

“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Being a part of the company of redeemed from all ages and time periods, and being reunited with our loved ones and ancestors—should cause us to be so overwhelmed with joy, that we simply want to praise our Creator!

It is immensely beneficial for each of us to take some special time this week to reflect upon these foundational truths which are so imperative for our faith. Whether we get lost in the eloquence of a beautiful song that speaks of the marvelous works of the Lord throughout the ages, or whether we praise Yeshua for His work of redemption—the most important thing is that we understand how God has interjected Himself into our lives so that we might have salvation. **The Lord Yeshua is the Rock of our Salvation!**

In these days of reflection and returning to Him, come to the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. *His arms are wide open.* Turn and run to the One who is the Rock of our Salvation!

V'zot Ha'berakhah זֹאת הַבְּרָכָה This is the blessing “Full Circle”

Deuteronomy 33:1–34:12
Joshua 1:1–18 (A); 1:1–9 (S)

The final Torah portion from the Book of Deuteronomy completes the traditional annual cycle which will begin again in the Book of Genesis, after the commemoration of *Shemini Atzeret* (Eighth Day Assembly) and *Simchat Torah* (Joy of the Torah). *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles has come to a close, and at this time it is a tradition in the Jewish community to celebrate the end of the yearly Torah readings. Frequently at this time, these extra days associated with *Sukkot* are believed to be an indication that the God of Israel is so pleased with the time of rejoicing and fellowship, that He desires to have one more day of fellowship with His people.

From a prophetic perspective, if the Feast of Tabernacles is symbolic of entering into the Millennial Kingdom with Yeshua reigning over the Earth, then the Eighth Day Assembly would be appropriately symbolic of entering into the eternal state and New Heavens and Earth. When people often think of the future resurrection and the redeemed being ushered into an existence that we can right now only speculate about—it is natural for us to think about the beginning, and the way things originally were in the Garden with Adam and Eve.

Hebrew readers are often keenly aware of how the last word of Deuteronomy, *Yisrael* (יִשְׂרָאֵל), ends in a *lamed* (ל), and the first term in Genesis, *b'reisheet* (בְּרֵאשִׁית), “in the beginning,” begins with a *bet* (ב). When you put the *lamed* and *bet* together, you form the Hebrew word *lev* (לֵב) or heart. As the annual Torah cycle is completed, one might be reminded of how his or her heart must be committed to learning from Moses' Teaching with sincere intentions. The admonition of Deuteronomy 6:6 is, after all, “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.”

If you consider the subject matter of *V'zot Ha'berakhah*, which is primarily devoted to blessing the tribes of Israel,⁶¹ it is perfectly suited for the final study of the annual cycle. The final words of Moses are recorded as he blesses the Ancient Israelites, before his tenure as Israel's leader is complete and he is led to the plains of Moab and dies.⁶² As you can imagine, a considerable amount of material about these last statements of Moses has been composed. After all, here is the man chosen by God for the incredible task of leading the people of Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery to the freedom of the Promised Land. As the narrative concludes, the final verses of Deuteronomy say it all:

“Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel” (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

When a person dies, his or her last words may be some of the most meaningful ever spoken. This is especially true if one knows that the time of death is imminent, and that these will be the final statements made to loved ones. In the case of this Torah portion, we know how Moses is quite aware that he is about to die. In the previous reading, *Ha'azinu* (Deuteronomy 32:1–52), the beautiful song Moses delivers is drafted to give Ancient Israel a poetic reflection that would be easy to memorize and meditate upon for centuries to come. Not only did it speak back (1) to the times of the Patriarchs, but also ahead to (2) the immediate future after Israel's conquest of Canaan, (3) the consequences of disobedience several hundred years into the future (the punishment meted out by Assyria and Babylon), (4) and the end-time scenario which is still yet to come. Bible readers for millennia been able to consider this message, recognizing how Moses' prophecies have been extremely accurate with multiple fulfillments already chronicled.

Moses' Prophetic Blessings

In his blessing of the Ancient Israelites (Deuteronomy 33), Moses repeats the pattern established centuries earlier by Jacob, when on his deathbed, he blessed his sons (Genesis 49). Here, in an almost farewell gesture, Moses places a parting blessing on each of the tribes of Israel, except Simeon, who goes unmentioned. Simeon's notable absence has generated speculation among Jewish commentators, ranging from the Simeonites being included within Judah's territory (cf. Joshua 19:2), or some kind of penalty being meted out because of being involved in the sin of Baal-peor (Numbers 25:3).⁶³

Moses looks into the immediate future for Israel, but the blessings are *permanently* placed upon the specific tribes. A very interesting study can be done when you consider Moses' blessings and compare them with Jacob's previous blessings. When you combine these sets of blessings together, a prophetic picture of what either the individual tribes of Israel, or corporate Israel together, will likely be doing through time, is encouraging to consider. **Most important to reflect upon is God's faithfulness to His special, chosen nation.**

⁶¹ Deuteronomy 33:1-29.

⁶² Deuteronomy 34:1-6.

⁶³ Cf. Scherman, *Chumash*, 1115.

Completing the Circle

The continuum of life continues from generation to generation. The Jewish Sages knew this, and centuries ago chose the beginning of the Book of Joshua for the corresponding Haftarah selection for *V'zot Ha'berakhah* (Joshua 1:1–18), which in the Jewish book order of the Tanakh begins the Prophets.⁶⁴ Here, as the baton is given to Joshua and his generation, we are reminded that as one generation passes away, it is up to the succeeding generation to carry forward. Joshua did just this, as he carried the anointing of Moses and continued to point Israel to obeying the words of the Lord:

“Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:6-9).

Joshua begins his work by pointing the Ancient Israelites to God’s Instruction. He knows from his days as an apprentice to Moses, that obeying the Lord would manifest itself in Israel being blessed and accomplishing all that He desired. Upon admonishing the people to follow God’s Torah, they concur that just as they followed Moses as leader, so will they follow Joshua:

“They answered Joshua, saying, ‘All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses’” (Joshua 1:16-17).

Ancient Israel responded to the heed of Joshua to continue obeying the Lord in a very affirmative way. The people understood that the blessings of God would flow from obedience to His Instruction.

May we likewise, generations removed, be led as the Ancient Israelites to declare a similar refrain when we have the challenge put before us to continue in our study of the Torah, and commit ourselves to obedience to the Lord. As Believers in the Messiah Yeshua—filled up with the Holy Spirit with His Instruction supernaturally transcribed on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27)—may such obedience truly be a manifestation of the love we have for Him! ***In so doing, the circle of study and obedience to the Torah will continue to be followed, and we can pass it on to our posterity.***

⁶⁴ In the Christian book order of the Old Testament, Joshua is reckoned among the Historical Books.