

Deuteronomy 33 Commentary

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[Moses on Mt Nebo](#) (Deuteronomy 34:1+)

Listen to [Mt Nebo](#), as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

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Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel	Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel

Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant		Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1-30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
Plains of Moab							
ca. 2 Months Moses: Author (Except Dt 34)							

Deuteronomy 33:1 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death.

- **the blessing:** Ge 27:4,27-29 49:1,28 Lu 24:50,51 Joh 14:27 16:33
- **the man:** Jos 14:6 Jud 13:6 1Sa 2:27 9:6,7 1Ki 13:1,6 Ps 90:1 *title 1Ti 6:11 2Ti 3:17 2Pe 1:21

MOSES' PROPHETIC BENEDICTION

Warren Wiersbe has a great introduction to chapter 33 - Before viewing the land, Moses viewed the future and told the tribes what lay ahead. When Jacob gave his blessing before he died, he revealed some of the sins of his sons (Gen. 49), but Moses did not do that. Instead, he focused primarily on the relationship of the tribes with the Lord and how each one would have a distinctive character, blessing, and ministry. ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

Believer's Study Bible - Balancing ch. 28 with its emphasis on curses (vv. 15-68, contrasted to blessings in vv. 1-14), this chapter contains only blessings. Known as the "Blessing of Moses," this chapter also contrasts with the "Blessing of Jacob" in Gen. 49, in that Jacob spoke of judgment as well as blessing on the Twelve Tribes, but Moses has only blessings. Moses also lists the tribes in different order, and skips Simeon altogether. Jacob had only mentioned Simeon along with Levi (Gen. 49:5-7) and had prophesied this tribe's disappearance (cf. Josh. 19:9). Since Moses could not bless the tribe, there was no reason to mention it.

Maxwell - Moses is described in verse 1 as "the man of God." This title is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to characterize a prophet (1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kin. 13:1-3; 2 Kin. 4:7, 16). Deuteronomy declares Moses to be a prophet par excellence (18:15; 34:10). Here Moses gives a blessing to the individual tribes before his death, as did the patriarchs (Gen. 27:7; 49:1-28). Such blessings were more than empty wishes; once uttered, they carried the promise of fulfillment. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

Disciple's Study Bible - Moses spoke like a patriarch. See note on Ge 49:1-28. As Jacob prepared a family to become a nation, so Moses prepared a nomadic nation to become a settled people and an international power. Such new identity had to come through God's blessing and direction. It called for application of old traditions and commitments to a new historical and sociological situation. Prayer prepares people to meet the future with God.

Jack Deere - The blessing of Moses given here just before his death (34:1-8) is well suited to the context. It was customary for a father to impart a blessing just before his death (cf. Jacob's blessing, Gen. 49). Moses, leader of the Exodus and the mediator of the Sinaitic Covenant, was in a sense Israel's "father." Levi is often omitted in the Old Testament lists of tribes. Here the tribe of Simeon, which later was absorbed by Judah (Josh. 19:1-9), is omitted. Like Moses' preceding song (Deut. 32:1-43) his blessing is given in poetic form. Chapter 33 is difficult in places to interpret because of the use of several rare words, unusual syntactical devices, and various textual problems. The following exposition mainly follows the NIV translation and does not discuss the more technical matters. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death- To be **blessed** with a **blessing** from the man of God is quite a promise!

William Kelly says that the blessing of Moses "is altogether in reference to the land which the people were on the point of entering. This is perhaps the chief difference as compared with Jacob's blessing. In the latter case, notice was taken of the tribes from the beginning of their history to the end, and apart from their possessing the land or not; whereas the blessing that Moses pronounces here is in strictest subordination to the great object of Deuteronomy. . . . Moses does not therefore show us historically the course of things as when Jacob prophesied, but a more specific benediction of the people in view of their place in relation to Jehovah in the land" (William Kelly, Lectures Introductory Pentateuch, pp. 519 -20). "Nothing can exceed the grandeur of the closing words of Moses; and they will assuredly be fulfilled in the future brightness and glory of restored Israel" (ibid., p. 523).

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown - Moses the man of God—This was a common designation of a prophet (1 Sa 2:27; 9:6), and it is here applied to Moses. In keeping with the tradition of the patriarchs of pronouncing a blessing on their children prior to death (cf. Ge 27; 48:15, 16; Ge 49:1–28), Moses, the spiritual father of Israel, gives his blessing to the tribes of Israel.

Utley - "**Sinai**" This is the place of the giving of the Law. It is called Sinai (BDB 696) only here in Deuteronomy. It is usually called Horeb (BDB 352). See Special Topic: The Location of Mt. Sinai at 1:2.

"Seir" This name (BDB 973) has several different referents in the OT:

1. It can refer to the land of Edom—Gen. 32:3; 36:30; Num. 24:18; Deut. 1:44; 2:8, 12, 22, 29; 33:1; Josh. 11:17; Jdgs. 5:4.
2. It can refer to a mountain/hill in Edom—Gen. 36:8–9; Deut. 1:2; 2:14; Josh. 24:4.
3. It can refer to a people—Gen. 36:20–30; 2 Chr. 25:11, 14; Ezek. 25:8 (of Edom)
4. It can refer to a mountain/hill in Judah—Josh. 15:10(?).

"Mount Paran" This is the mountain range (BDB 803) close to the plains of Moab (cf. 1:1) on the west side of Arabah, down the west side of the Gulf of Aqaba. Perhaps this listing is of the travel of the children of Israel as they left Sinai going into the Promised Land (also can be a wilderness, cf. Num. 10:12; 12:16; 13:3, 26). God was saying that He had been with them throughout the wanderings and He was still with them.

Blessed (Lxx = [eulogia](#) in Dt 33:1)([01288](#)) **barak** is a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one's knees - Camel in Ge 24:11, Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To be blessed means to have divine favor invoked or enacted upon as in the first use in Ge 1:22 "God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.". To give divine blessings (Ge 9:1-7) In Ge 5:2 "He created them male and female, and He **blessed** them and named them Man in the day when they were created." To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27) Barak is a significant component of the Abrahamic Covenant being used 4 times in Ge 12:2-3 when God promised Abram "And I will make you a great nation, And I will **bless** you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing (berakah); 3 And I will**bless** those who **bless** you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be **blessed**."

Barak in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:11; Deut. 2:7; Deut. 7:13; Deut. 7:14; Deut. 8:10; Deut. 10:8; Deut. 12:7; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 15:6; Deut. 15:10; Deut. 15:14; Deut. 15:18; Deut. 16:10; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 24:13; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 27:12; Deut. 28:3; Deut. 28:4; Deut. 28:5; Deut. 28:6; Deut. 28:8; Deut. 28:12; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 33:1; Deut. 33:11; Deut. 33:13; Deut. 33:20; Deut. 33:24;

Blessing ([01293](#)) **berakah** from **barak**) is a feminine noun referring to something that brings prosperity and life. It designates the good favor bestowed on someone as by giving a gift (Ge 33:11, 1 Sa 25:27) or by giving words of blessing (Ge 27:36, 49:28), which were a verbal picture of tangible blessing. Berakah most often describes divine favor bestowed on the righteous (Ge 12:2, Mal 3:10). It denotes words of blessing from a parent (Gen. 27:12, 41), from Moses (Deut. 33:1), from God (Deut. 11:26, 27, 29; Josh. 8:34; 2 Sam. 7:29), from the people (Prov. 11:26; 24:25), and from a poor person (Job 29:13). The word was also used in a formula of blessing ([Gen. 49:28](#)).

Maxwell - This closing blessing of Israel's great leader must have been the highlight of the people's lives. I remember reading about the late Dr. George Truett who pastored forty years at First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. At the close of his great ministry, the church board approached this man of God and asked what they could give him—a home, a car—what would he like? He replied, "Give me the privilege of praying for my people." Then, on his last Sunday for a solid hour while the congregation was standing, this great pastor-leader poured out his soul in prayer for the people he loved so dearly. Those who were there never forgot that hour. No doubt the same could be said about those who listened as Moses bestowed blessings upon his people. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

James Smith - THE BLESSED PEOPLE Deuteronomy 33

“Lord we would not always bring Thee
Plaints, and wails, and sobs, and sighs;
We would eager sing before Thee
Of our Cross-drawn ecstasies.”

To “count your many blessings” is an excellent thing for driving away the clouds of dull care. This chapter begins with “This is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel.” But what is the blessing wherewith Jesus the Son of God blesses the children of faith? The blessing then divided among the tribes may now, in a spiritual sense, be inherited by each individual believer in Christ. Surely there is enough here to make thy “cup run over.” All His saints are loved by Him, they are in His hand, they sit at His feet and receive His words (v. 3). Loved, secured, rested, taught. Viewing these blessings as patterns of spiritual things, as figures of the true, and shadows of things to come, we would point out that the people of God are blessed because they are—

I. A Living People, “Let Reuben live and not die” (v. 6). What Abraham prayed for Ishmael is true of every heaven-born soul, they “live before God.” They have been “quickenened by the Spirit,” and “raised from among the dead,” and made “alive unto God.” “Because I live ye shall live also.”

II. A Praying People. “Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and be Thou an help to him” (v. 7). So we read that Judah prevailed above his brethren (1 Chron. 5:2). They always prevail who have God for their help. Hath He not said, “Call upon Me, and I will deliver you?”

III. An Enlightened People. “Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one (Levi), and they shall teach,” etc. (vv. 8–10). It was with Levi as it is with the saints of God now. They teach the difference between the holy and the profane (Ezek. 44:23). Those possessed with the lights and perfections (Urim and Thummim) that come through the gift of the Holy Spirit will be witnesses unto Him (Acts 1:8). We may have here in type what is taught in 1 John 2:17.

IV. A Protected People. “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders” (v. 12). The beloved of the Lord are: (1) By Him for fellowship. (2) Under Him for safety. (3) On Him for rest. He hath loved us with an everlasting love. Beloved for the Saviour’s sake (Matt. 3:17).

V. A Fruitful People (vv. 13–17). The blessing of Joseph is full of the precious things of Heaven—the dew, the sun, and the moon—but the crowning blessing of all is “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” No wonder that Joseph was a fruitful bough, and that his branches ran over the wall. If we have the “good will of Him” who dwelt in Christ, then the “precious things of Heaven” will also be ours (1 Cor. 3:22, 23).

VI. A Sacrificing People. “They shall offer sacrifices of righteousness” (v. 19). To offer to God the sacrifices that are right is to crucify the flesh with its lusts. The unrenewed heart is incapable of such offerings. The first sacrifice of righteousness we are called upon to offer is ourselves (Rom. 12:1). Let the next be thanksgiving (Psa. 116:17). The constraining motive is the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). In yielding ourselves unto God we yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto Him (Rom. 6:13).

VII. A Courageous People. “Dan is a lion’s whelp” (v. 22). The lion’s whelp has begotten in it the lion’s nature, and will grow up into the lion’s image. We have been created after the image of Him who is called the “Lion of the tribe of Judah.” May we go in the fearlessness of His strength.

VIII. A Satisfied People. “O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord” (v. 23). What an inheritance! To be filled with the blessing of the Lord is indeed to be satisfied with FAVOUR. This favour, which is the grace of God, is abundantly able to do this (Phil. 4:19). We will never be satisfied until we are full with His blessing. This grace that fills and satisfies and makes to abound to every good work is within the reach of all (see 2 Cor. 9:8).

IX. A Happy People. “Happy art thou, O Israel” (v. 29). They ought to be a happy people whom God went forth to redeem that they might be a people to Himself, and to make Him a Name that He might do for them great things and terrible (2 Sam. 7:23). Sought, redeemed, separated, used. Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord (Psa. 144:15)

F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 33:1–17. The glorious nature of God is the opening theme here. The reference is to the giving of the Law when, amid fire and the mediation of angels, God descended on Sinai, Psa. 18:7–9; Hab. 3:3, 4. Oh, that we, too, may sit as pupils in God’s school and receive his words, verse 3.

Though Reuben could not excel, he was not forgotten. Simeon is omitted because of Numbers 25:14. Judah was to receive prosperity in prayer, in work and in war. Some render the benediction thus: “Bring him in safety from his wars!” But our warfare is

different, Eph. 6:12.

Levi receives special blessing. Note R. V. margin: "Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with him whom thou lovest." This is the white diamond-stone flashing with God's "Yes" or dimming with his "No," Rev. 2:17. Exod. 32:26 was never forgotten. See Matt. 25:37. But God forgets our sins, Heb. 8:12. Benjamin's portion may be yours. The precious things of Joseph's heritage pale to insignificance when contrasted with the riches of God's grace, Eph. 1:18.

Deuteronomy 33:2 He said, "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.

- **came from Sinai:** Ex 19:18-20 Jud 5:4,5 Hab 3:3
- **ten thousand :** Ps 68:7,17 Da 7:9 Ac 7:53 Ga 3:19 2Th 1:7 Heb 2:2 Jude 1:14 Rev 5:11
- a fiery law: Heb. a fire of law, De 5:22 2Co 3:7,9 Ga 3:10 Heb 12:20

Related Passages:

Judges 5:4-5+ "LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, Even the clouds dripped water. 5"The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.

Psalm 68:7-8+ O God, when You went forth before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness, Selah. 8The earth quaked; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself quaked at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

Habakkuk 3:3+ God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. **His splendor covers the heavens,** And the earth is full of His praise.

He said, "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran - Moses, in introducing his blessing (cf. Jacob's in Ge49), recounts God's advancing with His people from Sinai, Seir (Edom), and Paran (NE part of the Sinai Peninsula).

NIDOTTE - Several texts refer to Yahweh arising out of **Seir** (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4; cf. Hab 3:3, where Teman is parallel with Mount Paran). These statements could be taken to support a Seir located south of Judah, but caution must be exercised when dealing with poetic language and geographic details. Bartlett has proposed that Esau and Seir originally were connected with lands south of Judah and that the connections with Edom and the lands east of the Arabah are secondary. What seems clear is that Seir finds limited use by the prophets; in prophetic literature Seir and Edom are synonymous.

Carl Amerding - Unlike the blessing of Jacob which begins with an address to Reuben his firstborn, that of Moses begins with a majestic vision of the Lord coming from Sinai, rising up from Seir, and shining forth from Mount Paran. In addition to the fact that the places here mentioned are related to Israel, Esau, and Ishmael respectively, we may also note progress in the coming, the rising up, and the shining forth. It is the Lord in His government coming from, or with, His holy ones and having a law of fire in His right hand. The fact that reference is made to His coming from Sinai would seem to connect this with the initial giving of the law and all of the fiery phenomena, symbols of His holiness, which attended that solemn occasion. ([The Last Words of Moses: Deuteronomy 33](#)).

And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones- Who are the **holy ones**? KJV is a bit misleading translating it as "thousands of saints." These were not saints (believers all of whom are saints) but surely were angelic hosts as substantiated by the passages below. In addition, the Septuagint says when the Lord came from Sinai there were "at his right hand angels with him." (*ek dexion autou aggeloi* [[aggelos/angelos](#)] *met autou*) (Ps 68:17) The rabbis also thought angels were there on that great occasion.

In fairness here is the full **Septuagint** - note that the Jewish translators has "with ten thousands of **Cades**" not "ten thousands of angels." The meaning of Cades is uncertain but probably refers to "Kadesh" or "Meribah-kadesh" (qadesh means something like "sacred"). The upshot is that we do well to not be dogmatic about what this passage states remembering Dt 29:29 --

Septuagint - "And he said, The Lord is come from Sina, and has appeared from Seir to us, and has hasted out of the mount of Pharan, with the ten thousands of Cades; on his right hand were his angels with him. (Deu 33:2 LXE)

Acts 7:53 you who received the law as **ordained by angels**, and yet did not keep it."

Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been **ordained through**

angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Hebrews 2:2 For if **the word spoken through angels** proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

NET NOTE -- With slight alteration (מִמְרִיבַת קֹדֶשׁ [mimrivat qadesh] for the MT's מִרְבֵּבַת קֹדֶשׁ [merivvot qodesh]) the translation would be "**from Meribah Kadesh**" (cf. NAB, NLT; see Deut 32:51). However, the language of holy war in the immediate context favors the reading of the MT, which views the Lord as accompanied by angelic hosts.

MacArthur note on Galatians 3:19 - The Bible teaches that angels were involved in the giving of the law (Acts 7:53 Heb 2:2), but does not explain the precise role they played. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Wuest note on Galatians 3:19 - The law was ordained by angels, Paul says. The NT refers three times to the interposition of angels in the giving of the law. In [Acts 7:53] the fact is mentioned in order to enhance the authority of the law. In [Heb 2:2] it is contrasted with God's revelation in His Son.

At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them - "from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (Dt 33:2KJV) "With his right hand he gave a fiery law to them." (Dt 33:2NET) This designation undoubtedly reflects the scene on Mt Sinai (Horeb) as described by Moses...

Exodus 19:16-18 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there werethunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

Deuteronomy 4:11 "You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and **the mountain burned with fire** to the very heart of the heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom.

Jamieson on fiery law - so called both because of the thunder and lightning which accompanied its promulgation (Ex 19:16–18; De 4:11), and the fierce, unrelenting curse denounced against the violation of its precepts (2 Co 3:7–9).

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown - "Under a beautiful metaphor, borrowed from the dawn and progressive splendor of the sun, the Majesty of God is sublimely described as a divine light which appeared in Sinai and scattered its beams on all the adjoining region in directing Israel's march to Canaan. In these descriptions of a theophania, God is represented as coming from the south, and the allusion is in general to the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai; but other mountains in the same direction are mentioned with it. The location of Seir was on the east of the Ghor; mount Paran was either the chain on the west of the Ghor, or rather the mountains on the southern border of the desert towards the peninsula [Robinson]. (Ct Jdg 5:4-5; Ps 68:7-8; Hab 3:3). Since God's heavenly abode is surrounded by a myriad of angels (1 Kings 22:19), when God appeared at Sinai, these "holy ones" or angels were in his retinue. (Note this is J D Douglas' revision of JFB's classic commentary)

Disciple's Study Bible on He came - God's presence is an historical action. He comes to His people. God takes the initiative to be with His people. His people cannot passively find security in a place or time when we expect God to be present. God's coming signified His historical rule over His people and His right to determine their future.

Henry Morris on ten thousands holy ones - Evidently there were myriads of holy ones with God on Mount Sinai as His right hand wrote the commandments for Israel on tables of stone. Note also references to angels at the giving of the law in Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; and Hebrews 2:2.

Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask - DEUTERONOMY 33:2—Is this a prediction of the Prophet Mohammed?

PROBLEM: Many Islamic scholars believe this verse predicts three separate visitations of God—one on "Sinai" to Moses, another to "Seir" through Jesus, and a third in "Paran" (Arabia) through Mohammed who came to Mecca with an army of "ten thousand."

SOLUTION: First of all, this contention can be easily answered by looking at a Bible map. Paran and Seir are near Egypt in the Sinai peninsula (cf. Gen. 14:6; Num. 10:12; 12:16–13:3; Deut. 1:1), not in Palestine where Jesus ministered. Nor was Paran near Mecca, but hundreds of miles away near southern Palestine in the north eastern Sinai.

Furthermore, this verse is speaking of the "LORD" (not Mohammed) coming. And He is coming with "ten thousands of saints," not ten thousand soldiers, as Mohammed did. There is absolutely no basis in this text for the Muslim contention.

Finally, this prophecy is said to be one "with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death" (v. 1). If it were a prediction about Islam, which has been a constant enemy of Israel, it could scarcely have been a blessing to Israel. In fact,

the chapter goes on to pronounce a blessing on each of the tribes of Israel by God, who “will thrust out the enemy” (v. 27).

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MISINTERPRETATION: Many Islamic scholars believe this verse predicts three separate visitations of God—one on Sinai to Moses, another to Seir (a region near the Dead Sea and the Arabian Desert) through Jesus, and a third in “Paran” (Arabia) through Muhammad who came to Mecca with an army of “ten thousand.”

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: This contention can be easily answered by looking at a Bible map. Paran is near Egypt in the Sinai peninsula and Seir is in Old Testament Edom (cf. Gen. 14:6; Num. 10:12; 12:16–13:3; Deut. 1:1). Neither are in Palestine where Jesus ministered. Nor was Paran near Mecca, but hundreds of miles away in near southern Palestine in the northeastern Sinai.

Further, this verse is speaking of the “LORD” (Yahweh, not Muhammad) coming. And he is coming with “ten thousand saints,” not ten thousand soldiers, as Muhammad did. There is absolutely no basis in this text for the Muslim contention.

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Deuteronomy 33:3 "Indeed, He loves the people; All Your holy ones are in Your hand, And they followed in Your steps; Everyone receives of Your words."

- he loved: De 7:7-8 Ex 19:5-6 Ps 47:4 Ps 147:19-20 Jer 31:3 Ho 11:1 Mal 1:2 Ro 9:11-13 Eph 2:4,5 1Jn 4:19
- all his saints: De 7:6 1Sa 2:9 Ps 31:15 50:5 Jer 32:40 Joh 10:28,29 17:11-15 Ro 8:35-39 Col 3:3,4 1Pe 1:5
- they sat: Lu 2:46 8:35 10:39 Ac 22:3
- shall receive: Pr 2:1 1Th 1:6

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:37 “Because **He loved your fathers**, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power,

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 The LORD did not **set His love on you** nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because **the LORD loved you** and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers (ABRAHAMIC COVENANT), the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Psalms 47:4 He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. Selah.

Psalms 147:19-20 He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. 20He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR ISRAEL

Deere - Moses’ words in Deuteronomy 33:3–5 seem to reflect the peoples’ response in praise. They acknowledged the Lord’s love for them, His people, and the ministry of the angels (“the holy ones”) in mediating the Law (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Indeed, He loves the people- Moses proclaims God’s love for Israel as he blesses the tribes just before his death. The Hebrew word for **loves** is **chabab** used only here in the OT. The Septuagint is somewhat unusual in translating it with **pheidomai** which means to spare someone, to refrain from doing something and can convey the idea of being merciful which is probably the main sense here.

All Your holy ones are in Your hand (i.e., "Your power"),

NET NOTE - Heb "his holy ones." The third person masculine singular suffix of the Hebrew MT is problematic in light of the second person masculine singular suffix on בְּיָדְךָ (béyadekha, "your hands"). The Lxx versions by Lucian and Origen read, therefore, "the holy ones." The Lxx version by Theodotion and the Vulgate, however, presuppose third masculine singular suffix on בְּיָדָיו (béyadayv, "his hands"), and thus retain "his holy ones." The efforts to bring pronominal harmony into the line is commendable but unnecessary given the Hebrew tendency to be untroubled by such grammatical inconsistencies. However, the translation harmonizes the first pronoun with the second so that the referent (the Lord) is clear.

And they followed in Your steps; Everyone receives of Your words - "And they sit at your feet, each receiving your words." (Dt 33:3NET) "they assemble at Your feet. Each receives Your words" (Dt 33:3CSB) Does this phrase not remind us of Mary in Luke 10:39+ who "who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word."

NET NOTE on followed - The Hebrew term תָּכַו (tuku, probably Pual perfect of תָּכַח, takhah) is otherwise unknown. The present translation is based on the reference to feet and, apparently, receiving instruction in God's words (cf. KJV, ASV). Other options are as follows: NIV "At your feet they all bow down" (cf. NCV, CEV); NLT "They follow in your steps" (cf. NAB, NASB); NRSV "they marched at your heels."

Utley on followed - This is literally "lie down at" (Pual PERFECT, unusual VERB only here). It could also refer to the position of a learner (i.e., bowed low, cf. TEV, sit at your feet, cf. NET Bible). "They" refers to the people of Israel. **"Everyone receives of Thy words"** This refers to the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai/Horeb in Exodus 20 and following. God's people knew God's will and law. The covenant people have a special responsibility to reflect God's character. All of them affirmed their willingness to follow God's law. (Ex 24:3,7)

James Smith - A PRIVILEGED PEOPLE Deuteronomy 33:3

1. LOVED,
"Yea, He loved the people."
2. KEPT,
"All His saints are in Thy hand."
3. RESTED,
"They sat down."
4. TAUGHT,
"Every one shall receive of Thy words."

Deuteronomy 33:3 - H A Ironside

Here God's saints are seen in three places. They are in His heart: "He loves the people!" How precious to dwell in the bosom of infinite love! What rest in the hour of strife and in the day of distress! They are also in His hand—the place of security as our Lord tells us in John 10:27–30, whence none can pluck them. Last of all, they are at His feet—the place of discipleship, learning His mind and will that they may walk in His ways. How abundant the provision which He has made for the comfort, security and instruction of all His redeemed ones!

Low at Thy feet, Lord Jesus,
This is the place for me;
There I have learned sweet lessons,
Truth that has set me free.
Free from myself, Lord Jesus,
Free from the ways of men,
Chains of thought that once bound me
Never shall bind again.
None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,
Conquered my wayward will;
But for Thy grace, my Saviour
I had been wayward still.

In His Hands Deuteronomy 33:3

"All His saints are in Your hand". --Deuteronomy 33:3

On his deathbed, British preacher Charles Simeon smiled brightly and asked the people gathered in his room, "What do you think especially gives me comfort at this time?"

When they all remained silent, he exclaimed, "The creation! I ask myself, 'Did Jehovah create the world or did I?' He did! Now if He made the world and all the rolling spheres of the universe, He certainly can take care of me. Into Jesus' hands I can safely commit my spirit!"

Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, in the closing months of his life said to a friend, "I am so weak. I can't read my Bible. I can't even pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child and trust."

Both Simeon and Taylor knew that the almighty God who created the universe was holding them in His hands. Moses had the same assurance when he blessed the children of Israel before he died (Deut. 33). They could face the future with confidence because the God who had delivered them would also preserve them.

We certainly need not be fearful, then, as we enter a new year. God will never forsake His redeemed children. We can rejoice that our great Creator holds us in His hands. And that's true for every child of God. --H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The God who made the firmament,
Who made the deepest sea,
The God who put the stars in place
Is the God who cares for me.
--Berg

The God who holds the universe is the God who is holding you.

Deuteronomy 33:4 "Moses charged us with a law, A possession for the assembly of Jacob."

- **Moses** : Joh 1:17 7:19
- **A possession**: De 9:26-29 Ps 119:72,111

Moses charged us (NET - delivered to us) **with a law, A possession** (inheritance) **for the assembly of Jacob** -NLT - "the special possession of the people of Israel"

Deere - This was a major event in Israel's history. To become a nation it was necessary to have a common people (v. 5), a common constitution (the Law, v. 4), and a common land. The sojourn in Egypt molded Jacob's descendants into a common people, and the giving of the Law at Sinai gave them a common constitution. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Utley - "a possession for the assembly of Jacob" The term "**possession**" refers to an inheritance. It was used first of the tribe of Israel (Jacob) in Exod. 6:8 and is mentioned often in Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 11:15; 33:24; 36:2, 3, 5). The term "**assembly**" means "congregation" (cf. same root in Dt 23:2, 3, 4, 8; 31:30).

Deuteronomy 33:5 "And He was king in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people were gathered, The tribes of Israel together."

- king: Ge 36:31 Ex 18:16,19 Nu 16:13-15 Jdg 8:22 9:2 17:6
- Jeshurun: De 32:15

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:15 "But **Jeshurun** grew fat and kicked-- You are grown fat, thick, and sleek-- Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation.

Deuteronomy 33:26 "There is none like the God of **Jeshurun**, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty.

Isaiah 44:2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not

fear, O Jacob My servant; And you **Jeshurun** whom I have chosen.

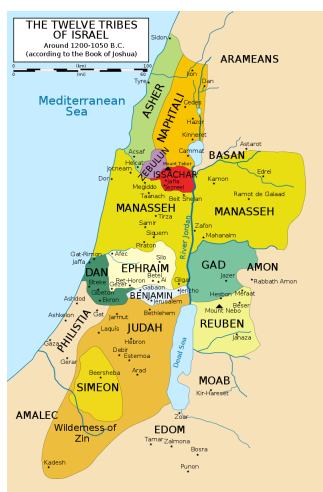
And He (Heb - "thus He") **was** (became) **king in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people were gathered, The tribes of Israel together** - When they assembled to receive God's commands, an inaugurate the covenant with the new nation (people) of God at Mt Sinai (Horeb). .

Jeshurun (4x = Dt 32:15, 33:5,26; Isa 44:2) means "the Upright One" (derived from yasar meaning straight, just, right) and is a term of endearment and refers ironically to Israel (Dt 33:5, 26), as what should have been their ideal character ("upright" = adhering strictly to moral principles). A good beginning ("Upright" of Israel's call = Ex 19:6, Dt 14:2) does not guarantee an upright course and a smooth landing, "[right side up](#)"!

Utley - "He was king" This may be a reference to YHWH as King (cf. Ex 15:18; Nu 23:21; 24:7; 1 Sa 8:4-9).

Deuteronomy 33:6 "May Reuben live and not die, Nor his men be few."

- Ge 49:3-4,8 Nu 32:31,32 Jos 22:1-9



Reuben - Click to Enlarge
[Look at map showing shrinking of the lands of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh by 830 BC!](#)

A PRAYER FOR REUBEN'S LIFE

May Reuben live and not die, Nor his men be few - The exact meaning of this is uncertain, but probably is a prayer that the tribe would grow and prosper. If so this is clearly another example of amazing grace! Recall that Reuben's sin (Ge 35:22) cost him the rights of the firstborn which were given to Joseph (1 Chr 5:1-2). Moses leaves this "bad news" out of this prayer. Jacob includes the bad news...

Genesis 49:3-4 "**Reuben**, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. 4 "Uncontrolled as water, **you shall not have preeminence**, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it—he went up to my couch.

Jamieson - Although deprived of the honor and privileges of primogeniture, he was still to hold rank as one of the tribes of Israel. He was more numerous than several other tribes (Nu 1:21; 2:11). Yet gradually he sank into a nomadic tribe which had enough to do merely "to live and not die." The implication is that Reuben would survive, not thrive (Mayes).

Maxwell - After an incident in the eleventh century B.C. (1 Chr. 5:18-22), very little is heard of this tribe, though they continued to exist and are mentioned as late as the time of Ezekiel (Ezek 48:7). ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

Warren Wiersbe - Hebrew students don't agree on the translation of the last clause. Is it "nor let his men be few" or "and let his men be few"? Is he asking blessing or judgment? In spite of his sin against his father, Reuben interceded for Joseph (Gen. 37:19-22; 42:22) and was willing to provide his sons as surety for Benjamin (42:37). The Reubenites settled with Gad and Manasseh in the territory east of the Jordan, but they marched at the head of the army in conquering Canaan (Josh. 4:12) and didn't return to their own land until after the conquest was completed (Josh 22:1-9). Between the first and second censuses in Numbers (Num. 1 and 26), Reuben lost 2,770 men, but the tribe had a reputation for being courageous soldiers (1 Chron. 5:10). It's interesting that no

great civil or military leader or prophet ever came from the tribe of Reuben. ([Be Equipped](#))

Ryrie - The prayer for Reuben reflects the danger of the tribe's decline, exposed as it was to Moab on the E side of the Jordan. The LXX makes the last half of the verse refer to Simeon, who is omitted from the list. This omission was probably because Simeon's portion of land in Canaan was within the border of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9).

Craigie - The tribe of Reuben (Jacob's firstborn son by Leah) find their blessing in the promise of continuity, even though they would never be strong numerically. In Jacob's blessing (Gen. 49:4), the instability of the tribe had already been hinted, and in a later military affair the Reuben-ites were criticized for their lack of participation (Judg. 5:15-16). After an incident toward the end of the eleventh century B.C. (see 1 Chr. 5:18-22), very little is heard of the Reubenites, though they continued to exist and are mentioned as late as the time of Ezekiel (Ezek 48:7 - **ED**: SEE ALSO Rev 7:5+). In light of these facts, the blessing of Reuben appears to have a prophetic character to it.

QUESTION - [Who was Reuben in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob by [Leah](#) and the forefather of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The story of Reuben in the Bible is told in Genesis chapters 29-50.

Reuben's mother Leah became the wife of Jacob by a cunning trick (Genesis 29:15-30). Jacob had gone to live with his uncle, Laban, in Paddan Aram. There he met and fell in love with Laban's beautiful daughter Rachel. Jacob agreed to work seven years for the right to marry Rachel, Leah's younger sister. On their wedding night, Laban substituted the [heavily veiled Leah](#) in Rachel's place. The next morning, Jacob was shocked to discover the deceit. So smitten was he with Rachel that he consented to work another seven years for her.

Leah's life turned out to be heartbreaking as she sought to win Jacob's love. But God blessed Leah with the honor of bearing many children, including Jacob's oldest son, Reuben.

Several meanings have been assigned to the name *Reuben*, but the most widely accepted is "behold a son." When Leah gave birth to Reuben, she explained her choice: "She named him Reuben, for she said, 'It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now'" (Genesis 29:32). This statement introduces the lifelong tension that existed between the two sisters in their marriage to Jacob.

As an adult, Reuben was one of the more honorable sons of Jacob. Reuben saved Joseph's life when his brothers plotted to kill him. He talked the brothers out of murdering Joseph and convinced them to leave him in a pit instead (Genesis 37:21-22). Reuben intended to return privately and rescue Joseph, but his plan failed when, in his absence, the other brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Years later, as all the brothers faced misfortune in Egypt, Reuben called out his brothers for bringing disaster on their family: "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood" (Genesis 42:22).

An interesting episode involving Reuben in the Bible centers on his mother's and aunt's belief in folk medicine in Genesis 30:14-17. One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben came across [mandrakes](#) in the field. Mandrakes were herbaceous flowering plants known for their exotic fragrance and human-shaped roots. They were also believed to enhance a woman's fertility. Reuben picked the mandrakes and brought them to his mother, Leah.

Rachel asked for some of the mandrakes Reuben had found, but Leah rebuked her: "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?" (Genesis 30:15). So, Rachel struck a deal with Leah. In return for some of the mandrakes, she let Leah sleep with Jacob. As a result, Leah became pregnant and gave Jacob a fifth son, Issachar.

Reuben demonstrated extreme love for his aging father when he offered his own two sons as a guarantee for the safety of Benjamin (Genesis 42:37). But, despite Reuben's admirable qualities and good intentions, he lacked enduring strength of character.

Reuben's great failure occurred when he slept with his father's concubine Bilhah. This act, a serious crime punishable by death, revealed the loss of his earlier integrity. After Rachel died, Reuben was likely anxious because Jacob had shown favor to her sons over Leah's. He may also have been worried for his mother. By sleeping with Bilhah, Reuben was likely challenging his father's authority and grasping for power.

As the oldest son of Jacob, Reuben should have been granted the birthright, but he was denied this honor because of his act of disrespect: "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it" (Genesis 49:3-4).

The [tribe of Reuben](#) descended from Reuben and his four sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. After helping the other tribes take possession of the Promised Land, the tribe of Reuben settled [east of the Jordan River](#). Initially starting out strong, the tribe was

always mentioned first—in the place of honor—in lists of the twelve tribes of Israel. However, because of Reuben's incest with Bilhah, the tribe eventually lost its place of preeminence as Jacob had prophesied. No prominent judge, prophet, or ruler came from the tribe of Reuben, and no mention of the tribe, other than the listing in Revelation 7:5, is made in the New Testament. GotQuestions.org

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Reuben?](#)

ANSWER - Each of the twelve sons of Israel / Jacob received a blessing from his father just before Jacob's death. The twelve sons were the progenitors of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#), and the blessing contained prophetic information about the future of each tribe. In the case of the tribe of Reuben, Jacob prophesied, "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it" (Genesis 49:3–4). In addition to referring to the future of the tribe of Reuben, the prophecy contains within it several lessons for all of us.

Reuben, the firstborn of the twelve sons, was to Jacob his "might, the first sign of my strength" (Genesis 49:3), indicating that to him were all the rights and prerogatives of a firstborn son. At first, he excelled in honor and power, as is fitting the firstborn son, but Jacob declares that Reuben "will no longer excel" (verse 4) due to his sin of incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine wife (Genesis 35:22). Although that sin was committed forty years prior, there was left an indelible spot on Reuben's character and that of his posterity. By committing this uncleanness with his father's wife, there would be reproach upon his tribe and the family, to whom he ought to have been an example and a blessing. He forfeited the prerogatives of the birthright, and his dying father demoted him, although he did not disown or disinherit him. He would still have all the privileges of a son, but not of the firstborn.

Jacob's sad prophecy for Reuben certainly came true. No judge, prophet, ruler, or prince came from that tribe, nor any person of renown except Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their rebellion against Moses. Reuben's tribe chose a settlement on the other side of the Jordan, a further indication of the loss of godly influence on his brothers to which his birthright entitled him. Although Reuben was the firstborn, the kingdom was given to Judah and the priesthood to Levi, leaving Reuben's tribe to be small and non-influential.

Further, Reuben was "unstable as water" (some versions translate it "turbulent as water"), and in this phrase we find several lessons for all Christians. For one thing, Reuben's virtue was unstable; he did not have control of himself and his own appetites. The charge of instability could refer to his being sometimes very regular and orderly, while at other times wild and undisciplined. As Christians, we are to be in control of our flesh and its appetites and desires at all times. Most importantly, we are to be steadfast in our faith and not "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

We also learn from Reuben that those who dabble in sin must not expect to save their reputation or maintain a positive influence upon others. Although we know our sins were nailed to the cross and we are forever forgiven for past sins, we may still suffer the temporal consequences of those sins, which often include remorse and a loss of reputation and influence. Reuben's sin left an indelible mark upon him and his family. As Christians, we must understand that some of our sins will leave a lasting scar. GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:7 And this regarding Judah; so he said, 'Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people. With his hands he contended for them, And may You be a help against his adversaries.'

- **bring:** Ge 49:8-12 Jdg 1:1-7 Ps 78:68,70 Mic 5:2 Mal 3:1 Heb 7:14
- **his hands:** 2Sa 3:1 5:1,19,24 1Ch 12:22 2Ch 17:12-19 Isa 9:17 Rev 19:13-16
- **be a help:** 2Sa 7:9-12 Ps 11:1-7 20:2 21:1,8 110:1,2 146:5 Lu 19:27 1Co 15:25 Rev 20:10-15

Related Passages:

Genesis 49:8-12 "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 9 "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 10 **"The scepter shall not depart from Judah** (PROPHECY OF MESSIAH), Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 "He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. 12 "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.



Judah - Click to Enlarge

PRAYER FOR JUDAH IN BATTLE

And this regarding Judah; so he said, **'Hear**, (command) **O LORD**, the voice of Judah, **And bring him to his people. With his hands he contended for them, And may You be a help against his adversaries.**" - "And this is the blessing to Judah. He said, Listen, O LORD, to Judah's voice, and bring him to his people. May his power be great, and may you help him against his foes." (Dt 33:7NET) Moses is asking God to hear Judah's prayer (and his prayer at the end of the verse). Judah marched at the head of the tribes (Nu 2:9) and therefore would have been first in any battle. Moses' blessing is in essence a prayer (**may You be a help against his adversaries**) for Judah's military success.

Help is [ezer](#) discussed below and is translated with [boethos](#) describes one who runs on hearing a cry to give assistance. This is what Yahweh would do to the adversaries of Judah (and He will also hear your cry for help beloved.) It is used once in the NT as a description of God our Helper. (Hebrews 13:6 ±).

Utley - There is nothing in Moses' blessing that hints of Judah's special place as royal tribe, so evident in Jacob's blessing of Gen. 49:8–12. The fact that the tribe of Simeon is not mentioned has caused some to relate this prophecy to a later period when Simeon was incorporated into Judah (cf. Josh. 19:1–9; Jdgs 1:3–4). Simeon's allotment was southwest of Judah, which was adjacent to the five Philistine cities.

Moses prayed that the tribe of Judah would be powerful in leading the nation to be victorious in battle through the help of Jehovah, a prayer which speaks ultimately of the Messiah, the Lion from the tribe of Judah (cf Rev 5:5-[note](#))

NIDOTTE on **Judah** - This son figures prominently in the Genesis narratives (cf. Gen 37:26–28; 38:1–30; 43:1–15; 44:14–34; 46:28) and is the recipient of promissory blessings from his father that portend unusual importance for the tribe and kingdom (Gen 49:10–12; Deut 33:7). The genealogy of David recounted in Ruth 4:18–22 makes a special point of connecting the reign of David (and thus the kingdom of Judah) with the ancestor Judah (Ru 4:11–12) and thereby the Abrahamic covenant. This provides a linkage between the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants

QUESTION - [Who was Judah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Judah was the fourth son of Jacob with his wife Leah, and the head of one of the [12 tribes of Israel](#). The other 11 tribes descended from Judah's brothers and half-brothers.

Judah's second-to-youngest brother, Joseph, was preferred by their father, and Judah and his brothers hated Joseph (Genesis 37:3–4). One day, the brothers threw Joseph in a cistern and conspired to kill him. The eldest sibling, Reuben, argued against this course of action, intending to rescue Joseph from the others (verses 21–22). But while the brothers ate lunch, and in Reuben's absence, a caravan approached, and Judah came up with a plan to sell Joseph to the caravan's merchants as a slave (verses 26–17). The brothers agreed, and Joseph was sold and taken to Egypt.

It is possible that Judah felt remorse or guilt for his actions, for "at that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with a man of Adullam named Hirah" (Genesis 38:1). There, Judah married a Canaanite woman who gave Judah three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. When Er grew up, Judah gave him a wife named [Tamar](#). But Er was an evil man, so the Lord put him to death (verse 7). Following the custom of [levirate marriage](#), Tamar was then given to Onan, who selfishly refused to give Tamar children (verse 9); he was also put to death by the Lord for his actions. Shelah was too young to take a wife, so Judah ordered Tamar to live as a widow in

her father's house (verse 11).

After several years Judah's own wife died, and he grieved. When he recovered, he traveled to Timnah to oversee to the shearing of his sheep. Tamar, still a widow in spite of the fact that Shelah had grown up, heard that her father-in-law was coming, and she devised a plan. Tamar put on a veil and pretended to be a prostitute on the road to Timnah (Genesis 38:14). The veil hid her identity from Judah, and Judah slept with her. Tamar became pregnant, which had been her goal all along. Three months later, when Judah found out that his supposedly chaste daughter-in-law was pregnant, he was filled with rage: "Bring her out and have her burned to death!" he demanded (verse 24). As she was being brought out for punishment as a harlot, Tamar produced evidence that her pregnancy was due to Judah's own immorality. Judah saw his hypocrisy and repented, saying, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah" (verse 26). Judah did not have sexual relations with Tamar after that. She later gave birth to twins, two boys named [Perez](#) and Zerah (verses 29–30).

Meanwhile, God was with Judah's brother Joseph in Egypt, elevating Joseph to a place of power second only the Pharaoh himself (Genesis 41:39–40). Joseph had interpreted the king's dream warning of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, and so Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of gathering grain to store for the lean years. Under Joseph's supervision, a large amount of grain was set aside (verse 49). When the great famine came upon the land, it affected even Canaan. Judah and his brothers traveled from Canaan to Egypt to buy some of the surplus food. Joseph eventually revealed himself to his brothers, who were remorseful for what they had done to him (for more on this, see Genesis 42 – 45).

Soon, Joseph brought his entire family to the land of Egypt, where their descendants would live for several hundred years, according to God's great plan for His people. This is where Jacob died, and before he passed, he called all his sons to bless them. In spite of all Judah's faults, his blessing from Jacob was both rich and wonderful; in it, Jacob foretold that Judah's house would be the greatest, and the scepter, or rule, would not depart from his descendants (see Genesis 49:8–12 for the full blessing). Jacob's words held true, for, many years later, Judah's line produced King David and his dynasty and, eventually, through the line of Perez, came the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is called "the [Lion of the tribe of Judah](#)" (Revelation 5:5). [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Judah?](#) |

ANSWER - Each of the twelve sons of Israel / Jacob received a blessing from his father just before Jacob's death. The twelve sons were the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the blessing contained prophetic information about the future of each tribe. In the case of the tribe of [Judah](#), Jacob prophesied, "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The [scepter will not depart from Judah](#), nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk" (Genesis 49:8–12).

Each part of Jacob's prophecy for the tribe of Judah reveals something about the people of that tribe, their history, and the spiritual application we can draw from it. In verse 8, Jacob prophesies that Judah's brothers would praise him. Judah's name signifies praise and was given him by his mother, her heart being filled with praises to God for him (Genesis 29:35). The strength and power of the tribe is also foretold in verse 8. Verse 9 uses the imagery of both a [lion](#) and the lion's cub to portray the tribe of Judah. Judah was comparable to a young lion for his strength, courage, and vitality and to a mature lion in that the line of Judah contained those of national prominence and kingship, including David and Solomon.

The scepter not departing from Judah until "he comes to whom it belongs" is a Messianic prophecy. The name "Shiloh" appears in this verse in several translations, a word that refers to the Messiah. Commentators differ on the exact meaning of this somewhat obscure passage, but all agree that He who comes to obtain the obedience of the nations can be none other than Christ. The rest of the passage, Ge 49:11–12, refers to the great abundance of riches that would belong to the tribe of Judah. So wealthy and blessed would they be that they would be able to tie a donkey to the choicest grapevine and allow him to eat his fill, an indication of the abundance that would belong to Judah.

The second application of Ge 49:11–12, and the one that pertains to Christians today, is the abundance of spiritual riches available to us in Christ, the great quantity of spiritual blessings flowing from the love of God, which come to us through Christ, which are comparable to wine and milk. The riches include His word and His statutes and Christ Himself, the Bread of Life. These may also be applied to Christ and to His human nature, which was like a garment dipped in blood through His sufferings and death. Isaiah 63:1–3 contains this same imagery. It can also refer to His church and His people whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:13–14). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 33:8 Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;

- **Let:** Ex 28:30,36 Lev 8:8 Nu 27:21 1Sa 28:6 Ezr 2:63 Ne 7:65
- with thy: Lev 21:7 Nu 16:5 2Ch 23:6 Ezr 8:28 Ps 16:10 106:16 Heb 7:26 Rev 3:7
- prove at: De 8:2,3,16 Ex 17:7 Nu 20:13 Ps 81:7

Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man - "Of Levi he said: Your Thummim and Urim belong to your godly one." (Dt 33:8NET) **Your godly man** is probably a reference to Moses because the context says "whose authority you challenged at Massah" and we read in Ex 17:2 "the people quarreled with Moses." As an aside remember that all the priests in Israel were Levites but not all Levites were priests but functioned as assistants to the priests at the Holy Sanctuary.

Thummim - Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Deut. 33:8; Ezr. 2:63; Neh. 7:65

Urim - Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezr. 2:63; Neh. 7:65

Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah- "whose authority you challenged at Massah, and with whom you argued at the waters of Meribah." (Dt 33:8NET) **Massah** is also called **Meribah** and is described in Exodus 17:1-7. Since the rebellion at **Massah** did not mention Levi or the priests the reference is unclear. This could imply Levi was faithful at Massah.

Ryrie comments that "Levi was to be faithful, as Moses was at Massah and Meribah."

MacArthur points out that "Moses omitted Simeon, but that tribe did receive a number of allies in the southern territory of Judah (Jos 19:2–9) and did not lose their identity (cf. 1Ch 4:34–38)." ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

QUESTION - [What were the Urim and Thummim?](#)

ANSWER - The Urim ("lights") and Thummim ("perfections") were gemstones that were carried by the high priest of Israel on the ephod / priestly garments. They were used by the high priest to determine God's will in some situations. Some propose that God would cause the Urim and Thummim to light up in varying patterns to reveal His decision. Others propose that the Urim and Thummim were kept in a pouch and were engraved with symbols identifying yes / no and true / false.

It is unclear whether the Urim and Thummim were on, by, or in the high priest's ephod. No one knows the precise nature of the Urim and Thummim or exactly how they were used. The Bible simply does not give us enough information. References to the Urim and Thummim are rare in the Bible. They are first mentioned in the description of the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8). When Joshua succeeded Moses as leader over Israel, he was to receive answers from God by means of the Urim through [Eleazar](#) the high priest (Numbers 27:21). The Urim and Thummim are next mentioned in Moses' dying blessing upon Levi (Deuteronomy 33:8). The following Scriptures likely also speak of the Urim and Thummim: Joshua 7:14-18; 1 Samuel 14:37-45; and 2 Samuel 21:1. [GotQuestions.org](#)

F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 33:8 Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with Him whom thou lovest. (R.V., marg.)

What a contrast between the blessings of Jacob and of Moses! In Jacob's farewell charge, we find the ominous words, "Cursed be Levi"; and he foretells that this tribe should be divided and scattered in Israel. But here the curse is turned into a blessing; and the scattering is transformed into a holy ministry for the whole of Israel, "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law." See to what a place of privilege they are exalted! "They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-offering upon thine altar."

If ever there was an illustration of the power we have to turn a curse into a blessing, it is here. Step by step the results of that awful sin, for which Jacob cursed his sons, are changed into benedictions. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; indeed, it has reigned, it has broken out into radiant and royal glory. Do not sit down hopeless, because of the consequences of an early sin that threaten to follow thee to thy grave. Thou mayest yet get honey out of the lion's carcass.

The way to this was by entire devotion to the call of God. After the sin of the golden calf, Levi said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen them; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his children. The cause of God, which Aaron had so ruthlessly betrayed, was dearer to him than the tenderest ties of blood. So he came into God's secret counsels of love, and knew the Urim and Thummim answers of the One whom he loved. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." It is only to those with whom He dwells that He can communicate his blessed will and purposes. Oh, may such bliss be mine!

Deuteronomy 33:9 Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant.

- **Who said:** Ex 32:25-29 Lev 10:6 21:11 Mt 10:37 12:48 22:16 Lu 14:26 2Co 5:16 Ga 1:10 1Th 2:4 1Ti 5:21
- **not:** Ge 29:32 1Ch 17:17 Job 37:24
- **for they:** Jer 18:18 Mal 2:5-7

LEVI REMAINED FAITHFUL

Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant - "He said to his father and mother, "I have not seen him," and he did not acknowledge his own brothers (ED: cf Ex 32:27-28) or know his own children, for they kept your word, and guarded your covenant." (Dt 33:9NET) The **NET NOTE** explains "This statement no doubt alludes to the Levites' destruction of their own fellow tribesmen following the golden calf incident (Ex 32:25–29)."

Exodus 32:25-29+ Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies— 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me!" **And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.** 27 He said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'" 28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 Then Moses said, "Dedicate yourselves today to the LORD—for every man has been against his son and against his brother—in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

Utley - This refers to the passage in Exodus 32, where Israel became involved in idolatry in the making and worshiping (i.e., sexual orgy) of the golden calf. At this point Moses ordered the faithful Levites (his own tribe) to kill many of their fellow Israelites in judgment (cf. Ex 32:25–29). By this action, even against their own family, they are honored for: they observed Thy word—BQal PERFECT, cf. 29:9 and they kept Thy covenant—, Qal IMPERFECT, cf. Ps. 25:10; 78:7; 119:2, 22, 33, 34, 56, 69, 100, 115, 129, 145

Deuteronomy 33:10 "They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, And Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You, And whole burnt offerings on Your altar.

- **teach:** De 17:9-11 24:8 Lev 10:11 2Ch 17:8-10 30:22 Ne 8:1-9,13-15,18 Eze 44:23,24 Ho 4:6 Mal 2:6-8 Mt 23:2,3 Joh 21:15,16
- **incense:** Ex 30:7,8 Nu 16:40,46 1Sa 2:28 2Ch 26:18 Lu 1:9,10 Heb 7:25 Heb 9:24 Rev 8:3-5
- **burnt offerings:** Lev 1:9,13,17 9:12,13 Ps 51:19 Eze 43:27

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 24:8"Be careful against an infection of leprosy, that you diligently observe and do according to all that the Levitical priests **teach (yārāh)** you; as I have commanded them, so you shall be careful to do.

LEVITES TO TEACH THE LAW TO ISRAEL

They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, And Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You(lit - perfume in Your nose), **And whole burnt offerings (kalil) on Your altar** - In sum Levites were to be teachers and worship leaders, officiating the offerings of the Israelites at the altar of God. **Teach (yārāh)** in the Septuagint is **deloo** which means to make clear or plain. In short, through the priests Israel could **know God** and since he represented the people before God, it was his task to bring the sacrifices and to make atonement for the people at the altar so through the priests the people could **come to God**.

Wiersbe - It was the **Levites** who slew the idolaters after the golden calf episode (Ex. 32:25-29), showing their zeal for the Lord. They put obeying God's will ahead of their love for their own families and their own nation (see Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26). It would be the privilege and responsibility of the priests to guard and use the Urim and Thummim, teach the people the law, and be in charge of

worship at the sanctuary. Moses prayed that the tribe of Levi—his own tribe—would be given strength for their many ministries and be protected from their enemies. ([Be Equipped](#))

Teach (03384) (**yārāh**) has three distinct verbal roots, but one of these (“to water”; Hos 6:3) is rare. Some of the occurrences carry the primary meaning of “to throw” or “to shoot.” But the majority of instances reflect the extended meaning of “to instruct.” In Ex 4:12 God tells Moses “I, will be with your mouth, and **teach** you what you are to say.” Objects which are thrown or shot include: arrows (Ps. 11:2; Ex. 19:13); the chariots of Pharaoh’s army by God (Exo 15:4); stones (Num. 21:30). Stones are also piled in a heap, perhaps by gathering and tossing onto the pile (Gen. 31:51) as well used to lay a cornerstone (Job 38:6). The term is also used of casting lots to determine a course of action (Josh. 18:6). The secondary meaning of yarah is “to instruct” or “to teach,” always in the Hiphil tense, meaning “causing to learn.” Instruction was given by the priest (2 Ki. 12:3); companions (Job 6:24); those with experience (8ff); and, of course, God (Exo. 24:12; Isa. 28:26). Objects of instruction mentioned by use of this term include: the difference between what is holy and what is profane (Ezek. 44:23); legal decisions (Deut. 17:10); what is pointed to (Prov. 6:13); skills for making the Tabernacle (Exo. 35:34); the statutes ordained by God (Lev. 10:11). The priests were required to teach the people as part of their vocation, but some unlawfully charged the people more (Mic. 3:11)

The noun **torah** is derived from yarah. The meaning “to cast” appears in Gen. 31:51: “And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee.” Yarah means “to teach” in 1 Sam. 12:23: “... but I will teach you the good and the right way.”

Yarah - 69 verses - archers(2), archers shot(1), archers*(2), cast(3), cast them down(1), directed(1), instruct(4), instructed(1), instruction(1), instructs(1), laid(1), point(1), points(1), rain(1), set(1), shoot(10), shot(3), shot through(1), showed(1), taught(3), teach(27), teacher(2), teaches(2), teaching(1), throws(1), watering(1). Gen. 31:51; Gen. 46:28; Exod. 4:12; Exod. 4:15; Exod. 15:4; Exod. 15:25; Exod. 19:13; Exod. 24:12; Exod. 35:34; Lev. 10:11; Lev. 14:57; Num. 21:30; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 17:11; Deut. 24:8; Deut. 33:10; Jos. 18:6; Jdg. 13:8; 1 Sam. 12:23; 1 Sam. 20:20; 1 Sam. 20:36; 1 Sam. 20:37; 1 Sam. 31:3; 2 Sam. 11:20; 1 Ki. 8:36; 2 Ki. 12:2; 2 Ki. 13:17; 2 Ki. 17:27; 2 Ki. 17:28; 2 Ki. 19:32; 1 Chr. 10:3; 2 Chr. 6:27; 2 Chr. 15:3; 2 Chr. 35:23; Job 6:24; Job 8:10; Job 12:7; Job 12:8; Job 27:11; Job 30:19; Job 34:32; Job 38:6; Ps. 11:2; Ps. 25:8; Ps. 25:12; Ps. 27:11; Ps. 32:8; Ps. 45:4; Ps. 64:4; Ps. 64:7; Ps. 86:11; Ps. 119:33; Ps. 119:102; Prov. 4:4; Prov. 4:11; Prov. 6:13; Prov. 26:18; Isa. 2:3; Isa. 9:15; Isa. 28:9; Isa. 28:26; Isa. 37:33; Ezek. 44:23; Hos. 6:3; Hos. 10:12; Mic. 3:11; Mic. 4:2; Hab. 2:18; Hab. 2:19

Deuteronomy 33:11 "O LORD, bless his substance, And accept the work of his hands; Shatter the loins of those who rise up against him, And those who hate him, so that they will not rise again."

- **his substance:** De 18:1-5 Nu 18:8-20 35:2-8
- **accept:** 2Sa 24:23 Ps 20:3 Eze 20:40,41 43:27 Mal 1:8-10
- **shatter:** Isa 29:21 Jer 15:10 Am 5:10 Mt 10:14,15 Lu 10:10-12,16 1Th 4:8

A PRAYER FOR BLESSING AND PROTECTION OF LEVITES

O LORD, bless ([barak](#)) his substance (his goods), **And accept** (be pleased with) **the work of his hands; Shatter the loins** (undercut the legs - NET) **of those who rise up against him, And those who hate him, so that they will not rise again-** This was a prayer for supernatural success and protection. It is unclear who will **rise up against** the Levites.

Utley - “**Shatter the loins**” This is literally “break the thigh” (i.e., the largest muscle in the body used as a symbol for the whole person). This is a Hebrew metaphor for making someone powerless.

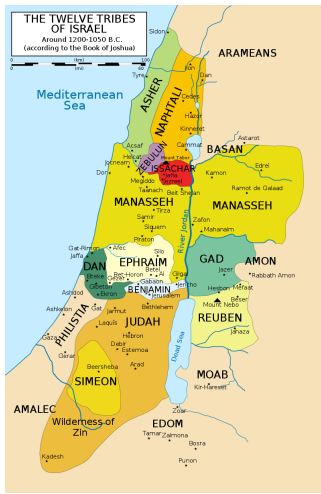
NET NOTE - Heb “smash the sinews [or “loins,” so many English versions].” This part of the body was considered to be center of one’s strength (cf. Job 40:16; Ps 69:24; Prov 31:17; Nah 2:2, 11)

Deuteronomy 33:12 Of Benjamin he said, "May the beloved of the LORD dwell in security by Him, Who shields him all the day, And he dwells between His shoulders."

- **The beloved** : De 33:27-29 Jos 18:11-28 Jdg 1:21 1Ki 12:21 2Ch 11:1 15:2 2Ch 17:17-19 Ps 132:14 Isa 37:22,35
- **shields him all the day**: Ps 91:4 Isa 51:16 Mt 23:37

Related Passage:

Genesis 44:20 "We said to my lord, 'We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.'



Benjamin - Click to Enlarge

PRAYER FOR BENJAMIN'S SECURITY AND PEACE

Of Benjamin he said, "May the beloved of the LORD dwell in security by Him, Who shields (surrounds - NRSV, NJV - protects) him all the day, and he dwells between His shoulders."- Benjamin may be called **beloved of the LORD** because he was Jacob's favorite (Ge 44:20 = "his father loves him"). The future Temple in Jerusalem would be in the territory of Benjamin. The phrase **dwells between His shoulders** is rendered as "LORD places him on his chest" (Dt 33:12NET) and "the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders." (Dt 33:12NIV)

Utley on **between the shoulders** - This is a metaphor for (1) a place of peace and security (Dt 33:20, 28) or (2) living in a sheltered place (i.e., Shiloh, Bethel, or Jerusalem [a suggestion of S. R. Driver]).

This suggests the scene in John 13:23 with Jesus and the Beloved Disciple.

There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Wiersbe - Jacob's youngest son Benjamin (Deut. 33:12) was greatly beloved by his father (Gen. 35:18; 44:20) and also beloved of the Lord and protected by the Lord. The little tribe of Benjamin was situated adjacent to Judah's northern boundary, and the city of Jerusalem was on the northern border of Judah and the southern border of Benjamin. Since the sanctuary would be at Jerusalem, Benjamin would be close to the Lord who dwelt there with His people. Like a father caring for a son, God would carry Benjamin on His back, between his shoulders, and shelter him from danger. The men of Benjamin had quite a reputation as warriors (Judges 5:14). ([Be Equipped](#))

Security (0983) (**betach** from **batach** = to trust) means security, confidence (belief that one is safe and secure - Isa 32:17, Job 24:23, Micah 2:8). In its first occurrence betach emphasizes the status of a city which was certain of not being attacked (Ge 34:25). All three uses in Psalms speak of God enabling us to dwell securely (Ps. 4:8; Ps 16:9; Ps 78:53) "As a noun, it primarily means security or calm assurance (Ge 34:25; Isa 32:17). As an adjective, it means assurance or confidence. It is primarily a positive term: to dwell in safety because of God's protection (Lev. 25:18); to lie down safely or in security (Hos 2:18); to walk securely or assuredly (Pr. 10:9). In other instances, it is a negative term meaning to be too self-assured or careless (Ezek. 30:9; 39:6)" (Baker)

The beloved of the Lord.

Who is the beloved of the Lord? It is one who believes in the love that God has toward him.... Peter had a great idea of his own love to Christ; "though all men forsake thee, yet will I not forsake thee"; but John was content to speak of himself as the beloved of the Lord. "O Daniel, greatly beloved," said the angel to that man of God.... Do you hesitate to class yourself with Daniel and John? Tell

me, is there any greater expression of the love of God, than was given in the surrender of His Son to Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Calvary? Did Daniel or John ever receive any more affecting love token than this? Be only bold enough to know the love that was expressed when Christ tasted death for you, and you may without hesitation sit down beneath the same tree with Daniel and John, and expect them to listen while you speak of the Crucified One. BOWEN

Deuteronomy 33:12 Complete Safety - Faith's Checkbook

“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.”—Deuteronomy 33:12

YES, there is no safety like that which comes of dwelling near to God. For His best beloved, the Lord can find no surer or safer place. O Lord, let me always abide under thy shadow, close to thy wounded side. Nearer and nearer would I come to thee, my Lord; and when once specially near thee, I would abide there forever.

What a covering is that which the Lord gives to His chosen! Not a fair roof shall cover him, nor a bomb-proof casement, nor even an angel's wing, but Jehovah Himself. Nothing can come at us when we are thus covered. This covering the Lord will grant us all the day long, however long the day. Lord, let me abide this day consciously beneath this canopy of love, this pavilion of sovereign power.

Does the third clause mean that the Lord in His temple would dwell among the mountains of Benjamin, or that the Lord would be where Benjamin's burden should be placed; or does it mean that we are borne upon the shoulders of the Eternal? In any case, the Lord is the support and strength of His saints. Lord, let me ever enjoy thy help, and then my arms will be sufficient for me.

QUESTION - [Who was Benjamin in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Benjamin was a son of Jacob and head of one of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). Benjamin was the twelfth-born and youngest son in Jacob's family. He was born to Jacob's wife Rachel, making Benjamin the full brother of [Joseph](#). His story is found in Genesis chapters 35–49. It is here that we learn of his birth (Genesis 35); his relationship to his father and brothers (Genesis 37, 42–45); his relationship with Joseph (Genesis 43–45); his children (Genesis 46); and the blessing he received from his father (Genesis 46:21).

[Jacob](#) had two wives, Rachel and Leah. He loved Rachel with such fervor that he worked for her dad for seven years to earn the right to marry her (Genesis 29:18), seven years that “seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her” (Genesis 29:20). This love helps us to understand Jacob's affection for Benjamin, born to his beloved Rachel. Rachel had great difficulty in giving birth to Benjamin, although she did not know she would have another son. Her midwife told her that she was having another son. Rachel died in childbirth, as soon after she died in childbirth, but, as she was dying, she named her son Ben-Oni, which means “Son of My Trouble.” Jacob renamed him Benjamin, “Son of My Right Hand” (Genesis 35:18).

Benjamin was not part of the conspiracy concocted by his ten older brothers to kill their brother Joseph. Later, when the brothers had to travel to Egypt to seek food during a famine, Jacob's love for his youngest son compelled him to keep Benjamin home “because he was afraid that harm might come to him” (Genesis 42:4). The other brothers traveled to Egypt and met with the governor of Egypt (Joseph, whom his brothers did not recognize). Joseph tested his brothers by accusing them of spying and demanding that they prove their honesty by bringing Benjamin back with them: “You will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here” (Genesis 42:15). Joseph shut them all in prison for three days and then released all but Simeon. The others returned home with the grain they had purchased—and the money that Joseph had secretly returned to them (verse 25).

Back in Canaan, Jacob laments his predicament: “You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!” (Genesis 42:36). For a while, Jacob refused to allow Benjamin to make the trip back to Egypt (verse 38). He later relented when they ran out of grain and Judah promised to personally guarantee Benjamin's safe return (Genesis 43:8–9).

Upon arriving in Egypt, the brothers presented themselves to Joseph, who was still unrecognized by them. Joseph, as he greeted the brothers this second time, “looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, [and] he asked, ‘Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?’ And he said, ‘God be gracious to you, my son.’ Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep” (Genesis 43:29–30).

Joseph showed favor to Benjamin by preparing five times more food and drink for him than for his brothers when they gathered for dinner (Genesis 43:34). When it came time for the children of Israel to return to their father, Joseph used Benjamin as the means of further testing them. Joseph placed a silver cup in Benjamin's bag along with the money for the grain (Genesis 44:1–2). Joseph let his brothers set out on their journey and then sent a steward after them to feign outrage over the fact that they possessed stolen property. The brothers proclaimed their innocence, but, sure enough, the silver cup was found in Benjamin's possession; the

brothers tore their garments in grief (verses 3–13). As punishment for their “crime,” Joseph demanded that Benjamin remain in Egypt. But Judah—the same brother who had suggested years earlier that Joseph be sold into slavery—pleads with Joseph, saying, “Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord’s slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come on my father” (Genesis 44:33–34). So, the brothers passed the test; they demonstrated a true change of heart from the time when they had mistreated Joseph.

Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers: “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that . . . God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God” (Genesis 45:4–8). Joseph then instructed his brothers to bring their father and all they possessed to Egypt, and “he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping” (verse 14).

Years later in Egypt, as Jacob prepared to die, he blessed Benjamin, saying, “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder” (Genesis 49:27). The [tribe of Benjamin](#) became famous for their skill in battle and warlike nature. We learn more about Benjamin and the tribe of Benjamin throughout the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges. Descendants of Benjamin include [Ehud](#), one of the judges; [Saul](#), Israel’s first king; [Queen Esther](#); and the [apostle Paul](#). GotQuestions.org

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Benjamin?](#)

ANSWER In Genesis 49 the patriarch Jacob, sensing his impending death, gathers his sons to his bedside to bless them. Each son became the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Benjamin, as the youngest, receives his father’s blessing last: “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil” (Genesis 49:27). The warlike nature of the small tribe of Benjamin became well known, as exhibited in their swordsmen (Judges 20:15–16; 1 Chronicles 8:40, 12:2; 2 Chronicles 14:8, 17:17) and in their ungodly defense of their extreme wickedness in [Gibeah](#) (Judges 19–20).

Benjamin’s blessing has three parts. Compared to a wolf, his blessing has two time frames, morning and evening; it has two actions, devouring and dividing; and two outcomes, prey and spoil. This sets up a type of “before and after” experience for Benjamin and his offspring.

Scripture shows that at least four great people came from Benjamin’s tribe, even though it was the smallest of the twelve tribes (1 Samuel 9:21). First, Ehud, a great warrior who delivered Israel from Moab (Judges 3:12–30). Next, Saul becomes the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:15–27). In later Jewish history, many Jews lived in Persia, God used Mordecai and Esther, from the tribe of Benjamin, to deliver the Jews from death (Esther 2:5–7). Finally, in the New Testament the apostle Paul affirms he, too, came from Benjamin. “I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Romans 11:1). Paul repeats this affirmation in Philippians 3:4–5.

Yet Benjamin’s tribe had its dark side. Their warlike nature came out not only in defense of their country but also in depravity within their country. In Judges 19–21 Benjamin takes up an offence against the other eleven tribes of Israel, and civil war ensues. This period had the reputation of everyone doing what was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). What led to the civil war was the horrific abuse and death of an unnamed Levite’s concubine (Judges 19:10–28). The eleven tribes turned against the tribe of Benjamin and nearly annihilated them because of their refusal to give up the perpetrators (Judges 20:1–21:25). Eventually, the tribes restored Benjamin’s tribe, greatly diminished due to the war, and the country reunited.

In Jewish culture the day begins at evening. Here begins the “after” for Benjamin. Benjamin’s prophecy ends in the evening, the beginning of a new day, in which he will “divide the spoil.” This has two aspects. First, through the apostle Paul, who testifies, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). In the apostle Paul Benjamin’s tribe had a citizen who served God mightily, as he says of himself, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

But Benjamin’s “dividing of the spoil” has another fulfillment yet future. In Revelation 7:8, during the tribulation period, 12,000 men from Benjamin, along with 12,000 from each of the other tribes of Israel, will reach the world’s population with the gospel. The result will be a multitude of the saved “that no man could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). The second dividing of the spoil for Benjamin comes in the millennial kingdom when they will have a place in the land of Israel, along with a gate that has their name on it in the city of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 48:32). They, along with the other tribes of Israel, will find the ultimate dividing of the spoils in the New Jerusalem as each gate has a name of one of the tribes, Benjamin included (Revelation 21:12–13). What a glorious finish! What grace is this!

Benjamin has great truths to teach. First, God doesn't see as men see, for God looks on the heart. God saw a warrior inside of Benjamin. Outwardly, others saw him as the youngest son and his tribe as the smallest tribe. But God saw more, a man who would both devour and divide. The second lesson for us lies in the two Sauls who came from the tribe of Benjamin. King Saul, the epitome of the sin nature and its war against God, and Saul/Paul whose nature was changed by God from a murderous Pharisee to the apostle of grace. Paul is the example of what God does for those who come to Christ in faith. GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:13 Of Joseph he said, "Blessed of the LORD be his land, With the choice things of heaven, with the dew, And from the deep lying beneath,

- **Joseph** : Ge 48:5,9,15-20 49:22-26
- **the dew**: De 32:2 Ge 27:28,29 Job 29:19 Ps 110:3 Pr 3:20 19:12 Isa 18:4 Ho 14:5 Mic 5:7 Zec 8:12

BLESSING ON JOSEPH

The most space is devoted to Joseph and in Dt 33:17 is ultimately bestowed on Joseph's two sons in Egypt Ephraim and Manasseh. Dt 33:13-16 primarily speaks of agricultural blessings.

Of Joseph he said, "Blessed ([barak](#)) of the LORD be his land, With the choice things of heaven(with the harvest produced by the sky), **with the dew, And from the deep lying beneath** (NLT - water from beneath the earth) Technically, there is no tribe of Joseph. Instead, Joseph received a "double blessing," and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, each became his own tribe. The blessing is for a bountiful harvest with emphasis of the divine provision of water from above (rain) and below (springs, possibly wells). In the land of Palestine water was crucial for a bountiful harvest.

NET NOTE - Heb "from the harvest of the heavens." The referent appears to be good crops produced by the rain that falls from the sky.

Deuteronomy 33:13 Precious Things - Faith's Checkbook

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath."—Deuteronomy 33:13

WE may be rich in such things as Joseph obtained, and we may have them in a higher sense. Oh, for "the precious things of heaven!" Power with God, and the manifestation of power from God, are most precious. We would enjoy the peace of God, the joy of the Lord, the glory of our God. The benediction of the three divine Persons in love and grace and fellowship, we prize beyond the most fine gold. The things of earth are as nothing in preciousness compared with the things of heaven.

"The dew." How precious is this! How we pray and praise, when we have the dew! What refreshing, what growth, what perfume, what life there is in us when the dew is about! Above all things else, as plants of the Lord's own right hand planting, we need the dew of His Holy Spirit.

"The deep that coucheth beneath." Surely this refers to that unseen ocean underground which supplies all the fresh springs which make glad the earth. Oh to tap the eternal fountains! This is an unspeakable boon; let no believer rest till he possesses it. The all-sufficiency of Jehovah is ours forever. Let us resort to it now.

QUESTION - [Who was Joseph in the Old Testament?](#)

ANSWER - Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, his first son through his favored wife, Rachel. Joseph's story is found in Genesis 37—50. After the announcement of his birth, we see Joseph next as a seventeen-year-old returning from shepherding the flock with his half-brothers to give Jacob a bad report of them. We are also told that Jacob "loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him" (Genesis 37:3). Joseph's brothers knew their father loved Joseph more than them, which caused them to hate him (Genesis 37:4). To make matters worse, Joseph began relating his dreams to the family—prophetic visions showing Joseph one day ruling over his family (Genesis 37:5–11).

The animosity toward Joseph peaked when his brothers plotted to kill him in the wilderness. Reuben, the eldest, objected to outright murder and suggested they throw Joseph into a cistern, as he planned to come back and rescue the boy. But, in Reuben's absence, some merchants passed by, and Judah suggested selling Joseph into slavery; the brothers accomplished the task before Reuben could rescue him. The boys took Joseph's robe and, after dipping the robe in goat's blood, deceived their father into thinking his

favorite son had been slain by wild beasts (Genesis 37:18–35).

Joseph was sold by the merchants to a high-ranking Egyptian named Potiphar and eventually became the supervisor of Potiphar's household. In Genesis 39 we read of how Joseph excelled at his duties, became one of Potiphar's most trusted servants, and was put in charge of his household. Potiphar could see that, whatever Joseph did, God looked favorably on him and he prospered in all that he did. Unfortunately, Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph. Joseph consistently refused her advances, showing honor for the master who had entrusted him with so much and saying that it would be "a wicked thing and a sin against God" for him to go to bed with Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:9). One day Potiphar's wife caught Joseph by the cloak and again made sexual advances. Joseph fled, leaving his cloak in her hand. In anger, she falsely accused Joseph of attempted rape, and Potiphar put him in prison (Genesis 39:7–20).

In jail, Joseph was again blessed by God (Genesis 39:21–23). Joseph interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners. Both interpretations proved to be true, and one of the men was later released from jail and restored to his position as the king's cupbearer (Genesis 40:1–23). But the cupbearer forgot about Joseph and failed to speak to Pharaoh about him. Two years later, the king himself had some troubling dreams, and the cupbearer remembered Joseph's gift of interpretation. The king summoned Joseph and related his dreams. Based on Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph predicted seven years of bountiful harvests followed by seven years of severe famine in Egypt and advised the king to begin storing grain in preparation for the coming dearth (Genesis 41:1–37). For his wisdom, Joseph was made a ruler in Egypt, second only to the king. Joseph was in charge of storing up food during the years of plenty and selling it to Egyptians and foreigners during the years of famine (Genesis 41:38–57). During these years of plenty Joseph had two sons—Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 41:50–52).

When the famine struck, even Canaan was affected. Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain (Genesis 42:1–3). He kept Benjamin, his youngest and the only other son of Rachel, behind (Genesis 42:4). While in Egypt, the men met their long-lost brother, whom they did not recognize. Joseph, however, did recognize his brothers. He tested them by accusing them of being spies. He confined them for three days then released all but one, sending with them grain for their households and requiring them to come back with their youngest brother (Genesis 42:6–20). Still unaware of Joseph's identity, the brothers were afflicted with guilt for having sold their brother years before (Genesis 42:21–22). Joseph overheard their discussion and turned aside to weep (Genesis 42:23–24). He retained Simeon and sent the others on their way, secretly returning their money to their grain sacks (Genesis 42:25). When the brothers later realized the money had been returned, they feared even more (Genesis 42:26–28, 35). Once home, they told Jacob all that had transpired. Jacob mourned again the loss of Joseph and the added loss of Simeon. He refused to send Benjamin, despite Reuben's promise that, if he did not return with Benjamin, Jacob could kill Reuben's two sons (Genesis 42:35–38).

The famine became so severe that Jacob acquiesced. Judah persuaded Jacob to send Benjamin with him, giving his own life as a pledge (Genesis 43:1–10). Jacob agreed, sending also choice fruits and double the money for the grain (Genesis 43:11–14). When Joseph saw the men, he instructed his servants to slaughter an animal and prepare a meal for the brothers to dine with him (Genesis 43:15–17). Afraid at the invitation to Joseph's house, the brothers made apologies to Joseph's steward for the money that had been replaced the first time. Joseph's steward reassured them and brought Simeon out (Genesis 43:18–25). When Joseph returned, the brothers bowed to him, fulfilling his earlier prophecy (Genesis 43:26). He asked about their family's welfare and again wept, this time removing himself to his chamber (Genesis 43:27–30). When the men sat down for the meal, at a separate table from Joseph, they were amazed to be arranged by birth order. Benjamin was given five times the portion the other brothers received (Genesis 43:31–34). Before sending them back to their father, Joseph again tested his brothers by returning their money to their grain sacks and placing his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. He let the brothers start on their journey and then sent his steward after them to feign anger and threaten to kill Benjamin. Back in Joseph's presence, Judah pleaded for Benjamin's life, saying that, if Benjamin were to die, so would Jacob. Judah told of Jacob's grief over the loss of Joseph and his belief that he could not bear to lose Joseph's brother. Judah also spoke of his pledge to Jacob and offered his life for Benjamin's (Genesis 44).

Upon seeing this proof of his brothers' change of heart, Joseph sent all his servants away and wept openly and loudly enough to be heard by Pharaoh's household. He then revealed himself to his brothers (Genesis 45:1–3). Joseph immediately reassured them, telling them not to be angry with themselves for what they'd done to him and saying that God had sent him to Egypt in order to preserve them (Genesis 45:4–8). Joseph reaffirmed his forgiveness years later, after the death of his father, saying that, although his brothers intended evil to him, God had intended it for good (Genesis 50:15–21). Joseph sent his brothers back to Jacob to retrieve the remainder of his household to come live in Goshen, where they would be near to Joseph and he could provide for them (Genesis 45:9–47:12).

Jacob did come to live in Egypt with all of his family. Before he died, Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons and gave thanks to God for His goodness: "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too" (Genesis 48:11). Jacob gave the greater blessing to the younger of the two sons (verses 12–20). Later in the history of Israel, Ephraim and Manasseh, the tribes of Joseph, were often considered two distinct tribes. Jacob's descendants lived in Egypt for 400 years, until the time of Moses. When Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt, he took the remains of Joseph with him, as Joseph had requested

(Genesis 50:24–25; cf. Exodus 13:19). In asking that he be buried in Canaan, Joseph showed great faith that God would bring His people back to the Promised Land (Hebrews 11:22).

There is much to learn from Joseph's story. As parents, we have warnings concerning Jacob's favoritism and the effects that can have on other children as seen in Joseph's youthful pride and his brothers' envy and hatred. We have a good example of how to handle sexual temptation—run (Genesis 39:12; cf. 2 Timothy 2:22), and we have a clear picture of God's faithfulness. He does not forsake His children, even in the midst of suffering: "The Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:3, 5, 21, 23).

There may be many distressing circumstances we find ourselves in, and some of them may even be unjust, as were those in Joseph's life. However, as we learn from the account of Joseph's life, by remaining faithful and accepting that God is ultimately in charge, we can be confident that God will reward our faithfulness in the fullness of time. Who would blame Joseph if he had turned his brothers away in their need? Yet Joseph showed them mercy, and God desires that we exercise mercy above all other sacrifices (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13).

Joseph's story also presents amazing insight into how God sovereignly works to overcome evil and bring about His plan. After all his ordeals, Joseph was able to see God's hand at work. As he revealed his identity to his brothers, Joseph spoke of their sin this way: "Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. . . . It was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:5, 8). Later, Joseph again reassured his brothers, offering forgiveness and saying, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Man's most wicked intentions can never thwart the perfect plan of God. [| GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Joseph?](#)

ANSWER - Technically, there is no tribe of Joseph. Instead, Joseph received a "double blessing," and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, each became his own tribe (Genesis 48; Joshua 14:4; Ezekiel 47:13). The Bible does, on occasion, refer to a "tribe of Joseph" (Numbers 13:11; 36:5; Revelation 7:8). However, in the contexts, the "tribe of Joseph" seems to be referring to either the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh, or to the "house of Joseph," which included Ephraim and Manasseh. When Jacob directed a prophecy toward each of his sons, he gave Joseph one of the longest: "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers" (Genesis 49:22–26). As with all Jacob's prophecies to his sons, the one to the tribe/house of Joseph contains lessons for all of us.

Joseph, the "prince among his brothers" was the second to the youngest of the twelve. Joseph's life, the history of his conflict with his brothers, his captivity, and the subsequent victory God brought about through his trials are well documented in Genesis, chapters 37–51. Jacob begins his prophecy by comparing Joseph to a fruitful vine, or young tree. God had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction (Genesis 41:52). Joseph's two sons were as branches of a vine running over the wall. Then Jacob proceeds to remind the other brothers of their ill treatment of Joseph. They are among the "archers" who attacked Joseph with bitterness and hostility, along with Potiphar's wife, whose false accusations sent him to prison for two years (Genesis 39; 41:1).

But through all these troubles, Joseph's strength is compared to a bow that remained steady. That is, his faith did not fail, but he stood his ground and emerged a conqueror. His arms remained strong and limber, a metaphor for his wisdom, courage, and patience. In short, Joseph maintained both his integrity and his comfort through all his trials, bearing all his burdens with an invincible resolution, and did not sink under the weight of them. The source of this strength was the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, who was always present to strengthen him. Joseph reminds us that all our strength for resisting temptations and bearing up under afflictions comes from God. His grace is sufficient, and His strength is perfected in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

From his afflictions, and by the power of God, Joseph fed and supported God's people—the nation of Israel as it existed at that time in Jacob and his family—during the famine that devastated the land. Joseph could be seen as an illustration of Christ, who was also shot at and hated, but who bore up under His sufferings (Isaiah 50:7–9) and became the Good Shepherd and the Rock and Redeemer of His people.

Joseph's sufferings also symbolize and foreshadow the church in general, as well as individual believers. The true church of Christ has always been persecuted by Satan, beginning with the extensive persecution of the first century under the Romans. But even in times of relative peace for the church, the enemy still shoots his arrows against the saints, but God protects and strengthens us and will bring us safely home by His power.

Jacob ends the prophecy for the tribe of Joseph with a series of blessings. He prophesies blessings of the heavens above, the deep below, and the breast and womb, all referring to the temporal blessings of fruitfulness and bounty that was the future for the tribe of Joseph. Years later, Moses gave these same promises of bountiful blessings to the tribe of Joseph (Deuteronomy 33:13–16), reiterating that Joseph was a “prince among his brothers.” Jewish history tells us that the territory of the tribe of Joseph was one of the most valuable parts of the country, and the house of Joseph became the most dominant group in the kingdom of Israel. Joseph reminds us that all blessings, both temporal and spiritual, come from God. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17). May we all be as steadfast and strong as Joseph, bearing up under affliction and reaping the reward of God’s eternal blessings. GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:14 And with the choice yield of the sun, and with the choice produce of the months.

- **the choice yield** : De 28:8 Lev 26:4 2Sa 23:4 Ps 65:9-13 74:16 84:11 Mal 4:2 Mt 5:45 Ac 14:17 1Ti 6:17
- **months** - Ps 8:3 104:19 Rev 22:2

And with the choice yield (choicest fruits - ESV; bountiful harvest - CSB) **of the sun, and with the choice produce** (rich yield - ESV) **of the months** - "with the harvest produced by the daylight and by the moonlight" (Dt 33:14NET) **Months** is yerah which is actually a "lunar month" the time between successive new moons (Mariam "hid him [Moses] fro three [lunar] months." Ex 2:2).

NET NOTE on **months** - Heb “the moon.” Many English versions regard this as a reference to “months” (“moons”) rather than the moon itself (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

Deuteronomy 33:15 "And with the best things of the ancient mountains, And with the choice things of the everlasting hills,

- Ge 49:26 Hab 3:6 Jas 5:7

And with the best things (finest produce) **of the ancient mountains, And with the choice things** (abundance) **of the everlasting hills** (harvest produced by the age-old hills- NET) The **best things** from the **mountains** probably refers to timber for building houses, etc.

Deuteronomy 33:16 And with the choice things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let it come to the head of Joseph, And to the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.

- **the earth**: Ps 24:1 50:12 89:11 Jer 8:16 *marg: 1Co 10:26,28
- **favor**: Ex 3:2-4 Mk 12:26 Lu 2:14 Ac 7:30-33,35 2Co 12:7-10
- **he crown of the head**: Ge 37:28,36 39:2,3 43:32 45:9-11 49:26
- **distinguished among his brothers.**: Heb 7:26

Related Passage:

Exodus 3:2-4 The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.” 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

And with the choice things of the earth and its fullness, and the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush- " the pleasure of him who resided in the burning bush" (Dt 33:16NET) The Hebrew word for bush occurs in only 4 verses (Ex 3:2, 3, 4, Dt 33:16), so clearly the **bush** here is the burning **bush** marking the presence of the [Angel of the LORD](#).

Let it come to the head of Joseph, And to the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers- Moses repeats Jacob's blessing in Ge 49:26 "The blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; **May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.**"

Wiersbe - The phrase "separated from his brethren" can also be translated "a prince among his brethren." This was true not only literally in Egypt but also spiritually and morally in the family. He was a godly man. ([Be Equipped](#))

NET NOTE on **distinguished** - This apparently refers to Joseph's special status among his brothers as a result of his being chosen by God to save the family from the famine and to lead Egypt.

Deuteronomy 33:17 "As the firstborn of his ox, majesty is his, And his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he will push the peoples, All at once, to the ends of the earth. And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And those are the thousands of Manasseh."

- **the firstborn:** 1Ch 5:1
- **his horns:** Nu 23:22 24:8 Job 39:9,10 Ps 22:21 29:6 92:10 Isa 34:7
- **push:** 1Ki 22:11 2Ch 18:10 Ps 44:5
- **the ten thousands:** Ge 48:19 Nu 26:34,37 Ho 5:3 6:4 7:1

Related Passages:

Genesis 48:19-20 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." 20 He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.



Ephraim & Manasseh - Click to Enlarge
Look at map showing shrinking of the lands
of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh by 830 BC!

ANIMAL METAPHORS APPLIED TO EPHRAIM & MANASSEH

As the firstborn of his ox, majesty is his, And his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he will push the peoples, All at once, to the ends of the earth. And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And those are the thousands of Manasseh." - **Manasseh** was the firstborn and **Ephraim** the younger son. Recall that in Ge 48:17-20 Jacob bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on the "second born" Ephraim which accounts for Moses mentioning him before his older brother Manasseh and also bestowing a greater number (**ten thousands**) on Ephraim.

Wiersbe - Moses compared Joseph and his sons ("his glory") to a beautiful firstborn bull with sharp horns that defeat every enemy....The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were known for their fruitful lands, their large flocks and herds, and their military power. Unfortunately, they were proud of their ancestry and occasionally refused to cooperate with the other tribes and thereby created problems for the nation. ([Be Equipped](#))

Horns is used in Scripture both literally and figuratively. In the latter sense at least three meanings appear: (1) strength in general (as here in Dt 33:17); (2) arrogant pride (Ps 75:4, 5); (3) political and military power (Da 8:20,21).

Deere interprets this passage as "Moses then prayed for the military success of Joseph, pictured like a ... bull or ox goring the nations. " ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

[Utley](#) has an interesting comment on the phrase **the ends of the earth** which is composed of two words which have "powerful theological significance."

1. uniqueness of YHWH (and thereby monotheism)

- a. Isa. 45:6, 14; 46:9; 47:8, 10
- b. Zeph. 2:15

2. the power and glory of YHWH

- a. Pro. 30:4
- b. many of those under #3

3. the extension of YHWH's worship and rule to all the earth

- a. Deut. 33:17
- b. 1 Sam. 2:10
- c. Ps. 22:25–31; 59:13; 67:1–7; 98:2–9
- d. Isa. 45:22; 52:10
- e. Jer. 16:19

4. Messianic

- a. 1 Sam. 2:10
- b. Ps. 2:8
- c. Micah 5:4–5

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Ephraim?](#)

ANSWER - Israel's [twelve tribes](#) were named for Jacob's children or, in the case of [Ephraim](#) (and Manasseh), his grandchildren. Ephraim was born in Egypt to Joseph's wife, Asenath. Joseph named his second-born son "Ephraim" because "God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering" (Genesis 41:52). When Jacob gave his blessing to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, he chose to bless the younger Ephraim first, despite Joseph's protests. In doing so, Jacob noted that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh (Genesis 48:5–21).

Throughout the Old Testament, the name *Ephraim* often refers to the ten tribes comprising Israel's Northern Kingdom, not just the single tribe named after Joseph's son (Ezekiel 37:16; Hosea 5:3). The Northern Kingdom, also referred to as "Israel," was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC (Jeremiah 7). The Southern Kingdom, also known as Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians nearly 140 years later (586 BC).

We learn from the tribe of Ephraim (and the other tribes) about our human essence, who we are as people. The history of the early Israelites reflects our universally flawed and sinful nature. As the book of Romans says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

There are several specific events regarding the tribe of Ephraim that we can learn from. While God gifted the tribe as warriors and valiant fighters (1 Chronicles 12:30), Ephraim failed to follow God's order to remove the Canaanites from the Promised Land (Exodus 23:23–25; Judges 1:29; Joshua 16:10).

During the time of the judges, the Ephraimites became angry with Gideon because he had not initially called for their help in battling the Midianites (Judges 8:1). Gideon wisely displayed godly kindness and extolled the tribe's commitment and willingness to serve the Lord, thus diffusing what could have become an ugly situation (Judges 8:2–3).

However, ugliness did arise later, and again it can be linked to Ephraim's pride, jealousy, and self-centeredness. When Jephthah chose to fight (and defeat) the Ammonites without the aid of the proud Ephraim warriors, a civil war erupted, and 42,000 warriors from Ephraim were killed. As Jesus said in His [Sermon on the Mount](#), we are to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). Do not seek glory for yourself; all honor and glory always belong to God, not to man.

Often, God chooses to use us in a manner less glamorous or spectacular than we would like. Do we pout? Do we yearn for glory? Do we control our pride and jealousy and accept God's will? Many of us, like the Ephraimites, have difficulty learning those lessons well. God says that we should accept what happens to us as His will, regardless of how good or bad those circumstances seem to us (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Other lessons of Ephraim complete the picture of the wide range of human behavior. We see Ephraim turning away from God and doing wicked things (Isaiah 28:1–3), yet we also find the tribe recognizing the need to repent and obey by following the prophet Oded's instructions (2 Chronicles 28:12).

The biggest lesson from the history of Ephraim is that God loves us as the Perfect Father despite our failings. He is patient and

merciful beyond our understanding. He hears our cries of anguish, disciplines and guides us, knows our moments of repentance, and yearns for us to be in perfect communion with Him (Jeremiah 30:22; 31:18–20). GotQuestions.org

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Manasseh?](#)

ANSWER - Israel's twelve tribes were named for Jacob's children or, in the case of [Manasseh](#) (and Ephraim), his grandchildren. After Jacob wrestled with Him all night, God renamed Jacob "Israel," which means "you have struggled with God and men and have overcome" (Genesis 32:22–30). The name Israel represents not only the modern-day country but also, originally, Jacob's offspring to whom God promised a great nation whose "descendants will be like dust of the earth . . . spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south" (Genesis 28:14).

Jacob's grandson, for whom the tribe was named, was born in Egypt to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, daughter of the priest Potiphera. Joseph named his firstborn "Manasseh" because God had made him "forget all my trouble and all my father's household" (Genesis 41:51).

This tribe provides us with many lessons; chief among them are messages about free will, obedience, faith, and the nature of God.

Early on, we learn that Manasseh is frequently referred to as the "half-tribe" of Manasseh. This designation highlights the choice made by some of the tribe to reside east of the River Jordan (Numbers 32:33; Joshua 13: 29–31). They believed the Transjordan was the more suitable land to raise their flocks. The rest of the tribe settled west of the Jordan, in Canaan, following Joshua's command to enter and possess the Promised Land. As is evident throughout Scripture, God endows His children with the freedom to choose.

Exercising free will can lead to undesirable or even disastrous results, especially if we disobey God or make selfish choices. Manasseh learned this lesson—painfully—when they failed to obey God's command to destroy the Canaanites. Part of this failure was due to a lack of faith that God would give them strength to overcome a seemingly unconquerable foe. Manasseh illustrates other human failings as well, such as greed and covetousness. The (half) tribe of Manasseh desired more land because they were "a numerous people." They may have had the numbers, but they were unwilling to follow Joshua's exhortation to clear "the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites" (Joshua 17:12-18).

On the other hand, the tribe of Manasseh at times exhibits faithfulness to God. Gideon, who would later become one of Israel's best judges, questioned God when called to "save Israel out of Midian's hand." One of Gideon's objections was that his "clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (Judges 6:15). Gideon required proof from God—twice—before he acted (Judges 6:36–40). Once convinced of God's will, Gideon moved forward with 32,000 troops to conquer the Midianites. But then God told Gideon that he had too many troops for the job, and God reduced his corps to a mere 300 men. Following God's lead, this paltry force routed the enemy. The battle proved God was with Gideon and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Other interesting lessons emerge. One is that God is just. Zelophehad, great-great-grandson of Manasseh, had no sons and died in the desert before entering the Promised Land. His daughters petitioned Moses, asking that the practice of male inheritance be changed so they could receive their deceased father's property. After consulting with the Lord, Moses agreed and developed rules designed to keep property within a family (Numbers 27:1–11). GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:18 Of Zebulun he said, "**Rejoice**, Zebulun, in your going forth, **And**, Issachar, in your tents.

- Ge 49:13-15 Jos 19:11 Jdg 5:14

Related Passages:

Genesis 49:13-15 "**Zebulun** will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon. 14 "**Issachar** is a strong donkey, Lying down between the sheepfolds. 15 "When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor.

Judges 5:14-15 From Ephraim those whose root is in Amalek came down, Following you, Benjamin, with your peoples; From Machir commanders came down, And from **Zebulun** those who wield the staff of office. 15 "And the princes of **Issachar** were with Deborah; As was **Issachar**, so was Barak; Into the valley they rushed at his heels; Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart.



Zebulun & Issachar - Click to Enlarge

COMMAND TO ZEBULUN AND ISSACHAR TO REJOICE

Of Zebulun he said, **"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going forth, and, Issachar, in your tents-** In the arrangement of Israel's camp around the Tabernacle, the tribes of **Zebulun** and **Issachar** were united with Judah in the leading division (Nu 2:3-9). Most of the uses of **rejoice** (*samah*) in Deuteronomy describe joy in the presence of Jehovah (a good pattern for all of us!) Note the combination of going forth (one's life outside - work life) and in your tents (one's life inside - home life), this combination calling for a completely joyful life in all circumstances (a good pattern for all of us!). Notice the implication. Since this is a command, God would give the wherewithal to fulfill the command indicating " that these two tribes could expect God's blessing in their daily lives." (Deere [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

THOUGHT - Would all God's children have the blessing bestowed on Zebulun and Issachar! Amen.

[Uitley](#) suggests that in this passage **rejoice** "is used in the sense of "enjoy the good, safe abundance of life.""

Rejoice (Lxx = [euphraino](#))(08055) **samah** means to rejoice; to be joyful, to be glad; to gloat. It describes a state and agitation of rejoicing, of being happy: of people (1 Sam. 11:9); of tribes of Israel (Deut. 33:18); of God rejoicing in His works (Ps. 104:31); of people rejoicing in the Lord Himself (Deut. 12:12; Ps. 32:11).

QUESTION - [Who was Zebulun in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Zebulun was the sixth son of Jacob by his wife Leah and the tenth of all Jacob's sons. Zebulun's birth came during the ongoing rivalry between sisters [Rachel and Leah](#) for their husband's attention. So upon Zebulun's birth, Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons" (Genesis 30:20, NASB). Leah uses a play on words here: "God has endowed (*zabad*) me with a good gift (*zebed*), and now my husband will dwell (*zabal*) with me." The name *Zebulun* means "dwell" (also translated "honor") and sounds much like the Hebrew words for "gift" and "endowed."

The Bible does not provide many details concerning Zebulun's life. We know that Zebulun was among the older brothers who [conspired to kill](#) their younger brother, Joseph, because of jealousy (Genesis 37:4). In the end, they did not kill him but sold him to some traders headed to Egypt (Genesis 37:26). Zebulun and his brothers had evil motives, but God used their wicked plan to save the entire nation of Israel (Genesis 50:20). Although Zebulun is not mentioned by name in this account, he had an equal part in the deception and was also present decades later when they were reunited with the brother they thought dead.

Jacob pronounced a blessing on each of his [twelve sons](#) before he died. To Zebulun he said, "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon" (Genesis 49:13). Zebulun had three sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel (Genesis 46:14). Their descendants became the tribe of Zebulun. Centuries later, the tribe of Zebulun was given an allotment within the Promised Land. Their eastern border was the Sea of Galilee, and their western border eventually stretched to the Mediterranean (Joshua 19:10–16).

Before he died, Moses also blessed the tribe of Zebulun, saying, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out" (Deuteronomy 33:18). Once settled in their land, the tribe of Zebulun became traders and sailors and profited much by the seagoing trade.

During the wandering in the wilderness, the tribe of Zebulun was led by Eliab son of Elon, and they numbered 57,400 (Numbers 2:7). During the time of the judges, the prophetess Deborah advised the commander of the army to take men from Naphtali and Zebulun to go against the enemy (Judges 4:4–7). They were considered brave risk-takers (Judges 5:18).

Although Zebulun's name is rarely mentioned in Scripture, he was part of the foundation God built for a nation that would one day produce His Son, Jesus Christ. The twelve tribes of Israel, founded in Genesis, are still prominent in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 21:12, John describes the New Jerusalem, and Zebulun is represented: "It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel."

Zebulun's name is inscribed in heaven, not because of the good he did or the life he lived. He is important in heaven because God chose him to be part of His plan to redeem mankind. We can learn from Zebulun's life that God's plans far supersede our ideas of why we are here. Despite our mistakes and rebellion, God's plans go forward (Isaiah 46:9–11). He is working out His will for His creation, and we are each a part of that grand scheme. GotQuestions.org

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Zebulun?](#)

ANSWER Zebulun is one of Israel's twelve tribes. In the time of Moses, Zebulun was divided into three clans: the Seredites, the Elonites, and the Jahleelites, named after Zebulun's sons (Numbers 26:26). The tribes were named for Jacob's children (or grandchildren, in the cases of Ephraim and Manasseh).

Jacob's tenth son, Zebulun, was the youngest of six sons borne by Leah. When Zebulun was born, Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons" (Genesis 30:20). Zebulun means "dwelling" or "honor."

Zebulun was one of six tribes chosen to stand on Mount Ebal and pronounce curses (Deuteronomy 27:13). By means of these curses, the people promised God they would refrain from certain behaviors. For example, one curse says, "Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol – a thing detestable to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 27:15). Another states, "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow" (Deuteronomy 27:19). Still another: "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out" (Deuteronomy 27:26). In all, Zebulun helped deliver twelve admonishments of this sort (Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

Upon entering the Promised Land, Zebulun failed to drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron and Nahalol, although Zebulun did subject them to forced labor (Judges 1:30). This was incomplete obedience to God's clear command to drive out all the inhabitants of the land (Numbers 33:52). Not responding fully to God's Word, as Zebulun demonstrated, is a trait to which we all can relate. How often do we choose to follow our own paths for various reasons, many of which may not be in concert with God's wishes?

Later, Zebulun returned to God and followed His commands. They participated in the battles led by Deborah and Barak, and they fought valiantly (Judges 4:6; 5:18). The judge Elon was a Zebulunite (Judges 12:11). During the kingdom years, Zebulun joined David at Hebron to transfer Saul's kingdom to David (1 Chronicles 12:23, 33, 40). This, too, provides insight into our behavior. While at times we turn away from God, His love for us, and ours for Him, draws us back into communion with Him and compliance with His will.

Zebulun's territory was located in what later became known as Galilee, in Northern Israel. Moses' blessing on the tribe was that they would prosper in their overseas dealings with Gentile nations (Deuteronomy 33:18-19). Isaiah prophesied, "In the past [God] humbled the land of Zebulun . . . but in the future he will honor Galilee" (Isaiah 9:1). Isaiah's prediction is Messianic: Galilee (including Zebulun) would be honored as the first to hear Christ's preaching, and this would more than compensate for their humiliation at the hands of the Assyrians centuries before.

Numerous verses in the Bible, especially in the Psalms, extol God for His unfailing patience, love, and faithfulness. Indirectly, Zebulun's history reminds us that God is always present when we return to Him. No matter how battered or bruised we may be or how ashamed we may feel about past transgressions, God can still use us. GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:18

It certainly is not possible for us to be in a position where Omnipotence cannot assist us. God has servants everywhere. There are "treasures hid in the sand" (Deut. 33:19), and the Lord's chosen shall eat thereof. When the clouds hide the mountains, they are as real as in the sunshine, so the promise and the providence of God are unchanged by the obscurity of our faith or the difficulties of our position. There is hope, and hope at hand; therefore, let us be of good cheer. When we are at our worst, let us trust with unshaking faith. Recollect that then is the time when we can most glorify God by faith. (Spurgeon - Daily Help)

F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 33:18–29. Zebulun and Issachar, sons of Leah, were neighbors in Canaan, and, being on the seaboard, became wealthy by commerce. The calling of the peoples may refer to the Gentile proselytes who were influenced by these tribes, 1 Kings 5:1–6; Mark 7:26.

The blessing of the other tribes is suggested by their position in Canaan: Gad, the leader of the west; Dan, standing on the southern frontier, like a lion at bay; Naphtali, possessing the sea of Galilee, see R. V. margin; Asher on the northwest, with mountain barriers against invasion. "Iron and brass!"

Let your soul dwell in the timeless, changeless, tireless God. There is none like him. He will ride through heaven to help you, will thrust out the enemies that resist your progress, will be your fountain and dew, your corn and wine, and will place beneath you arms as tender as they are loving. However low you fall, they will always be underneath. As your day, so your strength!

Deuteronomy 33:18 Going Out with Joy - Faith's Checkbook

"And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out."—Deuteronomy 33:18

THE blessings of the tribes are ours (BY APPLICATION); for we are those who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. Zebulun is to rejoice because Jehovah will bless his going out; we also see a promise for ourselves lying latent in this benediction. When we go out, we will look out for occasions of joy.

We go out to travel, and the providence of God is our convoy. We go out to emigrate, and the Lord is with us both on land and sea. We go out as missionaries, and Jesus saith, "Lo, I am with you unto the end of the world." We go out day by day to our labor, and we may do so with pleasure, for God will be with us from morn till eve.

A fear sometimes creeps over us when starting, for we know not what we may meet with; but this blessing may serve us right well as a word of good cheer. As we pack up for moving, let us put this verse into our traveling trunk; let us drop it into our hearts and keep it there; yea, let us lay it on our tongue to make us sing. Let us weigh anchor with a song or jump into the carriage with a psalm. Let us belong to the rejoicing tribe and, in our every movement, praise the Lord with joyful hearts.

QUESTION - [Who was Issachar in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER Issachar was [Jacob's](#) ninth son and ancestor of one of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). In Hebrew, *Issachar* means either "man of reward" or "hired man." His name is associated with the circumstances of his birth.

Issachar's mother was [Leah](#). After she gave birth to her fourth son, Judah, Leah stopped having children and was presumed to be barren (Genesis 29:35). One day her oldest son, Reuben, came across [mandrakes](#) in the field. In folk medicine, these flowering herbs were thought to enhance a woman's fertility. Reuben picked the mandrakes and brought them to his mother. Leah and her younger sister, [Rachel](#), argued over the mandrakes, but finally came to an agreement. Leah would give Rachel some of the mandrakes as a reward or payment for allowing Leah to sleep with their husband, Jacob. That night, Leah became pregnant and later gave Jacob her fifth (and his ninth) son, Issachar (Genesis 30:14–18).

As a Bible character, Issachar plays almost no role in the family story. We know he fathered four sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron (Genesis 46:13). To escape the famine, Issachar joined Jacob in relocating his family to Egypt, where Issachar eventually died and was buried. Later his body was moved to Shechem with the rest of the patriarchs (Acts 7:16).

Like his brothers, Issachar received a blessing from his father before Jacob's death: "Issachar is a rawboned donkey lying down among the sheep pens. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor" (Genesis 49:14–15). The blessing seems more like a curse, possibly indicating that the tribe of Issachar was forced to work for a Canaanite king at some point.

The territory of the tribe of Issachar, described in Joshua 19:17–23, incorporated the fertile eastern section of the valley of the Jezreel River, a western tributary of the Jordan, with Mount Tabor to the north and the Jordan River to the east.

Issachar shared a border and close connection with the tribe of Zebulun. This link is evident in the common blessing given by Moses before this death: "About Zebulun he said: 'Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents. They will summon peoples to the mountain and there offer the sacrifices of the righteous; they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand'" (Deuteronomy 33:18–19).

Issachar was a large tribe. Its battle-ready men numbered 54,400 in the first census (Numbers 1:29). By the time of the second census, it had increased to 64,400 (Numbers 26:25). During the reign of King David, Issachar's mighty men numbered 87,000 (1 Chronicles 7:5).

In the time of the judges, Issachar's tribe joined with Deborah and Barak to defeat Jabin, the king of Hazor (Judges 5:15). From Issachar's tribe came a later judge, Tola (Judges 10:1–2), as well as two kings of Israel, Baasha and his son Elah (1 Kings 15:27 – 16:14). As one of the northern tribes in the divided kingdom, Issachar was taken into captivity when the northern kingdom fell.

There is a brief mention in the Bible of another man named Issachar: a Levite and descendant of Korah. This Issachar was one of the door-keepers of the temple. He is listed as the seventh son of Obed-edom and was one of the “capable men with the strength to do the work” (1 Chronicles 26:8).

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QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Issachar?](#)

ANSWER Each of the twelve sons of Israel / Jacob received a blessing from his father just before Jacob’s death. The twelve sons were the progenitors of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#), and Jacob’s blessings contained prophetic information about each tribe. In the case of the tribe of [Issachar](#), Jacob prophesied, “Issachar is a rawboned donkey, lying down between two burdens; He saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, and became a band of slaves” (Genesis 49:14-15).

The first part of the prophecy about the tribe of Issachar, whose name means either “he will bring a reward” or “man of wages,” is somewhat obscure. The word translated “rawboned” in the NIV is translated “strong” in other versions. It can also mean “bony” as in “nothing but skin and bones.” Therefore, the prophecy could either mean that the descendants of Issachar would be strong and robust, able to bear burdens, or that they would be thin and weak and unable to do so.

The image of a donkey lying down between its burdens can also be interpreted two ways. On one hand, it could portray a sturdy animal resting for the task ahead. On the other hand, donkeys also are known to stubbornly crouch between their burdens to keep from having to do the work! Again, the prophecy eludes a dogmatic interpretation. The subsequent history of Issachar in the Bible does not conclusively favor either construal.

As for the second part of the prophecy, some commentators believe it is an indication that the descendants of Issachar would be farmers—the reference to “a band of slaves” means they would be servants of the land. Others see it as a prediction of forced labor, although nothing in Scripture indicates that the tribe of Issachar was ever forced into slavery of any kind. In fact, the Hebrew wording is so obscure that English translations vary widely. Consider the following:

KJV: “Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

ESV: “Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds. He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant at forced labor.”

NASB: “Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between the sheepfolds. When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor.”

NIV: “Issachar is a rawboned donkey lying down between two saddlebags. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor.”

There is another reference to the men of Issachar during the time of David’s struggle against Saul (1 Chronicles 12:32). The two hundred chiefs of Issachar who are faithful to David are described as those who “understood the times and knew what Israel should do.” Scholars are divided on the meaning of the phrase “understood the times.” Some portray the men of Issachar as politically astute, knowing how to use current events to their own advantage. Others interpret the phrase to mean they were known for their understanding of astronomy and physical science. Still others see them as men of prudence and wisdom who, because of their religious scholarship, knew that this was the proper time for David to become king. The truth is that we really don’t know for sure.

As part of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the territory of Issachar was conquered by the Assyrians around 720 B.C. and the tribe exiled. After that, all explicit biblical references to the tribe cease.

How are we to understand these references to Issachar and their different interpretations, and what do they mean to us as Christians? First, it’s important to understand that Jacob’s prophecies to his sons were just that—prophecies to his sons. We should be very careful when applying Old Testament passages to the Church Age or to Christians in general. We can, however, glean certain general principles regarding work and its rewards. The Bible makes it clear that work is a gift from God for the benefit of His people (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13; 5:18-20) and those who don’t work shouldn’t eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The Bible contains numerous references to those who work as reaping rewards, both in the temporal and spiritual realms (2 Chronicles 15:7; 1 Corinthians 3:8,14; 2 John 1:8; Revelation 2:23; 22:12).

There are some who would point to the different translations of Genesis 49:14-15 as evidence of the unreliability of the Bible. However, it must be remembered that such cases of obscurity are extremely rare, and none of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian

faith are ever in question. Whether the donkey was bony or robust does not affect the Bible's teaching on sin, death, judgment, heaven, hell, the atonement of Christ, or a myriad other doctrines. Scripture contains ample information regarding these doctrines to make them clearly understood to all who have "ears to hear" (Mark 4:9, 23). GotQuestions.org

Deuteronomy 33:19 "They will call peoples to the mountain; There they will offer righteous sacrifices; For they will draw out the abundance of the seas, And the hidden treasures of the sand."

- **call peoples:** Isa 2:3 Jer 50:4,5 Mic 4:2
- **they will:** Ps 4:5 50:13-15 51:16,17 107:22 Heb 13:15,16 1Pe 2:5
- **draw out:** De 32:13 Isa 60:5,16 66:11,12

MORE BLESSINGS ON ZEBULUN & ISSACHAR

They will call peoples to the mountain. here they will offer righteous sacrifices - "there offer sacrifices of righteousness." (Dt 33:19NIV) This is not clear, but does suggest a worship setting. In the context of the apparent blessings they received from the sea, this would support the premise that this section refers to grateful worship.

For they will draw out the abundance of the seas, And the hidden treasures of the sand - "they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand." (Dt 33:19NIV) In Ge 49:13 Jacob identified Zebulun with the sea declaring "Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon."

NIDOTTE - Like many of the terms for **abundance**, the nom. נִדְוֹת is poetic and occurs in the OT only in Moses' blessing of Zebulun and Issachar in Deut 33:19. The prosperity of the two tribes is linked to the seas (cf. the association of Zebulun with the sea in Jacob's blessing, Gen 49:13). The "superabundance" of the seas (i.e., fishing, maritime commerce, and seacoast industries like dye-making from shellfish and glass-making from sand) will provide great wealth for the peoples of Zebulun and Issachar.

Deere - the source of their prosperity was clearly the seas (in Gen. 49:13–15 only **Zebulun** is associated with the sea). Though neither tribe apparently touched the Mediterranean Sea, **Issachar** was near the Sea of Kinnereth (Galilee), and **Zebulun** was only a few miles from the Mediterranean; merchants probably traversed both tribal territories with sea products. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Deuteronomy 33:20 Of Gad he said, "Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad; He lies down as a lion, And tears the arm, also the crown of the head."

- **Blessed:** Ge 9:26,27 Jos 13:8,10,24-28 1Ch 4:10 12:8,37,38 Ps 18:19,36
- **He lies down as a lion:** 1Ch 5:18-21 12:8-14
- **tears:** Mic 5:8

Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 5:18-21 The sons of Reuben and the **Gadites** and the half-tribe of Manasseh, consisting of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow and were skillful in battle, were 44,760, who went to war. 19 They made war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. 20 They were helped against them, and the Hagrites and **all who were with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.** 21 They took away their cattle: their 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys; and 100,000 men.

Genesis 48:19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."



Gad Click to Enlarge
 Look at map showing shrinking of the lands
 of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh by 830 BC!

Of Gad he said, "Blessed ([barak](#)) is the one who enlarges Gad - "Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory!" (Dt 33:20NLT) The blessing would seem to actually be bestowed on Yahweh Himself for He is the One Who can truly enlarge territory.

[Merrill](#) - Moses celebrated the goodness of the Lord who had enlarged Gad (i.e., its territory, as in NIV; cf. Exod 34:24; Deut 12:20; 19:8; Isa 54:2; Amos 1:13) and equipped him to live (there) in strength and security (v. 20). ([New American Commentary](#))

He lies down as a lion, And tears the arm, also the crown of the head - "Gad is poised there like a lion to tear off an arm or a head." (Dt 33:20NLT) NET has "he will tear at an arm – indeed, a scalp" picturing Gad attacking prey. He would tear to sheds any who dared to harm him. Gad's militancy is emphasized both by Jacob (Gen. 49:19) and here by Moses.

[Utley](#) - He lies down as a lion" The word is "lioness" (BDB 522, cf. Gen. 49:9; Num. 24:9; Job 4:11). The lioness was the one who hunted and provided food for the male lion and cubs. Gad was referred to as the lioness. The tribe of Gad was blessed because of their faithfulness in battle (cf. Gen. 49:19).

QUESTION - [Who was Gad in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Two people bear the name Gad in the Bible. The first is Jacob's seventh-born son and forefather of the tribe of Gad, one of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). The second is a prophet in the time of King David.

Jacob had four wives: Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah. Gad's mother was [Zilpah](#), Leah's maidservant. Zilpah was also the mother of Asher. When Gad was born, Leah chose his name, which means "good fortune" in Hebrew: "Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, 'What good fortune!' So she named him Gad" (Genesis 30:10–11).

Little is written about Jacob's son Gad in the Bible. He traveled with his family from Padan Aram to Canaan and would have been part of the fraternal conspiracy to kill the youngest brother Joseph. Later, Gad traveled with his brothers to Egypt to buy food during the famine. The brothers were recognized by Joseph, who was now vizier over all the land in Egypt. Joseph saved his family, forgave his brothers, and brought them back to live in Egypt. The Bible tells us that Gad fathered seven sons: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli (Genesis 46:16).

Before Jacob's death, the patriarch gathered his twelve sons to pronounce blessings on them. To the tribe of Gad, Jacob delivered a prophecy that included an interesting play on words involving the name Gad. Jacob praised Gad, predicting the tribe would contain brave troops that would drive off raiders and victoriously pursue Israel's enemies: "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels" (Genesis 49:19). In Hebrew, the pronunciation of *Gad* sounds much like the pronunciation of the words translated "attack" and "band of raiders."

At the end of Israel's 40-year wilderness wandering, as the people prepared to enter the Promised Land, Gad's tribe asked to settle east of the Jordan River along with Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh. These tribes owned a substantial amount of livestock, and the territory east of the Jordan was desirable for raising herds. Dwelling in a bordering position east of the Jordan, it was particularly important for Gad to fulfill Jacob's prophecy and be brave and strong. Otherwise, Israel would be vulnerable to sudden enemy attacks.

Before Moses died, he also blessed the tribes of Israel. He compared Gad to a lion and celebrated the Lord's goodness in enlarging Gad's territory: "Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain! Gad lives there like a lion, tearing at arm or head" (Deuteronomy 33:20).

Shortly after the Exodus, Gad numbered 45,650 (Numbers 2: 14–15). By the time of the second census in the plains of Moab, the number had decreased to 40,500 (Numbers 26:18).

Another man named Gad in the Bible appeared as a contemporary of King David. He was a prophet and seer who counseled David. When David fled from Saul, Gad advised him to return to the land of Judah (1 Samuel 22:5). After David sinned by [taking a census](#), Gad rebuked him and offered a choice of punishments, and David chose a plague (2 Samuel 24:11–14). Gad advised King David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite on the day the plague ended (2 Samuel 24:18–19). Gad also aided in the arrangement of Levitical music (2 Chronicles 29:25). In 1 Chronicles 29:29, Gad is said to have written a part of the history of the life of King David.

One final Gad, a Canaanite god of fortune, is mentioned in some translations as an idol Israel worshiped. Isaiah 65:11 addresses “those forsaking Jehovah, Who are forgetting My holy mountain, Who are setting in array for Gad a table, And who are filling for Meni a mixture” (YLT), and verse 12 predicts their judgment. Most other translations put “Fortune” for “Gad” in this passage. [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Gad?](#)

ANSWER - Israel's 12 tribes, of which Gad was one, were named for Jacob's children (or grandchildren, in the cases of Ephraim and Manasseh). “Israel” was God's name for Jacob (Genesis 32:22-30); therefore, the phrase “children of Israel” is a way of referring to Jacob's descendants. Jacob's son Gad was born in Paddan Aram to Jacob's first wife's maidservant, Zilpah (Genesis 35:26). When Jacob blessed his 12 sons, he said, “Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels” (Genesis 49:19). Later, Moses blessed the tribe of Gad, saying, “Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain! Gad lives there like a lion, tearing at arm or head. He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled, he carried out the LORD's righteous will, and his judgments concerning Israel” (Deuteronomy 33:20-21).

The tribe of Gad was one of three (Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh were the others) to fight for and be awarded lands east of the Jordan River, the gateway to the Promised Land (Joshua 12:6; 13:8-13). When Gad and the other tribes first requested this land outside of the Promised Land, Moses warned that their actions could discourage the others from taking the land God had given, much like the ten spies' fearful report forty years previously. The Reubenites and Gadites said, “We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. But we will arm ourselves for battle and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has received their inheritance. We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan” (Numbers 32:16–19). Moses agreed: “Then Moses said to them, ‘If you will do this—if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for battle and if all of you who are armed cross over the Jordan before the LORD until he has driven his enemies out before him—then when the land is subdued before the LORD, you may return and be free from your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the LORD. But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out’” (Numbers 32:20–23).

The tribes were faithful to their commitment (Numbers 32:25; Joshua 22:1–6). When they returned to their own land they built an altar. The other Israelites came out against them, thinking they were rebelling against the Lord. But the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh called on the Lord saying He knew their motives and if they had acted in rebellion or disobedience they should not be spared. In fact, they had built the altar not to make sacrifices but “to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, ‘You have no share in the LORD’” (Joshua 22:27). Though the tribes had settled on the other side of the Jordan, they were still very much committed to worshipping God. They were still part of Israel and wanted to prevent the Jordan River, a significant geographical divide between Gad and the majority of the other tribes, from spiritually dividing God's people then or in future generations (Joshua 22:10-34). “And the Reubenites and Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us—that the LORD is God” (Joshua 22:34).

Gad, along with all the other northern tribes of Israel, was sent into exile in 722 BC (2 Kings 15:29 – 17:41). Gad's specific circumstances, seemingly triggered by the half-tribe of Manasseh's unfaithfulness to God, are described in 1 Chronicles 5:11-26.

We see in the tribe of Gad fidelity to God and to their commitments to others. Perhaps the most important lesson we learn from Gad (and all the other tribes) is to recognize the need for complete faith and trust in God. God commanded Moses to remind the Israelites to “carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do” (Deuteronomy 29:9). “Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison” (Deuteronomy 29:18). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 33:21 "Then he provided the first part for himself, For there the ruler's portion was reserved; And he came with the leaders of the people; He executed the justice of the LORD, And His ordinances with Israel."

- **the first part:** Nu 32:1-6,16,17-42
- **first part:** Nu 32:33 Jos 1:14 22:4
- **he came:** Nu 32:16,21 Jos 4:12,13 Jdg 5:2,11



Gad Click to Enlarge

Then he provided the first part (of the land - ESV) **for himself, For there the ruler's portion was reserved** - "He has selected the best part for himself, for the portion of the ruler is set aside there." (Dt 33:21NET) "The people of Gad took the best land for themselves; a leader's share was assigned to them" (Dt 33:21NLT)

And he came with the leaders of the people; He executed the justice of the LORD, And His ordinances with Israel."

NET NOTE on the ruler's portion was reserved - The Hebrew term מְחֹקֵק (mékhoqeq; Poel participle of חָקַק, khaqaq, "to inscribe") reflects the idea that the recorder of allotments (the "ruler") is able to set aside for himself the largest and best.

Wiersbe - The tribe of Gad (vv. 20-21) was located east of the Jordan (SEE MAP ABOVE Dt 3:12-16) with Reuben and Manasseh. Moses knew that Gad had chosen the best land for their flocks and herds. But Gad was also a brave tribe that sent warriors into Canaan to help conquer the land (Josh. 1:12-18; 4:12-18; 22:1-4). When Israel defeated the nations east of the Jordan, Gad took a "lion's share" for themselves. ([Be Equipped](#))

Utley - This verse is a play on Gad or a valiant warrior (in the metaphor of a lion). He chose part of the land on the eastern side of Jordan to inherit, but he and the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh were the first military group to go into battle in the Promised Land (cf. Josh. 4:12–13; 22:1–3). **"For there the ruler's portion was reserved"** The Hebrew meaning is uncertain!

Deere - The translation of some of these lines is uncertain. But the general sense seems to be that even though Gad had been allotted its territory east of the Jordan, choosing the best land (3:12–17), the tribe still fought valiantly (like a lion) in the conquest of Canaan (cf. Josh. 22:1–6). In this way the Gadites carried out the LORD's ... will. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Deuteronomy 33:22 Of Dan he said, "Dan is a lion's whelp, That leaps forth from Bashan."

- Ge 49:16-17 Jos 19:47 Jdg 13:2,24,25 14:6,19 15:8,15 16:30 Jdg 18:27 1Ch 12:35

Related Passages:

Genesis 49:16-17 **"Dan** shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. 17 **"Dan** shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward.

Joshua 19:47 The territory of the sons of **Dan** proceeded beyond them; for the sons of **Dan** went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem **Dan** after the name of **Dan** their father.



DAN Click to Enlarge

DAN A LION'S WHELP

Of Dan he said, "Dan is a lion's whelp, That leaps forth from Bashan- In Jacob's description Dan was a serpent that bit horse's heels (Ge 49:17). Now Dan is depicted as the offspring of a lion but other than the fact that he **leaps forth** his function is not clearly stated.

MacArthur - "Dan had the potential for great energy and strength and leaped from its southern settlement to establish a colony in the North"

Complete Biblical Library –Whereas Jacob viewed Dan as a viper by the roadside that bites the heels of horses, causing them and their riders to fall (Gen. 49:16f), Moses spoke of Dan as a lion's cub, an expression Jacob uses for Judah (Gen. 49:9). "Springing out of Bashan" probably refers to the Danites' conquest of Laish, which could have been launched from Bashan (cf. Jdg. 18:27f).

Wiersbe has an interesting analysis of this verse (because some translate **Bashan** as serpent) - Comparing Dan (Deut. 33:22) to "a lion's whelp" suggests that the tribe wasn't quite mature yet, but it showed great promise and had great strength. A lion's cub grows up to be a lion! The second clause has been translated "he shies away from the **viper**." Jacob compared Dan to a serpent (Gen. 49:16-17), and the serpent and the lion are both associated with Satan (Gen. 3; Rev. 12:9, 14-15; 20:2; 1 Peter 5:8). The tribe of Dan became idolatrous and apostate (Judges 17-18). ([Be Equipped](#))

Utley - "**Dan is a lion's whelp, that leaps from Bashan**" The mention of Dan as somehow connected to Bashan (cf. 1:4; 3:1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14) is surprising. Originally Dan's tribal allocation by lot was in the southwest (i.e., the Philistine area) and later they moved to the far north (cf. Judges 18). This may be a prophecy connected to this unauthorized relocation.

Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bashan](#)

QUESTION - [Who was Dan in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Dan was the fifth of twelve sons born to the Jewish patriarch Jacob. Dan's mother was [Bilhah](#), Rachel's maidservant. Dan's younger brother was Naphtali. As full brothers, the two are frequently mentioned together in the Bible (Deuteronomy 27:13; Exodus 1:4).

The account of Dan's birth is contained in Genesis 30:1–8. Rachel, who had remained childless, was envious of her sister, Leah, who had already given birth to four sons of Jacob. Barrenness held great shame for women in ancient cultures, so [Rachel](#) followed the custom of the day and presented her maidservant, Bilhah, to Jacob as a third wife. When Bilhah gave birth to Dan, Rachel considered the child her own. Rachel named him Dan, meaning "he judged," because she felt that God had judged and vindicated her through the child's birth.

On his deathbed, Jacob pronounced a blessing over all his sons. Dan was promised the role of a judge: "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel" (Genesis 49:16, ESV). Dan's blessing also included these words: "Dan will be a snake by the roadside,

a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward" (verse 17). Scripture does not tell us if Dan himself possessed these traits, but his tribe was small yet fierce like the viper in his father's blessing.

Dan had only one son, Hushim, to carry on his bloodline (Genesis 46:23). He is listed as Shuham (an alternate spelling of *Hushim*) in Numbers 26:42 and identified as the ancestor of the clan of the Shuhamites. Nothing else is disclosed about Dan in the Bible.

Some of Dan's descendants are mentioned in the days of the wilderness wanderings. Oholiab was a skilled craftsman appointed by God to work on the tabernacle (Exodus 31:6; 35:34; 38:23). An unnamed son whose father was Egyptian and whose mother was from the tribe of Dan [blasphemed](#) the name of the Lord and was put to death (Leviticus 24:10–11). Ahiezer was a leader of the tribe of Dan (Numbers 1:12; 2:25; 7:66–71; 10:25).

When Israel entered the Promised Land, the tribe that descended from Dan was allotted a portion of Canaan between Judah and Ephraim bordering the Mediterranean coast (Joshua 19:40–48). However, except for the valley of Zorah and Eshtaol, Dan's tribe failed to gain control of the territory, especially after the Philistines settled there. In the book of Judges, Samson, who was from the tribe of Dan, was called by God to fight against the Philistines (Judges 13 — 16). Eventually, Dan's tribe migrated to the north and seized the city of Laish. They renamed the city Dan and took up residence in the surrounding areas (Judges 18).

In Moses' blessing, Dan's tribe is called "a lion's cub, springing out of Bashan" (Deuteronomy 33:22). Some believe the reference relates to Dan's northern migration and capture of Laish. After Dan resettled to the north, the tribe became associated with idolatry (Judges 18:30–31; 2 Kings 10:29). [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Dan?](#)

ANSWER - The tribe of Dan was the group of people who descended from the fifth son of Jacob, [Dan](#). Jacob had twelve sons who became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. The history of the tribe of Dan is especially instructive to us in that it contains multiple examples of the tendency of people to follow man-made religion over biblical faith in God. This is totally contrary to the Scriptures that teach us "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law" (Romans 3:20) and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

As the Israelites came into the land of Canaan, by lot certain areas of territory were assigned to each tribe. The tribe of Dan was given a tract of land that was smaller than the other land grants but was fertile and also had a boundary along the Mediterranean Sea where there was fishing and commerce available to them.

However, the tribe of Dan never fully conquered this area as a result of a lack of faith in God. This was true of the other tribes as well, as the early chapters of the book of Judges clearly teach, and led to a time during the period of Judges where it was said, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Judges 18:1–31 tells the story of the people of Dan falling into idolatry. They also did not like the territory that was theirs, so they sent out spies to find a better area. In the north, some representatives of Dan learned of an area where a peaceful group of people lived. The tribe of Dan took things into their own hands and wiped out the people of that land so they could then move the entire tribe up to a region close to the sources of the Jordan River, just south of present-day Lebanon. There they established their main city and called it Dan.

Later in the history of the Hebrews, the kingdom was divided after the reign of Solomon. The kingdom split into Israel's ten tribes in the north and Judah's two in the south. The people of Dan were in the northern kingdom of Israel. We learn in 1 Kings 12:25–33 that King Jeroboam was afraid that those who lived in his kingdom in the north would still go down to the southern kingdom to worship at Jerusalem, since that was where the temple that God had authorized was located. So Jeroboam built two additional altars for the people of his nation to worship. He established worship in the south at Bethel and in the north at Dan. He built a golden calf at each location and instituted special days and feasts when people would meet. Sadly, this man-made worship at Dan has been one of its lasting legacies.

Today, many people follow various man-made religions and are convinced that all ways lead to God. Unfortunately, these groups follow the ways of the tribe of Dan. Proverbs 16:25 tells us that "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Jesus taught that the way to God was specific when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me" (John 14:6). John 3:36 teaches that "he who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." To learn from the mistakes of Dan would be to worship the God of the Bible alone and live for Him by faith. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 33:23 Of Naphtali he said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing of the LORD, **Take possession** of the sea and the south."

- Ge 49:21 Ps 36:8 90:14 Isa 9:1,2 Jer 31:14 Mt 4:13,16 11:28
- **possession:** Jos 19:32-39



Naphtali Click to Enlarge

FAVOR OF GOD FULLNESS OF BLESSING

Of Naphtali he said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing ([berakah](#)) of the LORD, **Take possession** (command) of the sea (of Galilee) and the south." - "Moses said this about the tribe of Naphtali: "O Naphtali, you are rich in favor and full of the LORD's blessings; may you possess the west and the south." (Dt 33:23NLT)

Utley - "Take possession of the sea and the south" The VERB (Qal IMPERATIVE) is used several times in Deuteronomy for Israel to possess the land (cf. Dt 1:8, 21, 39; 2:24, 31; 9:23; 11:31; 17:14; 26:1). It implies a taking by force and securing it as a permanent inheritance.

Complete Biblical Library – Naphtali's allotment extended from the Jordan River northward on the western shore of Lake Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee) to the upper Jordan basin. This Galilee region provided many temporal and material riches. Many centuries later, it was in this area that Jesus ministered extensively (cf. Isa 9:1; Mt. 4:12-17).

QUESTION - [Who was Naphtali in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Naphtali was Jacob's sixth-born son and the second of two sons by [Rachel's](#) maidservant, [Bilhah](#). Naphtali's older brother was Dan.

Rachel was so delighted at the birth of another son that she called the child Naphtali, which means "my wrestling." She chose this name because she felt vindicated after struggling with her older sister, [Leah](#), to provide Jacob with heirs: "Then Rachel said, 'I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.' So she named him Naphtali" (Genesis 30:8).

Little more is written of Naphtali in the Bible; we know that he had four sons: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem (Genesis 46:24), and, eventually, he moved his family with Jacob to Egypt to escape the famine.

[Jacob's](#) deathbed blessing upon Naphtali was, "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns" ([Genesis 49:21](#)) or "gives beautiful words" (NASB). Scholars suggest many interpretations for Jacob's blessing of Naphtali. Some say it implied gentleness of character; others think it may have alluded to agility in battle or hastiness.

Naphtali's descendants came to be known as the [tribe of Naphtali](#), one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The first census in the wilderness credited 53,400 adult, battle-ready males to the tribe of Naphtali (Numbers 1:42–43). A later census taken near the end of the wilderness wanderings counted 45,400 men of Naphtali who were capable of battle (Numbers 26:48).

Moses, when Israel entered the Promised Land, pronounced a blessing on Naphtali's tribe: "Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the LORD and is full of his blessing; he will inherit southward to the lake" (Deuteronomy 33:23). As indicated in this blessing, Naphtali settled in northern Canaan in the high regions west and northwest of the Sea of Galilee.

Three Levitical cities reserved for the family of the Gershonites existed within the tribe's borders (Joshua 21:32; 1 Chronicles 6:62) along with Kedesh, a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7). Naphtali successfully conquered the region but did not drive out the Canaanites. Instead, the Canaanites were subjected to forced labor (Judges 1:33).

The geographical position of the tribe led to several major conflicts in the region. The most significant was the war against Jabin, king of Hazor. Barak, the Hebrew warrior and son of Abinoam, from Kedesh in Naphtali, was called by [Deborah](#), the judge and prophetess, to lead the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali against the Canaanite forces of Hazor (Judges 4 – 5). The tribe of Naphtali as well as Asher, Zebulun, and Manasseh was also summoned by Gideon to fight against the Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 6:33–35).

During the monarchy period, the tribe of Naphtali sent armed forces to Hebron, showing support for David's rule (1 Chronicles 12:34). The tribe stayed loyal to David's dynasty during Solomon's administration as well. King Solomon had twelve regional officers over all Israel. One of them was Ahimaaz, who married Solomon's daughter, Basemath. Ahimaaz was from the tribe of Naphtali (1 Kings 4:7–15).

During the time of the divided kingdoms, the story of the tribe of Naphtali becomes harder to trace. When Pekah ruled in Israel, Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria began to exert his powerful influence in the region of Naphtali. By 732 BC, the Assyrian king had conquered Gilead, Galilee, and all of Naphtali and taken the people into captivity (2 Kings 15:29).

The prophet Isaiah recalled how the Lord had brought the land of Naphtali into contempt but would one day make it glorious again (Isaiah 9:1). Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, who brought the Good News to people living in the region of Naphtali (Matthew 4:13–15). Finally, in the book of Revelation, 12,000 members of the tribe of Naphtali are included among the sealed servants of God (Revelation 7:6).

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QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Naphtali?](#)

ANSWER -Israel's tribes were named for Jacob's children. [Naphtali](#), being the sixth son of Jacob, is one of Israel's twelve tribes. In the time of Moses, Naphtali was divided into four clans: the Jahzeelites, the Gunites, the Jezerites, and the Shillemites, named after Naphtali's sons (Numbers 26:48–49). Naphtali was borne by Rachel's maidservant, Bilhah. He was her second and last child with Jacob. When Naphtali was born, Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won" (Genesis 30:8). *Naphtali* means "my struggle."

Naphtali was one of six tribes chosen to stand on Mount Ebal and pronounce curses (Deuteronomy 27:13). By means of these curses, the people promised God they would refrain from certain behaviors. For example, one curse says, "Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone" (Deuteronomy 27:17). Another states, "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien or fatherless or the widow" (Deuteronomy 27:19). Still another: "Cursed is the man who kills his neighbor secretly" (Deuteronomy 27:24). In all, Naphtali helped deliver twelve such admonishments (Deuteronomy 27:15–26).

When Jacob blessed his twelve sons, he said, "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns" (Genesis 49:21). The image presented is of one who springs forth with great speed and provides good news. Later, Moses blessed the tribe: "Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the Lord and is full of his blessing; he will inherit southward to the lake" (Deuteronomy 33:23). In Joshua 19:32–39, we learn that Naphtali's land was in northern Israel, bordering Asher's territory, and the Sea of Kinnereth (or Galilee) touched the southern portion of its territory.

Despite all their blessings, the tribe of Naphtali failed to obey God's command to drive out all the Canaanites living in their territory. Therefore, "the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath became forced labor for them" (Judges 1:33).

In Judges 4:6–9, we learn that Barak was a Naphtalite. He had been chosen by God to lead a military force of 10,000 of his tribe against their Canaanite oppressors. However, when the time came for action, Barak responded in fear and cowardice, agreeing to fight against King Jabin's army only if Deborah the judge would accompany him. Deborah consents, but she prophesies that the honor for the victory would go to a woman and not to Barak. The prophecy was fulfilled in Judges 4:17–22.

"The Song of Deborah and Barak" (Judges 5) relates that the tribe of Naphtali risked their lives "on the heights of the field" (verse 18) and so was honored in the victory over the Canaanites.

Later, Naphtali responded to Gideon's call to repel the Midianites, Amalekites, and others from the East from their encampment in the Jezreel Valley (Judges 6:35). Along with the tribes of Asher and Manasseh, Naphtali followed Gideon into battle and chased the Midianites to Zererah and Abel Meholah (Judges 7:23).

When the time came for David to assume the throne, the tribe of Naphtali provided "1,000 officers, together with 37,000 men carrying shields and spears," along with a caravan of food, to help him (1 Chronicles 12:34, 40). When King Solomon was building the temple, he hired Hiram, a man whose mother was a Naphtalite, to do the bronze work (1 Kings 7:13–47).

In the time of Christ, the land of Naphtali was part of the area of Galilee, and it was viewed by the Jews in Judea as a place of dishonor, full of Gentile pagans (see John 1:46; 7:52). But Isaiah had prophesied that Naphtali would be honored: "In the past he humbled . . . the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan" (Isaiah 9:1). This honor came with the coming of Jesus Christ. All Jesus' disciples but Judas, who betrayed Him, hailed from Galilee, and much of Jesus' ministry took place there. Thus, "on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2).

The tribe of Naphtali had its ups and downs. Its history includes incomplete obedience and shades of cowardice, but it also includes bravery under Gideon and a godly support of King David. Probably the greatest lesson we can take from Naphtali is that God exalts the humble. Naphtali (as part of Galilee) was despised, and Nazareth was the lowest of the low. Yet Nazareth was Jesus' hometown, and Galilee was exactly where Jesus chose to begin His ministry. For our sakes, He became "despised and rejected by men" (Isaiah 53:3). The King of kings had the most unpretentious start. He is truly "humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 33:24 Of Asher he said, "More blessed than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers, And may he dip his foot in oil.

- **blessed:** Ge 49:20 Ps 115:15 128:3,6
- **be:** Pr 3:3,4 Ex 12:10 Ac 7:10 Ro 14:18 15:31
- **dip:** Job 29:6

PRAYER FOR PROSPERITY AND FERTILITY

Of Asher he said, "More blessed ([barak](#)) than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers, And may he dip his foot in oil - "Of Asher he said: Asher is blessed with children." (Dt 33:24NET) **Asher** means blessed and that is what they were! Jacob had blessed Asher saying "As for **Asher**, his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties." (Ge 49:20) Olive trees grew well on the northern seacoast, the property of Asher.

Jack Deere - To bathe one's feet in oil rather than simply to anoint them would be an extravagant act. Thus the tribe of Asher would experience abundant fertility and prosperity. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

NET NOTE - Dip his foot in olive oil. This is a metaphor for prosperity, one especially apt in light of the abundance of olive groves in the area settled by Asher. The Hebrew term refers to olive oil, which symbolizes blessing in the OT.

Wiersbe - Moses asked that the Lord bless the tribe with many children, the favor of his brothers, and great prosperity. To use precious olive oil on your feet would be a mark of wealth, and Asher's territory was blessed with many olive groves. The word translated "shoes" is also translated "bolts," referring to strong security at the city gates. So, the tribe would enjoy fertility, brotherly love, prosperity, and security; and the Lord would give them daily strength to accomplish their work. What more could they want? ([Be Equipped](#))

Utley has an interesting note - **"More blessed than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers"** This VERB ("be") is a Qal JUSSIVE. This shows the working of the Hebrew mind. To a Jew, a son was the greatest blessing possible. The rabbis interpret this verse to mean that because of the extreme beauty of Asher's daughters they were more sought after than sons. The meaning is uncertain.

QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Asher?](#)

ANSWER - Asher is one of Israel's twelve tribes. In the time of Moses, Asher was divided into five clans: the Imnites; the Ishvites; and the Berites; and, through Beriah, the Berite patriarch, two more clans: the Heberites and the Malkielites. The first three clans were named after Asher's sons; the fourth and fifth after Beriah's sons (Numbers 26:44-45).

Asher was Jacob's eighth son. His mother was Leah's maidservant, Zilpah, and he was her second and last child with Jacob. When Asher was born, Leah said, "How happy am I! The women will call me happy" (Genesis 30:13). Asher's name means "happy."

Asher was one of six tribes chosen to stand on Mount Ebal and pronounce curses (Deuteronomy 27:13). Through these curses, the people promised God they would refrain from bad behavior. For example, one curse says, "Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother" (Deuteronomy 27:16). Another states, "Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road"

(Deuteronomy 27:18). Still another: “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law” (Deuteronomy 27:23). In all, Asher delivered twelve admonishments (Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

When Jacob blessed his sons, he said, “Asher’s food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king” (Genesis 49:20). Later, Moses blessed the tribe, saying, “Most blessed of the sons is Asher; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil. The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, and your strength will equal your days” (Deuteronomy 33:24). Washing one’s feet in oil was a sign of prosperity, and Jacob’s reference to Asher’s food being “rich” indicated that Asher would possess fertile lands. In Joshua 19:24-31, we learn that Asher received land along the Mediterranean coast.

Despite all its blessings, the tribe of Asher failed to drive out the Canaanites, and “because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land” (Judges 1:31-32). In the time of Deborah and Barak, “Asher remained on the coast and stayed in its coves” rather than join the fight against Jabin, a Canaanite king (Judges 5:17). This failure to aid their fellow tribes could indicate a lack of reliance on God, a lack of effort, a fear of the enemy, or a reluctance to upset those with whom they did business. Thus, the example set here is a negative one: although Asher was richly blessed, they did not behave admirably; when the time for action came, they failed to trust in God and honor His plan.

Later in Judges, Asher does respond to Gideon’s call to repel the Midianites, Amalekites, and others from the East (Judges 6:35). In another important gesture, Asher accepts Hezekiah’s invitation to the tribes from the Northern Kingdom to join the Passover celebration in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 30:11). This was considered an act of humility, proof of a contrite heart before God.

In the end, we find that Asher received many great blessings from God. Having received a blessing, they were expected to obey the Lord’s commands. In this they sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed. We, too, have been blessed by God (Ephesians 1:3), and the Lord expects us to obey His commands (John 14:15). Just as Asher received a prophetic blessing from Jacob, God’s children have been told, “In his great mercy [God] has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3–5). Praise the Lord for His wonderful plans for us. What a comfort!

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QUESTION - [Who was Asher in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Asher was the eighth son of Jacob, and his name means “Blessed” or “Happy.” Asher’s mother was Leah’s servant, [Zilpah](#). According to the laws at the time regarding children born of servants, Asher would have been seen as Leah’s son rather than Zilpah’s. Asher had a total of eleven brothers, including a full brother by Zilpah; two half-brothers from Jacob’s other wife, Rachel; two half-brothers from Rachel’s servant, Bilhah; and six half-brothers from Leah. He also had a sister named Dinah. Each of Jacob’s sons, including Asher, would become the head of one of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). As God had promised to Asher’s great-grandfather, Abraham, He was making Abraham’s descendants into a great nation (Genesis 12:22).

The Bible does not say much about Asher as an individual. It does, however, describe the jealousy and anger Asher and his brothers had toward their brother Joseph due to Jacob’s preferential treatment of him (Genesis 37:3–4). This favoritism, coupled with Joseph’s description of the dreams he had in which his brothers were bowing down to him, caused the brothers to develop an extreme hatred of him (verses 5–11). Asher and his brothers ended up selling Joseph to some merchants, who in turn sold him as a slave in Egypt (verse 28). Joseph served there for several years, but God raised him to second-in-command of all Egypt (Genesis 41:39–41). As Joseph had interpreted a dream had by the king that warned of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of great famine, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of collecting food during the seven good years and storing it for the seven bad years (verses 48–49). When the famine began, Joseph’s brothers came to buy food from Egypt, eventually discovering that the man they were dealing with was their brother. They were grieved over what they had done to Joseph, and soon after the reunion Jacob and the rest of his family were brought to live in Egypt.

Just before Jacob died, he blessed each of his sons. The blessing for Asher was as follows: “Asher’s food will be rich; / he will provide delicacies fit for a king” (Genesis 49:20). In essence, Jacob was blessing Asher and his descendants with a promise that they would gain good food and riches. Later, Moses also blessed Asher’s descendants: “Most blessed of sons is Asher; / let him be favored by his brothers, / and let him bathe his feet in oil. / The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, / and your strength will equal your days” (Deuteronomy 33:24–25).

Genesis 46:17 notes that Asher had four sons (Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah) and one daughter (Serah). His tribe would eventually grow into six clans and, after the exodus from Egypt, was quite large. The Bible says that, at one point during the Israelites’ journey to Canaan, Asher’s tribe had 41,500 fighting men (Numbers 1:41).

Asher’s tribe inherited land in Canaan along the coast, from the city of Sidon in the north to Mt. Carmel in the south. True to the

blessings that Asher had received, the tribe possessed territory containing some of the richest soil in all of Canaan. Asher produced much grain, wine, oil, and minerals.

Asher's descendants endured as God had promised Abraham, and his tribe is mentioned often throughout the Bible. One of Asher's descendants, a [prophetess named Anna](#), was blessed to meet the baby Jesus just days after His birth (Luke 2:36). And one day, during the tribulation that will occur after Jesus returns for believers, a remnant of the nation of Israel will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, including 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Asher (Revelation 7:6). [| GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 33:24 - H A Ironside

Oil is a well-known type of the Holy Spirit. He who dips his foot in oil will leave a mark behind him as he walks through this scene. It is walking in the Spirit that causes any life to count for God. Such a person will enjoy the fellowship of his brethren as they see Christ in his ways. And he will be blessed with children. It is the man who walks in the Spirit who is a successful soul-winner and knows the joy of seeing his children in the faith glorifying God on his behalf. Asher is the blessed or happy one. Happy indeed is he of whom these things are true.

O Lord, whate'er my path may be,
If only I may walk with Thee
And talk with Thee along the way,
I'll praise Thee for it ALL some day.

Deuteronomy 33:25 "Your locks will be iron and bronze, And according to your days, so will your leisurely walk be.

KJV Deuteronomy 33:25 Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; **and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.**

Amplified "Your castles and strongholds shall have bars of iron and bronze, and **as your day, so shall your strength, your rest and security, be."**

NET Deuteronomy 33:25 The bars of your gates will be made of iron and bronze, **and may you have lifelong strength.**

BGT Deuteronomy 33:25 σ ῥηρος κα χαλκ ς τ π ῥημα α το σται κα ς α μ ραι σου σ χ ς σου

NLT Deuteronomy 33:25 May the bolts of your gates be of iron and bronze; **may you be secure all your days."**

ESV Deuteronomy 33:25 Your bars shall be iron and bronze, **and as your days, so shall your strength be.**

NIV Deuteronomy 33:25 The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, **and your strength will equal your days.**

YLT Deuteronomy 33:25 Iron and brass are thy shoes, **And as thy days -- thy strength.**

LXE Deuteronomy 33:25 His sandal shall be iron and brass; **as thy days, so shall be thy strength.**

CSB Deuteronomy 33:25 May the bolts of your gate be iron and bronze, **and your strength last as long as you live.**

NKJ Deuteronomy 33:25 Your sandals shall be iron and bronze; **As your days, so shall your strength be.**

NRS Deuteronomy 33:25 Your bars are iron and bronze; **and as your days, so is your strength.**

NAB Deuteronomy 33:25 May your bolts be of iron and bronze; **may your strength endure through all your days!"**

NJB Deuteronomy 33:25 Be your bolts of iron and of bronze **and your security as lasting as your days!**

GWN Deuteronomy 33:25 May the locks and bolts of your gates be made of iron and copper. **May your strength last as long as you live.**

BBE Deuteronomy 33:25 Your shoes will be iron and brass; **and as your days, so may your work be.**

- **Your locks** De 8:9 Lu 15:22 Eph 6:15
- **and** 2Ch 16:9 Ps 138:3 Isa 40:29 41:10 1Co 10:13 2Co 12:9,10 Eph 6:10 Php 4:13 Col 1:11

Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

Psalms 138:3 On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.

Isaiah 40:29; 31 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. ...40:31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

2 Corinthians 12:9; 10 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Colossians 1:11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

ASHER'S STRENGTH - ONE DAY AT A TIME!

Your locks will be iron and bronze - CSB = "May the bolts of your gate be iron and bronze." This clearly speaks of security.

And according to your days, so will your leisurely walk be - CSB = "And your strength last as long as you live." ESV has "and as your days, so shall your strength be."

THOUGHT - Are you strong spiritually speaking? The only way to continually be strong spiritually is to rely on the Lord's Spirit for daily strengthening by intake of His powerful Word. How are you doing? Hit and miss? If so, you will too often miss His provision of strength!

Jack Deere - The bolts of iron and bronze indicate the tribe's military security. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

The best way to destroy **today** is to regret **yesterday** and worry about **tomorrow**.

-- Warren Wiersbe

Warren Wiersbe - Verse 25 is a good reminder to live a day at a time, as all creation lives (Mt. 6:25–34). The best way to destroy today is to regret yesterday and worry about tomorrow. Israel faced some difficult days, but God would be with them and help them **a day at a time**. ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

Strength (KJV) ([hapax legomenon](#) = only use) ([01679](#))(**dobe'**/**dove'**) has a somewhat obscure meaning. The Lxx translates it with the Greek noun **ischus** which speaks of strength, power, might, the ability of human beings in Mk 12:30, of angelic power in 2Pe 2:11 (Other uses Mk 12:33; Eph 1:19; 2Th 1:9; Rev 5:12). BDAG says it is "capability to function effectively, strength, power, might."

Gilbrant has this note on **dobe'**/**dove'** - "When Moses prepares to depart from this life, he wrote his famous song which we now have recorded in Deut. 32. Before descending Mt. Nebo, he pronounced his blessing upon the people, proceeding from tribe to tribe, and concluding with **Asher**. These blessings are recorded in Deuteronomy 33. In Deut 32:25, Moses pronounced that **Asher** should have prosperity. The last phrase of the blessing, in which the word **dōve'** appears, is difficult to translate. Moses prays that Asher's "strength" would equal his days. Most translate the word "**strength**." The ASV represents a small number of scholars when it translates the word as "**leisurely walk**." Both would fit the concept of continued prosperity. Gesenius argues that the term refers to "**rest**," but in a poetic sense of leisure produced by a prosperous life which continues in old age. The Vulgate follows this concept." ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Since the Greek version translates **dobe'**/**dove'** with the word for strength, I favor that meaning for the Hebrew word.

Deuteronomy 33:25 - William MacDonald - Truths to Live By

God promises to give His people strength according to their needs at any particular time. He does not promise it in advance of the need, but when the crisis comes, the grace is there to meet it.

Perhaps you are called to go through a patch of sickness and suffering. If you knew in advance how great the testing would be, you would say, "I know I could never bear it." But all the divine support comes with the testing, to your amazement and everyone else's.

We live in fear of the time when our loved ones will be called away by death. We are sure our little world will fall apart and that we ourselves will be utterly unable to cope. But it isn't that way at all. We are conscious of the Lord's presence and power in a way we never knew before.

Many of us have close scrapes with death in accidents and situations of extreme peril. We find our hearts flooded with peace when ordinarily we would be in panic. We know it is the Lord, coming alongside to help.

As we read the stories of those who have heroically laid down their lives for the sake of Christ, we realize afresh that God gives "martyr grace for martyr days." Their cool courage was beyond human bravery. Their bold witness was obviously empowered from on high.

Now it should be obvious that worrying in advance of the need produces nothing but ulcers. The fact is that God doesn't give the grace and strength until they are needed. As D. W. Whittle said,

I have nothing to do with tomorrow,
The Savior will make that His care;
Its grace and its strength I can't borrow,
Then why should I borrow its care?

Annie Johnson Flint's memorable lines are ever apropos.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater;
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase.
To added affliction He addeth His mercy;
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Deuteronomy 33:25a Secret of a Happy Life

"Your castles and strongholds shall have bars of iron and bronze, and as your day, so shall your strength, your rest and security, be." (Amplified Version) (Deuteronomy 33:25)

These two Scripture verses prompted someone to write,

"One secret of a happy Christian life is living by the day. It's the long stretches that tire us. But really, there are no long stretches. Life does not come to us all at once. Tomorrow is not ours; but when it does come, God will supply both daily bread and daily strength."

As Pastor Philip Doddridge was walking along the street one day, he was feeling depressed and desolate, for something had happened to burden his heart. Passing a small cottage, he heard through the open door the voice of a child reading the words found in Deuteronomy 33:25,

"... as your days, so shall your strength be."

The Holy Spirit used that truth to bolster his sinking morale. He was encouraged not to look too far ahead, but just to go on living for the Lord from moment to moment in the consciousness that God would care for him.

Apparently D. L. Moody also learned that secret, for he said,

"A man can no more take a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We

are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it!"

God never gives His strength in advance, so let's stop crossing bridges before we come to them. The Heavenly Father will graciously supply our every need—one day at a time!

Don't try to bear tomorrow's burdens with today's grace.

Deuteronomy 33:25

Heavy Duty Shoes - Faith's Checkbook

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."—Deuteronomy 33:25

HERE are two things provided for the pilgrim: shoes and strength.

As for the shoes: they are very needful for traveling along rough ways, and for trampling upon deadly foes. We shall not go barefoot; this would not be suitable for princes of the blood royal. Our shoes shall not be at all of the common sort, for they shall have soles of durable metal which will not wear out even if the journey be long and difficult. We shall have protection proportionate to the necessities of the road and the battle. Wherefore let us march boldly on, fearing no harm even though we tread on serpents, or set our foot upon the dragon himself.

As for the strength: it shall be continued as long as our days shall continue, and it shall be proportioned to the stress and burden of those days. The words are few, "as thy days thy strength," but the meaning is full. This day we may look for trial and for work which will require energy, but we may just as confidently look for equal strength. This word given to Asher is given to us also who have faith wherewith to appropriate it. Let us rise to the holy boldness which it is calculated to create within the believing heart.

and your strength will equal your days. DEUTERONOMY 33:25b

It is a mistake to suppose that we can be endowed, so to speak, with spiritual power. God never gives a fund of strength to any of His servants on which they can draw from time to time until the whole is used. The power is always in Himself, and not in them, and only supplied moment by moment to those who are walking with and in dependence upon Him. EDWARD DENNETT

The Lord Jesus will make it His business to keep us alive and fruitful if we will make it our business to rely on Him. There must be no carnal straining, no natural effort; we do not have to keep ourselves alive.

Every fear to go down into daily death, every clinging to that which belongs to us, every grasp on our own personal position or ministry, will only hinder the manifestation of His life. It is to be life out of death.

Even when our trust in Him brings us into the most helpless and impossible situations, we may rest assured that all will be well, for He is indeed the God of resurrection. H.F.

Spurgeon - As thy days, so shall thy strength be

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deuteronomy 33:25

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Psalm 91

What a varying promise it is! I do not mean that the promise varies, but adapts itself to all our changes. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Here is a fine sunshiny morning; all the world is laughing; everything looks glad; the birds are singing, the trees seem to be all alive with music. "My strength shall be as my day is," says the pilgrim. Ah! Pilgrim, there is a little black cloud gathering. Soon it increases; the flash of lightning wounds the heaven, and it begins to bleed in showers. Pilgrim, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The birds have done singing, and the world has done laughing; but "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Now the dark night comes on, and another day approaches—a day of tempest, and whirlwind, and storm. Dost thou tremble, pilgrim?—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But there are robbers in the wood."—"As thy days so shall thy strength be." "But there are lions which devour me" "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But there are rivers; how shall I swim them?" Here is a boat to carry thee over; "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But there are fires: how shall I pass through them?" Here is the garment that will protect thee: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But there are arrows that fly by day." Here is thy shield: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But there is the pestilence that walketh in darkness." Here is thy antidote: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Wherever you may be, and whatever trouble awaits you, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Children of God, cannot you say that this has been true hitherto? I can.

ALEX. McLAREN Each of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and will not

send us out on any journey for which He does not equip us well.

M. A. KELTY. Watch your way, as a cautious traveller; and don't be gazing at that mountain or river in the distance, and saying: "How shall I ever get over them?" but keep to the present little inch that is before you, and accomplish that in the little moment that belongs to it. The mountain and the river can only be passed in the same way; and when you come to them, you will come to the light and strength that belong to them.

As thy days so shall thy strength be. I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.—Phil. 4:13.

He will not impose upon you one needless burden; He will not exact more than He knows your strength will bear; He will ask no Peter to come to Him on the water, unless He impart at the same time strength and support on the unstable wave; He will not ask you to draw water if the well is too deep, or withdraw the stone if too heavy. But neither at the same time will He admit as an impossibility that which, as a free and responsible agent, it is in your power to avert. He will not regard as your misfortune what is your crime. **MACDUFF.**

Deuteronomy 33:26 "There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty.

- **none:** Ex 15:11 Ps 86:8 Isa 40:18,25 43:11-13 66:8 Jer 10:6
- **Jeshurun:** De 32:15
- **rides:** Ps 18:10 68:4,33,34 104:3 Isa 19:1 Hab 3:8

THE INCOMPARABLE GOD OF JESHURUN

There is none like the God of Jeshurun (4x in OT - Dt. 32:15, 33:5, 33:26; Isa. 44:2), **Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty** - **Jeshurun** is a term of affection for Israel and is from yashar meaning "be upright." In Dt 33:7 Yahweh came to help Judah, but here He comes to help Israel. The Hebrew for help (ezer) is translated with [boethos](#) which pictures Jehovah running to Israel's aid on hearing the cry for help (cf Hebrews 2:18+ where com to the aid = [boetheo](#) and Hebrews 13:6+ where "Helper" = [boethos](#)).

Merrill The image of Yahweh riding on the heavens and clouds (šāmayīm and šēḥāqīm) is mythopoeic anthropomorphism adapted, no doubt, from pagan epic sources but with intensely polemic overtones against the depravity of pagan religious conception. The point was that it was not really Baal (or any other god) who rode in triumph in the heavens above, but it was the Lord alone who did so, he who is unique and solitary (cf. Ps 18:10; 68:33; 104:3). ([New American Commentary](#))

NET NOTE on **Who rides the heavens** - This title depicts Israel's God as sovereign over the elements of the storm (cf. Ps 68:33). The picture is also of **a God Who is instantly present with power to deliver in the time of need** The use of the phrase here may be polemical; Moses may be asserting that Israel's God, not Baal (called the "rider of the clouds" in the Ugaritic myths), is the true divine king (cf. v. 5) who controls the elements of the storm, grants agricultural prosperity, and delivers his people from their enemies

Help (05828) 'ezer is a masculine noun which means help, support. It can also refer to a helper or one who assists and serves another with what is needed. For example in the first OT use where Moses records "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a **helper** ('ezer: LXX = [boethos](#)) suitable for him." (Ge 2:18) **Ezer** refers to aid or assistance that is given, whether material or immaterial. It is often Jehovah Who helps His people. Jehovah is called the shield or protection of Israel's help (Dt 33:29). The Septuagint translates 'azar most often with the word group that includes: [boáo](#), [boetheo](#), [boethos](#), all conveying the general idea of running to the aid of one who cries out for help.

Ezer - 21 verses - Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:20; Exod. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Deut. 33:26; Deut. 33:29; Ps. 20:2; Ps. 33:20; Ps. 70:5; Ps. 89:19; Ps. 115:9; Ps. 115:10; Ps. 115:11; Ps. 121:1; Ps. 121:2; Ps. 124:8; Ps. 146:5; Isa. 30:5; Ezek. 12:14; Dan. 11:34; Hos. 13:9

See also [Ebenezer](#) ("Stone of Help" - as in the Hymn "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing")

Related Resource:

- [Jehovah Ezer: The LORD our Helper:](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Jeshurun](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jeshurun](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Jeshurun](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Jeshurun](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Jeshurun](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Jeshurun](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Jeshurun](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Jeshurun](#)
- [The Polemic against Baalism in Israel's Early History and Literature](#) -- Robert B. Chisholm Jr.

Spurgeon - The Lord is the great joy and the delightful portion of his people. In nothing were the tribes of Israel so favoured as in having the true God to be their God. This was the great glory and the particular privilege of the chosen people, that the only living and Most High Jehovah had revealed himself to them and to their fathers, had taken them to be his people, and given himself to be their God. Truly, when Moses looked upon the gods of Egypt, a country so superstitious that the satirist wrote about them, "Oh happy nation, whose gods grow in their own gardens"—when he heard the wild mythology of their idolatry, he might well say, "There is no one among them all who is like the God of Jeshurun." Perhaps Moses had seen those vast catacombs of idolized animals which Egyptian discoverers have recently opened, where the crocodiles, cats, and birds, which had been worshipped in life, were afterwards carefully consigned. Wise as Egypt professed to be, she preserved her dead gods in myriads. Dead gods! Hear it and be amazed at the folly of humanity. Truly, the imaginations of the most civilized nations have invented no deity comparable for a moment to the living God who made the heavens and the earth. The plagues of Egypt, as we have often been told, were all aimed against the gods of Egypt, and there was not a single deity adored by Egyptians that could stand against the Most High God. The river which they adored became loathsome to them when it was turned into blood, and yielded frogs in such abundance that the land stank. Their sacred insects swarmed until the very dust was full of horrible life, and the land was corrupted. Vain were their soothsayers and their idols, for Jehovah laughed them to scorn. Not only was Pharaoh put to the worst before Jehovah, but Egypt's gods were humbled. When all the chivalry of Egypt came to the Red Sea, and descended into the space which God had cleared to make a highway for his people, when the bounding billows leaped upon them, covered as they were with the emblems of their false deities, and bearing standards inscribed with idolatrous signs, there was a triumph over all the idol gods as well as over their followers. Moses saw this, and therefore sang, "Who is like you, oh Lord, among the gods? who is like you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Moses was often grieved when he saw the people of Israel going back in their thoughts to the foul idolatrous house of bondage, when he knew that they were ready at any time to make the image of Isis, the golden calf, and bow before it. He mourned that they harboured the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god, Remphan. He must have felt a holy horror that these images of mere demons, these pieces of gilded wood and carved stone, should ever be objects of Israel's adoration. For what had they done? What could they do? They had eyes, but they could not see; hands, but they could not handle; feet, but they could not move; but the God of Jeshurun made the heavens, and then before their eyes made the heavens to drop with manna; he made the earth, and for their supply made the flinty rocks to flow with rivers. It was he who went before his people with a pillar of fire and cloud, made them victorious over all their enemies, and promised to bring them into the promised land. "Well," said the man who had seen all this, "**There is no one like the God of Jeshurun.**" (Read Spurgeon's full sermon - [Israel's God and God's Israel](#) - Deuteronomy 33:26-28)

QUESTION - [What does it mean that God is the God of Jeshurun?](#)

ANSWER - In Isaiah 44:1–2, God comforts His people with these words:

"But now listen, Jacob, my servant,
Israel, whom I have chosen.
This is what the Lord says—
he who made you, who formed you in the womb,
and who will help you:
Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen."

The name *Jeshurun* means "upright one" or "blessed one." In the [parallelism](#) of Isaiah's poetry, *Jeshurun* is a synonym for *Jacob* in the previous line. So we see that *Jeshurun* is a poetic reference to the nation of Israel. It is a term of endearment; the Greek Septuagint translates *Jeshurun* as "beloved one," using a form of the word [agape](#). The name *Jeshurun* is used four times in the books of Deuteronomy and Isaiah. In each case the name occurs in a poetic setting and refers to Israel, God's [beloved](#) people.

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses rehearses the history of Israel to that point, including a time when the Israelites

were unfaithful to God in the wilderness:
“**Jeshurun** grew fat and kicked;
filled with food, they became heavy and sleek.
They abandoned the God who made them
and rejected the Rock their Savior” (Deuteronomy 32:15).

As Moses begins his final blessings on the tribes of Israel, he says,
“[The Lord] was king over **Jeshurun**
when the leaders of the people assembled,
along with the tribes of Israel” (Deuteronomy 33:5).

Then, as Moses ends the same series of blessings, he says,
“There is no one like the God of **Jeshurun**,
who rides across the heavens to help you
and on the clouds in his majesty.
The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deuteronomy 33:26–27).

Israel could be called “Jeshurun” because of God’s mercy and forgiveness. Isaiah starts out his book with a condemnation of Israel’s sin, calling the people a “sinful nation . . . whose guilt is great” and a “brood of evildoers . . . given to corruption” (Isaiah 1:4). Yet God still tenderly calls them “Jeshurun,” the “upright one.” The children of Israel forsook the Lord: “They have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him” (verse 4). Yet God still lovingly calls them “Jeshurun,” the “beloved one.” *Jeshurun* is God’s grace on display.

“He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:9–12).

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Deuteronomy 33:27 "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!'

- **eternal:** 1Sa 15:29 Ps 90:1-2 102:24 Isa 9:6 25:4 57:15 Jer 10:10 Mic 5:2 1Ti 1:17 Heb 9:14
- **dwelling place:** Ps 18:2 27:5 36:7 46:1,7,11 48:3 91:1,2,9,15 Pr 18:10 Isa 32:2 Lu 13:34 Php 3:9
- **underneath:** Ge 49:24 Pr 10:25 Song 2:6 Isa 26:4 1Pe 1:5 Jude 1:24
- **drove out:** De 9:3-5 Joh 10:28,29 Ro 8:2 16:20 Rev 20:2,3,10



OUR DWELLING PLACE: IN THE ALL ENCOMPASSING GOD

The eternal God is a dwelling place (refuge) - "The everlasting God is a Refuge" (Dt 33:27NET) For **Eternal God** see [El Olam: Everlasting God](#). (Note "eternal" here is not olam but [qedem](#)).

THOUGHT - God Himself is our **dwelling place** and in the New Covenant God Himself dwells in His temple,

our body! (cf Jn 14:23, 1 Cor 6:19-20+, 2 Cor 6:16+) **It does not get much better than that - us in God and God in us!** Try to wrap your mind around that truth! The next time you feel alone, meditate on the truth of you in God and God in you, forever and ever. Hallelujah! Amen!

In Moses' great psalm, he elaborates on this great description of [Elohim](#) ...

Psalm 90:1-2 A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, You have been our **dwelling place** in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

[Spurgeon comments](#) - Moses, in effect, says—wanderers though we be in the howling wilderness, yet we find a home in thee, even as our forefathers did when they came out of Ur of the Chaldees and dwelt in tents among the Canaanites. To the saints the Lord Jehovah, the self-existent God, stands instead of mansion and roof-tree; he shelters, comforts, protects, preserves, and cherishes all his own. Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the saints dwell in their God, and have always done so in all ages. Not in the tabernacle or the temple do we dwell, but in God himself; and this we have always done since there was a church in the world. We have not shifted our abode. Kings' palaces have vanished beneath the crumbling hand of time—they have been burned with fire and buried beneath mountains of ruins, but the imperial race of heaven has never lost its regal habitation. Go to the Palatine and see how the Caesars are forgotten of the halls which echoed to their despotic mandates, and resounded with the plaudits of the nations over which they ruled, and then look upward and see in the ever-living Jehovah the divine home of the faithful, untouched by so much as the finger of decay. Where dwelt our fathers a hundred generations since, there dwell we still. It is of New Testament saints that the Holy Ghost has said, "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in God and God in him!" It was a divine mouth which said, "Abide in me", and then added, "he that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit." It is most sweet to speak with the Lord as Moses did, saying, "Lord, thou art our **dwelling place**", and it is wise to draw from the Lord's eternal condescension reasons for expecting present and future mercies, as the Psalmist did in the next Psalm wherein he describes the safety of those who dwell in God.

Merrill - God the helper ([ezer](#)) is also God the refuge (ma'ôn; cf. Ps 90:1; 91:9) who eternally exists to bear up his people (Deut 33:27a). A tender expression of this loving care occurs in Isa 40:11:

Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

Dwelling place ([04585](#))(**meonah**) a feminine noun which means den (the ruins of desolate cities now the dwelling place of wild animals), habitation, refuge. Most frequently it designates the Lord's dwelling place, i.e. heaven (always qualified with the word "holy") and the temple (Ps 26:8). In Jer 21:13 it is a general figurative sense of God hunting for the habitations of people. [Swanson](#) - **1. animal den, lair**, i.e., a place where wild animals live (Job 37:8; 38:40; Ps 104:22; Song 4:8; Am 3:4; Na 2:13); **2. refuge**, i.e., a state of safety from danger as a figurative extension of a hiding place (Dt 33:27); **3. dwelling place**, i.e., a place where one lives (Ps 76:2 God's "dwelling place also is in Zion"); **4. refuge, fortress**, i.e., a construction that is a safe place from danger (Jer 21:13)

Meonah - 9v - den(2), dens(4), dwelling place(2), habitations(1). Deut. 33:27; Job 37:8; Job 38:40; Ps. 76:2; Ps. 104:22; Song. 4:8; Jer. 21:13; Amos 3:4; Nah. 2:12

And underneath are the everlasting ([olam](#)) **arms** - This recalls the description of the picture of our God as like an "eagle" in Dt 32:11+ "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions." Underneath is taḥat which in this context expresses the idea of support and stability.

THOUGHT - Feeling unstable? Ponder your position! Under the omnipotent God's arms, which are omnipresent and everlasting! Really let that sink deep into your soul. Memorize this verse. Meditate on it (chew it thoroughly!) And then rest in this truth. The "hurricane" may still be blowing with ferocity, but in Yahweh's everlasting arms you are (as it were) firmly fixed in the "[eye of the storm](#)." (See [picture depicting your position](#)) Hold fast by faith (which is anchored to His Word of Truth) to the One Who holds you fast.

Wiersbe - God's people are privileged to be in His hand for safekeeping (John 10:28–29) and at His feet for learning and obeying (Dt 33:3). We are "between His shoulders," next to His heart (Dt 33:12), and He bears us with His "everlasting arms" (Dt 33:27). **What more could we want?** (ED: OR NEED?) (Wiersbe - [With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

[NET NOTE](#) on "underneath you are his eternal arms" (Dt 33:27NET) - Heb "and from under, arms of perpetuity." The words "you" and "his" are supplied in the translation for clarification. Some have perceived this line to be problematic and have offered alternative translations that differ significantly from the present translation: "He spread out the primeval tent; he extended the ancient canopy" (NAB); "He subdues the ancient gods, shatters the forces of old" (NRSV). These are based on alternate meanings or conjectural emendations rather than textual variants in the MSS and versions.

And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, 'Destroy!' - Yahweh was a Victorious Warrior on behalf of Israel and He is the same for every son and daughter in the New Covenant! Remember that the battle is the Lord's and that the weapons of our warfare are spiritual (2 Cor 10:3-5+) and our enemies are spiritual forces (Eph 6:12+).

[Merrill](#) - In a more aggressive manner the arm of the Lord was stretched out against his (and Israel's) foes, an arm that punished evil and yet provided security to his own (cf. Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8). It is this aspect of the Lord's power that accompanied his role of Divine Warrior, the one who drove out Israel's enemies and gave Israel the authority to destroy them (v. 27b; cf. Exod 34:11; Deut 4:38; 7:22; 9:3-5; 11:23; 18:12; 28:36-37). It is clear by now that a subtle history of salvation emerges from this final blessing. The driving out of v. 27 gives way to peaceful and secure occupation of the promised land (v. 28). In isolation (thus Heb. *bādād*; cf. Num 23:9; Ps 4:8; Jer 49:31; Mic 7:14) Israel would live in safety. This suggests that God's people would never need fear being crowded out by other occupants of the land. They would be alone in that respect but obviously not entirely, for the Lord would be with them. ([NAC](#))

Spurgeon: If you are in personal danger, or in the midst of a storm, or facing illness, and if you hear a voice saying, "Surely the Lord is in this place," you will be perfectly at rest. The anxious air grows pure if He is there. Lightning cannot strike you, or if it does it will be joy. The storm cannot devour you, nor can the hungry ocean engulf you, or if one does it is happiness if God is there. There is no need to fear. Nervousness is wickedness when "the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you" (Deut. 33:2)

C H Spurgeon comments on the Comforting Doctrine, the [Omnipresence of God](#) Who "everywhere surrounds" His Beloved (1Th 1:4+) Children (1Jn 3:1+) on all sides: Indeed, they dwell in Him. (See related topic "[In Christ](#)"):

"The passage before us shows that the Lord is **ABOVE**, for we read, "There is no one like God, O [Jeshurun](#) (Israel), Who rides upon the heaven to help ([Hebrew = ezer](#); [Lxx = boethos](#); cp His great Name = [Jehovah Ezer](#)) you, on the clouds in majesty." (Dt 33:26-[Spurgeon's note](#))

Assuredly He is **AROUND** them, for "The eternal God is thy refuge;" and He is **BEFORE** them, for "He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say 'Destroy them.'" Here according to the text the LORD is also **UNDER** His saints, for "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

"LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations" (Ps 90:1+; [Spurgeon's sermon](#)) and by Thee we are **everywhere surrounded** as the earth by the atmosphere."

*"Within Thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find Thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."*

OUR DWELLING PLACE: THE ETERNAL GOD

Spurgeon: The word **REFUGE** ("dwelling place") may be translated "abiding place" which gives the thought that God is our Abode, our **Home**. There is a fulness and sweetness in the [metaphor](#), for dear to our hearts is our **home**, although it be the humblest cottage or the scantiest garret (attic) and dearer far is our blessed God, in Whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28+). **IT IS AT HOME** that we feel safe: we shut the world out and dwell in quiet security. So when we are with our God we "fear no evil." He is our Shelter and Retreat, our Abiding Refuge (Ps 62:7+). **AT HOME** we take our rest; it is there we find repose after the fatigue and toil of the day. And so our hearts find rest in God, when, wearied with life's conflict, we turn to Him, and our soul dwells at ease (Ps 37:7+, [Spurgeon Sermon #1](#), [Spurgeon Sermon #2](#); Mt 11:28-30+, read Jer 6:16-[Spurgeon sermon](#)). **AT HOME**, also, we let our hearts loose: we are not afraid of being misunderstood, nor of our words being misconstrued. So when we are with God we can commune freely with Him, laying open all our hidden desires; for if the "secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him," (Ps 25:14-[Spurgeon sermon](#); [Additional Note](#)) the secrets of them that fear Him ought to be & must be, with their Lord. **HOME TOO** is the place of our truest and purest happiness & it is in God that our hearts find their deepest delight. We have joy in Him which far surpasses all other joy ("fulness of joy" Ps 16:11+). **IT IS ALSO FOR HOME** that we work and labour. The thought of it gives strength to bear the daily burden and quickens the fingers to perform the task and in this sense we may also say that God is our Home. Love

to Him strengthens us. We think of Him in the person of His dear Son and a glimpse of the suffering face of the Redeemer constrains us to labor in His cause (2Cor 5:13-14+). We feel that we must work, for we have brethren yet to be saved and we have our Father's heart to make glad by bringing home His wandering sons; we would fill with holy mirth the sacred family among whom we dwell. Happy are those who have thus the God of Jacob for their refuge!"

OUR DWELLING PLACE: UNDERNEATH ARE HIS EVERLASTING ARMS

Spurgeon: "God—the eternal God—is Himself our Support at all times, and especially when we are sinking in deep trouble. There are seasons wh...en the Christian sinks very low in humiliation. Under a deep sense of his great sinfulness, he is humbled before God till he scarcely knows how to pray, because he appears, in his own sight, so worthless. Well, child of God, remember that when thou art at thy worst and lowest, yet "**UNDERNEATH**" thee "**ARE EVERLASTING ARMS.**" (The Old Hymn "[Leaning on the Everlasting Arms](#)" by Iris Dement) Sin may drag thee ever so low, but Christ's great atonement is still under all. You may have descended into the deeps, but you cannot have fallen so low as "the uttermost"; and to the uttermost he saves (Hebrews 7:25KJV±). Again, the Christian sometimes sinks very deeply in sore trial from without. Every earthly prop is cut away. What then? Still underneath him are "**THE EVERLASTING ARMS!**" He cannot fall so deep in distress and affliction but what the covenant grace of an ever-faithful God will still encircle him. The Christian may be sinking under trouble from within through fierce conflict, but even then he cannot be brought so low as to be beyond the reach of the "**everlasting arms**"—they are underneath him; and, while thus sustained, all Satan's efforts to harm him avail nothing. This assurance of support is a comfort to any weary but earnest worker in the service of God. It implies a **PROMISE OF STRENGTH FOR EACH DAY, GRACE FOR EACH NEED AND POWER FOR EACH DUTY.** And, further, when death comes, the promise shall still hold good. When we stand in the midst of Jordan (on "death's doorstep"), we shall be able to say with David, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." (Psalm 23:4-[Spurgeon sermon; Note](#)) We shall descend into the grave, but we shall go no lower, for the eternal arms prevent our further fall. All through life, and at its close, we shall be upheld by the "**EVERLASTING ARMS**"—arms that neither flag nor lose their strength, for "**THE EVERLASTING GOD FAINTETH NOT, NEITHER IS WEARY!**" (Isaiah 40:28)

CHARNOCK The eternal God is thy refuge.

God is a perpetual refuge and security to His people. His providence is not confined to one generation; it is not one age only that tastes of His bounty and compassion. His eye never yet slept, nor hath He suffered the little ship of His church to be swallowed up, though it hath been tossed upon the waves; He hath always been a haven to preserve us, a house to secure us; He hath always had compassion to pity us, and power to protect us; He hath had a face to shine, when the world hath had an angry countenance to frown. He brought Enoch home by an extraordinary translation from a brutish world; and when He was resolved to reckon with men for their brutish lives, He lodged Noah, the phœnix of the world, in an ark, and kept him alive as a spark in the midst of many waters, whereby to rekindle a church in the world; in all generations He is a dwelling-place to secure His people here or entertain them above.

Deuteronomy 33:26-29 Everlasting Arms

After a pre-concert rehearsal in New York City's Carnegie Hall, Randall Atcheson sat on stage alone. He had successfully navigated the intricate piano compositions of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt for the evening program, and with only minutes remaining before the doors opened, he wanted to play one more piece for himself. What came from his heart and his hands was an old hymn by Elisha Hoffman:

What have I to dread,
what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace
with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Those words echo the truth in the final blessing of Moses: "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26-27).

What a gift we have in our own arms and hands—they can swing a hammer, hold a child, or help a friend. But while our strength is limited, God's boundless power on our behalf is expressed in might and gentle care. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1). "He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11).

Whatever challenge or opportunity we face, there is security and peace in His everlasting arms. —David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The heavenly Father's arms never tire of holding His children

Robert Morgan - Leaning - From This Verse

I grew up in the Appalachian Mountains, in a church that loved the old hymns and gospel songs. Among our favorites was this one, based on Deuteronomy 33:27:

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

I only recently learned the simple story behind the song. A. J. Showalter was a professor of music with a deep love for hymnology and an even deeper love for his students. He frequently kept up with his pupils for years afterward, writing letters of comfort and counsel. One evening in 1887, he was in Hartselle, Alabama, leading a singing school in a local church. He dismissed his students for the evening, collected his precious hymnbooks, and returned to his boardinghouse.

Two letters had arrived, both from former pupils. Each of the young men was heartbroken, having just lost his wife. Professor Showalter went to the Bible, looking for a verse to comfort them. He selected Deuteronomy 33:27—"The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms. ..." As he pondered that verse, these words came to mind:

Leaning, leaning, Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms.

He scribbled replies to his bereaved friends, then reached for another piece of paper. He wrote to hymnist Elisha Hoffman. "Here is the chorus for a good hymn from Deuteronomy 33:27," his letter said in gist, "but I can't come up with any verses." Hoffman wrote three stanzas, sent them back, Showalter set it all to music, and ever since, these words have cheered us in our adversity:

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

The Everlasting Arms

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

In these days of jet travel, when we can cruise at altitudes of over 30,000 feet, flying can be most enjoyable as we wing our way above the storms and the turbulence of lower altitudes. Occasionally, however, some rough air is still experienced, and in those moments how reassuring it is to see the plane's wings out-stretched like two huge arms bearing us up. Recently, while flying from Atlanta to Chicago, we passed through some choppy air. As I looked out upon the giant silver wings of the jet, I was reminded of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." What a comfort it is for the true Christian to have such an assurance in the storms of life! When the bottom seems to fall out of living, how encouraging is the realization that the eternal God is bearing us up and will give sustaining grace for every trial. When Joseph was sold by his brethren into Egypt, it must have seemed to him the end of everything worthwhile in life; and yet the everlasting arms of God bore him up into a place of prominence and blessing. When Daniel was cast into the den of lions it seemed as though death was certain; yet even in that tragic situation he discovered that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him" (Ps. 34:7). Many Christians can testify from personal experience that those very circumstances of life which seemed to be most threatening were used by God to bring about increased blessing, greater joy, and more effective service.

Are you disturbed today by the trials of life? Is the air a little "choppy"? Are you experiencing some "turbulence"? Then just rest, relax, and trust in the Lord and you too will feel the strengthening resources of His power and know beyond a shadow of doubt that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

—E. A. Hoffman

You can't break God's promises by leaning on them!

The Best Is Yet to Come

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Are the best days of your life behind or in front of you? Our outlook on life—and our answer to that question—can change with time. When we're younger, we look ahead, wanting to grow up. And once we've grown older, we yearn for the past, wanting to be young again. But when we walk with God, whatever our age, the best is yet to come!

Over the course of his long life, Moses witnessed the amazing things God did, and many of those amazing things happened when he was no longer a young man. Moses was 80 years old when he confronted Pharaoh and saw God miraculously set His people free from slavery (Ex. 3–13). Moses saw the Red Sea part, saw manna fall from heaven, and even spoke with God “face to face” (14:21; 16:4; 33:11).

Throughout his life, Moses lived expectantly, looking ahead to what God would do (Heb. 11:24–27). He was 120 years old in his final year of life on this earth, and even then he understood that his life with God was just getting started and that he would never see an end to God's greatness and love.

Regardless of our age, “the eternal God is [our] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27) that faithfully carry us into His joy each day. By: James Banks ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord my God, I praise You for all You have done in the past. I look forward with thankfulness for all You will do in the future. And I thank You for today and all Your blessings.

When we walk with God, the best is yet to come.

A 19-Mile Fall

Underneath are the everlasting arms. — Deuteronomy 33:27

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:26-29

On August 27, 1960, US Air Force Captain Joseph Kittinger Jr. sat in a gondola suspended from a high-altitude balloon. When the balloon reached 102,800 feet above the surface of Earth (more than 19 miles), Kittinger jumped out. Four minutes and 36 seconds later his main parachute opened at 18,000 feet, but not before he had attained a velocity of 614 miles per hour! Kittinger carefully planned his record-setting descent.

In the spiritual realm, we're more likely to find that life is filled with unexpected free falls. The loss of a loved one, a broken relationship, or a terminated job can make us feel as if we're dropping into the unknown. For believers, there is a spiritual “parachute”—the loving arms of God.

Thousands of years ago, Moses wrote these words to the Israelites just before he died: “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27). The words “everlasting arms” refer to the protection and preservation of God's people. Despite the stressful circumstances they would surely face, they could rest in the assurance of God's watchful care.

Do you feel as if you're in a free fall? Take heart. God's loving arms are there to catch you. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O the sweet unfailing refuge
Of the everlasting arms;
In their loving clasp enfolded
Nothing worries or alarms.
—Henessay

With God behind you and His arms beneath you, you can face whatever lies ahead of you.

Free-Falling

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. — Deuteronomy 33:27

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:1-14

In the tender song of Moses found in today's Bible reading, God is portrayed as a dedicated mother eagle who can be trusted by her young, even in the scary experience of their learning to fly (Deuteronomy 32:11-12).

A mother eagle builds a comfortable nest for her young, padding it with feathers from her own breast. But the God-given instinct that builds that secure nest also forces the eaglets out of it before long. Eagles are made to fly, and the mother eagle will not fail to teach them. Only then will they become what they are meant to be.

So one day the mother eagle will disturb the twigs of the nest, making it an uncomfortable place to stay. Then she will pick up a perplexed eaglet, soar into the sky, and drop it. The little bird will begin to free-fall. Where is Mama now? She is not far away. Quickly she will swoop under and catch the fledgling on one strong wing. She will repeat this exercise until each eaglet is capable of flying on its own.

Are you afraid of free-falling, unsure of where or how hard you will land? Remember, God will fly to your rescue and spread His everlasting arms beneath you. He will also teach you something new and wonderful through it. Falling into God's arms is nothing to be afraid of. By: Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He will ever keep your soul,
What would harm, He will control;
In the home and by the way
He will keep you day by day.
—Psalter

God's love does not keep us from trials but sees us through them.

The Fear Of Falling

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. — Deuteronomy 33:27

Today's Scripture: Psalm 46

Have you ever dreamed that you were falling out of bed or from some great height, and you awoke in fright? I remember that as a boy I would often be awakened by such a terrifying feeling.

I heard about a man who had this sensation as soon as he slipped into sleep. He was so rudely awakened by his sense of falling that he was afraid to go back to sleep. He feared he would die, and he imagined he was falling into a bottomless pit.

Then one evening as he was strolling through a cemetery, he saw this phrase engraved on a tombstone:

Underneath Are The Everlasting Arms

These words reminded him that when believers die, they are safely carried by the Lord to their home in heaven. He recalled the assurance of the psalmist, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me" (Ps. 23:4).

The once-fearful man realized that in life and in death— and even in sleep—the "everlasting arms" of our loving Lord are there to catch and hold us. That night he was able to sing what he was taught in childhood, "Teach me to live that I may dread the grave as little as my bed!" At last he could fall asleep without fear. By: M.R. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I can trust my loving Savior
When I fear the world's alarms;
There's no safer place of resting
Than His everlasting arms.
—Hess

You can trust God in the dark as well as in the light.

Deuteronomy 33:27 A Stroll With God

Etty Hillesum was a young Jewish woman living in Amsterdam in 1942. During that time, the Nazis were arresting Jews and herding them off to concentration camps. As she awaited inevitable arrest, and with a fear of the unknown, she began to read the Bible—and met Jesus. She simply put her hand in God’s hand and found rare courage and confidence.

Etty wrote in her diary: “From all sides our destruction creeps up on us and soon the ring will be closed and no one at all will be able to come to our aid. But I don’t feel that I am in anybody’s clutches. I feel safe in God’s arms. And whether I am sitting at my beloved old desk in the Jewish district or in a labor camp under SS guards, I shall feel safe in God’s arms. For once you have begun to walk with God, you need only keep on walking with Him, and all of life becomes one long stroll.”

Etty was a living, courageous picture of the psalmist’s declaration: “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You... What can flesh do to me?” (56:3-4). What a challenge for anyone plagued by fear!

As we sense the strength of God’s everlasting arms beneath us (Dt. 33:27), we can stroll through life with confidence, holding the hand of our unseen Companion.— by Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I never walk alone, Christ walks beside me,
He is the dearest Friend I've ever known;
With such a Friend to comfort and to guide me,
I never, no, I never walk alone.

—Ackley

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**You can be confident about tomorrow
if you walk with God today.**

Deuteronomy 33:27a

Fall Into His Arms

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” [Deuteronomy 33:27](#)

As I was reading the words of today’s text from Deuteronomy, I recalled an old song written by Ada Habershon. “When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast; when the tempter would prevail, He can hold me fast.” Say, that’s good theology!

A lady who was facing difficult trials and troubling circumstances came to W. B. Hinson at the close of a sermon and said,

“I’m very much afraid I might fall.”

Hinson replied,

“Well, why don’t you do it?”

“But Preacher,” she protested, “where would I fall to?”

“You would fall down into the everlasting arms of God,” came his reply.

Then he said,

“I have read in the Bible that His everlasting arms are underneath His children. And you know, I believe that if you fall down upon those everlasting arms, it is sure and certain that you will never fall through them.”

Yes, the believer can rest in the unailing strength and support of the omnipotent Father. God bolsters this assurance with a progression of truth in Isaiah 41:10 when He says through the prophet,

“I am with thee.” “I will strengthen thee.” “I will help thee.” “I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”

And in John 17:11 we read this prayer of our Lord:

“Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.”

His request will not be thwarted because our Savior has given every believer into the keeping, safeguarding power of the Father. So even when we stumble, we fall into the everlasting arms of His grace. -P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries.](#)

He who to the wind and wave
Commanded, "Peace, be still!"
Stands with arms outstretched to save
And keep you in His will.
-Stairs

**When we get to the place where there's nothing left but God,
we find that God is all we need.**

Play [Twila Paris' All That I Need](#)

Spurgeon: Some of you are enduring [deep affliction](#). In your extraordinary trial, remember the depth of [divine faithfulness](#). You may be unable to comprehend why, but I urge you to believe in the firmness and stability of [divine affection](#). **You will have comfort in proportion to your trials.** If you have shallow sorrows you will receive shallow graces (Ed: Compare "variegated" [Gk = [poikilos](#) = various "sizes" and "shapes" of] trials in 1 Peter 1:6+ with *manifold* or "variegated" [poikilos] [grace](#) in 1 Peter 4:10+, grace of just the right "size" and "shape" for your trial). If you have deep afflictions you will obtain deeper proof of God's faithfulness. I could lay down and die when I think of life's trials, but like Sarah (Ge 21:6) **I recover and laugh when I remember that the eternal God is our refuge and that underneath are the everlasting arms** (Deut. 33:27). God will not fail. God will not take away His hand until He has finished His purpose concerning us (cp Phil 1:6+). Great trials bring great promises. Much afflicted one, there are great and mighty words that are not meant for saints of easier experiences. You will drink from the deep golden goblets reserved for those giants who can drink a great portion of wormwood, but God will also supply deep drinks of the well-refined wines on the lees (Isaiah 25:6-[Spurgeon sermon](#)). Trials greatly enlarge the soul. Thus I do not want, in my better mind, to escape great trials, since they involve great graces. If my strength shall be as my days (Deut. 33:25), then let my days be long and dark, for my strength will be mighty, God will be glorified, and I will be blessed. I earnestly urge every tested Christian to dwell on this truth, for it may be a great comfort. There is love, immortal and unchanging love, in heaven toward you, which will never grow cold. You will be helped. God would sooner cease to be than cease to be faithful. Be of good courage, for today He will strengthen your heart.

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.*

--[Annie Johnson Flint](#)

Deuteronomy 33:28 "So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew.

- **Israel:** Ex 33:16 Nu 23:9 Jer 23:6 Jer 33:16 Eze 34:25 Rev 21:27 22:14,15
- **the fountain:** De 8:7,8 Ps 68:26 Pr 5:15-18 Isa 48:1
- **his:** De 33:13 11:11 32:2 Ge 27:28

Related Passages:

Jeremiah 23:6 "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

Jeremiah 33:16+ 'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.'

Ezekiel 34:25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

ISRAEL WILL DWELL IN SECURITY AND PROSPERITY!

So Israel dwells in security - "Israel lives in safety" (Dt 33:28NET) The Septuagint has the verb [kataskenoo](#) which means to pitch one's tent and thus to rest which is combined with the verb [peitho](#) which means confidence and in the perfect tense describes

enduring confidence! A perfect picture of confident rest.

Security (0983) **betach** means security, confidence (belief that one is safe and secure - Isa 32:17, Job 24:23, Mic 2:8). In its first occurrence betach emphasizes the status of a city which was certain of not being attacked (Ge 34:25). All three uses in Psalms speak of God enabling us to dwell securely (Ps. 4:8; 16:9; 78:53) It is primarily a positive term: to dwell in safety because of God's protection (Lev. 25:18); to lie down safely or in security (Hos 2:18); to walk securely or assuredly (Pr. 10:9).

The fountain of Jacob secluded - Secluded is the Hebrew word for isolation, and this extends the idea of "security" in the first phrase. If one view the fountain of Jacob as a parallel phrase, the description is not of literal springs of water but of Israel itself. The literal rendering supports this interpretation "And Israel doth tabernacle in confidence alone; The eye of Jacob is unto a land of corn and wine." (Dt 33:28YLT) The English of the Septuagint has "And Israel shall dwell in confidence alone on the land of Jacob." (Dt 33:28LXE)

As **Merrill** explains **fountain of Jacob** "is a figurative way of describing Jacob's offspring, the descendants of his sons who came to comprise the nation Israel. They would live in a land of abundance of crops and of life-giving moisture, a land described elsewhere as one "flowing with milk and honey" (cf. Gen 27:28; Exod 3:8, 17; Lev 20:24; Num 13:27; Deut 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20; 32:13). (NAC)

In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew- When would this be fulfilled? There was a partial fulfillment when Israel first conquered the Promised Land, but it was not long before their disobedience resulted in God's wrath beginning to be poured out on them. And by the time of the book of Judges, they were repeatedly being invaded by enemies.

The full fulfillment awaits the time when Israel receives Messiah in the New Covenant. Ezekiel repeatedly mentions a time of **security** for Israel as in Ezekiel 28:26 which says "They will live in it **securely** (**betach**); and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live **securely** (**betach**) when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then (WHEN? WHEN THEY ARE LIVING SECURELY) they will know that I am the LORD their God." That last phrase "they will know that I am the LORD their God" is a term related to covenant and most likely speaks of the time when Israel has entered the New Covenant at the end of this age. If one studies the other mentions of **security** (**betach**), compare the uses of **betach** in the following passages

Ezek. 34:25 "I will make (karath) a **covenant of peace** with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live **securely** (**betach**) in the wilderness and sleep in the woods."

Ezekiel 34:27 "Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be **secure** (**betach**). on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them."

Ezekiel 34:28 "They will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live **securely** (**betach**), and no one will make them afraid.

This clearly a description of a land finally fully flowing with milk and honey, as Yahweh had always promised Israel if they would only be obedient to Him. The implication is clear that now they are obedient to Him (see how they are enabled to obey in Ezekiel 36:26-27+). This has not yet transpired, for even modern Israel, while prosperous and militarily strong, they are not as a nation that proclaims "the LORD is our righteousness." (see Jeremiah 33:16+) and they certainly do not dwell in **security**! It follows that Moses is alluding to the day described by Paul in Romans 11:26+ when "all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." Zechariah 12:10+ describes it this way "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

MacArthur agrees writing that "This pledge was only partially fulfilled after they entered the Land, but it awaits a complete fulfillment in **the kingdom of Messiah.**" ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Deuteronomy 33:28a The Dew of Heaven - Faith's Checkbook - C H Spurgeon

"His heavens shall drop down dew."—Deuteronomy 33:28

WHAT the dew in the East is to the world of nature, that is the influence of the Spirit in the realm of grace. How greatly do I need it! Without the Spirit of God I am a dry and withered thing. I droop, I fade, I die. How sweetly does this dew refresh me! When once favored with it, I feel happy, lively, vigorous, elevated. I want nothing more. The Holy Spirit brings me life and all that life requires. All else without the dew of the Spirit is less than nothing to me: I hear, I read, I pray, I sing, I go to the table of communion, and I find no blessing there until the Holy Ghost visits me. But when He bedews me, every means of grace is sweet and profitable.

What a promise is this for me! "His heavens shall drop down dew." I shall be visited with grace. I shall not be left to my natural drought, or to the world's burning heat, or to the sirocco of Satanic temptation. Oh, that I may at this very hour feel the gentle, silent, saturating dew of the Lord! Why should I not? He who has made me to live as the grass lives in the meadow will treat me as He treats the grass; He will refresh me from above. Grass cannot call for dew as I do. Surely, the Lord who visits the unpraying plant will answer to His pleading child.

Perhaps you've never thought of it, but dew is one of God's ingenious inventions. On clear nights, water vapor in the air gathers around each blade of grass, condenses, and forms billions of water droplets to refresh plants and to water the earth. When the Lord wanted to impress Job with His creative energy, He asked him, "Who fathered the drops of dew?" (Job 38:28). The promise of dew represented a free blessing that would come upon the Jewish people every day (Gen. 27:28; Deut. 33:13, 28). In Palestine it rains little from April to October, and if it weren't for the dew, all vegetation would perish during summer months. The rabbis taught that rainfall in Israel was dependant on the moral behavior of the people, and times of drought were considered disciplinary actions to correct disobedience. The dew, however, wasn't dependant on moral behavior. It was just a free, constant blessing from God. The morning dew is God's way of telling us that every morning is a fresh start, and every day is sprinkled with His compassions. (Robert Morgan - My All in All)

Thou art our Morning and our Sun,
Our work is glad, in Thee begun;
Our foot worn path is fresh with dew,
For Thou createst all things new.
—Lucy Larcom, 1892

Dwelling Safely Apart - - Faith's Checkbook - C H Spurgeon

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew."—Deuteronomy 33:28

THE more we dwell alone, the more safe shall we be. God would have His people separate from sinners. His call to them is, "Come ye out from among them." A Christian world is such a monstrosity as the Scriptures never contemplate. A worldly Christian is spiritually diseased. Those who compromise with Christ's enemies may be reckoned with them.

Our safety lies not in making terms with the enemy, but in dwelling alone with our best Friend. If we do this, we shall dwell in safety, despite the sarcasms, the slanders, and the sneers of the world. We shall be safe from the baleful influence of its unbelief, its pride, its vanity, its filthiness.

God also will make us dwell in safety alone in that day when sin shall be visited on the nations by wars and famines.

The Lord brought Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, but he stopped halfway. He had no blessing till, having set out to go to the land of Canaan, to the land of Canaan he came. He was safe alone even in the midst of foes. Lot was not safe in Sodom though in a circle of friends. Our safety is in dwelling apart with God.

Deuteronomy 33:29 "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."

- **Blessed are you:** De 4:7-8 Nu 23:20-24 24:5 2Sa 7:23 Ps 33:12 144:15
- **saved:** Isa 12:2 45:17 1Ti 4:10
- **the shield:** Ge 15:1 Ps 84:11 115:9-11
- **the sword:** Jdg 7:20 Ps 7:12 45:3 Isa 27:1 34:5,6 Jer 12:12 47:6 Rev 1:16 Rev 19:21
- **your enemies will cringe before you,** 2Sa 22:45 Ps 18:44 66:3 81:15 *margins
- **you will tread upon their high places:** De 32:13 Jos 10:24,25 Hab 3:19

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:7-8+ "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8 "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"

Numbers 23:20+ "Behold, I have received a command to bless; When He has blessed, then I cannot revoke it.

WHO IS LIKE ISRAEL?

Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved(yasha') by the LORD - This is like a ray of sunlight piercing the dark clouds of Israel's stubborn disobedience, as Moses gives them a ray of sure hope that God will finish what He began when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage, birthed a nation and made them His "wife" at Mount Sinai (See [Excursus on Yahweh as Husband of Israel](#)). Israel was saved not to die, but to live forever. (see Dt 4:32-40+).

Merrill - Salvation in the past provides confidence for the present, for the God who redeemed is the Shield, Helper (cf. v. 26), and Sword of Israel. He not only provides these things but in himself he embodies them (cf. Ps 115:9–11). The future was, therefore, bright as well. On the eve of conquest it was assuring to know that Yahweh, the Divine Warrior (cf. v. 27), would lead his elect nation to victory. Their enemies would submit to them, and they would tread upon the high places of their foes (v. 29b, c). ([New American Commentary](#))

Blessed (0835) ('**esher/'eser** related to the verb '**ashar** = to go or be straight, to go on, to advance, to be right) and always refers to people but never to God. **Vine** writes that "Basically, this word connotes the state of "prosperity" or "happiness" that comes when a superior bestows his favor (blessing) on one. In most passages, the one bestowing favor is God Himself = Dt. 33:29. The state that the blessed one enjoys does not always appear to be "happy" = (Job 5:17-18). Eliphaz was not describing Job's condition as a happy one; it was "blessed," however, inasmuch as God was concerned about him. Because it was a blessed state and the outcome would be good, Job was expected to laugh at his adversity (Job 5:22). God is not always the one who makes one "blessed." = 1Ki 10:8."

Who is the Shield (magen) of your help (see '**ezer**': Lxx - **boethos**) **and the Sword of your majesty** (of your triumph - ESV)! - "Your protective shield and your exalted sword." (Dt 33:29NET) Yahweh Himself is their **Shield** and their **Sword**, the Defender and the Warrior of His chosen people Israel!

So your enemies will cringe (come fawning - ESV) **before you** - The conclusion ("so") is that Israel's enemies will ultimately be fully and forever defeated with the help of the Sword of Yahweh.

Cringe (03584) **kachash** means to disappoint, to deceive, to fail, to lie, to deny (of Sarah's denial - Ge 18:15). To not tell the truth by speaking lies (Ge 18:15). To cringe or cower, bowing in fearful submission (feigned obedience Ps 66:3, Ps 81:15), not out of a sense of respect and this sense is an extension of lying or not being truthful in the relationship (Dt 33:29, 2Sa 22:45).

And you will tread upon their high places - "you shall tread upon their backs." (Dt 33:29ESV) The Septuagint has **trachelos** for **high places**, which depicts the conquering nation of Israel with their feet triumphantly on the necks of their enemies!

THOUGHT - There could also be a play on words here for **high places (bamah)** was the name of the places the pagans practiced their many abominable idolatries. Even Israel's better kings failed to clear the nation of these **high places**, but one day in the future the King of kings will utterly and forever destroy these heinous **high places!** Do you have any "high places" that you have failed to annihilate? If so rest assured they will continue to be a snare and thorn in your side until enabled by the Spirit you finally and fully remove them (cf Ro 8:13+)!

Merrill - This last figure is that of a conqueror who places his foot upon his vanquished and fallen adversary as a sign of absolute dominion (cf. Gen 49:8; Josh 10:24). The verb "trample" (Heb. **dārak**) occurs frequently to speak of the exercise of sovereignty over peoples and lands or even over nature itself (Deut 1:36; 11:24–25; Josh 1:3; 14:9; Amos 4:13; Mic 1:3; 5:4; Hab 3:15; cf. Job 1:7; 2:2). In light of the combination of conquest and dominion, it is better to understand **bāmôt** not as "high places" but as "backs," a rendering supported by comparative Semitic lexicography (cf. Ug. **bmt**, Akk. **bāmtu**; KB, 132).³⁹ The mythopoeic language of the passage as a whole (cf. v. 26) favors this view as does the parallelism of cringing ("cower"; Heb. **kāḥaš**) and trampling on the back. ([New American Commentary](#))

High places (01116) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. **bama** in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of **bamah** are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places.**"

Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 **NET NOTE** = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images." A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11) One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built a **high place** for **Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Chr 16:39-40, 21:29).

Deuteronomy 33:29 Over Jordan with Singing - Faith's Checkbook- C H Spurgeon

"Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee." —Deuteronomy 33:29

THAT arch-enemy, the devil, is a liar from the beginning; but he is so very plausible that, like mother Eve, we are led to believe him. Yet in our experience we shall prove him a liar.

He says that we shall fall from grace, dishonor our profession, and perish with the doom of apostates; but, trusting in the Lord Jesus, we shall hold on our way and prove that Jesus loses none whom His Father gave Him. He tells us that our bread will fail, and we shall starve with our children; yet the Feeder of the ravens has not forgotten us yet, and He will never do so, but will prepare us a table in the presence of our enemies.

He whispers that the Lord will not deliver us out of the trial which is looming in the distance, and he threatens that the last ounce will break the camel's back. What a liar he is! For the Lord will never leave us, nor forsake us. "Let him deliver him now!" cries the false fiend: but the Lord will silence him by coming to our rescue.

He takes great delight in telling us that death will prove too much for us. "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" But there also he shall prove a liar unto us, and we shall pass through the river singing psalms of glory.

Morning and Evening - C H Spurgeon Deuteronomy 33:29a

"Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!" — Deuteronomy 33:29 (

He who affirms that Christianity makes men miserable, is himself an utter stranger to it. It were strange indeed, if it made us wretched, for see to what a position it exalts us! It makes us sons of God. Suppose you that God will give all the happiness to his enemies, and reserve all the mourning for his own family? Shall his foes have mirth and joy, and shall his home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Shall the sinner, who has no part in Christ, call himself rich in happiness, and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars? No, we will rejoice in the Lord always, and glory in our inheritance, for we "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it worketh for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness; and therefore by the aid of the divine Comforter, we, the "people saved of the Lord," will joy in the God of our salvation. We are married unto Christ; and shall our great

Bridegroom permit his spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto him: we are his members, and though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in him. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Inheritors of joy for ever, we have foretastes of our portion. There are streaks of the light of joy to herald our eternal sunrising. Our riches are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?"