

March 9

### Deuteronomy 33 & 34

Hello again, I'm Jack Arant, Director of International Student Ministries, and today we are looking at the reading for March 9<sup>th</sup>, Deuteronomy chapters 33 and 34.

This portion begins with the Lord once again telling Moses why he won't get to experience the promise land for himself. His disregard for God's instruction disqualified him from leading the nation in conquest. God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock for the water to come out, but Moses struck it instead. God intended that Moses would follow his direction, but Moses did it the way he'd done it before. God was not pleased. He'll now get to see the land from a distance, but won't get to go in himself.

This shows there's a cost to disobeying clear commands from God. When we do it our way and not his, we suffer regrets, sorrow, missed opportunities, disappointment and lost blessings. Moses' disobedience cost him a trip into the promised land. Look at a few other examples: A whole generation died young because of not having courage to take the land. Aaron's first two sons perished for their irreverent disobedience by not following the priestly instructions. The examples are many. The principle still stands firm. That's why it's crucial for us to have the fear of God as a guiding character quality in our lives. After all, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. It's that healthy fear of God that will keep us from brushing off his commands, or treating our Lord with careless irreverence. Great as he was, Moses got to look longingly, but didn't get to go in.

When we think of notable people or close relatives, we like to take special notice of the last things they did or said. –Moses, the amazing man God has mightily used, is saying his last words. Moses, the great writer of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), the one who spoke to God face to face, the one who shepherded a nation through the wilderness for 40 years, now leaves his people, and us, with a rich legacy of great blessing.

Moses first pronounces a special blessing on the tribes of Israel and he mentions them by name. From Reuben to Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh, from Zebulun to Asher. (from A to Z!) It's like a family photograph. When you see a large group picture and you're in it, which face do you look for first? You look for your own! As his children we can be confident that God pronounces blessings over us. We have every spiritual blessing in Christ. Our names are written in his book. He knows my name!

Twice here he calls them Jeshurun, his nickname for Israel. I can't help but picture a baby going from the crawling stage to walking and taking his first steps, little "upright one". It's so much fun for parents and grandparents like me to watch those first steps!

Now let's look at some of the promises for this toddler: God will come from heaven to help you - he will be your refuge - his mighty arms are underneath you - he will go ahead of you and fight for you- he'll give you safety- give you prosperity - blessings - protection - help- and more than victory, your enemies will cower before you! Sounds like this child has a really bright future!

After saying these fitting last words of blessing, Moses climbs a mountain. That's not something you think of a dying man doing. Moses was still strong and vigorous.

There, from mount Pisgah's lofty heights he views the grand panorama of the beautiful land, and God promises him once again that he's giving it all to Israel.

Moses died, and God did the burial in some secret place. No great monument. I'm sure some would have been tempted to worship, or set up a shrine. A fitting end to the meekest, yet one of the greatest men that ever lived.

Think about Moses, who he was, and all he accomplished. From the very beginning of his life, God was at work. A child, under the threat of death put in a floating basket, now 120 years later buried by God Himself.

Reflect on all the ways God revealed himself in whole new ways through Moses. He revealed his name and character. Yaweh; I AM. Then through Moses he then demonstrated all that his name means by his mighty miracles. How fitting that the man who spoke to God face to face would be the one to give us the treasure of the first five books of the Bible, containing the law, revealing God's holiness. In those books we also see the theme of sacrifice, and the Passover Lamb.

The best ending I can give you are these words from Moses Himself:

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.