

# Deuteronomy 33:23

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-33/deuteronomy-3323/>

*Moses pronounces blessings on the tribe of Naphtali.*

Moses continues the poem of blessing he pronounced upon Israel that he began in Deuteronomy 33:1. The next tribe on which Moses pronounced blessings was the tribe of *Naphtali* (v. 23). *Naphtali* (“my struggles”) was the second son that Bilhah bore to Jacob. She bore two sons to Jacob: the first Dan, and then *Naphtali* (Genesis 30:1-8).

In his benediction to *Naphtali*, Moses described him as one *satisfied with favor and full of the blessing of the LORD*. God’s favor (Hebrew “rāṣōn”) refers to His good pleasure and acceptance resulting in security and prosperity. God’s *blessing* (Heb. “berēka”) refers to success, prosperity, or material possessions (such as land) which He bestows on someone. Hence, *Naphtali* would receive God’s favor to enjoy many blessings from Him.

Moses further commanded *Naphtali* to *take possession of the sea and the south*. The word translated as sea (Heb. “yām”) probably refers to the Sea of Galilee, which is located on the southern boundary of the territory of *Naphtali*. This likely suggests that *Naphtali* would occupy the territory in the Upper Galilee, a prosperous and fruitful land, according to Joshua 19:32–37.

Perhaps one of the greatest blessings *Naphtali* enjoyed was the fact the Lord Jesus Christ spent a great amount of His time ministering in the tribal areas of *Naphtali* and *Zebulun* (Matthew 4:12–17). According to the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus came, He settled in Capernaum, a small fishing village on the northern shoreline by the Sea of Galilee (see map in Additional Resources ) This region is in ancient tribal lands of *Zebulun* and *Naphtali* among the northern borders of Israel. This fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy in which he saw a great light coming from here to enlighten those walking in darkness (Isaiah 9:1-2).

## **Biblical Text:**

<sup>23</sup> **Of Naphtali he said,  
O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,**

**And full of the blessing of the Lord,  
Take possession of the sea and the south.**