

September 20, 1914

D'RASH - VaYelekh - He went

Moshe begins this week's parashah by announcing his retirement and telling the nation of Israel that their new leader will be Joshua. He tells them that he is 120 years old and that he can no longer go out and come in. In the David Stern translation, it says, "I can't get around any longer." But just what did he mean by such a statement? If leading such a great nation was too much pressure for him, he could have just gone out and played a couple rounds of golf or signed up for a tour of the Holy Land. Was his sight failing or his mental faculties becoming weak? We are told just a few chapters later that his eye had not dimmed and his vigor had not diminished. Moshe himself explains that HaShem told him that he will not cross the Jordan River. We know that it was because of his disobedience at Meribah when Moshe struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it in order to receive water.

Since Moshe was not permitted to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River, it was good that he had his replacement ready to go. There had been quite a bit of on-the-job training and Moshe assured the Israelites that HaShem would go before them. So, it really did not make too much difference who was leading the nation, because God, Himself, would destroy the enemy. Moshe made it clear that HaShem would go before them and annihilate their enemies. While it is true that Joshua would be their leader, the real power would be God's. The only reason that Joshua was there was because the people needed to have someone in front of them that they could touch and see. Since Joshua had been across the Jordan beforehand, and he knew that there were walled cities and giants, he must have been quite relieved when Moshe told him the message that he received from HaShem. He said, "Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes before you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

The *haftarah* reading from Isaiah recounts that when the Israelites were in distress, an angel of HaShem saved them. In His love and mercy, He redeemed them. He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old including their venture into Canaan.

These days we are facing ebola, famine, and blood thirsty barbarians who want to take over our country and destroy democracy. For them, there is no place for Jews or Christians. But we have to remember that the *B'rit Chadashah* tells us that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The author of Hebrews reminds us once again that our God will never leave us nor forsake us.

Hebrew	Deuteronomy 31:6
English	Deuteronomy 31:6-8
Haftarah	Isaiah 63:7-10
B'rit Chadashah	Hebrews 13:5-8