

Moses remembers



Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen the land which you have prepared for your people, the Israelites, that we might be a light to the unbelievers and show your glory to the world.

These words echoed around in my mind as I stood on the top of Mount Nebo and gazed across the land I could see in front of me.

Below and to my left I could see the Dead Sea with its salt encrusted edges, in front and to my right stretched the plains of Moab, with the river Jordan running up the middle, and its tributaries bringing cooling, life-giving water to the land. Beyond the plains were the mountains, beyond the mountains, the green hills, and when I focused carefully I could have sworn that I could see the Great Sea beyond the hills. All this, as far as I could see, was to be the land of my people, the people of Israel, the people of God.

It is a beautiful land, flowing with milk and honey, with water and trees, fruitful plants and animals; and towns ready built for us to live in. If I held out my hand, it felt almost as if I could touch the mountains, and stroke the green of the hills. All I could do was hold out my hands in blessing, and pray that this land will be all my people have hoped for.

I had hoped that I would live long enough to be able to take my ease in this land, in a comfortable bed, in a house, but the rebelliousness of my people, and my own

inadequacies mean that this sight, from this mountain will be the nearest I get to the promises that will be fulfilled in this place. For the people a land given by God to a people promised to be his in body, mind and soul, consecrated to worship him and him alone.

So I must feast my eyes now, and fill my mind with its glory, for the climb to get this view I knew I would make, but I know this effort will be my last. I have lived long and fulfilled the task God gave to me, and now I can return to God, and hand on my task to my successor, Joshua.

His will not be an easy task, as mine has not. The people are now united in their cause, and they have seen what they can achieve with God beside them in their battles. They will have many more battles ahead, against the people who already occupy the land God has promised to us, and they will, of course, need to keep battling with themselves as they seek to be the people God has called them to be. Walking alongside Yahweh, all things are possible

I cannot see the future, but I hope that there is a time when my people will be secure, when they will be able to rest in their houses, their tents long forgotten, and see their children and grandchildren playing at their feet. But it is such a desirable land, that just as we have been promised the best, for we are God's people, so others will covet its beauty and want to fight for this land and take it from us. I can only hope and pray to God that sometime this will be a land of peace, where he is known and worshipped, and which is his glory, and ours.