

Lesson 72

Tonight we're going to do chapter 33, then next week chapter 34. Then the week after that, the last week, we'll do an overview the whole 34 chapters to get the flow of the book. We're in the home stretch now. You've endured for the last 2 years I guess it's been. We're at least within sight of the end here.

(Opening Prayer)

As you can see in the outline we're now in chapter 33, the blessing of Moses on the tribes of Israel. We divide it in 3 sections. Before we get into this blessing thing, I want to make a point that we've made before; but I want to make it again. A chapter like this means nothing if God is not in charge of history. You can read this.

Liberal critics of the Bible will read it and say, "Oh, what pretty poetry and what a nice thought this was and how sweet it is to bless the tribes."

But that's not the point of this passage. The point of this passage is Moses is going to call upon God to give specific blessings to specific tribes. That does not make sense if there's not a God who's sovereign, able to pull it off.

So because of that I want to – on your handout I have a few introductory remarks there. You'll notice that I say when an ancient Near Eastern the suzerain vassal treaty was renewed; the renewal was not put into effect until the new suzerain was installed after the death of the previous suzerain. So here we have Moses passing the baton as it were to Joshua. When they get over the Jordan River they do their preliminary conquest and then in Joshua 8 – I believe that's where it is – we'll have this renewal ceremony. So everything that we're reading now in this last section of Deuteronomy is preliminary; it's in preparation for what's going to happen in the book of Joshua, the starting location there.

I've given you in italics an actual text that shows you how great kings changed administration. It says:

When Esarhaddon King of Syria dies you will set Ashurbanipal the crowned prince upon the royal throne. He will exercise the kingship and the lordship of Assyria over you.

Notice the date. It's 669. Now the date of Deuteronomy and the date of Moses is about 1400 B. C. So you're looking there at a pagan analogue; but it's 7 centuries after the book of Deuteronomy. That also shows you that probably some at least of those treaty protocols derived from biblical contracts, the idea of Israel's witness to the cultures surrounding them.

The difference though and whenever we study the contemporary culture, we always want to set the Bible against the contemporary culture. We want to see where the Bible differs and how it differs. When you do that in the next paragraph with Israel the conditional Mosaic Sinai treaty rested upon

the prior Abrahamic unconditional contract. That is not known in pagan history. That *riv* format remember we dealt with, the last part of that *riv* contract in Deuteronomy 32; there is no analogue to that outside of Israel. That's because of what we're going to talk about again here.

Yahweh was great enough to orchestrate national repentance that would satisfy the ethical spiritual requirements of the Abrahamic promises. Remember the Abrahamic promises can't come into historical effect if Israel doesn't love the Lord. So how is Israel going to come to the point where she meets the ethical spiritual requirements for the blessing? It obviously doesn't happen in the Old Testament because the kingdom didn't come in the Old Testament. So it's yet to come. The idea is that one day God will make a new covenant with Israel and this will change and then Christ will return.

The next sentence reads:

There is nothing like that in the ancient Near Eastern pagan world.

I make a point about "nothing" because we really want to think this through that when people make these hip-shooting comments about, "Oh well, the Bible is like all other religions in the world."

You can't read the Bible and other religions and say something like that. When you hear somebody talking that way, you can conclude that they really haven't read seriously either the Bible or the pagan literature because you can't make that statement when you read. I mean it's available in the library. In fact we have some. We have the Dead Sea Scrolls and every single one of the Dead Sea Scrolls translated in a book downstairs there in the church library. So it's not like this material is hidden somewhere.

What do we do now? As we point out in the handout, this contrast reveals the difference between biblical revelation based thinking and pagan autonomous based thinking. Only the former has access to information about the design of history; the latter doesn't. That's why there's a difference. Thus only biblical revelation based thinking has justification for believing that man can know meaning and purpose in life.

The poor unbeliever is left in a schizophrenic state on one hand denying that a self-revealing Creator has a plan for every aspect of history and therefore having to affirm that all reality is an irrational mystery.

Let's look at the two prongs there. I want to go through this slowly. Then I'm going to demonstrate it with the diagrams.

Unbelief is a form of schizophrenia. The reason why it is - is because you can't live as a non-believer without making opposite assumptions at your most basic level of life. One of these things is you deny that there is a self-revealing creator. I've chosen those words carefully. I'm not just saying that there's a creator. I'm saying there is a self-revealing

Creator. That is a god who speaks and acts in history. That's the Bible point. We don't have just any old God. We have a self-revealing God. It's fundamental to understand this. Notice it's self-revealing. By that what I mean is it is not man discovering God because finite man can't discover an infinite object. It's not man, spiritual people, religious people - spiritual people somehow in some sort of mystical way reaching out and discovering God. The Bible says that the primary driver here is that the Creator is self-revealing meaning He chooses the way, the time and the place to talk. It's not up to us. He is the one who self reveals. If you deny that - if you deny that, now you have a problem.

Let's look first at this diagram that we've seen before. I just want to point out some things again. What I've tried to do in this triangle is show you the relationships between 3 things. You kind of have to keep your eye on the birdie here because there are 3 pieces in this puzzle. One is God; one is man; and one is nature. The question is and why we want to look at this chart - we want to understand the benefits and the powerful truths that we have in the Bible - truths that no non-believer has. A non-believer is living in poverty here and sadly doesn't even know it.

Let's review what we're talking about. We have God. God has created both man and nature. If God has created both man and nature, what does that imply about the reasoning processes in man and the design processes in nature? Well, God knows comprehensively man. Every aspect of man, God knows. He was the creator. God also knows comprehensively nature. So because He's omniscient, because He's the Creator; He knows man and He knows nature. That means that there is a rationality to the way man is made and the way nature is designed. That's why we have this thing in the upper left the issue of consistency in thinking, that rational consistency in our thinking. Why can we have that as a Christian?

You want to watch that now because the two words we want to understand about God's Word. It is sufficient for these things, yes. But, it is also necessary for these things. Something can be sufficient and you might have something else also sufficient; but if I say the Scriptures are necessary, now I am saying something very powerful. I'm saying that the Scriptures are necessary in order to think consistently.

This is greatly offensive and largely misunderstood. So we want to understand that because that's behind passages like Deuteronomy 33 and 32. We should understand this as Christians because we live in a world that is really screwed up. Unregenerate minds don't appreciate and understand this.

The reason why man can know nature is because nature is created in a way that rationally fits the way that man is created. That follows only if God is the creator of both. So we know and we have a confidence in our knowing that we can proceed. Okay, we can be erroneous assumptions and we can be wrong; but at least nature everywhere - there is a design and a plan and a rhyme and reason to it. We have a reason for saying that

because we believe that God created both. That's the basis for rationality on the Bible basis.

Now over here on the right, the upper right, is the correspondence criteria. That's very important. What the correspondence criteria is man's ideas (that is what's going on in our heads) can correspond with factual reality outside our heads. In other words, we're not just dreaming this. We're not just guessing it. Our brains, our idea, our minds are made in order to understand nature around us.

What verse do you think about in Genesis 1 that shows you that that has to be the case? When God speaks to Adam and talks to the Trinity about the creation of man, what do they say that man should do? Subdue and manage! You can't manage an irrational mystery. It presupposes that.

Then in Genesis 2 what does God tell Adam to do? He brings the animals to him for Adam to name. Adam comes to know these animals meaning that the ideas that Adam has in his head fit the kind of creatures that are coming before his face that he sees. So that's what we mean by correspondence.

Now notice something. The way we've thought about this is that the consistency between man and nature is there only because God is the creator. The correspondence between what goes on in man's mind and nature is there only because God is the creator. So what we've established then is rationality and correspondence, the ability to think through, look at nature, and draw conclusions and have empirical thought going on. That all is necessitated or I should reverse it - the Bible is necessary in order to think rationally and in order to perceive nature. So that's that diagram.

Now tonight to show the tension with the pagan environment we're using another diagram. Now here's what happens if you deny the Scripture. When you see that schizophrenic thing - I'm still working that first sentence.

The poor unbeliever is left in a schizophrenic state on one hand denying that a self-revealing Creator has a plan for every aspect of history and therefore affirming that all reality is an irrational mystery.

Now unbelievers will object to that.

"I don't believe that's irrational."

That's true. You may not. But what is your justification for saying it's anything but an irrational mystery? That's the point.

Now let's look at this picture a minute. Here is man, and here is nature. There is no God now. We've eliminated God to try to reproduce the situation every unbeliever faces. This is also on page 2 of the handout. Now up here on the upper left, there's the consistency criteria. There's the need to think rationally. Now we said back on the other chart - we

said when God is there, we have a basis for going along with rationality because we're patterning things after His omniscience; and He is a rational thinker. His rationality is the foundation for our rationality

But when you come over here to the unbeliever, God is missing. So now where is rationality coming from? So we have man and you'll notice what we have outlined here is man is finite. Forget about fallen for a minute. Just think of finite. Man is finite. Man is limited. Over here nature - nature is infinitely complex. It is limited space-time observable. In other words, you can't observe everything about nature because you're finite. So now we've got a tension sets up between man and nature because man is finite and nature is basically infinite. So the problem now is a finite man can't be omniscient. So the non-Christian is placed in a position where in order to say that he knows reality he has to claim omniscience and he knows he can't.

So this is why you'll find people, "Well the more I know, the more probably I know more truly."

But that's an unending argument extended all the way to becoming omniscient. So there's the first problem is man's finiteness in this knowing issue.

Believers don't have a problem with this because God was there before us and He set it all up for us. But if you don't believe in God, man is the one left trying to do this.

Now I've also in the diagram indicated *fallenness* in italics because this is a post fall situation. So man is now plagued with two problems. Before Adam and Eve had one problem. They were finite. Now we have an additional problem - we're fallen. That means we have an agenda to avoid the self-revealing Creator. What does that do? That manifests itself over here in an idea of nature italics. Again I put that in italics, *no intelligent design*.

That no intelligent design is a view of nature necessitated by the fact that I'm a fallen sinner and I don't want to think about the idea that I am accountable to the God who created. So therefore I have to posit that there is no intelligent design because if I don't do that I'm back with my conscience again facing my Creator. So now we have another problem.

Let's go one step further. Now we have the consistency criterion. Are man's thoughts orderly only because of convention or psychological habit? That's the only basis for claiming rationality. You can't claim it by design because by definition you've eliminated design. Over here we have the correspondence criteria. How can man's ideas correspond to reality if over here there's no it has no intelligent structure? See people don't think about this. Our whole secular education never raises the question. Do you what this is? It's the Anderson and Grimm's fairy tails about the emperor has no clothes and nobody says that to him. Everybody is embarrassed to say this. Secular education doesn't raise the question.

None of our education from kindergarten on through graduate school ever raises these questions unless you get a very good philosophy class.

So now we've got a mess. On one hand here are the poor unbelievers trying to argue that he can think in an orderly fashion; but the basis for doing that is just he observes himself and others. It's just a psychological habit.

Over here the problem is how can I bother to know nature if nature isn't knowable? So in this sentence the poor unbeliever is left in a schizophrenic state on one hand denying a self-revealing creator has a plan for every aspect of history and therefore affirming all reality is an irrational mystery. That's what I mean by it. An irrational mystery means it's a concatenation not intelligently put together. It's not like we're saying the unbeliever has to believe that. They're saying it by virtue of denying the creator creature distinction here.

Now this leads to another problem. This is now coming into the fore in postmodern thinking in our own day and age. This has taken since the Enlightenment days, the Enlightenment days of say 1650, 1700. We're now 2000 so we've got 4 or 5 centuries now of the Enlightenment gradually becoming more and more and more self aware that we have a knowing problem. This is why you see everything relative. The unbelieving mind is becoming more conscious of its limitations.

So what happens here is here's man. There is no other mind available. Correct, on an unbelieving basis? Any minds are human minds. The mind looks out at nature and starts trying to describe nature. The problem is not knowing that nature is describable in the first place - doesn't that make human knowledge a vast mirage? That's the sad place we have arrived at in post modernism. That's why when they read a text in literature class you have to understand it's just the rantings and ravings of say in Shakespeare's case a white heterosexual male.

That's what they're doing. They're making everything relative to the mind that said this. Everything comes out of the mind and now we're aware after arguments with Descartes, arguments with Hegel, arguments with all the guys - that now finally we're realizing it's just a mind, what we're saying not necessarily has anything to do with external reality. It's just what we're thinking.

I can show you quotes by mathematicians that are arguing that mathematics is nothing more than putting down on paper what's going on in my head. It doesn't correspond necessarily with reality. There are reasons mathematically why that's so. One reason is that they observe certain kinds of geometry, the Euclidean geometry we all grew up with. Then we discovered non-Euclidean geometry that's self-consistent and different. They have all kinds of problems that are coming together.

My purpose tonight in taking so many minutes in going over this is to make us appreciate and give thanks to our Lord for revealing Himself and

providing this wonderful book, this wonderful compilation of God's Word that solves these kind of big, big problems. There aren't any solutions outside of God's Word.

It's a dark world. When the Bible speaks of a dark world, that's what it means. There's no purpose other than what man creates out of his head. The problem – if it's just what I create out of my head and what you create out of your head that has nothing to do with reality. That is just an autobiographical note.

So when come to Deuteronomy 33 that's why Moses like he did in chapter 32, he starts off that first section verses 1 to 5 and he concentrates on the glory of the King of Israel. It's a praise of God.

Moses was raised as a pagan. Moses was schooled in Egyptian thinking. So when Moses speaks, he speaks with that background. He is so appreciative that in his life God called to him. So he can't help as he blesses here.

By the way the blessing as we'll see in a moment is patterned after a Jewish father. If you want to see the pattern, Genesis 49 is when Jacob does this for all of his sons. He talks to Reuben. He talks to Levi. He talks to Judah. He talks to Joseph. He talks to Benjamin. And he blesses them.

We do not understand by the way, this is a whole other question – we do not understand how these fathers like Jacob these patriarchs how they knew so much about each of their sons that they could almost forecast not just what their son was going to do but their son's progeny was going to do in history. Strange! You see that with Noah and his three sons. He curses Cain.

He says:

^{NKJ} **Genesis 9:25** Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren."

And how he says to Shem that basically he's saying that monotheistic religion will only come from Shem. Think about it. The 3 monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have all come from Shem

And here we have Noah saying that over 25 centuries ahead of time. Now these guys must have some prophetic word from God to have that discernment.

In this text, Deuteronomy 33, Moses is sort of acting as the daddy of the nation. He's going to be doing the blessing; but he does it differently than Jacob. Jacob directly blessed his sons. In this case, these are prayer requests.

Moses is saying, "Let this happens to this son. Let this happen to another son."

But he starts in verse 1 to 5, concentrating on the source of the blessing.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:1** Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

His name is the man of God. That is a title that carries over elsewhere in Scripture. In Psalm 90 if you'll look on your outline, Psalm 90 header for this title *s* is used for Moses. The Psalms in your English Bible after you see Psalm NN (the word) you'll see sometimes a header. Usually the translations have made that header in lower font case. When you read your Bible you'll see that. It says, "This is a psalm of David and so on —"This is dedicated to this," or "This is a psalm that uses musical instruments" and so on. Those headers in Hebrew are the titles of the Psalm. The English translators didn't do that. So what they did is they called Psalm 90, Psalm 89, Psalm 95. The Hebrew doesn't say that. The Hebrew starts out with "boom" - that header.

So here Moses is called the man of God patterned after Psalm 90. Why does he have that title? As you outline has a blank - the header for this used for Moses presumably because of his unique face-to-face encounter with God on Sinai.

That's the unique feature of this man Moses in history. Of all the people in the Old Testament, the only one said to have a face-to-face talk with God is Moses. Even Isaiah in that passage when he sees the throne lifted up; it's lofty, but he's not having the same kind of personal discourse with God that Moses had.

So then it says:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:1** Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

On you outline blank there is the blessing Genesis 49 also delivered in poetic form. See you can tell your Bible tonight. Look at Deuteronomy 33 and you can see it's in poetic form. Genesis 49 is in poetic form. So we have to ask why are these sections of Scripture in poetic form? I don't know. I suggest that maybe the poetic form more easily memorized. That these blessing we treat casually; they were not treated casually by the people who received them. These blessings must have become their mottos for the rest of their life. We think of it as a casual statement of Moses. It's much more saying this is a destiny. It's like if somebody said this to us we'd have it in a plaque over our desk. That would be how important it would be. So maybe the poetic form is more easily memorized. I don't know. That's my guess.

A difference from Jacob's blessing is it's prayerfully requesting rather than a prophetic announcement. Genesis 49 is prophetic announcements; but

here for some reason it's Moses asking God to bless the nation, these national tribes. Maybe that's because he's not really their father so he's not in a position to prophetically bless he just has to ask God to bless them.

Now through verse 5, here is a wonderful depiction of the nature of God. There are some things said here when we pay attention to the details that totally challenge our modern empirical way of observing the cosmos. This description of God refutes empiricism. Let me show you why.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:2** And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand *Came* a fiery law for them.

³ Yes, He loves the people; All His saints are in Your hand; They sit down at Your feet; *Everyone* receives Your words.

⁴ Moses commanded a law for us, A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

⁵ And He was King in Jeshurun, When the leaders of the people were gathered, All the tribes of Israel together.

This is very difficult. Commentators complain about this because there are some textual problems with the Hebrew text. If you've read carefully as I was reading and you were following, you'll see there are pronoun problems. They're shifting between the second and third person going on here. This has been an affliction for years for people who have studied this text. My guess is that it flips from the second to the third person because when a prophet is involved, he on one hand is talking from God to the people (third person) but then he's also talking to God Himself (second person.) This flips back and forth. It makes it very confusing sometimes to read it. But we'll try to get through this.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:2** And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran,

The picture there is the sun rising. He's saying that God came to Sinai. This is of interest. I never saw an artist depict this. Cecil DeMille didn't do this in the Ten Commandments. But apparently physically the Shekinah glory when it came to settle on Sinai didn't erupt like a volcano like some critics say it did. That's not the picture you get here. The picture you get here is that suddenly this appeared in the sky and suddenly came down on the top of Mt. Sinai. It is a picture of God coming to Mt Sinai coming from somewhere else.

Then it says even more interestingly:

And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand *Came* a fiery law for them.

Now this word apparently refers to angels. So there are several things. We want to pause here a moment. If you look at your outline and you look at Deuteronomy 5. Let's go back to Deuteronomy 5 where this event

happened and where a straightforward physical description of what happened is given Here is the empirical observation, Deuteronomy 5:5.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 5:5** "I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.

Then it says in verse 23:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 5:23** " So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.

So clearly even though this must have been done in the daylight; there was a darkness, a peculiar darkness, with fire coming out of that darkness. Something peculiar is going on here. Notice neither in verse 5 or 23 is there said to be anything but a physical fire. However when we come now to chapter 33 all of a sudden we get a different view. Now it's not just fire; but it's 10,000 holy ones. We have this strange thing.

If you look on the outline – we won't have time to go to the verses but Acts 7 Stephen's speech. Stephen affirms that the law came through angels. Galatians 3:19 claims the same thing and so does Hebrews 2:2. So all the New Testament commentary recognizes that this fire is not just a physical fire. What appears empirically to human eyes as fire actually was something else. See this is the problem.

Empirical observation can be deceived. Go to a magic show a magician can deceive you. You can deceive empirical observation. Here is an example of how someone could have taken a video of this and see fire. Yet we are told that it wasn't just fire. There were angels and 10,000's of them that gathered around. This is also seen in Psalm 104:4, Psalm 68:17 where it says He made fire of His angels. Something is oscillating here between the physical fire and spiritual being of angels. How that happens I have no idea.

Next in your outline clearly created physical beings can manifest physically as fire. I suggest in our language an electrical presence such as a corona or aurora. Keep in mind the Hebrew language doesn't have anything for electricity. It can't distinguish that. It just says something bright light like a fire.

Now spirit and fire occur again at Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit comes all of a sudden we have an empirical observation of tongues of fire. So you see this is not some casual poetry in Deuteronomy 33 and we can just trot on and forget about it and never think about it. This is a consistent claim of Scripture. There is something about the cosmos that we do not know. That's why I have this little box. Here is another example of the radical different cosmology of the Bible compared to contemporary naturalist empirically interpreted phenomenon. It also shows

the fallacy of empiricism that the finite mind could correctly interpret empirical phenomenon without divine revelation.

Any unbeliever sitting there would have said, "Fire; I don't see any angels."

Yet all the New Testament says there were angels.

Now it says and this is why the Lord came. You notice in the outline where it says the Lord came.

The Hebrew reads literally, "He rose like the sun to us."

Well the sun rises in the east. So what they saw was the Shekinah glory coming to them out of the east then stopping on Mt. Sinai.

Now here comes a difficult verse.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:3** Yes, He loves the people; All His saints are in Your hand;

See the switch from third person which refers to God? But then "your hand" is God also. So we have the switch from the second to the third personal pronoun.

They sit down at Your feet; *Everyone* receives Your words.

Now the problem is you would think the saints were in your hand would be they sit down at your feet and received your word – that must be Israel. But the previous noun when it was used saints, holy ones is referring to angels.

So what do we do with this one? I suggest what we do with this one is that He loves the people; and it's plural in the original language. Moses is grouping the Israelites together with the angels. So when God is giving the Law, it is as though the angels are involved somehow in transmitting the Law; but they're also themselves learning from the Law. They are observing, and they are receiving the Law. Remember this is the self-revealing Creator that's doing this.

Then of course verse 4:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:4** Moses commanded a law for us, A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

It says, "Moses commanded the law" because he's teaching heritage to the congregation.

Now verse 5 we have another problem.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:5** And He was King

He was king does not refer to Moses. He is king refers to Yahweh. So here you have to be careful what's going on.

in Jeshurun, When the leaders of the people were gathered, All the tribes of Israel together.

Remember we saw Jeshurun as a title for Israel in chapter 32. When I pointed that out, Jeshurun is a word for upright. Apparently it refers to the uprightness of Israel in God's plan, not necessarily how they behave. It is referring to sort of a positional term for Israel.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:5** And He was King

Now that's another thing here. This is important for our theology of the Bible. Here it clearly says God was king. That made the theocracy an early version of the Kingdom of God.

In the box, I have this note. Here is the theology of the Divine Kingship of the theocracy and shows why Israel's request for a human king was such a sin. Remember in 1 Samuel they wanted a human king. This is why that was an affront. That was a major turning point in the nation because it was a rejection of God's kingship and substituting for it a man's kingship. It also explains Old Testament eschatology and looks forward to a time when God again is the actual king over mankind.

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 9:6** ... Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

And then:

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 52:7** ... Are the feet of him who brings good news, ...

So when you see God as king..

If you'll hold your place and turn to the book of Psalms and you flip through the 90's. If you get in the book of Psalms, check out some of the Psalms in the family of 90. Let's look at or example Psalm 93. These are called - scholars refer to these psalms as the Enthronement Psalms. It's not well known how they were rehearsed in Israel. Presumably they would rehearse these as they came to the temple. Why I want you to see Psalm 93 as one example, verse 1; I want you to notice the language used there and I want you to be careful that you don't read into it your own idea of what that means.

Let's look at verse 1.

^{NKJ} **Psalm 93:1** The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.

Now verses like that, if you go to Psalm 94...

^{NKJ} **Psalm 94:1** O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs -- O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!

² Rise up, O Judge of the earth;

All of these psalms are looking forward to God physically becoming the King of the World. This is not some religious thing, not some talking about the church – doing this or church doing that or redeeming the world. This is talking about God manifesting Himself in human history as He did to Israel in the theocracy, speaking theophanically to it.

Look at Psalm 95.

^{NKJ} **Psalm 95:1** Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

² Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

³ For the LORD *is* the great God, And the great King above all gods.

There's that worship center of God as King.

^{NKJ} **Psalm 96:1** Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

³ Declare His glory among the nations,

So all of this is a looking forward. It's an eschatological hope of Israel.

Finally look at Psalm 97. See how it starts.

^{NKJ} **Psalm 97:1** The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice;

So you have to read those things as some Hebrew man and woman would have understood God as King. We would say that coming of course this is the Millennial Kingdom and eventually the eternal state. It's not just talking about religious things that and aren't Church Age.

Back to Deuteronomy 33... So we're finishing up verse 5. This is the end of that praise section, introduction to His blessings.

In the outline Moses again prefaces speech about particular features of Israel with speech about the unique position in history. See, it's just like the New Testament. He starts with their position in history which parallels the structure of many New Testament epistles that speak of our position in Christ prior to discussing specific matters of our behavior. See Paul does that. The principle that I put in the little box there is trusting God for specific directions and enablement to follow those directions requires we first believe those directions and promises indeed are really true. It's not just asking you to do this; it's giving you the

historical manifestation so your faith will rest on something solid. That's why when I teach this I try to show this is not like paganism. This is not like unbelief. Our faith is different. It's got a resting place. It's so encouraging to think that way.

Now verses 6 through 25 we have the blessings. You can see the outline is basically the same. Reuben is in verse 6; then 7 talks about Judah. Verse 8 is talking about Levi. Then in verse 11 he talks about substance; verse 12 Benjamin; 13 Joseph. He goes through these blessings.

Now the fact that Moses is doing this argues that something else is going on here. That's why I put that little box under Roman III – specific blessings of each tribe. Here is a consistent assertion of the Bible that within the human race certain people groups retain certain characteristics from their ancestors. It started with Noah. You could divide the human race even today as derivative of 3 sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth. If you want to see some of the interesting cultural fallout of viewing people in one of those three categories I recommend to you Arthur Custins book *Noah's Three Sons*. I think you can download it from the Internet now. Custins was a Canadian physiologist who was enamored with this. He spent years chasing this down. He points out that wherever you see sons of Japheth, the sons and daughters of Japheth, they have a characteristic in history. They tend to be the organizers. They tend to take what the other sons do and organize it. If you look at the Shemites, the sons of Shem, they're monotheists – either true monotheists or false monotheists. If you look at the sons of Ham, they are the phenomenal inventors. Everywhere Ham goes he invents. All the major inventions of the world have been done not by Japheth, but by Ham. Drilling of teeth was done by the Hamitic Egyptians; gun powder, the Hamitic Chinese; paper, the Hamitic Chinese. Every continent was first settled by the Hamites. Who helped the Puritans survive the first winter? The Hamite American Indians. You see this pattern over and over and over again. It's amazing.

You never see it if you didn't start with the Scriptures and realize, "Gee, you know there is a design to the whole human race."

God has – we all have our strengths and weaknesses. There is no room for racism here. Every race has its role to play in human history. It's a wonderful way of looking at history.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:6** " Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few."

We don't know. We suspect from Genesis 49 and Judges 5 that Reuben and the Reubenites had a tendency for indecisiveness. It seems they had a problem making up their minds. In Judges 5 they couldn't figure out if they should get with holy war or not. So they are threatening themselves.

That's why he says:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:6** " Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few."

Then he moves on to Judah who was the military leader and you can see the blessing of Judah.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:7** And this he said of Judah: "Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people; Let his hands be sufficient for him, And may You be a help against his enemies."

That's the leadership of Judah. Of course, who becomes the son of Judah? David who is a model of the Lord Jesus who genealogically in Matthew and Luke is traced back to Judah.

Then of Levi he said. Here Levi is cursed by Jacob. He redeemed himself later on. He became the custodian of the Temple. Jews who have looked forward to the third temple have made the comment... I don't think it came first from evangelicals. I think it came from Jewish folks that the only tribe with a self identity today is Levi. Every Levite that has the blue gene is a son of Levi. So we have the fact that the Levites and Cohen which is also a famous Jewish name C-O-H-E-N, that's the Hebrew word for priest. Of all the names you see in this blessing only Levi seems to have survived. That may indicate somehow as to how when the temple is rebuilt; they'll know who to call on to become the priests of the temple.

Talking about the Urim and Thummim, the holy one, notice it says in verse 10.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:10** They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.

See they are the priestly function in the nation.

Verse 12 talking about Benjamin.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:12** Of Benjamin he said: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, *Who* shelters him all the day long;

He was beloved by Jacob. He was the youngest boy. It even has a neat expression.

And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

You wonder what that's talking about. I always thought of it as maybe a woman carrying her baby on her back, to dwell between her shoulders. But actually, after studying that it's not that. It's here, in the chest. One commentator pointed out that this is a picture in John 13 of one of the apostles because the gospels narrate in the last Upper Room Discourse – who was it that was so close to Jesus that he leaned on his chest? So

that's what that means in other words. The Benjamites seem to have a precious relationship historically with the Lord.

Here are the blessings of Joseph. He has two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. There is a blessing here on them. They were the ones that had certain areas of land. Apparently right here they are to be blessed.

In verses 18 to 19 you have Zebulon and Issachar. The strange remark there – it's kind of hard to understand it.

It says:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:19** They shall call the peoples to the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas And of treasures hidden in the sand."

...like beach sand. So for some reason these people are going to have some sort of maritime type businesses. See we don't know a lot of history subsequent to this to check this out.

Verses 20 to 21, we have Gad.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:20** And of Gad he said: "Blessed *is* he who enlarges Gad; He dwells as a lion, And tears the arm and the crown of his head.

So Gad is said to be a Trans-Jordanian tribe and he fights fiercely when they have to conquer the land.

Then we have Dan in verse 22. It says:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:22** And of Dan he said: "Dan *is* a lion's whelp; He shall leap from Bashan."

Apparently this says something about aggression.

Verse 23, we have Naphtali.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:23** And of Naphtali he said: "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing of the LORD, Possess the west and the south."

So again it's pointing geographically.

Here it's kind of interesting. Verses 24 and 25 speak of Asher

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:24** And of Asher he said: "Asher *is* most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:25** Your sandals *shall be* iron and bronze; As your days, *so shall* your strength *be*.

Actually the Hebrew says your gates shall be bear. That's why in your notes I put in italics the NET translation of the Bible done by biblical scholars gives you a rough translation from the original. The bars of your gates shall be made of iron and bronze. Then you have... It's talking about the idea of self defense and that they will be able. The tribes seem able to defend themselves in a forthright way.

They are also economically blessed because if you dip your foot in oil you have to have a lot of oil to dip your foot in. So that's an idiom for economic blessing. Notice that we often...verse 25 has a promise that we often claim.

As your days, *so shall* your strength be.

Historically that's what it's saying about Asher that he will have strength throughout his occupation of the land. That's the original thing. We can apply it spiritually.

Now we come to the finale of chapter 33, verses 26 to 29. Right here in the first part we have to look at how to properly understand the Hebrew text and not veer away from the rather fierce truths that are taught here. As I point out in the handout under Roman IV the first verse:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:26** *"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds.*

Again notice the shift. I am talking about the nation as a noun and talking about you as a single second person. But in your outline there is a blank there. Here is religious exclusivism that affirms that there are true and false theologies. I am going to show you one right here. Contrast with a contemporary opinion that are religions are mere subjective opinions of man, neglecting of course that this relativistic claim itself is a subjective thing. But the area to watch in this verse is the second clause and the third clause in verse 26 after it says:

Who rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds.

That is exactly the title we now know since 1948 and 1949 when at Eugarit they discovered these texts. For years and years people poopooed the Bible about Baal.

"Ah that's just the Jews making all that up."

Well, all of a sudden 1948 and 1949 we suddenly discovered there are manuscripts about Baalism and it's up in the Phoenician area exactly where the Bible says it was. This is where Rehab got his wife. She is the daughter of one of the priests up there. Lo and behold we now know what the Baalists were talking about.

Baal who is the false god for agrarian economy was said to be the writer of the clouds. That is a direct counterfeit to this title here earlier of Yahweh. So it shows you once again the pagan mind tries to borrow the idea that somehow behind the weather which was so important to an economic agricultural economy; that somehow there is a purpose and thing in it and they invent this false deity who probably inspired them demonically. So this verse 26 is now understood after discovering the Eugaritic text is now understood to be - Wow here the Bible Moses centuries before Baalism anticipates Baalism and is arguing that there is only one God who rides the heavens to help you. There is no excuse for Ahab and his ilk to buy into the Baalism thing when Deuteronomy 33 already states it.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:27** The eternal God *is your* refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms;

This is a verse we all know.

He will thrust out the enemy from before you, And will say, 'Destroy!'

So here it is anchored back to God's character. Because He is eternal He is not going away. He's not leaving us.

The eternal God *is your* refuge,

By refuge they mean national protection against invasion. All of this was available if Israel would simply believe.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:28** Then Israel shall dwell in safety,.

Of course it ends that there can be perfect security for Israel.

The fountain of Jacob alone, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens shall also drop dew

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:29** Happy are you, O Israel! Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD, The shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, And you shall tread down their high places."

Do you notice something in the poetry? Look at the first line in verse 29 - or the second clause in verse 29 and look at the first clause in verse 26. See the parallelism? Verse 26, first clause:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:26** "*There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,*

Then down in verse 29:

Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD

So there is the uniqueness -the uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of His people. It's very powerful. Then it finally ends:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 33:29** Happy are you, O Israel! Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD, The shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, And you shall tread down their high places."

Again in your notes there is a blank there. Tread down their high places is a reference to religious exclusivism again - that there is one true religion and that's the religion of God's self disclosure. All other religions are going to be eventually eliminated from history. With all due respect to the people and we're not trying to teach bigotry here. We're trying to say there's truth. In the area of religion there are such things as truth and there are such things as falsehoods. That will all ultimately be settled.

So the conclusion then to chapter 33 is here. It provides the only justifiable belief in the ultimate rationality of the universe. It provides the only justifiable basis for true knowledge of reality. It therefore supports strong biblical faith for everyday living in a fallen world headed for a culmination in the separation of good from evil. That is the sum and substance of this blessing chapter.

Next week we are going on to the last chapter in Deuteronomy and that will be short although it has to deal with the kind of mysterious thing that goes on there too.

(Closing prayer)

Okay, we have a few minutes. Are there any questions?

Question

From shine and dawn - that's all orthodox translation there. I've never heard of a translation like that. What is that one? That's interesting. That's a new translation too.

Question

The problem with that translation though is that if He's coming from the holy ones (10,000 holy ones), what do you do with the New Testament commentaries of Stephen and Paul where they're clearly saying that the angels were there with fire. See that's a translation that might be linguistically possible but of all the linguistic possibilities you have to figure, which fits the thought with the text. Sounds like somebody was free and lose with that one.

Question

I'm saying that the logic that he's using is obviously a feature of his mind. The question is - is the external universe logical? He has to assume. Everyone has to assume. In order to believe anything you have to

assume and believe somehow that the description that you have is mirroring or is accurate to the true state of affairs.

Question

They justify it. There are three ways an unbeliever can justify logic. One is to do what Plato did in the early Greeks. That is to argue that somehow our minds are tapping in on the world spirit, the ideal world. Therefore the logic that we have inside our heads really is locked or triggered or somehow connected with the ideals, the good, the just, so forth. So they believe that the logic was a manifestation of somehow the whole ideal world out there – not the material world but somehow the ideal world in back of the material world. That's the a priori approach.

The problem with that is that as centuries have gone on, mathematicians in particular have come up with paradoxes. Zeno and others, the Greeks had paradoxes. So they were troubled with the fact that they started seeing things that challenged their ability to think.

We have a math teacher here in our midst. Irrational numbers were called irrational numbers for a reason. The Greeks hated them – hated them because you've got the irrational number is not 3 over 4. It's not an integer ratio. It is this thing that keeps on going. It doesn't fit. It's not tight. It's not a logical category. So even the Greeks had problems with the a priori approach and finally it broke down in history.

The second way an unbeliever could try it is an a posteriori approach which means that logic is valid because I generalize from my experience. I see it work, so I generalize it and generalize it. The problem with that is that again mathematics have come up with logic constructs that can not be empirically be observed – like transfinite numbers and these kind of weird things that drop out of logic. They're certainly not a result of generalization. So where did those come from?

Then there's the problem of, "Well, I believe that because the basis of my experience because it's always worked."

We're back to the uniformity of nature argument because how do you know the next argument is going to work? Why do you keep on generalizing? So then you get an infinite regress. I generalize because I generalize because I generalize.

Finally, most today – most I think - unbelievers use the conventional approach. Logic works because society agrees to use it. The problem with that approach is that it divorces it from reality.

For those of you who probably are impatient with this discussion, let me say something here. This is a key argument that underlies a lot of stuff that goes on today. I know David runs into this. That is why he is asking those questions – in his work area. For many of us it's not an issue because we don't have to deal with this. This is the foolishness of

unbelief. But with intelligent, well educate unbelievers, they're struggling with this. They really are. They're sort of semi angry about the fact that they have to struggle with this. So often times in the end will do frustrated with the a priori approach, frustrated wit the a posteriori approach, frustrated with the conventional approach; they see the weaknesses of them.

"That's just the way it is."

That's probably the way I'd be – just the way it is. But admitting that I have no reason to justify it, I just say, "I just give up. That's just the way it is."

So this is what happens abandon the authority of the Word of God. This is the hole you keep digging yourself in. It's a sad destiny of unbelief.

Question

They couldn't possibly be the way the Bible says.

Question

In thinking of how I thought as an unbeliever. I think after a while you just get tired. You just get fatigued. These questions tire you out and grind you down.

You finally give up and say, "I don't know." But while you're saying, "I don't know"; you're also saying adamantly saying that the Bible can't be the solution.

This is the deceptive nature of our hearts. This is the fallen nature coming out intellectually.

Question

It's a statement of fatigue. I'm so frustrated that this is what I do.

Question

Absolutely! Romans 1:18 folks – if you don't read it once you need to read it 100 times. That is Paul's mature understanding of the Roman culture of his time. Remember Paul engaged the Roman culture of his time as a very, very well educated man. In Romans 1:18f, he is analyzing the spirit behind an unbelieving culture. And if after you read Romans 1:18 if you want to see how that approach worked in the street; look at Acts 14. Paul applies Romans 1:18 in Acts 14 in the street – just dialoguing in the street, in the market place.

Then in Acts 17 he takes that to a city municipal council meeting in Athens. The irony of Acts 17 is the location of that municipal trial for Paul none other, exactly the place where Socrates years before tried to

defend himself and was later sentenced to death. Socrates becomes a patron saint of Western secularism; and yet here we have Paul centuries later the same problem, the same municipality, the same issue comes up and here you have man of God speaking from the standpoint of the Bible. He refutes what Socrates couldn't do.

I think Luke knows this. Luke was a well-educated man. I smile when I read Acts 17. Luke, you are so perceptive. Of all the places he kept a memory of what Paul said and did, he had to stick it to the Athenians.

What we're facing here folks - this is the result that has to come from a secular non-biblical education. I think of the kids that have engaged as Christians on a campus and engaged the faculty.

She is an outstanding example This last fall semester in her music theory class, she had a professor of contemporary music study - it was a study of the acromatic(?) stuff. It was Stravinsky and the complete chaos in music say compared to J. S. Bach you have this transformation in music.

He comes out to the class and says to the kids, "Well, you can't be an artist and be rational."

She picked right up on that and went up to the professor and in a gracious fashion (not trying to be nasty) but said, "How can you say that all of art is irrational because if you do, we can't talk about it? How do you talk about something that is irrational?"

She was afraid that the professor would down grade her because she couldn't agree with much of the teaching of this course in modern music. She came to me after the semester with that little grin on her face and said, "Guess what!" The professor gave her an outstanding grade and in addition to giving her a good grade wrote a letter of appreciation to her because of all the kids in the class she was the one to stimulate discussion. So there's an encouragement that just because the teacher is an unbeliever - probably frustrated because kids sit there like zombies that they would enjoy a little controversy in the class - if nothing else to wake everybody up.

I hope as we've gone through the book of Deuteronomy you realize - don't read it as just a book. This is a fundamental piece of literature. We haven't even touched by the way on the contribution of this book to political theory in Western civilization. Coming out this year Dr. John Eidsmoe who wrote the earlier book called the *Christian History of the U. S. Constitution*- he actually got David Barton started. He is going to publish if the money is there a 3 volume set. It's not out yet but it's due out in 2012 - a 3 volume source set on the history of the Ten Commandments in Western jurisprudence. He writes as an attorney for Judge Roy Moore who had a debate with the Supreme Court over putting the Ten Commandments in the court. Well they got so frustrated at the ignorance at the judicial level. Judges today are so busy, the dockets are so full. Their education in law school has been so divorced from the Constitution

that the sentences that they are cranking out in these kinds of cases are very unsubstantial. So Eidsmoe spent probably the 8 years researching this whole issue of the work of Deuteronomy and the Ten Commandments as they have impacted jurisprudence.

He told a friend of mine that in searching with virtual search engines through all of the court cases he has found over 1,000 U. S. court cases where the Ten Commandments were explicitly cited by ruling judges. You talk about a precedent. We're talking over 1,000 cases that probably aren't even discussed in law school today. So when his 3-volume set comes out it's going to be very interesting how the judicial community does with this little jewel. But it's straight fact. It's undeniable. This happened. The kind of jurisprudence you see today is flaky. Again it's the result of the breakdown in thinking of the Word of God. We haven't had that for 100 years so we're seeing all this stuff that goes on.

One more question.

Question

But the point you're right. They'll put it down but that starts a discussion. The discussion then ought to proceed on by what standard are you evaluating those cases. What is the standard that you are referring to that those men violated? They should say if they're honest, the evolving social consensus.

Let me give you an example of shrewd thinking. This just came out this week. Senator Rand Paul has pointed to a flaw in the Supreme Court. For years and years Christians have argued that Roe vs. Wade was a wrong decision. Well Rand Paul and some lawyers began to read very thoroughly what the Supreme Court said in the Roe vs. Wade case. What the Supreme Court said is stunning. They left a loophole so big you could drive a Mack truck through it. The Court said in that case that we don't know when life begins. Therefore, in lieu of that knowledge we invent this privacy right of women by some obscure exegesis of a few. But then the Court itself said if it can be shown that life begins at conception, this case falls completely apart.

So Senator Rand Paul is arguing not for a Constitutional change. Don't have to. What he's arguing for is for Congress - and of course there will be a big fight about this - of defining when life begins. If they define that life begins at creation, then the fetus comes under the Fourteenth Amendment. There goes Roe vs. Wade.

Oh, this is a bombshell. Oh yeah, stem cell and all the rest of it - see.

But think folks. What was that diagram you've seen me show maybe 30 or 40 times? The four layer cake... Think about it. The political discussion up here in the top layer of the cake - that's why those discussions after a while are hot air discussions because underneath there is an ethical issue. Below the ethical issue there is this metaphysical issue about the

nature of life. So that's why ironically these fierce debates – I feel sorry for any politician today. This country is split very seriously in basic fundamental values of God and not God. I empathize with anybody running for office. Here you have half of your district this way and half of your district this way. Now what are you supposed to do? But that's the four-layer cake.

That's why in the book of Deuteronomy – remember it got into:

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 6:5** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

I made a point to love God in the details of life. What were the first two chapters devoted to when we got to that second section – Deuteronomy 12 and Deuteronomy 13? What was the topic of the First and Second Commandments? Why do you suppose Moses started there and didn't start in morality issues, thievery issues and the social issues? Because it harks back to the nature of the universe. All else flows from that. Roe Vs. Wade is a beautiful example of the fact that there are two completely different views of cosmology. There is no reconciliation between them. It's too bad, but that's they way it is.

Anyway, next week we'll deal with chapter 34, finish Deuteronomy and then we'll have that one Sunday of overview.