

# Can I Trust God?

*Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will tread on their heights. (Deuteronomy 33:29)*

## The Trustworthiness of God

As Moses prepares to die, he assures the Israelites that they can depend on God. Isaiah says it well: “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal” (Isa. 26:3-4). But the history of Israel is filled with famine, pestilence, pandemics, poverty, war, captivity, and the like. Given the actual history of Israel, how can Moses make such bold statements about God’s providential care? And what about you? \_\_\_\_\_?

## Moses Prepares to Die (32:48-33:29)

- **Deut. 32:48-52. Nebo.** Mt. Nebo, on the Abarim Range in Moab, offers a breathtaking view of much of southern Israel. Because Moses had dishonored God, he was allowed to look over into the land of promise, but he was not allowed to enter it. **Mt. Hor.** Where Aaron died, traditionally associated with Petra. **Meribah.** God had instructed Moses to speak to a rock to produce water; instead, Moses struck it with a rod and implied that he himself was responsible for producing the water (Num. 20:7-13).



The Moses Monument on Mt. Nebo (dmy)

• **33:1-5. Blessing.** Moses blesses Israel as though he is its father, which, in a sense, he is. Blessings in antiquity were taken very seriously (compare Gen. 49:1-27). **Sinai, Seir, Paran.** Mountains associated with Israel’s journey to the promised land. **Holy ones.** Apparently, God gave the Law on Sinai surrounded by His holy army; Paul may have this text in mind

when he writes \_\_\_\_\_. Vv. 3b-5 appear to be the people’s response to Moses’ praise of God. **Jeshurun.** Israel’s nickname, meaning “righteous one.”

- **33:6-25. Reuben.** Few in number, the Reubenites would exist a long time. **Judah.** Evidently an affirmation of God’s help in battle. **Levi.** Blessings in their three roles: making good decisions (Thummim and Urim; 2 stones used like dice to make decisions, see 1 Sam. 14:41), educating the people, and administering worship. **Benjamin.** Skilled warriors blessed for keeping Israel safe. **Joseph.** A long blessing on a favorite son of Jacob pointing to the prosperity of Joseph’s two sons, **Ephraim** and **Manasseh**. Ephraim became the main tribe of the Northern Kingdom. **Zebulun** and **Issachar.** Though spanning the fruitful Jezreel Valley, these tribes are blessed by the sea with enough abundance to hold festivals of gratitude. **Gad.** East of the Jordan, the Gaddites grew grain on the Moabite plateau, while supporting the tribes west of Jordan in battle. **Dan.** Only a lion’s cub, Dan would one day be great; perhaps a reference to Dan’s resettling near Mt. Hermon. **Naphtali.** Blessed to inherit land along the Sea of Galilee. **Asher.** The word “asher” means blessed; Asher’s land was rich in olive groves and contained strong cities.
- **33:26-29. God of Jeshurun.** The blessings of Moses end with a promise that God will ride the heavens to help Israel, serve as Israel’s dwelling place, uphold Israel, destroy Israel’s enemies, give Israel safety and abundance, and serve as Israel’s sword and shield.



Tribes of Israel (www.biblestudy.org)

## Can I Trust God?

1. Rephrase the question: "Can I trust God \_\_\_\_\_?" By simply rephrasing the question, you can discover what you really believe about yourself and about God.
2. Understand why God created you. He did not create you to \_\_\_\_\_; He created you to serve Him (1 Peter 2:9; Col. 1:16). Failure to understand this always leads to disappointment, since disappointment is the space between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (cf., James 4:1-4). So, stop worshiping yourself and start worshiping your God.
3. Count it all joy when you face trials (James 1:2-4). Whatever the source of your trials, God is using them to make you like He is (Prov. 19:21; Rom. 8:28). Trust Him in this.
4. Pray the prayer of Jesus: " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Luke 22:42; cf., Luke 9:23; John 6:38; Rev. 2:26). God's will is sovereign. Join the will of God, rather than asking God to join the will of you (Prov. 19:21; Psalm 33:11; Isa. 46:10-11; Ecc. 12:13). Then let God mold you into *His* image.
5. Ironically, by trusting God to do *His* will in your life, you will actually \_\_\_\_\_ you couldn't find by asking Him to do *your* will in your life. (Prov. 3:5-8; Rom. 8:18; Phil. 4:12-13). Then Deuteronomy 33:26-29 will prove true for you.



*Looking east across the Dead Sea at the mountains of Moab where Moses blessed Israel (dmy)*

### C. S. Lewis and the Problem of Pain

Christian thinker C. S. Lewis speaks of our pain and suffering as, in part, a cleansing God offers us in order to commune with us while preserving His holiness. In this sense, much of what we must go through is actually a sign of God's love, not a sign of disinterest.

"The problem of reconciling human suffering with the existence of a God who loves, is only insoluble so long as we attach a trivial meaning to the word 'love,' and look on things as if man were the centre of them. Man is not the centre. God does not exist for the sake of man. Man does not exist for his own sake. 'Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' We were made not primarily that we may love God (though we were made for that too) but that God may love us, that we may become objects in which the divine love may rest 'well pleased.' To ask that God's love should be content with us as we are is to ask that God should cease to be God: because He is what He is, His love must, in the nature of things, be impeded and repelled by certain stains in our present character, and because He already loves us He must labour to make us lovable."

"What we would here and now call our 'happiness' is not the end God chiefly has in view: but when we are such as He can love without impediment, we shall in fact be happy."

—C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

*Answers: Can you trust God? Galatians 3:19; to do what; serve yourself; expectation and reality; not my will but yours be done; find the happiness*