

# Deuteronomy 32:48-52

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-32/deuteronomy-3248-52/>

*After Moses's recitation of the song and final exhortation to Israel, the Suzerain God commands him the same day to go up Mount Nebo to view the Promised Land from afar and to die there on the mountain.*

Following his recitation of the song and his final warning to Israel (vv. 1-47), the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day (v. 48). He told Moses to Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho (v. 49). The Abarim refers to a mountainous area generally located east of the Jordan river and northeast of the Dead Sea. It also extends northward from the plains of Moab ([Numbers 33:47-48](#)).

Moses was to go up to Mount Nebo to look at the land of Canaan, which He was giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. Mount Nebo was also known as Mount Pisgah ([Deuteronomy 34:1](#)). Mount Nebo was about 2700 feet in height and was approximately twenty miles from Jericho. It was at the summit that Moses could view the land of Canaan before his death ([Deuteronomy 3:27](#), [34:1](#)).

The LORD then told Moses that he was going to *die on the mountain and be gathered to his people* (v. 50). This does not mean that Moses would be buried in the same tombs with his ancestors. Rather, it is an expression referring to his physical death. Moses would die as *Aaron his brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people*.

Mount Hor is located "by the border of the land of Edom" ([Numbers 20:23](#)), south of the Dead Sea. Aaron was commanded by the LORD to go up to Mount Hor, where he died ([Numbers 33:38](#)). This occurred about six months earlier because he (like Moses) rebelled against God's "command at the waters of Meribah" ([Numbers 20:24](#)).

The LORD reminded Moses that he was prevented from entering the Promised Land because he *broke faith with Him in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah, in the wilderness of Zin* (v. 51). The incident in view is recorded in [Numbers 20](#). God commanded Moses to speak to the rock to

bring water for the people ([Numbers 20:8](#)), but instead Moses struck it twice out of anger ([Numbers 20:11](#)). The LORD graciously gave the Israelites the water they needed ([Numbers 20:11](#)), but He told Moses that he would not lead the people into the Promised Land ([Numbers 20:12](#)).

So, Moses was told to go up to the top of Mount Nebo to see *the land at a distance* (v. 52). This was another act of grace on the LORD's part, for though Moses was not allowed to *go there into the land which God was giving to the sons of Israel*, he was permitted to gaze upon it from a distance.

### **Biblical Text:**

**<sup>48</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, <sup>49</sup> "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. <sup>50</sup> 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, <sup>51</sup> 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. <sup>52</sup> 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.**