

Deuteronomy 33:26–29

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Moses finished his blessings on each tribe of Israel with a blessing on all of them. Moses also exalted the God of Israel, the Protector and Provider of Israel.

Having pronounced blessings on the Israelite tribes, Moses concluded the poem of blessing that he gave just before his death with a section exalting the Suzerain (Ruler) God, the one from whom all blessings flow. Speaking to Israel directly, Moses told them that *there is none like the God of Jeshurun* (v. 26). As pointed out in the Song of Moses, set forth in Chapter 32, the term *Jeshurun* means “upright one” and is a poetic name for Israel (Deuteronomy 32:15). This line proclaims that their Suzerain (Ruler) God is incomparable. Moses recognized Him as the majestic One who delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness journey to the Promised Land.

This God *rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty*. This imagery was used often in pagan literature to describe the gods of Canaan, especially Baal. Using this imagery with the one true God of Jeshurun serves as a polemic against the pagan gods the Israelites were about to encounter when conquering the Promised Land. Baal cannot help the Canaanites because he does not exist. The God of Israel does exist and will defeat all of Israel’s enemies.

The God who helped Israel was also the *eternal God who is a dwelling place* for His people (v. 27). In Psalm 90, Moses declared that the LORD has been “a dwelling place in all generations” (Psalm 90:1). God was Israel’s true refuge because *His everlasting arms* (a symbol of strength and power) were placed *underneath* to sustain, carry, and to deliver them from their troubles. As they entered the Promised Land, *He drove out the enemy from before them*, telling His people to ‘*Destroy!*’ (Deuteronomy 7:2, 24). The LORD would give the victory as the people killed their enemies, the ones whom God sought to bring judgment upon due to their wickedness (Deuteronomy 9:5).

Because God gives the victory and is a refuge for His people, *Israel dwells in security* (v. 28). The phrase *the fountain of Jacob* probably refers to the

offspring of Jacob—the Israelites. That they were *secluded* illustrates them as very secure because of God's protection. Moses used these two parallel lines to explain the level of security and confidence the people of God would enjoy in Him.

The Israelites would remain unmolested and undisturbed because their God, Yahweh, would destroy all their enemies (such as the Canaanite nations) from before them in the Promised Land, *a land of grain and new wine* in which *God's heavens also drop down dew*. God's people would thus live in a land producing abundant crops (such as wheat and barley) and vineyards because the LORD would provide all of the moisture (dew) necessary. In Israel, dew from the Mediterranean is a source of moisture for much of the pastureland in the hills overlooking the coastal plain. Israel's land would be abundant and fertile because the Suzerain God would water the land.

Because of the presence, protection, and provision of the Suzerain God, Moses could proclaim to the people *Blessed are you, O Israel* (v. 29). They are "blessed" (Heb. "ašreḱā") with a prosperous, peaceful, and happy life in the Promised Land. The Israelites enjoyed a special privilege to be in a covenant relationship with the true God, Yahweh (Exodus 19:8). Israel's obedience to their Suzerain (Ruler) God would cause them to be God's "treasured possession" (Deuteronomy 26:18).

The question, *Who is like you* has the implied answer of "no one." Because of their unique relationship with Yahweh, no other nation could compare to Israel. This unique relationship resulted from being *a people saved* (delivered or rescued) *by the LORD*. As a result, the Israelites were to live as a "holy nation," separated from the uncleanness of the world. They would represent God as a "kingdom of priests" on the earth (Exodus 19:4-6). This would be done not because of Israel's merit, but because of God's unending love for Israel's fathers and His commitment to His words (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

The Israelites were unique because they were in a covenant relationship with an incomparable God, the Divine Warrior who holds all power and dominion. Such an incomparable God would give Israel unparalleled security, defensively because He would be *the shield* of Israel's *help* as He was a *shield* to Abraham (Genesis 15:1). The LORD is a shield to all who fear Him (Psalms 115:11).

God would protect Israel from danger because He was *the sword* of their *majesty*. This phrase means that the LORD's *sword* is *majestic* (or

possibly “exalted” or “glorious”). Such an intimidating God as Israel’s would cause Israel’s enemies to *cringe before* them.

With the divine Warrior-King going before them, Israel’s enemies will have no option but to submit to them in fear, and Israel will *tread upon their high places*. The *high places* can refer both to places of safe havens as well as the places where their pagan gods reside. To *tread* implies domination and control of these enemies. Here, it means that the Israelites would be able to walk triumphantly over the enemy’s territory, as well as their culture based on pagan gods who gave moral covering for their vast and wicked culture of human exploitation (Leviticus 18).

Biblical Text:

**²⁶ There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to your help,
And through the skies in His majesty.**

**²⁷ The eternal God is a dwelling place,
And underneath are the everlasting arms;
And He drove out the enemy from before you,
And said, ‘Destroy!’**

**²⁸ So Israel dwells in security,
The fountain of Jacob secluded,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His heavens also drop down dew.**

**²⁹ Blessed are you, O Israel;
Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord,
Who is the shield of your help
And the sword of your majesty!
So your enemies will cringe before you,
And you will tread upon their high places.**