

A BLESSED PEOPLE

Deuteronomy 31:1 – 34:12

Key verse 33:29

"Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will tread on their heights."

Today we are completing our Deuteronomy Bible study. Deuteronomy is the repetition of the laws of God for the next generation. For 40 years God led them through the desert to the border of the promised land. The taking of the land was now imminent. How should the next generation prepare for the conquest of the land? Moses encouraged them to be confident and undaunted against their enemies. He gave them the Book of the Law and his song so that they would remember God's grace. Moses also blessed them: "Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you?" Today we want to know why we are blessed. Quite a few people look at themselves and do not believe that they are blessed. As a result, they become despondent and fearful of the promised land. May God grant us insight for His blessing upon us, so that we may conquer the promised land victoriously in the New Year.

1. Be strong and courageous (31:1 - 32:52)

31,1.2 say, "Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: „i am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.'" During the last 40 years of his life, Moses served his people with all his heart. Now he could no longer go in and out. Mother Sarah Barry served the UBF campus mission without getting married day and night. Dr. Lee served the work of God regardless of his age. They served the people of God until they literally could not go in and out. But they produced countless fruits of faith and spiritual offspring.

Let us read verse 6: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Moses testified to God, who himself goes before the

people and destroys the enemies. Therefore, Moses encouraged the future leader of the next generation, Joshua, and the people to be strong and courageous. They should put aside all fear to drive out the Canaanites, destroy all their gods and take possession of the land. (Genesis 33:52.53)

Many UBF missionaries came from Korea to a foreign country. They preached the gospel on campus and made the students disciples of Jesus. It seemed like an immovable mountain. But they believed that God would not abandon them. So they confidently and courageously challenged the campus mission again and again. There they experienced how God was with them, conquered the campuses through their faith and changed young people into disciples of Jesus. Just as God was with the first generation of UBF, so he is with the next generation. At the last GLEF he revealed his hope to many of them according to Exodus 19:5.6. God is with them and gives them victory against the reign of sin. Therefore, they may confidently and courageously take the promised land, starting from their schools and campuses.

Let us read verse 11: "...when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing." Moses gave the law to the priests of the tribe of Levi and all the elders of Israel. They were to read the Law before the people every seven years in the Jubilee Year, on the Feast of Tabernacles. The children also were to hear and learn the Law, fear God, and keep and do all the words of the Law.

The passage from 31:14 – 32:47 deals with the song of Moses. This song shows 1) who God is and 2) how the Israelites rebelled against this God. Through this song the Israelites can rec-

ognize their wickedness, gain insight and turn back to God. 31:16 says, "...these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them." God already knew that the next generation after Moses' death would fall away from God and turn to other gods. But God was not desperate and did not give up on them. He kept the book of laws and wrote down the song of Moses. This can be summarized in 7 phases:

- 1) God is a rock and their Father. But the people sin against God. (1-6)
- 2) God's guidance for his people. (7-14)
- 3) Arrogance in the time of blessing. They reject their rock and follow foreign gods. (15-18)
- 4) God's anger at Israel's wrongness. (19-27)
- 5) Israel's lack of understanding. (28-33) The Israelites were to find the cause of their misfortune in the fact that they did not trust in God but in the rock of their enemies. But they have lost all understanding.
- 6) At the lowest point, Israel must realize that the LORD alone is God. (34-39)
- 7) Repentance of the people through the mercy of God. (40-43)

In Israel's history we see that these phases occur again and again like a cycle. The low point of the people was the loss of the promised land and the deportation into Babylonian captivity. How can God's people come out of this cycle of sin?

Let us read 32:46.47: "...he said to them, „Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you – they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.“ The next generation would leave God and run after foreign gods. After Moses' death they would break the covenant of God and sin greatly in the promised land. (31:16.20.29) But God did not cut off his hand. God gave them the song of Moses and his law. Moses taught them the song and spoke all the words of the law. God already knew that they would leave him. Nevertheless, God gave them His word through the song of Moses and His law. For God's word was their life. Through God's Word they have the privilege of repentance and long life in the Promised Land.

Horatio Spafford wrote the song "When Peace With God". He lost most of his fortune in the great Chicago fire of 1871. Two years later he lost four daughters when they drowned in a ship collision in the Atlantic Ocean. But Spafford wrote the words, "Though peace be with God in my soul, though storms come from afar, yet my heart of faith always sings, 'I am well, I am well in the Lord.'" This song reminded Spafford to hold on to his faith in God in many storms of life. It continues to encourage many people today to trust in God in every situation. Through the song of Moses, God reminds us that He is our rock, in whom we can always trust. This song reminds us of God's guidance. In the time of blessing we may beware of pride and idolatry. God is the Lord, who heals us and gives us victory over our enemies.

We thank God that he gave us his precious Word from the five books of Moses last year and that he has given us numerous spiritual songs since our childhood. Through this we know that the LORD our God is with us. God encourages us to keep and do all the words of His law. In this New Year, God is giving us life through Bible study, factual study, testimony letters and Daily Bread. Praise God who is always with us with His Word. Therefore, let us confidently and undauntedly take the promised land at the 1700 universities in Europe.

2. Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you? (33:1 – 34:12)

Let's look at 33:6-25. Moses blessed the tribes of Israel. Remarkable is Moses' blessing on the tribe of Levi. Levi's father, Jacob, described Levi and Simeon as cursed murderers who in their anger wiped out innocent men. (Gen 49:5-7) In the course of the Exodus and the 40 years of wandering in the desert, however, the Levites grew up as servants and co-workers of God. During the temptation by the golden calf and by the fornication of the daughters of Moab, the Levites were the only tribe on the side of God. They brought about repentance and a great salvation for the people of Israel. (Exodus 32:26-29; Exodus 25:7-9) Moses blessed the tribe of Levi with the blessing of the ministry. The priests and Levites have always been decisive for the welfare of the people of Israel. The important kings of Israel, David, Josiah, Hezekiah were led by the priests Nathan, Jehoiada on the right path and could be successful kings as long

as they obeyed the instruction of the priest. Through the priest Ezra and his Levites the spiritual rebirth of the people of Israel was effected. Today, God continues to work through the Bible teachers and spiritual leaders and is establishing global spiritual leaders for the next generation.

Let us read verse 29: "Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will tread on their heights." In the NIV it stands for "Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you,..." Moses praises the people of Israel as a blessed and incomparable people of God. Why is Israel such a blessed people?

1) The people of Israel are blessed because they receive their salvation through the Lord. God heard the lamentation of Israel and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Exodus 2:24) God took care of them and came down to rescue them from the hand of Egypt. He called Moses and sent him to Pharaoh to bring Israel out of Egypt. Pharaoh did not let Israel go. But God sent Moses to Pharaoh again and again and proved himself by ten plagues as their almighty Lord and their savior. God struck the Egyptians and saved Israel. Israel received its salvation through God, because God had chosen this smallest people out of His love. (Deut. 7:7.8) In the same way, God, through His mercy, has brought us, who were dead through our sins and transgressions, to life with Christ and given us new life.

I can testify that I am abundantly blessed. I rebelled against God and betrayed Him again and again through my secret double life. But God did not give up on me, but he sent his only Son Jesus Christ. Through him, God has freed me from the dominion of youthful lust and pleasure-seeking. God was always with me until today through his Word, my parents, my shepherd and many other people of God. Through His Word from Genesis 6:5, God has helped me to repent of my heart divided by women and money. God has borne all my infidelities. He does not give up making me a fisher of men according to Luke 5:10b, for which He chose me from my mother's womb.

My friend was hopeless. But God led him to the Word of God from Eph 2:10. God gave him the spiritual desire to study God's Word. His heart

was opened to know the baby Jesus and the power of salvation. That is why God led him to the Christmas theater many years in a row. God is with him and has the wonderful hope to make him a co-worker and servant of God. God wants to heal him from all his unbelief and make him a blessing for his family and friends. I pray that he will be able to accept God's grace personally and join the fight as a blessed people for the conquest of the promised land.

2) The people of Israel are blessed because God, their Lord, is their helper. After the glorious exodus from Egypt, God led Israel through the desert to the Red Sea. Pharaoh chased after them with horses, chariots and all his army. The Israelites were full of fear and grumbled against God. But God was their shield. God let the Israelites go on. God helped them to walk by faith through the Red Sea as over dry land. But God threw the Egyptians into the sea. Despite the grace and guidance of God, the Israelites in the desert kept murmuring against God. But God shielded them by raining bread from heaven (Exodus 16:4) and letting water run out of the rock. (Exodus 17:6) God helped them through the Ten Commandments and legal systems to live in relationship with the living God. God showed so much love and presence to his people. Meanwhile, they sinned against God with the golden calf. But God renewed the covenant with his stubborn people. Despite their disobedience, God chose to live among His people.

God chose Sarah out of His love already from her mother's womb according to Gen 17:15.16 to be a blessing for nations and kings over many nations. God has opened Sarah's spiritual eyes through Bible study, early morning prayer, the Children's Meeting and Young Leaders Evening. God has called her to be the Mother of Faith for Germany and Europe and a medical missionary for Cartagena. By writing the testimonies, God brought her to the insight for her rebellion and her self-will. Through the GLEF, God encouraged her to grow into a global spiritual leader and Bible teacher for many young people. God is a shield for her at baptism and graduation. God helps her to be a Sarah of faith for many nations.

3) The people of Israel are blessed because God fights for them in their struggle against their enemies. When the Israelites first set out from Mount Sinai two years after the exodus

from Egypt, their murmurings against God began again. Moses' brothers and sisters also rebelled against God's sovereignty. The entire people were overwhelmed with fear, complaining in the ears of God and did not want to enter the promised land. But God kept His promise by promising the next generation of Israel to bring them into the promised land. God gave the next generation victory over the Canaanites. (Genesis 21:3) The next generation also spoke and murmured against God. But God raised up the bronze serpent and gave them victory over death. God was the sword of their victory against the kings Sihon and Og. Balak, king of the Moabites, wanted to curse and destroy Israel. But God used Balaam to bless Israel. Finally, God gave Israel victory over the Midianites, who had led Israel to idolatry. Now God wanted to give them the promised land by driving out their enemies before them.

God had mercy on Joyce and led her to Bible study. God delivered her from all murmurings and gave her His Word from Isaiah 43:1.2: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine." It is God's wonderful grace that she has left her old life and started the new life with Ezra 7:10. God has even set her up as a shepherdess for the students, her family and for the India mission in 2018. Now God gives her victory with Psalm 118:17 and uses her as a preacher of the works of God.

Israel is a blessed and incomparable people because God has mercy on them and has not given up on them despite their unbelief and disobedience. God has not lost his hope for them to make them a kingdom of priests and holy people. God carried all their murmuring and led them for 40 years in the desert until they were now faced with the conquest of the promised land. Israel is blessed because God is always with them through His Word. God protects them, he helps them and is their sword in the fight against their enemies.

God came to us in the servant form of Jesus to be with us dirty sinners. God redeemed us from the power of sin and gave us new life. Now we no longer live under the rule of our ego, but God has become our king. We may serve Him by being used as witnesses of Jesus to the ends of the earth. We are a blessed people, because God wants to continue His salvation history through us.

34,7 says, "Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone." Moses gave his life for his people until the end. Yet his body and mind remained healthy until his death. May God bless us to live our mission as shepherds and Bible teachers for the students on campus and as global spiritual leaders to the end.

Let us look at verse 9: "Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the Spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses." After Moses' death, the story of God did not stop, but continued through the next generation under Joshua's leadership. Joshua was very well prepared to be the next leader for the conquest of the promised land because he had served and learned the work of God for 40 years under Moses. We, the co-workers of the next generation, have a much better starting position. Our parents served the work of God through faith alone. There had no previous experiences. But we are a blessed people! We stand on the shoulders of giants because we have received a unique and precious heritage through UBF. We have seen the influential work of God with our eyes and experienced it from our childhood. Because we stand on the shoulders of spiritual giants, we can see even further, as Joshua did, and be used as global spiritual leaders for the development of the 1700 colleges in Europe, for the establishment of three mission bases in the Middle East and for the sending out of 100,000 missionaries by 2041.

Today we have learned that we are a blessed people. God has always been with His people Israel and despite their stubbornness, He gave them the Song of Moses and the Book of the Law. God promised not to leave them when they conquered the promised land. Therefore, they were allowed to be strong and courageous. Israel is blessed because God has had mercy on them and fulfilled his promise to bring them to the good land. We are a blessed people because God is always with us through His Word. With Ezekiel 37:10, God gives us victory in the spiritual battle for the spiritual revival in Germany and Europe.