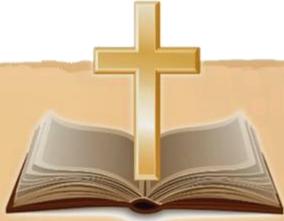


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Deuteronomy 33:6-11
Moses Blesses Israel, Part I
May 1, 2022

⁶ "Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few." ⁷ And this he said of Judah: "Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people; Let his hands be sufficient for him, And may You be a help against his enemies." ⁸ And of Levi he said: "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, Whom You tested at Massah, And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah, ⁹ Who says of his father and mother, 'I have not seen them'; Nor did he acknowledge his brothers, Or know his own children; For they have observed Your word And kept Your covenant. ¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar. ¹¹ Bless his substance, LORD, And accept the work of his hands; Strike the loins of those who rise against him, And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."

In the previous sermon, magnificent and splendid words began the blessing of Israel by Moses. It was as a flower of beauty slowly opening with each word. Today, the petals of this precious rose continue to gradually unfold and present themselves to us.

We will see the rather concise and curt blessing upon Reuben. From there a short, but most majestic blessing will be pronounced upon Judah. And then, words of remembrance, mingled with words of petition, are brought forth from the lips of Moses toward those of his own tribe, Levi.

The words were spoken, they have been recorded, and they remain as a memorial before the Lord as well as an instrument of instruction for Israel and for us.

It is hard to imagine that the Lord would give them, allow them to rest upon the people – through good and bad – and then have the people come to a sudden and crushing end without any hope of restoration or remedy.

But this is what much of the church has decided has occurred. Israel disastrously did not heed, they failed to recognize the time of their visitation, and the Lord cut them off forever. Does that sound like the covenant keeping Lord that we have seen throughout the books of Moses? It doesn't to me!

Text Verse: *"He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." Luke 1:54, 55*

It is true that the covenant of the Lord with Israel through Moses contains many stern warnings and curses, but it also is very precise in how it presents them. We have seen this again and again.

Moses speaks of cutting off the people, but never of cutting off the nation. The continuous movement of the words he has presented, especially in Deuteronomy, have been precisely chosen and laid before us to show that this is not the case.

Moses simply builds upon what the Lord has already said earlier in the law. For today, there is less of that type of speech, and more of a carefully selected line of thought that provides hope and assurance to the individual tribes, while at the same time revealing really marvelous hints and pictures of the coming Messiah.

Woven into the words are also some unique patterns, linguistic nuances, and literary forms to help guide us in the often obscure nature of the words themselves. I do hope you will be pleased and even tickled with how these three blessings unfold. It was a joy to search them out, and now I joyfully present them to you.

Precious and wonderful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Blessings Upon Reuben and Judah (verses 6 & 7)

⁶“Let Reuben live, and not die,

The words are simple and direct in Reuben’s blessing. And yet, they are also quite complicated and even obscure in meaning. Hence, they are highly debated. In them, there are three jussives – indirect commands or petitions. The first two are found in this clause: *yehi Reuven v’al yamot* – “May live Reuben and not may die.”

The blessing of Reuben is one of life. The reason for Moses stating this is that, despite being the firstborn, Reuben was already removed from the honor and position of the firstborn because he slept with his father’s concubine, Bilhah. That is found in Genesis 35:22. Upon his death, Jacob’s blessing upon his sons did not reflect favorably upon Reuben –

“Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. ⁴ Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch.” Genesis 49:3, 4

Later, when the rebels came against Moses in the wilderness, some of the main insurgents were of the tribe of Reuben –

“Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben...” Numbers 16:1

Despite their troubled past, Moses’ petition is for Reuben’s continuance, “May live Reuben, and not may die.” However, the next clause is what becomes difficult and debated over...

6 (con't) **Nor let his men be few."**

The third jussive is seen in this clause: *vihi metav mispar* – "And may his men *a* number." Despite being just three words, there are pages of commentary on what Moses is saying. First, the word *mispar*, or "number," signifies that which can be counted. If this is an independent clause, the meaning is the same as that found in Deuteronomy 4:27 –

"And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you."

As such, it is a countable number –

*May live Reuben, and not may die.

*And may his men be few.

But "*a* number" may be a way of saying an indeterminate number and thus –

*May live Reuben, and not may die.

*And may his men be unnumbered.

Or, if "*a* number" is tied to the previous words, it would also be a large number because the "not" would carry on to the second clause –

*May live Reuben, and not may die.

*And (not) may his men be few.

And to throw a monkey wrench in that almost nobody would see coming, an ancient Greek translation of this verse inserts the name of Simeon here. This is because there is no other mention of Simeon in the entire blessing of Moses upon the tribes –

*May live Reuben, and not may die.

*And may the men of Simeon be few.

Simply because we are following the Hebrew, and because there is only one negation, I would go with the most literal translation and say that Moses is petitioning that Reuben not be extinguished as a tribe, and – being charitable – he is asking that he become an uncountable number.

The use of three jussives in the verse seems to exclude carrying the word "not" over to the second clause. Moses is directly petitioning with clarity and precision –

“May live Reuben and not may die;
And may his men be a number.”

It is, then, a blessing for continuance and a petition for growth without a set limit. As such, Reuben, or “See a Son,” would picture Christ who did live and not die in the sense that He was never cut off because of His own sin. And He has also increased to an innumerable number –

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Revelation 7:9, 10

Simeon then has no blessing at all. Jacob’s blessing of Simeon was joined with that of Levi –

“Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. ⁶ Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.” Genesis 49:5-7

Because Simeon was to be divided and scattered, and because his tribe will be assimilated into Judah’s land grant, they would – for all intents and purposes – be assimilated into Judah as well. As such, the blessing upon Judah should be taken – at least partially, even if not intentionally at this time – as also falling upon Simeon.

Because of this, the words of Moses continue with this fourth son of Jacob who is next blessed even before the third son, Levi –

⁷ And this he said of Judah:

The introductory words are so short and precise in the Hebrew that it is hard to not see in them something stately and majestic, as if it is being proclaimed at the coming of a king: *v’zoth lihudah* – “And this to Judah.”

One can almost sense the blast of a trumpet, drawing all attention to what will be proclaimed as he heralds the royal arrival, “And this to Judah!”

⁷ (con’t) **“Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,**

vayomar shema Yehovah qol yehudah – “And he said, ‘Hear, Yehovah, voice Judah!’ The blessing of Judah calls attention to his voice. Although we would be here for the next week or two, or longer, if we were to sufficiently evaluate the meaning of this, it can be summed up in the thought that a great portion of Scripture is based upon the voice of Judah.

It was building throughout the time of the judges, but it was heard in the most resplendent manner as the young shepherd boy from Bethlehem called forth to the great foe of Israel –

“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give you into our hands.”

-1 Samuel 17:45-47

From that time on, the voice of Judah fills the pages of the psalms, the historical writings, the books of wisdom, and the words issued forth as prophecy. And then, the voice of Judah was heard in the most unique way of all in the first recorded words of the Lord –

“Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

-Luke 2:49

At that time, and for the rest of Scripture, the voice of Judah is truly realized in the way that Moses now intends. He knew the words of Jacob when he blessed his fourth son, and he thus knew that the line of the Messiah was fixed through him –

“Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father’s children shall bow down before you. ⁹Judah is a lion’s whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? ¹⁰The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. ¹¹Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. ¹²His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.” Genesis 49:8-12

The voice of Judah, which means “Praise,” is the praise of God because he is the praised of God. The voice of Judah is the voice of the Word of God that speaks forth life. The voice of Judah is the battle cry for the people of God to follow their King. The voice of Judah is the roar

of the Lion and the humble call of the Servant. The voice of Judah is, ultimately, the voice of Jesus – the Lord.

⁷ (con't) **And bring him to his people;**

v'el amo tevienu – “And unto His people [You] bring him.” Immediately, this refers to the tribe. Judah was separated from Israel, being the southernmost tribe and thus somewhat isolated from the rest. Throughout the Bible, Judah continues in this state of semi-separation.

However, Ezekiel prophesied of a time when Judah would be inseparably united to Israel –

Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹⁶ “As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’ ¹⁷ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. ¹⁸ “And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you mean by these?’ — ¹⁹ say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”’ ²⁰ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. -Ezekiel 37:15-20

The words of Moses, however, are certainly looking ahead in anticipation even more precisely than this. He is remembering the blessing of Jacob, and he is specifically calling forth for the coming of Messiah, to be brought to His people –

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” Micah 5:2

The voice of Judah, through Micah of Moresheth – which is in the tribe of Judah – called forth for the coming of Israel’s Ruler who would be from Bethlehem Ephrathah, also in the tribe of Judah.

⁷ (con't) **Let his hands be sufficient for him,**

The words are obscure and complicated: *yada rav lo* – “His hands abound to him.” The Greek reads “contend.” Because of the difficulty, many translations follow the Greek, saying, “His hand contends for him.” The word is *rav*, signifying abundance, enough, many, mighty, and so on. It is a sort of superlative in whatever it is referring to.

As the hand is that which accomplishes things, I would say the intent is something like, “He is fully sufficient to perform, be it in war, productivity, salvation, deliverance, and so on.” As such, Judah has the strength to carry itself and its purposes through.

In anticipation of the Greatest of Judah, one could look to the words of Isaiah to find the ultimate intent of Moses’ words –

“Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?— ‘I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’ ² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ³ ‘I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. ⁴ For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. ⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me. ⁶ I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth.’” Isaiah 63:1-6

With this in mind, the next words of the blessing might seem contradictory, but this is not the case...

⁷ (con’t) **And may You be a help against his enemies.”**

v’ezer mitsarav tiyeh – “And help from his enemies may You be.” If the hands of Judah abound in might, then why would they need the Lord to help them? But the words are comparative. Judah is considered to be capable of meeting and defeating its foes, but even the mightiest nation cannot prevail if the Lord is not with it.

This has been and it will continue to be seen. If the Lord purposes triumph, there will be triumph if by many or by few. And if the Lord purposes defeat, then it will come without regard to number.

And again, the words of Moses toward Judah are but a reflection of words that apply to the ultimate Son of Judah. Though in one way He is mighty to save, working out salvation by His own arm, He is fully dependent on the Lord who sent Him forth –

“For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; ¹⁷ I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. ¹⁸ They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. ¹⁹ But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! ²⁰ Deliver Me from

the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. ²¹ Save Me from the lion's mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me." Psalm 22:16-21

Not only are the two clauses not contradictory, whether referring to Judah or to Jesus, they show the total dependence of them upon the Lord. And the Lord is with both, helping them against the foes who have arisen against them.

There is a story to be found in the tribes of Israel
There is God working out His plan
Each detail calls out, "I have something to tell"
Something that leads to the redemption of man

The names of the tribes are carefully given
One shows one thing, and the next shows another
Each points to the greater story of hope-filled livin'
When Christ would come – Israel's greatest Son and Brother

The things they did and the lives they lived out
Are recorded in the Bible for us to read and to learn
The stories are given for us to see and have no doubt
The marvelous majesty, for which our souls now yearn

Christ is coming, so the word does tell
And hints of Him are found in the stories of Israel

II. The Blessing Upon Levi (verses 8-11)

⁸ And of Levi he said:

u-l'levi amar – "And to Levi he said." Levi is the third son, and he receives the third blessing, even if it is out of order because of Simeon's assumed inclusion in the blessing of Judah. It is the tribe of Moses. It is the tribe of the priestly class, and it is the tribe that has no land inheritance but is instead to be found throughout the land in the Levitical cities. To Levi, he says...

⁸ (con't) "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one,

thumekha v'urekha l'ish khasidekha – "Your Thummin and Your Urim to man your godly." The blessing of Levi concerns his office and duties. Here is a new word, *khasid*. It is an adjective signifying kind, godly, pious, and so on. It is mostly found in the psalms and at times it is rendered "saint."

Levi is spoken of here as a godly man who possesses the special stones, the “Perfections and Lights,” used to determine the will of the Lord. They are what receive the infallible truths and revelations divulged by God.

Of the five times these stones are mentioned together, this is the only time that the Thummim is stated before the Urim. There is no explanation for this, and there are various conjectures as to its meaning, some imaginatively elevating one precept over the other. But I would think that this is a way of saying that both are on an equal standing.

In other words, if it always said, “Urim and Thummim,” one might think that “Lights,” meaning God’s revelations, come first and then “Perfections,” or the infallible truths, are based upon those revelations.

But in stating it as “Thummim and Urim” here, Moses is indicating that they are both of the same substance. God’s revelations are revealed in infallible truths, and His infallible truths are conveyed in His revelations. In essence, they are two sides of one coin.

The godly nature of Levi is to be revealed in the coming clauses. For now...

8 (con’t) Whom You tested at Massah,

asher nisito b’Massah – “Whom You tested in Massah.” The name Massah means Testing. Hence, it says, “Whom you tested in Testing.”

There is nothing directly stated of Levi concerning what occurred in Massah which is the account given in Exodus 17. As such, it leaves one wondering what Moses is talking about. But the next clause helps alleviate the difficulty...

8 (con’t) And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah,

terivehu al me merivah – “You strived with him upon waters Meribah.” The name Meribah means “Place of Quarrelling.” The Lord strived with Levi at the “Place of Quarrelling.” This was when Moses and Aaron were to speak to the rock and have water issue forth. Instead, Moses struck the rock twice with his rod.

The connection between the two is that the event at Massah occurred just shortly after having departed from Egypt, and the event at Meribah occurred just as the spies were investigating the land of Canaan. As such they encompass, as book ends, the entire time at Sinai when the law was given.

Once the spies returned, the people rejected the word of the Lord, and they were punished with being exiled into the wilderness. As we have repeatedly seen, that is emblematic of the past two thousand years of exile for Israel. As such, Moses' words now look to the time of the administration of the law.

Next, Moses takes us back to the time of the giving of the law...

⁹Who says of his father and mother,

Levi is referred to by a verb prefixed by an article: *ha'omer l'abiv u-l'imo* – “The sayer to his father and to his mother.” Here, it is referring to Levi as an individual, a collective whole. He says...

⁹(con't) 'I have not seen them';

It is singular: *lo'reitiv* – “Not I have seen him.” The mother is the wife of the father and so the singular stands for both. The father and the mother are there, but it is as if they are not seen, and they are not regarded. The same attitude is again seen in the next words...

⁹(con't) Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,

v'eth ekhav lo hikir – “And his brothers no regard.” Moses says that even though Levi had brothers, his mind was not on them when called to do what he must do. Moses is making a point about Levi's priorities. Moses next says...

⁹(con't) Or know his own children;

v'eth banav lo yada – “And sons no know.” Any children of Levi are as if they are not even his when he is called to act. Levi has not seen the parents before him. He has not regarded the brothers around him, and he has not known his own sons. Despite them being the closest of family relationships, Moses speaks of Levi's priorities. What is it that Levi has put first? To tell us, Moses slips into the plural...

⁹(con't) For they have observed Your word

ki shameru imratekha– “For they have heeded Your word.” The plural now speaks of the people of the tribe. They are Levi, but they are also Levites. The actions of the people are what is now being highlighted.

The word of the Lord takes precedence over even the closest of family relationships. If parents, siblings, or even children come between a person and the Lord, they are to be

overlooked, disregarded, and treated as a stranger. Nothing can come between the faithful and the word of the Lord. Levi accepted the premise and applied it...

9 (con't) And kept Your covenant.

uberitekha yintsoru – “And Your covenant they have guarded.” The covenant of the Lord, which is based upon the word of the Lord, must take priority. To not heed it is to find death. To heed it is to find life. All family relations will end, but the covenant and the word remain. Levi was presented with a choice –

“Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever is on the LORD’s side—come to me!’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. ²⁷ And he said to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.”’ ²⁸ So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. ²⁹ Then Moses said, ‘Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.’” Exodus 32:25-29

This incident is what Moses is referring to now. Levi has put the word of the Lord, and His covenant, first. They went throughout the camp without recognizing faces, and they slew any who came before them. Because of this, they were granted the high honor of the priestly class and of those attached to them.

This then explains why Moses chose Massah and Meribah as his points of reference. Because those two events encompass the time of the giving of the law, from redemption out of Egypt until standing at the door of Canaan, their zeal for the Lord was a highlight among all of the failings of Israel, and – indeed – all the failings of Levi, including those of Moses and Aaron.

What they did was a demonstration of what the Lord finds pleasing above all else, meaning attendance to His word. Because of their moment of faithfulness...

10 They shall teach Jacob Your judgments,

yoru mishpatekha l’yaaqov – “They instruct Your judgments to Jacob.” Moses uses the word *arah*, to shoot as an arrow. As such, it gives the sense of pointing out, as if aiming by the finger. Hence, it is instruction in the judgments recorded for them. Further...

10 (con't) And Israel Your law.

v'torahtekha l'yisrael – “And Your law to Israel.” This is still an explanation of the verb *yarah*, and thus the two clauses are set in parallel. Just as they point out the judgments of the Lord to Jacob, so they point out the law of the Lord to Israel. The substance of the clauses is simply a poetic parallel –

They instruct:
Your judgments to Jacob.
And Your law to Israel.

10 (con't) They shall put incense before You,

yasimu qetorah b'apekha – “They put incense in your nostril.” This and the next clause are again parallel thoughts. In this clause is a word found only here in Scripture, *qetorah*. It signifies the smoke of incense. This is specifically speaking of the twice-daily mandate to burn the specially compounded incense which was then presented each day before the Lord –

“Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. ⁸ And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.” Exodus 30:7, 8

Along with that...

10 (con't) And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.

v'kalil al mizbekhekha – “And holocaust upon Your altar.” The words speak of the second twice-daily offering made to the Lord –

“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. ³⁹ One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. ⁴⁰ With the one lamb shall be one-tenth of an ephah of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. ⁴¹ And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ⁴² This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you.” Exodus 29:38-42

The words of this verse then speak of the honor and the responsibilities given to Levi because of their act of faithfulness to the word and the covenant of the Lord. The clauses are parallel as

they describe the twice daily duties that are actually both things that rise up before and to the Lord –

They put:

Incense in your nose nostril.
And holocaust upon Your altar.

Because of this, Moses calls for a special blessing upon them...

¹¹ Bless his substance, LORD,

The words return to the second person singular: *barekh Yehovah khelo* – “Bless, Yehovah, his activity.” The word *khayil* speaks of the force of something. This is probably speaking of the future state of the tribe.

In other words, “Bless his activity” is asking for a blessing upon what Levi would accomplish in the future. They have their duties to perform, and Moses is asking for a blessing upon that. This appears to be what is being conveyed, but there is a reason for it that will take completing the verse first to understand. And more...

^{11 (con’t)} And accept the work of his hands;

u-pool yada tirseh – “And deed his hands accept.” The word “work” or “deed” is singular. This is then parallel to the previous clause, and it refers to the future work of Levi in a collective sense – all of his works are one work.

As such, it is asking the Lord to accept their work in presenting the offerings, teaching the people, and so on. One can see the obvious parallel between the two –

Bless, Yehovah, his activity.
And deed his hands accept.

Next, Moses next asks for a future blessing against any foes of Levi...

^{11 (con’t)} Strike the loins of those who rise against him,

mekhats matenayim qama – “Shatter loins rising against him.” Some equate this to the rebellion of Korah from Numbers 16, but that was as much an internal rebellion as anything else. Instead, this is a petition to protect and defend not just the priesthood, but all of Levi.

The priests were the mediators of the law between God and the people, and the Levites then stood between the priesthood and the people. Moses is calling for those who would oppose this divinely instituted system to be shattered so that they cannot stand against them again. And more...

***11 (fin) And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."**

There is a stress in the Hebrew on the last word: *u-mesana min yequmun* – "And those hating him, from their rising!" The exclamation point attempts to give the sense of what is conveyed. This and the previous clause are set in parallel, but they are marvelously structured to overlap in their presentation –

**Shatter loins *those rising (qum) against him
And those hating him, from *their rising (qum)!**

Moses is asking for the Lord's protection for the priesthood, bringing their enemies low so that the priests can continue with the ministrations of the law without interference.

Now, taking the clauses of verse 10 and 11 together, one can see another parallel that is set forth –

They instruct Your judgments to Jacob. (Levi's work)
And Your law to Israel. (Levi's work)
They put incense in your nose nostril. (Offering rising)
And holocaust upon Your altar. (Offering rising)

Bless, Yehovah, his activity. (Levi's work)
And deed his hands accept. (Levi's work)
Shatter loins rising against him. (Protection from rising enemy)
And those hating him, from their rising! (Protection from rising enemy)

One can see that because of the work of Levi, to present offerings, Moses is asking for the work of Levi to be uninterrupted by any enemy rising. Nothing is to interfere with the work.

With that noted, another parallel exists that is seen in the final two clauses of the blessing upon Judah which matches the final four clauses of the blessing upon Levi, meaning the work and the protection –

His hands abound to him. (The work of Judah/the Lord)
And help from his enemies may You be. (Protection from the enemy for Judah/the Lord)

Judah anticipates the coming Messiah, but so does Levi. Everything about the priests, the Levites, their duties, and their offerings – all of it – anticipates and typologically pictures the work of Jesus. Hence, one can see why Moses linked the blessings of Judah with those of Levi, but also why he placed Judah first.

Judah anticipates Christ in His Person while Levi (as a tribe) more closely anticipates Christ in His duties. In the end, everything is anticipating the coming of Messiah and of what He would do in fulfillment of this law.

It is a law that served its purpose well. It used fallible people who ministered it on behalf of fallible people who lived under it in order to show the impossibility of it bringing man any closer to God. The problem did not, however, exist in the law.

Rather, it exists in those under the law. Their defect, sin, is what kept this law from performing its purpose. In the identification of this defect, the need for One without sin to fulfill it becomes evident.

And more, it highlights the need for it to end, and for a New Covenant to enter into the fabric of God's redemptive workings. It would need to be a law based upon the work of the One without defect, but which would grant that same state of perfection to those who enter into it.

This is what Christ did. He completed the mission set before Him, fulfilled the law that stood against us, and then He offers His righteousness to us – not through that law, but through faith in His fulfillment of that law.

It is what we might call the greatest deal of all time. And it is a deal that extends to "all time." God has made the offer, and He asks you to accept Him at His word, "Adam blew it, the law highlights that fact. Now, I have done this for you, just accept that My word is true."

May you carefully consider this, and may you receive the marvelous gift that God has extended to you. And may you do so today.

Closing Verse: *"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification."* Romans 5:15, 16

Next Week: Deuteronomy 33:12-17 *Moses will continue to bless the tribes until the blessings are through...* (Moses Blesses Israel, **Part II**) (101st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Moses Blesses Israel, Part I

“Let Reuben live, and not die
Nor let his men be few, but be numbered high

And this he said of Judah:
“Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah
And bring him to his people as you please
Let his hands be sufficient for him
And may You be a help against his enemies

And of Levi he said:
“Let Your Thummim and Your Urim
-----be with Your holy one days unended
Whom You tested at Massah
And with whom You at the waters of Meribah contended

Who says of his father and mother
-----‘I have not seen them’
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers
Or know his own children until the wrath was spent
For they have observed Your word
And kept Your covenant

They shall teach Jacob Your judgments
And Israel Your law, in this they shall not falter
They shall put incense before You
And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar

Bless his substance, LORD
And accept the work of his hands among men
Strike the loins of those who rise against him
And of those who hate him, that they rise not again

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...