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May Asher Dip His Foot in Oil

33: 24-29

May Asher dip his foot in oil DIG: In what sense is Asher “the favorite of his brothers?” How are God’s arms “everlasting?” How would this uplift Jeshurun (Isra’el)? What does the character of ADONAI mean for Isra’el in verses 28-29? How does this poem of blessing reinforce the song of Moses in Chapter 32? In the long run, where did Isra’el end up? Why?

REFLECT: How have you been blessed by the Lord? Who would you like to bless? With what? Why? Do your brothers and/or sisters (in the Lord, or humanly speaking) look upon you with favor? Describe a time when you felt ADONAI’s everlasting arms around you. How has YHVH been a Shield for you in the battle of life?

On the day Moses died, he delivered his final blessing and then ascended Mount Nebo to view the Land of Promise from afar.

Asher means “happy, **blessed**,” and **Moshe** asked **ADONAI** to **bless** the tribe with many **children, the favor of his brothers**, and great prosperity (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click [L1](#) - Asher’s Bread Will Be With Oil; He Will Provide Delicacies Fit for a King**). **Asher** stretched along the coast from Acre to Tyre. It was also on the highway by which invaders entered Palestine. Hence, it was natural to wish for strong fortifications for **Asher**.⁷⁰³



For **Asher** he said: **Most blessed of sons is Asher - may he be the favorite of his brothers, and may he dip his foot in oil (33:24)**. The exaggerated metaphor of bathing one's **foot in oil** suggests abundant prosperity. Even though olive groves were abundant in their territory of **Asher**, it seems that here the **oil**, which often symbolizes **blessing** in the TaNaKh (**Deuteronomy 32:13; Job 29:5-6 and 11**), provides a metaphor of prosperity in general. **The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze. As your days, so will your strength be (33:25)**. The iron and bronze bolts refer to bolts that held a city gate in place as an essential means of defending themselves. The basic idea here is, "May your land be as secure as if it were locked up with **bolts of iron and bronze**."⁷⁰⁴ This tribe would enjoy many **children, brotherly** love, prosperity and security, and **ADONAI** would give **them** daily strength to accomplish **their** work. What more could anyone want?⁷⁰⁵

The last words of Moshe: What a great relief it must have been for **Moses** to realize that his life and ministry had not been in vain. And that **the Jewish people** whom **he** loved so much would **rest safely** in the Promised Land. **Precious in the sight of ADONAI is the presence of all His people (Psalm 116:15)**. Therefore, these last words focus on **the happiness of the people of God** because of **His blessings**. As **Moshe** finished blessing the tribes, **he** visualized **the whole nation** and the joy **Isra'el** ought to have because **they** knew the true and living **God**. **Their God** wasn't a dead idol sitting in a Temple; **He rides the heavens to come to the aid of His people (Psalm 18:10, 68:33)**. But even more, **ADONAI** is **Isra'el's** "home" and dwelling place (**Psalm 90:1**), and they live in **Him** no matter where they go. As we go forward by faith, **He** defeats **the Enemy** and holds us up in the battle.⁷⁰⁶

There is none like God, Jeshurun (literally, **the upright One**). **Isra'el's God** is incomparable in power as **the One riding through the heavens to her aid and through the skies in His majesty**. The mention of **Jeshurun** links these concluding verses of praise

to the introductory portion of **the blessing** where **Jeshurun** is also mentioned in **33:5**. No matter what adversity **Isra'el** would face, **ADONAI** would be there instantly with power to deliver **her**. Because **YHVH** is eternal and is a **Refuge for His people, His everlasting arms**, figurative speaking, would protect **Isra'el** in times of calamity, and would **destroy her enemy**.⁷⁰⁷ **A refuge is the ancient God, and underneath are everlasting arms. He drove out the enemy before you and said, "Destroy" (33:26-27).**

Having such a wonderful and powerful **God, the nation** could be assured of conquering Canaan and then of living for a while **in safety** and prosperity. **So Isra'el rests in safety, untroubled is Jacob's fountain in a land of grain and new wine. Yes, his heavens drip dew (33:28).** **Jacob's fountain** does not refer to springs of water in **the Land**, but is a synonym for **Isra'el** (the parallel term) and **their** descendants. The guaranteed presence of **grain, new wine**, and **dew** represents the epitome of "the good life" in **the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 7:13, 11:10-12, 33:13-16; Genesis 27:28)**. **Moses** brings **his** conclusion to a climax by rejoicing over **Isra'el's** blessed position. Because of their special relationship with **YHVH**, demonstrated by His deliverance of them from Egypt (and other calamities), they are unique among the nations of the world.⁷⁰⁸

Happy are you, O Isra'el! Who is like you? The answer would be, "None!" But **Isra'el's** preeminence lay not in **her** own merit, because **there is none like God, Jeshurun (33:26)**. The power and preeminence of **Isra'el's God** imparted to **Isra'el, her** power and preeminence. **Isra'el** would be victorious, not through military genius, but because **YHVH is a warrior (Exodus 15:3)**, and would lead **His people** into battle (see [Ag - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh](#)) as **the commander of ADONAI's army (Joshua 5:14)**. **Isra'el** would be protected in battle by **the Shield**, which was **God Himself**.⁷⁰⁹ **A people saved by ADONAI, the Shield of your help and the Sword of your triumph? Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places (33:29).**

Isra'el would face many enemies and fight many battles as **they** conquered **the Promised Land**, but **ADONAI** would give them the victory. **They** would live in a safe and productive land, separated from the pagan Gentile nations around **her**, but bearing witness to **them** about **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. He would be **their Helper, their Shield, and their Sword**, so **they** had nothing to fear.

But **Isra'el's** greatest danger wasn't the armies around **them** so much as the desires within **them**. **Their** hearts needed to be weaned away from the love for idols and the sins associated with spiritual adultery. In the end, **the Jews** accepted and worshipped the gods

of the goyim **they** had defeated, and this led to the spiritual and moral decay of **the nation**. Instead of **trampling down their high places (33:29)**, Isra'el sank lower and lower into the pit of sin, until YHVH had to send **them** into captivity (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule](#)).⁷¹⁰

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that when all around us starts to crumble and mighty forces are against us, it is **You** who will protect us. The one true, all powerful **God** says of **Asher's land, her** "land will be as secure as if it were locked up with bolts of iron and bronze." In a similar way when we believe in You/trust **You** as our **Lord** and **Savior (Romans 10:9-10)** then **You** become our strength and our **Father (John 1:12)**. We do not need to worry or to fret, but to rest in **Your** care by seeking **Your** help. **But You, ADONAI, are a shield around me. . . I lie down and sleep. I awake - for ADONAI sustains me (Psalms 3:3a)**. No matter how big the problem- **You** are greater and mightier. **You** have all the answers and **You** delight in helping **Your** child. **I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people all around who have taken their stand against me. . . From the Lord comes deliverance (Psalm 3:5-6,8a)**. **You** are my strong fortress. **He said: "ADONAI is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer (Second Samuel 22:2)**. **You** are a wonderful **Father!** In **Yeshua's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*