

The Messiah Is Coming!



Week Thirteen

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Deuteronomy 33:1-17; 26-29

BLESSINGS AND PROPHECIES

The Book of Deuteronomy ends with two chapters full of poetry, followed by a short epilogue about the death of Moses. Here in chapter 33, the focus is on Moses' final blessings to the twelve tribes before his death. This is almost identical to the end of Genesis (Genesis 49 and 50). Both Moses and Jacob gather people together to give them blessings, and both Deuteronomy 33 and Genesis 49 highlight two of the twelve tribes that point forward to the Messiah. Jacob even notes that his words will "tell you what shall happen to you in days to come" (49:1), indicating an eschatological focus. Genesis 49 highlights Judah and Joseph. Judah represents the kingly aspect of the Messiah (v. 10). In contrast, Joseph portrays the suffering aspect of the Messiah (v. 26).

In fact, the entire Torah has an eschatological focus, in that Exodus and Numbers are also parallel to each other, especially in their longer poetry sections (Exod. 15 and Num. 23-24). The focus on the Exodus in these two books prophesies that the Messiah will live out the life of Israel, succeeding where they failed and recapitulating in His life what Israel went through in the Exodus (Num. 23:22, 24:8). This leaves Leviticus as the very center of the chiastic (or pyramid) structure of the Torah, and the structure of Leviticus also has a chiastic center, which is the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), highlighting the death of the Messiah to atone for the sins of the people. Thus the whole Torah points toward the Messiah and helps us to understand some aspects of who He is and what He will be like, which are then fleshed out more in the prophets.



inScribe

Write out Deuteronomy 33:1–17; 26–29 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Deuteronomy 33:26–29. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

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Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What positive aspects of kingship/leadership are highlighted in Scripture?

Who are some teachers who helped you to better understand the Bible? How did they do that?



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FAITHFULNESS AND KINGSHIP

Deuteronomy 33 focuses on the two tribes of Joseph and Levi, highlighting different aspects of the Messiah than Genesis 49 does. Here Joseph is blessed abundantly with the best gifts and is called “prince among his brothers” (v. 16, ESV), hinting at the kingly role of the Messiah. We usually view kingship as a bad thing, especially in light of God’s response to the people’s desire for a king in 1 Samuel 8. However, kingship was predicted by God and was not necessarily a bad thing; it was just that the people wanted a king in their own time, and like all the other nations, rather than waiting for God’s time and person (who was David). God told Abraham that he would have kings coming from him, as well as making clear in these messianic prophecies that kings were a part of God’s plan (Gen 17:6, 49:10). Deuteronomy 17:14–20 makes clear the kind of king that God was intending, one who had only one wife, no standing army, no wealth, and wrote his own copy of the Torah from which he would read every day. If the kings had actually been like that, they would have inspired the people to follow God, rather than turning them from God. And indeed, there were a few who came close (David, Hezekiah, Josiah), but even they did not follow these requirements. Thus, God is always the ultimate king, and only the Messiah will truly fulfill these prophecies for a good and righteous king.

When Moses speaks of Levi in Deuteronomy 33, he is blessed for his faithfulness to God, keeping His word and His covenant. He is called the “godly one” and receives the priestly Urim and Thummim, indicating the priestly role of the Messiah as well (v. 8). Indeed, the line between Levi and the Messiah to whom he points is blurred in verse 8, as, at Massah, the people tested God and not specifically Levi. But the priests are the representatives of God, and they also point toward the Messiah, who is the ultimate faithful High Priest!

In addition, the blessing on Levi highlights the need for teachers of the Torah to help people understand (v. 10). While the Bible is simple enough for a child to believe and be saved, it is also rich and deep, so that we will be studying it for eternity. And teachers trained in studying God’s word in the original languages are needed to guard against heresy and misinterpretation.

TYOLOGY

The Messianic prophecies in Deuteronomy are not only in chapter 33. In Deuteronomy 18, Moses predicts that “the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you . . . [and] it is to him you shall listen. . . . I will put my words in his mouth” (v. 15, 18, ESV). Many might think that this is referring to Joshua, but Joshua has already been on the scene and anointed to take Moses’ place when Deuteronomy 34 is written. And Deuteronomy 34:10 states that “there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face” (ESV), indicating that there is yet one to come! So, the Messiah is to be a prophet (Deut. 18, 34), a priest (Deut. 33:8–11), and a king (Deut. 33:13–17). These roles are then expanded on in all the prophets, as they reflect on and receive additional revelations of the character of Jesus. Of course, these are not the only things that Jesus does, but many of the prophecies point to some aspect of these characteristics.

Moses himself performed aspects of all of these roles, too. He dedicated the temple, which is a priestly role; he prophesied about the Messiah and even the exile, a prophetic role; and he judged and led the people, a kingly role. In this way, Moses served as a type, pointing to the Messiah as the antitype. A type is a person, place, or thing that God designs to point forward to something greater in a predictive way. In other words, God planned out certain elements of Moses’ life, without compromising his free will, in order to provide a prophetic picture of aspects of Jesus’ life. It might seem that any parallel between the Old Testament and New Testament could be a type, but this is not the case. Typology is not analogy or allegory. The Old Testament is very careful to indicate which people, places, and things point forward to the Messiah, and then usually also indicates further within the Old Testament itself that this is the case. So the New Testament then simply recognizes the fulfillment in the antitype, seeing what God had already indicated would take place. This is why certain ones of the twelve tribes are chosen to have a greater focus, because they are predictive of who the Messiah will be.

Typology actually brings great assurance to our faith. God has been planning ahead for thousands of years, and all that He predicted has come true. Thus, we can trust that His second coming will also happen, and we can wait with joy for His soon return.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How do the typological prophecies about Jesus give you hope about the certainty of His other promises?



Read more at
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What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Genesis 49:8–12, 22–26

Deuteronomy 18:15–22

Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Jeremiah 33:14–26

Isaiah 11:1–16

Micah 5:2–4



What other parables come to mind in connection with Deuteronomy 33?

Review your memorized verse from Deuteronomy 33:1–17; 26–29.

GOD IS CALLING YOU

The promises of the Messiah, so powerful here in this final blessing of Moses, provide deep comfort to us as we face the end of this world's history. Yahweh is almighty and powerful, and will deliver and save us. Yahweh is our ultimate King, who is coming in victory to rule in righteousness and peace, and on our behalf. Yahweh contends for His people, longing for them to be at peace in His judgments as they rely on Him.

Yahweh also loves and directs His people. He desires for us to dwell in safety, blessing us “with the choicest gifts of heaven above, and of the deep that crouches beneath, with the choicest fruits of the sun and the rich yield of the months, with the finest produce of the ancient mountains and the abundance of the everlasting hills, with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness” (vv. 13–16, ESV).

And He uses ordinary people to point forward to the ultimate gift, which is Himself. Joseph and Levi and Moses were far from perfect, yet God ordained that their lives would reflect Him in certain ways so that people could look at them and get a glimpse of what He would be like as their Savior. This is incredible grace.

God wants to do the same through us today. Though we will not be types in the technical sense, God can also use us to reflect His character to the world. We also have the privilege of speaking with God face to face in prayer, entering by faith into the heavenly sanctuary. Through us, God still has a message of mercy to share with this dark and dying world. Deuteronomy is not about legalism but about grace! It is about God's immeasurable grace and love and desire for a heart relationship with us. Now that you have seen that more clearly, God is calling you to share it! Break through the lies that Satan has broadcast about God and share the true nature of His character of love and mercy. Very few people read the Old Testament at all, let alone Deuteronomy. But as you share of God's heart and His desire for their hearts, you can be the change. May it be said of you, too: “Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph!” (Deut. 33:29, ESV).



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Meditate on Deuteronomy 33:1–17; 26–29 again and look for where Jesus is.



How can you share God's grace and desire for relationship with someone today?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



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The Messiah Is Coming!



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

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After this entire lesson's study, what
are applications you are convicted
of for your personal time?

What are applications you are
convicted of in your social life?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
www.inverseible.org/deut13-7

THE COMING OF A DELIVERER

“Through the long centuries of ‘trouble and darkness’ and ‘dimness of anguish’ (Isaiah 8:22) marking the history of mankind from the day our first parents lost their Eden home, to the time the Son of God appeared as the Saviour of sinners, the hope of the fallen race was centered in the coming of a Deliverer to free men and women from the bondage of sin and the grave.

“The first intimation of such a hope was given to Adam and Eve in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent in Eden when the Lord declared to Satan in their hearing, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.’ Genesis 3:15.

“As the guilty pair listened to these words, they were inspired with hope; for in the prophecy concerning the breaking of Satan’s power they discerned a promise of deliverance from the ruin wrought through transgression. Though they must suffer from the power of their adversary because they had fallen under his seductive influence and had chosen to disobey the plain command of Jehovah, yet they need not yield to utter despair. The Son of God was offering to atone with His own lifeblood for their transgression. To them was to be granted a period of probation, during which, through faith in the power of Christ to save, they might become once more the children of God.” (White, *Prophets and Kings*, 681, 682.)

“This hope of redemption through the advent of the Son of God as Saviour and King, has never become extinct in the hearts of men. From the beginning there have been some whose faith has reached out beyond the shadows of the present to the realities of the future. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—through these and other worthies the Lord has preserved the precious revealings of His will. And it was thus that to the children of Israel, the chosen people through whom was to be given to the world the promised Messiah, God imparted a knowledge of the requirements of His law, and of the salvation to be accomplished through the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son.

“The hope of Israel was embodied in the promise made at the time of the call of Abraham, and afterward repeated again and again to his posterity, ‘In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.’ Genesis 12:3. As the purpose of God for the redemption of the race was unfolded to Abraham, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his heart, and his darkness was scattered. And when, at last, the Saviour Himself walked and talked among the sons of men, He bore witness to the Jews of the patriarch’s bright hope of deliverance through the coming of a Redeemer. ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day,’ Christ declared; ‘and he saw it, and was glad.’ John 8:56.” (White, 682, 683.)

“Thus, through patriarchs and prophets, as well as through types and symbols, God spoke to the world concerning the coming of a Deliverer from sin. A long line of inspired prophecy pointed to the advent of ‘the Desire of all nations.’ Haggai 2:7.” (White, 697.)

“The many prophecies concerning the Saviour’s advent led the Hebrews to live in an attitude of constant expectancy. Many died in the faith, not having received the promises. But having seen them afar off, they believed and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. From the days of Enoch the promises repeated through patriarchs and prophets had kept alive the hope of His appearing.” (White, 699, 700.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What difference would it make for you to be blessed by your parents or spiritual leaders?

The Torah points clearly to the first coming of the Messiah; how did those in Jesus' day not see it? What does that say about what we might be missing today about the second coming?

What steps can you make to lead a life of integrity and faithfulness that will leave a legacy like Moses did?

Moses knew God face to face; this was the foundation of his legacy. What steps can you take today to build your relationship with God into the most important thing in your life?

How has your view of Deuteronomy changed over the past thirteen weeks?