

Parashah 54

V'Zot HaBrachah

וזאת הברכה

“This is the Blessing”

Deuteronomy 33:1 – 34:12

Torah Together



This last portion of the *Torah* records Moses' final blessing on the Israelites which includes prophetic statements about the tribes. As the last *parashah* of the *Torah*, it also records Moses' death and burial.

1. Moses Blesses the Tribes - 33:1-29

a) One of Moses' last deeds was to pronounce a blessing over the sons of Israel. Who else did this before his death? Where can you read about this blessing?

b) Verses 2-5 are a preamble to Moses' blessings. Do you find any significance in the places named in this section? Who do you think the “myriads of holy ones” are? Who or what is Jeshrun that God would be king over them?

c) Do you find any significance in Moses' blessing over Reuben? What about Judah? Do you think it significant that today's Jews are primarily descendants of Judah?

Scripture Link:
Genesis 49 records another blessing over the Tribes of Israel.

Hint: See **Galatians 3:19** and **Hebrews 2:2** for the possible identity of the “myriads of holy ones.”

Scripture Link:
See **I Chronicles 5:26** for information on what eventually became of the tribe of Reuben.

d) What was special about Moses' blessing over Levi, considering the role the Levites played in Israel? Is it clear how they were to treat their special responsibilities?

e) Can you find any significance in Moses' blessing over Benjamin? Where was Benjamin's tribal inheritance located? Might this relate to Moses' blessing?

f) What tribes were blessed in Moses' blessing over Joseph? In general terms, what does Moses see in Joseph's future? Do you find any prophetic significance in verse 17?

g) What do you find interesting in Moses' blessing over Zebulun and Issachar? Why might these two tribes be considered together?

h) In blessing Gad, why do you think Moses said, "He chose the best land for himself"?

i) Can you find any significance in Moses' blessing over the tribe of Dan?

j) What do you find interesting in Moses' blessing over Naphtali? Based on the location of Naphtali's tribal inheritance, what "lake" do you suppose Moses is referring to?

Most Bibles contain maps that show how the Land of Israel was divided among the tribes. The actual division is described in detail in the book of **Joshua, chapters 13 – 19**. As for this prophecy of Moses, some particularly interesting passages concern the tribe of Simeon (**Joshua 19:9**) and the tribe of Benjamin (**Joshua 18:28**). The study of the tribal inheritances in the Land of Israel can be fascinating.

Scripture Link: **Numbers chapter 32** tells the story of the tribes that chose for themselves land east of the Jordan River as their tribal inheritance.

k) How was Asher to be viewed by his brothers? What do you think it means to “bathe his feet in oil”?

l) What tribe was omitted from Moses’ blessings? Do you think this has any significance?

m) In verses 26 - 29, Moses concludes his blessing with a description of the God of Jeshrun (Israel). As an Israelite, how would you feel about Moses’ words?

“For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.”
Deuteronomy 34:12

2. The Death of Moses - 34:1-12

a) Where did Moses go after blessing the Israelites? What did God show him there?

b) How old was Moses when he died? Who buried him? Can his grave be located today?

c) Who replaced Moses as the leader of the Israelites?

d) Has there been a “prophet like Moses” since this time?

Scripture Link:

Read **Jude 5-11** for an interesting story about the archangel Michael quarrelling with the devil over Moses’ body. What insights do you gain about angels and the afterlife from this story?

Digging deeper

1. The majority of the Torah tells the story of Moses and the Israelites (**Exodus** through **Deuteronomy**). Reflect back on the life of Moses. What conclusions can you draw from his life? How did he change over the course of his life? What parts of Moses' life would be good models for you?

2. Carefully read **Psalm 119**. This is the longest Psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible. In Hebrew, each line in a stanza begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, an acrostic. What is the subject of this Psalm? Do you agree with its conclusion? Are there any parts that are particularly meaningful to you? How do you feel about the Torah?

For further study, see

Haftarah : Joshua 1:1-18

Brit Hadashah : Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36;
Jude 3-4, 8-10

Congratulations on finishing the study of God's *Torah*! Stop and reflect for a moment: Has God blessed you since you've begun studying His Word?