

DEUTERONOMY 33

D. MOSES' BLESSING ON ISRAEL (33:1-29)

The last words of Moses to Israel recorded in Deuteronomy are in the form of a blessing on each tribe. Moses plays the role of the father of Israel who, before his death, pronounces divine benefactions upon his family. This was the custom in ancient Israel (Gen 27:27-29; 49:1-28).

The chapter is related thematically to both chapters 28 and 32. The blessing theme continues the short blessing section in 28:1-14 and helps counter the extended curses section of that chapter. Chapter 33 also fills out chapter 32. Chapter 32 ended with assertions concerning Israel's final vindication. Chapter 33 illustrates how that vindication will work out through the concrete blessings on the tribes. The chapter ends the book of Deuteronomy on an uplifting and positive note, in contrast to the many warnings Moses had customarily given.

Chapter 33 is poetic, full of metaphors and figures of speech, and constructed with pairs of synonymous parallel lines. It contains several word plays on the names of the tribes. There are similarities to Jacob's blessing on his sons in Genesis 49 and some similarities to Deborah's song in Judges 5. However, the order of the tribes is listed differently from Genesis 49 which lists the sons in order of birth. Deuteronomy 33 seems to list them in geographical order of their territory in Canaan. The list begins with Reuben in the Transjordan, then moves west to Judah and north through Samaria to the tribes in the Galilee area. The listing also seems to be grouped according to the mothers.¹ The tribe of Simeon is absent which seems to reflect a time after it had been absorbed into Judah (Josh 15:26-32,42; 19:1-8).

¹The first three listed are Leah's sons, then Rachel's two sons, then Leah's two last sons. The last four are the sons of the concubines. The slight devi-

The text is difficult to interpret in several places. It has several rare words and some opaque allusions. Some of the problems may be due to its poetic style and early age.

Most scholars date the poem as one of the earliest in the OT. There is a general consensus that it comes from the 12th to 11th centuries B.C. The historical situation the poem reflects seems to fit well into the period of the judges and prior to the rise of the Davidic monarchy. Pre-Davidic evidence includes: no hint of the split after Solomon's death; the Thummim and Urim (see below on v. 8) fell out of use after David; the blessing on Judah, the tribe of David, is modest; Dan had already migrated to the north. These and other factors point to the eleventh or tenth century.²

Moses, as the prophet par excellence, could very well have given predictions about the fortunes of the tribes in the near future. On the other hand, Moses' final words to the tribes could have been updated soon after his death by someone in agreement with his words and with the whole of Deuteronomy.³

1. Introduction (33:1-5)

The poem begins with an introduction that is addressed to all of Israel. It is closely related to the conclusion in verses 26-29. The emphasis in both sections is on the unity of the tribes, and God's protection and provision for the nation as a whole. This puts the

ations from the birth order can be explained by the ordering according to geography (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p. 522).

²Cairns, *Deuteronomy*, p. 294. The tone is of prosperity and optimism. Gad's territorial expansion was complete and Simeon had been absorbed into Judah. F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, MT; Scholars Press, 1975), pp. 97-122, give the most detailed argument for an early date. See also D.N. Freedman, "Who Is Like Thee among the Gods? The Religion of Early Israel," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 315-335. He suggests a 12th to 11th century date for both Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33.

³Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p. 306. However, according to Joel D. Heck there is nothing in the blessing incompatible with the traditional view that it comes from Moses ("A History of Interpretation of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33," *BibSac* 147 [1990]: 16-31).

individual blessings into their proper theological context. Individual blessings are possible on each tribe because each one is part of a larger covenant community.

The introduction and conclusion exhibit an interrelationship that follows a chiasmic order.

- A. The LORD comes to deliver his people: v. 2
- B. The LORD protects and provides for his people: vv. 3-4
- C. God is king over Jeshurun: v. 5
- C'. There is none like the God of Jeshurun: v. 26
- B'. Israel is secure in and blessed by the LORD: vv. 27-28
- A'. Israel is delivered by the LORD: v. 29⁴

The arrangement also includes the mention of three important names in reverse order in the first and second half: LORD, Jacob, Jeshurun and Jeshurun, Jacob, LORD.

33:1 The poem is called a **blessing** although the verb is rare in the text (vv. 11,13,20,24; noun in v. 23). Some of the verses are phrased as wishes or petitions. Nevertheless, the poem is the final benediction of Moses on the tribes of Israel.

Moses was called a **man of God**, a phrase usually reserved for prophets in the OT. Chapter 18 had already considered Moses among the prophets, and Deuteronomy closes with an epitaph on Moses' prophetic status (34:10-12).⁵ The man of God was a holy man to whom one could appeal for assistance, and from whom one expected a word from God. Therefore, the poem is to be understood as a blessing from God, not just Moses.

33:2 God is pictured as coming from the mountains of the south with his heavenly army to protect and provide for his people. The theology of God's appearance is grounded in the giving of the law at Mt. **Sinai**.⁶ There he appeared in all his glory in the clouds, light-

⁴From Duane Christensen, "Two Stanzas of a Hymn in Deuteronomy 33," *Biblica* 65 (1984): 382-389. This close relationship has led some scholars to suggest that the verses were originally an independent hymn into which verses 6-25 were later inserted (Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p. 396; Cairns, *Deuteronomy*, p. 294).

⁵See also Josh 14:6; Ps 90:1; Ezra 3:2; 1 Chr 23:14; 2 Chr 30:16. "Man of God" is mostly used for prophets in the historical books, especially Elijah and Elisha (29 times for the latter).

⁶This is the only appearance of Sinai in Deuteronomy. The usual designation is Horeb.

ning, and thunder (cf. v. 26). From there he led Israel through the wilderness to Canaan. He marched out as the warrior God at the head of the heavenly hosts and led his people in defeat of their enemies. He came as the bright sun, armed in battle gear to save Israel (cf. Ps 80:1-3).⁷ The mighty God of Sinai was also celebrated in Judges (5:4-5), Habakkuk (3:3-6) and the Psalms (68:7-8).

33:3-4 This sovereign Warrior was the same God who had demonstrated that he did **love the people**. Because of that love he gave Israel the **law** so that she might **receive instruction** on how to live in obedience to him. The entire book of Deuteronomy has been an exposition of this theological truth. This concrete revelation of God and his character distinguished him from the other gods and initiated an intimate relationship with Israel. He was much more than a divine warrior riding on the clouds.

33:5 Through his victory at Sinai and his gift of the law, God demonstrated his **kingship** over Israel. This is not a frequent expression for God in the OT but the idea of his rule and dominion is common. It was first celebrated when God won a victory over the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Exod 15:18). Later Balaam, the pagan prophet, acknowledged that God's kingship protected Israel (Num 23:21). Subsequently, Israel celebrated God's reign in her hymns (Ps 97:1; 99:1). God's rule over Israel meant the **tribes** could have confidence in him.

The introduction prepared the way for the main part of the blessing by laying a foundation of assurance that the blessings had power. The conclusion in verses 26-29 celebrates the wonderful security the tribes had in their God/King.

⁷"Seir" and "Mount Paran" are mountains located to the south of Canaan and are in poetic parallel to Sinai. References to them reinforce the imagery of God coming from the south. The NIV footnote reflects the difficulty in understanding the last line in verse 2. Several emendations of the text have been offered. The NRSV reflects a popular solution in its translation: ". . . at his right, a host of his own." This agrees with the LXX that has "messengers [angels] with him." See Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, p. 435, and Patrick D. Miller, Jr., "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33," *HTR* 57 (1964): 240-243.

2. The Blessings on the Tribes (33:6-25)

33:6 Reuben was the oldest son and the first one listed in Genesis 49:3-4. In Genesis the “blessing” was negative because of his sin with Jacob’s concubine (Gen 35:22). The wish here seems to be positive. It is for longevity and increase in numbers. However, **nor** (NIV) could be read as “and” which would bring the thought in line with Genesis 49. Reuben received land in the Transjordan (Deut 3:12-17; Num 32) but was pressured by surrounding nations. Eventually the tribe suffered attrition at the hands of Syria (2 Kgs 10:32-33) and was never a significant part of the nation.⁸

Simeon, the second son, is notably absent. The book of Joshua provides evidence that the tribe was absorbed into Judah early.⁹ Judah and Simeon campaigned together early in the settlement period (Judg 1:3,17). Therefore, the poem seems to reflect the fact that Simeon had little independent status.

33:7 The geographical sequence required **Judah** to be listed next. His territory was west of the Dead Sea and encompassed all the land south of Jerusalem to the Negev. Judah received one of the longest blessings in Genesis 49:8-12. It was totally positive, picturing widespread prosperity. Judah also received the famous scepter promise in Genesis 49:10. The picture in Deuteronomy is of a tribe under attack and a wish for its success. The situation in view is not clear. In Judges 1:1-20 Judah and Simeon took unconquered land by themselves. They then lived under the threat of the Canaanites. On the other hand, in Numbers 2:9 Judah was to march at the head of the army as a vanguard which would have placed the tribe in great danger. The wish could be the hope that they would not become separated from the rest of the army.

The second half of the verse contains a word play between *Yehuda* (Judah) and *yadav* (his hands). This is similar to the word play in Genesis 49:8 where *yoduka* (“praise”; cf. Gen 29:35) and *yadeka* (your hand) occur with *Yehuda*.

33:8-11 The blessing on **Levi** is second only to Joseph in length

⁸The Syrian aggression was under God’s direction during the time of King Jehu (2 Kgs 10:32-33; 842-815 B.C.).

⁹Compare Josh 19:1-8 with 15:26-32,42. All of Simeon’s listed cities end up in Judah’s territory.

(vv. 13-17). Levi had no territory and is placed here after his younger brother, Judah (Gen 29:34-35). The words contrast sharply with Genesis 49:5-7. Jacob cursed Levi and Simeon together because of the violence they did to the Shechemites (Gen 34:25-31) in defense of Dinah, their sister. They both would be scattered and dispersed.

The rallying of the Levites to Moses' side in Exodus 32 is clearly reflected in verse 9. In carrying out Moses' command they made no distinction between family and nonfamily members (v. 27,29). They were the only ones zealous for the **covenant**. The Levite Phinehas emulated that same zeal at Peor in Moab (Num 25). These pious actions were part of the reason the tribe gained ascendancy in God's eyes.

As the priestly tribe, the Levites were entrusted with the **Thummim and Urim**, an early method of discovering God's will (Num 27:21). These objects were kept in the breastplate (ephod) of the high priest (Exod 28:30).¹⁰ They are last mentioned in 1 Samuel 28:6 though the references to the ephod in 1 Samuel 30:7-8 and 2 Samuel 2:1 probably refer to the Thummim and Urim also. How they worked is unclear.¹¹

The reference to **Massah** and **Meribah** (v. 8) is puzzling, for the Levites were not singled out in those episodes nor was Israel tested by God at those times. The events in Exodus 17:1-8 and Numbers 20:1-13 were occasions when Israel tested God. A possible solution to this problem is that Moses and Aaron in this episode were understood to represent the Levites. Psalm 81:7 indicates that part of Israel was tested in the wilderness. Or it could be that the Levites supported Moses on those occasions as they did in Exodus 32, but it was not recorded in the biblical text.¹²

The responsibilities of the Levites were twofold: **teach the law to Israel** and preside at the offerings (v. 10).¹³ These mediatory roles

¹⁰The reference to "the man you favored" could be to the high priest. The NRSV translation "to your loyal one" is more accurate than the NIV. The word is *hasid* which the NIV usually translates as "saint, faithful, godly, devoted, holy."

¹¹The Urim perhaps gave a negative response. It may have come from the root, 'r, "to curse." The Thummim would have given a positive answer. It may be related to the root, *tam*, "to be perfect, complete."

¹²Cairns, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 296-297.

¹³See 31:9-13 and Lev 10:11 for the teaching function. In Deuteronomy

were crucial to the spiritual health of the nation. Passing on the instruction contained in the *torah* was foundational for the future of the covenant people (ch. 6).

The blessing includes a wish for the success of everything the Levites tried to accomplish (v. 11a). Protection against unjust attack was also crucial for the spiritual leaders of the nation (v. 11b). Unlike the other tribes, the Levites had no military component. Yet their history included times of rebellion (Korah against Aaron, Num 16), danger, and attack (Saul and the priests of Nob, 1 Sam 22:6-22).¹⁴

33:12 Benjamin received a tender blessing that contrasts with the picture of Benjamin as a ravenous wolf in Genesis 49:27. The latter probably reflects Benjamin's reputation for bravery and skill in war. Benjaminites were noted left-handed slingers (Judg 20:16), and the tribe produced Ehud (Judg 3:15) and Saul (1 Sam 9:1).¹⁵

Benjamin means "son of the right hand." Jacob personally named him, reversing Rachel's chosen name (Gen 35:18). He was Jacob's favorite after Joseph (Gen 42:4,38; 44:10) and deeply loved. **Beloved** perhaps plays on these associations. Elsewhere Israel was the beloved of the LORD (Isa 5:1; Jer 11:5) or Solomon (as noted in his personal name, Yedidyah, 2 Sam 12:25 [Jedidiah]).

Benjamin's territory was small but occupied an important position. It was a narrow strip of land north of Judah that included Jerusalem (Josh 18:28). Its land provided an important buffer zone for Judah after the division of the nation.

Benjamin's special status was reflected in God's special care. He rested on the back of God (**between his shoulders**). This is a picture of tender protection and security and is equal to holding one close in the bosom.¹⁶ God emulated Jacob's love for Benjamin in his compassion for the tribe.¹⁷

further duties for the Levites included judicial (17:9; 21:5) and medical functions (24:8). See also Deut 10:8-9.

¹⁴Attacks could be verbal as well. Psalm 69 uses language similar to 11b for verbal accusations.

¹⁵The apostle Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin also (Rom 11:1).

¹⁶Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, p. 440. See Num 11:12; Ruth 4:16; 2 Sam 12:3; Isa 40:11.

¹⁷In the Hebrew the subject of the phrase is ambiguous. The NIV supplies "the one the LORD loves." Hebrew has "he." If God is the subject then the reference would perhaps be to God, in the form of his sanctuary, resting

33:13-17 Joseph received the longest blessing as he did in Genesis 49:22-26. The blessing is twofold: fertility and strength. This is very similar to the tone of the blessing in Genesis. Joseph did not receive any territory himself but was represented by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (v. 17b; Josh 14:2-4). Together the two tribes received the largest portion of land of all the tribes. Manasseh settled in part of Gilead, Bashan (Deut 3:13), and the northern half of Samaria. Ephraim occupied the southern half of Samaria (Joshua 16-17). These areas were some of the most fertile in the Transjordan territory and in the Promised Land. However, Ephraim gained ascendancy as Jacob had predicted (Gen 48:19-20), even giving his name to the northern kingdom (Isa 7:2; 9:9; 11:13; Jer 7:15; Ps 60:7, and often in Hosea). Fruitfulness (פְּרִיָּה, *meqed*) dominates the blessing and occurs five times (vv. 13, 14[twice], 15, 16).¹⁸ All of God's creation was a source of blessing for the tribes: heaven, sun, moon, mountains, and earth. The natural world was not divine, or gods, as the ancient cultures thought, but under God's control and a conduit of his grace. The bounty of the land described here is reminiscent of chapter 8.

The blessing of fruitfulness is also a word play on Ephraim's name. The root of his name is *prh*, "to be fruitful" (Gen 41:52). There may be some connection to Joseph's name also, which meant "may he increase" (Gen 30:23).

Him who dwelt in the burning bush (v. 16) is a rare reference to Exodus 3:1-6. The one who was over all nature came to Moses within nature, manifested in the burning bush. Moses met God there and received his commission to lead Israel out of Egypt.¹⁹ At the end of his life Moses still was reflecting on his initial call.

Joseph's preeminence over his brothers (v. 16b) reflects his dream (Gen 35:5-11) and the events in Egypt. The language is taken word for word from Genesis 49:26b. Joseph's power over the

among the hills (shoulders) of Benjamin (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p. 326). It seems best to follow the NIV.

¹⁸The idea is difficult to track in the NIV because of the varied translations of *meqed*: verse 13 – "precious dew"; verse 14 – "best, finest"; verse 15 – "choicest gifts"; verse 16 – "best gifts."

¹⁹Tigay suggests a word play between bush, *seneh*, and the name Manasseh (*Deuteronomy*, p. 328).

nations is expressed by a common metaphor for strength, **the horns of a wild ox** (Num 23:22; Job 39:9-12; Ps 22:21).

33:18-19 Zebulun and Issachar were the sixth and fifth sons of Leah (Gen 30:19-20). The positive blessing here contrasts to the negative one for Issachar in Genesis 49:14-15 where he was pictured as submitting to forced labor. The land of these two tribes in lower Galilee and the Jezreel valley was some of the richest in the northern part of the Promised Land. The reference to **sea** and **sand** in verse 19b and in Genesis 49:13 is puzzling since neither tribe had land near the sea. Perhaps at one time Zebulun had control of territory to the Mediterranean Sea, which Asher later took over. The blessing perhaps indicates that their location gave them control over important trade routes. In that case, they would have had access to seafood, shells, and other products from both the Mediterranean and Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee).

The mountain of verse 19a is unnamed. Mount Tabor was on the border of Issachar and Naphtali, which would make it the logical mountain for the reference. But there is no mention in the OT of Tabor being a place for worship, though Hosea condemned an altar there (Hos 5:1). Perhaps in pretemple times that altar was a legitimate place of worship, and the tribes enjoyed the blessing of leading others in paying respect to God.²⁰

33:20-21 Gad is blessed for his strength and his leadership. In Genesis 49:19 he was celebrated for defending himself against raiders. Gad received some of the good land of Gilead (Num 32:1-5). This gave him a leadership position among the tribes. The tribe played a pivotal role in the conquest of Canaan (Josh 22:1-8) also. There is some evidence that Gad grew in size and importance over the years while Reuben, who had the land to the south, declined. When the Moabite king, Mesha, freed himself from Israelite control in the mid-ninth century B.C. he referred to the Transjordan area as Gad.²¹

When the heads of the people assembled may be a reference to the well that was dug in the Transjordan. When it was done, the people gathered to celebrate it with song and rejoicing (Num 21:16-18).

²⁰There could be a word play between Zebulun and sacrifice, *zbh*.

²¹Moabite Stone, line 10; cf. 2 Kgs 3:4. For a convenient description and translation see D. Winton Thomas, ed., *Documents from Old Testament Times* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), pp. 195-198.

Gad is one of the few tribes to receive a direct blessing. Blessing may be associated with a word play on Gad, for the name means “good fortune” (Gen 30:11).

33:22 The statement on **Dan** is cryptic and quite different from Genesis 49:16-18. In the latter, he is both a leader for justice (a play on his name)²² and a snake by the road that caused terror. **Lion’s cub** is similar to the figure of lion in verse 20 and refers to strength and power. It was used of Judah in Genesis 49:9.

Dan originally received land near the seacoast (Josh 19:40-48) but could not settle there because of the strength of the Amorites (Judg 1:34-35). The tribe eventually migrated to the far north and conquered the city of Laish (Judg 18), renaming it Dan. The geographical pattern for the sequence of the tribes in this poem seems to presuppose that Dan had moved north.

The northern territory of Dan was a fertile, lush area on the border of the nation. It was near the head of the Hulah Valley and its springs provided one of the major sources of the Jordan River. Laish was an ancient, well-fortified site and the Israelites made it one of their important cities. After the division of the nation it became the site of one of the altars and high places for the calves that Jeroboam set up (1 Kgs 12:25-33).²³

The metaphor of the cub **springing out of Bashan** may refer to Dan’s conquest of Laish. Bashan, the modern Golan Heights, rises above Laish/Dan to the east. The people of Dan struck swiftly, as if they had leaped from the hills onto the city.

33:23 Naphtali received one of the most positive blessings of the tribes. He received both the LORD’s **favor and blessing**. The LORD’s favor was a bestowal of protection and prosperity (Ps 106:4-5). In Genesis 49:21, Naphtali was pictured as a fertile doe. These blessings would have been realized as Naphtalites moved into their assigned territory. It included the rich Hulah valley, much of upper Galilee,

²²The verb for “to bring justice” in Hebrew is *din*.

²³Decades of excavations at the site of Dan have uncovered many important artifacts. These include the area of the altar and high place, much of it intact, the extensive ninth century city gate, and a complete eighteenth century B.C. mud brick gate. Today the site is still green and beautiful. The state of Israel has made it into a National Park. See Avraham Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994).

and the west side of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). His territory was adjacent to Zebulun and Issachar to the south and southwest.

This area was later associated with Messianic expectations. Isaiah saw a great light coming from here (Isa 9:1-2[8:23-9:1]). The NT asserts that Jesus was that great light since much of his Galilean ministry was in the tribal areas of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matt 4:12-17). The famous trio of cities where Jesus often ministered, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, were all in Naphtali territory. The Christian can proclaim that the land did indeed experience the great favor of God.

33:24-25 **Asher** was the most **blessed** of the tribes, but his **favor** was from his brother tribes. His name is perhaps related to the word for happy or fortunate (*'ašrāy*) (cf. Gen 30:12-13 and v. 29 below). Both Genesis 49:20 and the blessing here hint at the rich land Asher inherited. It was located in upper Galilee and along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The upper Galilee was noted for its abundant olive trees (**bathe his feet in oil**). The territory was next to Tyre and controlled the coastal highway. Therefore, security would be essential to the tribe's well-being (v. 25).

3. Conclusion (33:26-29)

The poem ends with a blessing on all of Israel (v. 29). This conclusion is closely related to the introduction in verses 1-5 (see above). The cosmic leader and king is also the protector of Israel who enables her to live in safety and security.

33:26 The source of Israel's security was the power of her unique God. **There is no one like him** (cf. v. 29; 32:39; 3:4; 4:35-39). He came to her aid riding **on the clouds**. Mythological language was borrowed here to describe the coming presence of the LORD. It was a typical way to express divine **majesty** and glory.²⁴ The image was appropriate for Palestine that depended on rain coming at the right time for fertility.

33:27 There was no confusion with the Canaanite gods, however, for Israel's God was the only one who was **eternal** (Gen 21:33;

²⁴"Rider of the Clouds" is a common epithet for Babylonian and Canaanite gods, cf. *ANET*, pp. 66, 132, 138.

Hab 1:12; Ps 74:12; Isa 51:9). He was the only one who could carry Israel protectively in his **everlasting arms** as he had done since the Exodus.²⁵

33:28 Consequently, Israel's life in the Promised Land would be **secure** and she would live on the bounty of the land. Joseph's blessing was similar, but the language in verse 28b is almost identical to Isaac's blessing on Jacob (Gen 27:28). The physical blessings for an abundant life were available for the whole nation in the new land.

33:29 The conclusion rings with confidence and joy. **Blessed** is not the *brk* of earlier verses but the *'ašrāy* of Psalm 1:1. "How happy are you, **O Israel**."²⁶ Nothing could surpass the sweet contentment and quiet security of living in God's land under his protection. He was a **shield** to Abraham (Gen 15:1) from the beginning and continued his care. Israel's security was guaranteed by her victory over her enemies.²⁷

Israel faced untold dangers and threats as it prepared to move into the land. Moses had repeatedly admonished the people to trust in God and rely on him to drive out the Canaanites. He had again and again lifted up obedience to the law as the way to live in security in the land. He had often pointed out the blessings that awaited Israel. Here, at the end of his last address to the people, he reiterates the arguments. The providential care and help of the LORD was theirs. Under his protection and leadership they could cross into the land and live under his blessing there. Their future was secure. It was now time to move into that future.²⁸

²⁵Usually, references to God's arm in Deuteronomy are about his powerful ability to rescue Israel from Egypt (4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 26:8; cf. Exod 6:6; 15:16). However, here it refers to God's eternal care and protection. Moses used the phrase in his complaint to God in Num 11:12: Why should he have to carry the nation like an infant in his arms?

²⁶Or, how joyful or contented. The NRSV has "Happy are you."

²⁷The NIV footnote, "tread upon their bodies," is preferred over the translation in the text, "trample down their high places." Victory over enemies in the ancient Near East was commonly portrayed as the victor placing the foot on the back or neck of the victim (Gen 3:15).

²⁸See Miller, *Deuteronomy*, p. 241.