

Deuteronomy 33

33:1-5

Moses spoke this, but someone else recorded it. Notice the use of the third person. Moses is called “Moses the man of God” for the first time in the Pentateuch. (Total 3x: here, Josh. 14:6 and Ps. 90 in the heading)

Sinai, Seir and Paran identify the area of the theophany and the giving of the law.

The Lord’s appearance at Sinai is described as “came,” “dawned,” and “shone forth,” which gives the impression of a growing light from the dawning of the morning sun.

Moses speaks of himself in 3rd person, which was common for leaders to do at this time.

Recounting the giving of the Law of the Lord and the kingship of the Lord over Israel (Jeshurun, the upright ones.)

The lists of the 12 Tribes is never in the same order:

- Order of birth Gen. 29:31-30:24 and 35:16-18
- Jacob’s blessing, Gen. 49
- Census, Num. 1:5-15
- Census, Num. 1:20-42
- Camps, Numbers 2:1-33
- Moses’ blessing, Deut. 33
- Land allotment, Deut. 3:12-17; Josh. 13:15-31; Josh. 15:1-19:48
- 144,000 in Tribulation, Rev. 7:4-8
- Millennium land allotment, Ezekiel 48

33:6 – REUBEN, This is a prayer that says Reuben will live and not die, but his men will be few

33:7 – JUDAH, Also a prayer. Very general. Could have occurred sometime in the OT or still be future. Military reference.

33:8-11 – LEVI, (Jacob put Simeon and Levi together, but they have been separated here.) Levi’s status has changed drastically since Jacob’s blessing. Here Levi is recognized as the priestly tribe which recognizes every member of the tribe. Moses focuses on Levi being the teacher and revealer of the covenant, the Word of God and the ritual worship system. They went to God for Israel and went to Israel for God.

33:12 – BENJAMIN, a ravenous wolf devouring prey in Gen. 49:27, but now Benjamin is the son that the Lord carries on his shoulders like a father carrying his son. “Loved” of the Lord is mentioned twice.

33:13-17 – JOSEPH (EPHRAIM, 33:17a, MANASSEH, 33:17b)

First half, 13-16 is a prayer for agricultural prosperity. This picks up on Jacob’s blessing in Gen. 49:22-26. The Hebrew word “**mege**d” (“best,” “choicest”) is used 5x but is translated 5 different ways to match the text (“precious,” “best,” “finest,” fruitfulness,” “best gifts”):

- “the **precious** dew from heaven”
- “the **best** the sun brings”
- “the **finest** the moon can yield”
- “the **fruitfulness** of the everlasting hills”
- “the **best** gifts of the earth.”

Joseph would fine the Lord’s blessings by using the sources the earth provided:

- Dew=precipitation from the air
- Deep Waters=rivers, springs from the earth
- Best of the sun and moon=agricultural products from the soil

The “ancient mountains” and “the everlasting hills” would be the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh

Second half, 16-17 identifies his social standing among brothers and his military strength. The first born was Manasseh, but Ephraim was given the blessing of the first born by Jacob. Ephraim is 10,000’s. Manasseh is 1,000’s.

33:18-19 – ZEBULUN and ISSACHAR, the last two sons of Leah. Their activities and daily routines were similar. They would exchange trade opportunities for tolerance of religion.

Moses mentions the Sea as did Jacob, but Joshua did not give them land that bordered the Mediterranean Sea. Yet, Josephus records that Zebulun’s land bordered the sea at Mt. Carmel.

33:20-21 – GAD, the Lord is blessed for enlarging Gad’s territory east of the Jordan. Gad defended their eastern territory until they lost it to Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian King, around 730 BC

33:22 – DAN, the word “bashan” maybe should be translated “viper” which means it would match Jacob’s blessing.

33:23 – NAPHTALI, Naphtali was blessed because their land encircled the Sea of Galilee from the north to the south on the west side

33:24-29 – ASHER,

SIMEON is not in the list

Deuteronomy 34 – Map and photo below:

Division of the Promised Land to the children of Israel



