

this practice, at Succoth further sacrifices were offered and water was drawn from the pool of Siloam. Jesus used this in his teaching in John 7:37,38 when he said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water". This section has some excellent illustrations, perhaps the best, in the reviewer's opinion, in the book.

The New Year, called *Rosh ha-Shanah*, was marked by the blowing of *shofars* (ram's horns). Then came the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). These special days are the next to be dealt with in the book. The authors describe the latter quite vividly. The Feast of Hanukkah, mentioned in the Gospel of John as the Feast of the Dedication (10:22,23), is celebrated in December, and the Lord was in the temple at the time. It is a feast set up to remember a miracle at the time of the Maccabean uprising against the Greeks. There is a short piece on the Feast of Purim, the establishment of which we read about in the lovely book of Esther.

Purifications and vows

Finally, a group of purifications and vows are considered, all of which involved ceremonies at the temple, and which impinged on the teaching of the Lord Jesus. The purification from leprosy elicited the following comment from the authors:

"Jesus must have seen many lepers in his lifetime. The first part of the ceremony, with the bird being set free in the open field, could

be performed anywhere. The part which took place after the interval of seven days must have been a regular occurrence in the Temple. The poignant picture of the leper longingly putting his hand into the Temple Court from which he was still barred must have stayed in the mind of Christ, with the knowledge that the bird that was killed and the bird that was set free, both pointed toward himself" (p. 74).

The book has a memorable illustration of a woman suspected of adultery undergoing purification at the Nicanor Gate, reminding us of the woman who was bought before the Lord. The Nazarite vow was observed in the time of the Apostle Paul (Acts 21:23-26), and, as we know from that incident, involved sacrifice offered in the temple.

This is a book worth having for the colour photos and the succinct and informed comments of the authors. All can profit from it. Young and old will find treasures in it, for in our minds we are enabled to stand in the very temple walked in and known so well by our Saviour.

In the mercy of our God we shall see a greater temple even than this in the Kingdom, for does not our God say: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious" (Isa. 60: 13)? This book is warmly commended to the Brotherhood and all who wish to know more of God's purpose through His Son.

Moses' last words to Israel

8. Blessings for Gad and Dan

David Green

GAD

Deuteronomy 33

- v. 20. Blessed is he who enlarges Gad;
He dwells as a lion,
And tears the arm and the crown of his head.
- v. 21. He provided the first part for himself,
Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there.
He came with the heads of the people;
He administered the justice of the LORD,
And His judgments with Israel.*

He who enlarges Gad

ACCORDING to Strong, the Hebrew verb translated "enlarge" here means 'to broaden'. Moses uses it of borders (Ex. 34:24; Deut. 12:20) and territory (19:8). It is also used by David of relief when in distress (Ps. 4:1, AV). In the absolute sense, God is the One Who "enlarges" the territory of Gad. We think of David's prophetic words of praise: "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things!" (72:18).

* Quotations from the NKJV unless stated otherwise.

However, it is the arm of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been charged with carrying out this enlarging, not for Gad only but for all the tribes of Israel. In this work he is 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah' (Rev. 5:5), subduing all Israel's enemies: "He dwells as a lion, and tears the arm and the crown of his head". The arm signifies the power and strength of those enemies, and the head their mind and purpose, which is summarised in the words "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more" (Ps. 83:4).

Following this time of distress there will be relief and an enlarging of borders and territory, for under the guiding hand of Jesus "the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a *lion* among the beasts of the forest, like a *young lion* among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver" (Mic. 5:8).

Most commentators see a more localised fulfilment of Moses' words, "he dwells as a lion", in the past military activities of the Gadites. Not only were they active in helping the other tribes to possess the land of Canaan, but we read of Gadite warriors with "faces . . . like the faces of lions" (1 Chron. 12:8) who came to David when he was in the wilderness before the death of Saul. There is also the record of the defeat of the Hagarites by the two-and-a-half trans-Jordanic tribes (5:18-22). These instances of lionlike behaviour are but a faint foreshadowing of events still future.

It is recorded that, when Zilpah's first son was born, Leah called his name Gad, saying, "A troop comes!" (Gen. 30:11). In Jacob's prophecy about his sons he makes a play upon this meaning of the name Gad: "a troop shall tramp [margin, raid] upon him, but he shall triumph [raid] at last" (49:19). Moses' blessing for Gad homes in on the final triumph over enemies mentioned in Jacob's prophecy, when not only the tribe of Gad but also all the tribes of Israel will be led to victory by "the Lion of the tribe of Judah".

The first part for himself

As with the other blessings, we should look for a future fulfilment for these words of Moses concerning Gad. However, if the "he" and "himself" of verse 21 refer to the tribe of Gad, the blessing appears to contain an echo of the past, for Gad, together with Reuben, had requested

for their inheritance "the first part" of the land conquered by Israel. This consisted of the territories of Sihon, king of the Amorites, whose capital city was Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan. Moses agreed to the request of these two tribes on the proviso that their men of war went over the Jordan with the other tribes and helped them in the conquest of the land of Canaan (Num. 32:1-38).

The NIV translates Deuteronomy 33:21 as follows: "He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled, he carried out the LORD'S righteous will, and His judgments concerning Israel". The Reubenites and Gadites felt that this was "the best land" for their numerous flocks and herds, and, having agreed to Moses' decision, they were faithful in fulfilling their obligations in carrying out "the LORD'S righteous will" regarding the Canaanites (Josh. 22:1-6).

A lawgiver's portion reserved

According to *Strong's Concordance*, the Hebrew word translated "lawgiver" (NIV, "leader") implies the idea of one who enacts laws. If verse 21 refers to Gad, the lawgiver would be Moses, and the reference would be to the portion that was reserved by Moses for the tribe of Gad on the east side of Jordan.

In any future application the promised "lawgiver" must be of the tribe of Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a *lawgiver* from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to him shall be the obedience of the people" (Gen. 49:10); and again: "Judah is My lawgiver" (Ps. 60:7).

Accordingly, the future application of verse 21 must refer to Jesus and those with him, who are called, chosen and faithful (Rev. 17:14). Jesus will come with his saints, "the heads of the people", to administer "the justice of the LORD" to Israel, and indeed to the rest of the world. They will "execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people . . . to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints" (Ps. 149:7,9, AV).

What then is the "lawgiver's portion" "reserved" "for himself"? Does this refer to the "holy district [AV, oblation]" (Ezek. 48:10) offered to the Lord and set apart for the priests and Levites (vv. 11-13), or is it the prince's portion lying to the east and the west of that district (vv. 21,22)? Not all agree with identifying the prince as

Jesus.¹ In all probability the lawgiver's portion is the city of Jerusalem, "the city of the great King" (Mt. 5:35), which lies within the holy oblation (Ezek. 45:6), "For out of Zion shall *go forth the law*, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). This city is named by the prophet Ezekiel, "THE LORD IS THERE" (48:35).

DAN

Deuteronomy 33

v. 22. Dan is a lion's whelp;
He shall leap from Bashan.

A lion's whelp

In his blessing Moses describes Dan as "a lion's whelp". In his last words, Jacob described Judah in the same way: "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up" (Gen. 49:9). Examples of the fulfilment of Jacob's words can be seen in the history of the tribe of Judah, particularly in the wars of David. Similarly, Balaam likens the nation of Israel to a lion in his second prophecy: "Look, a people rises like a lioness, and lifts itself up like a lion; it shall not lie down until it devours the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain" (Num. 23:24). This prophecy would have an initial fulfilment in the conquest of Canaan.

Why do both Jacob and Moses use this figure of a lion's whelp? Other Hebrew words are used for older and stronger lions. The Hebrew word *gur*, translated 'whelp', generally indicates a young lion that has not yet left its mother (*cf.* Ezek. 19:2,3). Perhaps the idea of Divine care and protection is intended by the use of this description. [As discussed earlier](#) when considering verse 20, the analogy of a lion suggests successful military activity, and this is confirmed by the two passages quoted in the previous paragraph.

He shall leap from Bashan

The tribe of Dan was never connected with the land of Bashan. They were allotted an area south of Ephraim and west of Benjamin but later established a territory in the north of the land centred on Leshem (Josh. 19:47). It was the half tribe of Manasseh that was allocated the land of Bashan. In the age to come, Dan will be the northernmost tribe, occupying an area well to the north of Bashan.

It would seem that Bashan is mentioned here only because it was an area where lions were

commonly found. Apparently the region of eastern Bashan has many caves which in earlier times were used by lions for their lairs. "In the regions of Eastern Bashan, which abound with caves, and more especially in the woody western slopes of Jebel Hauran, many lions were harboured which rushed forth from the thickets, and were very dangerous enemies to the herds of Bashan".²

Leaping forth suggests activity with agility and suddenness. Those commentators who look for a past fulfilment in the history of the Danites refer to the surprise attack on Leshem (Leshem) recorded in Judges 18. However, since that episode is connected with idolatry it could hardly be a fulfilment of this blessing bestowed by God. Others suggest that Dan, in his northern territory, couched like a lion of Bashan on the slopes of Hermon, watching for his prey and ready to leap forth.³

The greater and complete fulfilment is yet future and will not take place until the tribe of Dan, together with all the other tribes of Israel, will be turned to their God in truth and righteousness. Then the people of Dan will, like those of Gad ([see above](#)), be part of that army which, led by Jesus Christ, will subdue the enemies of Israel. The conquests of Israel led by Joshua and David in the past are but a prefiguring of the great day to come. Christ's people will be "willing in the day of [his] power" (Ps. 110:3, AV).

The NIV rendering of this passage is: "Your troops will be willing on your day of battle"; and it renders verses 5b and 6: "he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will *judge* nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth". In the context of the blessing for Dan it should be noted that the Hebrew verb translated "judge" in verse 6 is the word from which the name Dan is derived. This connection is clearly made in Jacob's last words: "Dan shall *judge* his people as one of the tribes of Israel" (Gen. 49:16).

[\(To be continued\)](#)

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- Two reasons for not identifying the prince with Jesus are (a) the prince prepares a sin offering for himself (Ezek. 45:22), and (b) he is not allowed to enter through the east gate because the glory of God has entered through that gate (43:4; 44:2,3). On the other hand, Jesus is the manifestation of the glory of God.
 - Keil, quoted in the *SPCK Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. I, *The Pentateuch*, 1907.
 - Page 396, *Sinai and Palestine*, A. P. Stanley, John Murray, London, 1858.