

May 24, 2020 - Deut. 32:1-43 - Song of Moses
Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 32:1-43 - Song of Moses
Psalm 146-147
Haftarah: Isaiah 1:2-9, 16-27

The Song of Moses

The Hebrew verses are written as poetry, and were meant to be sung like a psalm. The song exhibits striking originality of form; nowhere else in the Old Testament are prophetic thoughts presented in a poetic format on so large a scale.

The Song first describes God's goodness toward Israel. Then it describes how Israel forgot His goodness and rebelled. Finally, it shows God's vengeance on His enemies and final victory.

The amazing thing is that Moses, when confronted with the moment of his death, broke out in song.

To learn this song is the 613th commandment, the last one according to the rabbis. To "write down *for yourselves* this song" (**Deuteronomy 31:19**) means Israel must make it, and the whole Torah, new again in every generation.

The rabbis considered the "Song" (*shirah*) of Moses to refer to the whole Torah, because the Torah has characteristics of poetry. It is allusive rather than explicit. It leaves unsaid more than is said. Secondly, like poetry, it hints at deeper reservoirs of meaning, sometimes by the use of an unusual word or sentence construction. Descriptive prose carries its meaning on the surface. The Torah, like poetry, does not. The silences and "negative space" in the scriptures contain its mysteries. And the Torah speaks to our emotions and soul with the sense of the sublime, as music does.

Jews chant the weekly Torah portions. They do not pray, they "*daven*" or sing the words directed toward heaven. The same prayer may be sung to half-a-dozen different tunes depending on whether it is part of the morning, afternoon or evening service, and whether the day is a weekday, a Sabbath, a festival or one of the High Holy Days.

- https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2308716/jewish/The-Torah-as-G-ds-Song.htm

Deuteronomy 32:1 - "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth."

Earlier he had called on "heaven and earth" as witnesses against Israel. (**Deuteronomy 30:19** and **31:28**)

Again, Why do heaven and earth make good witnesses?

Rashi - "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you" - The Holy One, Blessed

is He, said to Israel, "Look at the heavens which I created to serve you. Have they ever changed their ways? Has the sphere of the sun ever failed to rise from the east to illuminate the entire world, as it is stated, 'The sun rises, and the sun sets' (Ecc. 1:5)? Look at the earth which I created to serve you. Has it ever changed its ways? Have you ever sown [in] it that it did not grow? Or have you ever sown wheat and it yielded barley? Now, they [heaven and earth] were created with neither reward nor loss in mind- for if they are meritorious [by fulfilling their purpose for which I created them], they nevertheless do not receive reward [for this]; and if they sin, they are not punished. And yet [even with this lack of incentive], they have never changed their ways! So you, who will receive reward if you are meritorious and who will be punished if you sin-how much more so [should you fulfill My will]!"- [Sifrei 32:1]

But also,

Rashi - If Israel says, 'We never accepted the covenant,' who will come and refute them?" Therefore, he called upon heaven and earth as witnesses for Israel - witnesses that endure forever. Furthermore, if they [Israel] act meritoriously, the witnesses will come and reward them: "The vine will give its fruit, the earth will yield its produce, and the heavens will give their dew" (Zech. 8:12). And if [Israel] acts sinfully, the hand of the witnesses will be upon them first [to inflict punishment upon them]: "And He will close off the heaven that there will be no rain, and the soil will not give its produce" (Deut. 11:17), and then [the verse continues]: "and you will perish quickly"-through [the attacks of] the nations. — [Sifrei 32:1]

"Heaven and earth" may also refer to the angels and to humans - the inhabitants of both worlds who are invited to hear.

Torah is a Gentle Rain

Deuteronomy 32:2-3 - "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God."

Compare **Hosea 6:3** - "Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

And **Psalms 72:6** - "May he be like rain that falls on freshly cut grass, like spring showers that water the earth."

- **Isaiah 55:10-11** - "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The teaching is equivalent to God Himself. His presence brings genuine refreshment, regeneration and new growth:

- **Acts 3:19** - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when *the times of refreshing* shall come from the presence of the Lord, And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you"

"ascribe ye greatness unto our God" - from this verse the Rabbis derived [the rule] that [the listeners] should respond: "Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom [forever and ever]!" after [every] blessing [recited] in the Temple [instead of "Amen," which is the response outside the Temple]. — [Ta'anith 16b]

When we do this, we come into harmony with the entire universe:

- **Psalm 19:1** - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

God wants his teaching of Torah to, like the rain, search for us and find us, like seeds, hidden "beneath a clod of earth," waiting to sprout. The rain (teaching) combines with the scattered seed and the Holy Spirit to bring us to new life, a new creation.

The Mighty Rock

Deuteronomy 32:4 - "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

The Jewish translation has: "The deeds of the [Mighty] Rock are perfect, for all His ways are just; a faithful God, without injustice He is righteous and upright."

The Hebrew manuscript has a letter in it larger than usual, to denote "Mighty" - the greatness of this Person, and to make it observable; he is "this" or "that rock," a particular rock, by way of eminence, that rock and stone of Israel which was typified by the rock Moses had smitten in the wilderness, and which, no doubt, he knew, as the Apostle Paul did, that it was a type of Christ:

Rabbi Simeon said: "Moses in his Song, first said The rock, perfect is his work, referring to the occasion when water issued from the rock..." (Zohar S'hmot 64b)

- **1 Corinthians 10:4** - "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

- **Daniel 2:34-35** - "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces....and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Deuteronomy 32:5 - "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his

children: they are a perverse and crooked generation."

Hard to translate. Probably like the Jewish translation: "Destruction is not His; it is His children's defect, you crooked and twisted generation."

Deuteronomy 32:6-7 - "Do ye thus requite (pay back) the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

The Targum of Jonathan has: "Read in the books of the law and they will teach you, and in the books of the prophets and they will tell you."

Rashi - reflect upon the years of [other] generations: [i.e.,] the generation of Enosh, whom [God] inundated with the waters of the ocean, and the generation of the Flood, whom [God] washed away. Another explanation is: [If] you have not set your attention to the past, then "reflect upon the years of generations," i.e., to recognize the *future*, that He has the power to bestow good upon you and to give you as an inheritance the days of the Messiah and the world-to-come. — [Sifrei 32:6]

Deuteronomy 32:8-9 - "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

Rashi - "When the Most High gave nations their lot": When the Holy One, Blessed is He, gave those who provoked Him to anger their portion, He flooded them and drowned them [i.e., that was their lot].

"when He separated the sons of man": When [God] scattered the Generation of the Dispersion [which built the tower of Babel], He had the power to remove them from the world [altogether], but He did not do so. Rather, "He set up the boundaries of peoples," [i.e.,] He let them remain in existence and did not destroy them.

"according to the number of the children of Israel": [God let man remain in existence] for the sake of a [small] number of the children of Israel who were destined to descend from the children of Shem, and [the sake of] the number of the seventy souls of the children of Israel who went down to Egypt, He "set up the boundaries of peoples," [i.e.,] He separated man into seventy nations with] seventy languages.

"Because the Lord's portion is His people": And why did God go to all this effort [to save mankind]? "Because the Lord's portion" was hidden within them [i.e., mankind] and was destined to come forth. And who is God's portion? "His people." And who is His people? "Jacob, the lot of His inheritance"

Another interpretation is that the Promised Land was measured out and bounded, as would be sufficient to hold the twelve tribes of Israel, when numerous, and their time

was come to inhabit it; and which, in the mean while was put into the hands of Canaan and his eleven sons to possess; not as their proper inheritance, but as tenants, until the proper heirs existed, and were at an age, and of a sufficient number to inherit.

Deuteronomy 32:10 - "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."

"Found" is interpreted by Targum Onkelos to mean that God "found" sufficiency and supply for them in the wilderness - the manna and water from the rock, clothing and protection from snakes and scorpions, guidance with the pillar of cloud and fire, and He "covered them with clouds of glory."

"as the apple of his eye" - the pupil of His eye. Always under his watch, but also as close to Him as one could possibly be.

On Eagle's Wings

Deuteronomy 32:11-12 - "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."

Rashi - [The eagle] does not impose its [whole] body upon them. It does not enter its nest suddenly. [Rather,] it beats and flaps its wings above its young between one tree and another, between one branch and another, in order that its young should awaken and have the strength to receive it. ...it hovers above them, touching them and yet not quite touching them. So too, is the Holy One, Blessed is He.

"spreading its wings, taking them":

When it [the eagle] comes to move [its fledglings] from place to place, it does not pick them up with its feet, as do other birds. Other birds are afraid of the eagle, which soars very high and flies above them. For this reason, it [the other bird] carries them with its feet because of the eagle [above them]. The eagle, however, is afraid only of an arrow. Therefore, it carries its young on its wings, saying, "It is better that an arrow pierce me, rather than pierce my young." So too, the Holy One, Blessed is He, [says]: "I carried you on eagles' wings" (Exod. 19:4). [I.e.,] when the Egyptians pursued [the children of Israel] and overtook them at the [Red] Sea, they cast arrows and catapulted rocks [at Israel]. Immediately, "The angel of God moved... [behind them... and the pillar of cloud] came between the camp of Egypt [and the camp of Israel]" (Exod. 14:19-20) [for Israel's protection]. — [Mechilta 19:4]

"and there was no strange god with him." - this is why the Song is a witness against Israel. They would remember this song and repent from their idolatry.

The Zohar says this will be in the future, in the days of the King Messiah; when there will be no abominable thing in Israel, the Lord alone shall lead him.

Deuteronomy 32:13-14 - "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he

might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape."

"high places" = *bamah* - any high area, but used to describe the sacred high places where idols, groves and pillars were erected for idolatry. (**Numbers 33:52** - "Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places (*bamah*)."

To "ride on the high places" was to no longer fear or ascribe power to the idols, but to treat those areas like any other. "Ride" denotes victory, control and dominion over.

"oil out of the flinty rock" is similar to "a root out of dry ground" - a miraculous and unexpected growth. Oil represents the Spirit, used in anointing.

"Bashan" was the best are for flocks, its rams were said to be the fattest.

Some saw this bounty as describing Israel in the Promised Land, but they weren't there yet. So others ascribed this to the days of Solomon, or the Times of Messiah.

Spiritually this describes God's gracious supply: nourishment for babes - milk - as well as meat for mature believers; and further, as the true Manna that came down from heaven, the blood and the body of the Lord.

Israel's Sins - Complacency Again Warned Against

Deuteronomy 32:15 - "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

"A fat stomach never breeds fine thoughts." – Saint Jerome

Jeshurun - a special word for Israel, a diminutive term of endearment meaning either "the child of the upright," or "the beloved Israel." The Targums just use "Israel." The Septuagint has "the beloved one."

"kicked" - Only used in **1 Samuel 2:29** : "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and mine offering . . . to make yourselves fat?"

A similar picture is given in **Psalm 41:9** - "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Judas's betrayal was emblematic of Israel's national rejection of Jesus.

It also recalls Jesus' words to Paul "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for

thee to kick against the pricks." (**Acts 9:5**)

"waxen fat" = engorged

Targum "and left the Word of God, who created them" - Jesus is the Word, the Logos, who created everything (**John 1:1**) .

"the Rock of his salvation" - Jesus is the Rock Who was lightly esteemed (Hebrew = "treated like a fool") by the nation of Israel, His own people.

Deuteronomy 32:16 - "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger."

"strange gods" = *zuwr* - strange, another; the word "gods" is not in the text. It means to estrange oneself, specifically to commit adultery.

Idolatry was considered as Israel turning away from her husband Yahweh.

"abominations = *tow`ebah* - Rashi interprets this as "abominable deeds, such as homosexuality and sorcery." The word usually means idolatry or practices related to idolatry.

Deuteronomy 32:17 - "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."

The Jewish translation adds "They sacrificed to demons, which have no power"

It's important to remember that the demons have no power over us, only what we grant them.

"devils" = *shedim* - demons, idols. From a root that means to swell up (with insolence), to devastate. One who does this, i.e. a demon. Demons were considered to be inhabiting idols.

A similar Babylonian word was "*shedu*," 'good' demons who are pictured as the bull-colossi that guarded the entrances to temples.

- **Psalm 106:37** - "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils (*shedim*)"

Paul quotes this:

- **1 Corinthians 10:20** - "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

Israel created their own idols, besides those they borrowed from the pagans.

Deuteronomy 32:18 - "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."

Again the Jewish translation has "Mighty Rock" with a superscription to indicate a great and particular Rock discussed at **verse 4**.

"God that formed thee" = God who brought you out of the womb, who "delivered" you, using deliver as in English to save and also to bring forth from the womb. Israel was delivered from Egypt and became a nation.

- **Psalm 90:2** (a prayer of Moses), "Before the mountains were brought forth, while Thou wast yet in travail with earth and world, and from eternity unto eternity Thou art God!"

They forgot the God who delivered them, and were "unmindful" of the Messiah when He appeared.

Deuteronomy 32:19 - "And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters."

Israel persecuted the prophets God sent to them, and after the crucifixion, provoked and oppressed Christian believers.

Deuteronomy 32:20 - "And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith."

"I will hide my face from them" - See discussion of **Deuteronomy 31:17-18**

"I will see what their end will be" — I will make them and others see what the fruit of such actions will be.

"froward" = *tahpukah* - perverse, fraudulent, deceitful, unyielding; ungovernable; disobedient

Deuteronomy 32:21 - "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

This refers to the Gentiles. Paul quotes this and pairs it with a passage from Isaiah:

- **Romans 10:19** - "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

- **Isaiah 65:1** - "I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation that was not called by My

name."

This all refers to God opening the Gospel to the Gentiles.

- **Matthew 21:43** - "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Judgments on Rebellious Israel

Deuteronomy 32:22 - "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell (*she'owl*), and shall consume the earth (*'erets* - land) with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains."

Rashi - "setting aflame": Jerusalem, which has her foundations set upon the mountains, as Scripture states: "Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains" (Ps. 125:2). - [Sifrei 32: 22]

Deuteronomy 32:24-25 - "They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs."

"burnt with hunger" - Onkelos paraphrases it, "inflated or swelled with famine," which is a phrase Josephus makes use of in describing the famine at the siege of Jerusalem.

In place of "devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction" the Jewish translation has "attacked by demons, excised by Meriri."

Rashi - "attacked by demons": Heb. וְלַחֲמֵי רָשָׁף. Demons fought (לחם) against them, as Scripture states: "and flying creatures (בְּנֵי רָשָׁף) fly upwards" (Job 5:7). These are demons.

"excised by Meriri": Heb. וְקָטַב מְרִירִי, and excision caused by a demon named מְרִירִי. Heb. קָטַב means excision, similar to, "I will decree the grave upon you (קָטַבְךָ)!" (Hos. 13:14) [In Hebrew, the word for decree is גָּזַר, the root of which is גָּזַר, to cut.

"the teeth of beasts" - this was previously predicted:

- **Leviticus 26:22** - "I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate."

The Jerusalem Targum has "the teeth of the four monarchies, which are like to wild beasts, I will send upon them"

"and terror within" - On account of that which they did in the innermost chambers of their houses, as Scripture states, "[Have you seen] what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each one in his paved chambers?" (**Ezekiel 8:12**) - [Sifrei 32:25]

Spiritually, God strips away the confidence of the imaginations of our innermost being where idolatries are formed, replacing it with terror.

Deuteronomy 32:26 - "I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men:"

The Jewish translation has "I said that I would make an end of them, eradicate their remembrance from mankind."

Onkelos rendered this expression in accordance with the explanation of the Baraitha [a talmudic source not included in the canon of the Mishnah], which is taught in Sifrei (32:26). This Baraitha divides the word אֲפַיִם into three separate words, to read: אֲפַיִם אֵי הָאֵל, which has the meaning, "I said in My anger (אֵל) that I would make them as if they were naught," so that those who behold them would say about them, "Where are they אֵי הָאֵל?"

Deuteronomy 32:27 - "Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this."

So, Did God "fear"?

Just as Moses expressed his concern, if God should cut off the people of Israel as one man, that the Egyptians would say He brought them out of Egypt for mischief, or that He was not able to bring them into the land of Canaan (**Exodus 32:12**); so the Lord, speaking after the manner of men, as Aben Ezra observes, anticipates the deceitful assertions of the enemy.

Deuteronomy 32:28 - "For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them."

This refers back to Israel in verse 26, not the adversaries in verse 27 (as some commentators believe).

- **2 Corinthians 3:14-15** - "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart."

Deuteronomy 32:29 - "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

God would prefer that Israel repent and turn back to Him.

Deuteronomy 32:30 - "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?"

Just as Israel's victories would be by divine providence rather than superior skill or numbers, so would be their defeat.

- **Leviticus 26:8** - "And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

- **Isaiah 30:17** - "One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill."

"the Rock" - again, this is designated in the manuscript as "the Mighty Rock"

Deuteronomy 32:31 - "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

An example is the confession of the Egyptians:

- **Exodus 14:25** - "And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians."

Deuteronomy 32:32-33 - "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."

Referenced by Ezekiel referring to Israel:

- **Ezekiel 16:48-49** - "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

... and by Jesus:

- **Matthew 11:23-24** - "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

- **Revelation 14:8** - "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

This wine of gall (which might be pictured in the sour wine offered to Jesus at the cross) is in contrast to the wine representing the blood of Christ in the afikomen.

Deuteronomy 32:34 - "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my

treasures?"

Not just the judgment on Israel's sins, but the time of wrath of God on all His enemies.

Targum of Jerusalem: "is not the cup of the judgment of vengeance mixed and prepared for the ungodly sealed up among my treasures, to the day of the great judgment?"

i.e. it is not seen yet, and by all appearances the wicked seem to prosper. But it is coming.

- **Revelation 14:9-10** - "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:"

Deuteronomy 32:35 - "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste."

Quoted by Paul:

- **Romans 12:19** - "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord."

- **Hebrews 10:30** - "For we know him that hath said, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense*, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people."

A Word of Hope

Deuteronomy 32:36 - "For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left."

"For" = Nevertheless...

"repent himself" = have compassion on

God will plead the cause of His faithful, repentant servants, and protect and deliver them. After God had sorely chastised them, he would have mercy upon them and turn their captivity.

Targum of Jonathan: "The Word of the Lord shall judge his people in mercy" and have compassion upon his servants.

"none shut up, or left" - none will be left out or forgotten, "every one, men of all sorts"

Mocking the Idols

Deuteronomy 32:37-38 - "And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection."

Calvin - Moses "leaves the decision to the unbelievers... because he knew that they must be convinced by experience."

"I AM"

Deuteronomy 32:39 - "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

The Targum of Jonathan prefaces this verse with, "When the Word of the Lord shall reveal himself to redeem his people, he will say to all people, see now..."

The Hebrew is "See now that I, I am"

- **Exodus 3:14** - "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

- **John 8:58** - "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

- **Revelation 1:8** - "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and was and is to come--the Almighty.

This was repeated by Hannah in her song, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive" (**1Samuel 2:6**).

Compare also **Isaiah 43:13**, "Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand."

The Targum of Jerusalem says, "I am he that kills the living in this world, and quickens the dead in the world to come."

The Concluding Oath

Deuteronomy 32:40 - "For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me."

This is a form of taking an oath, lifting the hand and swearing that "as I live forever" I will render vengeance on My enemies.

A "glittering sword" is a sword drawn out of the scabbard, cleaned and polished, whetted and made sharp. This sword is a sword of justice, and reappears as the sharp sword said to proceed out of the mouth of Christ, the judiciary sentence which he will pronounce and execute on antichrist, and all his followers:

- **Revelation 19:15** - "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Deuteronomy 32:42 - "I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges on the enemy."

Paul says we participate in crushing the head of Satan:

- **Romans 16:20** - "But the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

We do this by revenging the disobedience within ourselves, and speaking the Gospel in our world.

- **2 Corinthians 10:5-6** - "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

Deuteronomy 32:43 - "Rejoice, O you nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land, and to his people."

The Song closes as it began at **Deuteronomy 32:1-3**, with an invitation to praise.

The Septuagint adds the phrase "let all the angels of God worship Him" (quoted in **Hebrews 1:7**).

Paul quotes the first line:

- **Romans 15:10** - "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, 'For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.'"

(Some Jewish interpreters wrongly render it, "Praise his people, O nations")

"and will be merciful to his land, and to his people."

"merciful" = *kaphar* - to make atonement for, cover, pardon, propitiate, obliterate (i.e. the sin or the charge against someone)

A Framework for Other Prophetic Statements in Scripture

Besides the confirmation and reiteration by the Old Testament prophets, some have also found a correlation between the judgments described here in the Song of Moses, the prophecies of the end times by Jesus in **Matthew 24** and the seven seals of **Revelation 6-8**.

[For an example, see <https://revelationscriptures.com/7-seals-matthew-24-song-moses-sung-deuteronomy-32-re-sung-revelation-153-god-tells-us-3-times/>]

Summary

With the Song of Moses, God "introduces the cure before the disease" as a rabbinical saying goes (הקדים רפואה למכה; b. Megillah 13b).

Because God understands our human nature, He is prepared for our failures and is preparing a way of reconciliation.

- **Psalm 103:12-14** - "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame (*yetzer* - inclination); he remembereth that we are dust."

One commentator says the message of the Song of Moses is that we're going to fail and forget our true identity, but "losing God and finding Him again is part of what it means to be a Jew." This is because REPENTANCE is the kernel at the heart of faith. Opening ourselves to God's forgiveness is the opposite of steeling ourselves against failure and living a tightly bound-up existence that fears taking a risk.

- <https://www.chicagojewishnews.com/2017/09/song-of-torah-passing-down-teachings-to-the-next-generation/>

Joy is the fruit of fully absorbing the Song of Moses into our inner being.