

MOSES' BLESSING FOR HIS PEOPLE

I. Introduction

Thank you for joining us today in our studies in Deuteronomy. This whole book is written against the background of Moses' life and the coming of Israel to Canaan. It summarizes the journey, reviews the covenantal arrangement and speaks of eventualities of the future. In chapter 33 Moses gives a blessing for the people of Israel on a tribe by tribe basis. You will recall that Jacob also did this for his sons in the closing chapters of Genesis and Moses is following that precedent. The blessings are analytical and to an extent predictive and they are fitting especially in the light of the threatened punishments in chapter 31. We see the following divisions of material in the chapter.

- 32:1-5....A testimony to God's love and Moses place
- 6-25..Particular blessings for the tribes
- 26-29..a song of praise for God and His people.

II. Discussion

33:1-5....the blessing: question of time and authorship

- v. 2...the greatness of God
- v. 3...God's love for Israel
- v. 4...Moses has passed to them the law
- v. 5...He was the leader of God, the people gathered under him.

33:6-25....the tribal blessings

- v. 6...Reuben: live,not die. His family multiplies.
- v. 7...Judah, let him lead
- v. 8-11...Levi..honored for recognizing the covenant. his future duties are surveyed and a prayer made for his work.
- v. 12..Benjamin...the beloved of the Lord
- v. 13-17..Joseph: the precious things are his (no special mention of Ephraim or Manasseh until v. 17)
- v. 18-19..Zebulon, Issachar: rejoice in your tribes
- v. 20-21...Gad, blessed for his face
- v. 22..Dan...a lion's whelp
- v. 23..Naphtali, a full land
- v. 24..Ashur..his foot in oil...

But Simeon is missing!

33:26-29....Praise to God

- v. 27..testimony to His care
- v. 28..to the goodness of Israel's land
- v. 29..to the happiness of the people of the Lord.