

# V'zot Habrachah ( וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה ) (And This is the Blessing)

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12, Joshua 1:1-18, Revelation 22:1-5

A Messianic Jewish Commentary

By Hannah Neshet [www.voiceforisrael.net](http://www.voiceforisrael.net)

“And this is the blessing (v’zot Habrachah) that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death.” (Deuteronomy 33:1)

This parashah opens the concluding portion of readings in the book of Deuteronomy (D’varim). Like a father blessing his children on his death bed, Moses blesses the children of Israel before his death.

Whereas the preceding Song of Moses came as a warning and admonition to a wayward, rebellious, unfaithful people and the resulting calamities that will befall them; this portion foretells the blessings of a bright future for Israel - which is her destiny.



Deuteronomy 32:50-33:29 in the Aleppo Codex

“Yes, He loves the peoples, all His holy ones – they are in Your hand.” (Deuteronomy 33:3)

Here, the Hebrew word for ‘people’s is *‘amim*’ which can mean nations; therefore God’s love is all inclusive for all people of any tongue, tribe or nationality. We are all, Jew or Gentile, in His loving hands. Although Moses brought forth God’s Divine Torah first to the nation of Israel, His Covenant and Torah is for all who will receive.

“Moses commanded us a Torah, an inheritance of the kehilla (congregation) of Yaacov (Jacob).” (Deuteronomy 33:4)

The Hebrew word used here for ‘inheritance’ is not *‘yerushah*’ as would be expected, but rather *‘morashah*’. Whereas an inheritance (*yerushah*) is given freely to be spent by the heir at his own personal discretion and will, a *morashah* is an estate which must remain ‘in the family’ - to be handed down from generation to generation from father to son and on and on forever.

This is the Torah of Elohim – it is never to be diminished or forgotten but kept in the family of God and transmitted from generation to generation. May we never neglect our sacred and supreme duty, amongst all our other tasks and goals and obligations, to ‘teach our children’ the holy Torah of God.

Moses went on to bless each of the Tribes of Israel; but he gave a special, tender and endearing blessing to one tribe – Benjamin. He is called the ‘Beloved of the Lord’ (Deuteronomy 33:12); however the Hebrew word used here is ‘yedid’, which means friend. In Hebrew, a chaver is also a friend, but it may imply a romantic or sexual relationship between a man and woman. A yedid is a true, pure friendship!



The Lord . came from the myriads holy, at His right hand was a fiery law to them." (Deuteronomy 33:2.)

All morning I’ve had a song going through my head whose lyrics go something like this,

*“In good times, in bad times, I’ll be on your side forever more..... that’s what friends are for....”*

Yeshua calls us ‘friends’ (yedidim)<sup>1</sup>- we are ‘yedidim’ with Adonai Yeshua Hamashiach. Wow!

Benjamin held a special place in his father, Jacob’s heart, since he was the only full brother to his favorite son, Joseph. Both Joseph and Benjamin were sons of his beloved wife, Rachel, who died giving birth to Benjamin. Moses also recognizes that special parental affection that God has for this tribe.

In Scripture, Joseph is later referred to as Ephraim, and represents the ten northern tribes that later are scattered amongst the nations and become assimilated or ‘lost’. Joseph represents the so – called ‘Gentile Believers’ who are being grafted back into the natural olive tree through covenant in the blood of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua.

Judah and Benjamin merged to form the Southern tribe which was preserved and makes us the Jewish people of today. Who is Benjamin today then? It could be that those of the tribe of Benjamin are some of the Messianic Jews today. These ‘Benjamites’ are fully part of Judah (Yehudah) and living amongst our Jewish brethren; and yet full brothers with Joseph (Ephraim) - our brother in Adonai Yeshua.

This blessing of Moses on Benjamin promises that we will dwell safely with God and be covered by Him, even dwelling between his shoulders. Now how awesome is that?!

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<sup>1</sup> John 15:5

**“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; He covers him all the day, and He dwells between His shoulders.”** (Deut. 33:12)

Many Messianic Jews today dwell in poverty and lack, suffering persecution from our Orthodox Jewish brethren, but we can see from the prophetic picture of Joseph, that Joseph gave to Benjamin five times more than his other brothers!



*"Zebulun . . . and Issachar . . . shall suck the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand." (Deuteronomy 33:18–19.)*

The hearts of many from among Joseph (Ephraim) are being stirred to give towards Israel out of a heart of gratitude and indebtedness for the Torah, the Messiah and a place in the Covenants; but I believe there is a blessing that the Messianic Jews are yet to receive – a five-fold blessing! This hope should cause us not to lose heart but to press on in faith, hope and love!

Moses then gives a general blessing which is one of the most beautiful words in all of Scripture: **“The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms;”** (Deuteronomy 33:27)

God is not only a dwelling place for us, His people, but is also our unfailing support. We may sometimes feel as if we have no support in this life (or at least not enough); but our comfort and confidence is in knowing that God’s all powerful arms are ever stretched out to sustain us and to catch us when we are about to fall. He never grows weary or weak, even when we feel like we can’t go on anymore.

I remember a time in my life so clearly when I felt utterly exhausted, weary, and broken. My (then) husband had been evicted from Israel for our faith in Yeshua; and so we had been cast back into exile. We were broke, sick, depressed and our marriage was falling apart at the seams.

It was summer, and so we went to a nearby Christian camp, desperately needing fellowship and encouragement. I don’t remember anything else from this camp, but I do remember a preacher talking about this one Scripture: **“The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms;”** (Deuteronomy 33:27)

What he said was this, *“Whenever we are in trouble or need, we can always run to God and find shelter. However, there may be times in our lives when we are so tired and weary of the trials and heartaches that we don’t even have strength to run anymore.”*

This was me. I knew that my strength, my hope, and even my faith had weakened to the point that I could no longer even run to God to help get me through.

*“This is when,” the preacher said, “that we can simply rest in His everlasting arms. When we are too broken and weary to run to Him, He will stretch out His arms and hold us until we have the strength to get up and go on again.”*



"Gad . . . dwells like a lion." (Deuteronomy 33:20.) (brick panel from the Procession Way of Babylon, now at the Louvre)

This is what God did for me and perhaps this comes as a ‘word in due season’ for someone else who feels they are in need of that strong support.

I love how God promises that even if our mother and father forsake us, yet He will take care of us. (Psalm 27:10) How wonderful is the unfailing love of God for His children. This alone should give us reason to rejoice and be glad.

**“Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you? A people saved by the Lord...”**  
(Deuteronomy 33:29)

Before he died, Moses went up to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, near Jericho, and the Lord showed him all the Promised Land; but Moses was only able to behold it from afar. He was never allowed to enter in because of his sin of striking the rock to bring forth water for the children of Israel.

**“And the Lord said of the Lord, “This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying: I will give it to your seed....”** (Deuteronomy 34:4)

If someone claims to be a Bible Believer, there can be no doubt or wavering in conviction, whether arising from human opinion or media bias, that this land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael) rightly belongs to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - not Abraham, Ishamel and Esau. The question is whether or not we will believe in and stand upon the Word of God or not?

**“So Moses the servant of Adonai died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He was buried there in the valley of the land of Moab... and no man knows of his grave to this day.”** (Deuteronomy 34:5-6)

No one knows to this day where Moses was buried. Rabbinic legend holds that it was God Himself who buried his friend, Moses, with whom he spoke face to face. Moses was the most

humble man on the face of the earth; therefore it is fitting that, unlike many of our ancestors, Moses lies in an unknown and unvisited tomb.

Moses labored but did not live to really see and enjoy the full fruit of his labors in serving the Lord. He did not achieve his highest goal. No, Moses was removed from this earthly life before seeing the children of Israel enter into the land of milk and honey after being delivered from Egypt.

So too may we labor in service unto the Lord and not see the full fruition of our work. Someone else may carry on after we depart to eternity, as did Joshua for Moses; and yet we must be faithful and trust that in the end, we will hear Elohim say, *“Well done, my good and faithful servant; enter into your rest which has been prepared for you since eternity.”*



The Death of Moses (illustration from a Bible card published 1907 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

Even in dying, Moses remained the servant of God, obeying even the command to ascend the mountain and die there, even though Scripture tells us that his natural life force was not weakened. Even at 120 years old, he suffered none of the infirmities of old age.<sup>2</sup>

The Jewish sages believe that God spares the righteous the bitterness of death and takes away their soul with a kiss. Paul spoke of Yeshua taking away the sting of death.

**"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"** (1 Corinthians 15:55)

The children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days but then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended (Deuteronomy 34:8)

The Jewish people have specific time periods of mourning for the dead and believe it is wrong to prolong them unnecessarily. We may grieve over our losses and this is right and natural; but it is not right to live with a spirit of grief. There is a time to let go and press on, just as He said to Samuel, *“How long will you mourn for Saul.”* (1 Samuel 16:1)

When something is over we need to grieve the loss, weep for a time; but then go on with our lives, trusting that God still has a good plan – to give us a hope and a future. Even for a man as great as Moshe Avinu (our father Moses), there came a time when the people needed to lay aside their grief, stop weeping and go on under the new leadership of Joshua son of Nun.

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<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:7

**“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.”** (Deuteronomy 34:9)

When one door closes, God will open another; when one chapter ends, a new one begins.

And so ended the life of Moses, considered to be one of the greatest prophets of all times. **“And there has not risen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.”** (Deuteronomy 34:10)

And yet it was prophesied by Moses that there would be another prophet to come after him, even greater than himself.<sup>3</sup> When Yeshua multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand, he re-created the miracle of the provision of manna in the wilderness.

By this sign, the people of Israel knew him to be this prophet – greater than Moses: **“Therefore when the people saw the sign which he had performed, they said, “This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.”** (John 6:11-15)

According to Jewish custom, the completion of any of the five books of Moses in the Torah is marked by the entire congregation standing up in the synagogue and shouting, **“Chazak, Chazak, v’nitchazek!”** (*Be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened*).

This is said three times to symbolize past, present and future. Truly we are living in days where we need to be strong and of courage, knowing that the Lord our God is with us wherever we go. These are the words that God spoke to Joshua in the haftorah for this week.

He said, **“Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan...unto the land which I give to them, even to the children of Israel.”** (Joshua 1:2)

We need to know when something is over and done. As someone once said, *“If the horse has been dead for ten years, it may be time to dismount!”*

For this, to let go of what lies behind and press on what lies ahead, even the Promised Land across the Jordan River, we need to be strong and of good courage. God makes these promises:

- 1) I will be with you
- 2) I will not fail you
- 3) I will never leave or forsake you

**“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you, nor forsake you; Be strong and of good courage...”** (Joshua 1:5)

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<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 18:15, 18,19

How may we be strong and of good courage like Joshua, and to run the race set out before us to victory? It is by observing all the Torah, which Moses commanded us, not turning from it to the right or to the left, **“That you may have good success wherever you go.”** (Joshua 1:7)

As the Lord said to Joshua, so may He say to us, **“This book of the Torah shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall mediate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your ways prosperous and then you shall have good success.”** (Joshua 1:8)

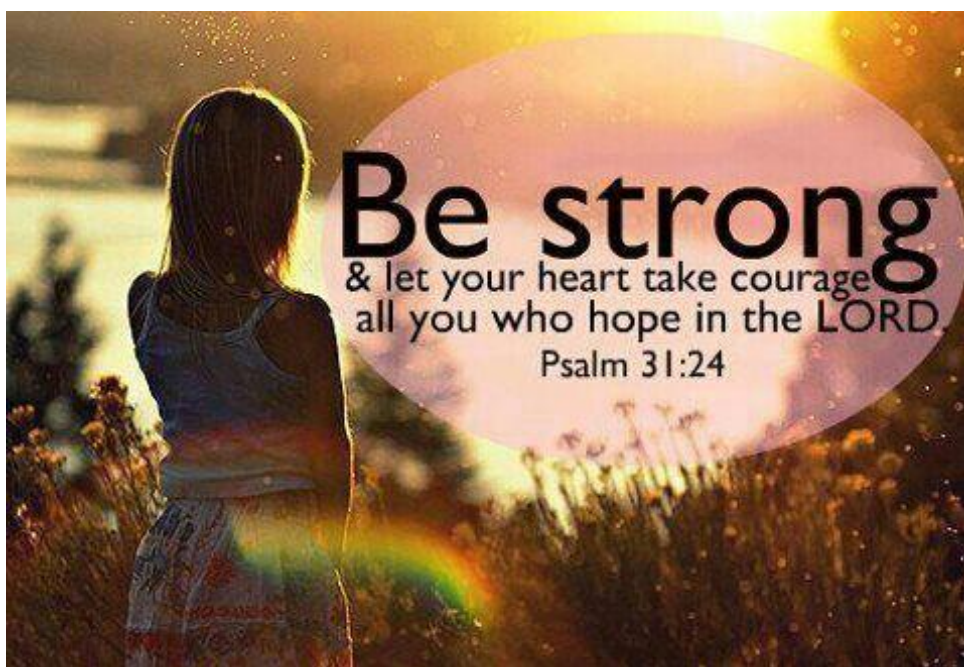
The success and prosperity of many Jewish people, who have preserved the Torah throughout history - their achievements and contributions to all of mankind - proves that God’s word is true. How can we also be successful and live in the Promises of God? It is by living according to God’s ways in the Torah and by refusing to give in to fear but pressing on in faith, to cross over the Jordan, trusting God to be with us every step of the way.

“For He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1:7)

This last portion of Scripture from the end of Deuteronomy is never read on its own; but rather on the festival of Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Torah) when we begin reading the Torah all over again. After the last verses of Deuteronomy 34 have been read, the Torah is immediately begun again by reading Genesis 1:1 – 2:3.

This is to show us that our study of the Word of God is to never end but be a lifetime pursuit of the spiritual treasures and rich spiritual nourishment out of the truths found within. After every ending in life comes a new beginning. When one door closes another opens.

And so I conclude this work with these same words to you as we continue our journey with the Lord: “chazak, chazak, v’nitchazek!!” “Be strong and of good courage, and may we be strengthened through our study of the Torah.”



## V'zot Habrachah Study Questions

1. What is the difference between 'Yerushah' and 'Morashah' and what is the significance of the Hebrew word used in this passage of Scripture?
2. What is the difference between a 'yedid' and a 'chaver'?
3. Why did Benjamin hold a special place in the heart of Jacob? What was Benjamin's relationship with Joseph? What happened to those of the tribe of Benjamin?
4. Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt so completely burned out that you couldn't even run to God? How did He support you with His everlasting arms? Share.
5. In what way did Moses fail to realize his greatest goal in life? Have you experienced a deep disappointment in life? Have you been able to give that to God and go on?
6. How was Moses a faithful servant of the Lord in death as he was in life?
7. How do the Jewish mourning customs show us that we need to put a limit on time spent grieving our losses and press on in life? Share and discuss.
8. Moses was a great prophet, but where was it promised that there would come another prophet even greater than Moses? What miracle did Yeshua perform in which the people believed him to be this promised 'greater prophet than Moses'?
9. How do we know when God is finished with something and we need to move on in faith and courage? Share and discuss your experience with starting a new chapter in your life.
10. After Moses died, the leadership of Israel was transferred to Joshua. God charged him to be strong and of good courage. From where did Joshua find his strength and courage to lead Israel?
11. How are we instructed to find success and prosperity?
12. What do we proclaim when we finish our study of each book of the Torah? Why is it said three times?



## About the Author:

Hannah Neshet grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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