joshua 19:1) (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/deuteronomy-33-7.html>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
The words, “Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD,” point us to the “Lord” Jesus Christ, who came to die on the cross so that His people could be saved.
- “It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Even young people need to be prepared to meet God.

Activities:

- Play dough: arms; palm trees

- Snack: Coconut [because it comes from palm trees] Gummy Snacks. A recipe and photo are at https://www.yummly.com/recipe/Coconut-Gummy-Snacks-_Gut-Healing-Recipe_-1811100#directions.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the two palm trees found below and back with paper towel. Cut out each palm frond and tree trunk. Place the tree trunks on a flannel board. A correct answer to a question allows a student to place a palm frond at the top of a palm tree trunk.)
 1. When Moses pled with God to go into the land, what did God say? [“Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter. You may not enter the land.”]
 2. Moses’ song had been a warning. What kind of impact were Moses’ final words to have? Choose one word—either *blessing* or *cursing*. [Blessing.]
 3. Fill in the blanks. “You shall command your sons to observe all of this law carefully. For it is not an idle word; indeed it is your _____.” [Life.] “By this word you will prolong your _____ in the land.” [Days.]
 4. What mountain was Moses to climb? [Nebo/Pisgah/Arim.]
 5. Why was Moses to ascend Mount Nebo/Pisgah? [To see the land.]
 6. In what land did Moses die? [Moab.]
 7. Who buried Moses? [God.]
 8. How old was Moses when he died? [120 years.]
 9. How long did Israel mourn for Moses? [Thirty days.]
 10. Give one reason why Moses was the greatest of prophets. [No other prophet knew the LORD face to face; all the signs and wonders that the LORD performed through him in Egypt were spectacular; the mighty power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel was awesome.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 20:1–17. An enlarged copy of the words, the “Exodus 20:1–17” song sheet, and motions are in Lesson 12.15 or on the “Lessons” and “Songs” pages at teachingthebibletochildren.org. “Stop! It’s the Law,” a song that teaches only the basic Ten Commandments, is found on the same “Songs” page.

Handwork:

- Copy the clipart of Moses found below (source of the picture is unknown). Students should color the picture and then cut the mountain with Moses apart from the land found on the right side of the picture. On a separate piece of paper in landscape orientation, glue Moses to the top left corner so that his head and upper body are above the paper; glue the vegetation to the lower right hand corner of the paper. Finish the mountain and color brown. Glue the verse found below on the upper right open area.



Mount Pisgah

Mount Nebo

Mount Abarim

refuge

Refrain to Moses' Song

1. Take to heart all the words
Moses gave in warning.
2. Command your children to
observe these words carefully.
3. These are not idle words; they
are your life.
4. By this word you will prolong
your days.

Moses' Final Words of Blessing

1. "Indeed, the Lord loves the people."
2. "There is none like the God of Israel, Who rides the heavens to help, and rides through the skies in His majesty."
3. "The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."
4. "Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord."
5. "The Lord is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies will cringe before you, and you will tread upon their high places."

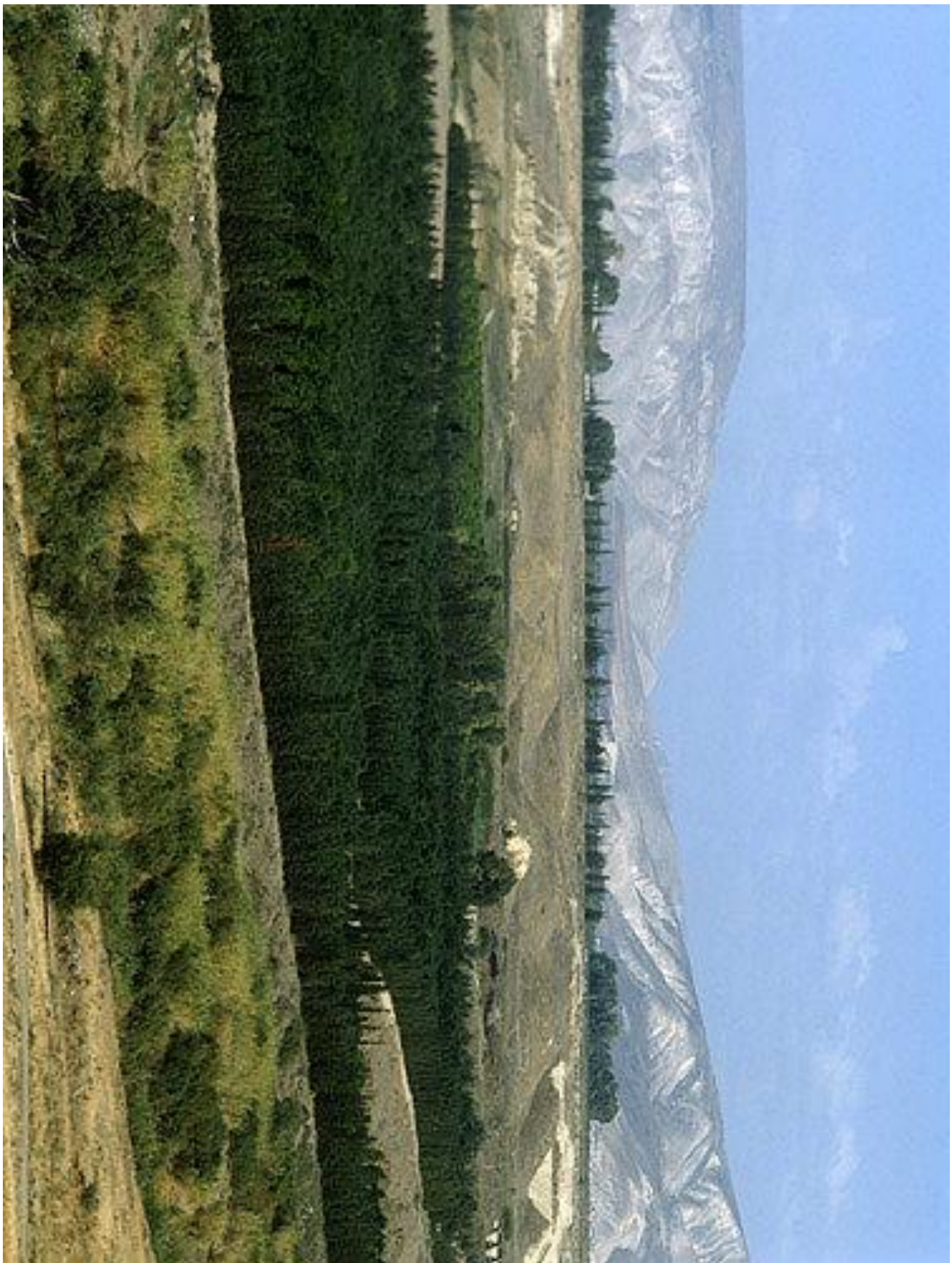




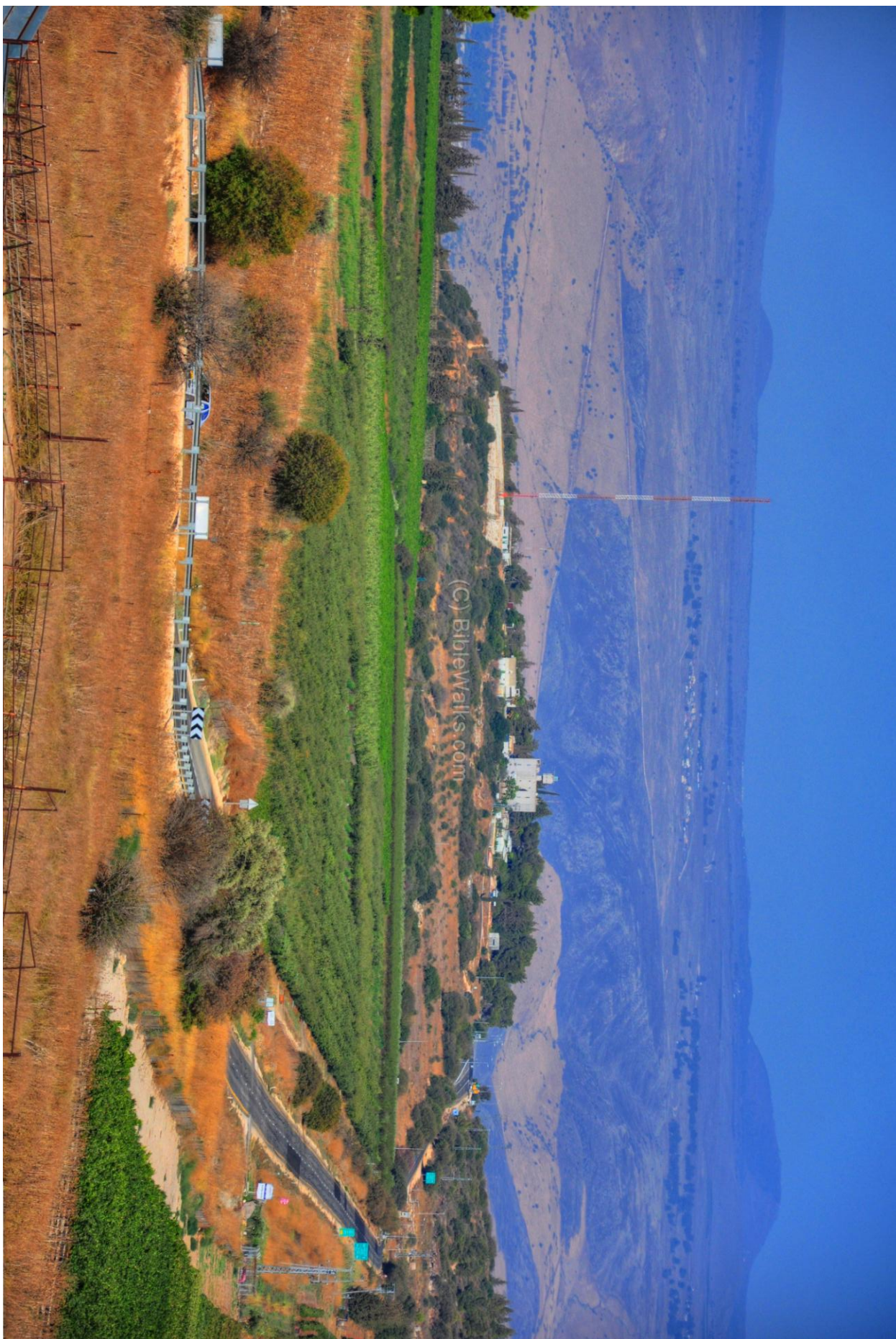
<http://www.pray4zion.org/images/graphics/12tribesofisraelmap.jpg>



Nebo across from Jericho (<http://www.grahamphillips.net/ark/images/image3.gif>)



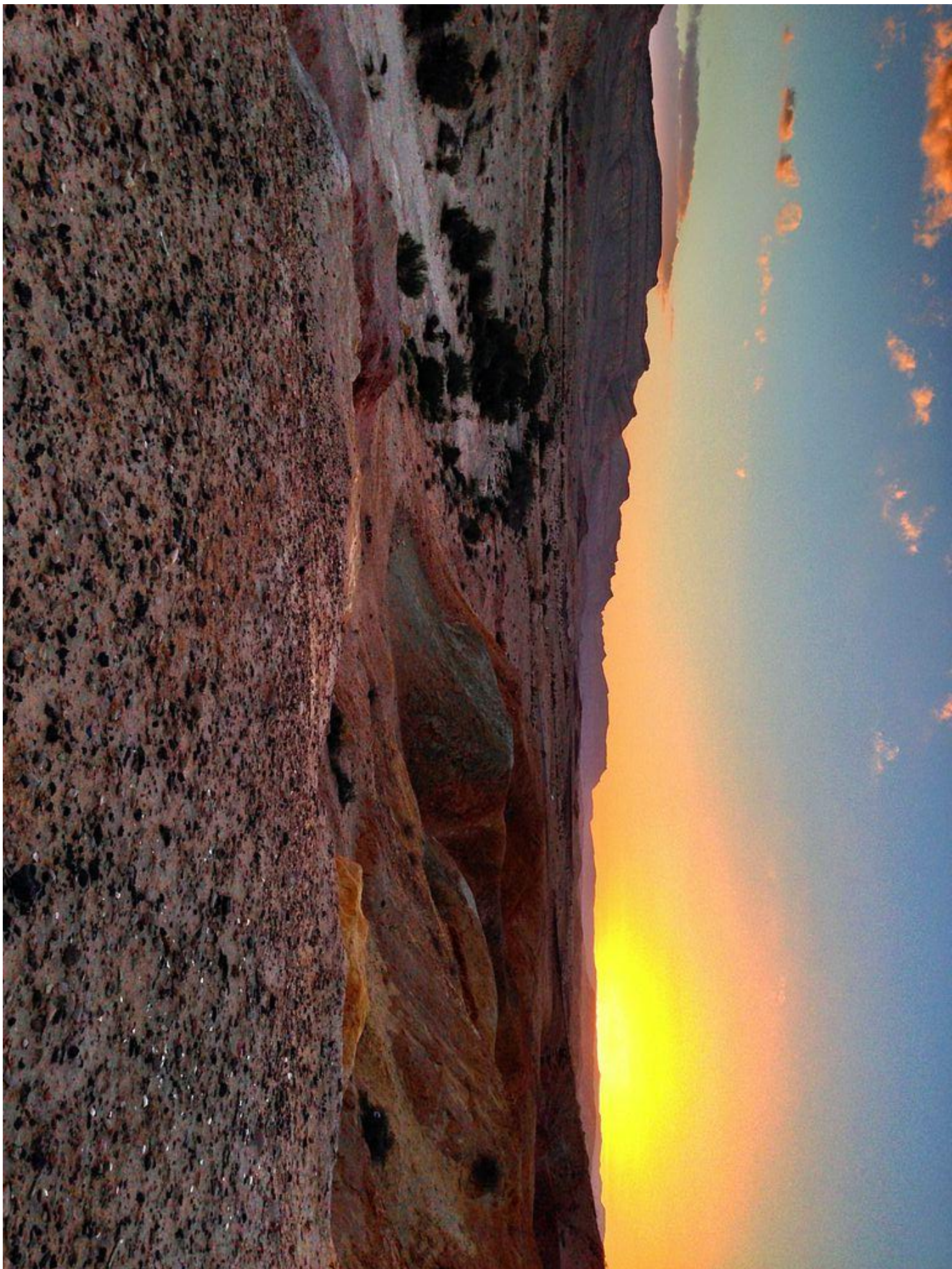
Jordan Valley and Gilead mountains (<http://www.soniahalliday.com/images/IS324-2-21.jpg>)



Modern Kedesh Naphtali (<https://www.biblewalks.com/Photos63/Kedesh24.jpg>)



Hill country of Ephraim (<https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-ihpZeISjrGw/WAN-FPj0gFI/AAAAAAAAABFA/eG8jjmJHhmUokYQOHPZRcxWuxt3kPLk2QCLcB/s1600/Ephraim.jpg>)



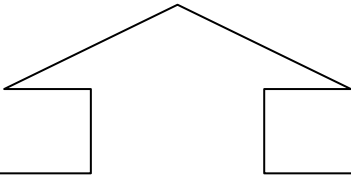
Negev Desert (https://raiseupisrael.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/sunset_in_the_negev_desert_near_yeruham_israel.jpg)



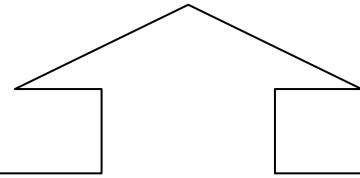




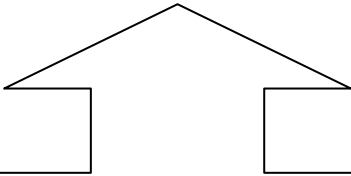




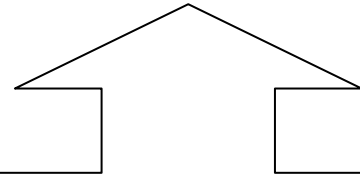
Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there" (Deuteronomy 34:4).



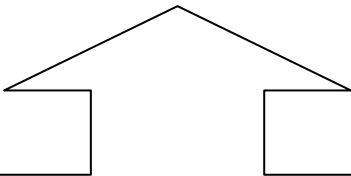
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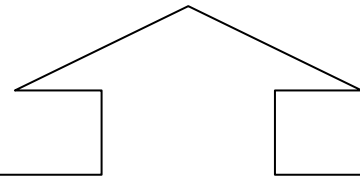
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