

November 30, 2025

GOD'S POWER: DEUT 33:1-5,26-29

TEACHER'S NOTE: THIS LESSON ONLY HAS TWO POINTS, SO WE WILL SPEND MORE TIME THAN USUAL ON EACH POINT. ALSO, WE ARE GOING TO BE LOOKING AT A LOT OF OTHER PASSAGES TO HELP US WITH THE APPLICATION. YOU MIGHT WANT TO RECRUIT PEOPLE AHEAD OF TIME TO READ THE OTHER PASSAGES.

Introductory Activity Option 1 (Adapted from ETB LG, 113)

Ask Do you or did you as a young person like scavenger hunts? Or are you the type who would set out on a real-life treasure hunt if you had a set of clues?

Explain: In 2010, Forrest Fenn self-published his memoir titled *The Thrill of the Chase*. Fenn was a Vietnam War veteran and a successful, self-made art dealer living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In his memoir, he included a 24-line poem that contained clues for a treasure hunt. Somewhere in the American West, he had hidden a small lockbox containing gold coins, jewels, and other rare art pieces. The poem became the road map for many people who set out on the decade-long treasure hunt. Many of these people saw the treasure as a way of finding freedom from debt or to find financial security. The memoir was treated like a holy book by these treasure hunters. They particularly picked apart the poem written by a man in his eighties that would help them discover a treasure that could change their lives. Several people died in the backcountry as they searched the Rocky Mountains from Wyoming to New Mexico. The treasure was eventually discovered by Jack Stuef (pron. Stoof) in 2020. He later auctioned off the treasure for \$1.3 million. All of this was put in motion by a poem written by an older man who sought to encourage people to explore the outdoors and experience the thrill of the hunt.

Transition: In today's lesson, we are going to read a poem or song by Moses that was meant to encourage the people of God. The people were going to enter the Promised Land, and Moses was going to die after 120 years of life. Deuteronomy 33 contains the last recorded words of Moses. They are a blessing pronounced over the people of Israel. The blessing has three parts (1) "his blessing exalted God as Israel's King (33:1-5)," (2) he blesses "Israel's twelve tribes by name (33:6-25)," and (3) "Moses again reminded Israel of God's uniqueness (33:26-29)." (ETB LG, 142) Moses' words can remind us that "Believers can live without fear knowing that they serve the one true God." (ETB LG, 141)

1. KING (DEUT. 33:1-5)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 33:1-5.

Notes:

This Lesson was created using:

- *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* (ETB LG)
- *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* (ETB PSG)
- *Explore the Bible Commentary* (ETBC)
- *Preaching the Word: Deuteronomy* (Preaching)
- *New American Commentary: Deuteronomy* (NAC)

Explain: In these verses, Moses looks back at what God had done for the people of Israel. In His actions, we can see that God cares for the people in three distinct but interlocking ways. Verse 2 recounts three times in which God's presence with the people was clear. He wasn't just present with the people, though. He was present as the **Divine Warrior**. Moses says that He "came with ten thousand holy ones." The picture could be one of God leading an army of 10,000 warrior angels. It could also be referring to God's leadership of Israel's army. Either way, God, as Divine Warrior, holds the power of the lightning in His right hand. He brought the people out of slavery in Egypt. He brought the people to Sinai and established a special relationship with them. He brought them through the wilderness. Now he is with them on the verge of entering the Promised Land.

At the beginning of their journey, Moses had led the people in another song celebrating God as Warrior. Exodus 14 details the way God had defeated Pharaoh and his armies by drowning them in the Red Sea. In chapter 15, the Israelites sing the Song of the Sea. The first stanza of the song is recorded in verses 1-3. "Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord. They said: I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted; he has thrown the horse and its rider into the sea.² The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.³ The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name." This was the first of many times the Lord fought on behalf of the people. Even at this early stage in their journey, they knew the Lord could take them into the Promised Land. Later in that song, they looked forward to the defeat of the Canaanites by the Lord. In verses 14-16a, they sing in anticipation of the fear God's power will bring upon the people of the land: "¹⁴ When the peoples hear, they will shudder; anguish will seize the inhabitants of Philistia.¹⁵ Then the chiefs of Edom will be terrified; trembling will seize the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan will panic;¹⁶ terror and dread will fall on them." In Deuteronomy 33, Moses reminds the people of what God has done, who He is, and what they can expect Him to do.

We, too, serve God, the Divine Warrior. We can look back to His power displayed in the OT, but we can look to His work in the Gospels as well. Jesus revealed His power over creation through His healing ministry. He revealed His power over Satan through exorcisms. He revealed His power over sin and death at the cross and the tomb. Like the Israelites, we can look back on what God has done. We can also look forward to what He will do. In the book of Revelation, the prophet John sees a vision of the returning Christ. He writes, "¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and makes war.¹² His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself.¹³ He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.¹⁴ The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen.¹⁵ A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron

rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Discuss: Since God is the Divine Warrior, what actions should Christians be motivated to undertake? (More personally, what actions should you, as a group member, be motivated to take?)

Explain: The people of Israel stood on the cusp of conquest. Their earthly leadership was transitioning from Moses to Joshua. The reminder that God is Warrior should motivate them to move forward with the task of taking the land. Since God is our Warrior, we should all be motivated to move forward in evangelism. On an individual level, we should be motivated to undertake difficult and trying ministries in the church and outside the church. Some of us, even those in middle age, might need to answer the call to full-time vocational ministry or the mission field. God will defeat your enemies. Moreover, God will care for you in difficulties. That is what Moses reveals next.

Reread Deuteronomy 33:3 (See Notes Box)

Here we see that God is their **Decisive Provider**. He has cared for the people in multiple ways throughout their journey. He provisioned them with the financial resources when they “plundered the Egyptians” of their wealth during the Exodus (Ex 12:36). He provided food and water for forty years. He provided so that their clothes did not wear out during the forty years of wandering (Deut 8:4). He provided them with the law that would enable them to be a holy people. Throughout Scripture, God continues to promise provision and protection. In the twenty-third psalm, God is depicted as the Good Shepherd who provides food and water, respite, and protection. In Psalm 34:4-7, we see that God will provide care when we are fearful and downtrodden. Verse 7 reveals that when we are fearful of the world, “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who *fear him*, and rescues them” (emphasis added). In the NT, Jesus promises that the Lord will care for His people. Matthew 6:31-32 encourages us, “³¹ So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.” Instead of tireless seeking and worrying about these things, we are to do as He says in verse 33 and “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” In Matthew 11, Jesus promises respite from the emotional and spiritual toils of this sin-filled world. He says in verses 28-30, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Discuss: Since God is our Decisive Provider, how can we show that we trust Him to care for us?

Notes:

Deut. 33:3
Indeed he loves the people. All your holy ones are in your hand, and they assemble at your feet. Each receives your words.

Explain: The people had to trust the Lord to provide for them in the Land. He had promised to keep up His end of the bargain as they faithfully followed Him. We saw this when we studied Deuteronomy 28. The Lord promises to provide for us as well. We can show that we trust Him, first, by keeping His precepts. Second, we demonstrate our trust through good financial stewardship. Since God is the one who provides everything we have, we should care for and manage our resources well. Third, we show trust by being generous givers. Yes, we are to give to His Kingdom, but are also to be conduits of His care for others by helping them financially when they are in need.

God is the Divine Warrior and the Decisive Provider. He is also the **Distinguished King**.

Reread Deuteronomy 33:5 (See Notes Box)

Jeshurun is a word that means upright, and here it refers to the nation of Israel. (see also Deut. 32:15 and Isaiah 44:2) God had set Israel apart from all the nations and given them the law. Following the law of God would enable them to be upright in all they do. When they accepted the Lord's covenant at Sinai, they not only accepted His law, but they also accepted Him as their Distinguished King. Throughout their early history, Israel was led by godly and God-appointed men. The first of these was Moses, followed by Joshua. Later, the judges and prophets led the people. Each of these, though, was just a spokesperson for the true King of Israel, the LORD God. The nation did not need an earthly king because it had a heavenly one. Later in the book of 1 Samuel, the people ask for an earthly king. The ailing prophet is not inclined to give in to their demands, but the Lord instructs him to do so. The Lord tells the prophet, in 1 Samuel 8:7, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king." He also tells the prophet to warn the people about the "customary rights" (v. 9) of a king. Earthly kings have the right to extract service, labor, property, and taxes from the people. Many times, they also end up oppressing the people they rule (vv. 10-18). The people wanted a fleshly king, and the kings they got often acted in the flesh. Nevertheless, the Lord remained the King of Israel even while they rejected Him and their covenant obligations.

The Lord is still King of all creation. In the NT, we are commanded again to submit to His Kingship. We do so through devotion to the risen and soon returning King Jesus. The word used in the New Testament that alludes to Jesus as King is the Greek word "*kyrios*." When this word is used in the gospels and translated as Lord, it is a sign of respect (see Matt 3:3; 4:7; Mark 12:11; 12:29; Luke 1:9). However, the same word is used in other

Deut. 33:5
So he became King in Jeshurun
when the leaders of the people
gathered with the tribes of Israel.

parts of the New Testament and specifically refers to Jesus as King.¹ Romans 14:9, for example, says, "Christ died and returned to life for this: that he might be Lord [*kyrios*] over both the dead and the living." The passage we looked at before from the Book of Revelation ends with the declaration that Jesus is the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." There, "*kyrios*" is used for Lord, and *basileus*, a word alluding to a sovereign ruler, is used for King. Jesus is both the Lord and King of those who devote themselves to Him and submit to His rule.

Discuss: Since Christ is our Lord and King, what ramifications does this hold for believers?

Explain: In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." When we profess our love for Christ and devote ourselves to Him, we show this by keeping His commands. Jesus goes on in verses 16 and 17 to reveal the coming of the Spirit to help us keep His commandments. These three verses reveal that we have no excuse when we fail to follow the Lord. Firstly, we have submitted to follow Him and do His will. Second, He has given us what we need to do so.

Summarize Transition: In his final words to the people, Moses begins by reminding them of what God has done and who He is. He is their Divine Warrior, Decisive Provider, and Distinguished King. As a result, they should continue to follow and trust Him. In the following verses, which we are going to skip over, Moses blesses each of the tribes individually. He will then conclude with exultant praise for the King of Israel.

2. DWELLING PLACE (DEUT. 33:26-29)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 33:26-29.

Explain: In verses 5-25, Moses blesses each of the tribes individually. The poetic blessing concludes with another general blessing of the entire nation. This stanza is also an exuberant praise of Yahweh God. In verse 26, Moses extols the **Majesty of God**. Moses says that there is none like Him. He is unique. The false gods of the Canaanites are nothing like Him. Moreover, those false gods and those who worship them will suffer when the Lord comes to the aid of Israel. In Psalm 68, David sings of God's majesty.

Read Psalm 68:32-35. (See Notes Box.)

Discuss: What are some ways we can acknowledge the majesty of God?

Explain: We acknowledge the majesty of God when we live like He is in charge. We also worship Him in response to His majestic creation. We can also sing loudly and speak boldly of His acts. That is what Moses does next. In verses 27-28a, He proclaims the **Power of God**. He proclaims that God is their dwelling place. Psalm 91:9 helps us understand what it means to call

Psalm 68:32-35

³² Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; sing praise to the Lord,
Selah

³³ to him who rides in the ancient, highest heavens. Look, he thunders with his powerful voice! ³⁴ Ascribe power to God. His majesty is over Israel; his power is among the clouds. ³⁵ God, you are awe-inspiring in your sanctuaries. The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

¹ Jonathan Lo, "Deity," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

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God our "dwelling place." There, we see that this means God is our refuge. He is the place we run to when we are in trouble. And it is there that we can rest underneath his everlasting arms. Isaiah 40:11 paints a picture of God's care.

Read Isaiah 40:11. (See Notes Box.)

Explain: Not only does God gather His people tenderly into His arms, but He also drives away their enemies with those same arms. He will destroy those who seek to harm His people. Moses continues in verse 28 by extolling the **Provision of God**. Not only does God protect His people, but He also provides for them. Moses says they are secure and "Jacob lives untroubled." Translating that phrase has led to other ways of phrasing this in English. The ESV translates it as, "Jacob lived alone." This is reminiscent of Balaam's words in Numbers 23:9 (See Notes Box). God would drive out the people from the land, and Israel would occupy it alone and therefore be safe there.

Discuss: What are some ways the Lord protects and provides for us?

Explain: The Lord protects us from sin through the work of Christ and the ongoing guidance of the Spirit. He protects us from unwise decisions and broken relationships through His instruction in the Bible. He also protects us supernaturally in times that we do not even realize it.

Summarize and Transition: Moses concludes his song of blessing with an exuberant exclamation of praise to the Lord. Verse 29 is almost like a shout of joy for the uniqueness of Israel and its relationship to the Lord. We can imagine Moses looking back over the past 40 years and marveling at God's care and looking forward to Israel's future with anticipation of God's continued faithfulness.

CONCLUDE

Forrest Fenn's poem that we mentioned at the beginning of the lesson sent thousands of people in search of gold that would give them a secure future. The words of Moses were meant to send millions of Israelites into the future with an appreciation of God as their King, Protector, and Provider.

The Words and work of God can send us out in the world knowing that He will care for us and lead us in our Kingdom work. Let's go out this week confident in Him and ready to accomplish the things He has for us.

Pray and ask the Lord to help group members trust the Lord and follow Him well.

Notes:

Isaiah 40:11

¹¹ He protects his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in the fold of his garment. He gently leads those that are nursing.

Numbers 23:9

⁹ I see them from the top of rocky cliffs, and I watch them from the hills. There is a people living alone; it does not consider itself among the nations.

"The driving out of v. 27 gives way to peaceful and secure occupation of the promised land (v. 28). In isolation (thus Heb. *bādād*; cf. Num 23:9; Ps 4:8; Jer 49:31; Mic 7:14) Israel would live in safety." (NAC, 448)