

**Text: Deuteronomy 33:12-17**

**Message: “Let the blessing come on the head of Joseph”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The prayer of blessing of Moses
  - a. His final prayer for Israel before his death
  - b. Tailored specifically for each tribe of Israel
  - c. Reflects his understanding of the tribes
  - d. Also reflects his heart and spiritual maturity as their leader
2. Today’s focus – his prayer for Benjamin and Joseph
  - a. These were the sons of Rachel, Jacob’s favourite sons
  - b. But the prayers for them are vastly different
  - c. What lessons can we learn as we observe these 2 prayers?

## **THE BLESSING OF GOD’S PRESENCE AND PROTECTION**

*Of Benjamin he said:*

*“The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him,  
Who shelters him all the day long;  
And he shall dwell between His shoulders.”                      Deuteronomy 33:12*

1. Benjamin
  - a. The youngest of the siblings
  - b. His mother died giving birth to him
  - c. Separated from his biological brother Joseph for more than 20 years
  - d. Jacob compared him to a “ravenous wolf” recorded in Genesis 49:27
  - e. The tribe of Benjamin was one of the smaller tribes in Israel cf. Numbers 26

2. Moses' prayer for the tribe of Benjamin

- a. He shall dwell in the presence of God
- b. He shall find safety in His protection all day long ("shelter")
- c. God will help him when he is weak and seeks mercy
- d. There is a sense of closeness that can be developed ("dwell between His shoulders")

3. Significance of this prayer of blessing

- a. The tribe of Benjamin may be weak and humble
- b. But God will do His part to bless them
  - i. His presence will be with them wonderfully
  - ii. He will also protect them and keep them safe
  - iii. They can develop a special closeness with God!

**GOD'S SPECIAL BLESSING OF PROVISION AND POWER**

*<sup>13</sup> And of Joseph he said:*

*"Blessed of the LORD is his land,  
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,  
And the deep lying beneath,  
<sup>14</sup> With the precious fruits of the sun,  
With the precious produce of the months,  
<sup>15</sup> With the best things of the ancient mountains,  
With the precious things of the everlasting hills,  
<sup>16</sup> With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,  
And the favour of Him who dwelt in the bush.  
Let the blessing come 'on the head of Joseph,  
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.'  
<sup>17</sup> His glory is like a firstborn bull,  
And his horns like the horns of the wild ox;  
Together with them  
He shall push the peoples  
To the ends of the earth;  
They are the ten thousands of Ephraim,  
And they are the thousands of Manasseh."*

*Deuteronomy 33:13-17*

#### 4. Joseph

- a. Jacob's most beloved son
- b. Sold as a slave by his brothers, wrongly imprisoned by his master
- c. Eventually became governor of Egypt and led Egypt through the famine
- d. Brought his whole family to Egypt and took care of them

#### 5. Moses' prayer of blessing for the tribe of Joseph

- a. He cited from Jacob's prayer recorded in Genesis 49:26
  - i. For God's blessings to come "on the head of Joseph"
  - ii. "And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers"
- b. He provided greater detail on what these blessings would entail
  - i. The precious things of heaven and earth
  - ii. Fruitfulness and abundance in the physical land
  - iii. The widespread favour of God, as Moses had found in the bush
  - iv. Glory and power like a firstborn bull and wild ox to defeat enemies in battle
  - v. Posterity in multiplying the next generations of Ephraim and Manasseh
  - vi. These are special blessings reserved only for the tribe of Joseph!

#### 6. Significance of this prayer of blessing

- a. God remembered the impressive life of Joseph
  - i. His outstanding conduct and character as a slave and prisoner
  - ii. His faithfulness to God amidst his tribulations and suffering

- iii. His heart to forgive his brothers for the evil they did to him
- iv. His deep devotion to God throughout his whole life
- b. God had specially honoured him by blessing his life wonderfully
- c. This special blessing would also extend to his descendants, Ephraim and Manasseh!
  - i. The physical blessings they would receive in the land
  - ii. The strength of their might as the largest tribe in Israel
  - iii. The leading role that Ephraim would eventually take in Israel

### **LESSONS FOR US TO LEARN**

1. God's part in blessing us
  - a. He is a God who desires to bless
  - b. In His grace, He offers us many wonderful blessings
2. But to experience the fullness of His blessings, we need to do our part
  - a. To cultivate a conduct and character honourable to God
  - b. To grow in our faithfulness to God
  - c. To stay committed to God despite our trials and suffering
3. If we can do this, we can experience God's blessings in the most wonderful way
  - a. In the present
  - b. For the future