

MOSES BLESSES THE TWELVE TRIBES

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 33:1-29

LESSON 142 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Happy is that people, Whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 144:15)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 33:1-29

¹ And this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. ² And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them. ³ Yea, he loved the people; all his saints *are* in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; *every one* shall receive of thy words. ⁴ Moses commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. ⁵ And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people *and* the tribes of Israel were gathered together. ⁶ Let Reuben live, and not die; and let *not* his men be few. ⁷ And this *is the blessing* of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help *to him* from his enemies. ⁸ And of Levi he said, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, *and with* whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; ⁹ Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. ¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. ¹¹ Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Majesty of God

1 One of the last official acts of Moses was to bless the Children of Israel, Deuteronomy 33:1;

Genesis 49:1-28

- ¹ And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall befall you in the last days.
- ² Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.
- ³ Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:
- ⁴ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.
- ⁵ Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of cruelty *are* in their habitations.
- ⁶ O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.
- ⁷ Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.
- ⁸ Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.
- ⁹ Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?
- ¹⁰ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.
- ¹¹ Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:
- ¹² His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.
- ¹³ Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.
- ¹⁴ Issachar *is* a strong ass couching down between two burdens:
- ¹⁵ 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.
- ¹⁶ Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.
- ¹⁷ Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.
- ¹⁸ I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.
- ¹⁹ Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.
- ²⁰ Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.
- ²¹ Naphtali *is* a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.
- ²² Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:
- ²³ The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:
- ²⁴ But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his

through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.¹² 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.¹³ 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,¹⁴ And for the precious fruits *brought forth* by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,¹⁵ And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,¹⁶ And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and *for* the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let *the blessing* come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him *that was* separated from his brethren.¹⁷ His glory *is like* the firstling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thousands of Manasseh.¹⁸ And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents.¹⁹ They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck *of* the abundance of the seas, and *of* treasures hid in the sand.²⁰ And of Gad he said, Blessed *be* he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.²¹ And he provided the first part for himself, because there, *in* a portion of the lawgiver, *was he* seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of

hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

²⁵ *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

²⁶ The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

²⁷ Benjamin shall *ravin as* a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

²⁸ All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

Luke 24:50-51

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

⁵¹ And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

- 2 Moses opened his blessing with a wonderful description of the glorious appearances of God as He gave the Law, Deuteronomy 33:2;

Exodus 19:18-20

¹⁸ And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

²⁰ And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

Judges 5:4-5

⁴ LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

⁵ The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

- 3 God gave the Law to the Children of Israel because He loved them, Deuteronomy 33:3;

Jeremiah 31:1-3

¹ At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

² Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

³ The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

1 John 4:19

¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

- 4 The Lord would have Israel ever remember Moses in connection **with** the giving of the Law, Deuteronomy 33:4, 5;

John 1:17

¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Acts 7:37-38

³⁷ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

³⁸ This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina,

the LORD, and his judgments with Israel. ²² And of Dan he said, Dan *is* a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan. ²³ And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. ²⁴ And of Asher he said, *Let Asher be* blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. ²⁵ Thy shoes *shall be* iron and brass; and as thy days, *so shall* thy strength *be*. ²⁶ *There is* none like unto the God of Jeshurun, *who* rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. ²⁷ The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ Happy *art* thou, O Israel: who *is* like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who *is* the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

II Moses' Blessings

- 1 Reuben was blessed with long life and a large tribe, Deuteronomy 33: 6;

Numbers 26:2

² Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

Numbers 26:7

⁷ These *are* the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty.

- 2 Moses blessed Judah with the anticipation that they would be a praying people, active for God, Deuteronomy 33:7;

Judges 1:1-2

¹ Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?

² And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

Micah 5:2

² But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

Hebrews 7:14

¹⁴ For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

- 3 The Levites received a gracious blessing because they were chosen of God, Deuteronomy 33:8-11;

Exodus 32:26-29

²⁶ Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who *is* on the LORD'S side? *let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

²⁷ And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

²⁸ And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

²⁹ For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

- 4 Benjamin received the promise of an inheritance next to the Lord's sanctuary; and rich blessings in connection with it, Deuteronomy 33:12;

Joshua 18:11-28

¹¹ And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

¹² And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven.

¹³ And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which *is* Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south side of the nether Bethhoron.

¹⁴ And the border was drawn *thence*, and compassed the

corner of the sea southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Bethhoron southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah: this *was* the west quarter.

¹⁵ And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjathjearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah:

¹⁶ And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel,

¹⁷ And was drawn from the north, and went forth to Enshemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which is over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben,

¹⁸ And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah:

¹⁹ And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this *was* the south coast.

²⁰ And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

²¹ Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz,

²² And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel,

²³ And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

²⁴ And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages:

²⁵ Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

²⁶ And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah,

²⁷ And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah,

²⁸ And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, *and* Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

Judges 1:21

²¹ And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

- 5 Ephraim and Manasseh were included under the bountiful blessing of Joseph, Deuteronomy 33:13-17;

Genesis 49:22-26

²² Joseph is a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:

²³ The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:

²⁴ But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

²⁵ *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that *lieth* under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

²⁶ The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

- 6 Zebulun's and Issachar's blessing included a peaceful settlement and profitable employment, Deuteronomy 33:18, 19;

Joshua 19:10-23

¹⁰ And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their

inheritance was unto Sarid:

¹¹ And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that is before Jokneam;

¹² And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrising unto the border of Chislothtabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia,

¹³ And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittahhepher, to Ittahkazin, and goeth out to Remmonmethoar to Neah;

¹⁴ And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthahel:

¹⁵ And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages.

¹⁶ This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

¹⁷ And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families.

¹⁸ And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem,

¹⁹ And Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath,

²⁰ And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez,

²¹ And Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Bethpazzez;

²² And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Bethshemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages.

²³ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

1 Chronicles 12:32-33

³² And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment.

³³ Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: *they were* not of double heart.

Isaiah 2:3

³ And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

7 Gad was already blessed in the inheritance Moses, the lawgiver, had given him; he would receive the surety of that blessing after he helped his brethren conquer Canaan, Deuteronomy 33:20, 21;

Numbers 32:1-6

¹ Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle;

² The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

³ Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

⁴ *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

⁵ Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jordan.

⁶ And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

Numbers 32:16-17

¹⁶ And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

¹⁷ But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

8 Dan was to be a fierce, warlike tribe, Deuteronomy 33:22

9 Naphtali was to be satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord, Deuteronomy 33:23;

Isaiah 9:1-2

¹ Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

² The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Matthew 4:13-16

¹³ And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

¹⁴ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

¹⁵ The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

¹⁶ The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

10 Moses blessed Asher with a fourfold blessing, ending with the promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," Deuteronomy 33:24, 25;

Proverbs 3:3-4

³ Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

⁴ So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Isaiah 40:29

²⁹ He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

III The Excellency of Israel

1 Israel excelled among the nations because they trusted in the eternal God who is beyond comparison, Deuteronomy 33:26, 27;

Isaiah 26:4

⁴ Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

Isaiah 43:10-15

¹⁰ Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

¹¹ I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

¹² I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.

¹³ Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

¹⁴ Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

¹⁵ I *am* the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel,

your King.

Jude 1:24-25

²⁴ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

- 2 Never before was a nation so well situated, sheltered, or blessed as Israel would be in the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 33:28, 29;

2 Samuel 7:23

²³ And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

Psalms 33:12

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is *that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is *that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

NOTES:

The Last Blessing

The time was fast approaching when the Children of Israel would cross the River Jordan into the Promised Land; therefore Moses knew that he did not have much time left to spend in this world. Moses had been the leader, adviser, intercessor, and prophet for Israel over a period of 40 years and had learned to love these people more than he loved his own life. Whenever disease or plague came, Moses prayed; if enemies attacked, Moses sought God's counsel and help; whenever trouble arose in the camp, no matter what the cause, Moses interceded with God until the condition was corrected. Truly Moses had borne the burdens of the people, and now he wished to show them one more kindness before he bade them farewell.

As Jacob had blessed his sons, and foretold their future, in his last days on earth (**Genesis 49:3-28** ³ Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: ⁴ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch. ⁵ Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of cruelty *are* in their habitations. ⁶ O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. ⁷ Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. ⁸ Judah, thou *art* *he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. ⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? ¹⁰ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*. ¹¹ Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: ¹² His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. ¹³ Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon. ¹⁴ Issachar is a strong ass couching down between

two burdens: ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. ¹⁸ I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. ¹⁹ Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last. ²⁰ Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. ²¹ Naphtali *is* a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. ²² Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall: ²³ The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him: ²⁴ But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) ²⁵ *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: ²⁶ The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. ²⁷ Benjamin shall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. ²⁸ All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing *he blessed them*), so Moses in a similar manner blessed the individual tribes of Israel. It is wonderfully fitting that God should draw aside the curtains of time for a few moments and allow these outstanding religious leaders to see the events of history before those events took place.

Jesus' Blessing

These blessings remind us of another day when a wonderful Leader stood upon the mount blessing His people; and as He blessed them, Jesus was parted from the people and taken into Heaven (**Luke 4:51** ⁵¹ And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven). What a marvelous blessing it was that He gave to His people: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). The blessings of that promise are fulfilled in the Latter Rain Gospel, which is in the world today. A glorious future Jesus described for His Church: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18). Every true soldier of the Cross is made partaker of this marvelous blessing. The capsheaf of all blessings is yet to come. The angels announced when Jesus went away: "This same *Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The Spiritual Blessing

One difference stands out between the blessings that Jacob gave his sons, and Moses' blessings to the twelve tribes. The future that Jacob predicted was principally temporal, or pertaining to the national status of Israel, while Moses spoke of the spiritual as well as the temporal blessings in the land of Canaan. God wanted to give His people, then, the best in both the spiritual and physical realms, as He does today. The spiritual blessings given the Israelites are likewise for us today; and we see, in the temporal blessings of Canaan, a type of the greater spiritual blessings that are poured out upon hungry and aggressive pilgrims in this Gospel dispensation.

God had called Moses to lead the Church in the wilderness. Of all the people, none had received a brighter vision or a clearer understanding of the beauties and benefits of that Church than had Moses. As a true shepherd of Israel, the utmost endeavor of Moses was to portray the revelation in such a way that would encourage the people to take hold of God and never let go.

Such is the privilege and duty of every Christian today. A man is a Christian because he has embraced the truth of the Gospel. An operation of the Spirit of God upon his heart and a revelation by the Father, that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), make it possible for him to believe in Jesus. When the revelation of Jesus comes to the heart of man, there also comes a commission to go and tell others of the grace that he has found. The clearer the vision, the greater is the desire to tell the Story. Paul's testimony was: "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God. and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19, 20). Cannot we hear the words of Jesus ringing in our heart, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37) ?

Reuben, Judah, and Levi

Moses' blessing to the tribe of Reuben was that they should live and not die. Perhaps Moses could foresee this tribe in a desperate spiritual struggle trying to serve God with that barrier, the Jordan River, between them and God's sanctuary. Jacob had said in his blessing that Reuben was unstable as water, and should not excel (**Genesis 49:4** ⁴ *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*). Though more than 200 years had passed since Jacob had spoken, the situation of Reuben had not changed appreciably.

Judah received a blessing from both Moses and Jacob. Both blessings were more of the spiritual type, for it was from this tribe that the Messiah should come. Moses said that Judah would be a praying people, and that their prayers would be answered. God would allow the tribe of Judah to increase, and would cause them to triumph over their enemies.

The priesthood was given to the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi. The blessing of this tribe was wholly spiritual. As the result of Levi's devoted service to God when Israel sinned at Mount Sinai and made the golden calf to lead them back to Egypt, God had said, "Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 10:9). What greater blessing could anybody desire?

Other Tribes

Benjamin was recognized as the beloved of the Lord, no doubt as the result of the position of esteem that he held with his father. Also the Lord could see that Benjamin's inheritance would contain a portion of the City of Jerusalem, the city that God loved and chose to put His name there.

Joseph was another tribe who received a blessing. This blessing contained the promise of both spiritual and physical prosperity. Moses asked for Joseph "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush," referring to the scene on Mount Horeb when God appeared in the midst of the burning bush (**Exodus 3:2-3** ² *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.* ³ *And Moses*

said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt).

Zebulun and Issachar seemed to receive a distinct call to influence their neighbors to serve God. Naphtali, too, was included in God's call. Later the prophets spoke more distinctly in this regard; and we find that during *Jesus'* ministry on earth, His headquarters were at Capernaum in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali (**Matthew 4:13-15** ¹³ And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: ¹⁴ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ¹⁵ The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles). The land of Galilee, where Jesus found the multitudes who heard Him gladly and whence most of the Apostles came, was situated within the inheritance of these tribes.

The tribe of Asher received an outstanding spiritual blessing, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." It is a promise that God would graciously support them under all their trials and troubles. It is also a promise sure to all the spiritual seed of Abraham that God will proportion the grace and strength to the services that He calls upon His children to perform and the sufferings that He calls upon them to go through.

Strength as Thy Days

The Lord will never ask His people to perform duties that are impossible of execution. They may seem impossible oftentimes, and no doubt they would be if man were left to his own devices to accomplish them. Here is where God's promise takes over, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." This strength naturally depends upon a concurrence between God and man. On the part of God a mission or duty is assigned to the man for which the strength of accomplishment is granted. On the part of the man there must be exercised all the granted strength by which he pursues the course which is opened in the way of duty before him. When these two elements combine — the strength of God and the willingness of man — it is literally true that anything is possible.

When the call to Egypt, and the deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage, came to Moses, he said: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out **of** Egypt?" (Exodus 3 :11). He truly felt his own insufficiency to perform such a major undertaking. The Lord answered Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee" (Exodus 3:12); and that was enough. God's presence puts honor upon the worthless, wisdom into the foolish, and strength into the weak. Moses went forth strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and who would dare to say that the mission was a failure?

Job's Strength

Job experienced this "strength as his day" in the day that the malicious darts of Satan were turned against him. That God's strength was supplied was proved by the fact that Job came through the test without sin. Perhaps Job was not conscious of God's strength at all; in fact, he wondered why God hid His face from view (**Job 13:24** ²⁴ Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?). A Christian need not be aware of that God-given strength in his life, but what he does need is a conscious knowledge of an absolute need for that strength for his duties, and a true faith in the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Then God can send a day to that man, such as there has never been any like it, for He would send the sufficient strength, and enable that man to go through with triumphant victory.

Moses' Last Words

As the blessing of the twelve tribes of Israel came to a close, the inspiration of God being upon him still, Moses magnified once more the God of Israel and the Israel of God. These are the last recorded words of Moses; therefore they are the more remarkable. The last words of a man, especially a God-fearing man, are noted with interest.

There is no god who can be compared with the God of Israel, "who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Then Israel was protected on every side, and from above and beneath as well.

Is not this true of every child of God? We have an incomparable Father who protects us also from every side. He rules the heavens, therefore no trouble can come from that direction strong enough to overthrow us. He is our refuge on every side, hence "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day" (Psalm 91:5). The everlasting arms support the child of God, from beneath. No matter how low that child may be brought in persecution or trial, destitution or trouble, those everlasting arms are there to keep the spirit from fainting and the faith from failing to bring the soul back again into a wealthy place. Cannot we truly say with Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

QUESTIONS

- 1 At what period in Moses' life did he bless the Children of Israel?
- 2 How did the blessing of Moses differ from the blessing that Jacob gave to his sons?
- 3 Which of the tribes of Israel did Moses say would be a praying people?
- 4 Why did the tribe of Levi receive such a wonderful blessing?
- 5 Name some of the things included in Joseph's blessing Did Joseph receive any spiritual blessing from Moses?
- 6 What is meant by the promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be"?
- 7 Who was the refuge of the Children of Israel?
- 8 Who is the refuge of the child of God today? How?