
A final blessing!

Rabbi Alon Meltzer

*A New Page of Talmud –
Vezos Habracha 5783*



This is the blessing with which Moses, God's agent, bade the Israelites farewell before he died. – **Devarim 33:1**¹ After God had shown him the whole Land of Israel before he died, in order that he should be able to pronounce a blessing both over the land and over the people who were going to live in it. Both Moses' plea to see the land by crossing the river Jordan (Deut. 3,25), and God's purpose in granting him this part of his prayer (Numbers 27,12) were intended for this purpose, i.e. for him to bless the people after viewing the Land of Israel would inspire him to do so. Here we have the text of this blessing.– **Seforno on Devarim 33:1**² The baraita continues: And on all the other days of Sukkot, they read

This is the blessing with which Moses blessed...

*וְזָאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה
Devarim 33:1*

selections from the portion of the offerings of Sukkot found in the book of Numbers, chapter 29. On the last Festival day of Sukkot, i.e., the Eighth Day of Assembly, they read the portion of "All the firstborns," starting with the portion of "You shall tithe," since it includes many mitzvot and statutes relating to gifts for the poor, who should be helped during this period of rejoicing, and it concludes with the halakhot governing firstborns (Deuteronomy 14:22–16:17). And they read as the haftara the portion of "And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying" (I Kings 8:54–9:1), which occurred on that day. On the next day, the second day of the Eighth Day of Assembly in the Diaspora, they read the portion of "And

this is the blessing" (Deuteronomy, chapters 33–34) until the end of the Torah, and they read as the haftara "And Solomon stood" (I Kings 8:22–53).– **Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah 31a**³ At Shacharit, we take out three Torah scrolls. From the first, we read from "And this is the blessing" [Deuteronomy 33:1] until the end of the Torah. From the second, we read "In the beginning" [Genesis 1:1] until "that God made" [2:3]. In the third we read "On Shmini Atzeret" [Numbers 29:35]. The haftarah is "And after Moses died" [Joshua 1:1]. In places where they do two days of Yom Tov, they only take two Torah scrolls out on the first day, reading five sections from

Re'eh from the first from "every firstborn" [Deuteronomy 15:1]. If it is Shabbat, they read seven and start at "You should tithe" [14:22]. The maftir reads from the second Torah "On Shmini Atzeret." The haftarah is from Kings, "When Solomon finished..." [Kings I 8:1]. The Torah scrolls are returned. We say Kaddish and then announce [the addition of] "who makes the wind blow and the rain fall."– **Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 668:2**⁴

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