

The Introduction to Moses' Blessing of the Tribes of Israel

Deuteronomy 33:1–5

Veritas Class

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Introductory Matters

- A. Structure and Design
- B. Comparison with Genesis 49

C. Date and Provenance

- 1. The Date of the Blessings
- 2. The Date of the Compilation

E. Relationship to the Rest of Deuteronomy

F. Conclusions

- 1. The Exordium (Introit) and Coda (closing) seem to have been composed very early as a separate doxological hymn.
- 2. The blessings fragments appear to have been collected later and headings were headed identifying each fragment with a tribe.
- 3. The collection of blessings was inserted into the preexistent hymn, breaking it up into exordium and coda.
- 4. The poetic product was inserted and integrated into the book of Deuteronomy and verse 1 was composed by the final author of the book—if not the Pentateuch.

Exposition: The Exordium/Introit/Opening

¹ This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, pronounced on the Israelites before his death. ²
He said:

YHWH came from Sinai
and dawned upon them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran;
He came from the [place of] myriads of holy ones,
With fire emanating from his right.

³ O you who loves the peoples,
all his holy ones were in your hand.

So they followed in your steps,
receiving direction from you,

⁴ when Moses charged us with the Torah,

as a possession for the assembly of Jacob.

- ⁵ Thus he became king in Jeshurun,
when the heads of the people were gathered,
all the tribes of Israel together.

A. The Heading for the Blessings (v. 1)

1. The Nature of the Blessing
2. The Identity of the “Blesser”
3. The Identity of the “Blessee” (Beneficiary)

B. The Introit/Exordium (vv. 2–5)

1. The Arrival of the Divine King (v. 2)
 - a. His Identity: YHWH
 - b. His Origin:
 - c. His Glory:

How shall we interpret the last two lines of v. 2?

Possibilities:

Line 1

- (1) He came from the [place of] myriads of holy ones (i.e., heaven). (ESV)
- (2) He came from Meribath Kadesh. (NLT)
- (3) And with him myriads of holy ones. (CSB, NIV, NRS)

Line 2

- (1) From his right angels [came] with him.
 - (2) From his right came the fire of his law for him.
 - (3) From his right fire emanated for him.
2. The Introduction of the King and his People (v. 3)
 3. The Introduction of the Torah (v. 4)
 4. The Celebration of YHWH’s Kingship (v. 5)

A Comparison of the Amount of Space Given Each of the Tribes in Genesis 49 (■) and Deuteronomy 33 (■)

