

Deut. 34:1 Moses went up from the steppes of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, and the LORD showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan; ² all Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; the whole land of Judah as far as the Western Sea; ³ the Negeb; and the Plain—the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ‘I will assign it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross there.”

Deut. 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of the LORD. ⁶ He buried him [ויקבר אתו] in the valley in the land of Moab, near Beth-peor; and no one knows his burial place to this day. ⁷ Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated. ⁸ And the Israelites bewailed Moses in the steppes of Moab for thirty days.

Bernard Levinson, “Deuteronomy,” *Jewish Study Bible*

6: He buried him: The clear indication is that God Himself buried Moses, as He Himself sealed Noah into the ark (Gen. 7.16). Instead of Moses’ progeny assuming the important legal responsibility of caring for the dead, God undertook it personally.

Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS Torah Commentary

6. He buried him in the valley The valley below Mount Nebo. Perhaps God removed Moses’ body from the mountain, where everybody knew he had gone to die, in order to keep his grave site secret. See below.

no one knows his burial place Because God buried him. Many commentators have conjectured that Moses’ grave site was kept secret to prevent people from making it a shrine and even worshipping Moses’ spirit.

HIZKUNI: **To this day.** It remains unknown in order to prevent them from trying to bury anyone else with him (as was done, for example, with the man of God at Bethel; see 1 Kings 13:31–32), and to keep those who inquire of the dead from trying to do so with him.

M. Sotah 1:9, Danby translation מי גדול ממשה, שלא נתעסק בו אלא המקום, שנאמר (דברים לד) ויקבר אתו בגיא.

9 ... Whom have we greater than Moses, for none other than the Almighty occupied himself with him, as it is written, *And he buried him in the valley* [Deut 34⁶]. And not of Moses alone have they spoken thus, but of all the righteous, for it is written, *And thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall gather thee* [in death, Isa 58⁸].

RASHI: **He buried him.** The Holy One in His glory buried him. R. Ishmael says: “He buried himself.” This is one of the three places where R. Ishmael interprets the object marker *et* in this fashion; for the others, see Lev. 22:16 and Num. 6:13. **Near Beth-peor.** A grave had been prepared for him there at the time of creation, in order to make expiation for the incident at Peor. This grave is one of the things that were created just before nightfall on the sixth day of creation.

RASHBAM: **He buried him.** Rather, “one buried him,” that is, “he was buried” (OJPS). The same syntax occurs in “Can horses gallop on a rock? Can it be plowed with oxen?” (Amos 6:12), where the Hebrew literally asks, “Can [some unknown] he plow it with oxen?” Since no one knew his burial place, the one who buried him was also unidentified, and the text simply writes that “someone” buried him.

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Driver, Deuteronomy, International Critical Commentary

—6. *And he buried him*] though Heb. idiom (see phil. n. on 15²) would permit the verb to be fairly represented in English by *they buried him* (ἔθαψαν), or *he was buried* (see the RV. of 1 K. 13⁹ 2 K. 21²⁶—the same word as here—Is. 53⁹), yet, in view of clause ^b, the subject intended is doubtless Jehovah.

Deut. 15:2 This shall be the nature of the remission: every creditor shall remit the due that he claims from his fellow; he shall not dun his fellow or kinsman, for the remission proclaimed [כִּי־יִקְרָא שְׂמִטָּה] is of the LORD.

—[קָרָא] the implicit subj. is the cognate ptc. הַקּוֹרֵא, as always in such cases, e.g. Gn. 48¹ וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף, sc. הָאוֹמֵר, Is. 8⁴ וַיִּשָּׂא, sc. הַנוֹשֵׂא. English idiom often requires a change of form ; and the passive voice has to be employed (as RV. here).

GKC § 144d

3. The indefinite personal subject (our *they*, *one*, the French *on*, and the German *man*) is expressed—(a) By the 3rd person singular masculine, e. g. קָרָא *one called* (or *calls*) it ...

§ 144e Rem. The Jewish commentators, following the Arab grammarians, usually explain these singulars by the addition of the participle (generally determinate) of the same stem, e. g. קָרָא הַקּוֹרֵא. This view is supported by the fact that such a complement sometimes occurs, e.g. Is 16:10 יֵדְרֵךְ הַדְרֵךְ! *the treader treads out, for one treads out.*

IBN EZRA: **He buried him.** He buried himself by entering a burial cave in the valley. **In the valley.** But this “valley” was a valley at the top of Mount Abarim, which is the same as Mount Nebo (Nebo is another name for Mercury); and that is how a valley could be “facing” Beth-peor (as our verse literally says) ... So “the valley near Beth-peor” (3:29) is in “the hills of Abarim” (Num. 33:47). It is clear, therefore, that Moses is buried in the same place where he died. **To this day.** These are clearly the words of Joshua, which he may have written as late as the end of his life.

BEKHOR SHOR: **He buried him.** The Torah begins with an act of kindness, clothing the naked—“the LORD God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife” (Gen. 3:21)—and ends with one, burying the dead. **In the valley in the land of Moab, near Beth-peor.** In what valley? In the land of Moab. Where in Moab? Near Beth-peor. Yet despite these three indicators, **no one knows his burial place.**

• **ABARBANEL:** **He buried him.** Because Moses had had nothing to do with human appetites since Sinai, there was no ritual uncleanness in him and the Holy One Himself could attend to his burial. Elijah did not attain this level, and he had to enter into the fire when he was taken up to heaven.

• **SFORNO:** If he buried himself, as a few of the Sages say, his incorporeal soul must have done so—for he died on the mountain and was buried in the valley.

• **S. D. LUZZATTO:** That is, he was buried by the will of God, miraculously, without a burier.

• **ABARBANEL:** **No one knows his burial place.** How could anyone know his burial place? There was nothing left of his body, which simply returned to the elements of which it had been made, and no marker of a grave site.

Sotah 14b [Koren translation]

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: Even Moses our teacher himself does not know where he is buried. It is written here: “And no man knows of his grave,” and it is written there: “And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death” (Deuteronomy 33:1). In other words, even Moses, as he is referred to by the term “man,” does not know his burial place.

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