
Pearl Seeking

TREASURING HIS WORD

Let's do a quick overview of the entire Torah portion:

Monday:	Deut. 33:1-5	Preamble to Mosheh's blessings over the tribes of Yisra'el
Tuesday:	Deut. 33:6-11	Blessings for Re'uben, Yehudah and Lewi
Wednesday:	Deut. 33:12-17	Blessings for Binyamin and Yoseph
Thursday:	Deut. 33:18-29	Blessings for Zebulun, Yissaskar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher
Friday:	Deut. 34:1-12	Mosheh's death and burial; Yehoshua becomes leader

In this week's Parsha Pearls lesson, we will be wrapping up this year's Torah cycle* and take a look at the last few chapters of the book of Deuteronomy. As the children of Yisra'el head into the land of Kena'an without him, Mosheh pronounces a prophetic blessing over each of the tribes. From this point, Yehoshua will take up the mantle of leadership over the children of Yisra'el. Because these prophetic blessings contain very little information, we have provided some points for you to discuss with your children regarding each tribe. We recommend that families continue to read the journey of the Yisra'elites contained in the book of Yehoshua. Now, let's read Deut. 33-34 to conclude our year's journey with Parsha Pearls.

* We have provided a certificate after the snack section that parents/teachers can print out to acknowledge the child's accomplishment in completing a year of Parsha Pearls. It can be included in the Simchat Torah celebration as well if you choose to have an end of year party.

PARSHA POINTS

- Mosheh the man of Elohim blessed the children of Yisra'el before his death and pronounced these words (33:1-29):

Re'uben

- Let Re'uben live, and not die, and let his men be numbered
 - The very place Mosheh was standing when he pronounced this blessing was in Re'uben's territory
 - Since Re'uben was guilty of an incident with his father's concubine, Bilhah (Gen. 35:22), perhaps the reference to 'let Re'uben live, and not die' is a plea to Yahweh for them NOT to become extinct or absorbed into another tribe
 - Famous Biblical characters from the tribe of Re'uben: Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16)
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Re'uben was referred to as boiling like water (Gen. 49:3-4)



Yehudah

- Hear, Yahweh, the voice of Yehudah, and bring him to his people. His hands shall fight for him, and You be a help against his enemies.
 - Yehudah is the tribe that generated the lineage of our Messiah Yeshua
 - Notice that Mosheh asks Yahweh to 'shema' - to hear and honor his plea to act on Yehudah's behalf Famous Biblical characters from the tribe of Yehudah: Caleb, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, King David, King Solomon, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Nehemiah
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Yehudah was referred to as a lion's cub (Gen. 49:8-12)



Lewi

- Your Tummim and Your Urim belong to Your kind one, whom You tried at Massah, with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah, who said of his father and mother, 'I have not seen them.' And he did not acknowledge his brothers, or know his own children, for they have guarded Your Word and watched over Your covenant. They teach Your right-rulings to Ya'aqob, and Your Torah to Yisra'el. They put incense before You, and a complete burnt offering on Your altar. O Yahweh, bless his strength, and accept the work of his hands. Smite the loins of those who rise against him, and of those who hate him, that they rise no more.
 - Mosheh beseeches Yahweh a great deal on Lewi's behalf, and promotes their righteous deeds
 - Mosheh asks that the Tummim and Urim remain with the tribe of Lewi. The Tummim and the Urim are only mentioned four times in the Bible. They were 2 (shtayim) stones stored in a special pouch that were attached to the breastplate of the High Priest, and were used to determine Yahweh's will in certain matters
 - In this blessing, there are also references to Lewi passing many tests from Yahweh, including their loyalty in the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:26-29), thus the statement, "... he did not acknowledge his brothers..."
 - Famous Biblical characters from the tribe of Lewi: Mosheh, Aharon, Miriam, Gershon, Qehath, Merari, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, Malachi, Asaph and the sons of Qorah (who contributed to the Psalms)
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Lewi was NOT described favorably: for Ya'aqob was angry about their violence against Shekem and Hamor (Gen. 49:5; Ch. 34)



Binyamin

- Let the beloved of Yahweh dwell in safety by Him, shielding him all the day, as he dwells between His shoulders.
 - Binyamin's land allotment fell between Ephrayim and Yehudah
 - The wilderness tabernacle rested for a long time in Binyamin's territory; and later on the temple was built there
 - Famous Biblical characters from the tribe of Binyamin: Ehud (Judg. 3:12-30), King Sha'ul (Saul) (1 Sam. 9:21), Mordekai (Mordecai) (Est. 2:5), Sha'ul/Paul (Phil. 3:5)
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Binyamin was referred to as a wolf (Gen. 49:27)



Yoseph

- Blessed of Yahweh is his land, with the choicest from the heavens, with the dew, and the deep lying beneath, with the choice fruits of the sun, with the choice yield of the months, with the finest of the ancient mountains, with the choicest of the everlasting hills, with the choicest of the earth and all that fills it, and the good pleasure of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let it come on the head of Yoseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers. His splendor is like a first-born bull, and his horns are like the horns of the wild ox. With them he pushes the peoples to the ends of the earth. And they are the ten thousands of Ephrayim, and they are the thousands of Menashsheh.
 - Yoseph is depicted here as abundant and prosperous in every way
 - Yoseph is interchangeable with Ephrayim and Menashsheh
 - Ya'aqob adopted Ephrayim and Menashsheh as his own (Gen. 48:5)
 - Yoseph received a double portion of wealth from his father (Gen. 48:22) when Ya'aqob split the firstborn blessing
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Yoseph was referred to as an offshoot of a fruit-bearing tree (Gen. 49:22-26)



Zebulun & Yissaskar

- Rejoice, O Zebulun, in your going out, and Yissaskar in your tents! They call peoples to the mountain, there they bring offerings of righteousness, for they draw from the riches of the seas, and treasures hidden in the sand.
 - The people of Zebulun have always been associated with being trade merchants
 - Yissaskar has always been associated with herding and ranching
 - The 2 tribes shared a solid partnership and allegiance that brought prosperity to them both
 - Zebulun went out in ships - thus 'in your going out', and Yissaskar would remain and occupy themselves with the study of Torah - thus 'in your tents' (1 Chron. 12:32)
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Zebulun was described as one who dwells at the seashore and Yissaskar was referred to as a strong donkey (Gen. 49:13-15)



Gad



- Blessed is he who enlarges Gad. He dwells as a lion, and shall tear off the arm, also the crown. And he chose the best for himself, for there the portion of the lawgiver was hidden. And he came with the heads of the people. The righteousness of Yahweh he did, and His right-rulings with Yisra'el.
 - The tribe of Gad was one of the 3 (**shalosh**) tribes that chose territory outside of Kena'an
 - They received the most outstanding pasture and crop lands of any of the tribes - thus 'the best'
 - Gad is known for having highly trained troops
 - Because they lived near the border, they had to be strong like a lion to protect the tribes (1 Chron. 12:8-15)
 - The territory where Gad lived was near to where Mosheh had died - thus 'there the portion of the lawgiver was hidden'
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Gad was referred to as one who raids the heel of those who raid him (Gen. 49:19)



Dan

- Dan is a lion's cub that leaps from Bashan.
 - Like Gad, this tribe was known for its lion-like strength and battle ability, as they also lived near the border
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Dan was referred to as a serpent, and as one who rightly rules his people (Gen. 49:16-18)



Naphtali

- O Naphtali, satisfied with pleasure, and filled with the blessing of Yahweh, possess the west and the south.
 - Naphtali was blessed with very fertile territory
 - It was beautifully watered and had a temperate climate
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Naphtali was referred to as a deer let loose (Gen. 49:21)



Asher

- Asher is most blessed of sons. Let him be accepted by his brothers, and dip his foot in oil. Your sandals are iron and bronze, and your strength as your days.
 - Asher was also blessed with fertile land - referring to most blessed of sons
 - They settled in the upper Galilee between Naphtali and the Mediterranean Sea
 - Their region was known for the high quality olive oil it produced - thus the phrase 'dip his foot in oil'
 - Their area was a major trade route and had both benefits and risks - thus
- Mosheh's blessing of iron, bronze and strength
 - In the blessing of his father Ya'aqob, Asher was referred to as being wealthy (Gen. 49:20)



The 11 Tribes

- Mosheh reminds Yisra'el of Yahweh's protection to them and to acknowledge their blessing (33:26-29):
 - Yeshurun (Yisra'el or upright one), there is no one like El, riding the heavens to help you, and on the clouds, in His excellency.
 - The Elohim of old is a refuge, and beneath are everlasting arms.
 - He drives out the enemy from before you and says, 'Destroy!'
 - Yisra'el dwells in safety, the fountain of Ya'aqob alone, in a land of grain and new wine.
 - His heavens also drop down dew.
 - Who is like you, Yisra'el - a people saved by Yahweh, the shield of your help, and He who is the sword of your excellency!
 - Your enemies are subdued for you, and you tread down their high places.
- Mosheh went up from the desert plains of Mo'ab to the heights of Mount Nebo, where Yahweh let Mosheh look (**ra'ah**) with his eyes (**enayim**) at all the land which the Yisra'elites were to enter - 34:1-4
- Yahweh confirmed to Mosheh that this was the land which He swore to give to Abraham, to Yitshaq, and to Ya'aqob's seed - 34:4
- Mosheh died there in the land of Mo'ab, according to the mouth of Yahweh - 34:5
- Mosheh was 120 (**me'ah esrim**) years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his freshness gone - 34:7
- The children of Yisra'el mourned for Mosheh 30 (**shloshim**) days - 34:8
- Mosheh had laid hands on Yehoshua as Yahweh's choice for the next leader over the children of Yisra'el, and Yehoshua became filled with the spirit of wisdom from Yahweh - 34:9
- No prophet (**navi**) has arisen in Yisra'el like Mosheh; for Yahweh spoke with him face to face (**panim el panim**), and caused him to do mighty signs and wonders with a strong hand, and to perform great and fearsome deeds - 34:10-12



DIGGING DEEPER

Parents/Teachers may choose to use these prompts for further discussion of the Torah portion.

- Discuss the contrast between the Song of Mosheh and the Blessing of Mosheh over the children of Yisra'el. Which one contains warnings and sounds like a lecture? Which one contains hope and sounds like a pep talk?
- Notice that Shim'on is left out of the blessing. Why do you think that is? Find Scriptural evidence to back it up. See Gen. 49:5-7. Why do you think Lewi was included in Mosheh's blessing? (Ex. 32:26-29)
- Mosheh concludes his prophetic blessings over each tribe with one that is for the nation as a whole. Discuss Yahweh's repeated reminders that He is their safety, their refuge, their protector, their strength, their shield, etc... (Deut. 33:26-29)
- Why do you think Yahweh Himself buried Mosheh? Why do you think Yahweh did NOT want anyone to know where Mosheh was buried? (Deut. 34:6) Do you think that some might have built a shrine to Mosheh?
- Notice that Mosheh's blessing over each tribe did not follow their birth order. Since most of the blessings have to do with the land, could it be that they were given according to the position of each tribe's land inheritance? Research the order of the tribes' placement in the land of Yisra'el, and determine whether or not Mosheh's blessings had to do with the nature of their tribal territories.

