

Message #44

Deuteronomy 33:1-29

This past week I read a really interesting article that was written back in 2015. The article was titled: “Does ‘happily ever after’ really exist?” When you read fairy tales or watch Disney movies, people are led to believe the story will always end happy with the prince always coming to the rescue.

What this author did was to go out and ask men and women whether or not they believed in “happily ever after.” Many women said “no” and a few said yes. She said she never did get a straight answer from the men, many of whom said, “I don’t understand the question.”

But the most profound answer the writer got was from her own daughter who said, “Of course it exists...everyone is responsible for their own happiness. We all have the ability to experience ‘happily ever after’ on a daily basis.”

That is the point Moses has been driving home in this book of Deuteronomy. Choose to obey God and life will be happy and filled with blessings. Choose not to obey God and life will be miserable and filled with trouble.

But as Moses brings Deuteronomy to its conclusion, he communicates one more truth for Israel:

IN THE END ALL TRIBES OF ISRAEL WILL BE IN THE PROMISED LAND AND WILL LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER BECAUSE THE SOVEREIGN GOD OF THE BIBLE WILL CAUSE THIS TO HAPPEN.

Now the key to understanding this chapter is the last verse of the song Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 32:43 and the last verses of Deuteronomy 33:26-29. The last verse of the song says there will come a time when the nations of the world will be rejoicing because Israel has been forgiven and is in her land. The last verses of this chapter describe the time when Israel is securely living in the land and experiencing the full blessings of God.

In between these two great points are the final blessings of Moses on Israel. Notice **verse 1**, this is a blessing of Moses. This is a blessing of Moses who is a man of God. This is a blessing he pronounces on Israel before he dies.

This is the final blessing that Moses is going to pronounce before he dies. It was customary for a father to pronounce blessings on his children before he died and in the Bible those blessings were often prophetic predictions of what would happen.

Verse 1 identifies Moses as “the man of God.” When you are nearing death, there is no greater title that one may have than he was a man of God or she was a woman of God.

So what we have here is a true “man of God” by God’s own classification giving His final discourse and it is a discourse of blessings. There are no cursings here, just blessings:

These blessings are very positive and very prophetic. Israel will have a national story that will end happily ever after. There are three final blessings to this:

FINAL BLESSING #1 – Moses reminds Israel how God blessed her in the past. **33:2-5**

Moses wanted the people of Israel to think back and remember what God had done for her. God had been the source of some amazing blessings for His people. He specifically cites nine historical facts:

Fact #1 - God revealed Himself to His people at Mt. Sinai. **33:2a**

Just think about this for a moment. God Personally revealed Himself to Israel. He literally visibly appeared and manifested Himself to Israel and gave Israel His word.

He has never done this to any other nation in the world. Moses mentions three specific places God did this: Mt. Sinai, Mt. Seir and Paran.

At Mt. Sinai there was a thick cloud on the mountain and there was thunder and lightning and smoke and fire and mountain shaking and a loud trumpet (Ex. 19:16-19). The glory of the Lord stayed there six days and when people looked at it, it looked like a consuming fire burning on top of a mountain that never burned up (Ex. 24:15-18).

At Mt. Seir, NE of Mt. Sinai, the people circled the mountain for days and God spoke to Moses (Deut. 2:4) and at the wilderness of Paran, north of Mt. Sinai, a thick cloud appeared over the tabernacle that revealed God's glory and led them from one spot to another (Num. 10:11-12). God has never done that for any other nation EVER!

Fact #2 - God revealed Himself in the midst of ten thousand holy ones. **33:2b**

What we understand this to mean is that God had thousands of angels there as He gave the law and those same thousands of angels can testify no one has ever perfectly kept the law (Heb. 2:2; Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19). What a moment when God Himself gave His word.

Fact #3 - God revealed Himself by flashes of lightning. **33:2c**

This was a physical and visible display of the glory of God to this nation. From His right hand He flashed lightning for them to see (Ex. 19).

Fact #4 - God loves His people. **33:3a**

The relationship at times with Israel had been rocky. In fact, most of the time the relationship was rocky. But Moses wanted the people to know that **God loves His people**. It is clear that when it comes to Israel and us, this love of God does not depend on the current spiritual condition. Deuteronomy has been a hard hitting book. It is a book filled with threats and warnings. But God wanted His people to know He loves them.

More than once, in Deuteronomy, Moses reminded Israel God loved her (4:37; 7:13).

Fact #5 - God's holy set apart people are in God's hands. **33:3b**

God's people are in God's hands. Only God's people can say they are in the hands of God in the sense of being secure and protected and in the sense of being His property.

Fact #6 - God's holy set apart people follow God's direction. **33:3c**

God's people followed God. God's people obeyed God. There was a time when Israel did that.

Fact #7 - God's holy set apart people receive God's words. **33:3d**

Notice carefully that God's people want to know and receive the "words" of God. The very words are inspired. One of the most loving things God ever did for His people was to give them His word.

Fact #8 - God's law was given to His people through Moses. **33:4**

God gave Israel His law. God gave His people His written word. It was the greatest possession they had.

Fact #9 - God was the king of His people. **33:5**

God was the king of Jeshurun, the king of upright people. God's people didn't need a Prime Minister or a President or a king. God was King and He led and cared for His own nation. From this statement and **verse 26**, Israel will be an upright nation. This is what God did for Israel.

FINAL BLESSING #2 – Moses reveals how God will bless each family in the future. **33:6-29**

Now the key to interpreting this blessing is to remember there will come a time when the nations will rejoice because Israel is a nation right with God. Each family of Israel, each tribe and group will be blessed of God and that is what Moses is predicting.

The fact is Moses names individuals who were long dead. So he obviously is looking into the future and predicting what will happen to each individual and tribe that is blessed by God. As A. C. Gaebelain said, these will be things experienced in the Millennium by the nation Israel:

Message #1 - Moses' message to the family of Reuben. **33:6**

Moses' message to Reuben was that he and his family live and not die and that they prosper in numbers. They will continue to exist and in the end when the Kingdom is established, they will be there in great numbers.

Message #2 - Moses' message to the family of Judah. **33:7**

Moses message to Judah was a Messianic prayer that when Judah called out to God to bring help to them, He would answer and send "him" to the people. This is a clear prediction that Judah will recognize the need to cry out "blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." It will be Judah who will lead the people to cry out for Jesus Christ to return and set up His kingdom.

Message #3 - Moses' message to the family of Levi. **33:8-11**

Moses' message to the tribe of Levi was that they would have a supernatural ability to get answers from God and minister for God. The godly one would be able to use the Thummim and Urim.

This family had been set aside at Meribah, when they stood for the word of God and kept the covenant of God even when other family members didn't. Those who are spiritual leaders at times must be willing to put the truth of God above family relationships.

Moses' desire for them was that they teach the word of God to the people of God (**v. 10a**). They would offer the incense (**10b**) and also the burnt offerings (**10c**).

Moses prays specifically that God would bless his substance and prosper them. That God would accept the work of his hands (**11a**).

That God would protect them and shatter those who rise up against him so that they can never do it again (**11b**).

During the Millennium there will be different responsibilities for each family. This family will have a special ministerial responsibility in ministering the word of God and serving at the Temple.

Message #4 - Moses' message to the family of Benjamin. **33:12**

Benjamin was the youngest and Moses' prayer and desire for him was security and protection that was coming directly from God. In the Millennium this tribe will be "beloved of the LORD."

Message #5 - Moses' message to the family of Joseph. **33:13-17**

Joseph is mentioned but this certainly would include his sons Ephraim and Manasseh (**v. 17**). Moses message was lengthy.

The message centers on Moses wanting God, who revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush, to bless physically Joseph in the land with the best crop yields and with a distinguished notoriety.

It is interesting to observe that numerically Moses wants God to bless Ephraim with ten thousands and Manasseh with thousands. During the millennium there will be thousands of family members of Joseph who will be flourishing.

Message #6 - Moses' message to the family of Zebulun and Issachar. **33:18-19**

Moses' message to the two younger sons of Leah, Zebulun and Issachar, was that they would have abundance from the mountains and the seas. They would be at home living in the mountains and on the seas. These were real outdoor people. They will be people who will draw out and discover many hidden treasures that will not be discovered until Jesus Christ is here in Person.

Message #7 - Moses' message to the family of Gad. **33:20-21**

God is the one who permits enlargement to come to people. Gad lived east of the Jordan and was like a lion that would tear into enemies. After Gad toppled Sihon and Og, they took the best part of the land on the east side of the Jordan. But he followed through and fought for the righteousness of God with his brothers. Moses wanted him blessed.

During the Millennium, they will have a large portion and will carry out justice as it relates to the ordinances of Israel.

Message #8 - Moses' message to the family of Dan. **33:22**

Moses' message to Dan is that he is a fearless lion's cub who is not afraid to spring into action. He apparently will be a protector in the "Bashan" region, which is modern day Syria.

Message #9 - Moses' message to the family of Naphtali. **33:23**

Moses' message to Naphtali is that he will have an abundance of blessing from the Promised Land in the south and also from the sea.

Message #10 - Moses' message to the family of Asher. **33:24-25**

Moses' message to Asher was that he would be honored and favored and live out life filled with delicacy and leisure. This tribe will be happy and blessed. Moses wanted him to know security as bronze and iron.

FINAL BLESSING #3 – Moses reveals how great God is to Israel. **33:26-29**

Now Moses has a message for all the family of Israel about God. Moses says you need to know what God is like and what God has done. You need to know doctrine about God. There are 15 final realities he brings out:

Reality #1 - There is none like the God of upright (Jeshurun) Israel. **33:26a**

Reality #2 - God comes from heaven to help Israel. **33:26b**

Reality #3 - God is a majestic God operating in the heavens. **33:26c**

Reality #4 - God is an eternal God. **33:27a**

Reality #5 - God is a dwelling place for His people. **33:27b**

Reality #6 - God uses His everlasting arms to drive away His people's enemies. **33:27c**

Reality #7 - God uses His everlasting arms to destroy His people's enemies. **33:27d**

Reality #8 - God will see to it that Israel dwells in security. **33:28a**

One day Israel's land will be like a secluded resort area.

Reality #9 - God will see to it that Israel has prosperity. **33:28b**

Reality #10 - God is the One who has blessed His people. **33:29a**

Reality #11 - God is the One who has saved His people. **33:29b**

There will come a day when all will testify "who is like Israel?" This nation literally has been saved as a nation by Almighty God.

Reality #12 - God is the One who protects His people as a shield. **33:29c**

Reality #13 - God is the One who fights for His people with His sword. **33:29d**

Reality #14 - God is the One who causes His people's enemies to cringe. **33:29e**

Notice He will cause them to cringe before His people. They will cringe in the very presence of the people they were enemies.

Reality #15 - God is the One who elevates His people. **33:29f**

He takes His people from the lowest of lows and elevates them to the highest of highs.

This is the way Moses, this man of God, ended his message to Israel. What he wanted her to know is this story for Israel will end "happily ever after."