

# Deuteronomy 32 Commentary

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**Moses on Mt Nebo** (Deuteronomy 34:1+)

Listen to **Mt Nebo** as you Ponder How Moses' **May Have Felt**

Deuteronomy by **Irving Jensen**- used by permission

deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## Deuteronomy

<b>Dt 1:1-4:43</b>	<b>Dt 4:44-26:19</b>				<b>Dt 27:1-34:12</b>		
<b>Moses' First Discourse</b>	<b>Moses' Second Discourse</b>				<b>Moses' Third Discourse</b>		
<b>Historical Review</b>	<b>Legal Exposition</b>				<b>Prophetical Promises</b>		
<b>Looking Back</b> 40 Years	<b>Looking Up</b> What God Expected of Israel				<b>Looking Ahead</b> What God Will Do for Israel		
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant		Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1-30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
<b>Plains of Moab</b>							
<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

**Deuteronomy 32:1 "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.**

- De 4:26 30:19 31:28 Ps 49:1 Isa 1:2 Jer 2:12 Jer 6:19 Jer 22:29
- Deuteronomy 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Isaiah 1:2+ Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.

Jeremiah 2:12 "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 6:19 "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, The fruit of their plans, Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My law, they have rejected it also.

Jeremiah 22:29 "O land, land, land, Hear the word of the LORD!

Job 20:27 "The heavens will reveal his iniquity, And the earth will rise up against him.

## THE SONG OF MOSES

### Here is an outline of the Song of Moses - Note

- Israel's creation and Yahweh's gracious treatment (Dt 32:1-14, vv5-6 are perjorative toward Israel)
- Israel's unfaithfulness and spurning of Yahweh (Dt 32:15-19)
- Yahweh's judgment decreed (Dt 32:20-35)
- Yahweh's promise of victory over all adversaries of Israel (Dt 32:36-43)

Notice that the longest section in the Song is the discourse on Yahweh's punishment of His chosen people. Surely they must have cringed as they heard these prophetic pronouncements! And yet as a nation they stubbornly refused to heed these warnings of divine wrath! Israel was like the majority of mankind today who steadfastly ignore and even scoff at God's clear, repeated warnings of eternal punishment for every soul of man who refuses to believe in Jesus as their Source of eternal life.

The **Song of Moses** is a song of God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness. It was shocking song of warning, designed to get the attention of those whose tendency was to forget God, which is exactly what happen. If they ever sang it, it clearly did not sink into their heart, but was proverbially "[in one ear and out the other.](#)"

**John Maxwell** - One of the best ways to memorize something is to put it to music. My daughter Elizabeth was having some difficulty remembering the multiplication tables until her teacher taught her to sing them. Immediately there was a positive change in Elizabeth's grasp of numbers. This song has the following characteristics: (1) It has an abundance of pictures, metaphors, and poetic expressions that show the feelings of God; (2) it is a witness against a disobedient nation that has been blessed far above all other nations on earth; and (3) the song is a prophetic anticipation of future judgment. This poetic composition offers a graphic contrast between the nature of God and the nature of His people. He is "the Rock" (Dt 32:4, 18, 30, 31). They are on the "rocks" (Dt 32:37).([Preacher's Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - Israel had sung the "Song of Moses" at the Red Sea (Ex. 15), celebrating their victory and God's power; but this new song laments Israel's apostasy and God's chastening of His own people. In 31:19-30, God made it clear that the song was to be a witness to remind them of their sins. ([Expository Outlines of the Old Testament](#))

**Steven Cole** - God wanted Israel to remember and sing Deuteronomy 32 down through their generations, but it may have been a song that Israel wished they could forget. You've had songs that get into your head and you can't get them out until they just about drive you crazy! We don't know the tune of Moses' song, but God wanted it to stay in the Israelites' heads forever. Someday we'll hear this song, because in Revelation 15, John saw the saints in heaven singing the song of Moses, praising God for His greatness, righteousness, truth, and holiness. It teaches us: To avoid turning away from the Lord, we should remember and sing songs that tell us who God is and who we are so that we appreciate what He has done for us in Christ....God gave Moses this song to teach Israel

**Who He is** and to **warn them of the consequences if they turned away from Him.** ....That's the intent of this song. One way to heed the warning of future apostasy is to sing spiritually edifying songs as we gather each week. ([Sermon](#))

**There are four Songs of Moses in the Bible** - Exodus 15:1-21, Deuteronomy 32:1-43, Psalm 90:1-17 and the fourth written by John the apostle in Revelation 15:3-4 - First a song of victory, second song of apostasy, third a song of remembrance and fourth a song of the final victory.

Revelation 15:3-4+ And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! 4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

- [Paul Wilbur's The Song of Moses](#)
- [Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir's Song of Moses](#)

**Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth**- Moses calls to the "witness stand" two unchanging witnesses heaven and earth (all creation) to underscore the importance of what he is about to say, for it will include

solemn warnings which they would probably not like to hear!

Deuteronomy 4:39+ “Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

Deuteronomy 30:19+ “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

**Matthew Henry** - Heaven and earth will be witnesses against sinners, witnesses of the warning given them and of their refusal to take the warning (see Job 20:27); the heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. Or heaven and earth are here put for the inhabitants of both, angels and men; both shall agree to justify God in his proceedings against Israel, and to declare his righteousness, Ps. 50:6; see Rev. 19:1, 2.

**Spurgeon** - Because men are so slow of hearing, Moses calls on the heavens and the earth to bear witness against them; and because of the sublimity of his subject, he calls upon the heavens and the earth to pay attention to it.

**Wiersbe** - God gave Moses this song to teach the people so that they would learn to love and obey Him (Dt. 31:19–30). Our songs today should follow this pattern by revealing the greatness and goodness of the Lord and thus encouraging us to live for Him (v. 3). The key image for God is “the Rock.” It speaks of His stability in a changing world and His dependability in a demanding world (v. 4). The Rock is our Savior (v. 15), Father (v. 18), and Deliverer (vv. 30–31). He is all that we need. Israel is compared to young eagles that must leave the nest and learn how to fly (vv. 11–12). But Israel is also God’s treasure, and He will protect His people (vv. 34–35). Moses reminded them not to forget their beginning (v. 18) or ignore their “latter end” (v. 29). Moses compared God’s Word to the rain and the dew (v. 2), which come down from heaven and bring life and refreshment to the earth. Much sharing of the Word may seem to be a waste, but the Word accomplishes God’s purposes whether we see it or not (Isa. 55:10–11). Much of this song is a warning to the people that they were prone to forget what God did for them and to turn from God to idols. We do not know how often they sang this song, but **we do know that they did not take it to heart.** Do God’s people today pay attention to what they are singing? ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

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#### **James Smith - THE SONG OF THE ROCK; OR, WHAT CHRIST IS TO HIS PEOPLE Deuteronomy 32**

There are two rocks mentioned here. One represents the gods of the heathen, or the false foundations on which sin-blinded men build their vain hopes (v. 37). The other speaks of Christ as our strong, unchanging Saviour. So “that their rock is not as our Rock” (v. 31). “Their rock sold them” (v. 30). “Our Rock saves us” (v. 15). Christ, our Rock, is here represented as the—

I. Giver of Life. “The Rock begat thee” (v. 18). With other religions it is only a being converted to a system. With the Christian it is a being born of God (1 John 5:1). Nothing less will suffice (John 3:3). HE must quicken (Eph. 2:1)

II. Saviour of Men. “The Rock of his salvation” (v. 15). Christ’s Name, works, death, resurrection, all proclaim Him a Saviour, and that to the exclusion of every one and everything else (Acts 4:12). Those who build without this Rock will be confounded (Luke 6:48, 49). Their rock is only the treacherous sands of their own imaginations.

III. Source of Supply. “He made him suck honey and oil from the Rock” (v. 13). The honey and the oil may speak of sweetness and refreshing, of strength and anointing, or of the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost. See the connection between Christ’s death and the gift of the Spirit in Galatians 3:13, 14; 4:4–6.

IV. Perfect Worker. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect” (v. 4). What He begins He finishes (Phil. 1:6). The believer’s wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption begun in Christ are perfected in Him (Col. 2:10; Eccles. 3:4). The work He had perfected for us, He wishes to perfect in us (Phil. 2:13).

V. Incomparable Master. “Their rock is not as our Rock” (v. 31). The rocks of the ungodly fail them in the day of trial (v. 30; 1 Kings 18:26). Ye serve the Lord Christ, the chiefest among ten thousand. He will never forsake you (Heb. 13:5, 6). Our Rock is immutable, all the storms of earth and time cannot move it, nor will all the ages of a coming eternity change it. A young woman lay a-dying whose father was an infidel, but whose mother was a Christian. “Now that I am dying,” said the girl to her father, “shall I believe you or mother?” He answered, “Believe your mother.” Truly their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the Song of Moses \(Deuteronomy 32:1–43\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There are at least three songs that [Moses](#) wrote. One was sung after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15), one is recorded in Psalm 90, and the other was written in the last days of Moses’ life, in Deuteronomy 32.

As his time on earth drew to a close, Moses tied up several loose ends in his ministry, following God’s instructions in setting everything in order. God told Moses to write a song, commonly called “The Song of Moses,” and teach it to the people (Deuteronomy

31:19, 30). The Lord then commissioned [Joshua](#), Moses' replacement (Dt 31:23). Finally, Moses wrote down the entire Law as he had received it from God (Dt 31:24) and gave it to the Levites to keep with the ark of the covenant (Dt 31:25).

God required the Israelites to learn the Song of Moses in anticipation of their future apostasy in the [Promised Land](#). God knew that, despite His blessings, Israel would turn their backs on Him and follow other gods, bringing divine judgment. When that happened, the song they had learned generations previous would "be a witness . . . against them. . . . When many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them" (Deuteronomy 31:19, 21). The Song of Moses had both a prophetic purpose (it predicted the nation's falling away) and a didactic purpose (it taught the faithfulness of God and the consequences of sin).

The song that Moses recited to the people takes up the better part of chapter 32. Deuteronomy 32:44 says that Joshua aided Moses in the recitation of this inspired song. The same day that Israel learned the Song of Moses, God directed Moses to climb [Mt. Nebo](#), where Moses would be laid to rest (Dt 32:48–50).

The song begins with a universal call to listen, followed by praise of the just, faithful, and upright God (Deuteronomy 32:1–4). In contrast to God's faithfulness is Israel's unfaithfulness (Dt 32:5–6). The song proceeds to recite the history of Israel from their time of bondage in Egypt, through their wilderness wanderings, to their established place in the Promised Land (Dt 32:7–14). The Song of Moses then becomes prophetic: Israel's future ingratitude and idolatry are predicted, as are the judgments of God for their sin (Dt 32:15–31). Then God promises to avenge Israel against their (and His) enemies, showing compassion on His people (Dt 32:32–42). The song ends on a joyful note, as God's punishment is past, righteousness is restored, and the land of Israel cleansed (Dt 32:43).

A major theme of the Song of Moses is God's faithfulness. He is called "the Rock" four times in the song (Deuteronomy 32:15, 18, 30–31). Even as God's people are chasing whims and trusting feeble gods, God remains their steadfast, unchanging Source of Salvation.

The last words of the Song of Moses are a promise that God will "make atonement for his land and people" (Deuteronomy 32:43). This is a significant promise, because the atonement for God's people is none other than the sacrifice of God's own Son, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:20). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 32:2 "Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb."**

- drop : 2Sa 23:4 Job 29:22,23 Ps 72:6 Isa 55:10,11 Ho 6:4 14:5 1Co 3:6-8 Heb 6:7
- as the showers : Mic 5:7 Zec 10:1
- Deuteronomy 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TEACHING LIKE RAIN ON A DRY SOUL**

Moses poetic description reminds me of Paul's words in Ephesians 5:26+ speaking of the Bride of Christ "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by **the washing of water with the word**" This the effect Moses desired for the OT Wife of Jehovah, the nation of Israel. He wanted them to memorize his "Song" so that they might frequently repeat it and enjoy the blessing of God's Word which is always "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." (2 Ti 3:16+).

**Let my teaching drop as the rain - My teaching** means literally, "my taking" as if to say the my teaching were first "taken" from God on Mt Sinai ( Ex 19:2-3+) Sadly Moses' teaching did drop like rain (words) from Heaven (from God), but Israel was like a nation of ducks and the raindrops were like "[water on a duck's back!](#)" That is to say, Moses' **teaching** was for the most part (as one review Israel's subsequent history) without having any significant, lasting, or apparent impact on the nation as a whole.

**THOUGHT** - As Israel's great teacher, Moses set an example not only for the Old Testament prophets, but for every person called to be a minister of the Word today. He took from God and gave vital, refreshing words to the people. (Disciple's Study Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Moses compared God's Word to the rain and the dew (v. 2), which come down from heaven and bring life and refreshment to the earth. Much sharing of the Word may seem to be a waste, but the Word accomplishes God's purposes whether we see it or not (Isa. 55:10–11). ([With the Word Commentary](#))

**My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb-** All these figures of speech (**rain...dew..droplets...showers**) speak of something we all love to hear and receive. There is nothing like the sound of gentle rain outside. And the recipients (fresh grass, herb) are benefited by the moisture. So too the souls of the people would be benefited by

the "washing of the water with the word" from Moses.

**THOUGHT** - Ephesians 5:26+ says of the church Jesus' bride "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." Note the effects "setting apart" from the world and to service to God and cleansing her from sin. Moses' Song is now to believers the entire Word of God! God's Word will never return void...

Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

**NET NOTE** on **dew** - Or "mist," "light drizzle." In some contexts the term appears to refer to light rain, rather than dew.

**Spurgeon** - It is good preaching, and good hearing too, when the gospel comes like a gentle shower which saturates and soaks into the soil, and refreshes and makes it fruitful; may God the Holy Spirit make it to be so whenever we gather together for worship! The Word of the Lord may be as a driving hail, breaking everything upon which it falls, and so becoming the savor of death unto death. But may God. make it to us as the dew and the small rain from heaven., that it may be a savor of life unto life!

**Teaching** (learning) ([03948](#)) **leqah/leqach** from **laqach** = to take, grasp) can mean teaching (Dt 32:2, Pr 16:21, 23, Isa 29:24) or learning which is "grasping" with the mind (Pr 1:5, 4:2, Pr 9:9). In Pr 7:21 it refers to persuasive words, words that hold power to change one's behavior. **Laqah** embraces "comprehension of truth well enough to teach it." **Walter Kaiser** - As with the root meaning (of leqach) "take, seize," the "grasping" is with the mind and hence "perceiving" is the nuance prominent in this derivative. Note some of the words with which it is paired: **binâ** "understanding" (Isa 29:24), **ākām** "wisdom" (Pr 1:5; 9:9) and **tôrâ** "instruction, law" (Pr 4:2). In Pr 7:21 **leqah/leqach** means "the persuasiveness" of a harlot. But in Pr 16:21 the word is used in a good sense of a teacher's persuasiveness. ([TWOT](#))

**Deuteronomy 32:3 "For I proclaim the Name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God!"**

- **For:** Ex 3:13-16 6:3 20:24 34:5-7 Ps 29:1,2 89:16-18 105:1-5 Ps 145:1-10 Jer 10:6 23:6 Mt 1:23 Joh 17:6,26
- **ascribe:** De 5:24 1Ch 17:19 1Chr 29:11 Ps 145:3 Ps 150:2 Jer 10:6 Eph 1:19

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 17:19 "O LORD, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have wrought all this **greatness**, to make known all these great things.

1 Chronicles 29:11 "Yours, O LORD, is the **greatness** and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.

Psalms 145:3 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, And His **greatness** is unsearchable.

Psalms 150:2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent **greatness**.

## THE NAME AND GREATNESS OF OUR GOD

Moses begins with the **summum bonum**, the highest good, the great Name of the LORD.

**Steven Cole** - The songs we remember and sing should tell us who God is.

**John Maxwell** subtitles Dt 32:3-9 as "God's faithfulness is compared to Israel's foolishness." ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

**For I proclaim the Name of the LORD**- **Proclaim** in the Septuagint is **kaleo** meaning to call, to identify by Name or by attribute. The **Name** stands for God's person, since it reflects all of His glorious attributes, His perfect character and majestic qualities. His Name is revealed in His Word. Here the Name of God is **Jehovah** ([see study](#)), His **covenant** Name by which He made Himself known to Israel. In Ex 6:3+ God tells Moses that He is about to be revealed in that aspect of His character signified by **Jehovah**, His covenant-relation to Israel as the One Who redeems her and delivers her from Egypt (Ex 6:6-8). To know God in covenant is a strong tower. "God's **Name** stands for the manifestation of His presence in His revelation and His relation to His

people." (Hemphill)

**Cole** adds "'The Lord" (Deut. 32:3) translates Yahweh, God's covenant name that He revealed to Moses at the burning bush, where He told Moses to tell the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you" (Exod. 3:14-16). It was by His name Yahweh that the Lord promised to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt (Exod. 6:2-8). The Lord Jesus claimed to be "I AM" when He told the Jews who challenged Him (John 8:58), "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." He is the mediator of the new covenant, which is better than the old (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). ([Sermon](#))

**Matthew Poole** explains that "The name of the Lord, i.e. the Lord, as he hath revealed himself in his works, and especially in his word by his promises, and the declarations of his infinite perfections, and of his good will to his people."

**THOUGHT** - Persons may confidently and safely take refuge in God's [covenant Name](#) which conveys an assurance of security to those who are in [covenant](#) with Him by grace through faith

**Ascribe greatness to our God (Elohim) - GWN** = "Give our God the greatness he deserves!" **Ascribe** is a command that conveys the sense of impute, attribute or credit greatness to God. They should and could do this because "the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness." (Dt 5:24, cf Dt 3:24) His revelation calls for proclamation. Also His revelation calls for "revolution" (and/or revival) in our hearts! The Septuagint translates greatness ([godel](#)) with [megalosune](#) which literally means prominence, greatness, importance and is used only of God majesty (Jude 1:25+) and also as a Name for God the Majesty (Heb 1.3+) The God of Israel is so far above all other gods that He is in a class all by Himself, for indeed He is the one and only true God. This greatness of God is revealed in all His ways and in all His dealings with Israel. He is a loving heavenly Father to His people, without comparison. He does no wrong and is always faithful to His people.

**THOUGHT** - Let us ascribe greatness to Him for He is our God as believers in His Son. Worship Him in Spirit and Truth (Jn 4:24+) as you sing [Ascribe Greatness to Our God the Rock](#).

**Ascribe (03051)** יָהַב **yāhab**, הָב **hab**: I. A verb indicating to give, to come; to pay attention. The basic form of this verb is given as yāhab or hab, but its meaning and usage are not affected by this (see II, below). It indicates the handing over or turning over of something to someone: one's wife (Gen. 29:21); a garment (Ruth 3:15); a price (Zech. 11:12). It takes on the meaning of give in its imperative form: to give lots; that is a decision from the Lord about what is to be done (1 Sam. 14:41). It means to set something or someone in a certain location (Deut. 1:13; 2 Sam. 11:15). It is used of attributing glory to the Lord (Ps. 29:1, 2) or greatness (Deut. 32:3). It has the idiomatic meaning of "Come, now!" in its imperative forms (hab, hābāh, Gen. 11:3; 38:16; Ex. 1:10). II. A verb indicating to give, to come; pay attention. The meanings and usage of this verb are the same as those given in I, above. ([Word Study OT](#))

**Paul Gilchrist** - The verb is used only in the Qal imperative in the following ways: (1) as an interjection "Come! Come now!" (Gen 11:3, plus four times) translated in LXX by the adverb deute, mostly used as a hortatory particle (cf. Isa 1:18, LXX). (2) The basic idea is expressed by "give!" It is used with the object of what is to be given with indirect object expressed, in Gen 29:21 "give me my wife" the idea being of having her presented to Jacob, in Deut 1:13 of giving, i.e. presenting men for appointment. The notion of choosing or nominating would be involved here. A development of the above is "set!" "place!" as in II Sam 11:15, "Set/place Uriah on the front of the battle!" (3) The most theologically important meaning is used in the command to "give" (KJV) or "ascribe" (ASV, RSV) glory to the name of the Lord (Deut 2:3; Ps 29:1-2; 96:7-8; I Chr 16:28-29). It is interesting to note that though these passages are practically the same, the LXX renders I Chr by didōmi "give" and the Ps passages with pherō which basically means "to bring, present, bear" whether a burden or a gift. "Ascribe" with the synonyms "attribute" or "credit" would suggest "inferring of cause, quality, authorship" (Webster). Hence the passages would demand everyone to acknowledge the Lord Yahweh as the great king and offer such ascription of glory and greatness as is commensurate with his majesty. Cf. Rev 21:24 which alludes to Isa 60:11 where the kings of the earth shall bring (pherō) their glory to the new Jerusalem. ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**Yahab** - 29v - ascribe(10), choose(1), come(4), give(15), here(1), place(1), provide(1). Gen. 11:3; Gen. 11:4; Gen. 11:7; Gen. 29:21; Gen. 30:1; Gen. 38:16; Gen. 47:15; Gen. 47:16; Exod. 1:10; Deut. 1:13; Deut. 32:3; Jos. 18:4; Jdg. 1:15; Jdg. 20:7; Ruth 3:15; 1 Sam. 14:41; 2 Sam. 11:15; 2 Sam. 16:20; 1 Chr. 16:28; 1 Chr. 16:29; Job 6:22; Ps. 29:1; Ps. 29:2; Ps. 60:11; Ps. 96:7; Ps. 96:8; Ps. 108:12; Prov. 30:15; Zech. 11:12

**Greatness (01433)** [godel](#) means greatness in terms of size ([Ezek 31:7](#)), of divine power (Ps 79:11), of divine dignity (Dt 32:3), of divine majesty (Dt 3:24), of divine mercy (Nu 14:19), of the false greatness or bravado of one's heart (Isa. 9:9) and was used to describe the extreme arrogance of the heart of the king of Assyria (Isa.

#### Related Resources:

- [God's Name - A Strong Tower](#)
- [God's Name-A Strong Tower \(II\)](#)
- [Why Study the Names of God?](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - In 1715, Louis XIV of France died. He called himself, "Louis the Great." His court was the most magnificent in all of Europe. He even planned his funeral to be spectacular. To dramatize his greatness, his body was put in a golden coffin. He had given orders that the cathedral be dimly lit, with only a special candle set above the coffin. Thousands waited in hushed silence. Then Bishop Massillon began to speak. Slowly reaching down, he snuffed out the candle, saying, "Only God is great!"

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#### Deuteronomy 32:3-4 A Song to Remember

I was delighted when I received a free gift in the mail—a CD of Scripture set to music. After listening to it several times, some of the melodies took root in my mind. Before long, I could sing the words to a couple of verses in the book of Psalms without the help of the recording.

Music can help us recall words and ideas we might otherwise forget. God knew that the Israelites would forget Him when they entered the Promised Land (Deut. 31:20). They would forsake Him, turn to idols, and trouble would follow (vv.16-18). Because of this, He asked Moses to compose a song and teach it to the Israelites so they could remember their past closeness with Him and the sin that hurt their relationship (Dt 31:19-22). Perhaps most important, God wanted His nation to recall His character: "[God] is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He" (Dt 32:4).

Consider what God might want you to remember about Him today. Is it His power, His holiness, His love, or His faithfulness? Can you think of a song that celebrates God's character? Sing it in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).— by Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Give me a spirit of praise, dear Lord,  
That I may adore Your name,  
Sing praises from the depths of a grateful heart  
To the One who is always the same.  
—Dawe

Remembering God's goodness puts a song in your heart

**Deuteronomy 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.**

- **the Rock:** Dt 32:18,30,31 1Sa 2:2 2Sa 22:2,3,32,47 2Sa 23:3 Ps 18:2,31,46 Ps 61:2-4 Ps 92:15 Isa 26:4 Isa 28:16 Isa 32:2 Mt 16:16-18 1Co 10:4 1Pe 2:6
- **his work:** Ge 1:31 2Sa 22:31 Ps 18:30 19:7 138:8 Ec 3:14 Mt 5:48 Jas 1:17
- **all his:** De 10:18 Ge 18:25 Job 35:14 Ps 9:16 97:2 99:4 Isa 30:18 Jer 9:24 Da 4:37 Joh 5:22 Ro 1:32 2:2,5 Jas 4:12 Rev 15:3,4
- **a God:** Ex 34:6 Ps 31:5 98:3 100:5 146:6 Isa 25:1 Jer 10:10 Joh 1:14,17 14:6
- **without:** Job 34:10 Ps 92:15 Hab 1:13 Ro 3:5

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any **ROCK** like our God.

2 Samuel 22:2; 3 He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my **ROCK**, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.

2 Samuel 32 "For who is God, besides the LORD? And who is a **ROCK**, besides our God?"



2 Samuel :47 "The LORD lives, and blessed be my **ROCK**; And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation,

2 Samuel 23:3 "The God of Israel said, The **ROCK** of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,

Psalms 18:2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my **ROCK**, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalms 18:31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a **ROCK**, except our God,

Psalms 18:46 The LORD lives, and blessed be my **ROCK**; And exalted be the God of my salvation,

Psalms 61:2-4 From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the **ROCK** that is higher than I. 3 For You have been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. 4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. Selah. ([PLAY SONG](#))

Psalms 92:15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my **ROCK**, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Isaiah 26:4 "Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting **Rock**.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.



**Moses Strikes the Rock**

## **GOD OUR FAITHFUL RIGHTEOUS UPRIGHT ROCK!**

This passage is like a mini-tutorial on many of the great [Attributes of God!](#)

**The Rock!** (Hebrew = [tsur](#)) - This great Name of God is repeated 3 more times in Moses' song (Dt 32:18,30,31), which is indeed ironic for it was Moses striking of the rock which kept him from entering the Promised Land (see Nu 20:11-13+ toward the end of the 40 year journey when the second generation failed the "no water test" Nu 20:1-13+, cf Ex 17:6+). The same Moses who sinfully struck the rock, now openly praises the **Rock**, which Paul says **was Christ** (1 Cor 10:4+)! So in effect Moses is telling them about Messiah, about Christ, the One they must individually, personally run to in order to be saved eternally!

**Rock** speaks of Jesus as stable, strong, unchanging, faithful, enduring. At the very beginning of the song, Moses focused their attention on the **greatness** of God; for if they understood His **greatness**, the people wouldn't want to worship man-made idols. **A.W. Tozer** used to remind us that "no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God." He also said, "The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God."

**NET NOTE** - The Hebrew term depicts God as a rocky summit where one may find safety and protection. Within a covenantal context it serves as a reminder to the people that their God has committed Himself to their protection in return for their allegiance.

**Spurgeon:** Moses had to be put into a cleft of a rock before he could see God. There was a rock in the wilderness, Moses smote it, and water gushed out. The apostle tells us "that rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10:4) Very well, Paul, I believe it was, but there is another thing that I believe, I believe that this rock was Christ. I know it was not Christ literally. Moses stood in a literal rock; he stood on the top of a high mountain, hidden in a cleft of a real rock. But, O my soul, what is the cleft of the rock where thou must stand, if thou wouldst ever see God's face, and live? Oh, it is the "**Rock of ages, cleft for me,**" where I must hide! Oh, what a cleaving that was when Jesus died! (Jn 19:34, 37, 20:27) O my soul, enter into the cleft in Jesus' side. That is the cleft of the Rock where thou must abide, and see God. But when I get into the cleft of that rock, O my soul, when I get into that cleft whose massive roof is the well-ordered everlasting covenant, whose solid golden floor is made of the solemn decrees of the predestination of the Most High, and

whose sides are called Jachin and Boaz, that is, establishment and strength, I am in a cleft of a rock which is so enduring that time can never dissolve it. Precious Christ, may I be found in Thee amidst the concussion of the elements when the world shall melt away, and the heavens shall be dissolved! Oh, may I stand in Thee, Thou precious cleft of the Rock, for Thou art all-in-all to my soul!...In closing, I want to draw one practical inference; what shall it be? Draw it yourselves. Let it be this: There is an hour coming when we must all, in a certain sense, see God (Php 2:10-11, Rev 1:7). We must see Him as a Judge (2 Ti 4:1). It becomes us, then, to think seriously whether we shall stand in the cleft of the Rock when He comes. ([God's Glory and His Goodness](#) - Sermon on Exodus 33:18-23)

**Maxwell** - God is prominently pictured as "a Rock" in this poem (vv. 4, 18, 30, 31). This metaphor is often used by the psalmist, and it appears at other places in the Bible. It represents the divine unchangeability and security to which men come for refuge in a world filled with physical and spiritual foes. This imagery has found its way into the music of the Christian church in such songs as "Rock of Ages" and "The Solid Rock." For Moses, the characterization of God as a Rock was born out of personal experience: the law was proclaimed on the rock of Sinai; Moses hid himself in the cleft of a rock; out of a smitten rock the waters gushed forth. How natural it was for Moses to apply this image to the eternal God! ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

**His work is perfect** - Perfect is [tamim](#) (from root meaning "complete" comprehensive, all-sided so as to cover all aspects of a thing) means "single-hearted, without blame, sincere, and in Ex 12:5 refers to a "unblemished" sacrifice, which the Rock Christ Jesus fulfilled. In this verse the Septuagint translates **perfect** with [alethinos](#) which means true (conforming to facts), dependable, genuine.

**For all His ways are just** - Just is [mishpat/mispat](#) an attribute of God (Isa. 30:18 [cf. Ge 18:25]). He loves mishpat (Ps 37:28). It is rooted in His character and ought to be emulated by godly people (Ps. 37:30; Pr 12:5; 21:15; 29:4; Mic 3:1, 6:8). Think about this statement from the lips of Moses. The very One Who had told Him he could not enter the Promised land because he had smitten the Rock a second time.

**Cole** - God's ways are how He deals with people. Here it especially applies to God's dealings with Israel in the wilderness. They grumbled and did not submit to His ways, even though He abundantly provided for them. They often accused God of cruelty and unfaithfulness by bringing them into the wilderness to kill them. Thus God says of Israel in the wilderness (Ps. 95:10), "For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways." He is perfect, just, faithful, and righteous. ([Sermon](#))

**A God of faithfulness and without injustice** - Faithfulness is [emunah](#) which conveys the key idea of certainty, fidelity, to remain in one place, firmness, steadiness. **Emunah** is used for the first time in Scripture to describe Moses hands held up with the staff of God until sunset (Ex 17:12). **Emunah** expresses his total dependability and is frequently listed among the attributes of God (1Sa 26:23; Ps 36:5; Ps 40:10; La 3:23) and describes his works (Ps 33:4) and His words (Ps 119:86; Ps 143:1).

**Righteous and upright is He** - **Righteous** (tsaddiyq) describes conformity to an ethical or moral standard. Righteousness is all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, and ultimately all that God provides to believers in Christ. **Upright** ([yashar](#)) is from a root which means straight and figuratively speaks of the characteristic of blamelessness describing God in Ps 119:137 and Hos 14:9. This makes me think of the phrase "[straight shooter](#)" for our God is the ultimate "[Straight Shooter](#)!"

#### Related Resource:

- Play [Ascribe Greatness to Our God the Rock](#)
- Play [O Lord, My Rock and My Deliverer](#)
- [Christ Our Rock](#)
- [Rock of Our Salvation](#)
- [Christ Our Rock of Refuge](#)
- [Christ Our Rock of Refuge-2](#)

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#### Perfect Justice

All [God's] ways are just. Deuteronomy 32:4

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 32:1-4

In 1983, three teens were arrested for the murder of a fourteen-year-old. According to news reports, the younger teen was "shot . . . because of his [athletic] jacket." Sentenced to life in prison, the three spent thirty-six years behind bars before evidence surfaced that revealed their innocence. Another man had committed the crime. Before the judge released them as free men, he issued an apology.

No matter how hard we try (and no matter how much good is done by our officials), human justice is often flawed. We never have all the information. Sometimes dishonest people manipulate the facts. Sometimes we're just wrong. And often, evils may take years to be righted, if they ever are in our lifetime. Thankfully, unlike fickle humans, God wields perfect justice. "His works are perfect," says Moses, "and all his ways are just" (Deuteronomy 32:4). God sees things as they truly are. In time, after we've done our worst, God will bring about final, ultimate justice. Though uncertain of the timing, we have confidence because we serve a "faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he" (v. 4).

We may be dogged by uncertainty regarding what's right or wrong. We may fear that the injustices done to us or those we love will never be made right. But we can trust the God of justice to one day—either in this life or the next—enact justice for us. By: Winn Collier ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Where have you seen justice abused or misrepresented? Where does your heart cry out for God to bring justice?

God, I see injustice all around me: in the news, in my relationships, on social media. Thank You for the hope I can have in You and Your just ways.

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### **Deuteronomy 32:4 Is God Unfair?**

A couple I knew some years ago questioned God's fairness after both of their school-aged children were killed in auto accidents within a period of 3 years. Like most parents, they had anticipated much happiness with their son and daughter. Their friends saw their own children graduate from high school, but these parents were deprived of that joy.

I wonder if the family of the apostle James may have questioned God's fairness too. He was executed, but Peter was miraculously rescued from the same fate (Acts 12:2,5-11).

It's true that life is often unfair. Some seem to be blessed with far more opportunities than others, but let's not blame God. These injustices are here because mankind's sin has invaded God's creation. The Lord allows them, but He has not caused them. He grieves over them more than we do, loves us equally, has made eternal salvation available to all, and will judge everyone by the principle: "To whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

At the end of time, the Lord will right all the wrongs of the ages, and even the people most deprived and mistreated in this life will be satisfied with God's justice. Ultimately, no one will have reason to accuse Him of being unfair. — by Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Life can be lived with joy and song  
Amid its heartache and its pain,  
For one day God will right each wrong—  
With peace and justice He will reign.  
—D. De Haan

We can endure life's wrongs, knowing that God will make all things right

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### **Deuteronomy 32:4 Not Fair**

When I was coaching high school freshman girls basketball in the fall of 2005, I was surprised at how many times I heard, "That's not fair!"

The girls' motivation seemed to depend on whether or not they thought what I asked them to do was fair. If I asked some girls to do a defensive drill while others shot free throws, I heard, "Not fair." If I allowed one group to play offense longer than another group, I heard, "Not fair."

So many situations in life shout, "Not fair!" I observe Christian couples who struggle to have babies while others are blessed with children and then abuse them. I look at families whose children are all alive and well, while I go through life without one of mine. I see friends who long to serve God but can't because of health issues.

It's then that I must go back to a basic truth. We are not the arbiters of fairness. God is, and He knows far more than we do about His plans and purposes. The question isn't about fairness. In the end, it's about trust in a faithful God who knows what He is doing. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice" (Deut. 32:4).

Life will never look fair. But when we trust God, we always know that He is faithful. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If you feel that blessings pass you by,  
And for you life seems a bit unfair,  
Just remember, Christ was born to die,  
And in His great salvation you can share.  
—Hess

Life is not always fair,  
but God is always faithful

**Deuteronomy 32:5 "They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation.**

- **They have acted corruptly:** De 4:16 31:29 Ge 6:12 Ex 32:7 Jdg 2:19 Isa 1:4 Ho 9:9 Zep 3:7 2Co 11:3
- **because of their defect:** Jn 8:41
- **a perverse:** De 9:24 Ps 78:8 Isa 1:4 Mt 3:7 16:4 17:17 Lu 9:41 Ac 7:51 Php 2:15

#### Related Passages:

2 Peter 2:13+ suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

Isaiah 1:4+ Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.

Philippians 2:15+ so that (PURPOSE OF Php 2:14, POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF Php 2:13+!) you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked ([skolios](#)) and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

## CORRUPT CROOKED CHILDREN

What a contrast we see here between the **character** of the immutable, incorruptible LORD and those who should have acted like His **children** but did not!

**Disciple's Study Bible** makes a very interesting statement that "A people blessed by God is not necessarily His people. When they rebel against Him, as did the children in the wilderness, they become shameful and crooked. Such people must bear responsibility for their rebellion."

BLESSINGS FROM GOD DO NOT GUARANTEE LIKENESS TO GOD.

**They have acted corruptly toward Him - NET** - "His people have been unfaithful to him." **Have acted corruptly** is past tense (Lxx uses the verb [hamartano](#) - to sin, do wrong), but Moses has also made a future tense declaration in Dt 31:29 stating "I know that after my death **you will act corruptly** and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days." Moses had previously warned Israel to "watch (Lxx = [phulasso](#) - guard, defend) yourselves carefully" (Dt 4:15+) "so that you do not **act corruptly** (Lxx = anomeo = to be lawless, be corrupted by sins) and make a graven image." (Dt 4:16+). In Dt 4:25+ Moses in effect prophesied "When you become the father of children and children's children (WITHIN 2 GENERATIONS) and have remained long in the land, and **act corruptly** (Lxx = anomeo = to be lawless, be corrupted by sins) , and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger."

**English word corrupt** definitions and synonyms - Containing errors or alterations, especially ones that prevent proper understanding or use. Ruined morally; perverted. Destroyed or subverted regarding honesty or integrity. Rotten; spoiled: Bella Bathurst has a quote that could apply to the nation of Israel - "There was a strange smell in the room, high and slightly sweet, like perfume corrupted in the bottle. Debased, debauched, depraved, perverted.

**Have acted corruptly** (07843) [shachath](#) means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies - Ex 8:24). **Shachath** is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf "acted corruptly" - Dt 9:12+ (cf Ex 32:7+; Dt 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would **destroy** Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu

32:15). **Shachath** describes Israel's behavior - "it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and **act** more **corruptly** than their fathers" (Jdg 2:19+). The first 3 uses of **shachath** are very instructive for they resulted in a worldwide flood, even as Israel's corruption would result in worldwide shame at her ignominious defeat by godless pagans...Now the earth was **corrupt** (shachath; Lxx = [phtheiro](#) = cause loss of soundness, ruin, destroy, kill. Corruption is a rotten fruit that comes from "the lusts of deceit" Eph 4:22+) in the sight of God (cp Pr 15:3+), and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was **corrupt** (shachath; Lxx = [kataphtheiro](#) = "rotten!") for all flesh had **corrupted** (shachath; Lxx = [kataphtheiro](#)) their way upon the earth. 13 Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. (Ge 6:11-13)

**They are not His children, because of their defect- NET** - " they have not acted like his children– this is their sin." In the Septuagint the word for **not** (ou) means ABSOLUTELY NOT! Paul comments in Romans 9 "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are (OU = ABSOLUTELY) **not** all Israel who are descended from Israel." (Ro 9:6+).

**NET NOTE** on "**defect**" - This highly elliptical line suggests that Israel's major fault was its failure to act like God's people; in fact, they acted quite the contrary.

**Defect** ([03971](#))(**mum**) is a mark or flaw that spoils the appearance of something, especially a person's body or figuratively in his character (or heart), specifically the effect of sin (Dt. 32:5; Job 11:15; Dt 31:7). **Mum** usually describes a physical characteristic that is deemed to be bad. An animal which had a blemish could not be sacrificed (Lev. 22:20, 21; Nu 19:2; Deut. 17:1) **Mum** denotes any physical defect, such as was not found in Daniel and his three friends (Dan 1:4ff.) and in the man who would be God's priest (Lev 21:17ff.), or any moral defect (Job 31:7; 11:15; Deut 32:5). **Mum** can describe an injury caused by another (Lev. 24:19, 20) In the ancient world absence of any blemish was a sign of beauty (2 Sa 14:25; Song 4:7) or potential (Dan. 1:4)

**Mum** - 17v - blemish(2), defect(14), injured\*(1), injures\*(1), insults(1). Lev. 21:17; Lev. 21:18; Lev. 21:21; Lev. 21:23; Lev. 22:20; Lev. 22:21; Lev. 22:25; Lev. 24:19; Lev. 24:20; Num. 19:2; Deut. 15:21; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 32:5; 2 Sam. 14:25; Job 11:15; Prov. 9:7; Cant. 4:7

**But** - A very sad term of contrast!

**Are a perverse and crooked generation** - Jesus gave a similar sad description of Israel in the first century declaring "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." (Mt 17:17). **Crooked** is the only use in OT of the Hebrew word pethaltol meaning "warped," one deviating from what is considered moral, right, proper, or good. It describes Israel as wickedly cunning, distorted, ingenuous! It is a figurative extension of a twisted or warped object out of its normal shape, in this case not an object but a human soul!

**Perverse** (crooked) ([06141](#)) **'iqqesh** from **aqash** = to twist, make crooked, pervert) means twisted, perverted. The passages **iqqesh** is found in give a sense of the meaning - the moral, religious, and social perversion and crookedness of Israel (Dt. 32:5), the perverse in general (2Sa 22:27; Ps. 18:26; Pr 2:15; 17:20), a deceitful, perverse heart, the source of evil (Ps 101:4), as a character trait that destroys the rich (Pr 28:6), as that which is not found in wisdom (Pr 8:8), as that which God hates (Pr 11:20), as speech from a fool (Pr. 19:1). The **Septuagint** translates **iqqesh** in this passage with **skolios** (same word in Philippians 2:15+) describing literally that which is not straight and figuratively anything that is spiritually corrupt and those who do not walk in "straightness"

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**C H Spurgeon** - "The spot of his children." — Deuteronomy 32:5 (Morning and Evening)

What is the secret spot which infallibly betokens the child of God? It were vain presumption to decide this upon our own judgment; but God's word reveals it to us, and we may tread surely where we have revelation to be our guide. Now, we are told concerning our Lord, "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name." Then, if I have received Christ Jesus into my heart, I am a child of God. That reception is described in the same verse as believing on the name of Jesus Christ. If, then, I believe on Jesus Christ's name—that is, simply from my heart trust myself with the crucified, but now exalted, Redeemer, I am a member of the family of the Most High. Whatever else I may not have, if I have this, I have the privilege to become a child of God. Our Lord Jesus puts it in another shape. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Here is the matter in a nutshell. Christ appears as a shepherd to his own sheep, not to others. As soon as he appears, his own sheep perceive him—they trust him, they are prepared to follow him; he knows them, and they know him—there is a mutual knowledge—there is a constant connection between them. Thus the one mark, the sure mark, the infallible mark of regeneration and

adoption is a hearty faith in the appointed Redeemer. Reader, are you in doubt, are you uncertain whether you bear the secret mark of God's children? Then let not an hour pass over your head till you have said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." Trifle not here, I adjure you! If you must trifle anywhere, let it be about some secondary matter: your health, if you will, or the title deeds of your estate; but about your soul, your never-dying soul and its eternal destinies, I beseech you to be in earnest. Make sure work for eternity.

**Deuteronomy 32:6 "Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.**

- **Do you thus repay:** De 32:18 Isa 1:2 2Co 5:14,15 Tit 2:11-14
- **O foolish:** Ps 74:18 Jer 4:22 5:21 Ga 3:1-3
- **Is not He your Father** Ex 4:22 Isa 63:16 Lu 15:18-20 Joh 8:41 Ro 8:15 Ga 3:26 4:6 1Jn 3:1
- **bought:** Ex 15:16 Ps 74:2 Isa 43:3,4 Ac 20:28 1Co 6:20 2Pe 2:1
- **made:** Job 10:8 Ps 95:6 pS 100:3 pS 149:2 Isa 27:11 Isa 43:7 44:2

### RECOMPENSE TO THE RIGHTEOUS ONE!

**Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people?** - Moses is asking Israel is this how you repay Yahweh (acting as a perverse and crooked generation)? Israel acted foolishly, since the nation chose to provoke Yahweh by infidelity, according to the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:6, 21). Fools are equated with non-belief (Job 2:10; 30:8; Pss. 14:1; 39:8; 53:1; 74:22; Jer. 17:11). The righteous should not die like a fool, cut off in their prime by violence (2 Sa. 3:33). Unwise is the Hebrew negative (lo) and the Hebrew word chakam meaning wise. Unwise people is the antithesis of what they were to be as a light among the Gentiles a "great nation (that) is a wise (chakam) an understanding people." (Dt 4:6). In short, Israel's sin caused them to miss one of their major purposes for their creation and existence which was to shine the light of Yahweh into a dark world.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, this principle still holds true. You are called to be a light to the lost (Mt 5:16+, Php 2:14-15+) but if your "temple" (1 Cor 6:19-20+) is corrupted by sin, God cannot and will not use you. One of His major purposes for your life is sadly ruined. Run from sin that you might "be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2Ti 2:21+) and great will be your reward (Ps 19:11+, Mt 5:12+, Lk 6:23+, Heb 10:35+).

**Foolish** (05036)(**nabal** from verb **nabal** = to be senseless) means devoid of wisdom, good sense or sound judgment, and especially associated with insolence and/or ungodliness. The concept of uselessness pervades all the uses of the root verb. Nabal means insensibility to God, as well as a moral insensibility, close the mind to reason. Nabal refers to lacking understanding or even the capacity for understanding, implying a willful moral insolence and impudence and disobedience to the law of God (Dt 32:6, 21; Ps 74:18; Eze 13:3)

**Nabal** - 18v - fool(9), foolish(5), foolish man(1), foolish women(1), fools(1), fools\*(1). Deut. 32:6; Deut. 32:21; 2 Sam. 3:33; 2 Sam. 13:13; Job 2:10; Job 30:8; Ps. 14:1; Ps. 39:8; Ps. 53:1; Ps. 74:18; Ps. 74:22; Prov. 17:7; Prov. 17:21; Prov. 30:22; Isa. 32:5; Isa. 32:6; Jer. 17:11; Ezek. 13:3

**Wise** (02450)(**chakam** from verb **chakam** - to be wise) means wise, shrewd, i.e., a capacity for understanding and discernment (Pr 10:8). It can mean skilled, i.e., pertaining to the knowledge of a craftsman in some technical work (Ex 35:10, 25; 36:1, 2, 4, 8; Isa 3:3; Jer 10:9; Eze 27:8) **Chakam** is an adjective which can refer to professional skill and ability, or to moral character and a person's relationship with God. It also refers to a "God-fearing person,"

**Complete Biblical Library** - Chākhām refers to professional skill in several OT contexts. The men and women who were called upon to make the priestly garments and help construct the Tabernacle and its furnishings possessed skills in working with cloth, precious and semiprecious stones and wood. The same is said of those who later built the Temple (Exo. 28:3; 31:6; 1 Chr. 22:15; 2 Chr. 2:7). Professional mourning was also a skilled activity (Jer. 9:17).

Wise people constituted a class of palace administrators and high court officials who gave advice to kings and other political leaders. When Pharaoh had puzzling dreams, he called in his wise men and magicians to interpret them for him. They could not interpret the dreams, which affirms that the wisdom of the wise men of the nations does not compare with the wisdom of God (Jer. 10:7). Joseph was brought in before Pharaoh, and he interpreted the dreams, suggesting a wise course of action in preparation for the coming famine foretold by the dreams (Gen. 41:8, 33).

In the Persian court, the wise men were experts in matters of law and justice (Est. 1:13). A lesser ruler Haman had his own

advisers (Est. 6:13), as did the wife of the military commander, Sisera (Judg. 5:29). The wise men were classed with the priests and prophets as leaders and advisers in Israel (Jer. 18:18).

A woman of Tekoa and a woman of Abel-Beth-Maacah were noted for their wisdom. The administrative and advisory sense of the term in this context indicates that these women probably held some kind of leadership or advisory position within their cities. Joab brought the woman of Tekoa to David to act as an advisor to the king regarding his relationship with his son Absalom (2 Sam. 14:2ff), and the woman of Abel-Beth-Maacah led the meeting that resulted in the beheading of Sheba, who had rebelled against David and the kingdom (2 Sam. 20:16).

Those who lead God's people should possess wisdom, and God is the source of their wisdom. There were too many people for Moses to handle effectively, so wise and respected men were chosen from among the tribes to help him in matters of justice and administration (Deut. 1:13, 15). The LORD gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart so he could govern the nation justly (1 Ki. 3:12). The LORD warns judges and officials not to accept bribes, for such gifts blind the eyes of the wise, turn them into fools, and corrupt their hearts (Deut. 16:19; Ecc. 7:7).

In the moral sense, the wise love those who rebuke them (Prov. 9:8), they are teachable (9:9), they accept commands (10:8), do not lose control in anger (29:11), seek knowledge (18:15), and bring healing words to others (12:18).

In the spiritual sense, to walk in wisdom is to walk in proper relationship with God, for God is the source of all true wisdom. The LORD promised Israel that if they would follow his laws, the nations would acknowledge their wisdom, the favor of God (Deut. 4:6). Both wise and foolish people die. The grave becomes the home of the fool, but God redeems the life of the wise person from the grave and takes him to himself, indicating that even in the OT, there was hope beyond the grave for those who followed God (Ps. 49:10). This is in contrast to the preacher who claimed that the wise and the fool both die and then are quickly forgotten (Ecc. 2:16). People are not to follow what appears to be wise, but they are to fear the LORD, following his ways and turning from evil. This is the source of life and health, and it will cause the person to become a source of life to others (Prov. 13:14). The wise are not to boast in their own wisdom; rather, they are to boast in their knowledge of God's kindness, justice and righteousness (Jer. 9:23).

The wise will do what is right, although no one is wise enough to comprehend all of God's ways. Thus, all our works must be committed into God's hands. The future may bring success or failure; despite all our wisdom and abilities, there is still an element of chance in life. The wise, however, will still do what is right (Ecc. 8:17; 9:1, 11; 10:2).

Chakam - 133v - expert(1), men who are skillful(1), sage(1), shrewd(2), skilled(2), skilled men(3), skilled men and with those(1), skilled\*(1), skillful(1), skillful man\*(1), skillful men(1), skillful men\*(1), skillful persons\*(1), skillful\*(3), unwise\*(1), wailing women(1), who(1), who are wise(1), wise(64), wise man(21), wise man's(2), wise men(22), wise son(1), wisehearted(1), wiser(2), wisest(1). Gen. 41:8; Gen. 41:33; Gen. 41:39; Exod. 7:11; Exod. 28:3; Exod. 31:6; Exod. 35:10; Exod. 35:25; Exod. 36:1; Exod. 36:2; Exod. 36:4; Exod. 36:8; Deut. 1:13; Deut. 1:15; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 16:19; Deut. 32:6; Jdg. 5:29; 2 Sam. 13:3; 2 Sam. 14:2; 2 Sam. 14:20; 2 Sam. 20:16; 1 Ki. 2:9; 1 Ki. 3:12; 1 Ki. 5:7; 1 Chr. 22:15; 2 Chr. 2:7; 2 Chr. 2:12; 2 Chr. 2:13; 2 Chr. 2:14; Est. 1:13; Est. 6:13; Job 5:13; Job 9:4; Job 15:2; Job 15:18; Job 17:10; Job 34:2; Job 34:34; Job 37:24; Ps. 49:10; Ps. 107:43; Prov. 1:5; Prov. 1:6; Prov. 3:7; Prov. 3:35; Prov. 9:8; Prov. 9:9; Prov. 10:1; Prov. 10:8; Prov. 10:14; Prov. 11:29; Prov. 11:30; Prov. 12:15; Prov. 12:18; Prov. 13:1; Prov. 13:14; Prov. 13:20; Prov. 14:1; Prov. 14:3; Prov. 14:16; Prov. 14:24; Prov. 15:2; Prov. 15:7; Prov. 15:12; Prov. 15:20; Prov. 15:31; Prov. 16:14; Prov. 16:21; Prov. 16:23; Prov. 17:28; Prov. 18:15; Prov. 20:26; Prov. 21:20; Prov. 21:22; Prov. 22:17; Prov. 23:24; Prov. 24:5; Prov. 24:23; Prov. 25:12; Prov. 26:5; Prov. 26:12; Prov. 26:16; Prov. 28:11; Prov. 29:8; Prov. 29:9; Prov. 29:11; Prov. 30:24; Eccl. 2:14; Eccl. 2:16; Eccl. 2:19; Eccl. 4:13; Eccl. 6:8; Eccl. 7:4; Eccl. 7:5; Eccl. 7:7; Eccl. 7:19; Eccl. 8:1; Eccl. 8:5; Eccl. 8:17; Eccl. 9:1; Eccl. 9:11; Eccl. 9:15; Eccl. 9:17; Eccl. 10:2; Eccl. 10:12; Eccl. 12:9; Eccl. 12:11; Isa. 3:3; Isa. 5:21; Isa. 19:11; Isa. 19:12; Isa. 29:14; Isa. 31:2; Isa. 40:20; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 4:22; Jer. 8:8; Jer. 8:9; Jer. 9:12; Jer. 9:17; Jer. 9:23; Jer. 10:7; Jer. 10:9; Jer. 18:18; Jer. 50:35; Jer. 51:57; Ezek. 27:8; Ezek. 27:9; Ezek. 28:3; Hos. 13:13; Hos. 14:9; Obad. 1:8

**Spurgeon** - Sin is the basest form of ingratitude. We owe everything to God, and we ought therefore to treat him as our Creator and Father should be treated. On the contrary, how often have we requited him evil for good, and acted as if we regarded him as our enemy rather than as our best Friend!

**Is not He your Father Who has bought you?** - NET and NIV have "Is He not your Father, your Creator?" NLT = "Isn't He your Father Who created you?"

**Cole** - A few times the Old Testament states that God is Israel's **Father** (Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Mal. 2:10). It mentions more frequently that Israel was God's son. God was Israel's Father because He brought them as a nation into existence. Jesus often taught that we are to approach God as our loving Father (Matt. 6:9, 26, 32; etc.). The fact that God bought Israel refers to His redeeming them out of slavery in Egypt. He has the right of ownership and they owe Him total submission and allegiance. Even so, we are not our own; we've been bought with a price. Therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). ([Sermon](#))

The same Hebrew verb ([qanah](#)) for **bought** is used in the following related passages. The Septuagint in all three passages is the same Greek verb [ktaomai](#) which means to gain possession of, to procure something for oneself or to acquire.

"Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O LORD, Until the people pass over whom You have **purchased**. (Exodus 15:16)

Remember Your congregation, which You have **purchased** of old, Which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance; And this Mount Zion, where You have dwelt. (Psalm 74:2)

**He has made you and established you** Isaiah 44:2 says "Thus says the **LORD who made you** and formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; and you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.'"

**Disciple's Study Bible - Father**--This is one of the strongest declarations of the **fatherhood** of God in the Old Testament. Both here and in Dt 32:18, it is suggested that since God created Israel, He is Israel's Father. This suggests to us, therefore, that God has a fatherly interest in all people inasmuch as He is Creator of all people. The idea of God as Creator tells us something about the wisdom, power, and authority of God. The idea of God as Father tells us something about the love and compassion of God for those whom He has created. Each idea logically leads to the other. Because God is Creator, He is Father to us. Because God is Father, He creates. See note on Mal 2:10.

**Disciple's Study Bible on bought you - Redemption**--The Creator created a people for Himself by purchasing or redeeming them from Egyptian slavery (Ex 15:16). Redemption is thus a new creation and leads to special titles for God. He is Creator (Hebrew qanah), a word with a wide range of meaning--give birth (Ge 4:1); buy (Ge 33:19); ransom, redeem, or buy back (Ne 5:8; Isa 11:11); get or acquire (Pr 4:5); create (Ge 14:19,22; Ps 139:13); or take over (Ps 78:54). He made Israel (Hebrew 'asah) just as God made (Hebrew 'asah) the expanse of the firmament (Ge 1:7), the heavenly bodies (Ge 1:16), and the animals (Ge 1:25). Similarly, God decided to make humans in the divine image (Ge 1:26). God also formed Israel (Hebrew kun) in the same way He formed a sanctuary or holy place of worship (Ex 15:17), David's dynasty (2 Sa 7:13), the authority and fame of Jerusalem (Isa 62:7), and as He founded the earth (Isa 45:18) and the heavens (Pr 3:19). People of God, as His chosen community, are a unique creation of God just as is the universe. We show our praise and gratitude to Him in worship.

**Bought** (purchased, acquired) (07069) **qanah Swanson** divides Strong's number **07069** into two groups - (1) קָנָה (**qānāh**: (qal) buy, get, purchase, i.e., acquire possessions with the exchange of money or bartered goods (Ge 25:10; 47:19), (nif) be bought (Jer 32:15; 32:43); (hif) acquire (Zec 13:5) (2) קָנָה (**qānāh**: (**qal**) create, bring forth, i.e., create an object of a similar kind, as a figurative extension of giving birth to a baby (Pr 8:22), **Qanah** is used of One Bringing Forth, Creator, i.e., a title of God (Ge 14:19, 22; Dt 32:6), note: in these contexts the creation of objects of a different class or kind; (**qal**) give birth, formally, create, i.e., produce and give birth to a baby, as a normal birthing process (Ge 4:1; Ps 139:13)

#### Related Resources:

- [Why is God so different in the Old Testament than He is in the New Testament? | GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org/Why-is-God-so-different-in-the-Old-Testament-than-He-is-in-the-New-Testament?)

Deuteronomy 32:7 "**Remember** the days of old, **Consider** the years of all generations. **Ask** your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you.

- **Remember**: Ps 44:1 Ps 77:5 Ps 119:52 Isa 63:11
- **generations**: Ps 10:6 77:8
- **ask**: De 4:32 Ex 13:14 Jdg 6:13 Job 8:8-10 Ps 44:1 77:5,6,11,12 Ps 78:3,4 Isa 46:9

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 63:11 Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them,

Psalm 44:1 For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. O God, we have heard with our ears, Our fathers have told us The work that You did in their days, In the days of old.

## HISTORY OF ISRAEL: REMEMBER, CONSIDER, ASK

**Remember the days of old** - "**Remember** the ancient days" (Dt 32:7NET) In the Lxx remember (**zakar**) is translated with **mimnesko** as a command in the **aoist imperative** ("Just do it!")

**Remember** (record, mention) (02142) **zakar**: bring to mind or think of again (an image or idea from the past into the mind), recall information or events, keep in mind for attention or consideration with a focus on responding in an appropriate manner, (Ex 6:5 Dt25:17) KJV translates as "remember" 172x. Recall, call to mind, usually as affecting present feeling, thought, or action: remember past experiences Ge42:9 , 2Ki 9:25, things formerly known Je17:2 Recall past distress, etc, La3:20, with implied regret, longing Nu 11:5, Ps 137:1



La1:7 1st occurrence is in Ge 8:1 with God as the subject: "God remembered Noah." (1) the mental acts themselves, such as remembering, meditating on, paying attention to, and thinking about; (2) the mental acts and the behavior appropriate to these acts (thus to "remember the covenant" is to act in accordance with covenant stipulations).

**John Maxwell** - The song will be a witness to the faithfulness of God and will help Israel "remember the days of old" (Dt 32:7) after they fall into apostasy....Moses once again calls upon the people to "remember the days of old". This repeated challenge is given sixteen times in Deuteronomy, beginning in 4:10 and concluding here. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

**Remember** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:10; Deut. 5:15; Deut. 7:18; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:18; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:27; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 16:3; Deut. 16:12; Deut. 24:9; Deut. 24:18; Deut. 24:22; Deut. 25:17; Deut. 32:7

**THOUGHT** - How is your memory of God's manifold "methods" in your life? If you are like most of us, it is a bit "fuzzy" we might say. But it is always good to periodically recall His past acts of faithfulness, to kindle afresh present faithfulness (aka "trust and obedience") in our hearts! Take a few moments today and recall His great and marvelous works (Rev 15:3+) in your life! It will not be a waste of time.

**Consider** ([bin/biyn](#); Lxx - [suniemi](#) = put the pieces of the puzzle together) **the years of all generations** - **NET** = "bear in mind the years of past generations" Literally the Hebrew reads "generation and generation." "The repetition of the singular noun here singles out each of the successive past generations." ([NET NOTE](#))

**Ask** (Lxx = [eperotao](#)) **your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you** - Interesting word play - Ask your father about our Father. The older generation is to the source of truth about God and His great power on behalf of the nation of Israel. Israel was always just one generation from forgetting the great things their Great God had done for them.

**THOUGHT** - Parents, grandparents, we must also "[pass the baton](#)" about the greatness of our God.

**Ryrie on Vs. 32:7-14** These verses furnish an historical background: the dividing of the nations (v. 8; cf. Gen. 10-11), the choosing of Jacob (v. 9), and the deliverance from Egypt (v. 12). the pupil of His eye (v. 10). See Zech. 2:8. The protection and training of Israel are described in the illustration of the eagle (v. 11). Verses 13-14 refer to experiences in Transjordan, where the people had enjoyed honey and olive oil (the olive tree yields abundantly when growing on limestone terraces, flinty rock), dairy products, meat (concerning Bashan, see note on Amos 4:1), the richest grain, and wine.

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## Grandma's Recipe

Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you. Deuteronomy 32:7

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 145:1-13

Many families have a secret recipe, a special way of cooking a dish that makes it especially savory. For us Hakkas (my Chinese ethnic group), we have a traditional dish called abacus beads, named for its beadlike appearance. Really, you have to try it!

Of course Grandma had the best recipe. Each Chinese New Year at the family reunion dinner we would tell ourselves, "We should really learn how to cook this." But we never got around to asking Grandma. Now she is no longer with us, and her secret recipe is gone with her.

We miss Grandma, and it's sad to lose her recipe. It would be far more tragic if we were to fail to preserve the legacy of faith entrusted to us. God intends that every generation share with the next generation about the mighty acts of God. "One generation commends [God's] works to another," said the psalmist (Ps. 145:4), echoing Moses' earlier instructions to "remember the days of old . . . . Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you" (Deut. 32:7).

As we share our stories of how we received salvation and the ways the Lord has helped us face challenges, we encourage each other and honor Him. He designed us to enjoy family and community and to benefit from each other. By: Poh Fang Chia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Is there someone from a different age group with whom you can share your faith journey? How about asking someone from an older generation to share their story with you. What might you learn?

Share your story at [ourdailybread.org/story](http://ourdailybread.org/story). While there check out stories of God at work in lives of people around the world.

What we teach our children today will influence tomorrow's world.

**Deuteronomy 32:8 "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel.**

- **Most High:** Nu 24:16 Ps 7:17 50:14 82:6 91:1 92:8 Isa 14:14 Da 4:17 5:18 Ac 7:48
- **When He separated:** Ge 10:25 11:9 Ps 115:16 Ac 17:26
- **he set:** Ge 10:15 Ge 15:18-21

#### **Related Passages:**

Acts 17:26+ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

Genesis 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.

## **GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER NATIONS AND ISRAEL**

**When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance**- This title the **Most High** (see [El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All](#)) for God emphasized His sovereignty and authority over all the nations (see Ge 11:9; 10:32; 14:18; Nu 24:16) with the amazing revelation that in the whole plan for the world, God had as His goal the salvation of His chosen people. God ordained a plan where the number of nations (70 according to Ge 10) corresponded to the number of the children of Israel (70 according to Ge 46:27). Further, as God gave the nations their lands, He established their boundaries, leaving Israel enough land to sustain their expected population.

**NET NOTE on the Most High** - The Hebrew term  $\text{יְלֵיֹן}$  ('elyon) is an abbreviated form of the divine name [El Elyon](#), frequently translated "God Most High" (so here NCV, CEV) or something similar. This full name (or epithet) occurs only in Ge 14:18-20, though the two elements are parallel in Ps 73:11; 107:11; etc. Here it is clear that Elyon has to do with the nations in general whereas in v. 9, by contrast, Yahweh relates specifically to Israel. See T. Fretheim, NIDOTTE 1:400–401. The title [El Elyon](#) depicts God as the sovereign Ruler of the world, Who is enthroned high above His dominion.

**Henry Morris** - As Moses began his final song, he reminded his people that there had been "many generations" before them. Yet he told them they had been in God's plan from the beginning, (v9) even making reference to the primeval father, Adam. The different nations had received their inheritance and boundaries after the flood and after Babel, as recorded in Ge10, the "Table of Nations." It is noteworthy that there are seventy nations listed in "the Table" where it says that "by these [families of the three sons of Noah] were the nations divided in the earth after the flood" (Ge10:32). These seventy did not include Israel, for this was before the days of Abraham. Nevertheless, just as there were seventy people in the original nation of Israel as they entered Egypt with Jacob (Ge46:27), so God, in His prescience, had ordained "bounds" for seventy original nations in the world after the flood. Although the number of Israelites had multiplied by a factor of 30,000 or more in the 400 or so years in Egypt, the number "seventy" has been associated with Israel in many ways ever since (70 elders, 70 in the Sanhedrin, 70 Septuagint translators, 70 weeks of Daniel, 70 years captivity, etc.). The number of nations in the world, on the other hand, has only slightly more than doubled in the 4000 or so years since Babel.

**When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel** "He had the limits of the peoples marked out, keeping in mind the number of the children of Israel." (DT 32:8 BBE)The sovereign God is concerned with and guides the destiny of all nations and peoples. This shows the awesome nature of being selected out as God's elect inheritance chosen to represent Him among the nations.

**NET NOTE** - Heb "the sons of Israel." The idea, perhaps, is that Israel was central to Yahweh's purposes and all other nations were arranged and distributed according to how they related to Israel.

**Cole** - The last phrase of verse 8, "according to the number of the sons of Israel" is unclear, but as one commentator explains (Kalland, *ibid.* 3:203), "the most probable meaning is that the boundaries of the nations were determined with the intent that Israel would have Canaan because her numbers could be supported in that area. This was done because Israel was central in the Lord's affection and sovereign planning."

**Spurgeon** - His first thought was concerning his own people. He provided Canaan for them; it was just the very land for them, with space enough, and yet with not too much room, so that they might cultivate it all, and prove it to be a land flowing with milk and honey. Yet these special thoughts of God, with regard to his own chosen people, did not exclude kind thoughts towards the rest of

mankind, for “he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people,” that is, the people belonging to other nations; but, still, his deepest and his highest thoughts were concerning the children of Israel.

## Deuteronomy 32:9 "For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.

- **the LORD'S:** De 26:18,19 Ex 15:16 19:5,6 1Sa 10:1 Ps 78:71 135:4 Isa 43:21 Jer 10:16 51:19 Eph 1:18 1Pe 2:9,10
- **the allotment of His inheritance:** Mic 2:5

### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 4:20+ “But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for **His own possession** ([nachalah](#)), as today.

Deuteronomy 9:26 “I prayed to the LORD and said, ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, even **Your inheritance** ([nachalah](#)), whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Deuteronomy 9:29 ‘Yet they are Your people, even **Your inheritance** ([nachalah](#)), whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.’

## PEOPLE OF ISRAEL YAHWEH'S PORTION & INHERITANCE

**For** - Explains why Yahweh showed such high regard for Israel in verse 8.

**The LORD'S portion is His people** - Israel belongs to Yahweh. **Portion** means a share of something often land (Dt 12:12, 18:1, but in this case "someone") set aside for a specific purpose, and for Israel it was for them to have been a light to the nations, a purpose they did not fulfill. Of course, the Messiah came from Israel and He became the light of the world (Jn 8:12), so in that sense the purpose was fulfilled.

**Cole** - The Bible teaches that the Lord is our **portion** and inheritance (Ps. 16:5; Eph. 1:11, cf Lam 3:24, Ps 73:26, Ps 119:57, Ps 142:5), but also that we are His portion and inheritance (1 Sa 10:1; 1 Ki 8:51)! Psalm 149:4 declares, “For the Lord takes pleasure in His people.” It should constantly amaze us that the sovereign over the nations chose us as His portion and inheritance! ([Sermon](#))

**Portion** ([02506](#)). הֵלֶק **hēleq**: A masculine noun indicating a portion, a territory. It indicates a portion, a share, a piece of territory in many ways: a part of booty or spoil (Ge 14:24; Nu 31:36); of food (Lev. 6:17[10]); a tract or portion of land (Josh. 19:9; Hos. 5:7; Mic. 2:4); of Israel as a possession of the Lord (Deut. 32:9). It is used metaphorically of a person's doing his or her part in something (Job 32:17); of one's association or part or sharing in another group or way of life (Ps. 50:18; Isa. 57:6); or of the portion or share of fortune that the Lord gives to persons (Job 31:2). The portion or proper share for the wicked is punishment or calamity (Isa. 17:14). “**Portion**” became a metaphor for the relationship of God and humans. Deuteronomy 32:9 says that God's “portion” or “inheritance” is his people. The psalmist, in turn, claims the LORD as his portion (Ps. 16:5). Even the wicked person has a portion from God, though it is not one of prosperity (Job 20:29). Thus, the concept of portion was integral to both the physical existence of Israel in the land of Palestine, which is their portion, and the spiritual portion they had in God. [Swanson](#) - **1. share of something**, portion, allotment, a part of something, implying it is assigned (Ge 14:24; Dt 10:9); **2. plot of ground**, i.e., a relatively small parcel of ground (2Ki 9:10); **3. reward** (Ps 17:14; Ecc 2:10); **4. fate, lot**, i.e., what happens with a focus on something parted out by choice (Job 20:29; 27:13; Ecc 3:22; Hab 1:16); 5. הֵלֶק יַעֲקֹב (hē-lēq yā-‘āqōb) Portion of Jacob, i.e., a title of the LORD (Jer 10:16; 51:19)

**Heleq** - 62 verses - associate(1), catch(1), divisions(2), equal portions(1), farm land(1), inheritance(1), land(1), legacy(1), lot(1), portion(36), portions(4), property(2), reward(4), share(9), territory(1). Gen. 14:24; Gen. 31:14; Lev. 6:17; Num. 18:20; Num. 31:36; Deut. 10:9; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 18:1; Deut. 18:8; Deut. 32:9; Jos. 14:4; Jos. 15:13; Jos. 18:5; Jos. 18:6; Jos. 18:7; Jos. 18:9; Jos. 19:9; Jos. 22:25; Jos. 22:27; 1 Sam. 30:24; 2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Ki. 12:16; 2 Ki. 9:10; 2 Ki. 9:36; 2 Ki. 9:37; 2 Chr. 10:16; Neh. 2:20; Job 17:5; Job 20:29; Job 27:13; Job 31:2; Job 32:17; Ps. 16:5; Ps. 17:14; Ps. 50:18; Ps. 73:26; Ps. 119:57; Ps. 142:5; Eccl. 2:10; Eccl. 2:21; Eccl. 3:22; Eccl. 5:18; Eccl. 5:19; Eccl. 9:6; Eccl. 9:9; Eccl. 11:2; Isa. 17:14; Isa. 57:6; Isa. 61:7; Jer. 10:16; Jer. 51:19; Lam. 3:24; Ezek. 45:7; Ezek. 48:8; Ezek. 48:21; Hos. 5:7; Amos 7:4; Mic. 2:4; Hab. 1:16; Zech. 2:12

**Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance** - **Jacob** is the patriarch's name which here stands as representative of the entire nation of Israel. **Inheritance** speaks of that which belongs to Yahweh and NET translates it as "His special possession." The Septuagint translates it as [kleronomia](#) and in this context means Israel is Yahweh's own property or possession.

**Inheritance** (Lxx = [kleronomia](#); gift, heritage) ([05159](#)) [nachalah](#) from [nāḥal](#) = signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession) means Inheritance, heritage, possession. A possession is any piece of property that passes by law to an heir on the death of the owner. It also speaks of God's promises to His people, such as the promise of the land to national (redeemed [remnant](#)) Israel. **NET NOTE** - "to be his people of inheritance." The Lord compares his people to valued property inherited from one's ancestors and passed on to one's descendants. (ED: IS THIS NOT AMAZING GRACE!)  
**Nachalah in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 3:28; Deut. 4:20; Deut. 4:21; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 9:29; Deut. 10:9; Deut. 12:9; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 18:1; Deut. 18:2; Deut. 19:10; Deut. 19:14; Deut. 20:16; Deut. 21:23; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 29:8; Deut. 32:9

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#### **April 13 - F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk GOD'S HERITAGE IN HUMANITY**

"The Lord's portion is His people."-- Deuteronomy 32:9.

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."-- Eph1:4.

WE DO not become God's property when we consecrate ourselves to Him, but only awake to see that we are already His, and assume that manner of life which they should live who are not their own, but have been bought with a price (1Co6:19-20). The three symbols of God's care of His own, as enumerated by Moses in his Song, are exquisitely beautiful.

"He kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10). Almost instinctively we raise our hand to protect the eyes if anything threatens us, and it is thus with God's care to us. How carefully the eye is preserved from impurity and evil by the strong bony socket in which it is set, by the eyebrows and lashes which catch the dust and grit, by the eyelid closing over, and the tear-water washing it. Thus the soul which God loves may pass through the evil of the world without taint or soil, because of His gracious keeping power.

"As an eagle" (Deuteronomy 32:11). When the young eaglets are able to fly, but hover about their nest, unwilling to venture from the cliff, the mother-bird breaks up their eerie home, drives the fledglings forth on to the air, compels them to use their wings, flutters beneath to catch them if they are inclined to fall, and bears them up on her strong wings until they can fly alone. So it is in life that sometimes God has to break up the happy conditions to which we have been accustomed from our birth, and drive us forth. But it is for our good since only so can we acquire the glorious powers of sustained flight on the wings of the wind.

Divine leading (Deuteronomy 32:12). God teaches us to go as a mother her little child; His hand leads and guides our tottering steps (Hos11:3-4).

The Epistle to the Ephesians gives us a list of the blessings, like a string of pearls, which God our Father, the Owner and Lover of our souls, heaps upon us, and is waiting for us to appropriate and use (Deuteronomy 1:3). His love to us is no passing fancy, but the carrying out of an eternal purpose. He redeems us from the love and power of sin; He abounds towards us with the riches of His grace; we are kept and sealed by the Holy Spirit; and ultimately shall be presented before Him, without blemish, to the praise of His glory.

PRAYER: What can I lack if I have Thee, Who art all Good? Verily, the heart is restless, until it rest in Thee alone. AMEN.

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#### **C H Spurgeon - "The Lord's portion is his people." — Deuteronomy 32:9 (Morning and Evening)**

How are they his? By his own sovereign choice. He chose them, and set his love upon them. This he did altogether apart from any goodness in them at the time, or any goodness which he foresaw in them. He had mercy on whom he would have mercy, and ordained a chosen company unto eternal life; thus, therefore, are they his by his unconstrained election.

They are not only his by choice, but by purchase. He has bought and paid for them to the utmost farthing, hence about his title there can be no dispute. Not with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord's portion has been fully redeemed. There is no mortgage on his estate; no suits can be raised by opposing claimants, the price was paid in open court, and the Church is the Lord's freehold for ever. See the blood-mark upon all the chosen, invisible to human eye, but known to Christ, for "the Lord knoweth them that are his"; he forgetteth none of those whom he has redeemed from among men; he counts the sheep for whom he laid down his life, and remembers well the Church for which he gave himself.

They are also his by conquest. What a battle he had in us before we would be won! How long he laid siege to our hearts! How often

he sent us terms of capitulation! but we barred our gates, and fenced our walls against him. Do we not remember that glorious hour when he carried our hearts by storm? When he placed his cross against the wall, and scaled our ramparts, planting on our strongholds the blood-red flag of his omnipotent mercy? Yes, we are, indeed, the conquered captives of his omnipotent love. Thus chosen, purchased, and subdued, the rights of our divine possessor are inalienable: we rejoice that we never can be our own; and we desire, day by day, to do his will, and to show forth his glory.

**Deuteronomy 32:10 "He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.**

- **found:** De 8:15-16 Ne 9:19-21 Ps 107:4,5 Song 8:5 Jer 2:6 Ho 13:5
- **cared for** De 4:36 Ne 9:20 Ps 32:7-10 147:19,20 Ro 2:18 3:2
- **guarded:** Ps 17:8 Pr 7:2 Zec 2:8

#### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 8:15-16 "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. 16" In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

Jeremiah 2:6 "They did not say, 'Where is the LORD Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and of pits, Through a land of drought and of deep darkness, Through a land that no one crossed And where no man dwelt?'

Nehemiah 9:19-21 You, in Your great compassion, Did not forsake them in the wilderness; The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, To guide them on their way, Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go. 20" You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, And You gave them water for their thirst. 21" Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want; Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the **apple of the eye**; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings

Proverbs 7:2 Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the **apple of your eye**.

Zechariah 2:8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, "After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the **apple of His eye**."

### **YAHWEH'S CARE AND PROTECTION OF HIS "PUPIL"**

In verses 10-12 Moses recounts how Yahweh led and sustained the infant nation of Israel in the wilderness.

**He found him in a desert land** - The English of the Septuagint has "He maintained him in the wilderness," conveying not simply finding but also providing for someone (Greek verb autarkeo = supply with necessities).

**Driver** - to illustrate His providential care; Israel was found (cf. Hos. 9:10; and the figure of the exposed child in Ez. 16:3-6) by Jehovah, at a time when it was homeless, and might readily have perished from want; it was tenderly taken charge of by Him, and brought to a land abundantly provided for its needs (comp. Jer. 2:6-7).

**And in the howling waste of a wilderness - NET** - "In an empty wasteland where animals howl." Moses depicts the perils of the wilderness journey. The word **waste** (וַחֲלָה) implies a wild and desolate expanse (Job 12:24, Ps. 107:40)

**NET NOTE**- Heb "in an empty, howling wasteland." The word "howling" is derived from a verbal root that typically refers to the wailing of mourners. Here it likely refers to the howling of desert animals, or perhaps to the howling wind, in which case one may translate, "in an empty, windy wasteland."

**Spurgeon** - And is not this also a true description of God's love and kindness to you and to me, beloved in the Lord? Did he not find us in the wilderness? Has he not led us about, trod by our experience instructed us, and has he not guarded us with as much watchful care as a man bestows upon the apple of his eye? Oh, blessed be his holy name, we owe everything to him! He giveth us everything that we have.

**He encircled him** - The Hebrew word **sabab** means to surrounding on all sides at the same time. It was if God ["circled the \(divine\) wagons"](#) so to speak (even as wagon trains did in crossing the dangerous frontier in America) to protect them from enemies. Yahweh provided protection (cf Ps 32:10).

**THOUGHT** - And does the omnipresent God not also surround us on all sides with His omnipotent protection, so that nothing contacts us that is not filtered through His sovereign, omnipotent hands? (Rhetorical of course).

Psalm 5:12 For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You **surround** him with favor as with a shield.

**Timothy Rogers, 1691.** When the strong man armed comes against us, when he darts his fiery darts, what can hurt us, if God compass us about with *his lovingkindness as with a shield*? He can disarm the tempter and restrain his malice, and tread him under our feet. If God be not with us, if he do not give us sufficient grace, so subtle, so powerful, so politic an enemy, will be too hard for us. How surely are we foiled, and get the worse, when we pretend to grapple with him in our own strength! How many falls, and how many bruises by those falls have we got, by relying too much on our own skill? How often have we had the help of God when we have humbly asked it! And how sure are we to get the victory, *if Christ pray for us that we do not fail!* #[Luke 22:31](#). Where can we go for shelter but unto God our Maker! When this lion of the forest does begin to roar, how will he terrify and vex us, till he that permits him for awhile to trouble us, be pleased to chain him up again!

Psalm 32:7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You **surround** me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

**Spurgeon - Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.** What a golden sentence! The man is encircled in song, surrounded by dancing mercies, all of them proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle, it completely rings him round; on all sides he hears music. Before him hope sounds the cymbals, and behind him gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy, and all this for the very man who, a few weeks ago, was roaring all the day long. How great a change! What wonders grace has done and still can do! **Selah.** There was a need of a pause, for love so amazing needs to be pondered, and joy so great demands quiet contemplation, since language fails to express it.

Psalm 32:10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall **surround** him.

**Spurgeon** - Faith is here placed as the opposite of wickedness, since it is the source of virtue. Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it, dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded with the bodyguard of mercies. May it be given to us of the Lord at all times to believe in the mercy of God, even when we cannot see traces of its working, for to the believer, mercy is as all surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it. The wicked have a hive of wasps around them, *many sorrows*; but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us.

Psalm 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also **surrounds** You.

Psalm 125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD **surrounds** His people From this time forth and forever.

**Spurgeon** - The hill of Zion is the type of the believer's constancy, and the surrounding mountains are made emblems of the all surrounding presence of the Lord. The mountains around the holy city, though they do not make a circular wall, are, nevertheless, set like sentinels to guard her gates. God doth not enclose his people within ramparts and bulwarks, making their city to be a prison; but yet he so orders the arrangements of his providence that his saints are as safe as if they dwelt behind the strongest fortifications. What a double security the two verses set before us (Ps 125:1-2+)! First, we are established, and then entrenched; settled, and then sentinelled: made like a mount, and then protected as if by mountains. This is no matter of poetry, it is so in fact; and it is no matter of temporary privilege, but it shall be so for ever. Date when we please, "from henceforth" Jehovah encircles his people: look on as far as we please, the protection extends "even for ever." Note, it is not said that Jehovah's power or wisdom defends believers, but he himself is round about them: they have his personality for their protection, his Godhead for their guard. We are here taught that the Lord's people are those who trust him, for they are thus described in the first verses: the line of faith is the line of grace, those who trust in

the Lord are chosen of the Lord. The two verses together prove the eternal safety of the saints: they must abide where God has placed them, and God must for ever protect them from all evil. It would be difficult to imagine greater safety than is here set forth.

Psalm 139:5 You have **enclosed** me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

**Spurgeon** - As though we were caught in an ambush, or besieged by an army which has wholly beleaguered the city walls, we are surrounded by the Lord. God has set us where we be, and beset us wherever we be. Behind us there is God recording our sins, or in grace blotting out the remembrance of them; and before us there is God foreknowing all our deeds, and providing for all our wants. We cannot turn back and so escape him, for he is behind; we cannot go forward and outmarch him, for he is before. He not only beholds us, but he besets us; and lest there should seem any chance of escape, or lest we should imagine that the surrounding presence is yet a distant one, it is added,

Psalm 142:7 Bring my soul out of prison, So that I may give thanks to Your name; The righteous will **surround** me, For You will deal bountifully with me.”

**Surround** (04141) (**sabab**) to turn about, go around, surround, encircle, to turn, go around, turn around (change direction). Vine - This verb occurs only in Hebrew (including post-biblical Hebrew) and Ugaritic. Nouns using these radicals appear in Arabic and Akkadian. Biblical Hebrew attests the word in all periods and about 160 times. Basically this verb represents a circular movement—“to take a turning.” First, it refers to such movement in general. The first occurrence of **sabab** having this emphasis is in Gen. 42:24, where Joseph “turned himself about” from his brothers and wept. Here the verb does not tell the precise direction of his departure, only that he left their presence. Similarly, when Samuel was told that Saul went to Carmel and “is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal” (1 Sam. 15:12), we are not told that he reversed direction in order to get from his origin to Carmel and Gilgal. God led Israel out of the way (by an out-of-the-way route) when He took them into the Promised Land. He wanted to avoid having them face war with the Philistines, an event that was unavoidable if they proceeded directly north from Egypt to Palestine. Therefore, He led them through the wilderness—a back route into the land: “But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea ...” (Exod. 13:18). Perhaps one of the passages where this meaning is clearest is Prov. 26:14, which speaks of the “turning” of a door on its hinges. An extension of this meaning occurs in 1 Sam. 5:8–9, “to remove, to take away”: “And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about [taken away] unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither” (cf. 2 Kings 16:18).

A second emphasis of **sabab** is “to go around,” in the sense of to proceed or be arranged in a circle. Joseph tells his family: “... Lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf” (Gen. 37:7). They moved so as to surround his sheaf. This is the action pictured when Israel besieged Jericho, except with the further nuance of encircling in a processional and religious march: “And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once” (Josh. 6:3). “To travel” and “to return” are used together to represent traveling a circuit. It is said of Samuel that he used to go annually “in circuit” (1 Sam. 7:16). Another variation of this emphasis is “to go around” a territory in order to avoid crossing through it: “And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass [go around] the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way” (Num. 21:4).

**Sabab** is also used of the completion of this movement, the state of literally or figuratively surrounding something or someone. The very first biblical occurrence of the word carries this force (according to many scholars): “The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth [flows around] the whole land of Havilah ...” (Gen. 2:11). Judg. 16:2, where the Gazites “compassed [Samson] in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city,” represents another occurrence of this nuance. When David spoke of the cords (as a trap) of Sheol “surrounding” him (2 Sam. 22:6), he meant that they actually touched him and held him fast. **Sabab** can be used of sitting down around a table. So Samuel told Jesse to fetch David, “for we will not sit down till he come hither” (1 Sam. 16:11). A third use of this verb is “to change direction.” This can be a change of direction [toward: “Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe ...” (Num. 36:9); the usual direction of passing on an inheritance is down family lines, and God’s commandment that the daughters of Zelophehad marry within their father’s families would make certain that this movement of things not be interrupted. This emphasis appears more clearly in 1 Sam. 18:11: “And David [escaped] out of his presence twice”; it is certain that David is putting as much space between himself and Saul as possible. He is “running away or turning away” (cf. 1 Sam. 22:17). **Sabab** may also refer to a change of direction, as in Num. 34:4:

“And your border shall turn....”

There are three special nuances under this emphasis. First, the verb may mean “to roam through” as a scout looking for water: “... And they fetched a compass [made a circuit] of seven days’ journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them” (2 Kings 3:9). Some scholars suggest that this is the idea expressed in Gen. 2:11 that the Pison meandered through Havilah rather than flowed around it. Second, **Sabab** may be used of “turning something over” to someone. So Adonijah said of Solomon: “... The kingdom was mine, ... howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother’s ...” (1 Kings 2:15). Third, **Sabab** may be used of “changing or turning one thing into another”: “And the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem ...” (Zech. 14:10). ([Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Swanson - SALAB 1. (qal) go around, surround, encircle**, i.e., move around an object with linear motion, which can conclude with an object being encircled or surrounded at each spatial position around the object (Jdg 16:2), note: this can be a threatening or protecting motion; (nif) surrounded (Ge 19:4; Jos 7:9; Jdg 19:22; Eze 41:7); (polel) surround, shield, go about, gather around (Dt 32:10; Ps 7:8; 26:6; 32:7, 10; 55:11; 59:7,15; Song 3:2; Jer 31:22); (hif) cause to surround, carry around (Ex 13:18; 1Ch 14:14); (hof) surrounding (Eze 41:7); **2. (qal) winds through, goes around**, i.e., linear motion which includes a arching, rounding motion (Dt 2:1); (nif) turn, change direction (Nu 34:4, 5; Jos 15:3, 10; 16:6; 18:14; 19:14; Jer 31:39; Eze 1:9, 12; Eze 10:11b); (hif) turn (Jdg 18:23); (hof) be turned (Isa 28:27); **3. (qal) turn**, i.e., a non-linear pivot motion (Pr 26:14); (nif) pivot, swing (Eze 26:2); (hof) hinged (Eze 41:24); **4. (nif) turn in a circle, roll**, i.e., the spinning motion of a wheel (Eze 1:17; Eze 10:11 a; 10:16); **5. (hof) set, be mounted**, i.e., pertaining to the placing of an object into a secure setting so as not to move (Ex 28:11; 39:6, 13); **6. (piel) change over**, i.e., cause a difference by differing the nature or relationship of an object or event (2Sa 14:20); (nif) turned over, formally, surrounded (Jer 6:12); (hif) bring over, change over (2Sa 3:12); (hof) be changed (Nu 32:38); **7. (polel) engulf**, i.e., be surrounded by a mass (Jnh 2:4,6); **8. unit: (hif) פָּנָה אֶת פָּנָיו (sā-ḥăḇ ’ēṭ pā-ně(h)) sulk**, formally, turn the face, i.e., be in an offended, angry mood (1Ki 21:4), note: for another interp in Eze 41:7b

Salab - 153v - about(2), all around(1), around(2), around\*(1), away\*(1), bring back(1), bring...over(1), brought(2), brought around(2), brought about(1), change(1), changed(5), circle around(2), circled(2), circled around(1), circling(1), circuit(1), circumference\*(3), come around(1), completely\*(1), directed(1), driven(1), encircled(2), encircling(1), encompass(2), engulfed(2), escaped(1), faced\*(2), flows around(2), form(1), gathered around(2), go about(3), go around(4), led around(2), made a circuit(1), make the rounds(2), march around(3), marched around(3), measured the circumference(1), opened(1), removed(2), returned(1), set(3), set\*(1), sit(1), surround(7), surrounded(18), surrounding(2), surrounds(2), swinging(1), swirling(1), taken around(1), transferred(2), turn(13), turn around(2), turn aside(1), turn away(2), turn back(1), turned(12), turned about(4), turned around(2), turned aside(2), turned away(3), turned over(1), turned round(1), turning(5), turns(1), walk about(2), went about(1), went throughout(2). Gen. 2:11; Gen. 2:13; Gen. 19:4; Gen. 37:7; Gen. 42:24; Exod. 13:18; Exod. 28:11; Exod. 39:6; Exod. 39:13; Num. 21:4; Num. 32:38; Num. 34:4; Num. 34:5; Num. 36:7; Num. 36:9; Deut. 2:1; Deut. 2:3; Deut. 32:10; Jos. 6:3; Jos. 6:4; Jos. 6:7; Jos. 6:11; Jos. 6:14; Jos. 6:15; Jos. 7:9; Jos. 15:3; Jos. 15:10; Jos. 16:6; Jos. 18:14; Jos. 19:14; Jdg. 11:18; Jdg. 16:2; Jdg. 18:23; Jdg. 19:22; Jdg. 20:5; 1 Sam. 5:8; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 7:16; 1 Sam. 15:12; 1 Sam. 15:27; 1 Sam. 16:11; 1 Sam. 17:30; 1 Sam. 18:11; 1 Sam. 22:17; 1 Sam. 22:18; 1 Sam. 22:22; 2 Sam. 3:12; 2 Sam. 5:23; 2 Sam. 14:20; 2 Sam. 14:24; 2 Sam. 18:15; 2 Sam. 18:30; 2 Sam. 20:12; 2 Sam. 22:6; 1 Ki. 2:15; 1 Ki. 5:3; 1 Ki. 7:15; 1 Ki. 7:23; 1 Ki. 7:24; 1 Ki. 8:14; 1 Ki. 18:37; 1 Ki. 21:4; 2 Ki. 3:9; 2 Ki. 3:25; 2 Ki. 6:15; 2 Ki. 8:21; 2 Ki. 9:18; 2 Ki. 9:19; 2 Ki. 16:18; 2 Ki. 20:2; 2 Ki. 23:34; 2 Ki. 24:17; 1 Chr. 10:14; 1 Chr. 12:23; 1 Chr. 13:3; 1 Chr. 14:14; 1 Chr. 16:43; 2 Chr. 4:2; 2 Chr. 4:3; 2 Chr. 6:3; 2 Chr. 13:13; 2 Chr. 14:7; 2 Chr. 17:9; 2 Chr. 18:31; 2 Chr. 21:9; 2 Chr. 23:2; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 33:14; 2 Chr. 35:22; 2 Chr. 36:4; Ezr. 6:22; Job 16:13; Job 40:22; Ps. 7:7; Ps. 17:11; Ps. 18:5; Ps. 22:12; Ps. 22:16; Ps. 26:6; Ps. 32:7; Ps. 32:10; Ps. 48:12; Ps. 49:5; Ps. 55:10; Ps. 59:6; Ps. 59:14; Ps. 71:21; Ps. 88:17; Ps. 109:3; Ps. 114:3; Ps. 114:5; Ps. 118:10; Ps. 118:11; Ps. 118:12; Ps. 140:9; Prov. 26:14; Eccl. 1:6; Eccl. 2:20; Eccl. 7:25; Eccl. 9:14; Eccl. 12:5; Cant. 2:17; Cant. 3:2; Cant. 3:3; Cant. 5:7; Cant. 6:5; Isa. 23:16; Isa. 28:27; Isa. 38:2; Jer. 6:12; Jer. 21:4; Jer. 31:22; Jer. 31:39; Jer. 41:14; Jer. 52:21; Ezek. 1:9; Ezek. 1:12; Ezek. 1:17; Ezek. 7:22; Ezek. 10:11; Ezek. 10:16; Ezek. 26:2; Ezek. 41:7; Ezek. 41:24; Ezek. 42:19; Ezek. 47:2; Hos. 7:2; Hos. 11:12; Jon. 2:3; Jon. 2:5; Hab. 2:16; Zech. 14:10

**He cared for him** - Literal Heb “he gave him understanding.” **NET** is a better translation “taught him,” for Hebrew word **biyn** primarily means understanding, and the Lxx translates it with **paideuo** meaning to chasten, correct, educate, teach, train, give guidance.

**He guarded him as the pupil of His eye** - **ESV, NIV, KJV** = “apple of His eye.” What is more tender and precious than the pupil of one’s eye? The metaphor of pupil or “**apple of one’s eye**” speaks of one’s treasure, that which is precious and dear. This was Israel to the heart of Yahweh! Even in their rebelliousness. Is this not a picture of the Father’s unconditional love. Amazing grace indeed!

**John Maxwell on as the pupil of His eye** - The Hebrew reads literally, “He kept them as the ‘little men’ of His eye.” How close do you have to get to another person before you see yourself reflected in that person’s eye? God has gotten that close to Israel. He knows His people face to face. ([Preacher’s Commentary](#))

**Guarded** (preserved, watched) ([05341](#)) **natsar** means to guard, keep, observe, hide, preserve, hide. Many of the uses of natsar are nuanced by the object that is being watched or guarded. The first use in Ex 34:7 speaks of God keeping His faithfulness! Natsar is used with a similar sense of keeping faithfulness in “keeping” the covenant (Dt. 33:9); “keeping” the law (Ps. 105:45); “keeping” the rules of parents (Pr. 6:20). Scripture uses **natsar** to describe men guarding truths about God (Ps 25:10, Ps 119:2, 22, 33, 34, 100, 129, Pr 3:1)

**Pupil or apple** (of the eye) ([0380](#))(**iyshown/ishon**) (“little man of the eye” = pupil, “apple of the eye”) and is translated in Lxx with the Greek noun kore = primary meaning = ‘girl, young woman’ Homer. et al; On a smaller scale = ‘doll’ Dio Chrys. 31, 153). The tiny image reflected in the iris of the eye gave rise to the use of the term kore (=Lat. pupilla) to denote the ‘pupil’ of the eye (e.g., used this way by Hippocrates; Septuagint;



Philo) pupil, in our literature kore is used in imagery of something held dear: agapan os kore tou ophthalmou ~ love as the pupil of one's eye = love as the darling, favorite, or 'apple' of the eye. Kore is used in Deut 32:10; 3 Macc 5:47; 4 Macc 18:21; Ps 17:8; Odes 2:10; Prov 7:2; Pr 20:9; Sir 17:22;

**Ishon** - 5v - apple(2), middle(1), pupil(1), time(1).Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8; Prov. 7:2; Prov. 7:9; Prov. 20:20

**Disciple's Study Bible** - God found Israel in a barren, desert land with no one to care for her and called Israel to be His own chosen people. His blessings came to the nation in a remarkable and unlimited way. He was patient with His people. When everyone else abandoned her, God still cared for Israel and provided for her. He had a father's undying love for his children. He did not always approve of what His children did, but He always loved His children and stood ready to receive them when they turned back in repentance. Perhaps the deepest and most comprehensive word that can be said about God is that He is love, and that all of His actions are loving actions. God's love for His people does not mean that He is blind to their sins when they turn aside from Him. Nor does God's love mean that He never brings suffering to His people. The love of God means that God must chastise His people, on occasion, because He loves them. When God's love is expressed in wrath or judgment, it is always wrath from a broken heart of love and with a purpose of bringing His people to obedience and maturity.

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### **Blink and Think of God**

He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye. Deuteronomy 32:10

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 32:1–12

"God is like an eyelid," my friend Ryley said, and I blinked in surprise. What could she mean by that?

"Tell me more," I replied. Together, we had been studying surprising pictures of God in the Bible, things like God as a laboring mother (Isa. 42:14) or as a beekeeper (7:18), but this one was new to me. Ryley pointed me to Deuteronomy 32, where Moses praises the way God takes care of His people. Verse 10 says that God shields and protects His people, guarding them "as the apple of his eye."

But the word we translate apple, Ryley told me, literally means pupil. And what encircles and guards the pupil? The eyelid, of course! God is like the eyelid, which instinctively protects the tender eye. The eyelid guards the eye from danger, and by blinking helps remove dirt or dust. It keeps sweat out of the eye. It lubricates the eyeball, keeping it healthy. It closes, allowing rest.

As I considered the picture of God as an eyelid, I couldn't help but thank God for the many metaphors He's given us to help us understand His love for us. When we close our eyes at night and open them in the morning, we can think of God, and praise Him for His tender protection and care for us. By: Amy Peterson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thank You, God, for using surprising metaphors to help us understand You better. Thanks for guarding us just as the eyelid guards the eye.

When you blink, remember to thank God for His protection.

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### **Hovering Over Us**

He shielded him and cared for him . . . like an eagle that . . . hovers over its young. Deuteronomy 32:10–11

Today's Scripture & Insight: Deuteronomy 32:7–12

Betty's daughter arrived home from an overseas trip, feeling unwell. When her pain became unbearable, Betty and her husband took her to the emergency room. The doctors and nurses set to work, and after a few hours one of the nurses said to Betty, "She's going to be okay! We're going to take good care of her and get her healed up." In that moment, Betty felt peace and love flood over her. She realized that while she hovered over her daughter anxiously, the Lord is the perfect parent who nurtures His children, comforting us in difficult times.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the Lord reminded His people how, when they were wandering in the desert, He cared for them as a loving parent who hovers over its young. He never left them, but was like an eagle "that spreads its wings" to catch its children and "carries them aloft" (32:11). He wanted them to remember that although they experienced hardship and strife in the desert, He didn't abandon them.

We too may face challenges of many kinds, but we can take comfort and courage in this reminder that our God will never leave us. When we feel that we are falling, the Lord like an eagle will spread His wings to catch us (v. 11) as He brings us peace. By: Amy

Boucher Pye ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father God, Your love as a parent is greater than anything I can imagine. May my confidence rest in You, and may I share Your love with others.

Our God hovers over us with love.

**Deuteronomy 32:11 "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.**

- Ex 19:4 Isa 31:5 40:31 46:4 63:9 Heb 11:3 Rev 12:4

#### **Related Passages:**

Exodus 19:4+ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.

Isaiah 31:5 Like flying birds so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it; He will pass over and rescue it.

### **YAHWEH IS LIKE AN EAGLE CARRYING ITS YOUNG**

**Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions** - This verse speaks of the training of Israel to "fly on its own," so to speak. Notice this verse begins with like so clearly is a simile, a comparison. God did not literally carry Israel in the desert (or later). The point is that (like the apple of His eye), God was watching over Israel (in context especially when she was newly born from her Egyptian slavery) as Israel "learned to fly." Unfortunately Israel did not "learn to fly" using Yahweh's instructions, but repeatedly rebelled against Him until they were destroyed (exiled) from the Promised Land. Regarding the picture of an eagle catching its young eaglets if they fail to fly the first few times, some have stated this is an error in the Bible, because there are no reports in [ornithology](#) (bird watcher) literature. **However read the interesting discussion of this verse in [Answers in Genesis](#)** where they record two anecdotal reports of eagles dropping and catching their young eaglets as they teach them to fly

"Last summer while my father and I were extracting honey at the apiary about a mile southeast of Tliacher School, Ojai, California, we noticed a golden eagle teaching its young one to fly. It was about ten o'clock. The mother started from the nest in the crags, and roughly handling the young one, she allowed him to drop, I should say, about ninety feet, then she would swoop down under him, wings spread, and he would alight on her back. She would soar to the top of the range with him and repeat the process. One time she waited perhaps fifteen minutes between flights. I should say the farthest she let him fall was 150 feet. My father and I watched this, spellbound, for over an hour. I do not know whether the young one gained confidence by this method or not. A few days later father and I rode to the Cliff and out on Overhanging Rock. The eagle's nest was empty." (Quote attributed to a Miss F. E. Shuman.)

V.C. Holmgren wrote, "Many ornithologists have thought that the Bible picture of an eagle carrying her young was merely figurative, but in recent years certain reliable observers have actually seen a parent bird let its young rest for a moment on the feathered back—especially when there was no other roosting place in sight. When an eagle nests on the ledge of a sheer-walled canyon, many feet above the earth, with no jutting tree or protruding rock to break the fall, the quick movement of a mother bird to offer her own back to a frightened fledgling may be the only way to let it live to try its wings again." (Both quotes from [Answers in Genesis](#))

**Driver** - as the bird stirs up its nest, with the object of encouraging its young ones to flight, but at the same time hovers over them so as to be at hand to support them on its wings, in case their strength fails and they are in danger of falling, so Jehovah (the figure of the bird being still retained) spread out His wings, and bare Israel upon them, until its powers were matured, and the nation was able to support itself alone (cf. Hos. 11:3). W. L. Alexander quotes from Davy, *Salmonia*, p. 87, the following pertinent illustration: "Two parent eagles on Ben Weevis were teaching their offspring, two young birds, the manoeuvres of flight." Rising from the top of a mountain, they "at first made small circles and the young imitated them; they paused on their wings waiting till they had made their first flight, holding them on their expanded wings when they appeared exhausted, and then took a second and larger gyration, always rising towards the sun, and enlarging their circle of flight, so as to make a gradually ascending spiral."

**Keil** - Under the figure of an eagle, which teaches its young to fly, and in doing so protects them from injury with watchful affection, Moses describes the care with which the Lord came to the relief of His people in their helplessness, and assisted them to develop their strength. This figure no doubt refers more especially to the protection and assistance of God experienced by Israel in its journey through the Arabian desert; but it must not be restricted to this. It embraces both the **deliverance of Israel out of Egypt by the outstretched arm of the Lord**, as we may see from a comparison with Ex 19:4+, where the Lord is said to have brought His people out of Egypt **on eagles' wings**, and also the introduction into Canaan, when the Lord drove the Canaanites out from before them and destroyed them. This verse contains an independent thought; the first half is the [protasis](#), the second the [apodosis](#). The nominative to "**spread**" is Jehovah; and the suffixes in [yiqacheehuw (H3947)] and [yisaa'eehuw (H5375)] ("**caught**" and "**carried**") refer to Israel or Jacob (v9), like the suffixes in v10. Examples of this, according to the popular belief, are given by Bochart (Hieroz. ii. p. 762). [richeep (heb 7363)], from [raachap] to be loose or slack (<Jer. 23:9>): in the Piel it is applied to a bird in the sense of loosening its wings, as distinguished from binding its wings to its body; hence (1) to sit upon eggs with loosened wings, and (2) to fly with loosened wings. Here it is used in the latter sense, because the young are referred to. The point of comparison between the conduct of God towards Jacob and the acts of an eagle towards its young, is the loving care with which He trained Israel to independence. The carrying of Israel upon the eagle's wings of divine love and omnipotence was manifested in the most glorious way in the guidance of it by the pillar of cloud and fire, though it was not so exclusively in this visible vehicle of the gracious presence of God as that the comparison can be restricted to this phenomenon alone. ([Deuteronomy 32](#))

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### **Deuteronomy 32:1-14 FREE-FALLING**

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." - Deuteronomy 33:27

In the tender song of Moses found in today's Bible reading, God is portrayed as a dedicated mother eagle who can be trusted by her young, even in the scary experience of learning to fly (Deuteronomy 32:11).

A mother eagle builds a comfortable nest for her young, padding it with feathers from her own breast.

But God-given instinct that builds that secure nest also forces the eaglets out of it before long. Eagles are made to fly, and love will not fail to teach them. Only then will they become what they are meant to be.

So one day the mother eagle will disturb the twigs of the nest, making it an uncomfortable place to stay. Then she will pick up a perplexed eaglet, soar into the sky, and drop it. The little bird will begin to free-fall. Where is Mama now? She is not far away. Quickly she will swoop under and catch the fledgling on one strong wing. She will repeat this exercise until each eaglet is capable of flying on its own.

Are you afraid of free-falling? Remember, God will fly to your rescue and spread His everlasting arms beneath you. He will also teach you something new and wonderful through it. Falling into God's arms is nothing to be afraid of. - J E Yoder ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

He will ever keep your soul,  
What would harm, He will control:  
In the home and by the way  
He will keep you day by day.

God's love does not always keep us from trials  
but always sees us through the trials

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### **F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 32:11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest that fluttereth over her young.**

Three references are made to the eagle in this passage.

**She stirs up her nest.** — When her fledglings are old enough to fly, but linger around the few bits of stick, dignified as a nest, the mother-bird breaks it up, and scatters them. How much better this, than that they should miss the luxury of flight on outspread pinions in the blue vault, and of basking in the eye of the sun. So when the Father sees his children clinging to earth's bare rocks, captured and held by the poor sticks they have gathered, and missing the ascension — glory, He breaks up the nest. The fortune is dispersed, the home broken up, the aspect of the life changed. We are then able to enjoy the bliss of life in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus.

**As flutters over her young.** — They stand seared and wretched on the edge of the rock, but she careers gently above them, now edging around, now mounting, then dropping far below to rise again. So would she allure them to follow her example. Here again we have an emblem of God's efforts to make us imitators of Himself, to teach us the possibilities that await us in Jesus.

**She spreads forth her goings and takes them.** — Incited by the mother's endeavors, the eaglet may venture on the untried air, and lo! the unaccustomed wings fail beneath its weight. It falls, but not far, for the mother swoops beneath, and bears it up and away. Trembling soul, God is beneath thee. If thy faith fails, and thou art falling, like another Peter, into a bottomless abyss, He will catch thee, and bear thee up, and teach thee the mystery of the more abundant life.

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Deuteronomy 32:11-12 A farmer noticed a bird busily building a nest. Unfortunately, the spot was in a heap of dead branches recently pruned from some trees. Realizing that this was a dangerous place for hatching a brood, the farmer destroyed the nest. The next day, the persistent mother-to-be tried again, and for a second time the farmer thwarted her efforts. On the third day the bird finally began constructing her nest on a limb near the man's kitchen door. This time he let it remain. The unsafe pile of branches from which he had twice driven her was burned long before the bird's eggs were hatched. We too find that at times our plans are thwarted. We wonder why God would break up the earthly nests we have struggled and worked so hard to build. But were we able to see as He sees, we would know that He seeks for us a higher destiny, a place of greater security and provision for our needs. — H. G. Bosch

**Deuteronomy 32:12 "The LORD alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him.**

- **LORD:** De 1:31 Ne 9:12 Ps 27:11 Ps 78:14,52,53 Ps 80:1 Ps 136:16 Isa 46:4 Isa 63:9-13
- **no:** Isa 43:11,12 Isa 44:7,8

#### **Related Passage:**

Deuteronomy 1:31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.'

Nehemiah 9:12 "And **with a pillar of cloud You led them by day, And with a pillar of fire by night** To light for them the way In which they were to go.

Psalms 78:14; 52; 53 Then **He led them with the cloud by day And all the night with a light of fire.** 52 But **He led forth His own people** like sheep And guided them in the wilderness like a flock; 53 **He led them safely**, so that they did not fear; But the sea engulfed their enemies.

Ps 81:9 "Let there be no strange god (Dt 32:16) among you; Nor shall you worship any **foreign god**.

Malachi 2:11 Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves and has married the daughter of a **foreign god**.

### **YAHWEH WAS THEIR "WILDERNESS GUIDE"**

**The LORD alone guided him - Guided** is imperfect and indicates God was continually guiding them during this time.

**And there was no foreign god with him - NLT** has "they following no foreign gods." **CSB** has "with no help from a foreign god" which gives a good sense of the intended meaning that it was Yahweh alone who led Israel. The point is that other "gods" has no part in leading Israel in the wilderness, which makes it all the more preposterous and groundless that Israel should subsequently neglect Him and forget Him (Dt 32:18)! Their actions reflect inexcusable ingratitude.

**Driver** - In thus sustaining Israel through the desert, Jehovah was, in fact, leading him (Ex. 13:21, 15:13) to his home: He was, moreover, doing this alone, without the co-operation of any other god.

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#### **Deuteronomy 32:7-12 Reframing The Picture**

As an eagle stirs up its nest, . . . spreading out its wings, . . . so the Lord alone led [Jacob]. —Deuteronomy 32:11-12

For 3 months I had a ringside seat— or should I say a bird's-eye view—of God's amazing handiwork. Ninety feet above the floor of Norfolk Botanical Garden, workers installed a webcam focused on the nest of a family of bald eagles, and online viewers were allowed to watch.

When the eggs hatched, Mama and Papa Eagle were attentive to their offspring, taking turns hunting for food and guarding the nest.

But one day when the eaglets still looked like fuzzballs with beaks, both parents disappeared. I worried that harm had come to them.

My concern was unfounded. The webcam operator enlarged the camera angle, and there was Mama Eagle perched on a nearby branch.

As I pondered this “reframed” picture, I thought of times when I have feared that God had abandoned me. The view in the forest heights of Virginia reminded me that my vision is limited. I see only a small part of the entire scene.

Moses used eagle imagery to describe God. As eagles carry their young, God carries His people (Deut. 32:11-12). Despite how it may seem, the Lord “is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27). This is true even when we feel abandoned. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Under His wings I am safely abiding;  
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,  
Still I can trust Him—I know He will keep me;  
He has redeemed me and I am His child.  
—Cushing

Because the Lord is watching over us, we don't have to fear the dangers around us

**Deuteronomy 32:13 "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock,**

- **ride:** De 33:26,29 Isa 58:14 Eze 36:2
- **honey:** Job 29:6 Ps 81:16 Isa 48:21 Eze 21:17

## RIDING HIGH WITH YAHWEH

Now Moses recalls how Israel was enabled to take possession of the fertile soil of Canaan.

**He made him ride on the high places of the earth - NET** = "He enabled him to travel over the high terrain of the land"

**Driver** - In clause a the poet uses a fine imaginative figure, implying triumphant and undisputed possession; similarly Dt 33:29 (תדרך), Hab. 3:19 (ידרכני), Ps. 18:34 (יעמידני); and of God, marching as sovereign over the earth, Am. 4:13, Mic. 1:3, or sea, Job. 9:8 (in all דרך) This passage suggests the terms of the promise in Is. 58:14.

**And he ate the produce of the field** - "Fruitage of the field (תנובת שדי) exactly so Lam. 4:9" (**Driver**) When they entered the Promised Land, they were given the **produce** of the Canaanites initially and thereafter Yahweh sent early and latter rains to make the land incredibly productive.

**And He made him suck honey from the rock - NIV** - "He nourished him with honey from the rock"

**Driver - Honey out of the crag**, - even places that might be expected to be naturally barren yielded rich and valued products, which Israel might suck—i.e. enjoy with relish (Dt 33:19, Is. 60:16, 66:11, 12)—in its Palestinian home. Palestine, says Tristram (DB.2 i. 377), is by its flora well suited to bees; and in the wadys “innumerable caves and fissures of the dry limestone rocks afford shelter and protection for the combs.” Hence honey might literally be found oozing out from among the rocks.

**And oil from the flinty rock** (cf Dt 8:15) - NET - "olive oil from the hardest of rocks," "Olive oil from rock probably suggests olive trees growing on rocky ledges and yet doing so productively." (**NET NOTE**) The olive also flourishes in sandy, and even in rocky soil (cf. Job 29:6).

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**Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask - DEUTERONOMY 32:13–14—How could there be sufficient pasture for the herds of 2 million people in a desert?**

**PROBLEM:** The Bible informs us that the children of Israel wandered in the “desert” for 40 years (cf. Ex. 19:2; 23:31). They numbered over 600,000 adult men (Ex. 12:37; Num. 1:1–4:49), which would be a total population of some 2 million. But, Deuteronomy 32:13–14 speaks of there being plenty of produce for them and their flocks, which seems highly improbable for this many people and flocks in a “desert.”

## **SOLUTION: Several things should be kept in mind.**

First of all, the Hebrew word “desert” does not imply the total desolation that it may connote today. It can be translated “wilderness.” There were rivers and pastures in this wilderness.

Second, there is good evidence, even from modern times, that this wilderness had far more water and vegetation than it presently does, as is demonstrated by archaeological exploration of the remains of previous civilizations in that area.

Finally, God Himself provided for all their needs in the wilderness in several ways:

1. God provided them ample food (manna) for the entire 40 years (Ex. 16:35).
2. He also gave water “abundantly” for them and their flocks (Num. 20:11).
3. Since they came with “a great deal of livestock” (Ex. 12:38), they would naturally have plenty of milk to drink.
4. Since the land was apparently more arid than today, there were undoubtedly natural rivers, springs, and pastures as well.
5. By commerce with the surrounding nations (Midianites, Edomites, and Ishmaelites), they could obtain other needed things with the large amount of silver and gold they took from Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:35–36).

## **Deuteronomy 32:14 Curds of cows, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs, And rams, the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the finest of the wheat-- And of the blood of grapes you drank wine.**

- **Curds of cows:** Ge 18:8 Jdg 5:25 2Sa 17:29 Job 20:17 Isa 7:15,22
- **Bashan:** Ps 22:12 Eze 39:18 Am 4:1 Mic 7:14
- **the fat:** Ps 81:16 147:14
- **blood:** Ge 49:11 Mt 26:28,29 Joh 6:55,56

### **Related Passage:**

Genesis 49:11 “He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes.

**Curds of cows, and milk of the flock** - [Driver](#) comments “The poet eloquently continues his enumeration of the choice and varied products of Palestine—the flocks and herds which fattened upon its pastures, and the vines which clothed its hillsides with purple crops. חמאה is not “butter,” but curdled or sour milk, still esteemed in the East as a refreshing beverage, and often offered to travellers. It is now called leben (DB. s.v. MILK). Cp. Ge. 18:8, Jdg. 5:25, 2 Sa 17:29, Job 20:17, 29:6.”

**With fat of lambs and rams, the breed of Bashan, and goats** - Livestock was Israel's in abundance. [Driver](#) - “it seems to denote such as, from their age or kind, were a special delicacy: cf. 1 S. 15:9, Am. 6:4.”

[Driver](#) - **Herds of Bashan** celebrated for their strength and size (cf. on Dt 3:1).

**With the finest of the wheat and of the blood of grapes you drank wine**- The staples wheat and grapes were given to Israel.

[Driver](#) explains the Hebrew word finest is most often translated “fat” - **Fat**, figurative of what is best or finest, occurs Nu. 18:12 (the “fat” of oil and of new wine), and in the phrase “fat of wheat,” Ps. 81:16) (doubtless a reminiscence from this passage) Ps 147:14: the fat about the kidneys being the richest (cf. Lev. 3:4; Is. 34:6 “kidney-fat of rams”), the “kidney-fat of wheat” denotes the choicest and most nutritious wheat.

## **Deuteronomy 32:15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked-- You are grown fat, thick, and sleek-- Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation.**

- **Jeshurun:** De 33:5,26 Isa 44:2
- **kicked:** 1Sa 2:29 Acts 9:5
- **grown fat, thick, and sleek:** De 31:20 Job 15:27 Ps 17:10 73:7 119:70 Isa 6:10 Ac 28:27 Ro 2:4,5
- **then he:** De 6:10-12 Dt 8:10-14 31:16,20 Ne 9:25 Isa 1:4 Jer 2:5 5:7,28 Ho 13:6
- **the Rock:** De 32:4 2Sa 22:47 Ps 18:46 89:26 95:1

### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 33:5 "And He was king in **Jeshurun**, When the heads of the people were gathered, The tribes of Israel together.

Deuteronomy 33:26 "There is none like the God of **Jeshurun**, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty.

Isaiah 44:2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you **Jeshurun** whom I have chosen.

Deuteronomy 8:10-14+ "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. 11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; 12 otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, 13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Jeremiah 5:28 'They are **fat**, they are **sleek**, They also excel in deeds of wickedness; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; And they do not defend the rights of the poor.

1 Sa 2:29 'Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?'

## THE DANGER OF MATERIAL PROSPERITY

### Outline of the Song of Moses

- Israel's creation and Yahweh's gracious treatment (Dt 32:1-14, vv5-6 are perjorative toward Israel)
- Israel's unfaithfulness and spurning of Yahweh (Dt 32:15-19)
- Yahweh's judgment decreed (Dt 32:20-35)
- Yahweh's promise of victory over all adversaries of Israel (Dt 32:36-43)

Deuteronomy 32:15-18 details Israel's ingratitude, defection and rebellion which was the result of Yahweh's provision of an abundance of good things!

**THOUGHT** - Is there not a strong warning for us today, especially believers in America, who have so many good things from Yahweh and we so easily forget He is the Giver? I confess that I all too infrequently recall James 1:17+ to mind that " Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

**God's Warnings are serious**, but if they are heard and heeded, they bring blessing and life, not cursing and death. They are like the warnings at the Grand Canyon to not go too near the edge lest you fall and die. Seventeen people died at the Grand Canyon in 2018, out of about 6.4 million people who visited the canyon in 2018. GOD'S MESSAGE IS DON'T GO NEAR THE EDGE!

**But** - Another sad term of contrast.

**Jeshurun grew fat and kicked** - She was like an animal kicking at the one who feed and sustained her! **Jeshurun** (4x = Dt. 32:15, 33:5,26; Isa.44:2) means "the Upright One" (derived from [yasar](#) meaning straight, just, right) and is a term of endearment and refers ironically to Israel (Dt 33:5, 26), as what should have been their ideal character ("upright" = adhering strictly to moral principles). A good beginning ("Upright" of Israel's call = Ex 19:6, Dt 14:2) does not guarantee an upright course and a smooth landing, "[right side up](#)"! Moses is describing the [declension](#) of Israel from her ideal state of the "upright one." Elsewhere (33:5, 26, Is. 44:2† defecerant" (Calv.). Elsewhere **Jeshurun** is used as a title of honour (Dt 33:5,26; Isa.44:2

**Kicked** is used figuratively, resisting Yahweh's gentle, loving "prodding" with [the goad](#) of His Law, much like Paul (Saul) resisted the Lord's goad in Acts 26:14+ when Jesus asked "'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." Israel was just like Saul kicking against the goads! The **Septuagint** renders **grew fat** with the verb **apolaktizo** which means to engage in a kicking motion on which **BDAG** comments "in the use of Dt 32:15 in 1 Cl 3:1 (cp. Just., D. 20, 1), where the meaning in the light of the context probably means to 'kick up (the heels)', in a demonstration of proud (ED: I WOULD ADD

"REBELLIOUS") independence (and so "to spurn")." The Septuagint translation is even more dramatic (and tragic) reading "The beloved ([agapao](#) in perfect tense) One they kicked."

**Spurgeon** - Many can endure the trials of adversity who cannot escape the perils of prosperity. Solomon truly said, "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise;" and many a man has failed in that time of testing. When you come to be wealthy, to be admired, to receive honor among men, then is the time of your severest trial.

**Driver** - Israel, which ought to have been docile and obedient, like an ox—or perhaps (Calv. Ew.) like a horse—that had grown fat and strong through good feeding, and had consequently become intractable (cf. Hos. 4:16; Is. 10:27), turned rebelliously against its Owner and Benefactor.

**Grew fat** (cf Jer 5:28) means well fed, but in this context clearly speaks of material prosperity which paradoxically would lead to their spiritual famine! As **NIDOTTE** says **grew fat** in this context "has an adverse sense, denoting the moral turpitude that comes of excess wealth (Deut 32:15 [bis; NIV, fat and filled with food]; Jer 5:28)."

Nehemiah 9:25 "They captured fortified cities and a fertile land. They took possession of houses full of every good thing, Hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, Fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, were filled and grew fat, And reveled (delighted) in Your great goodness. (As they say "so far, so good," but sadly they soon forgot to "delight in Yahweh's goodness."

**You are grown fat, thick, and sleek** (See "commentary" in Jer 5:18 [above](#)) Moses identifies the assembly of Israel as **Jeshurun**. and then identifies their problem of failure to properly appreciate their material prosperity. Once they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land of milk and honey, they would eat and be "**satisfied**." (Dt 8:10+). **Grown fat** ([abab](#) in perfect mood - their fixed state or condition) is rendered in the Lxx with the verb **epachuno** which literally means to make fat, but here in the Lxx in the passive voice means to make insensitive, dull, unable to understand (as used in Mt 13:15 and Acts 28:27). Recall that in Dt 29:4 Moses declared "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear." The converse of not giving insight to the disobedient, is to give insight/understanding to the one who is obedient as Jesus declared in John 7:17 --"If anyone is **willing to do His will** (THAT IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL TRUTH), he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." Paul quoted part of Dt 29:4+ in Ro 11:8+ to describe how Israel as a nation had been judicially blinded as a result of its volitional (aka, willful) refusal to see or hear the true revelation and will of God. Here is the point, **grown fat** is not just a description of their physical condition but more significantly a description of their spiritual condition!

**THE PERIL OF PROSPERITY** - Deuteronomy 31:20+ "For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous (**PROSPERITY**), THEN (MARKER OF PROGRESSION IN A NARRATIVE) they will **turn** to other gods and **serve** them, and **spurn** Me and **break** My covenant.

**Then** - This marks progression in a narrative and here functions as introducing a cause (fat, et al) and effect (forsook) .

**He forsook God who made him - Made him** as in Dt 32:6. **NET** = "he deserted the God." Israel **Forsook** summarizes the declension of Israel (Lxx has [egkatalieipo](#) to **leave in a lurch**). This is a sad note for while Israel abandoned ([natash/natas](#)) God, the psalmist writes "the LORD will not abandon ([natash/natas](#)) His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance." (Ps 94:14) Moses had already warned them of the danger declaring "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God." (Dt 8:11+) And this same verse tells you how one forgets Yahweh which is "by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes."

**Forsook** (left)([05203](#)) [natash/natas](#) means to abandon, to forsake, to leave alone. About 50% of the 40 uses convey the idea to forsake, reject leave alone. The idea is to cause a relationship or association to cease until there is the possibility of renewal. Things abandoned or forsaken - Of land that should be "forsaken" in the seventh year (Ex. 23:11), of Israel who abandoned God (Dt. 32:15), of Saul's father who forgot about the donkeys (1 Sa 10:2), of David who left his flock (1 Sa 17:20), of the psalmist who pleaded with God not abandon him (Ps. 27:9), of God abandoning His dwelling place at Shiloh (Ps 78:60), of abandoning a quarrel (Pr 17:14), of a mother's teaching which should not be forsaken (Pr 6:20). Natash means to not permit when Laban was not allowed to kiss his grandchildren good-bye (Ge 31:28).

**And scorned the Rock of his salvation** - **KJV** = "Lightly esteemed" **ESV** = "scoffed at." **NIV** = "rejected." Israel treated Yahweh with it disgust, contempt, disapproval or as if the Worthy One was unworthy! Amazing! The English rendering of the Greek Septuagint is "departed from God his Saviour (Lxx = [soterios](#))." **Salvation** is the Hebrew word [yeshua](#).

**Driver** sums up v15 - The four clauses of this verse express a climax: a states the cause and beginning of Israel's lapse, b depicts it as confirmed, c describes how Israel forsook Jehovah, d how it ended by loading Him with contempt.

**Scorned** ([05034](#))([nabel](#) cp **nabal** = fool) means to fall away, to fail, to despise. Nabel represents a state or



condition of leaves when they are dried but still attached to the tree-parallel to dry grass. The image of withered leaves about to fall given by this verb or other dried up vegetation often serves as a figure of judgment. The verb is used only five times, once to describe one who exalts himself as foolish. Four times, in the Piel stem, it expresses disgust or contempt, by a person who scorns the rock of his salvation (Deut 32:15), or treats his father contemptuously (Mic 7:6). God makes vile the recalcitrant (Nah 3:6). The prophet prays to fend off God's wrath so that he will not disgrace the throne of his glory (Jer 14:21). The derivatives picture the full significance of the word. **Nabel** - 5v - been foolish(1), disgrace(1), make vile(1), scorned(1), treats...contemptuously(1). Deut. 32:15; Prov. 30:32; Jer. 14:21; Mic. 7:6; Nah. 3:6

**Salvation** (03444) (**yeshua** see note on related word "Yehosua" in next paragraph) is from a root in Arabic = "make wide" or "make sufficient" sarar = "narrow," = "be restricted" or "cause distress." The idea of wide connotes freedom from distress and ability to pursue one's objectives. It means to move from distress (enemies, natural catastrophies, plague or famine, sickness) to safety which requires deliverance. Generally deliverance comes from some an outside source. The one who brings deliverance is known as the "savior." Yeshua may be used in everyday life free of theological overtones at a well Moses saved daughters of Reuel (Ex 2:17) but generally has strong religious meaning. And so we read Yahweh wrought deliverance - God of our salvation Ps 68:19-20. Yeshua can also describe salvation through human agents empowered by God. While the NT idea of salvation is primarily forgiveness of sin, deliverance from sin's power and defeat of Satan, the OT only begins to point in this direction. And so in the OT the majority of references to salvation speak of Yahweh granting deliverance from real enemies and out of real catastrophies. The Lxx translates **Yeshua** with the Greek adjective **soterios/soterion** (from **soter** = savior) an adjective which refers to that which is pertains to the means of salvation = bringing salvation, delivering, rescuing and is used 5x (Lk. 2:30; 3:6 = Luke's uses clearly refer to the salvation wrought by the Savior Christ Jesus as does the use in Acts 28:28; Eph. 6:17; Titus 2:11). **Soterios** describes the act of delivering or saving from great danger or peril and of healing, protecting and preserving.

#### Deuteronomy 32:16 "They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

- **jealous:** De 5:9 1Ki 14:22 Na 1:1,2 1Co 10:22
- **abominations:** De 7:25 Lev 18:27 2Ki 23:13

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a **jealous God**.

Deuteronomy 5:9 'You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a **jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Deuteronomy 6:15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a **jealous God**; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

Psalms 78:58 For they provoked Him with their high places And aroused His jealousy with their graven images.

Jeremiah 2:25 "Keep your feet from being unshod And your throat from thirst; But you said, 'It is hopeless! No! For I have loved **strangers**, And after them I will walk.'

Jeremiah 3:13 'Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God And have scattered your favors to the **strangers** under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' declares the LORD.

### HOW TO MAKE A HOLY GOD JEALOUS

**Driver** - The verse exemplifies how Israel had treated Jehovah with **contumely** ("rudeness or contempt arising from arrogance or insolence." Dt 32:15), viz. by robbing Him, its Benefactor, of the honour which was His due, and bestowing it upon false gods,—the intrinsic worthlessness of which is then further illustrated in v. 17.

**Steven Cole** - Although God prophesied that Israel would turn to idolatry, it was not inevitable that *everyone* would do so, *if* they heeded God's warning. We need to understand that whatever God foreknows, He foreordains. In other words, God doesn't just sit in heaven and look down on earth to see in advance what direction the parade will go. Rather, He determines the parade route. He "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11; Job 42:2). And so God not only *foresaw* Israel's future apostasy, which He announces here (Deut. 31:16); He also *foreordained* it, yet in such a way that He was not responsible for their sin. While we can't understand how God can foreordain evil and yet not be responsible for it, the Bible often teaches that very thing (e.g. Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). When God tells us in His Word what the future holds, it is not so that we can draw up nifty prophecy charts. It's so that we will heed His warning and not fall into the sins that will happen in the future. And, it's so that we will not be surprised or discouraged when we see these things taking place. For example, the Bible tells us that in the future, there will be a time of great apostasy, when many professing believers will fall away (Matt. 24:10-12). Many will be deceived by the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3-12). But knowing that this will happen does not mean that it's inevitable that we will be part of that future apostasy. Rather, we can be on guard not to fall into spiritual deception. And, we'll be ready to endure persecution and hardship for the sake of the gospel. ([Sermon](#))

**They made Him jealous with strange gods** - Lxx of **strange** = allotrios = not one's own! Yahweh's jealousy is not like human jealousy but is a righteous, justified jealousy. After all God was their Husband by covenant and for them to be seeking our strange gods, "strange lovers," would naturally (supernaturally) make Yahweh **jealous** (See Excursus on Yahweh as Husband of Israel).

**Made jealous (qanah)** is rendered in Lxx with the verb [paroxuno](#) which means to provoke to wrath (Paul's spirit in Acts 17:16+)

Psalm 44:20; If we had forgotten the name of our God Or extended our hands to a **strange god**,

Psalm 81:9 "Let there be no **strange god** among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god.

Isaiah 43:12 "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was **no strange god** among you; So you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God.

In Jer 5:19 God passes judgment - "It shall come about when they say, 'Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?' then you shall say to them, 'As you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve **strangers** (zur) in a land that is not yours.'" a prophecy that was fulfilled when Judah was taken into captivity in the strange/foreign land of Babylon!

**Jealous and provoked to anger** are anthropomorphic descriptions of Yahweh (See [anthropomorphism](#) OR [Anthropomorphic Language to describe God](#)).

**Jealous** (zealous) ([07065](#)) ([qanah](#) from rom [qin'ah](#) = zeal, ardor - from color produced in face by deep emotion) means to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous. The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflinching pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. Jealousy can be righteous or unrighteous - e.g., Genesis 37:11 records that Joseph's "brothers were jealous of him" and here we see the mindset and emotion of their fleshly jealousy led to unrighteous deeds! Contrast Phinehas godly jealousy that motivated righteous deeds!

**Strange** ([02114](#)) [zur](#) is a verb which means to be a stranger. Things described as strange (in this sense the verb seems to be used as an adjective) - fire, **gods** (Dt 32:16, Ps 44:20), waters (2Ki 19:24 = water in foreign lands), children ("illegitimate" - NAS, "alien" - ESV) In Jer 2:25 Judah says "I have loved **strangers**" but the NET interprets it as "I love those **foreign gods**." Again in Jer 3:13 NAS translates [zur](#) as **strangers** (ESV as "**foreigners**") but again NET sees this as a reference to "foreign gods." This shows how every Bible translation is in essence an "interpretation" (a veritable "mini-commentary" if you will) of the original language, another reason I strongly encourage the diligent student to become facile with the original Greek and Hebrew (at least able to use a Bible program to determine the original words) (cp similar prophecy in Ezek 11:9). In Ezek 14:5 God says Judah is "**estranged** (zur; Lxx = apallotrioō = alienated) from me through their idols." Speaking to faithless Judah God says "**You adulteress wife** (See Excursus on Yahweh as Husband of Israel), who takes **strangers** (zur) instead of her husband! (Ezekiel 16:32)

**With abominations they provoked Him to anger** - The Canaanite practices the Israelites learned were unspeakably wicked, despicable and abominable. **Provoked to anger (kāas)** is imperfect tense speaking of continuous effect of their spiritual harlotry and is rendered in the Lxx with the verb [ekpikraino](#) meaning to embitter (only here in the Bible).

**Driver** on **abominations** - cf. Dt 7:25: in the pl., of wicked or idolatrous practices Dt 18:9, 12, 20:18; 1 Ki 14:24, 2 Ki 16:3, 21:2, 11; Jer. 7:10, 44:22; and esp. in Ezekiel. (39 times), as Ezekiel 5:9, 11, 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17, Perhaps here of the idols themselves: cf. 2 Ki. 23:13, Is. 44:19.

**Abominations** (Lxx = [bdeugma](#); detestable or loathsome things) ([08441](#)) [toebah](#) is that which causes horror and disgust to another, in this case the holy God. Thus [toebah](#) describes things, persons or practices that are either ritually or morally offensive to the LORD. From an Egyptian point of view, however, several things are

abominable: eating with Hebrews, the profession of shepherding (Gen. 43:32; 46:34) and sacrifices made to the LORD (Exo. 8:26). The expression “**abomination to the LORD**” indicates anything that could spoil the religious purity of the people and is used repeatedly in Deuteronomy, to describe various abominations -- using the gold and silver from images (Dt 7:25f), eating the meat of unclean animals (Dt 14:3), remarrying a divorced woman (Dt 24:4), sacrificing unacceptable animals (Dt 17:1), cross-gender dressing (Dt 22:5), using income from cultic prostitution as an offering to the LORD (Dt 23:18), using dishonest measures in business (Dt 25:15f), making carved images or cast idols (Dt 27:15) and sacrificing children by fire in the worship of other gods (Dt 12:31). Since these laws clarified the boundary between righteousness and sin, the prophets understandably held Israel to account for covenant violations in these specific areas. For example, Isaiah and Jeremiah indicted people for idolatry (Isa. 41:24; 44:19; Jer. 2:7; 44:4, 22), hypocritical offerings of incense (Isa. 1:13), participation in child sacrifice (Jer. 32:35) and intermarriage with foreigners (Mal. 2:11). Jeremiah railed against priests who committed theft, murder, adultery, perjury and the worship of Baal (Jer. 7:9f; 8:12). Ezekiel was especially concerned with impurity in worship. He thus pointed out the abominable sins of adultery and incest (Ezek. 22:11; 33:26), as well as idolatry (7:20; 16:36) and other ritual acts (43:8). After the exile, the abominable sin of intermarriage was found among the community (Ezra 9:1, 11, 14). Proverbs also names things which are abomination to the LORD. These include the corrupt person (Pr. 3:32), false weights (Pr 11:1), those with a false heart and lying lips (Pr 11:20; 12:22) and the sacrifice of the wicked (Pr 15:8). In terms of social relationships, Proverbs also lists a number of abominable things, such as the wrongdoing that kings detest (Pr 16:12), the turning from evil that fools detest (Pr 13:19), the dishonesty that the righteous detest (Pr 29:27), the detestable prayers of those who are deaf to the Law (Pr 28:9) and mockers whom society detests (Pr 24:9). penalties for these abominations included being cut off from the people of Israel (Lev. 18:29), death (Pr 20:13; Deut. 17:4), exile (Lev. 18:28), destruction (Deut. 13:14), the withdrawal of the LORD’s favor (Ezek. 5:11), as well as death by sword, famine and plague (Ezek 6:11).

**Provoked to anger** (03707)(קָאָס *kāas*) is a verb meaning to vex, agitate, stir up, provoke the heart to a "heated" condition which results in actions. To be angry, vexed, be incensed, to be in a state of strong displeasure, to provoke to anger. The causative sense of the verb occurs often and frequently signifies idolatry provoking God to anger (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:9; Ps. 106:29; Ezek. 8:17). The result of provocation may be expressed as *’ap*, anger (639) (Deut. 9:18; 2 Kgs. 23:26; Jer. 7:20). In a noncausative sense, the verb means to be angry; people were warned not to become angry hastily (Eccl. 7:9); God says that after He punishes, He will not be angry (Ezek. 16:42). Three times it refers to the people’s anger directed toward righteousness (2 Chr. 16:10; Neh. 4:1[3:33]; Ps. 112:10).

**Gilbrant** - The most frequently found meaning of this verb denotes intense emotion. The English translation "to be angry" understates the level of exasperation indicated within many contexts using *kā’as*.

Although it is rarely found in the Qal, it occurs over forty-five times in the Hiphil stem. Not surprisingly, then, the most frequent context is interpersonal where *kā’as* is evoked by the actions of others. The result is that anger and passion produce or lead to a response against the provocateurs.

Deuteronomy 32:16 says that God was "provoked to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked him to anger." In the same chapter (vv. 18ff), the Lord says that He will hide his face from Israel because they have provoked Him to anger by forgetting that He is their Maker. Lastly, in this same chapter, God declares that "a fire was kindled in his anger" and that He has been provoked to wrath because Israel is a perverse and unfaithful generation (vv. 20ff.). His response to such provocation is recorded in vv. 23-26: He would heap calamities upon them, send wasting famine, consuming pestilence and deadly plagues. Wild beasts, vipers and the swords of enemies would make them childless.

The theology presented in these verses helps define and confirm the holy essence of the Lord. He is provoked to great anger when his people commit apostasy. He responds by sending a variety of plagues and enemies. All of these responses of God in turn "provoke" Israel to humble themselves, repent and return to the Lord (vv. 27-39).

Elsewhere in the Bible, the Hiphil form of *kā’as* is used to refer to the reaction of God against the sins of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:14ff; 16:2, 26). The prophet Ahijah spoke the word of the Lord to Jeroboam, saying, "I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes... because they have forsaken me and worshiped" other gods (see 1 Kings 12:31, 33, NIV). However, after a successful rebellion, Jeroboam wanted to insure that members of the ten tribes would not return to Jerusalem for sacrifices, worship and holy days (1 Ki.12:26f).

Scripture says that after seeking advice, King Jeroboam formed two golden calves to be worshiped at Dan and Bethel so that travel to Jerusalem would not be necessary (vv. 28f). In addition, he built shrines and altars, appointed "priests of the lowest of the people, which were not sons of Levi," (v. 31) and ordained a feast day like that held in Judah. These actions, especially worship of the golden calves, were later referred to as the "sins of Jeroboam." As a result, the same prophet (Ahijah) announced the judgment of God that Jeroboam's dynasty would die with him (1 Kings 14:14ff).

Jeremiah stated that because the people had turned their backs and not their faces toward God, they had evoked kā'as (Jer. 7:18f). Similarly, Ezek. 8:17 says that the priests of Israel had provoked the anger of God by their sun worship, that is, by turning toward the east and away from the altar of the Lord. God's response was to remove his glory from the Temple and from the city of Jerusalem and to allow its people to be captured. Ezekiel 16:26 shows that deliberate disobedience to a command of God, in this case forming an alliance with Egypt (rather than trusting in the Lord for deliverance), brings about kā'as in the Lord with an appropriate response.

Humans may also be provoked to anger, jealousy and wrath, often leading to severe reactions. Job 5:2 says: "For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one." Fools (who are definitely ungodly) allow kā'as to arise and in doing so bring on their own misfortune and even destruction.

The majority of the occurrences of kā'as represent theological descriptions of how the Lord is provoked to anger, and what causes Him to respond with action in keeping with his holy nature, including vengeance (Hos. 12:14). Most frequently, and perhaps most significantly, God is provoked by the faithlessness of those with whom He is close. God chooses his responses carefully and in love, because He intends for his actions to produce repentance and restoration. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Kaas** - 53v - anger(3), angry(4), demoralized\*(1), make me angry(1), provoke(5), provoke him to anger(2), provoke me to anger(8), provoke them to anger(1), provoked(7), provoked him to anger(2), provoked me to anger(2), provoked the to anger(1), provoked to anger(1), provoking(7), provoking him to anger(2), provoking me to anger(4), provoking the to anger(1), spite(2), trouble(1), vexation(1), vexed(1).- Deut. 4:25; Deut. 9:18; Deut. 31:29; Deut. 32:16; Deut. 32:21; Jdg. 2:12; 1 Sam. 1:6; 1 Sam. 1:7; 1 Ki. 14:9; 1 Ki. 14:15; 1 Ki. 15:30; 1 Ki. 16:2; 1 Ki. 16:7; 1 Ki. 16:13; 1 Ki. 16:26; 1 Ki. 16:33; 1 Ki. 21:22; 1 Ki. 22:53; 2 Ki. 17:11; 2 Ki. 17:17; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Ki. 21:15; 2 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ki. 23:19; 2 Ki. 23:26; 2 Chr. 16:10; 2 Chr. 28:25; 2 Chr. 33:6; 2 Chr. 34:25; Neh. 4:1; Neh. 4:5; Ps. 78:58; Ps. 106:29; Ps. 112:10; Eccl. 5:17; Eccl. 7:9; Isa. 65:3; Jer. 7:18; Jer. 7:19; Jer. 8:19; Jer. 11:17; Jer. 25:6; Jer. 25:7; Jer. 32:29; Jer. 32:30; Jer. 32:32; Jer. 44:3; Jer. 44:8; Ezek. 8:17; Ezek. 16:26; Ezek. 16:42; Ezek. 32:9; Hos. 12:14

**Deuteronomy 32:17 "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread.**

- **sacrificed:** Lev 17:7 Ps 106:37-38 1Co 10:20 1Ti 4:1 Rev 9:20
- **not God:** De 32:21 Jer 10:15 1Co 8:4 10:19
- **to God:** De 28:64 Isa 44:8
- **to new gods:** Jdg 5:8

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Corinthians 10:20+ No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles **sacrifice**, they **sacrifice to demons** and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in **demons**.

Psalms 106:37-38 They even **sacrificed** their sons and their daughters to the **demons**, 38 And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, Whom they **sacrificed** to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood.

Judges 5:8 "**New gods** were chosen; Then war was in the gates. Not a shield or a spear was seen Among forty thousand in Israel.

Dt 11:28, and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other **gods which you have not known**.

Dt 13:6 "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who

is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other **gods**' (**whom neither you nor your fathers have known**,

Dt 29:26 'They went and served other gods and worshiped them, **gods whom they have not known** and whom He had not allotted to them.

Hos. 13:4 Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; **And you were not to know any god except Me**, For there is no savior besides Me.

## "DEMON WORSHIP"

**They sacrificed** ([zabach](#); Lxx = [thuo](#)) **to demons** (Lxx = [daimon](#)) **who were not God** - **KJV** = "powerless spirits" Moses alluded to this in his words to the first generation "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations." (Lev 17:7+). As Ps 106:37-38+ says they even "sacrificed their sons and daughters to the demons" and the result was that "the land was polluted with the blood."

[Zabach](#) in Deuteronomy - the first 10 describe divinely ordained sacrifices - Deut. 12:15; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 15:21; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:4; Deut. 16:5; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 18:3; Deut. 27:7; Deut. 32:17; Deut. 33:19

**Demons** (07700) תַּיִ שֵׂדִי: A masculine noun meaning a demon, a devil. The primary or typical translation of this noun is demon or demons. This noun was used to describe the recipient of a sacrifice (i.e., a sacrifice that was not directed or given to God [Deut. 32:17]). Certain sacrifices in which sons and daughters were sacrificed were also directed toward demons (Ps. 106:37). This word is also used to designate the recipients of forbidden sacrifices. A loanword from Akkadian and Aramaic, *shfidh* was often depicted as a colossal bull monument that served as a protecting spirit. But the spirits were ambivalent, and evil functions were attributed to them. To Israel, this word, used only in the plural, depicted "evil spirits" or "demons" to whom the rebellious Israelites and the pagan nations around them sacrificed (Deut. 32:17). Israel's act of sacrificing to demons is referred to in Ps. 106:37. Only found in Dt 32:17 and Ps 106:37

**Victor Hamilton** - Undoubtedly Hebrew *šēd* is to be connected with the Babylonian word *shēdu*, a demon either good or evil. In pagan religions the line between gods and demons is not a constant one. There are demons who are beneficent and gods who are malicious. Generally speaking though, a demon was conceived as being less powerful than a god. In Mesopotamian thought the *shēdu* was a supernatural protective power for whose presence the gods were invoked. Specifically, the function of *shēdu* may have been to represent the vitality of the individual, his sexual potency (Oppenheim, p. 201; see bibliography). One cannot help but notice the paucity of references to the demonic in the OT and even where it occurs it is demythologized. Good and evil are in the moral, not the metaphysical, sphere. Kaufmann (p. 65, fn. 1) says, "When the gods of the nations are called *šēdim* it is not meant that they are evil spirits, but that they are insubstantial shades, 'no-gods,' with neither divine nor demonic functions." The wraps are taken off the demonic in the Bible in the Gospels and the Revelation. That is to say, the demonic appears most profusely when Jesus is present. Perhaps God has opened to us the satanic world only in the presence of Christ (Kinlaw, p. 8). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**To gods whom they have not known, new gods who came lately**- What gods had Israel known? In Egypt they became acquainted with Egyptian gods, but in the Promised Land they would encounter "**new gods**" of the despicable, idol worshipping Canaanites.

**Driver** on gods **who came lately** or were "introduced recently, in ironical contrast to Jehovah, who had been the nation's God from of old.

Isaiah 63:16 For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us.  
You, O LORD, are our Father, **Our Redeemer from OF OLD is Your name**.

**Whom your fathers did not dread** - **Driver** = "shuddered not." **Dread** in this context probably conveys the sense that the fathers did not bristle with horror or become appalled by these gods, clearly implying that this reaction would be what one would expect in encountering these "new gods."

**Deuteronomy 32:18 "You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth.**

- the Rock: De 32:4,15 Isa 17:10
- forgot: De 6:12 Dt 8:11,14,19 Ps 9:17 44:20-22 106:21 Isa 17:10 22:10,11 Jer 2:32 3:21 Ho 8:14

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 8:11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today;

Deuteronomy 8:14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Deuteronomy 8:19 "It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.

## CLIMAX OF INGRATITUDE THEY FORGOT GOD

There is a bit of irony in this verse which twice alludes to the idea of **forgot** and yet it is in the Song of Moses which Israel was to **remember** (presumably to motivate not to forget God!)

**You neglected the Rock who begot you** - **Begot** is used literally of bear a child (Cain in Ge 4:1). **Driver** = "writhed, was in anguish." (cf Ps 51:7, Isa 51:2) Israel owed her existence to Yahweh (called their **Father** in Dt 32:6). The Septuagint translates **Rock** (**tsur**) with **theos**. Recall in Dt 8:15 Yahweh "brought water...out of the rock (**tsur**) of flint," Paul explaining that **Rock** was Christ (1 Cor 10:4+). The Hebrew word for **neglected** (**shayah** used only here) means to give no attention to and so to disregard, leading them ultimately to forget their Rock! **Swanson** says the idea of **shayah** is "to not think about someone and so not respond appropriately to that one."

Note the parallel terms **begot** and **gave...birth** emphasizing that God was the One Who brought Israel into existence as a nation. Normally a child that is birthed has a special affection and tie to the parent, but not so in this case. This comparison makes Israel's defection even more heinous!

**Complete Biblical Library** - "The pathos of this song reveals the eventual hard-heartedness of the people of Israel against their God, which would bring judgment and punishment at the hands of ungodly people."

**And forgot the God who gave you birth** - (Lxx = **egkataleipo**) Moses had warned them of the danger of forgetting God (Dt 8:10+) when they experienced prosperity, the result of which would be to "forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments. Forgot is **shakach/shakah** (Lxx = **epilanthanomai**) which is unfortunately a key word in Deuteronomy occurring 13x - Deut. 4:9; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 8:14; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 31:21; Deut. 32:18

**John Maxwell** - The depths of Israel's perversity can be seen in verse 18 where Moses compares the Lord to a mother "who begot you" and as a father "who fathered you." Yet Israel forgets His parental love. Martin Luther said, "A full stomach does not promote piety, for it stands secure and neglects God." (**Preacher's Commentary**)

**Deuteronomy 32:19 "The LORD saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters.**

- **And** : Lev 26:11 Jdg 2:14 Ps 5:4 10:3 78:59 106:40 Am 3:2,3 Zec 11:8 Rev 3:16
- **spurned**, La 2:6
- **of his sons**: Ps 82:6,7 Isa 1:2 Jer 11:15

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 1:2+ Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.

Jeremiah 11:15 "What right has My beloved in My house When she has done many vile deeds? Can the sacrificial flesh take away from you your disaster, So that you can rejoice?"

## SPURNERS ARE

## SPURNED!

In this next section Dt 32:19-22 Moses describes the punishment for Israel's spurning of God.

**The LORD saw this, and spurned them** - Here we see Yahweh's righteous indignation! The first 4 uses of the verb **spurned** ([naas](#) - Nu. 14:11, 23; Nu 16:30; Dt 31:20) describe Israel spurning Yahweh, but now Yahweh spurns Israel. The Septuagint render **spurned** with [zeloo](#) meaning jealous (used in similar context in 2 Cor 11:2+)

**Because of** - Explains why God would spurn His chosen people

**The provocation of His sons and daughter** - **Provocation** describes deliberate actions and/or speech (cf Isa 1:2+) that makes someone angry. The Septuagint renders **provocation** with two words [paroxuno](#) meaning to be provoked to wrath and [orge](#) meaning wrath.

**Provocation** (03708) . קָעַס **kaas**, קָעַס ka'as: A masculine singular noun meaning anger, provocation, vexation. The alternate spelling of the word occurs only in Job. The majority of occurrences are in poetic literature. Human sinfulness and idolatry (1 Kgs. 15:30; Ezek. 20:28) cause God's anger, while fools, sons, wives, and rival wives can also cause vexation (1 Sa 1:6; Prov. 27:3; 17:25; 21:19, respectively). [Swanson](#) - **1. sorrow, grief**, i.e., a feeling of anxiety and sadness in a distressing situation (1Sa 1:16; Ps 6:8; 10:14; 31:10; Pr 17:25; Ecc 1:18; 2:23; 5:16; 7:3; 11:10); **2. anger, fury**, i.e., have a strong feeling of displeasure and annoyance based on a wrong, real or perceived (Dt 32:19; Ps 85:5; Pr 12:16; 21:19; Ecc 7:9) **3.taunt**, i.e., a speaking of words of scorn, implying anger toward object of scorn, with a focus on eliciting a response by the mocking (Dt 32:27; 1Sa 1:6); **4. provocation**, i.e., cause another to be angry by an action (1Ki 15:30; 21:22; 2Ki 23:26; Pr 27:3; Eze 20:28)

**Kaas** - 25x - anger(3), bitterly\*(1), grief(4), grief and anger(1), grievous(1), indignation(1), provocation(7), provocations(1), sorrow(1), vexation(1), vexing(1). Deut. 32:19; Deut. 32:27; 1 Sam. 1:6; 1 Sam. 1:16; 1 Ki. 15:30; 1 Ki. 21:22; 2 Ki. 23:26; Job 5:2; Job 6:2; Job 10:17; Job 17:7; Ps. 6:7; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 31:9; Ps. 85:4; Prov. 12:16; Prov. 17:25; Prov. 21:19; Prov. 27:3; Eccl. 1:18; Eccl. 2:23; Eccl. 7:3; Eccl. 7:9; Eccl. 11:10; Ezek. 20:28

**Deuteronomy 32:20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness.**

- **I will hide:** De 31:17-18 Job 13:24 34:29 Isa 64:7 Jer 18:17 Ho 9:12
- **end:** De 32:5 Isa 65:2-5 Mt 11:16,17 Lu 7:31,32
- **sons:** 2Ch 20:20 Isa 7:9 30:9 Mt 17:17 Mk 9:19 Lu 18:8 2Th 3:2 Heb 11:6

### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 31:17-18+ Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and **hide My face from them**, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' 18 "But **I will surely hide My face** in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.

## HOW TO MAKE GOD "DISAPPEAR"!

### Outline of the Song of Moses

- Israel's creation and Yahweh's gracious treatment (Dt 32:1-14, vv5-6 are perjorative toward Israel)
- Israel's unfaithfulness and spurning of Yahweh (Dt 32:15-19)
- Yahweh's judgment decreed (Dt 32:20-35)
- Yahweh's promise of victory over all adversaries of Israel (Dt 32:36-43)

**Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be** - **NET** = "I will reject them." **NLT** = "I will abandon them." God will prevent the sons of Israel from seeing Him or discovering Him. The omnipresent God will in effect "withdraw" His

benevolent helping hand from Israel. The Septuagint of hide (sāṭar) is the verb [apostrepho](#) which means God will turn away from the sons of Israel. God's turning away is a reflection of His divine justice or retribution. There is a touch of irony, for while Yahweh hides His face from them, He is still able to see their end (they can't see Him, but He can see them!) Dt 31:17+ speaks of **their end** because when Yahweh hides His face from them and "they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them."

**Driver** - Jehovah will withdraw from them His favourable regard (Dt 31:17), and, leaving them, as it were, to themselves, will wait to see what their final lot (Dt 32:29, Job 8:7) will then be: He will do this, because they have proved themselves to be a falsehood-loving race, sons (v. 5) disloyal to a tender Parent.

**Hide** (05641) (סָטַר **sāṭar**) A verb meaning to hide, conceal. It has the sense of preventing someone to know or see something, to keep something from public notice or from certain persons. It has the sense of to guard and protect oneself from perceived danger (Prov. 22:3); and of trying to escape God's eyes, His presence (Gen. 4:14; Jer. 16:17). It is used of persons being hidden from each other, absent from each other's presence (Ge 31:49). It is used in the sense of shielding and protecting a person or something from perceived danger (Ex. 3:6). It means to do something secretly, hidden, such as adultery (Num. 5:13); or to try to hide oneself physically from danger and other persons (Dt. 7:20; 1 Sa 20:5, 24; 1 Kgs. 17:3). It is used as a noun referring to secret things known only to God (Deut. 29:29[28]). Persons are sometimes aware of hidden problems or errors in their own lives (Ps. 19:12). It is used of God's not hiding His face, that is, removing His presence from a person (Ps. 22:24; Mic. 3:4). God will, however, hide His people from His wrath (Zeph. 2:3). David writes in Ps 119:114: "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word." Hiding place is the Hebrew noun *siṭrāh* (05643), which is derived from **sāṭar**. **Swanson** - 1. (nif) **hidden, be concealed**, i.e., pertaining to not being able to be known (Dt 29:28), this can also have the associative meanings of protection and safety, or hiding in shame, in some contexts; (piel) hide (Isa 16:3); (pual) hidden (Pr 27:5); (hif) hide, conceal (Ex 3:6); (hitp) hide oneself, keep oneself hidden (1Sa 23:19; 26:1; Ps 54:2; Isa 45:15); 2. (hitp) **vanish, perish**, i.e., to cease to exist, as an extension of an object hiding oneself (Isa 29:14)

**Satar** - 79v - (**SEE ESPECIALLY THE USES IN THE PSALMS** = as a "teaser" see David's prayer in Ps 17:8) absent(1), conceal(3), concealed(4), cover(1), hid(11), hidden(16), hide(33), hides(4), hiding(3), placed(1), secret things(1), surely hide(1), undetected(1). Gen. 4:14; Gen. 31:49; Exod. 3:6; Num. 5:13; Deut. 7:20; Deut. 29:29; Deut. 31:17; Deut. 31:18; Deut. 32:20; 1 Sam. 20:2; 1 Sam. 20:5; 1 Sam. 20:19; 1 Sam. 20:24; 1 Sam. 23:19; 1 Sam. 26:1; 1 Ki. 17:3; 2 Ki. 11:2; 2 Chr. 22:11; Job 3:10; Job 3:23; Job 13:20; Job 13:24; Job 14:13; Job 28:21; Job 34:22; Job 34:29; Ps. 10:11; Ps. 13:1; Ps. 17:8; Ps. 19:6; Ps. 19:12; Ps. 22:24; Ps. 27:5; Ps. 27:9; Ps. 30:7; Ps. 31:20; Ps. 38:9; Ps. 44:24; Ps. 51:9; Ps. 55:12; Ps. 64:2; Ps. 69:17; Ps. 88:14; Ps. 89:46; Ps. 102:2; Ps. 104:29; Ps. 119:19; Ps. 143:7; Prov. 22:3; Prov. 25:2; Prov. 27:5; Prov. 27:12; Prov. 28:28; Isa. 8:17; Isa. 16:3; Isa. 28:15; Isa. 29:14; Isa. 29:15; Isa. 40:27; Isa. 45:15; Isa. 49:2; Isa. 50:6; Isa. 54:8; Isa. 57:17; Isa. 59:2; Isa. 64:7; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 16:17; Jer. 23:24; Jer. 33:5; Jer. 36:19; Jer. 36:26; Ezek. 39:23; Ezek. 39:24; Ezek. 39:29; Hos. 13:14; Amos 9:3; Mic. 3:4; Zeph. 2:3

**For** - Explains two reasons (but next verse seems to continue reasons) why Yahweh will hide Himself from Israel.

**They are a perverse generation** - NLT "they are a twisted generation." How does God define "perverse" in this context? Those who are unfaithful or manifest no faith (next phrase). The Septuagint uses [ekstrepho](#) in the perfect tense signifying the **sons** of Israel have turned aside from correct behavior and are still in that state of "perversion"! They have in effect evaded what is truth and what is right.

**Perverse** (08419) [tahpukah](#) from **hapak** = to turn, overturn) is a feminine noun which means to turn away from what is normal and right. The first OT use describes the perverse generation of Israelites who deliberately deviated and distorted from the good way of the Lord's ways, turning from His Law and from Him (Dt 32:20), for their true life is found in Him. **Tahpukah** describes deceptive and corrupt speech, things that are distorted (Pr. 2:12). "Perversity of evil" signifies that evil itself features perversity, a distortion of what is straight and right (Pr. 2:14). Perversity issues from one's heart (Pr 6:14). Notice that many of the OT uses refer in some way to one's speech (Pr 2:12, 8:13, 10:31, 32, 23:33) and Pr 6:14 links perversion with the heart which makes sense since as Jesus taught out of the mouth comes that which fills the heart (Mt 12:34, Lk 6:45).

**Sons in whom is no faithfulness** - NET = "children who show no loyalty." NLT = "children without integrity" NIV = "children who are unfaithful." The Septuagint renders this as sons in who this is continually (present tense) **absolutely no** (ou = absolute negation) **faith** ([pistos](#))! Woe! Note also the striking contrast with Dt 32:4 describing Yahweh as "A God of **faithfulness** and without injustice."



**Deuteronomy 32:21 'They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,**

- **made me:** De 32:16 Ps 78:58
- **with their idols:** 1Sa 12:21 1Ki 16:13,26 Ps 31:6 Jer 8:19 10:8 14:22 Jon 2:8 Ac 11:15
- **I will:** Ho 1:10 Ro 9:25 Ro 10:19 Ro 11:11-14 1Pe 2:9,10

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:13-14 "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose **Name is Jealous**, is a jealous God—

Psalms 78:58 For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images.

Ezekiel 8:3-5+ He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the **idol of jealousy**, which provokes to **jealousy**, was located. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the appearance which I saw in the plain. 5 Then He said to me, "Son of man, raise your eyes now toward the north." So I raised my eyes toward the north, and behold, to the north of the altar gate was this **idol of jealousy** at the entrance.

1 Corinthians 10:22; 14 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?...14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Judges 2:12 and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus **they provoked the LORD to anger**.

Judges 2:20-21 So **the anger of the LORD burned against Israel**, and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to My voice, I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died,

### REWARDED WITH THE LAW OF RIGHTEOUS RETRIBUTION

What "[goes around, comes around!](#)" True of Israel and still true today!

**They have made Me jealous** ([qanah](#); Lxx - [parazeloo](#)) **with what is not God** - NET = "They have made with jealous with false gods."

**W A Criswell** (Baptist Pastor) once made an interesting statement that "God's jealousy is the other side of His love. It is the zeal with which He seeks to maintain His relationship with those He loves. God's jealousy has been called "**the basic element in the whole OT idea of God.**" I find that last statement fascinating but think it does correlate well with the truth of Israel as the Wife of Jehovah and how her repeatedly playing the harlot in the Old Testament inflamed God's righteous jealousy! How many sermons have you hear on God's jealousy? Moses had preached a few to Israel (Dt 4:24, Dt 5:9, Dt 6:15, Dt 29:20, Dt 32:16, Dt 32:21). Perhaps it may have helped Israel if they had see **Webster's** definition of jealous - "intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness, hostile toward a rival, vigilant in guarding a possession."

Dt 4:24-26+ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a **jealous God**. 25 "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed.

**NET NOTE** - **They have made me jealous**. The "jealousy" of God is not a spirit of pettiness prompted by His insecurity, but righteous indignation caused by the disloyalty of His people to His covenant of grace. The jealousy of Israel, however (see next line), will be envy because of God's lavish attention to another nation. This is an ironic wordplay.

**Jealous** (zealous)([07065](#))([qanah](#) from rom [qin'ah](#) = zeal, ardor - from color produced in face by deep emotion) means to be jealous, to be envious, to be **zealous for exclusivity in a relationship**. The picture is

that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. Jealousy can be righteous or unrighteous - e.g., Genesis 37:11 records that Joseph's "brothers were jealous of him" and here we see the mindset and emotion of their fleshly jealousy led to unrighteous deeds! Contrast Phinehas godly jealousy that motivated righteous deeds!

**They have provoked Me to anger** (kāas; Lxx = [parorgizo](#)) **with their idols** - **KJV** = "vanities" **NET** = "enraging Me with their worthless idols." Hebrew has literally "their empty (things)," which **NET NOTE** says is "used here to refer pejoratively to the false gods."

**Idols** (futility, vanity, breath, delusion, worthless, emptiness)([01892](#)) **hebel**: means to vanity, emptiness, meaninglessness; idols. The first OT use refers to idols (Dt 32:21, cf 1 Ki 16:13, 26, Jer 8:19; Jeremiah 10:8, 15; Jer 14:22 Jer 51:18; Jonah 2:9; Ps 31:6), a fitting word picture for the worthlessness of idols! In Jer 2:5 Judah "walked after emptiness (hebel) and became empty" refers to Judah's pursuit of idols (cf similar use Jer 10:15, 2 Ki 17:15 "they followed vanity [hebel] and became vain [worthless]) **Hebel** "generally appears in contexts where it is used as a simile emphasizing the transitory state of an object, never as descriptive of the biological function.

**Vine - First**, the word represents human "breath" as a transitory thing: "I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity [literally, but a breath] (Job 7:16). **Second**, hebel means something meaningless and purposeless: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). **Third**, this word signifies an "idol," which is unsubstantial, worthless, and vain:

Vanity is what King Solomon found was left of a life that rejected Yahweh as Lord of all and sought the heinous worship of idols in [1Ki 11:1-12]. It is fascinating then that Solomon uses the Hebrew "Hebel" more than any other OT writer in one book, Ecclesiastes, with the frequent phrase "vanity of vanities" (Eccl 1:2). Of particular interest are closely parallel verses [Jer 2:5] (they went far from Me & walked after emptiness & became empty) & [2Ki 17:15] They went after vanities and "became vain." (NIV: "They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.")

**THOUGHT** - Two inexorable principles are illustrated by comparing these 2 verses both of which use the Hebrew noun "**hebel**": (1) every man takes on to some degree the character and nature of the "god" (or "God") he worships (2) the characteristic of all false gods is that they destroy the very ones who worship them! A corollary is that worshipping other "gods" will make God jealous and may stoke the fires of His righteous indignation! Woe! Time for an "idol check!"

## **ISRAEL SOWS AND NOW REAPS**

**So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people** - **NET** = "so I will make them jealous with a people they do not recognize." As the Lord was provoked to jealousy by Israel's worship of that which was "not God," so He would provoke Israel to jealousy and anger by humiliation before a foolish, vile "no-nation." In [Ro 10:19], Paul applied the term "not a nation" to the Gentile nations generally. Jews who worship a "no-god" will be judged by a "no-people."

**NET NOTE** on **are not a people** - Heb "what is not a people," or a "non-people." The "non-people" (אֲנֹכִי, lo'-'am) referred to here are Gentiles who someday would become God's people in the fullest sense (cf. Hos 1:9; Hos 2:23).

Romans 10:19+ But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "**I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS ([parazeloo](#)) BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER ([parorgizo](#)) YOU.**"

**Driver** comments - In Rom. 10:19 the passage is interpreted freely so as to refer to Israel's being provoked to jealousy by the heathen being admitted to the same theocratic privileges; but in the original context it is the favour shown to them by their being allowed to punish Israel, which moves Israel to jealousy.

**NIDOTTE** - Israel is God's people, and he is Israel's God. Anyone outside the circle of the covenant is "non-people" (אֲנֹכִי) and "no-god" (אֲנֹכִי) (Deut 32:21).

**I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation** - **NET** = "with a nation slow to learn I will enrage them." **NIV** "a nation that has no understanding"; **NLT** "I will provoke their fury by blessing the foolish Gentiles."

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## QUESTION - [Why is God a jealous God?](#)

**ANSWER** - It is important to understand how the word “jealous” is used. Its use in Exodus 20:5 to describe God is different from how it is used to describe the sin of jealousy (Galatians 5:20). When we use the word “jealous,” we use it in the sense of being envious of someone who has something we do not have. A person might be jealous or envious of another person because he or she has a nice car or home (possessions). Or a person might be jealous or envious of another person because of some ability or skill that other person has (such as athletic ability). Another example would be that one person might be jealous or envious of another because of his or her beauty.

In Exodus 20:5, it is not that God is jealous or envious because someone has something He wants or needs. Exodus 20:4-5 says, “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” Notice that God is jealous when someone gives to another something that rightly belongs to Him.

In these verses, God is speaking of people making idols and bowing down and worshiping those idols instead of giving God the worship that belongs to Him alone. God is possessive of the worship and service that belong to Him. It is a sin (as God points out in this commandment) to worship or serve anything other than God. It is a sin when we desire, or we are envious, or we are jealous of someone because he has something that we do not have. It is a different use of the word “jealous” when God says He is jealous. What He is jealous of belongs to Him; worship and service belong to Him alone, and are to be given to Him alone.

Perhaps a practical example will help us understand the difference. If a husband sees another man flirting with his wife, he is right to be jealous, for only he has the right to flirt with his wife. This type of jealousy is not sinful. Rather, it is entirely appropriate. Being jealous for something that God declares to belong to you is good and appropriate. Jealousy is a sin when it is a desire for something that does not belong to you. Worship, praise, honor, and adoration belong to God alone, for only He is truly worthy of it. Therefore, God is rightly jealous when worship, praise, honor, or adoration is given to idols. This is precisely the jealousy the apostle Paul described in 2 Corinthians 11:2, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy...” [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### Related Resources (all from [Gotquestions.org](#))

- [What is godly jealousy?](#)
- [What is the biblical understanding of the wrath of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that God is a consuming fire?](#)

**Deuteronomy 32:22 For a fire is kindled in My anger, And burns to the lowest part of Sheol, And consumes the earth with its yield, And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.**

- **For a fire:** De 29:20 Nu 16:35 Ps 21:9 83:14 97:3 Isa 66:15,16 Jer 4:4 15:14 Jer 17:4 La 2:3 4:11 Eze 36:5 Na 1:6 Mal 4:1,2 Mk 9:43-48 2Th 1:8 Heb 12:29
- **lowest:** Ps 86:13 Isa 30:33 Zep 3:8 Mt 10:28 18:9 23:33
- **consumes,** Isa 24:6,19,20
- **foundations:** Job 9:5,6 Ps 46:2 144:5 Isa 54:10 Mic 1:4 Na 1:5 Hab 3:10

### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 29:2 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land;

Dt 11:17 “Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Jeremiah 15:14 “Then I will cause your enemies to bring it into a land you do not know; **For a fire has been kindled in My anger, It will burn upon you.**”

Jeremiah 17:4 And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance that I gave you; And I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; **For you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn forever.**

Lamentations 4:11 The LORD has accomplished His wrath, He has poured out His fierce anger; And He has

kindled a fire in Zion Which has consumed its foundations.

## JEHOVAH'S JEALOUSY KINDLES AN ALL-CONSUMING FIRE

**For** - Explains why God will make Israel jealous and provoke them to anger in the previous verse.

The four pictures of Yahweh's passion are powerful - fire is **kindled**, **burns** to lowest Sheol, **consumes** the earth, **sets on fire** the foundation of the mountains. WOE!

**THOUGHT** - And do not forget these were words Israel was to have taken into memory that they might be sung aloud! God wanted to warn them. I wonder if Moses' Song would make the Top Ten Worship Singles for 2021? (That's rhetorical of course!).

**A fire is kindled in My anger - In My anger** is literally "in my nostril (SEE [aph](#))" (cf Ps 18:8). Once the fire of God's anger was kindled, it knew no limits in its destructive force, reaching to even those in the grave, an indication of God's eternal judgment against those who oppose Him.

**And burns to the lowest part of Sheol** - How low can you go? Yahweh's first penetrates even to the underworld. As the [NET NOTE](#) says "**Sheol** refers here not to hell and hell-fire – a much later concept – but to the innermost parts of the earth, **as low down as one could get**. The parallel with "the foundations of the mountains" makes this clear (cf. Ps 9:17; 16:10; 139:8; Isa 14:9, 15; Amos 9:2).

**THOUGHT** - The point is that nothing, absolutely nothing and no one can possibly escape the blaze of Yahweh's fire, with one exception and that is for those who have taken refuge in the cleft of the Rock, Christ Jesus! (cf Ex 33:22, 1 Sa 22:3, Ps 18:2, Ps 62:7, Ps 94:22, ). This begs the question - HAVE YOU RUN TO ROCK OF YOUR SALVATION, CHRIST JESUS, AND TAKEN ETERNAL REFUGE FROM THE ALL CONSUMING FIRE OF YAHWEH AGAINST SIN? Let it not be said of your dear reader "you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the rock of your refuge." (Isaiah 1:17)

**Sheol** ([07585](#))([she'ol](#)) is the underworld or the place to which people descend at death. The grave, death, the depths, the nether world, the underworld. Sheol was viewed as the place where departed spirits went after death. Sheol was envisioned as a dark region within the earth, the entrance to which was the grave with its steep slopes (cf. Ps 88:4-6). In Job 14:13-22, Job expressed the common view of life beyond death, namely, that in Sheol there is no contact with the living, only separation, but in Sheol there is a conscious awareness of the dreary existence. In Jonah 2:3 Jonah pictures himself in the belly of Sheol, its very center - in other words he is as good as dead. In Ps 22:6 Sheol, the underworld, the place of the dead, is personified as David's enemy.

### Related Resources:

- [Sheol in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#)
- [Sheol in Holman's Dictionary](#)
- [NET Bible articles](#)
- [What is the Difference Between Sheol, Hades, Hell, etc?](#)

**And consumes the earth with its yield - NLT** - "It devours the earth and all its crops." "the earth and it produce."

**And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains**- Note the progression in the description from deepest to highest, clearly portraying the picture that Yahweh's fire is all consuming (cf Dt 4:24).

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### Music's Power

Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. —Deuteronomy 31:22

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:14-30

A college student was troubled by sinful thoughts. Even though he regularly read his Bible and prayed, he continued to struggle, so he sought help from a Christian counselor.

"What kind of music do you listen to?" asked the counselor. The student said it was secular rock. The counselor then commented, "Think of your mind as a big sheet of paper. Each song you hear is a match burning the edges. You ask God to heal the burn, and

He begins applying the salve of His Word. But you keep adding matches. Listen to Christian music and see what happens." The student did, and the truth set to music began to heal his mind.

God combines music's power with truth to draw His people closer to Himself. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses taught a new generation of Israelites a long song of 43 verses. It proclaimed God's faithfulness, but it would also become a witness against them when they settled in the Promised Land and forsook Him. The song's purpose was twofold: It would show the Israelites that God had a right to their love, and it would call them back to Himself when they had come to the end of their own strength (vv.36-39).

Never underestimate music's power. It can either hinder the Spirit's work or increase your love for Christ. [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))By: Dennis J. DeHaan

There is a music from above  
That takes away our tears;  
It is God's melody of love—  
It quiets all our fears. |  
—DJD

If there's no harmony in your life, try changing your tune.

### Deuteronomy 32:23 'I will heap misfortunes on them; I will use My arrows on them.

- **heap:** De 28:15 Lev 26:18,24 Isa 24:17-18 Isa 26:15 Jer 15:2-3 Eze 14:21 Mt 24:7,8
- **use:** Ps 7:12,13 La 3:13 Eze 5:16

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 28:15+ "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Lev 26:18 'If also after these things, you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins....21 'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins....24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins....28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins.

Jeremiah 15:2-3 "And it shall be that when they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you are to tell them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Those destined for death, to death; And those destined for the sword, to the sword; And those destined for famine, to famine; And those destined for captivity, to captivity.'" 3 "I will appoint over them four kinds of doom," declares the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag off, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

In Deuteronomy 32:23-25 Moses describes multiple manifestations of Yahweh's "consuming fire" in judgment against Israel.

**I will heap misfortunes on them** - NLT = "I will heap disasters on them." NET = "I will increase their disasters." One might call this "providential punishment." **Heap** is rendered in the Lxx with [sunago](#) which means to cause to come together or "gather together," in this case a "gathering" that Israel will not welcome!

**Heap** (05595) sâpâh A verb meaning to scrape or sweep away, to destroy, to perish, to be captured. Patterson says "

The basic image of the root seems to be that of sweeping—both the process of heaping things together and of sweeping them away (cf. Arabic saâ' "to raise and carry away dust"). The root may sometimes be confused with 'âsap or yâsap. The root is usually used in a hostile sense, particularly in contexts of judgment. David spent much of his life being swept away before his enemies; later, facing God's judgment for sin, he avoids the choice of being swept away before his enemies (I Chr 21:12–13). The judgment of God against sin is the subject of several contexts. Lot and his family were warned so that they would not be consumed with Sodom (Gen 19:15ff.). The prophets repeatedly warned apostate Israel that God would heap misfortunes upon them (e.g. Isa 7:20). Jeremiah (Jer 12:4) stated that man's sin was so serious that even the natural world was affected by it. God's judgment should occasion prayer and intercession. Abraham pleaded with his heavenly visitors for the life of the righteous in Sodom (Ge 18:23f.). The Psalmist, concerned that God's will and

reputation be evidenced in his life, prayed for his enemies to be swept away (Ps 40:14]). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**Sapah** - 18v - add(2), captured(1), destroy(2), heap(1), perish(2), remove(1), snatched away(1), sweep away(2), swept away(6). Gen. 18:23; Gen. 18:24; Gen. 19:15; Gen. 19:17; Num. 16:26; Num. 32:14; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 32:23; 1 Sam. 12:25; 1 Sam. 26:10; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Chr. 21:12; Ps. 40:14; Prov. 13:23; Isa. 7:20; Isa. 13:15; Isa. 30:1; Jer. 12:4

**I will use My arrows on them** - Use means to use up completely so that none will remain unused, figuratively describing the depth and intensity of the divine chastisement. In Dt 32:42 he says "I will make my arrows drunk with blood." (cf Ezek 5:16, Ps. 7:13 Ps 38:2 Job 6:4: cf. Lam. 3:12, 13)

**Arrow of God.** God's arrow deals death in many forms. Perhaps due to the natural pairing of thunder and lightning, the image of God's arrows is commonly preceded by mention of thundering wrath. While arrow frequently refers to lightning, either implicitly or explicitly (2 Sam 22:15; Ps 18:4, 144:6, Zech 9:14; Hab 3:11), the bow of God may also smite with arrows of war (Deut 32:42); flood (Ps 77:17, but note also Gen 9:13, 14, 16 where "bow" becomes "rainbow" in some translations, masking the concrete imagery of God's promise to "hang up his bow"); famine (Ezek 5:16); calamity and pestilence (cf. 1 Chr 21:12, 27); plague (Dt 32:23–24; Hab 3:5) or individual sickness brought on by "spiritual" poisoning (Job 6:4, 16:13; Ps 38:2–3); and perhaps other natural disasters, such as earthquake (Hab 3:9). Almost any act of God could be accomplished by his arrows with many other weapons in reserve. Scripture labels the recipients of God's punishment as his "targets" (Lam 3:12). (Dictionary of Biblical Imagery)

**Deuteronomy 32:24** 'They will be wasted by famine, and consumed by plague And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust.'

- **wasted:** De 28:53 Jer 14:18 La 4:4-9 5:10
- **consumed,** Ps 18:12-14 120:4 Hab 3:5
- **the teeth:** Lev 26:22 Jer 15:3 16:4 Eze 5:17 14:15,21
- **venom of crawling things:** Ge 3:14 49:15 Isa 65:25 Am 9:3

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:22+ 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

Jeremiah 15:3 "I will appoint over them four kinds of doom," declares the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag off, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

## A PLETHORA OF PUNISHING EVENTS

**Driver** says the sense of this verse is "'When they are already exhausted by famine and pestilence, wild beasts and poisonous reptiles will be sent amongst them.'

**They will be wasted** (CSB - weak) **by famine** (hunger) - "They will be starved by famine, eaten by plague, and bitterly stung; I will send the teeth of wild animals against them (Dt 32:24NET) **Wasted** (mazeh) is used only here in Scripture and means burned out, exhausted, debilitated, sucked out, empty and in the Lxx is **teko** meaning to melt (down), be dissolved, be wasted away (used only once in NT in 2 Peter 3:12+ "elements will melt "). They will lack bodily or muscular strength or vitality. Likely a description of famine that occurs in a siege (cf Dt 28:53, 55, 57).

**And consumed** (Heb - [lacham](#); Lxx - [brosis](#) - eating, consuming, corroding; CSB - ravaged) **by plague** (literally - burning heat) - A **plague** is a pandemic disease which is destructive and contagious and burning heat" suggests **aplague** producing significant [hyperpyrexia](#) (elevated body temperatures).

**Plague** ([07565](#). רָעַף **rešep**: A masculine noun meaning a flame, a flash, blaze, plague, a lightning bolt, a burning pestilence. It refers to a burning, flaming of love (Song 8:6); of flaming, burning arrows of war (Ps. 76:3). It refers to lightning as a form of destruction (Ps. 78:48). It indicates a plague, one of God's curses on a disobedient Israel (Deut. 32:24); or to pestilence (Hab. 3:5), another of God's means of disciplining His people.

[Swanson](#) - **1. flame**, i.e., the glowing, hot, gaseous part of a fire which blazes (Ps 76:4; Song 8:6+), note: NIV translates in Ps. "flashing," apparently with a focus on the glint of light reflecting on a moving arrow, and not a burning head of a "fire-arrow," **2. unit:** בְּנֵי רֶשֶׁפֶן (bēn rē-šēp) 1 sparks, formally, sons of flame, i.e., very small particles of burning material, often floating upward off the hot-rising air of an open fire (Job 5:7+); **3. lightning bolt**, i.e., a shaft of lightning as a natural occurrence in nature (Ps 78:48+); **4. pestilence**, formally, bolt of lightning, i.e., a pandemic disease which is destructive and contagious (Dt 32:24; Hab 3:5)

**Resep** - 6v - Deut. 32:24; Job 5:7; Ps. 76:3; Ps. 78:48; Cant. 8:6; Hab. 3:5

**And bitter destruction** (ESV - poisonous pestilence; CSB - bitter plague) **Baker** on **bitter** (meriyriy) It indicates the harsh, mortal caustic aspect of something; threatening. In context it identifies Israel's destruction as bitter, hard to swallow." [Swanson](#) says it means "deadly, formally, bitter, i.e., pertaining to a pandemic disease that kills."

**And the teeth** (fangs) **of beasts I will send upon them** - Ezekiel says "'Moreover, I will send on you famine and **wild beasts**, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, the LORD, have spoken.'" (Ez. 5:17, see also Hos 2:14)

**With the venom of crawling things** (NIV - vipers) **of the dust** - "poisonous snakes that glide in the dust." (Dt 32:24NLT) "the poison of creatures that crawl in the dust."

(Deu 32:24 NET) [Driver](#) says that the root of **crawling things** "signifies to withdraw, retire; and the expression denotes reptiles such as crawl away to hide themselves under stones, plants, &c." In Jeremiah Yahweh says "For behold, I am sending serpents against you, Adders, for which there is no charm, And they will bite you," declares the LORD." (Jer. 8:17)

**Deuteronomy 32:25 'Outside the sword will bereave, And inside terror-- Both young man and virgin, The nursling with the man of gray hair.**

- **sword:** Lev 26:36,37 Isa 30:16 Jer 9:21 La 1:20 Eze 7:15 2Co 7:5
- **bereave.** La 2:19-22 4:4

#### Related Passages:

Lamentations 1:20 "See, O LORD, for I am in distress; My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. **In the street the sword slays; In the house it is like death.**

Ezekiel 7:15 **The sword is outside and the plague and the famine are within** He who is in the field will die by the sword; famine and the plague will also consume those in the city.

Leviticus 26:22 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which **will bereave** (sakol) **you of your children** and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

### DEATH WITHOUT AND WITHIN

**Outside the sword will bereave** (sakol; of children), **And inside terror** - NET = "The sword will make people childless outside, and terror will do so inside" Just imagine singing these lyrics! I can find no record that Israel ever sang this song. Perhaps some did, but we will have to wait until heaven to find out. Interestingly, they did remember the "Shema" in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, but it was of course much shorter and secondly it did not have the passages warning Israel of the disasters that would take place if they failed to obey the law.

**Both young man and virgin, The nursling** (sucking child) **with the man of gray hair** - No age group is exempt from this judgment.

[Driver](#) - The terrible realities of war will wreak bereavement alike through the streets and in the houses: neither age nor sex will be spared.

**Deuteronomy 32:26 'I would have said, "I will cut them to pieces, I will remove the memory of them from men,"**

- De 28:25,37,64 Lev 26:33,38 Isa 63:16 Lu 21:24

## Related Passages:

Psalms 34:16 The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Psalms 109:15 Let them be before the LORD continually, That He may cut off their memory from the earth;

## YAHWEH IS MAKING THIS PRONOUNCEMENT

I would have said, "I will cut them to pieces, I will remove (bring to an end) the memory of them from men - NIV = "I said I would scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind" "I would have annihilated them, wiping out even the memory of them. (Dt 32:26NLT)

**Deuteronomy 32:27 Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy, That their adversaries would misjudge, That they would say, "Our hand is triumphant, And the LORD has not done all this."**

- **their:** 1Sa 12:22 Isa 37:28,29,35 47:7 Jer 19:4 La 1:9 Eze 20:13,14 Eze 20:20-22 Zec 1:14,15
- **they:** Ex 32:12 Nu 14:15,16 Jos 7:9 Ps 115:1,2 140:8 Isa 10:8-15 Isa 37:10,12-23 Da 4:30-37

## REASON YAHWEH DID NOT BLOT OUT ISRAEL'S MEMORY

**Had I not** (KJV = **were it not**) **feared the provocation by the enemy, That their adversaries would misjudge** (interpret the wrong way, fail to recognize the truth) - Yahweh's point is that it was only the dread of taunting by the enemies of Israel (and God) which held Him back from annihilating Israel. The **NLT** is a good paraphrase "But I feared the taunt of Israel's enemy, who might misunderstand and say, "Our own power has triumphed! The LORD had nothing to do with this."

**Spurgeon** - Here is a sweet word of grace amid the just judgments of Jehovah: **'Were it not'**—So he spared, them for his own name's sake; and, **to this day, when God can find no other reason for showing mercy to the guilty, he does it for his name's sake**; and this is a blessed plea, to be urged by a man who can see no reason why God should have mercy upon him. He may say, **"Lord, do it for thy name's sake, to make thy grace and thy mercy illustrious, in the salvation of such a poor, hopeless wretch as I am."**

**John Maxwell** has an interesting comment - God is about to unleash the ultimate punishment on His people—annihilation—but then He stops after further reflection. Here we have an instance of God deliberating with Himself. Gerhard von Rad, commenting on these verses, said, "This section is therefore an interlude which takes us out of the turmoil of historical processes and allows us to overhear a soliloquy within the depths of the divine heart." God's decision is to exercise restraint, not because Israel deserves it, but because His honor is at stake. Israel's lack of understanding keeps her from considering her coming calamity. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

**Driver** - the enemy, by taking to themselves the credit of annihilating the Chosen People, and not recognizing in their success Jehovah's hand, would not render Him His due

**Provocation** (03708)(kaas) A masculine singular noun meaning anger, provocation, vexation. The alternate spelling of the word occurs only in Job. The majority of occurrences are in poetic literature. Human sinfulness and idolatry (1 Kgs. 15:30; Ezek. 20:28) cause God's anger, while fools, sons, wives, and rival wives can also cause vexation (1 Sa 1:6; Prov. 27:3; 17:25; 21:19, respectively).

**That they would say, "Our hand is triumphant** - The Hebrew (yad + ruwm) is the same combination in numbers for presumptuous sins = "the person who does anything with a **high hand**," (Nu 15:30ESV)" The only thing that would prevent the Lord from permitting the complete destruction of His people would be His concern that the Gentiles might claim for themselves the honor of victory over Israel.

This was the same "argument" Moses had used with Yahweh when He was prepared to destroy them after the golden calf, Moses reasoning Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people." (Ex 32:12+)

**And the LORD has not done all this** - **NAB** = "Our own hand won the victory." The pagan nations would have concluded that they



have been the ones who have brought about Israel's ruin. Ryrie adds that "God would limit the victories of Israel's enemies over her, lest they think they accomplished them in their own power and thus take glory from God. Moses longed for Israel to understand that God used her enemies for His purposes."

## Deuteronomy 32:28 "For they are a nation lacking in counsel, And there is no understanding in them."

- De 32:6 Job 28:28 Ps 81:12 Pr 1:7 Isa 27:11 29:14 Jer 4:22 8:9 Ho 4:6 Mt 13:14-15 Ro 11:25 1Co 3:19

### Related Passages:

Isaiah 27:11 When its limbs are dry, they are broken off; Women come and make a fire with them, For they are not a people of discernment, Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them. And their Creator will not be gracious to them.

Jeremiah 4:22 "For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children And have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know."

Matthew 13:14-15+ "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT **WILL NOT UNDERSTAND**; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE **HEART** OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR **EARS** THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR **EYES**, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR **EYES**, HEAR WITH THEIR **EARS**, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR **HEART** AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

## ISRAEL WAS COMPLETELY WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

I agree with **Merrill** that while "The identification of the subject throughout the passage is a matter of some difficulty, but the overall argument suggests that Israel was in view in vv. 28–30" ([NAC](#))

**For** - Yahweh explains why He had been forced to threaten His chosen people with such severity. In short they simply could not discern the source of their welfare.

**Driver** says this passage "emphasizes Israel's lack of insight, and assigns it (**For**) as the ground of the withdrawal of Jehovah's favour (Dt 32:20–27);

**They are a nation lacking in counsel** - **NET** - devoid of wisdom; **NLT** - senseless. The Hebrew for lacking is [abad](#) which the NASB marginal note says means "**perishing**," which is accurate because this Hebrew word was used of something being destroyed, ruined, or obliterated, so that it ceases to exist or function as it once did. In this case it is Israel's **counsel**, that attribute which provides direction and/or advice as to a decision or a course of action. The Septuagint uses [apollumi](#) in the perfect tense, indicating their counsel has been destroyed or ruined and that is their permanent state or condition!

**and there is no understanding in them** - **NIV** = "there is no discernment in them". In the Septuagint the Greek reads that there is **absolutely no** understanding in them! **Augustine** has a good word on understanding - "Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand." Israel was described by Jer 3:14 as "faithless sons" and in v20 above as "sons in who is no faith." Little wonder that they failed to understand.

**THOUGHT** - Disobedience always blunts understanding of divine truth. Jesus laid down the principle in John 7:17 "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." Note the critical conditions - "willing" and "to do," the former speaking of the heart's desire and the latter of the heart's obedience. While you may be a new born believer and obviously many truths in God's Word would not be fully understandable. But if you have walked with Jesus a while and you are still having trouble understanding God's Word, you might want to pray Ps 139:23-24.

**Understanding** ([08394](#)) [tebunah](#) from bin = to discern) is a noun describing the ability to discern a right course of action (Dt 32:28, Ps 136:5, 145:5, Pr 3:19). In other contexts, [tebunah](#) refers to skill or the ability to perform a craft (Ex 31:3). [Tebunah](#) is the object of knowledge (Pr 2:3; 3:13; 5:1; 14:29; 18:2; 19:8 Ps 49:4; 147:5 Is 40:28 1Ki 5:9; 7:14) Vine summarizes [tebunah](#) - it represents the act (Job 26:12), faculty (Ex. 31:3), object (Pr 2:3), and personification of wisdom (Pr. 8:1).

**Understanding** (Webster) = power of comprehending; especially the capacity to apprehend general relations of particulars; the power to make experience intelligible by applying concepts and categories. The faculty of the human mind by which it apprehends the real state of things presented to it, or by which it receives or comprehends the ideas which others express and intend to communicate. The understanding is called also the intellectual faculty. It is the faculty by means of which we obtain a great part of our knowledge.

### Deuteronomy 32:29 "Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future!"

- **would that:** De 5:29 Ps 81:13 107:15,43 Isa 48:18,19 Ho 14:9 Lu 19:41,42
- **they would:** Isa 10:3 47:7 Jer 5:31 17:11 La 1:9 Lu 12:20 Lk 16:19-25

#### Related Passages:

Lamentations 1:9 Her uncleanness was in her skirts; She did not consider her future. Therefore she has fallen astonishingly; She has no comforter. "See, O LORD, my affliction, For the enemy has magnified himself!"

## YAHWEH'S DESIRE FOR ISRAEL TO DISCERN HER FUTURE

**Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future!**- Note the sadness and compassion in the heart of God. This reads almost like a prayer (NLT, NET - "I wish that they were wish.") This passage echoes Yahweh's words in Deuteronomy 5:29+ "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!"

**Wiersbe** - Moses reminded them not to forget their beginning (v. 18) or ignore their "latter end" (v. 29). ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

This passage also reminds me of the [pathos](#) of Jesus when He looked over the Holy City of Jerusalem...

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.(Lu 19:41,42+)

**Driver** - had Israel been wise, it would have understood this, viz. the necessity of such chastisements as those just described (Dt 32:20–25), and discerned their latter end (Dt 32:20), i.e. the final issue of the course they were pursuing, in case either they themselves neglected to repent, or God out of regard to His honour (Dt 32"26f.) did not interpose to save them.

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#### Plan For The Future

Oh, that they were wise, . . . that they would consider their latter end. —Deuteronomy 32:29

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:6-29

In the spring of 1981, a young man was flown into desolate northern Alaska to photograph the natural beauty and mysteries of the tundra. He took along 500 rolls of film, several firearms, and 1,400 pounds of provisions.

As the months passed, the words in his diary changed from wonder and fascination into a nightmare. In August he wrote, "I think I should have used more foresight about arranging my departure. I'll soon find out." In November he died in a nameless valley, by a nameless lake, 225 miles northeast of Fairbanks. An investigation revealed that though he had carefully planned his trip, he had made no provision to be flown out.

We read in Deuteronomy that the Israelites made a similar mistake. For a while they had all they needed, but they forgot that it was God who provided for them (Dt. 32:15-18). It soon became obvious that they had given no thought to the outcome of worshipping false gods and living for their own enjoyment. Their behavior brought God's judgment (vv.19-25). They had failed to "consider their latter end" (v.29).

Have you thought about your latter end? It's wise to prepare for it now. Trusting Christ as Savior and living for Him is the only way to plan for the future. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord, You'd have us ponder this,  
One truth You'd have us see:  
It's in this life we chart our course  
For all eternity.  
—DJD

It's never too soon to plan for eternity.

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### Deuteronomy 32:29 Plan Your Departure!

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

All of us need to make specific plans for our departure from this life. If we don't, we can be left in a predicament similar to that of a young man who became stranded in an Alaskan wilderness. His adventure began in the spring of 1981 when he was flown into the desolate north country to photograph the natural beauty and mysteries of the tundra. He had photo equipment, 500 rolls of film, several firearms, and 1400 pounds of provisions. As the months passed, the entries in his diary, which at first detailed his wonder and fascination with the wildlife around him, turned into a pathetic record of a nightmare. In August he wrote, "I think I should have used more foresight about arranging my departure. I'll soon find out."

He waited and waited, but no one came to his rescue. In November he died in a nameless valley, by a nameless lake, 225 miles northeast of Fairbanks. An investigation revealed that he had carefully mapped out his venture, but had made no provision to be flown out of the area.

In Deuteronomy 32 we read that the Israelites made a similar mistake. For a while they had all they needed, but it soon became obvious that they had given no thought to the outcome of worshipping false gods and living for their own enjoyment. They failed to consider "their latter end."

Have you thought about your exit from life? Trusting Christ as Savior and living for Him each day is the only way to be sure we have prepared for our departure. -M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord, You'd have us ponder this,  
One truth You'd have us see—  
It's in this life we chart our course  
For all eternity.  
-D.J.D.

You can't repent too soon,  
for you know not how soon it may be too late

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### Deuteronomy 32:30 "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?"

- **one chase:** Lev 26:8 Jos 23:10 Jdg 7:22,23 1Sa 14:15-17 2Ch 24:24 Isa 30:17
- **put** Jdg 2:14 3:8 Ps 44:12 Isa 50:1 52:3 Mt 18:25 cp. Josh 23:10
- **given them up** Job 11:10 16:11 Ps 31:8

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:17 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you.

Leviticus 26:36-37 'As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. 37 'They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies.

Deuteronomy 28:25 "The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, but you shall flee seven ways before them, and you shall be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

**Driver** summarizes Dt 32:30-33- Israel's disasters are due only to Jehovah's alienation, occasioned by Israel's sin: the heathen gods have not the power to produce them (v. 31); the heathen nations are too corrupt to do so (v. 32f.)

**How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold (delivered) them, And the LORD had given (handed) them up?** This is rhetorical. The answer clearly is this supernatural description is only possible by the exertion of God's power. This is in a sense a prophetic warning that Israel's armies would experience military disaster which was divinely ordained. This is part of the divine curses in Deuteronomy 28 (see Dt 28:25) and is the sad antithesis of what could have been true of Israel in Dt 28:7 had they only obeyed the LORD with all their heart and all their soul and all their might!

As **Driver** says the defeats of Israel "cannot be reasonably attributed to Jehovah's inability to defend His people, they must be taken as proof that He has, for some sufficient cause, designedly cast them off.

The verb **sold** is a figure of speech meaning to hand over or surrender over someone (in this case Israel) to another and is used in the OT especially in the book of Judges when for 300 years Israel forgot God, forsook God and and sought the idols - Jdg. 2:14, Jdg 3:8, Jdg 4:2, Jdg 4:9, Jdg 10:7, 1 Sa. 12:9

**Deuteronomy 32:31 "Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this.**

- Ex 14:25 Nu 23:8,23 1Sa 2:2 4:8 Ezr 1:3 6:9-12 7:20,21 Jer 40:3 Da 2:47 3:29 6:26,27

## **ROCK OF AGES ROCK OF ALL "ROCKS"**

**Indeed their (Israel's enemies) rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves judge this** A contrast between the gods of the nations ("rock") and Israel's true God ("Rock"). Israel could smite its foes with very little difficulty because of the weakness of their gods, who are not like the Rock Jehovah. Even Israel's enemies conceded this was true! Their **rock** seems to be a reference to stones pagans set up and worshiped as idols.

**Driver** - as the nations themselves are obliged to own, their "rock" (i.e. their god, or gods) cannot vie in might with Israel's "Rock" (comp. e.g. Ex. 14:25; Nu. 23-24; Jos. 2:9f.; 1 Sa. 4:8, 5:7, 10f, 1 Ki. 20:23-30), and cannot therefore have brought about Israel's disasters

**Steven Cole** on **rock** - "Their rock" refers to the false gods of the Canaanites. It points to idols that people trust in. Some trust in money, thinking that it will bring them stability and security in life. But billions of dollars will be worthless when you die and stand before God (Luke 12:15-21). Others trust in pleasure, but sensual pleasures quickly fade as we grow old and die. Others trust in relationships with a spouse, family, or friends. Such relationships are a gift from God. But death can quickly rob us of our cherished relationships. Whatever rock you put your trust in is not like our Rock, the living and true God. He alone ultimately satisfies, both for time and eternity (Ps. 16:11 = "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."). ([Sermon](#))

**Deuteronomy 32:32 "For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter.**

- **the vine.** Isa 1:10 Jer 2:21 La 4:6 Eze 16:45-51 Mt 11:24
- **grapes:** De 29:18 Isa 5:4 Heb 12:15

## **GRAPES OF WRATH FROM THE VINE OF SODOM**

**For their (Israel's enemies') vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah-** Vine speaks of the vital connection which is figurative but is still vivid as it indicates the very heart of the pagan nations was evil and depraved like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. And look what God did to them!

**Sodom** and **Gomorrah** is the epitome of corruption (Ge 18:20; 19:4-28; Mt 10:15; 11:23-24). It is interesting that the figures of Sodom and Gomorrah in other contexts is compared to Israel - Is. 1:10, 3:9, Jer. 23:14, Ezek 16:46-49, La 4:6)

**Deere** points out the fact that "the enemies who would execute God's judgment on Israel were as evil as **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**, further underscored the depth of evil and shame into which Israel had fallen (vv. 32–33).

**NET NOTE**- The term "vine" is a reference to the pagan deities which, the passage says, find their ultimate source in **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**, that is, in the soil of perversion exemplified by these places (cf. Gen 18:20; 19:4–28; Isa 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6; Ezek 16:44–52; Matt 10:15; 11:23–24).

**Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter** - Eating the idolatrous fruit of the pagan nations would lead only to death, physical and spiritual. **Bitter (merōrah)** is translated in Lxx with [pikria](#) meaning bitterness and literally, of plants that produce inedible or poisonous fruit.

**Bitter** (04846. מְרוֹרָה merōrah: A feminine noun referring to gall, liver, a bitter thing. In Job 20:14 the word pictorially describes the viper's venom. It is used of the gallbladder (Job 20:25); its bile (Job 20:14; venom, NASB). It indicates words that create grief in another person (Job 13:26). It describes clusters of grapes as bitter in a figurative sense (Deut. 32:32).

### Deuteronomy 32:33 "Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the deadly poison of cobras.

- **poison:** Job 20:14-16 Ps 58:4 Ps 140:3 Jer 8:14 Ro 3:13

## POISONOUS WINE

**Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the deadly poison of cobras**- The message of this passage is double death is the fate of partaking of the spiritual poisons of the pagan nations.

**Driver** says that **serpents** is "a generic term, commonly applied to marine monsters (Ge 1:21 al.), but sometimes used of land-reptiles, Ex. 7:9, 10, 12, Ps. 91:13b."

**Deadly** (0393. אָזָר 'azār: An adjective meaning cruel or deadly, that which takes a life. It refers to the deadly or cruel venom of cobras (Deut. 32:33). Job calls God's actions toward him cruel (Job 30:21), and God accuses His own people of being cruel (Lam. 4:3). It is rendered fierce to describe Leviathan (NASB, NKJV, KJV, NIV, Job 41:10[2]).

**Akzar** - 4v - cruel(2), deadly(1), fierce(1). Deut. 32:33; Job 30:21; Job 41:10; Lam. 4:3

**Poison** (07219. רֹשׁ רֹשׁ, רֹשׁ רֹשׁ: A masculine noun meaning poison, bitterness, gall. It refers to something that is a life-threatening substance. In context it refers to human hostility or bitterness (Deut. 29:18[17]). It defines grapes as poisonous, grapes that represent pagan peoples (Deut. 32:32). It describes pagan wine as like the poison of cobras (Deut. 32:33). Job described the wicked person as one who partakes of the poison of cobras (Job 20:16). It refers to water that is poisoned (Jer. 8:14; 9:15[14]; 23:15). In context it may have the sense of harshness, gall, bitterness (Lam. 3:5, 19). Justice and/or injustice is described as being poisonous, transformed into deadly corruption socially (Hos. 10:4; Amos 6:12).

**Ros** - 12v - bitterness(2), gall(1), poison(4), poisoned(2), poisonous(2), poisonous weeds(1). Deut. 29:18; Deut. 32:32; Deut. 32:33; Job 20:16; Ps. 69:21; Jer. 8:14; Jer. 9:15; Jer. 23:15; Lam. 3:5; Lam. 3:19; Hos. 10:4; Amos 6:12

**Cobras** (06620. פֶּתֶן peṭen: A masculine noun indicating a cobra, a poisonous snake. It refers to a deadly poisonous snake of Asia and Africa with loose skin around its neck close to its head (Deut. 32:33). Its venom is used to depict the character of the wicked (Job 20:14, 16; Ps. 58:4[5]). The one who trusts God need not fear the poison of the cobra (Ps. 91:13). In the Messianic Age, the cobra will be tame (Isa. 11:8). Used in a variety of images, in essence, pethen is used as a simile to compare the danger of the wicked. This is especially clear in Ps. 58:4, as the lies of the wicked are compared to the poison of a snake. The monolog of Zophar in Job 20 twice employs the noun in the course of a metaphor concerning wicked words (vv. 14, 16). The wickedness tastes sweet, but does complete internal damage, as though one had consumed the poison of a snake. The Song of Moses concludes with a curse concerning the coming apostasy of the Israelites once they reach the land (Deut. 32:33). The Israelites would experience the opposite of the abundance they originally reaped upon taking the land, as the wine they produced would bear the poison of snakes, the produce of poisoned grapes.

**Pethen** also appears twice in the context of Yahweh's control over nature. The first usage of this nuance is attested in Ps. 91:13, as the righteous are promised the protection of Yahweh and his angels so that the righteous will be able to tread upon lions and snakes. It is also used to illustrate the apocalyptic renewal of the universe, as the adverse effect of the fall of humanity is righted (Isa. 11:8). The rift between humans and nature will be bridged, as "the suckling child will play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child will put his hand on the cockatrice's den."

**Peten** - 6v - Deut. 32:33; Job 20:14; Job 20:16; Ps. 58:4; Ps. 91:13; Isa. 11:8

### Deuteronomy 32:34 'Is it not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasures?'

- Job 14:17 Jer 2:22 Ho 13:12 Ro 2:5 1Co 4:5 Rev 20:12,13

#### Related Passages:

Romans 2:4-5 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

### PAY DAY SOME DAY!

This section teaches the sometimes difficult to comprehend principle that God would use sinful, pagan nations to discipline His chosen people, but He would always hold them accountable for the wickedness against Israel and would recompense them justly!

**Driver** summarizes Dt 32:34–36. writing that "such corruption cannot remain for ever unnoticed by Jehovah: it calls for vengeance; and in the end He will interpose on His people's behalf, and abandon their enemies to destruction."

**Spurgeon** - What, a striking and startling question that is, as though God laid up the memory of man's sin, sealed it up, and kept it in a secret place against the day when he shall call sinners to account, and visit them for their iniquities! What an awful thing it is to have the sins of one's youth laid up, sealed up, and put away in God's treasury; and the sins of middle life, and perhaps the sins of old age, too, to be brought out, by-and-by, and laid to our charge! Who shall be able to stand in that great day? Only those who are washed in the blood: and robed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Is it not laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasures**- Verses 34-35 are a quote from Yahweh. The point is that the moral corruption of the pagans (their poison wine) has not been overlooked but is remembered by Yahweh, and is been "laid away" for future payback. While God exercised restraint against Israel (Dt 32:26-27 - for His Name, not theirs), He would not do the same for the pagan nations. The evil done to Israel by her enemies, as alluded to in Dt 32:32-33, is not forgotten by God and He will punish them even as he explains in the next verse -- **in due time** (when their bill comes due so to speak). Sealed up was a phrase used in the ancient world to describe the act of affixing an impression on something (e.g., a letter - 1 Ki 21:8, bill of sale - Jer 32:10, etc) to serve as a seal to authenticate and secure that which was sealed. The Lxx translate **sealed** with [psphragizo](#) (used of believer sealed by the Spirit - Eph 1:13, 2 Cor 1:22) in the perfect tense indicating it was sealed in the past and the seal is still present. The "bill" the pagans owe because of their evil against Israel is kept safe in God's depository.

**Sealed up in My treasures** is an image used by Paul in Ro 2:4-5+.

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,**

#### Related Resource:

- [Robert G Lee's famous sermon Payday Someday.](#)

### Deuteronomy 32:35 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.'

- **Vengeance is Mine:** Dt 32:43 Ps 94:1 Na 1:2,6 Ro 12:19 Ro 13:4 Heb 10:30

- **In due time their foot will slip:** Ps 73:17-19 Pr 4:19 Isa 8:15 Jer 6:21 Jer 13:16 1Pe 2:8
- **for the day:** 2Pe 2:3
- **the impending** Isa 5:19 Isa 30:12,13 Isa 60:22 Hab 2:3 Lu 18:7,8 2Pe 2:3 2Pe 3:8-10



[Damocles Sword](#) - Click to Enlarge (look closely to see sword)

## GOD'S PREROGATIVE: PAYDAY SOMEDAY!

**Vengeance is Mine, and retribution** (recompense) - **NET** = "will get revenge and pay them back at the time their foot slips." Mark it down that divine judgment may be delayed but it will not be indefinitely deferred! **Retribution** (shillem - only OT use) is translated in Lxx with [antapodidomi](#) meaning to give back in return for something received (in this case payback for sin). The Hebrew verb (**shillem**) speaks of a deserved punishment, in the sense of a repayment for whatever wrong was done by a person. The point is that the punishment is deserved and it is ultimately only God Who has the right to avenge the wrongdoers, giving them what they deserve.

**Spurgeon** - To you who trust in anything except God, the day will come when you will hear such terrible words as these—"Now let your riches save you, let your pleasures and your vices cheer you; go ye now in your own wicked ways, and see if you can find any comfort in them!" What holy sarcasm there is in these words, which will cut to the quick the conscience when it is once fairly aroused!

**Driver** - the words are not intended as a warning against self-vengeance (as the verse is applied, Rom. 12:19)—for the prostrate nation is not in a condition to think of that: it is meant as a declaration that there is, after all, a source when vengeance will be forthcoming: "I, of whom, under the circumstances, you least expect it, will arise, and recompense your foes" For the thought of Jehovah's **vengeance** (נָקַם) see Dt 32:41, 43, Is. 1:24, Mic. 5:15 Nah. 1:2, Ezek. 25:14, 17, Jer. 5:9, 29, 9:8 (cf. Jer 11:20, 20:12), 46:10, 50:15, 28, 51:6, 11, Is. 34:8, 35:4, 47:3, 59:17, 61:2, 63:4; cf. also Lev. 26:25, Nu. 31:3, Ps. 94:1, 99:8.

**Paul** quotes this verse in Romans in his exhortation to believers not to seek revenge when wronged writing

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, **VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,**" says the Lord." (Ro 12:19)

The writer of Hebrews says

For we know Him who said, "**VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.**" And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." (Heb 10:30+)

**Vengeance** (noun)(05359) [naqam](#) from the verb form **naqam** = to avenge or take vengeance) is the act of taking revenge (harming someone in retaliation for something harmful that they have done). It refers to punishment inflicted or retribution exacted for an injury or wrong and can refer to punishment beyond what is physical. **Naqam** is translated in the Septuagint in this verse with [ekdikeyo](#) (**ek** = out or from + **dike** = right, justice; see cognates = [ekdikesis](#) and [ekdikos](#)) is literally that which proceeds from justice. The idea is to vindicate one's right or to do one justice.

**In due time their foot will slip** - Notice the sense of urgency is heightened by the use of three time phrases -**due time, day near, impending...hastening**.

**Cole** - Lord tells Israel that when they turn away from Him, He will use the idolatrous nations to punish Israel and then He will judge those nations because of how they treated Israel (Deut. 32:35-36)!...“Vengeance is Mine” (v. 35) is cited twice in the New Testament, once to prohibit us from taking our own vengeance (Rom. 12:19); and the other time (Heb. 10:30) to warn us that God will judge those who trample Jesus under foot and regard His blood of the covenant as unclean.

**Due time** ([et/eth](#)) is translated in Lxx with [kairos](#) meaning the right time, a point in time, the time of crisis (crisis for the one who will receive divine punishment!) This **slip** is guaranteed for every soul whose foot has slipped on sin and steadfastly planted by grace through faith on the Rock of our Salvation, the Messiah.

**Driver** says the idea of in due time is that as "soon as they once begin to totter, vengeance will speedily complete its work. The tottering of the foot is a frequent image of a reverse of fortune Ps. 38:16, 94:18, cf. Ps 66:9, 121:3. The righteous, when their foot totters, are upheld by Jehovah (Ps. 94:18): in the case of the wicked, a similar moment is seized by God's providence (cf Jude 1:24-25+), for the purpose of completing their destruction.

This passage was the source of one of the greatest sermons ever preached -**Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God** by Jonathan Edwards on July, 1841 at Enfield, Mass.

**Time** (06256)([et/eth](#)) means time but the exact sense depends on the context. It is used most often to express the time of the occurrence of some event. Et/eth can refer to a duration of time, as for all time (Ex. 18:22; Pr 8:30) or for any time in general (Lev 16:2). The time referred to may be past, present, or future (Nu 23:23; Jdg. 13:23; Isa. 9:1). **Et/eth** can be the time when certain appropriate things took place - kings went forth to war in the spring (2 Sa 11:1; 1 Chr. 20:1), the Jews said "The **time** has not come, even the **time** for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt," to which God said "Is it **time** for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" (cf Hag 1:2, 4). **Et/eth** is fitting for certain reasons, such as rain falling on the land in its season (Dt. 11:14; Jer. 5:24); fruit trees bearing fruit at the proper time (Ps. 1:3), a proper time for fitting words (Pr 15:23)

**For** - He now explains the time phrase **in due time**.

**The day of their calamity is near** - **NET** = "day of disaster is near" The disastrous character of **calamity** is illustrated also by the figures used in connection with it as in Pr. 1:27 = "When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you." Also in Pr 6:15 = "Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; Instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing."

**Day of calamity** - Dt 32:35 2 Sam 22:19 Job 21:30 Psa 18:18 Prov 27:10 Jer 18:17 Jer 44:2 Jer 44:23 Jer 46:21 Jer 51:2 Lam 1:21 Amos 6:3 Oba 1:13

**Calamity** (0343) [ed](#) means distress. This Hebrew word (**ed**) often refers to final, life-ending calamity (Pr 6:15, 24:22). The Lxx translates **ed** with the noun **apoleia** which means utter and hopeless loss of all that gives worth to existence. The more common sense of **apoleia** is as a description of the destruction which one experiences, when instead of becoming what he might have become by redemption through the blood of Christ (new creature/creation in Christ - 2Cor 5:17), he is ruined ("spiritually bankrupt", in a state of "eternal disrepair") suffering loss of value or usefulness (ultimately usefulness to God - this is sad beyond words and even as I write this note tears well up in my eyes for the plight of these men and women, created in the image of God.) Think of the picture of a once beautiful edifice which has suffered the ravages of time and circumstances and all that one sees is the useless, collapsed, disintegrated remains. To reject wisdom for a lifetime is to end up rejected by God for eternity!

**And the impending** (close in time, about to occur; Hebrew = "prepared things") **things are hastening upon them** - **NET** = "the impending judgment is rushing upon them." **NIV** = "their doom rushes upon them." The idea of impending is that their day of disaster is hovering threateningly over their head like the [sword of Damocles](#).

**Hastening** (02363). [וַיַּחַרְחֹץ](#). A verb meaning to hasten. Its basic sense is to hurry or do something quickly: to carry out an ambush quickly (Jdg. 20:37); to hurry to a place of safety (Ps. 55:8[9]). It takes on the sense of disturbed, agitated, or unstable (1 Sam. 20:38; Job 20:2; 31:5; Isa. 28:16; Hab. 1:8). **Swanson** - **1. (qal) go quickly**, hasten, rush upon, i.e., do something with rapidity of motion, and so have less time go by, with an associated meaning of great energy (Dt 32:35; 1Sa 20:38; Ps 22:20; 38:23, 40:14; Ps70:2,6; Ps 71:12; 119:60; 141:1); (hif) hasten, make hurry (Jdg 20:37; Job 31:5; Ps 55:9; Isa 5:19; 60:22); **2. (qal) swoop**



**down**, i.e., a swift downward flight of a bird of prey as it catches its prey, technically called a “stoop.” (Hab 1:8); **3. qal pass.) be ready, be prepared**, formally, hastened, i.e., be in a state for immediate action as an extension of being hastened or hurried (Nu 32:17+), note, for another interp Job 20:2; Isa 28:16,

**Hus** - 20v - agitation(1), disturbed(1), hasten(8), hastened(2), hastening(1), hurried(1), make haste(2), quick(1), ready(1), speedy(1), swooping(1 Num. 32:17; Deut. 32:35; Jdg. 20:37; 1 Sam. 20:38; Job 20:2; Job 31:5; Ps. 22:19; Ps. 38:22; Ps. 40:13; Ps. 55:8; Ps. 70:1; Ps. 70:5; Ps. 71:12; Ps. 119:60; Ps. 141:1; Isa. 5:19; Isa. 8:1; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 60:22; Hab. 1:8

### Deuteronomy 32:35 AWAKENED BY VISIONS OF HELL

America’s greatest theologian is often identified as Jonathan Edwards, a New England pastor of the 1700s. Edwards was brilliant. At age six he studied Latin. He entered Yale when not quite thirteen and graduated when barely fifteen. He was ordained at age nineteen, taught at Yale by twenty, and later became president of Princeton. Harvard granted him both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree on the same day.

But he is best known for Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God—the most famous sermon in American history.

He preached it on Sunday, July 8, 1741, while ministering in tiny Enfield, Connecticut. A group of women had spent the previous night praying for revival. When Edwards rose to speak, he quietly announced that his text was Deuteronomy 32:35, “... their foot shall slide in due time.” This “hellfire and brimstone” approach was somewhat a departure for Edwards. Of his one thousand written sermons, less than a dozen are of this type.

Edwards neither gestured nor raised his voice. He spoke softly and simply, warning the unconverted that they were dangling over hell like a spider over the fire. O sinner! consider the fearful danger. The unconverted are now walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen.

Edwards’ voice was suddenly lost amid cries and commotion from the crowd. He paused, appealing for calm. Then he concluded: Let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom.

Strong men held to pews and posts, feeling they were sliding into hell. Others shook uncontrollably and rolled on the floor. Throughout the night cries of men and women were heard throughout the village, begging God to save them. Five hundred were converted that evening, sparking a revival that swept thousands into the kingdom.

The Great Awakening had come. (Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

**Deuteronomy 32:36 "For the LORD will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free.**

- **For the LORD:** Ps 7:8 50:4 Ps 96:13 Ps 135:14
- **will have compassion:** Jdg 2:18 10:15,16 Ps 90:13 106:45 Jer 31:20 Joe 2:14 Am 7:3,6
- **none:** 1Ki 14:10 1Ki 21:21 2Ki 9:8 2Ki 14:26

## IN GREAT COMPASSION YAHWEH WILL VINDICATE ISRAEL

### Outline of the Song of Moses

- Israel’s creation and Yahweh’s gracious treatment (Dt 32:1-14, vv5-6 are perjorative toward Israel)
- Israel’s unfaithfulness and spurning of Yahweh (Dt 32:15-19)
- Yahweh’s judgment decreed (Dt 32:20-35)
- Yahweh’s promise of victory over all adversaries of Israel (Dt 32:36-43)

**For** - Moses explains why Yahweh will take vengeance against Israel’s foes. This is a critical verse to understand, for here God shows that while He will vindicate His people Israel, He will not do so until they come to the humble place of no longer trusting in and/or relying on their strength, their efforts. Isn’t this the way God moves most mightily in our lives as believers? (cf 2 Cor 12:9-10+). **John Maxwell** adds that “God’s goal in judging Israel is not to annihilate her; it is to bring her to the point where she

understands that "there is no God beside Me." (Dt 32:39).

**The LORD will vindicate His people** - This is the antithesis of vengeance on the wicked. More literally this reads in the **NET** = "The LORD will judge his people." In this context the idea of **vindicate** is correct for here Yahweh will free His people from allegation or blame (cf similar sense in Ge 30:6, Ps 54:1, Pr 31:9).

The two clauses are repeated verbatim Ps. 135:14.

**And will have compassion on His servants** - **KJV** = "repent" **NET** = "will change his plans concerning his servants" -- **NET NOTE** explains "The translation understands the verb in the sense of "be grieved, relent" (cf. HALOT 689 s.v. דָּנָה hitp 2); cf. KJV, ASV "repent himself"; NLT "will change his mind." Another option is to translate "will show compassion to" as in NASB, NIV, NRSV."

This statement in Dt 32:36 is a sense an answer to the psalmist's plea "Do return, O LORD; how long will it be? **And be sorry** (**naham/nacham**) for Your servants." (Ps 90:13)

**Have compassion** (repent, relent) (05162) **naham/nacham** means to be sorry, to pity, to console oneself, repent, regret, comfort, be comforted, to get revenge for oneself (Ge 27:42, Ezek 5:13). According to the TWOT **nacham** reflects the idea of "breathing deeply" and hence refers to the physical display of one's feelings, such as sorrow, or in this case compassion or comfort. The **Septuagint** renders **nacham** in in Dt 32:36 with the Greek verb **parakaleo** (**para** = beside + **kaleo** = call) which has the basic picture of calling someone to oneself, to call to one's side, to encourage, to instill someone with courage or cheer and so to comfort (used this way in Mt 5:4+, cp Lk 16:25+).

**When He sees that their strength is gone** (their power has disappeared), **and there is none remaining** (no one left), **bond** (confined) **or free** - **Strength** is **yad**, the word for hand and often used as a figure for strength or power. **Bond or free** = the fettered or free (phrase in 1 Ki 14:10, 21:21, 2 Ki 9:8). The exact meaning of **bond or free** is difficult to ascertain, but one thing it clearly means is ALL.

#### Deuteronomy 32:37 "And He will say, 'Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge?"

- Jdg 10:14 2Ki 3:13 Jer 2:28

### WHERE IS YOUR REFUGE? THE "rock" OR THE ROCK?

Note again Dt 32:39-42 appears to be a quotation from Yahweh.

**Driver** sums up Dt 32:37-39 - God will speak to them through the extremity of their need, bringing them to own, by the logic of facts, that the gods in whom they trusted are unworthy of their regard, and so making it possible for Himself to interpose on their behalf. The verse supplies the thought that was missing in v. 36, viz. of the moral change wrought in Israel by its need, which would be the necessary condition of Jehovah's being able to "repent," and receive them again into His favour

**And He** (Moses is quoting Yahweh) **will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge**- This question (which continues in v38) is a bit ironic as God asks where are the idolatrous gods the "rock" whose favor they previously had sought to win by their vain sacrifices? Where are they? The answer is THEY DO NOT EXIST!

We see a parallel thought in Judges 10:14 "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress." Similar in Jer 2:28 the question is asked "where are your gods Which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you In the time of your trouble; For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah." In those two examples the questions were in context of judgment, but in Dt 32:37-38 the context is Israel's need (no strength remaining, bond and free in v36). And so the question is asked to bring to their minds and conviction the folly of having chosen to chase after worthless idols. God is moving them to shift their gaze from the false, impotent rock to their true and living, omnipotent Rock.

**Sought refuge** is somewhat ironic for this same verb is used in the psalms of taking refuge in Jehovah (Ps 2:12, Ps 7:1) Ps 18:2 has another parallel ("rock") and reads "The LORD is my **Rock** and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my **Rock**, in whom **I take refuge**; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Is is notable that **sought refuge** often has a following word for the place of refuge as Ps 36:7 (**take refuge** in the shadow of Your wings) and Ps 57:1 (my soul **takes refuge** in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will **take refuge** Until destruction passes by. )

**Take refuge** (take shelter) (02620) (**chasah**) means to flee for protection. The picture is that of one who

confides or puts their trust in another (usually God - see 36 uses below). The verb can mean to put trust in or have hope in (this would be one's attitude or mindset) but can also mean to flee for protection to (this would be one's action consistent with a mind that trusted & hoped in God). God is ever the sole refuge of His people and trust in Him protects the "trustee!" It is always better to trust in God rather than to trust (batah) in princes (Ps 118:8-9). With one exception (Isa 30:2) **chasah** refers to the Lord as the One in Whom refuge is sought and is portrayed by various metaphors - **Rock** (Dt 32:37, 2Sa 22:3, Ps 18:2), **Wings** (cp a "mother hen" protecting her chicks Ru 2:12, Ps 36:7, Ps 57:1, Ps 61:4, Ps 91:4), **Shield** (Ps 144:2, 2Sa 22:31, Ps 18:30, Pr 30:5 - paralleled with the "Word of God"), at God's **"right hand"** (Ps 17:7), Those who **take refuge** in Jehovah are those who fear (reverential awe and respect) Him (Ps 31:19), those who are His servants (Ps 34:22, 64:10), those who trust in God rather than men (Ps 118:8,9), the righteous (Pr 14:32), afflicted (Isa 14:32), "a humble and lowly people" (Zeph 3:12). To seek refuge" stresses the insecurity and helplessness of even the "strongest" individual. The result of taking refuge in God is to be "blessed" (Ps 2:12), to be "saved" (Ps 17:7), experience joy (Ps 5:11), experience and possess His "great goodness" (Ps 31:19), become inheritors of "the land" (Isa 57:13).

**THOUGHT** - Do we recall to our minds the greatness of our sovereign, omnipotent Creator and Sustainer, so that when times of affliction and testing come we are fully convinced of His ability to protect us and we run to Him for refuge without hesitation? Let us ever turn first to Him and may the Spirit enable us to recall our past deliverances by the mighty hand of our Deliverer (Ps 18:2 40:17, 70:5, 144:2) so that we do not waver in unbelief when the storm comes but instead run confidently into our Rock of Refuge. How do we take refuge in Him? (1). Know His Word (2). Heed His Word like Noah did in Heb 11:7. God does not stutter or equivocate. He speaks very clearly concerning His will for men. Our part is to hide ourselves in that true word. It is close to the idea of taking up the shield of faith in Eph 6:16 (believing what God has promised is true...e.g., that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure...the truth is if we are falling to a repetitive temptation, we need to be very circumspect...it is probably because we want to fall into the passing pleasures of sin! Fall into the Cleft of the Rock (1 Co 10:4) instead...and be shielded from the fiery trials even though the fire is heated extremely hot (Da 3:22, Isa 43:2.)

**Deuteronomy 32:38 'Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you, Let them be your hiding place!**

- **Who ate the fat** Lev 21:21 Ps 50:13 Eze 16:18,19 Ho 2:8 Zep 2:11
- let them: Jdg 10:14

## YAHWEH MOCKS THE IDOLS

**Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you, Let them be your hiding place** God mockingly inquires about the whereabouts of the gods that drank the drink offerings of wine offered by their pagan worshipers. In Daniel 11:8, this term refers to metal idols or images brought home by the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy after defeating the Syrian army.

**Deuteronomy 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.**

- **I am He** Ps 102:27 Isa 41:4 45:5,18,22 46:4 48:12 Heb 1:12 Rev 1:11 2:8
- **no god:** De 4:35 Isa 45:5,18,22
- **I put to death:** 1Sa 2:6 2Ki 5:7 Job 5:18 Ps 68:20 Isa 43:13 Ho 6:1 Joh 8:24 Rev 1:17,18
- **there is no one who can deliver from My hand:** Job 10:7 Ps 50:22 Isa 43:13 Mic 5:8

## YAHWEH'S SELF TESTIMONY

**See now that I, I am He,** (Ps113:4-6) The Septuagint has "idete idete (See, See) hoti **ego eimi**. The Hebrew is more expressive,

"See now that I, I am" (cf the repetition of "**ego eimi**" in Isa 41:4; 48:12 Jn 8:24 Jn 18:5). God is clearly filled with compassion and is speaking tenderly and truthfully to His wayward "Wife" (See Excursus on Yahweh as Husband of Israel) calling her to learn from the destruction of the idolaters, and the inability of their idols to help them.

**Driver** - With impassioned eloquence the poet, speaking in Jehovah's name, bids Israel now, whatever may have been the case hitherto, recognize, from the impotence of their false gods, His sole divinity, and own that He has the power both to smite and to heal—it is He who has brought Israel to its present extremity, and it is He who is also able, if it so pleases Him, to restore to it its lost prosperity.—That I, I am he] the duplication of the pronoun marks the passion and fervour of the speaker. **I am He** (אני הוא) as in Isa. 41:4, 43:10, 13 (followed as here by ואין מידי מציל, Isa 46:4, 48:12, and (with thou) Ps. 102:28. An emphatic assertion of the personality of Jehovah: "**I am He**," i.e. **He Who is**—as opposed to the unreal gods of the heathen (Dt 32:37f.)...—the Unseen, yet Omnipresent and Self-consistent, Ruler of the world.

It is notable that here Moses concludes with that name of God by which he was first made to know him (Ex 3:14), "I am that I am. I am he that I have been, that I will be, that I have promised to be, that I have threatened to be; all shall find me true to my word."

After showing the worthlessness of false gods (Dt 32:37, 38), this declaration of the nature of God was presented to show that the God of Israel is the living God, the only One who can offer help and protection to Israel. He has the power of life and death with regard to Israel (cf. 1Sa 2:6; 2Ki 5:7) and the power to wound and heal them (cf. Isa 30:26; Isa 57:17, 18 Jer 17:14 Hos 6:1 Isa 45:7). The Hebrew emphasizes by repetition. This whole stanza is a towering expression of the uniqueness of God in His being, power, providence, and justice. Because God is both infinitely just and all-powerful, we can be sure that evil will at last be destroyed (Rev 19:1, 2) and will one day shout a loud "Hallelujah" (Rev 19:3). In marked contrast to the weak, incompetent, and, nonexistent gods of the pagans, we see Yahweh the One Who alone exists forever. This self asseveration is inherent throughout the covenant text of Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 4:35, 39; Dt 5:7; Dt 32:12) and argued at length elsewhere, especially in Isaiah (cf. Isa 41:4; Isa 43:10–12; Isa 45:5–6).

**And there is no god besides Me;** (Dt 4:35 Isa 45:5,18,22) - This is Yahweh's affirmation of **Monotheism**. He is the only God! (cf Dt 6:4)

Deuteronomy 4:35 "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God;**there is no other besides Him.**

Deuteronomy 4:39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; **there is no other.**

Deuteronomy 32:12 "**The LORD alone** guided him, And **there was no foreign god with him.**

Isaiah 41:4 "Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

Isaiah 45:5-6; 18; 22 "I am the LORD, and **there is no other**; Besides Me **there is no God**. I will gird you, though you have not known Me 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That **there is no one besides Me**. I am the LORD, and **there is no other**, ... 18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and **there is none else....**

Isa 45:22 "**Turn** (COMMAND) to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and **there is no other.** (The Spirit of God used Isa 45:2 to Save **C H Spurgeon**)

**It is I who put to death and give life** - While one might ask what right He has to do this, they need to ask what right does the sinful creature have to question the perfect Creator. We need to remember that "the secret things belong to the LORD." (Dt 29:29).

1 Samuel 2:6 "The LORD **kills and makes alive**; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

2 Kings 5:7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "**Am I God, to kill and to make alive**, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

Job 5:18 "For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; **He wounds, and His hands also heal.**

Psalms 68:20 God is to us a God of deliverances; And **to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.**

Isaiah 43:13 "Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; **I act and who can reverse it?"**

Hosea 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. **For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us,**

**but He will bandage us.**

Revelation 1:17-18 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and **I have the keys of death and of Hades.**

**I have wounded and it is I who heal** - Heal is the Hebrew word [rapha](#) from which we get the great Name of God, [Jehovah Rapha: \(Jehovah Rophe\) The LORD our Healer](#) (see Ex 15:25 1Sa 2:6 Ps 147:3 Isa 30:26)

**Driver** - Though Jehovah has smitten His people with war and other scourges, He will now heal them, and visit their foes with irretrievable disaster.

The order of these abilities or attributes appears to be the reverse of matching elements in Dt 32:26-38, where the powerlessness of pagan gods is the issue. Thus the Lord's grasp from which no one could be delivered (Dt 32:39) opposes Dt 32:26-30, where Israel is said to have believed that their calamities must be attributed to the gods of the nations. Also the Lord as sovereign of life and death and of harm and health (Dt 32:39b) was so unlike those gods whose roots and fruits were poisonous in their source and effect (Dt 32:31-33).

**And there is no one who can deliver from My hand** (Job 10:7 Ps 50:22 Isa 43:13 Mic 5:8): God is absolutely sovereign and will ultimately judge Israel's enemies and restore His chosen people.

In this closing section Moses' song speaks, 1. Glory to God. No escape can be made from his power. 2. It speaks terror to his enemies. Terror indeed to those who hate him. The wrath of God is here revealed from heaven against them. 3. It speaks comfort to his own people. The song concludes with words of joy. Whatever judgments are brought upon sinners, it shall go well with the people of God.

#### Related Resources:

- [Is God sovereign over death? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does God killing people make Him a murderer? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 32:40 'Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, And say, as I live forever,**

- Ge 14:22 Ex 6:8 Nu 14:28-30 Jer 4:2 Heb 6:17,18 Rev 10:5,6

### YAHWEH'S OATH I AM EL OLAM

**Driver** summarizes Dt 32:40–42 - In conclusion, Jehovah solemnly promises that He will whet His sword, and grant His people vengeance on their foes

**Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven**, when God says He lifts His hand to heaven, first He is speaking anthropomorphically and He is using this to depict His taking of an oath. This is in the context of Moses' song. This was not an empty word but indeed these words are our life (Dt 32:47).

**Driver** - To lift up the hand is the gesture of a person taking an oath, intended to imply that he appeals to God as a witness to the truth of his affirmation, and that he is willing to incur the vengeance of Heaven in case he speaks falsely: it is here applied, anthropomorphically and figuratively, to Jehovah Himself.

**And say, as I live forever** - The implication of course is that His oath stands forever! In the next verse we see that this oath is that God will repay those who hate Him. The Hebrew word for forever is [olam](#), from which we derive the great Name of God, [El Olam: Everlasting God](#).

#### Related Resource:

- [Anthropomorphism](#) - gotquestions.org
- [Anthropomorphic Language to describe God](#) - Bob Utley

**Deuteronomy 32:41 If I sharpen My flashing sword, And My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My**

## adversaries, And I will repay those who hate Me.

- **If I sharpen My flashing sword:** Ps 7:12 Isa 27:1 34:5,6 66:16 Eze 21:9-15,20 Zep 2:12
- **I will render vengeance:** De 32:35 Isa 1:24 59:18 66:6 Mk 1:2
- **hate:** De 5:9 Ex 20:5 Ro 1:30 8:7 2Ti 3:4

### Related Passages:

Nahum 3:3 Horsemen charging, Swords flashing, spears gleaming, Many slain, a mass of corpses, And countless dead bodies— They stumble over the dead bodies!

Habakkuk 3:11 Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your gleaming spear.

Ezekiel 21:9-11 “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the LORD.’ Say, ‘A sword, a sword sharpened And also polished! 10‘Sharpened to make a slaughter, Polished to flash like lightning!’ Or shall we rejoice, the rod of My son despising every tree? 11‘It is given to be polished, that it may be handled; the sword is sharpened and polished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

**Spurgeon** - It is only in mercy, you see, that the Lord deals with his people; they cannot stand before him on the ground of justice, but in his mercy is their place of refuge. May we all find that mercy by fleeing for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us in Christ Jesus and his glorious gospel! Amen.

**If I sharpen My flashing sword** - lit. “the lightning of my sword” Yahweh's omnipotence depicted as a Warrior arming Himself for the day of battle. (cf Ex. 15:3, Is. 42:13, 59:17)

**and My hand takes hold on justice** (Hebrew = “judgment”) - Yahweh's perfect justice.

**NET** = my hand will grasp hold of the weapon of judgment; (Dt 32:41NET)**NET NOTE** explains that “This is a **metonymy**, a figure of speech in which the effect (**judgment**) is employed as an instrument (sword, spear, or the like), the means, by which it is brought about.

**Driver** - He “seizes hold” of judgment, as though it were a weapon, lying at His side, and so is ready for the combat with His foes, whose time of triumph over Israel is now drawing to its close. As the context shows, the foes whom the poet has in view are the victorious heathen (v. 30–35): the sinners in Israel itself (though of course, if pressed, he would not deem them included in the promised salvation) lie, as before (v. 36), outside the range of his thoughts.

**I will render vengeance on My adversaries** - Yahweh's righteous judgment.

**And I will repay those who hate Me** - Yahweh's just retribution.

**NET NOTE** - “The Hebrew term שָׂנֵא (**sane**, “hate”) in this covenant context speaks of those who reject Yahweh's covenant overtures, that is, who disobey its stipulations (see note on the word “rejecting” in Deut 5:9; also see Deut 7:10; 2 Chr 19:2; Ps 81:15; Ps 139:20–21).”

## Deuteronomy 32:42 'I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword will devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the long-haired leaders of the enemy.'

- **I will make My arrows:** De 32:23 Ps 45:5 68:23 Isa 34:6-8 Jer 16:10 Eze 35:6-8 38:21,22
- revenges: Job 13:24 Jer 30:14 La 2:5

**Driver** - The figure of v. 41a is developed; and Jehovah's vengeance is pictured as accomplished amidst a scene of carnage, such as the Hebrew prophets, esp. the later ones, love to imagine (e.g. Is. 34:5f., 49:26, 63:3–6, 66:16, Jer. 12:12, 25:30–33, 46:10, 50:25–29).

**I will make My arrows drunk with blood** - This depicts the fulfilment of the declaration in Dt 32:39 **'It is I who put to death and give life.'** Blood for blood. His adversaries (and Israel's adversaries) will pay the price of their bloodguiltiness with their own blood.

**Driver** - The “arrows,” which were formerly (Dt 32:23) to be exhausted against Israel, will now be directed, with fatal effect, against Israel's foes.

**And My sword will devour** (eat) **flesh** - **Devour** (akal) means to destroy completely as when consumes (or eats) something completely. See the same figure in 2Sa 2:26, 2Sa 11:25, Isa 1:20. Whether the sword is literal or figurative, the result is not in doubt. The flesh of His enemies will be devoured.

**With the blood of the slain and the captives**- See Nu 23:24 and 2 Sa 1:22. The captives alludes to the custom in ancient warfare of killing all the prisoners after a victory, this passage showing the completeness of the carnage!

**From the long-haired leaders of the enemy** - **Driver** suggests "Long-haired heads] alluding either to the exuberant vigour and pride of Israel's wild assailants, or perhaps (W.R.S. in Black's Judges in the Smaller Camb. Bible for Schools, p. 39) to their being as warriors consecrated to their sanguinary work, the unshorn locks being the mark of a vow:"

**Deuteronomy 32:43 "Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land and His people."**

- **Rejoice:** Ge 12:3 1Ki 8:43 Ps 22:27 Isa 11:10 Isa 19:23,25 Lu 2:10,11,32 Ac 13:47,48 Ro 15:9-13 Rev 5:9,10
- **avenge:** De 32:35 Job 13:24 Jer 13:14 La 2:5 Lu 19:27,43,44 21:22-24 Ro 12:19 Rev 6:10 15:2,4 18:2,20 19:2
- **render:** De 32:41
- **will :** Ps 85:1

## **A WORSHIP SERVICE LIKE NO OTHER**

**Rejoice, O nations, with His people** - Time for a worship service for God's (Israel's) enemies are finally devoured. The nations that remain are apparently Gentiles who were not active enemies of Israel.

**THOUGHT** - When does this worship service take place? While one cannot be dogmatic, this could be the victorious return of Christ at the end of this age, defeating all His enemies and setting up His Messianic Kingdom on earth. There are not enough facts in this description to allow one to be definitive. Passages like Isaiah 11:10 support this interpretation for "in that day the **nations** will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious." (Isa 11:10) One also thinks of Zech 14:16 which says "Then it will come about that **any who are left of all the nations** that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths."

**MacArthur** - As a result of the execution of God's vengeance, all nations will be called upon to praise with Israel the Lord who will have provided redemptively for them in Christ and also provided a new beginning in the Land. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Driver** - The **nations** are invited to congratulate Israel on possessing a God like Jehovah (33:26, Ps. 144:15), who will thus effectually take up His people's cause. Such an invitation, addressed to the nations (cf. Is. 42:10-12, Ps. 47:2 (1) 67:1-7 al.), involves implicitly the prophetic truth that God's dealings with Israel have, indirectly, an interest and importance for the world at large.

**For He will avenge** (verb - [naqam](#)) **the blood of His servants** - As he has described in Dt 32:35. Yahweh is the ultimate "Blood Avenger!"

**He will avenge** ([05358](#)) **naqam** means to avenge, take vengeance, revenge, avenge oneself, be avenged, be punished. The last OT use in Nahum 1:2 gives us a good sense of the meaning as it applies to divine vengeance - "A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD **takes vengeance** on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies." That God is a God of righteous, just, holy, perfect vengeance should comfort all who have been unfairly treated, injured, etc in this life, for Deuteronomy 32:43 says "Rejoice...."

**And will render vengeance** (noun - [naqam](#)) **on His adversaries** - "he will take vengeance against his enemies" (Dt 32:43NET)

**And will atone for His land and His people** - Note Who the Owner is! **His land, His people!** **NET** = "make atonement for his land and people." (Dt 32:43NET)" **Will atone** is the verb **kapar** which means to make atonement, to make reconciliation (to reconcile), to purge, to make propitiation (to propitiate), to pacify, to cancel. **Vine** writes that "Most uses of **kapar** involve the theological meaning of "covering over," often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin. It is not clear whether this means that the "covering over" hides the sin from God's sight or implies that the sin is **wiped away** in this process."

**MacArthur** has an interesting analysis of the **atonement** - part for the land, part for the people -- This **atonement for the Land** is the satisfaction of God's wrath by the sacrifice of His enemies in judgment (**ED: BLOOD FOR BLOODGUILTINESS ON THE LAND**). The **atonement for the people** is by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross (cf. Ps 79:9). Paul quotes this passage in Ro 15:10, as does the writer of Hebrews 1:6. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Numbers 35:33+ supports the preceding thoughts by MacArthur

'So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation (or atonement - [kapor](#) ) can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, **except** by the blood of him who shed it.

**COMMENT** - AND IN THESE PASSAGES IN Dt 32:41-42 THOSE WHO SHED BLOOD WERE AVENGED BY THE LORD).

**Driver** on **atone for His land** - by slaying those who have polluted it, whether by shedding innocent blood in its midst (Dt 21:8, Nu. 35:33), or by practising in it idolatry and other abominations (Lev. 18:25).

Leviticus 18:25; 28 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.(Lev 18:28) so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.

**Deuteronomy 32:44 Then Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun.**

- **spoke** : De 31:22,30
- **Joshua**, Nu 13:8,16

#### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 31:19-22+ Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel. 20 "For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant. 21 "Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify before them as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore." 22 So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete:

### **MOSES SPEAKS HIS SONG TO ALL**

**Then Moses came** - From wherever he was (not stated) when he received this song from Yahweh.

**And spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun**- "The verse forms the conclusion, corresponding to the introduction Dt 31:16–22. Dt 31:22 states how Moses wrote the Song, Dt 32:44 how he recited it before the people" ([Driver](#) )

[Joshua](#) is called Hoshea only in Nu 13:8, 16.

**Warren Wiersbe** has an interesting note - Much of this song is a warning to the people that they were prone to forget what God did for them and to turn from God to idols. We do not know how often they sang this song, but we do know that they did not take it to heart. Do God's people today pay attention to what they are singing? ([With the Word Bible Commentary](#))

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#### **Deuteronomy 32:44-52 A Bitter Attitude**

Great emphasis is being placed on living longer and better. Advances in medical science are making it possible for more and more people. Yet in spite of this, none of us can avoid growing old. One day aging will overtake all of us, and our bodies will shut down.



What is preventable, however, is an attitude of bitterness and regret as we grow older. Look at the life of Moses. When he was 120 years old, he stood with the Israelites before they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land. He could not go with them because he had disobeyed the Lord when in anger he struck the rock in the wilderness (Numbers 20:12,24).

How easily Moses could have slipped into a self-pitying and resentful frame of mind! Had he not borne the burden of a stubborn and stiff-necked people for 40 years? Had he not interceded for them time after time? Yet at the end of his life he praised the Lord and urged a new generation of Israelites to obey Him (Deuteronomy 32:1-4,45-47).

As we grow older, we can dwell on the failures and hardships of our past, or we can remember God's faithfulness, accept His discipline, and keep looking to the future in faith. It's the only way to avoid a bitter attitude.

—Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Though wrinkles and weakness come with age  
And life with its stress takes its toll,  
Yet beauty and vigor can still be seen  
When Jesus gives peace to our soul.  
—D. De Haan

We cannot avoid growing old;  
but we can avoid growing cold

**Deuteronomy 32:45** When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel,

## BRINGING THE SONG TO AN END

**When Moses had finished** (same Hebrew word in Dt 7:22; Dt 20:9; Dt 26:12; Dt 28:21; D. 31:24; Dt 32:23) **speaking all these words to all Israel** - This is preparation for Moses' final exhortation. The Septuagint translates finished with [sunteleo](#) which means to bring something to an end, in this case it was Moses' song and also the end of his life as the following verses testify.

**Finished** (complete)([03615](#)) [kalah](#) to be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, or spent. To bring a process to completion. To [consummate](#). It can have a positive connotation (Ge 2:1-2), but more often is used in a negative sense. The completion of a project naturally leads to the cessation of the activity.

### J. R. MILLER. Moses made an end of speaking.

So we all shall do some day. Moses knew it was the end for him; we may not know when our end is at hand. Any word of ours, spoken amid glee and merriment, may be our last. If we always thought of this would it not make us more careful? Would we ever say an unkind word to a friend, if we felt that we may never have an opportunity to unsay it or atone for it? Would we ever utter an angry, untrue, or unclean word, if we only remembered that it may be the last utterance our lips shall give forth? We want to have beautiful endings to our life, to leave sweet memories behind us in the hearts of those who love us. We want our names to be fragrant in the homes on whose thresholds our footfalls are wont to be heard. We want the memory of our last words in our friends' ears to live as a tender joy with them as the days pass away. We can be sure of all this only by making every word we speak beautiful enough to be our last word. For with any sentence we may come to the end of our speaking.

**Deuteronomy 32:46** he said to them, "**Take** to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law.

- De 6:6,7 Dt 11:18 1Ch 22:19 Pr 3:1-4 Eze 40:4 Lu 9:44 Heb 2:1

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:26+ I call heaven and earth to **witness** (‘ûd) against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed.

Deuteronomy 8:19+ "It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I **testify** (‘ûḏ) against you **today** that you will surely perish.

Deuteronomy 30:19+ "I call heaven and earth to **witness** (‘ûḏ) against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

Deuteronomy 5:1+ Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, **that you may learn them and observe them carefully**.

Deuteronomy 28:58-59+ "**If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law** which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God, then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses.

## MOSES FINAL WARNING

he said to them, "**Take to your heart** The idea of the Hebrew verb ([sum](#)) is to put something somewhere and was used in Daniel 1:8+ where Daniel "**made up** ([sum](#)) his mind (**placed it on his heart**) that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food." In Dt 32:46 the **Septuagint** renders "**take**" with the verb [prosecho](#) which is a command in the [present imperative](#) to do this continually. [Prosecho](#) means to turn and hold one's mind (heart) on something, paying close attention to it. [Prosecho](#) was used as a nautical term to describe a ship holding its course in a specific direction, which gives us a picture of what Moses is trying to teach the children of Israel just prior to crossing the Jordan to possess their possession.

YLT: Set your heart to all the words which I am testifying against you

DBY: Set your hearts unto all the words that I testify among you

NKJV: Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you

**Heart** ([03824](#)) (**lebab**) (leb - note that this discussion also includes the closely related noun lebab -03824) sometimes refers to a literal heart (Ex 28:29, 1Sa 25:37, 2Ki 9:24), but most often is used figurative to refer to what I term the "control center" of our being. Think of an Air Traffic Controller and how dysfunctional, even destructive it is when the controllers fail to function as they should.

**John MacArthur** - The "**heart**" commonly refers to the **mind** as the center of thinking and reason (Pr 3:3; 6:21; 7:3), but also includes the emotions (Pr 15:15, 30), the will (Pr 11:20; 14:14), and thus, the whole inner being (Pr 3:5). The heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech (Pr 4:24), sight (Pr 4:25), and conduct (Pr 4:26, 27). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Kalland** - In like manner he had said before that they should seek the Lord with all their heart (Dt 4:29), love the Lord with all their heart (Dt 6:5; 13:3; 30:6), serve him with all their heart (Dt 10:12; 11:13), and fix his (Moses') words in their heart (Dt 11:18). Previously Moses had said that the Lord was the people's life (30:20); here he said that "all the words I have solemnly declared to you," "all the words of this law" (v.46), are their "life" (v.47). This was so because by adherence to the revelation the Lord had given them, they were to live under his covenant in the land across the Jordan. These words were not to be taken lightly, as though the people could follow them or disregard them with no great change in their welfare in either case. Not so! The revelation in covenant-treaty form was to be obeyed in all its detail, with a willing adherence and devotion both to the words and spirit of the law and to its giver—the Lord their God. He was their life, and his words were their life. Without the words there would be insufficient knowledge of him or of his way of life for them. Commitment to the Lord and to his word would insure a long national life for Israel in the Promised Land. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel](#))

**John Maxwell** - If they will meditate on the certainty and severity of the judgment that God will send them for apostasy, the Song of Moses can serve as a powerful deterrent to future rebellion. A healthy fear of judgment will also help their descendants to obey God's Word. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))

Moses has repeatedly exhorted Israel to take his words to heart...

Deuteronomy 6:6-7+ "These words, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart**. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 11:18-20+ "You shall therefore **impress these words of mine on your heart and on your**

**soul**; and you shall **bind** them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. . 19“ You shall **teach** them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. 20 “You shall **write** them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

**THOUGHT** How do you take them to heart? This is Mosaic shorthand" for memorize this song! Beloved, are you memorizing the word of God? If not you are missing out on the greatest treasure and greatest experience of your life. These words are God's very own breath (so to speak) written on paper (or digital means) but God wants them nearer and dearer to you. He wants them on your heart. When you memorize, you are taking in that which is truly living and active (energetic)! Do you really believe that is true? Then you now have no excuse for not beginning this adventure of a lifetime! Yes, this is a spiritual discipline but it is more than a discipline. It is a delight, a joy and as Moses says in Dt 32:47, it is your life! Like the commercial says "JUST DO IT!" In time and eternity you will not regret it. This is a clear charge from Moses to the people to **memorize the Word of God** which in turn facilitates **meditating** on the Word of God (Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note, Joshua 1:8-note). It is very difficult to meditate on that which you have not memorized! Remember the Israelites did not have WiFi or Ipods to look up the Word! They had no written text to which they might refer. Treasuring God's Word in their heart was crucial for their spiritual success (cp Ps 119:9, 11). Are you intentionally, systematically storing up God's precious truth in your heart? This is a once in a lifetime opportunity! Don't miss it! This spiritual discipline will yield dividends not only in this life but in the life to come. As Paul instructed Timothy

But **have nothing to do** with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))(**gumnazo** n the present imperative = command to make this one's habitual practice!) yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for (**term of explanation**) bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.** 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we labor (**kopiao** = to point of exhaustion = memorizing is not easy!) and strive (**agonizomai** = with agonizing effort. Why? Eternity will prove it was worth it! Strive to memorize God's Word! You won't be disappointed!), because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. 1Ti 4:7-10+)

#### Related Resources:

- [Meditate](#)
- [Primer on Biblical Meditation](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Memory Verses by Topic](#)

The law of his God is in his heart. His steps do not slip.

THE BEST THING. IN THE BEST PLACE. FOR THE BEST RESULT!

--Psalm 37:31

**John Gill** - it was not enough to hear them, but they were to lay them up in their hearts, and retain them in their memories; and not only so, but reflect on them in their minds, and closely apply to the consideration of them, and get the true knowledge and sense of them, and put it in practice...(They were) to transmit to their children, and enjoin them the observance of, that so religion might be perpetuated in their posterity.

**Eugene Merrill** - The seriousness of Israel's obligation can be seen in the emphatic words of the charge in v. 46. "Take to heart" (Heb. *śimû lēbabkem*) is a command of strongest force (cf. Deut 30:1; 2Sa 13:20; Isa 42:25; 46:8; Ezek 3:10), one that leaves no room for equivocation. Moreover, the use of the personal pronoun "I" (*ānōkî*) with the participle of 'ûd (rendered as "I have solemnly declared" in the NIV) intensifies the sense of personal interest on the Lord's part. It was he, the sovereign God, who had laid these mandates on them. ([New American Commentary](#))

Old **John Trapp** nails it writing "Set your hearts = And pray God to fix your quicksilver, to put his holy finger upon the hole that is in the bottom of your memories."

I would add we need to pray for that grace which will enable us to love the Word of the Lord.

**All the words - All the words** - Not just your favorite verses! The whole counsel of God's Word for us in the NT era. (cp Acts 20:27).

Note that the **key word** in these two passage is the **Word** of God which is alluded to some seven times = '**words...which** (refers to

words) **you shall command...all the words...(47) it...word...it...this word."**

Here is the English translation of the Septuagint -

Deut. 32:46 and he said to them: "Pay heed with your heart to all these words that I am testifying against you today, which things you shall command your sons, to guard and to perform all the words of this law. Deut. 32:47 Because this is not an empty word for you, since it is your very life, and through this word you shall live long in the land into which you are crossing over the Jordan there to inherit." (Septuagint-NETS)

While this exhortation comes at the end of the Song of Moses (Deut 42:1-43) and refers most directly to those words, this warning is clearly applicable to **all the words** (phrase repeated 4x in Dt 32:44-46 which Moses had spoken to Israel, and by extension is applicable to us regarding all the words of Scripture. (Note last phrase "**even all** the words of this law" and cp Deut 31:26)

**Constable** - Moses addressed the Israelites again after he had taught them his song. He urged them to take to heart not only the words of the song but **all the words of the law**, namely, the entire covenant text of Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 17:19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58; 29:29; 31:12, 24). (Expository Notes)

**Jeffrey H Tigay on all the words** - It is clear from the rest of the verse that the words in question include commands, and since the poem contains none, "the words" must be those of the Teaching as a whole. As noted in Excursus 29, the phrase "these words" is a virtual synonym for the Teaching. (JPS Torah Commentary)

**Bernard M Levinson - All the words**, specifically, the laws of Deuteronomy (Dt 31:24); now, following the insertion of the Song, reinterpreted to refer to both. (Jewish Study Bible)

**J A Thompson** - With Dt 32:44 we return to prose narrative. Moses and Joshua recited the words of this poem to the people and then charged them personally to lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you and to see to it that their children should observe the law of God. The song and the law seem to be joined together in these final instructions. The most significant feature was the law. Even an important item like the song needed to be brought into conjunction with the law of God. (Tyndale OT Commentaries - Vol 5 - Deuteronomy)

**Peter Craigie** - Words of God which were spoken through Moses. **The words** (Dt 32:46a) may either be the words of the song, or they may be the words of this law (Dt 32:46b). If the former is the case, then the function of the song can be seen once again; it serves not only as a public witness to covenant commitment, but as a warning against the dangers of leaving the covenant faith. Knowing the dangers of falling from the true faith, the Israelites should be diligent in instructing the younger generation in the true faith; the education of the new generation is an important theme running throughout Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; 31:13). (NICOT)

**Eugene Merrill** - His charge to them was that they "**take to heart**" all the words of the song, but not only these words. They also were to heed "**all the words of this law**" (v. 46), a technical phrase used consistently to refer to the entire covenant text of Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 17:19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58; 29:29; 31:12, 24). ([New American Commentary](#))

**Bratcher** - it is difficult to say whether all the words here means the words of the song that Moses has just recited, or some or all of the earlier part of the book of Deuteronomy. ("A Handbook on Deuteronomy")

**The Moody Bible Commentary** - These lyrics could be preventive medicine if they would only heed its message.

**ILLUSTRATION** - Researchers studying eye movement during normal conversation have found that sustaining eye contact for any length of time is difficult, if not impossible. Special cameras reveal that what appears to be a steady gaze at someone is actually a series of rapid scans of the face. Eye movement is essential because the nerves in the eye need a constant change of stimulation if we are to see properly. Studies show that if we look at the same spot continuously, the rest of our visual field will go blank. We can experience a similar problem in our study of the Word of God. If we "stare" exclusively at certain biblical truths while excluding other important doctrines, our spiritual vision will begin to blur out. Some people, for instance, tend to look only at the love of God, or the wrath of God, or evangelism, or church growth, or the end times, or the devil, or sin. No matter what particular truth we are interested in, we need to be careful lest we lose our perspective. The Bible tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16) and is profitable for our spiritual development. Only as we see the big picture—how the many biblical doctrines fit together—will we avoid staring at some truths and becoming blind to others. —M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's Word was given for our good  
And we are to obey;

Not choose the parts that we like best,  
Then live in our own way.  
—Hess

You can't enjoy the harmony of Scripture  
if you play just one note of truth

**With which I am warning you today** - Note the time phrase "**today**" and compare **today** in Dt 8:19+ and Dt 4:8+. **Benjamin Franklin** was a **deist** but still gave great advice "*Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.*" The idea of **warning** (‘ûḏ) is to bear witness against, to testify, to admonish, to give a solemn warning. The Septuagint is enlightening for it uses the verb **diamarturomai** which means to solemnly charge or give a solemn warning. Even as these were the last words of Moses in Deuteronomy, in a similar way in Paul's last words he gave Timothy a similar charge using the same rare Greek verb **diamarturomai**...

**I solemnly charge (diamarturomai)** you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom (2 Ti 4:1+, verb also used in warnings - Lk 16:28, 1Ti 5:21, 2Ti 2:14)

PAUL DECLARES - "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to **testify solemnly (diamarturomai)** of the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24+)

**Warning (05749)** (טוּב ‘ûḏ) is a verb that means to admonish, to counsel in terms of someone's behavior. It to bear witness, to testify. Specifically, it can signify either to serve as a witness or to testify against someone, albeit falsely (1 Kgs. 21:10, 13); or in favor of someone (Job 29:11). It can also mean either to admonish someone (Gen. 43:3; Neh. 9:26, 30); or to warn solemnly (Gen. 43:3; Ex. 19:21; Deut. 32:46; 1 Sam. 8:9; 1 Kgs. 2:42; 2 Chr. 24:19; Neh. 9:29; 13:15, 21; Jer. 42:19; Amos 3:13). Such warnings frequently came from the Lord (2 Kgs. 17:13, 15; Jer. 11:7); but they were also mediated through His prophets (2 Chr. 24:19; Jer. 42:19). In the causative form, it can mean to call to witness, to take as a witness (Deut. 4:26; Isa. 8:2); or to obtain witnesses, that is, authentication (Jer. 32:10, 25, 44). Schultz - It is used relative to a business transaction in Jer 32:10, 25, 44 where Jeremiah obtained witnesses for the deed to his newly acquired property in Anathoth.

**Swanson** - **1. (piel) bind**, surround with ropes, i.e., attach ropes around an object so as to confine it (Ps 119:61); **2. (pilpel) sustain**, relieve, help, i.e., come to the aid of a person, in any form (Ps 146:9; 147:6+); (hitpolel) help each other, hold each other up (Ps 20:9[EB 8]+); **3. (hif) cause to testify**, call on a witness, i.e., cause a person or entity to personally observe an event, and so be a future witness in a judicial proceedings (Dt 4:26); **4. (hif) charge, declare**, i.e., speak of something with certainty, with a focus that this assertion carries force of law (Dt 32:46; La 2:13); **5. (hif) admonish, warn**, i.e., tell someone of a future happening that is dangerous or an unfavorable circumstance, often with a possible contingency to change the future (Ex 19:21); (hof) be warned (Ex 21:29)

**Schultz**- This word is used not too frequently and usually in the area of human affairs. It is used relative to a business transaction in Jer 32:10, 25, 44 where Jeremiah obtained witnesses for the deed to his newly acquired property in Anathoth. Jezebel secured two men to denounce (witness against) Naboth so that Ahab could have his vineyard (I Kings 21:10, 13). Isaiah secured reliable witnesses to verify his sign to Ahaz (Isa 8:2). Job recalled the wide approval he enjoyed before his adversity (Job 29:11). God appeals to and invokes heaven and earth as his witness against Israel that he has given her a choice between life and death (Deut 4:26; 30:19). This is a common motif in the OT (cf. Isa 1:2). Moses also invokes heaven and earth against the anticipated rebellion of Israel (Deut 31:28). Most frequently this word is used in the sense of a strong warning. Man can be the one who issues the warning as well as the one who receives it. Joseph warned his brothers to return with Benjamin (Gen 43:3). The merchants are strongly admonished by Nehemiah not to desecrate the Sabbath (Neh 13:15). Moses cautioned Israel against curiosity at Sinai (Ex 19:21). Samuel warned the nation against instituting the monarch (I Sam 8:9). The owner of an ox, who had been advised that his animal was dangerous, would be put to death if the ox should kill a person (Ex 21:29). God is also frequently the subject of this verb, extending a warning to Israel (II Kings 17:15; Ps 50:7; 81:8 [H 9]; Jer 11:7). The prophets were often the channel through which God extended his solemn exhortation (II Chr 24:19; Neh 9:26; Jer 42:19; Amos 3:13). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**U d** - 36v - admonish(2), admonished(6), call(5), called(1), gave witness(1), give warning(1), solemnly

warn(2), solemnly warned(2), take(1), testified(3), testify(4), testimony(1), warn(1), warned(5), warning(2), witness(4). Gen. 43:3; Exod. 19:21; Exod. 19:23; Exod. 21:29; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:28; Deut. 32:46; 1 Sam. 8:9; 1 Ki. 2:42; 1 Ki. 21:10; 1 Ki. 21:13; 2 Ki. 17:13; 2 Ki. 17:15; 2 Chr. 24:19; Neh. 9:26; Neh. 9:29; Neh. 9:30; Neh. 9:34; Neh. 13:15; Neh. 13:21; Job 29:11; Ps. 50:7; Ps. 81:8; Isa. 8:2; Jer. 6:10; Jer. 11:7; Jer. 32:10; Jer. 32:25; Jer. 32:44; Jer. 42:19; Lam. 2:13; Amos 3:13; Zech. 3:6; Mal. 2:14

**Driver** on warning words - God's law is viewed as a testimony against human sin (cf on Dt 4:45). Comp. the absol. use of the verb in emphatic or earnest protestation, in popular language Ge 43:3, 1 Ki 2:42, and in a religious sense Jer. 11:7, Ps. 50:7 ("Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God.")

Years later a **man named Ezra** heeded Moses' warning and as a result experienced the good hand of the LORD upon him...

Ezra 7:9-10+ For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him**. 10 **FOR** (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING WHY "GOOD HAND" WAS UPON HIM) Ezra had set his **heart** to study the law of the LORD and to practice it (AKA - OBEY), and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

## **PASSING ON THE BATON TO THE NEXT GENERATION**

**Which you shall command** ([tsavah](#); Lxx - [entellomai](#)) **your sons** - This is to be more than a casual suggestion. It is far too important to be stated casually! You shall solemnly charge as when a superior "orders" or "commands" a subordinate (sons should be subordinate). Failure to do so would result in failure of the sons to memorize the Song of Moses and obey the Song of Moses. Surely this is an OT picture of the vital practice of making disciples which was Jesus' last command =

"Go therefore and **make disciples** (**aoist imperative** = the only command in the "Great Commission" meaning "Do this now! Don't delay!") This command even conveyed a sense of urgency! see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20+)

Notice the parallel between Moses charge to the fathers to command their sons to observe all of the laws carefully and Jesus exhortation that they would teach them to "**observe all that I commanded you**."

This is a repeated exhortation to pass the "spiritual baton" on to your sons (aka "make disciples!").

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. 10 "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, '**Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.**'"

Deuteronomy 6:7+ "You shall **teach them diligently to your sons** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 11:19+ "You shall **teach them to your sons**, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 31:13+ "**Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God**, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

**Comment** - Notice that if they would fail to pass on the words from God to Moses to them, then the result would be failure to fear Yahweh and the powerful effect of fear of the LORD which is to turn away from evil (Pr 8:13, Job 28:28, etc). The result would be that when temptations came, the sons would have no "defense" and would quickly succumb to the seductions of evil! Sadly, this proved to be the history of Israel! Do you fear the LORD? Are you passing on a healthy fear of the LORD to your sons and daughters? If not, then "LOOK OUT!"

The word will keep you from sin or  
sin will keep you from the word!

**To observe carefully, even all the words of this law** - **Observe carefully** emphasizes that it was not enough to simply hear the

warning words but to obey the warning words. The verb observe carefully ([shamar](#)) is sometimes translated by English as watchman, sentry or doorkeeper and thus conveys the thought of keeping careful watch over these words of warning. The **Septuagint** renders shamar with [phulasso](#) (in present tense calling for this to be one's lifestyle!) which means to guard carefully, like a sentry guarding a military base. The **Septuagint** also couples a second verb with guard ([phulasso](#)), the verb [poieo](#) which is also in the present tense and means to continually carry out the words accomplishing their full intent in one's life. And note that this is not just **some** of the words but **ALL the words** making sure none of them escape your mind so that you can then **observe** all of them.

**Did Israel heed Moses' warning?** The short answer is **NO**. While some individual Israelites did heed these words (men like Joshua, David, etc), most of the nation did not as the following passages testify.

2 Ki 17:15 **They rejected His statutes and His covenant** which He made with their fathers and His **warnings with which He warned them**. And they followed vanity and became vain, and went after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which the LORD had commanded them not to do like them.

Nehemiah 9:34 "For our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers **have not kept Your law Or paid attention** to Your commandments and Your admonitions with which You have admonished them. (**WOE!**)

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, do not be deceived! If Israel could not escape the consequences of not heeding God's words of warning, then neither can you or I! How many believers fail to reach their potential of "life abundant" (Jn 10:10) because they fail to hear (internalize) and heed ("externalize") God's perfect and holy Word of exhortation? Only God knows the full answer. But you who are reading know the answer for yourself. Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to truly experience life to the full as God intended for you!

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## A Child's World

The words which I testify among you today, . . . command your children to be careful to observe. —Deuteronomy 32:46

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6-25

A popular pizza restaurant that caters to children advertises itself as "a place where a kid can be a kid." Actually, a child should be able to be a child anywhere.

But creating a child's world goes beyond letting a kid be a kid. Parents must understand their responsibilities in guiding that child. And for that we need to look at what the Bible says about parenting:

- Parents must teach God's truth (Dt. 4:9; 32:46).
- Parents must lovingly discipline children because they are immature and need guidance (Prov. 22:15; 29:15).
- Parents should not exasperate their children (Eph. 6:4).
- Parents' wise decisions bring blessing to their children (Dt. 30:19-20).
- Parents who are godly teach their children to obey (Eph. 6:1; 1 Tim. 3:4).
- Parents who faithfully train their children can be confident that their efforts are not in vain (Prov. 22:6).

Above all, to create a child's world, your home needs to be a place where you serve one another through God's love (Gal. 5:13). And it doesn't hurt to have some pizza now and then too! By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O speak the truth to these your precious ones—  
For guidance tell your daughters and your sons  
Of One who loves them even more than you,  
Who wants to be their guide a lifetime through.  
—Anon.

A parent's greatest responsibility is to point the way to God.

**Deuteronomy 32:47 "For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."**

- De 30:19 Lev 18:5 Pr 3:1,2,18,22 4:22 Isa 45:19 Mt 6:33 Ro 10:5,6 1Ti 4:8 6:6-8 1Pe 3:10-12 2Pe 1:3,16 Rev 22:14

## MOSES FINAL WORDS ABOUT THE FULLY SUFFICIENT WORD

**For** - (**Lxx** = **hoti** = a conjunction which can introduce a result or can be causal as in this passage = "because") is a **term of explanation** which should always prompt a pause to ponder the passage before to see what is being explained. Not only will it be a pause that refreshes, but it will be a pause that will often yield fresh insight into the passages as the Spirit illuminates the text. It will not be a waste of time to pause and ponder! Why? Because God's Word God's Word is NEVER VOID (or empty) of producing results (teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness - 2Ti 3:16-17).

**it is not an idle word for you** - In other words it is not a vain, futile or empty word. **Not an idle word** - Amplified = "not an empty and worthless trifle" NAB = "For this is no trivial matter"; NLT = "These instructions are not empty words"; HCSB = they are not meaningless words"

**THOUGHT** - In the Lxx the Greek word for **'hoti'** is absolutely (not relatively) not! The idea of course is that God's Word was worthy of their attention back then and it remains worthy of our attention today! Are you reading it daily? Are you heeding what you read? Take it not just into your head but into your heart!

**It** - The Word of God. Which explains why it is not a vain or worthless Word, for "Every word of God is tested." (Pr 30:5) David adds that "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." (Ps 12:6). These were words spoken by God with the goal to impart life to those who hear and heed them!

**Driver** - It is not something unworthy of your regard, not something so destitute of moral force and value that you can afford to put it aside with disdain. On the contrary, it is your life,—the foundation of your moral and material well-being (Dt 30:20; see [note](#) on Dt 4:1).

**Vine and Hogg** in the preface of their commentary on the letters to the Thessalonians write "The motto chosen at the inception of the work was the charge of Moses to Israel concerning the Law: **"It is no vain thing for you; because it is your life"** (Deut. 32:47). These words are equally applicable to the whole Bible, the completed Revelation of God, and to the Christian of the day now present. We shall be thankful indeed if our readers, with ourselves, are by anything written herein helped the more deeply to reverence, and the more closely to follow, Holy Scripture, and the more steadfastly "to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven."

**THOUGHT** - Mark it down, God's Word is not idle or vain. It is NONE of the following! not yielding the desired outcome; fruitless, lacking substance or worth, futile, unprofitable, time-wasting, unavailing, valueless, insignificant, trifling, trivial, useless, ineffectual, unrewarding. The Word of God is the exact opposite of vanity and emptiness. It is what truly gives meaning, purpose and significance to life.

**Idle** (empty, worthless) ([07386](#)) **req** is an adjective that means empty or vain (frivolous, trivial, trifling). **Req** is used to describe an empty pit (Ge 37:24), empty pitchers (Jdg 7:16), vain (worthless) men (Jdg 9:4, 11:3, 2Chr 13:7 = speaking of their character), empty vessels (2Ki 4:3), worthless things (Pr 12:11, Pr 28:19), empty vessel (as a term of comparison - Jer 51:34)

**Req** - Literal emptiness is indicated in Gen. 37:14; 41:27; Jdg 7:16; 2Ki. 4: 3. Metaphorically, req refers to God's purifying and painful judgment against his people in Ezek 24:11, which describes the prophet's symbolic action of placing the empty cooking pot on the fire, so that all its impurities may be burned off (see also Neh. 5:13). Isa 29:8 refers to the nations that will suffer gnawing pangs of hunger (lit: "... those who awake empty"), again as a direct consequence of God's judgment against them. References to those who are "empty" in the sense of being "vain" or "idle" are found in Dt 32:47; Jdg 9: 4; 2Sa. 6:20; 13:7; Pr 12:11; 28:19. (Stephen Renn)

In Deut 32:47 **req** is translated in the **Lxx** with the adjective **kenos** which literally means empty and figuratively means without truth or power (1Cor 15:14, Eph 5:6-[note](#), Col 2:8-[note](#), James 2:20. Note that God's Word is the antithesis of this figurative description of **kenos**!) The adjective kenos also conveyed the sense of without effect or without reaching its goal (1Cor 15:10-[note](#), 1Cor 15:58-[note](#)).

**Bishop Trench** writes that "in the NT *kenoi logoi* (empty words) (Eph 5:6, cf Dt 32:47, Ex 5:9) are words which have no inner substance and kernel of truth, hollow sophistries and apologies for sin." (Synonyms of the NT) - Comment - The words described in Eph 5:6 are the direct antithesis of the Word of God in Dt 32:47 (and in the entire Word of God, the Bible)!

**Calvin** - Jerome's translation is better — "The precepts are not given you in vain;" for Moses simply intimates that the Law was not given in vain, so as to end in fruitlessness; and consequently they were to beware lest they should frustrate God's purpose, who



desired to do them good.

**An idle word** is a word which is **not profitable**. But as Paul says "All Scripture is inspired by God and **profitable** for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2Ti 3:16-17)

**Bratcher on an idle word...your life** - This emphasizes the seriousness of the matter; what Moses has taught the people is not something insignificant that they can take or leave. Their very existence as a people depends on their obedience to the Law.

**Levinson on not an idle word** - using the same word as the Laws of Hammurabi: "My laws ... are trifling only to the fool" (Ibid)

Tozer - Moses expressed how crucial and significant God's Word was to the people he led in Deuteronomy 32:47: "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess" (emphasis added). Soldiers in battle used their swords as both an offensive and a defensive weapon. God has equipped you with such a weapon for your spiritual battle: "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to accomplish the work of God. The great need of the hour among persons spiritually hungry is twofold: first, to know the Scriptures, apart from which no saving truth will be vouchsafed by our Lord; the second, to be enlightened by the Spirit, apart from whom the Scriptures will not be understood.

**G Campbell Morgan - It is no vain thing for you: because it is your life**-- These words were addressed by Moses to the people after he had repeated the song to them. He referred to the law as it was interpreted by the song. Let us then glance at the song. It opens with a call to attention and a statement concerning its nature. It is a song concerning the name of Jehovah (Dt 31:1-3a). Then, in brief but pregnant sentences, the song sets forth the glories of the name as it celebrates the greatness, the perfection, the justice, the faithfulness of God (Dt 31:3b, 4). Then in sudden contrast, and in short, sharp fashion, it describes the people in their unworthiness (Dt 31:5). It then becomes an appeal, calling upon the people to remember, and merges into a description, full of beauty, of the tender government of God. It is a wonderful revelation of the fact that love is the inspiration of law (Dt 31:6-14). In strange contrast again the song becomes a wail as the unfaithfulness of the people is described, beginning with the words, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Dt 31:15-18). Such unfaithfulness had resulted in discipline which the song describes (Dt 31:19-28). Then it breaks out into lament. "Oh, that they were wise," and describes the blessings which follow obedience (Dt 31:29-43). That is merely an analysis. Let the song be studied by its simple aid, and it will be found how wonderfully it was calculated to teach men that the will of God for them is indeed no vain thing, but their very life. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

**John Gill** - it was no light and trifling matter, but of great importance and consequence, obedience to it being attended with rewards, and disobedience with punishment... if obeyed, the means of a comfortable and happy **life**, in the enjoyment of all good things, of the preservation and continuance of it to a length of time; and long life was always reckoned a great temporal mercy:

**Geneva Study Bible** on not a vain word - For I will perform my promise to you, (Isaiah 55:10).

**John Trapp** - God's favour is no empty favour, it is not like the winter sun, that casts a goodly countenance when it shines, but gives little comfort and heat.

**Handbook of Deuteronomy** no vain thing - It is no trifle for you, but it is your life: see 30:20. This emphasizes the seriousness of the matter; what Moses has taught the people is not something insignificant that they can take or leave. Their very existence as a people depends on their obedience to the Law. CEV has a helpful model: "The Law isn't empty words. It can give you long life..." Thereby you shall live long in the land: see 30:20. Thereby means "by means of it" and refers to obeying the Law, and TEV has "Obey them [the teachings] and you will live..." Possess: see 1:8. For parallels see 4:26, 40.

**indeed it is your life** - What does Moses (and the Spirit Who inspired him) equate with **"your life"**? The Word of God! (Cp Dt 8:3, Dt 30:15, 19-20) The Word points to life and gives life to those who follow the instruction. The word is the means by which you can experience full life. What does this mean practically? You need to take it to heart (memorize it) and then you need to observe it carefully. In the New Testament this is made possible by continually relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the instructions of the word.

Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your **life**.

-- Pr 4:13

James says it this way

"But **prove** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." (James 1:22+).

**Life Application Study Bible** - The Bible can sit on your bookshelf and gather dust, or you can make it a vital part of your life by regularly setting aside time to study it. When you discover the wisdom of God's message, you will want to apply it to your life and pass it on to your family and others. The Bible is not merely good reading-it's real help for real life.

If we were fully persuaded of that God's **Word** is our **life**, how different we would be our intake (time in the Word) and our output (Spirit enabled conduct in obedience to the Word)!

**MacArthur** - Moses reiterated to Israel that obedience to the Lord's commands was to be the key to her living long in the land that God had prepared and called for this song to be a kind of national anthem which the leaders should see is frequently repeated to animate the people to love and obey God. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

This clear association of the Word of God and our life reminds me of the words Jesus used to deflect the verbal attack (temptation) of the devil - " But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4)

Compare the teaching in Dt 30:19-20 where Moses ""I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by **loving** the LORD your God, by **obeying** His voice, and by **holding fast** to Him (How do you hold fast to Him? By holding His Word, that it might hold you when trials and temptations come as we know they will); for (another **term of explanation**) **this is your life** and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." In other words, by obeying the Word, one shows he loves the LORD his God and the result is life and blessing, not only in this life but in that to come! Hold on beloved for Jesus said "I am coming quickly." (Rev 22:12).

**Warren Wiersbe** - Moses closed the song, Joshua standing with him, by appealing to the people to take the message to heart and teach the song to their children, so that future generations would obey the Law and avoid idolatry. (See Deut. 4:9-10; 6:7; 11:19; Ex. 10:2; 12:26.) The Word of God is the life of God's people, just as God is our life (Deut. 30:20); for the Word communicates to us the truth about God and His gracious blessings. To receive and obey the Word is to share in the life of God. "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (Deut 32:47NIV). "For the word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). ([Be Equipped](#))

**Wayne Grudem** quotes Dt 32:47 in his discussion of the necessity of the Bible writing "The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will, but it is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws." He goes on then in point "B" to note "The Bible is necessary for maintaining spiritual life. (118) (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 32:47; 1 Peter 2:2)" ([The Word of God - The Authority of Scripture - Part 2](#))

**And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess-** "By this Word" conveys the sense of "by means of" this Word. Obedience to the Word is associated with "long" life, fullness of life with bountiful blessings! The reason I place "long" in quotes is that some godly obedient saints have had a short earthly life, but they redeemed the time God had allotted them.

[Driver](#) on prolong your days- the natural Deuteronomic sequel of "your life": cf. Dt 30:20 and on Dt 4:26

### **Prolong your days...**

Deuteronomy 5:16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, **that your days may be prolonged** and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 6:2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God (NOTE THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF HEALTHY, HOLY FEAR OF THE LORD - DO YOU HAVE THIS AS YOUR "GUARD AND SHIELD?"), to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and **that your days may be prolonged**.

Deuteronomy 11:8-9 (OBEDIENCE) "You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it; **so that you may prolong your days** on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

**COMMENT:** MARK IT DOWN - ISRAEL WAS TO POSSESS THEIR PROMISED OF MILK AND HONEY BY OBEDIENCE. BELIEVERS ARE TO POSSESS THEIR PROMISED LIFE, LIFE ABUNDANT - Jn 10:10 - BY OBEDIENCE! HOW ARE YOU DOING BELOVED?

Deuteronomy 25:15 (HONESTY, INTEGRITY) "You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and

just measure, **that your days may be prolonged** in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

So the Word of God heard and heeded (obeyed) will enable them to possess the land and live in the land which God had promised. For NT believers, the promises include every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3), so the blessing to us is not a promised land but a promised life, indeed, an abundant life (Jn 10:10)!

**Thoralf Gilbrant** - These were "not just idle words" to bind people in a pattern of legalism; they were God-spoken words designed to impart life. Longevity and prosperity in the divinely Promised Land awaited them if they adopted the life-style prescribed in the words God had spoken to them. (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

**Possess** (03423) (**yarash**) means to take possession, to inherit, to drive out and is usually used in connection with the idea of conquering a land. This is the same verb Jehovah used when He gave this promise to Abram = "And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to **possess** it." (Genesis 15:7, also used in Ge 22:17 of the promise to Abram's seed, cp Ge 28:4) The **Lxx** uses **kleronomeo** from **kleros** (First a pebble, piece of wood used in casting lots as in Acts 1:26 then the allotted portion or inheritance, and so a lot, heritage) and it means to receive a lot or share of an inheritance, inherit a portion of property or receive a possession as gift from someone who has died. As noted below a major theme of the book of Deuteronomy is possession of the land. This theme continued throughout Israel's history and prophetic message. Possession of the land was directly connected to a person's relationship with the Lord; breaking the covenantal relationship led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3 referring to a future fulfillment when the Messiah returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom).

**Yaras** is a **key word** (key verb) in the book of Deuteronomy, the second giving of the law to Israel as they prepared to go and take possession of the promised land. Of the over 200 uses note that the majority (about 63 verses) are found in the book of Deuteronomy...

Deut. 1:8; Deut. 1:21; Deut. 1:39; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 2:31; Deut. 3:12; Deut. 3:18; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 4:1; Deut. 4:5; Deut. 4:14; Deut. 4:22; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 4:47; Deut. 5:31; Deut. 5:33; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 7:17; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 9:1; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 9:6; Deut. 9:23; Deut. 10:11; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:10; Deut. 11:11; Deut. 11:23; Deut. 11:29; Deut. 11:31; Deut. 12:1; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 16:20; Deut. 17:14; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 19:2; Deut. 19:14; Deut. 21:1; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 28:21; Deut. 28:42; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:5; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:13; Deut. 32:47; Deut. 33:23;

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**James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose** Deuteronomy 32:47

#### I. What the Word Of God is Not. "It is not a vain thing."

1. Because its QUICKENING power is needed (Psa. 119:5).
2. Because it has ILLUMINATING power (Psa. 119:105).
3. Because of its IRRESISTIBLE power (Jer. 23:29).

#### II. To Whom it is No Vain Thing. "It is no vain thing for you." For you who have heard and believed.

#### III. Why it is No Vain Thing. "Because it is your life."

1. It is the SOURCE of your life (1 Peter 1:23-25).
2. It is the SUSTENANCE of your life (1 Peter 2:2).
3. It is the STRENGTH of your life (Eph. 6:17).

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**John Butler - Analytical Bible Expositor...**The Recommendation About the Song (Deut. 32:46-47)

Moses not only repeated the song to the people, but he also gave some recommendations regarding the song.

• **The consecration for the song.** "Set your hearts unto all the words" (Deuteronomy 32:46). The heart must be upon the words of the song if the song is to do them any good. David said, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). If you do not love the Word of God, you will not meditate upon it, and you will soon forget it. There is not much love for the Scriptures today which explains many of the problems in

our land and of our people.

• **The command about the song.** "Command your children to observe... all the words" (Deuteronomy 32:46). Teaching the children the Scriptures is vital. Our day is guilty of teaching the children everything but the Scripture, and this produces a great many problems in the land.

• **The character of the song.** "It is not a vain thing" (Deuteronomy 32:47). The world plays down the value of the Scripture and would have us believe that there is little if any worth in the Word of God. But Moses exhorts otherwise here to the Israelites.

• **The compensation in the song.** "Through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land" (Deuteronomy 32:47). If Israel heeds the words of this song, which is the Word of God, they will prolong their stay in the land. The captivity exposed their failure to abide by the Divine Word. (Analytical Bible Expositor – Leviticus to Deuteronomy)

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## **Spurgeon takes the word as pointing to one's personal religion..Religion-a reality**

The Christian dispensation is one which requires much faith to receive it. We walk not by sight, but by faith alone; and it is little marvel that when ungodly men see the righteous afflicted, and discover that their comfort lies in matters which only faith can apprehend, they should cry out, "It is a vain thing," and should turn aside from the ordinances of God. Besides, to confess the truth, there have been so many counterfeits of true religion, that it is not remarkable that unconverted men should consider even the genuine article to be but a vain thing.

### **I. The true religion of Christ, which consists in a vital faith in His person, His blood, and His righteousness, and which produces obedience to His commands and a love to God, is not a fiction.**

1. The objects of true religion are, to those who believe in Jesus, no fiction.
2. The experience which true religion brings is no fiction.
3. There is a reality in the privileges of religion.
4. The religion of Christ is evidently not a vain thing if you look at its effects.
5. To the man who really possesses it, it is his life. His religion is not like a man's regimentals, which he can take off and go in undress; it is inside of him; it is woven right through and through him.

### **II. It is no trifle.**

1. It deals with your souls.
2. It connects you with God.
3. Those who have ever known anything of it tell you it is no "child's play."
4. Sinners, when they are in their senses, find it no trifle.
5. True ministers of God feel it to be no trifle.

### **III. It is no folly.**

If you would accomplish the proudest feat of human intellect, it is to attain to the knowledge of Christ crucified. Here the man whose mind makes him elephantine may find depth in which he may swim. Here the most recondite learning shall find itself exhausted. Here the most brilliant imagination shall find its highest flights exceeded, Here the man who understands history may crown his knowledge by the history of God in the world; here men who would know the secret, the greatest secret which heaven and earth and hell can tell, may find it out, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. All the learning of man is doubtless folly to the angels, but the foolishness of God in the Gospel is wisdom to cherubim and seraphim, and by the Church shall be made known to them in ages to come the manifold wisdom of God,

### **IV. It is no speculation.**

People sometimes ask us what we think about the heathen, whether they will be saved or not, Well, sirs, there is room for difference of opinion there; but I should like to know what you think about yourselves--will you be saved or not?--for after, all,. that is a question of a deal more importance to you. Now, the religion of Christ is not a thing that puts a man into a salvable state, but it saves him. It is not a religion which offers him something which perhaps may save him; no, it saves him out and out, on the spot. It is not a thing which says

to a man, "Now, I have set you a-going, you must keep on yourself." No, it goes the whole way through, and saves him from beginning to end. He that says "Alpha" never stops till He can say "Omega" over every soul. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

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Religion a Reality "For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." Deuteronomy 32:47 .

June 22nd, 1862 by C. H. SPURGEON (1834-1892)

It appears from this closing remark of Moses, that there were men in his time who thought religion to be vain, although, under the system which then existed, there were many plain proofs of its usefulness: for they who served God in those days prospered, and national advantages always followed nation obedience to God. Under the theocratic government of the Israelites in the wilderness, and in their early history when established in Canaan, their offences against God's law brought upon them famine, plague, or the scourge of marauding hosts; while repentance and a return to allegiance always brought them a deliverer, and a restoration of peace and plenty. They had visibly before their eyes proofs that God did reward virtue; and yet, notwithstanding this, there were some so besotted against God, that they said, "It is a vain thing to serve the Lord." Do you wonder, therefore, that there should be many such under the gospel? It would, indeed, be marvellous if there were not many more, for the gospel is a far more spiritual system than the Jewish dispensation, and its blessings are not of a carnal order. No blessing apparent to carnal eyes rests upon the godly, but sometimes the case appears to be reversed: we see the wicked prosper, and the righteous are trodden under foot. The Christian dispensation is one which requires much faith to receive it. We walk not by sight, but by faith alone; and it is little marvel that when ungodly men see the righteous afflicted, and discover that their comfort lies in matters which only faith can apprehend, they should cry out, "It is a vain thing," and should turn aside from the ordinances of God. Besides, to confess the truth, there have been so many counterfeits of true religion, that it is not remarkable that unconverted men should consider even the genuine article to be but a vain thing. Men have made pretences of wondrous sanctity, whilst inwardly full of rottenness; and sinners have learned to argue with terrible logic: "They are none of them good; they are all deceivers; the best of them are hypocrites, and religion itself is a vain thing." However false may be the conclusion here and we believe it to be utterly so yet we do not wonder that men, desiring to believe religion to be a falsehood, have found some support for their unbelief in the hypocrisy of professors.

Now we will grant you this morning that much of the religion which is abroad in the world is a vain thing. The religion of ceremonies is vain. If a man shall trust in the gorgeous pomp of uncommanded mysteries, if he shall consider that there resides some mystic efficacy in a priest, and that by uttering certain words a blessing is infallibly received, we tell him that his religion is a vain thing. You might as well go to the Witch of Endor for grace as to a priest; and if you rely upon words, the "Abracadabra" of a magician will as certainly raise you to heaven, or rather sink you to hell, as the performances of the best ordained minister under heaven. Ceremonies in themselves are vain, futile, empty. There are but two of God's ordaining, they are most simple, and neither of them pretend to have any efficacy in themselves. They only set forth an inward and spiritual grace, not necessarily tied to them, but only given to those who by faith perceive their teachings. All ceremonial religion, no matter how sincere, if it consist in relying upon forms and observances, is a vain thing. So with creed-religion by which I mean not to speak against creeds, for I love "the form of sound words," but that religion which lies in believing with the intellect a set of dogmas, without partaking of the life of God; all this is a vain thing. Again, that religion which only lies in making a profession of what one does not possess, in wearing the Christian name, and observing the ritual of the Church, but which does not so affect the character as to make a man holy, nor so touch the heart as to make a man God's true servant such a religion is vain throughout. O my dear hearers, how much worthless religion may you see everywhere! So long as men get the name, they seem content without the substance. Everywhere, it matters not to what Church you turn your eye, you see a vast host of hypocrites, numerous as flies about a dead carcass. On all sides there are deceivers, and deceived; who write "Heaven" upon their brows, but have hell in their hearts; who hang out the sign of an angel over their doors, but have the devil for a host within. Take heed to yourselves; be not deceived, for he who tries the heart and searches the reins of the children of men is not mocked, and he will surely discern between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not.

But with all these allowances, we still this morning assert most positively that the religion of Christ Jesus, that which has been revealed to us of the Holy Ghost by the apostles and prophets, and specially by the Messiah himself, when truly received into the heart, is no vain thing. We shall handle the text four ways, taking the word "vain" in different shades of meaning. It is no fiction it is no trifle; it is no folly; it is no speculation. In each case we will prove our assertion by the second sentence "Because it is your life."

I. First, then, the true religion of Christ, which consists in a vital faith in his person, his blood, and his righteousness, and which produces obedience to his commands, and a love to God, IS NOT A FICTION.

I am not going to argue this morning. I was never sent to argue, but to teach and speak dogmatically. I assert in the name of all those who have tried it, that true religion is not a fiction to us. It is to us the grandest of all realities, and we hope that our testimony and witness, if we be honest men, may prevail with others who may be sceptical upon this point. We say, then, that the objects of true religion are, to those who believe in Jesus, no fiction. God the Father to whom we look with the spirit of adoption, is no fiction to us. I know that to some men the Divine Being is a mere abstraction. As to communing with him, as to speaking to him, they think

such wonders may have occurred to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, but to them such things are impossible. Now we do solemnly assure you, as men who would not lie in this matter, that God the Father is to us as real a person as the man from whose loins we sprang, and that we have as surely talked unto him, and he has as truly spoken to our hearts as ever we have spoken with our friend, and have been answered by him. We tell you that to us the being of God is a fact which influences our whole life, checks us when we would sin, forbids our weaker passions to rebel, and nerves our nobler powers to do or suffer. Our consciousness, our experience, our emotions, and our whole being, tell us that there is a God. We have had personal dealings with him; he has been with us in our chamber; we have seen his face in the sanctuary; we have cast our cares upon him; and therefore to us the Eternal and indwelling Father is no fiction. So is it with Christ Jesus. To mere professors Christ Jesus is never anything but a myth. They believe there was such a man, but he is only an historical personage to them. To true believers in Christ, however, he is a real person, now existing, and now dwelling in the hearts of his people. And oh! I bear my witness that if there be anything which has ever been certified to my consciousness it is the existence of Jesus, the man, the Son of God. Oh friends, have we not, when our soul has been in a rapture, thrust our finger into the prints of the nails? Have we not been so drawn away from the outward world, that in spiritual communings we could say, He was to us as our brother that sucked the breasts of our mother, and when we found him without we did embrace him, and we would not let him go? His left hand has been under our head, and his right hand has embraced us. I know this will sound like a legend even to men who profess to be Christ's followers, but I question the reality of your piety if Christ be not one for whom you live, and in whom you dwell; with whom you walk, and in whom you hope soon to sleep that you may wake up in his likeness. A real Christ and a real God no man has real religion till he knows these. So again the Holy Spirit, who is, with the Father and the Son, the one God of Israel; the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, indivisibly One and yet everlastingly Three the Holy Spirit is also real, for

"He, in our hearts of sin and woe  
Makes living streams of grace arise,  
Which into boundless glory flow."

Tell us there is no Spirit? Why, about this we can speak positively. A fool may say that there is no magnetic influence, and that no electric streams can flow along the wires, but they who have once been touched by that mysterious power know it; and the Holy Spirit's influence on men is quite as much within the sphere of our recognition, if we have ever felt it, as is the influence of galvanism or magnetism. Those who have once felt the spiritual life know when it is flowing in; when its strength is withdrawn, and when it returns anew. They know that at times they can do all things; their heaviest trial is a joy, and their weightiest burden a delight; and that at other times they can do nothing, being bowed down to the very dust with weakness. They know that at times they enjoy peace with God through Jesus Christ, and that at other times they are disturbed in spirit. They have discovered, too, that these changes do not depend upon the weather, nor upon circumstances, nor upon any relation of one thought to another, but upon certain secret, mystic, and divine impulses which come forth from the Spirit of God, which make a man more than man, for he is filled with Deity from head to foot, and whose withdrawal makes him feel himself less than man, for he is filled with sin and drenched with iniquity, till he loatheth his own being. Tell us there is no Holy Spirit! We have seen his goings in the sanctuary, but as we shall have to mention these by-and-bye, we pass on, and only now affirm that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are to true Christians no fiction, no dream, no fancy, but as real and as true as persons whom we can see, things which we can handle, or viands which we can taste.

But further, we can also say that the experience which true religion brings is no fiction. Believe me, sirs, it is no fiction to repent; for there is a bitterness in it which makes it all too real. Oh, the agony of sin lying on an awakened conscience! If you have ever felt it, it will seem to you as the ravings of a madman when any shall tell you that religion is not real! When the great hammer of the law broke our hearts in pieces, it was a stern reality. These eyes have sometimes, before I knew the Saviour, been ready to start from my head with horror, and my soul has often been bowed down with a grief far too terrible ever to be told to my fellow-man, when I felt that I was guilty before God, that my Maker was angry with me, that he must punish me, and that I deserved and must suffer his eternal wrath. I do assure you there was no fiction there! And when the Spirit of God comes into the heart and takes all our grief away, and gives us joy and peace in believing in Christ, there is no fiction then. Of course, to other men this is no evidence, except they will believe our honesty; but to us it is the very best of evidence. We were bidden to believe on Christ; it was all we were to do: to look to his cross, to believe him to be the propitiation for sin, and to trust in him to save us; we did so, and oh, the joy of that moment! In one instant we leaped from the depths of hell to the very heights of heaven in experience; dragged up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, our feet were set upon a rock, and we could sing for very joy. Oh, the mirth! oh, the bliss! oh, the ecstasy of the soul that can say

"Happy, happy, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away,  
Happy, happy, happy day."

That was no fiction, surely. If it be so, I will continue to cry, "Blessed fiction! blessed dream! may I contrive to believe thee; may I always be so deluded if this is to be deluded and misled!" Since then, look at the believer's experience. He has had as many troubles as other men have, but oh, what comforts he has had! He lost his wife, and as he stood there and thought his heart would break, he could still say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Child after child sickened before his loving gaze, and as they went one after the other to the tomb where he often wished he could have slept instead of them while he mourned and wept as Jesus did, yet still he could say, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." When the house was

burned when the property vanished when trade ran ill when character was slandered when the soul was desponding and all but despairing, yet there came in that one ray of light, "Christ is all, and all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." I can tell you, that Christians have often had their brightest days when other people thought they were in their darkest nights; and they have often had the best of dainties when there was a famine abroad. Is this a fiction? O sirs, we challenge you to find so blessed a fiction as this elsewhere! I saw last Friday a sight, enough to make one weep indeed: there in the back-room of the house, lay a fine youth, a member of this Church, sickening and near to death of consumption, and he talked to me joyously of his prospect of entering into the rest which remaineth for the people of God; there in the front-room, on the same floor, lay his sister, I suppose but some two years younger, withering under the same disease; and there sat the tender mother with her two children, thinking to lose them both within a few days, and though she said, it was natural to weep, yet she could say even under this sharp trial, "The Lord's name be magnified in it all." I say there was no fiction there. If you who think there is a fiction in such things could live among Christians if you could see the poor cheerfully suffering if you could mark the sick and how joyously they bear their pains-if you could see the dying and hear their shouts of triumph, you would say, "There is a reality here; there is something in true religion; let me die the death of the righteous; let my last end be like his!"

But yet further; as we are sure there is a reality in the objects and in the experience of true godliness, so are we quite clear that there is a reality in its privileges. One of the privileges of the Christian is prayer. It is the believer's privilege, to go to God and ask for what he wants, and have it. Now, sirs, I am absolutely certain that prayer is a reality. I shall not tell here my own experience. One reads not his love-letters in the streets, one tells not his own personal dealings with God in public; but if there be a fact that can be proved by ten thousand instances, and which therefore no reasonable man has any right to doubt if there be anything that is true under heaven, it is true that God hears prayer when it cometh not out of feigned lips, and is offered through Jesus Christ. I know when we tell the story out, men smile and say, "Ah, these were singular coincidences!" Why, I have seen in my life, answers to prayer so remarkable, that if God had rent the curtain of the heavens and thrust out his arm to work a deliverance, it could not have been more decidedly and distinctly a divine interposition than when he listened to my feeble cry for help. I speak not of myself as though I were different from other men in this, for it is so with all who have real godliness. They know that God hears them; they prove it to-day; they intend to prove it at this very hour.

Communion with Christ is another reality. The shadow of his cross is too refreshing to be a dream, and the sunlight of his face is too bright to be a delusion. Precious Jesus! thou art a storehouse of substantial delights and solid joy. Then, the privileges of Christian Love towards one another are real. I know they are not with some men. Why, look you at some of your fashionable Churches; if the poor people were to speak to the richer ones, what would the rich ones think of them? Why, snap their heads half off, and send them about their business! But where there is true Christianity, we feel that the only place in the world where there can ever be liberty, equality, and fraternity, is in the Church of Christ. To attempt this politically, is but to attempt an impossibility; but to foster it in the Church of God, where we are all allied to God, is but to nourish the very spirit of the gospel. I say there is a reality in Christian love, for I have seen it among my flock; and though some do not show it as they should, yet my heart rejoices that there is so much hearty brotherly love among you, and thus your religion is not a vain thing.

Once more upon this point, for I am spending all my time here while I need it for other points. The religion of Christ is evidently not a vain thing if you look at its effects. We will not take you abroad now to tell you of the effects of the gospel of Christ in the South Sea. We need not remind you of what it has done for the heathen, but let me tell you what it has done for men here. Ah! brethren, you will not mind my telling out some of the secrets, secrets that bring the tears to my eyes as I reflect upon them. When I speak of the thief, the harlot, the drunkard, the sabbath-breaker, the swearer, I may say "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye rejoice in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." How many a man has been going by the door there, and has said "I'll go in and hear Old Spurgeon." He came in to make merriment of the preacher, and very little that troubles him. But the man has stood there until the Word has gone home to him, and he who was wont to beat his wife, and to make his home a hell, has before long been to see me, and given me a grip of the hand and said, "God Almighty bless you, sir; there is something in true religion!" "Well, let us hear your tale," We have heard it, and delightful it has been in hundreds of instances. "Very well, send your wife, and let us hear what she says about you." The woman has come, and we have said "Well, what think you of your husband now, ma'am?" "Oh, sir, such a change I never saw in my life! He is so kind to us; he is like an angel now, and he seemed like a fiend before; Oh! that cursed drink, sir! everything went to the public-house; and then if I went up to the house of God, he did nothing but abuse me. Oh! to think that now he comes with me on Sunday; and the shop is shut up, sir; and the children who used to be running about without a bit of shoe or stocking, he takes them on his knee, and prays with them so sweetly. Oh! there is such a change!" Surly people say "Will it last? Will it last?" Well, I have seen it last the eight years of my pastorate, in many cases, and I know it will last for ever, for I am persuaded that it is God's work. We will put it to all the Social Science Societies; we will put it to all the different religions under heaven, whether they know the art of turning sinners into saints; whether they can make lions into lambs, and ravens into doves. Why I know a man who was as stingy a soul as could be, once, and now he is as generous a man as walks God's earth. There is another, he was not immoral, but he was passionate, and now he is as quiet as a lamb. It is grace that has altered these characters, and yet you tell me that this is a fiction! I have not patience to answer you. A fiction! If religion does not prove itself to be true by these facts, then do not believe it; if it does not, when it comes into a neighborhood, turn it upside down, sweep the cobwebs

out of its sky, clean the houses, take the men out of the public-houses; if it does not make swearers pray, and hard-hearted men tender and compassionate, then it is not worth a button. But our religion does do all this, and therefore we boldly say, it is not a vain thing.

Besides, to the man who really possesses it, it is his life . He is not a man and a Christian, but he is all a Christian. He is not as some are, men and Members of Parliament, who have many things to attend to, and attend Parliament also; but the man who is thoroughly a Christian is a Christian every bit of him. He lives Christianity; he eats it; he drinks it; he sleeps it; he walks it. Wherever you see him, he has his religion. His religion is not like a man's regimentals which he can take off and go in undress; it is inside of him; it is woven right through and through him. When the shuttle of his religion was thrown, it went right through the core of his heart, and you must kill that man to get his religion out of him. Racks may tear his nerves and sinews, but they cannot tear away his hope, for it is essentially and vitally part and parcel of himself. Ah! my ladies and gentlemen, you who think religion is no more real than the life of a butterfly, it is you who are unreal in your fancies, and your follies; religion is the substance, and your life is only the shadow! Oh! you workingmen, who think that to be godly is but to indulge a dream, you know not what you say. All else is fiction but this; all else is but a moon-beam phantom, but this is sun-lit reality. God give you grace to get it, and then you will feel we have not spoken too strongly, but rather have spoken too little of that which is essentially and really true.

II. Secondly, "It is not a vain thing" that is, IT IS NO TRIFLE.

If religion be false, it is the basest imposition under heaven; but if the religion of Christ be true, it is the most solemn truth that ever was known! It is not a thing that a man dares to trifle with if it be true, for it is at his soul's peril to make a jest of it. If it be not true it is detestable, but if it be true it deserves all a man's faculties to consider it, and all his powers to obey it. It is not a trifle. Briefly consider why it is not. It deals with your soul . If it dealt with your body it were no trifle, for it is well to have the limbs of the body sound, but it has to do with your soul . As much as a man is better than the garments that he wears, so much is the soul better than the body. It is your immortal soul it deals with. Your soul has to live for ever, and the religion of Christ deals with its destiny. Can you laugh at such words as heaven and hell, at glory and at damnation? If you can, if you think these trifles, then is the faith of Christ to be trifled with. Consider also with whom it connects you with God ; before whom angels bow themselves and veil their faces. Is HE to be trifled with? Trifle with your monarch if you will, but not with the King of kings, the Lord of lords. Recollect that those who have ever known anything of it tell you it is no child's play. The saints will tell you it is no trifle to be converted. They will never forget the pangs of conviction, nor the joys of faith. They tell you it is no trifle to have religion, for it carries them through all their conflicts, bears them up under all distresses, cheers them under every gloom, and sustains them in all labour. They find it no mockery. The Christian life to them is something so solemn, that when they think of it they fall down before God, and say, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." And sinners , too, when they are in their senses, find it no trifle. When they come to die they find it no little thing to die without Christ. When conscience gets the grip of them, and shakes them, they find it no small thing to be without a hope of pardon with guilt upon the conscience, and no means of getting rid of it. And, sirs, true ministers of God feel it to be no trifle. I do myself feel it to be such an awful thing to preach God's gospel, that if it were not "Woe unto me if I do not preach the gospel," I would resign my charge this moment. I would not for the proudest consideration under heaven know the agony of mind I felt but this one morning before I ventured upon this platform! Nothing but the hope of winning souls from death and hell, and a stern conviction that we have to deal with the grandest of all realities, would bring me here.

A pastor's office is no sinecure. A man that has the destinies of a kingdom under his control, may well feel his responsibility; but he who has the destiny of souls laid instrumentally at his door, must travail in birth, and know a mother's pangs; he must strive with God, and know an agony and yet a joy which no other man can meddle with. It is no trifle to us, we do assure you; oh! make it no trifle to yourselves. I know I speak to some triflers this morning, and perhaps to some trifling professors. Oh! professors, do not live so as to make worldlings think that your religion is a trifling thing! Be cheerful, but oh! be holy! Be happy, for that is your privilege; but oh! be heavenly-minded, for that is your duty. Let men see that you are not flirting with Christ, but that you are married to him. Let them see that you are not dabbling in this as in a little speculation, but that it is the business of your life, the stern business of all your powers to live to Christ, Christ also living in you.

III. But next, and very briefly, for time will fly; the religion of Christ is no vain thing that is, IT IS NO FOLLY.

Thinking men! Yes, by the way, we have had thinking men who have been able to think in so circuitous a manner that they have thought it consistent with their consciences to profess to hold the doctrines of the Church of England, and to be Romanists or infidels! God deliver us from ever being able to think in their way! I always dislike the presence of man who carries a gun with him which will discharge shot in a circle. Surely he is a very ill companion, and if he should turn your enemy how are you to escape from him? Give me a straightforward, downright man, who says what he means, and means what he says, and I would sooner have the grossest reprobate who will speak plainly what he means, than I would have the most dandy of gentlemen who would not hurt your feelings, but who will profess to believe as you do, while in his heart he rejects every sentiment, and abhors every thought which you entertain. I trust I do not speak to any persons here who can think so circuitously as this. Still, you say, "Well, but the religion of Christ, why, you see, it is the poor that receive it." Bless God it is! "Well, but not many thinking people receive it." Now that is not



true, but at the same time, if they did not we would not particularly mind, because all thinking people do not think aright, and very many of them think very wrongly indeed; but such a man as Newton could think and yet receive the gospel, and master-minds, whom it is not mine just now to mention, have bowed down before the sublimity of the simple revelation of Christ, and have felt it to be their honour to lay their wealth of intellect at the feet of Christ. But, sirs, where is the folly of true religion! Is it a folly to be providing for the world to come? "Oh, no." Is it altogether a folly to believe that there is such a thing as justice? I trow not. And that if there be such a thing as justice it involves punishment? There is no great folly there. Well, then, is it any folly to perceive that there is no way of escaping from the effects of our offences except justice be satisfied? Is that folly? And if it be the fact that Christ has satisfied justice for all who trust in him, is it folly to trust him? If it be a folly to escape from the flames of hell, then let us be fools. If it be folly to lay hold of him who giveth us eternal life oh, blessed folly! let us be more foolish still. Let us take deep dives into the depths of this foolishness. God forbid that we should do anything else but glory in being such fools as this for Christ's sake! What, sirs, is your wisdom? your wisdom dwells in denying what your eyes can see a God; in denying what your consciences tell you that you are guilty; in denying what should be your best hope, what your spirit really craves after-redemption in Christ Jesus. Your folly lies in following a perverted nature, instead of obeying the dictates of one who points you to the right path. You are wise and you drink poison; we are fools and we take the antidote. You are wise and you hunt the shadow; we are fools and we grasp the substance. You are wise, and you labour and put your money into a bag which is full of holes, and spend it for that which is not bread, and which never gives you satisfaction; and we are fools enough to be satisfied, to be happy, to be perfectly content with heaven and God

"I would not change my bless'd estate For all the world calls good or great; And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold."

Blessed folly! Oh, blessed folly! But it is not a foolish thing; for it is your life . Ah, sirs, if you would have philosophy it is in Christ. If you would accomplish the proudest feat of human intellect, it is to attain to the knowledge of Christ crucified. Here the man whose mind makes him elephantine, may find depths in which he may swim. Here the most recondite learning shall find itself exhausted. Here the most brilliant imagination shall find its highest flights exceeded. Here the critic shall have enough to criticise throughout eternity; here the reviewer may review, and review again, and never cease. Here the man who understands history may crown his knowledge by the history of God in the world; here men who would know the secret, the greatest secret which heaven, and earth, and hell can tell, may find it out, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. All the learning of man is doubtless folly to the angels, but the foolishness of God in the gospel is wisdom to cherubim and seraphim, and by the Church shall be made known to them in ages to come the manifold wisdom of God.

IV. And now for the last point, hurriedly again: "It is not a vain thing," that is, IT IS NO SPECULATION, no hap-hazard.

People sometimes ask us what we think about the heathen, whether they will be saved or not. Well, sirs, there is room for difference of opinion there; but I should like to know what you think about yourselves will you be saved or not? for after all that is a question of a deal more importance to you. Now the religion of Christ is not a thing that puts a man into a salvable state, but it saves him. It is not a religion which offers him something which perhaps may save him; no it saves him out and out, on the spot. It is not a thing which says to a man "Now I have set you a-going, you must keep on yourself." No, it goes the whole way through, and saves him from beginning to end. He that says "Alpha" never stops till he can say "Omega" over every soul. I say the religion of Christ: I know there are certain shadows of it which do not carry such a reality as this with them, but I say that the religion of the Bible, the religion of Jesus Christ, is an absolute certainty. "Whosoever believeth on him hath eternal life, and he shall never perish, neither shall he come into condemnation." "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Well," says one, "I should like to know what this very sure religion is." Well, it is this "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Trust Christ with all that you have and you shall be saved. "Well," says one, "but when?" Why, now, here, this morning, on the spot: you shall be saved now. It is not a vain thing; it is not a speculation, for it is true to you now . The word is nigh thee; on thy lip and in thy heart. If thou wilt with thy heart believe on the Lord Jesus Christ thou shalt be saved, and saved now. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are Christ Jesus." This is a great and glorious truth, and it is true to-day "Whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life." "But is it true to me?" saith one. My text says "It is not a vain thing for you ." "Oh, it will suit other people; it will not do for me." It will suit you , sir "It is not a vain thing for you because it is your life." If you have come up from the country, it is no vain thing for you, my dear friends; if you reside in town, amidst its noise and occupations, it is not a vain thing for you, my dear hearers. It is not a vain thing for any; if you do but lay hold of it, and it lays hold of you if you receive the reality and vitality of it into your soul, be you who you may, it will not be a vain thing to you; not a "perhaps" and an "if," a "but" and a "peradventure," but a "shall" and a "will," a divine, an eternal, an everlasting and immutable certainty. Whosoever believeth in Christ let the earth shake; let the mountains rock; let the sun grow old with age, and the moon quench her light shall be saved. Unless God can change his mind and that is impossible; unless God can break his word and to say so is blasphemy; unless Christ's blood can lose its efficacy and that can never be; unless the Spirit can be anything but Eternal and Omnipotent and to suppose so were ridiculous he that believeth on Christ, must at last, before the eternal throne, sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb. "Well," says one. " 'tis a vain thing, I'm sure, to me, for I'm only a poor

working-man; religion no doubt, is a very fine thing for gentlefolk, but it doesn't do for a man as has to work hard, for he's something else to think on." Well, you are just the man that I should think it would do for. Why, it is little enough you have here, my dear friend, and that is the very reason why you should have eternal joys hereafter. If there be one man that religion can bless more than another and I do not know that there is it is the poor man in his humble cot. Why, this will put sweets into your cup; this will make your little into enough, and sometimes into more than enough; you shall be rich while you are poor, and happy when others think you are miserable. "Well," says the rich man, "It is nothing to me; I do not see that it will suit me." Why, it is the very thing for you, sir; in fact, you are the man who ought to have it, because, see what you have to lose when you die, unless you have religion to make up for it! What a loss it will be for you when you have to lose all your grandeur and substance! What a loss it will be for you to go from the table of Dives to the hell of Dives! Surely it is not a vain thing for you. "Well," says another, "but I am a moral and upright person; indeed, I do not think anybody can pull my character to pieces." I hope nobody wants to; but this is not a vain thing for you, because, let me tell you, that fine righteousness of yours is only fine in your own esteem. If you could only see it as God sees it, you would see it to be as full of holes as ever beggars' rags were when at last they were consigned to the dust-heap. I say your fine righteousness, my lady, and yours, Sir Squire from the country, no matter though you have given to the poor, and fed the hungry, and done a thousand good things; if you are relying on them, you are relying on rotten rags, in which God can no more accept you than he can accept the thief in his dishonesties. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags, and we are all as an unclean thing." It is not a vain thing for you, then. "Oh, but I am a young man just in my teens, and growing up to manhood; I think I ought to have a little pleasure." So I think, friend, and if you want a great deal of it, be a Christian. "Oh, but I think young people should enjoy themselves." So do I. I never was an advocate for making sheep without their first being lambs, and I would let the lambs skip as much as they like; but if you want to lead a happy and a joyous life, give you young days to Jesus. Who says that a Christian is miserable? Sir, you lie; I tell you to your teeth that you know not what Christianity is, or else you would know that the Christians are the most joyous people under heaven. Young man, I would like you to have a glorious youth; I would like you to have all the sparkle and the brilliance which your young life can give you. What have you better than to live and to enjoy yourself? But how are you to do it? Give your Creator your heart, and the thing is done. It is not a vain thing for you. "Ah!" says the old man, "but it is a vain thing for me; my time is over; if I had begun when I was a lad it might have done; but I am settled in my habits now; I feel sure, sir, it is too late for me; when I hear my grand-children say their prayers as they are going to bed, pretty dears, when they are singing their evening hymn, I wish I was a child again; but my heart has got hard, and I cannot say "Our Father' now; and when I do get to "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," I get stuck there, I do not know how to get over that, for I have not forgiven old Jones yet who robbed me in that lawsuit; and then you know I am infirm, and have these rheumatics, and a hundred other pains; I do not think religion will suit me." Well, it is just the very thing that will suit you, because it will make you young again. What, "Can a man be born again when he is old?" That is what Nicodemus asked. Yes, a man can be born again, so that the babe shall die a hundred years old. Oh! to make the autumn of your life and the coming winter of your last days into a new spring and a blessed summer-this is to be done by laying hold of Christ now; and then you shall feel in your old veins the young blood of the new spiritual life, and you will say, "I count the years I lived before a death, but now I begin to live."

I do not know whether I have picked out every character; I am afraid I have not; but this thing I know, though you may be under there, or up in the corner yonder where my eye cannot reach you, yet you may hear this voice and I hope you may hear it when you are gone from this house back to your country-towns and to your houses

"'Tis religion that can give Sweetest pleasures while we live! 'Tis religion must supply Solid comfort when we die.

After death its joys will be Lasting as eternity! Be the living God my friend, Then my bliss shall never end."

And this is the gospel which is preached unto you. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" that is trust him "and thou shalt be saved." May God bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

**Deuteronomy 32:48 The LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying,**

- Nu 27:12,13

**The LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying** - John Maxwell entitles this last section "A Land to be Denied."

**Deuteronomy 32:49 "Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession.**

- **mountain:** De 34:1 Nu 33:47-48

- **and look at:** De 34:2-5 Isa 33:17 2Co 5:1
- Deuteronomy 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Deut 34:1-5 Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." 5So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

[Moses on Mt Nebo](#) (Deuteronomy 34:1+)

Listen to [Mt Nebo](#) as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

## GOD'S COMMAND TO GO, LOOK AND DIE!

**Go up to this mountain of the [Abarim](#), Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho-** God is commanding Moses to make his final journey and at the end of this journey to fall asleep. Moses the man of God obeys God, leaving us an example to follow in his steps, that we would not sluggish but be "imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb 6:12+)

Numbers 27:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "**Go up** to this mountain of [Abarim](#), and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel.

[Mount Nebo](#) (Nu 33:47, Dt 32:49, Dt 34:1) - (nee' boh) Place and divine name meaning, "height." Mountain about twelve miles east of the mouth of the Jordan River from which Moses viewed the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 32:49 ). It rises over 4000 feet above the Dead Sea and gives an excellent view of the southwest, west, and as far north as Mount Hermon. Israel captured the area around Mount Nebo as they marched toward Canaan. They camped in the area of Mount Nebo opposite Jericho when the Balaam incident occurred (Numbers 22-24 ). During the period of the judges it was the possession of Eglon of Moab. David recaptured the area (2 Samuel 8:2 ), and it remained a part of Israel until Mesha rebelled and took control about 850 B.C. (See also [Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#))

**NET NOTE** - [Abarim](#). This refers to the high plateau region of the Transjordan, the highest elevation of which is Mount Pisgah (or Nebo; cf. Deut 34:1). See also the note on the name "Pisgah" in Deut 3:17.

[Pisgah](#) - (pihss' guh) Place name perhaps meaning, "the divided one." Mountain in the Abarim range across the Jordan River from Jericho. Some Bible scholars believe it was part of Mount Nebo; others think it could have been a separate rise, either en-Neba or near modern Khirbet Tsijaga. God allowed Moses to view the Promised Land from the heights of Pisgah (Deuteronomy 34:1 ) but would not let him cross into Canaan. Israel had camped near Pisgah (Numbers 21:20 ). Balak took Balaam to its height so the prophet could see Israel and curse them (Numbers 23:14 ). It was a limit of Sihon's kingdom (Joshua 12:23 ); Ashdoth-pisgah in KJV) and also for the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:20 ).

**Driver** - Go up to this mountain of the 'Abārim] verbatim as Nu. 27:12. The "mountains of the 'Abārim, in front of Nebo" are mentioned also Nu. 33:47f. The name—properly, no doubt, meaning, "of the parts beyond"—appears to have been applied to the range of mountains "beyond" (i.e. East of) Jordan, in which Nebo formed a particular ridge. 'Iyê (ruins of) 'Abārim was the name of a station of the Israelites in the high ground S.E. of Moab (Nu. 21:11, 33:44) **Unto Mount Nebo ... fronting Jericho]** these words are not in Nu. 27:12. See Dt 34:1. Nebo was not situated in the Jordan valley, so that some more general expression would naturally have to be employed.

**and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession-** Yahweh's gift to Israel was linked to His original promise to Abraham in Ge 17:8 and note that it was to be their everlasting possession. God repeated the promise to Moses in Ex 6:4+ "I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned." This promise of Yahweh's giving the land of Canaan is repeated in Lev 25:38, Nu 13:2, 1 Chr 16:18, Ps 105:11

**Possession** (property, site) (0272) [ahuzzah/achuzzah](#) basic idea of the root is "to take hold of." Something seized, a possession (esp. of land) Jacob "took hold" of Esau's heel (Gen 25:26); Samson "took hold" of the

city gate (Jud 16:3); Ruth "held" the cloak as Boaz poured six measures of barley into it (Ruth 3:15). The curtains of Xerxes's palace were held by cords of linen on silver rings (Est 1:6). Men could "hold" or "wear" swords (Song 3:8). In the Niphal stem the verb usually means "to acquire property," thus overlapping with the noun 'ahuzza "possession." Sometimes both noun and verb occur in the same verse (Josh 22:9, 19). The Niphal may arrive at this meaning through its reflexive use, "to take for oneself." The property in view is almost always land. The majority of its sixty-six uses pertain to the possession of land.

Normally the property under discussion was located in the land of Canaan. All of that land had been promised to Abraham as "an everlasting possession" (Gen 17:8), a promise repeated to Jacob (Gen 48:4). Five times in Genesis, Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah is mentioned (Gen 23:4, 9, 20; Gen 49:30; Gen 50:13). By gaining possession of this burial site for Sarah, Abraham made the down payment on the eventual full possession of the land. Canaan is called "the land of the Lord's possession" in Josh 22:19, to distinguish it from Transjordan where the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh chose to settle (Jos 22:9).

Within Canaan each family had its individual property, considered its inheritance. Even if it had to be leased to others, or was consecrated to the Lord, the land always reverted to the original owner in the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:10, 13, 28; Lev 27:24). The daughters of Zelophehad were successful in their bid to acquire property as an inheritance, since they had no brothers (Num 27:7).

The Levites received no land as a possession, but they did have cities and their surrounding fields (Lev 25:33). The Lord was the possession of the Levites; he was their inheritance and share (Ezek 44:28; Num 18:20).

It was the Lord who promised to the Messiah, son of David, that the ends of the earth would be his possession (Psa 2:8).

Once, in Lev 25:45-46, persons are called property. Israelites were allowed to keep resident aliens as their permanent possession.

**Deuteronomy 32:50 "Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people,**

- **be gathered:** Ge 15:15 25:8,17 49:33 Da 12:13
- **as Aaron:** Nu 20:24-29 33:38

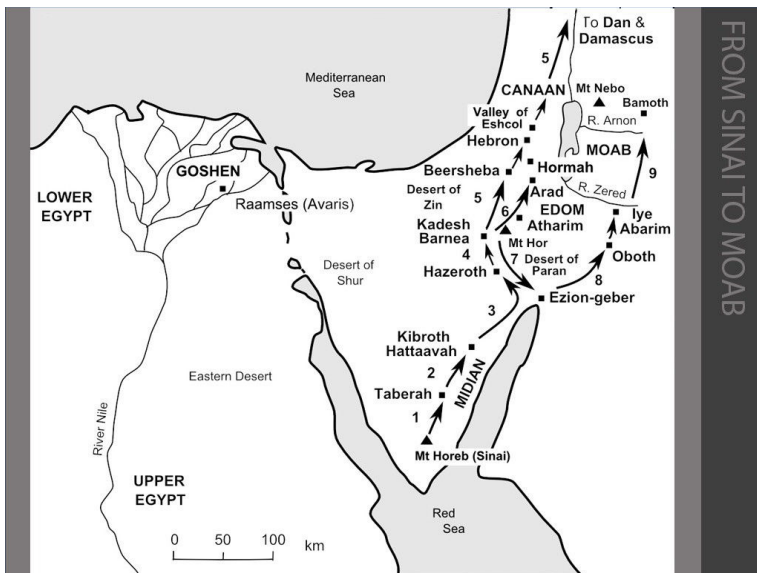
## **MOSES GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE**

**Then**

**die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people** - Gathered to your people is frequent - (Ge 25:8, Ge 35:29, Nu. 20:24, 26, Nu 27:13, 31:2)

**Deuteronomy 32:51 because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel.**

- **you broke faith with Me:** De 3:23-27 Nu 20:11,12,24 27:14
- **Meribah-Kadesh:** Nu 20:13-14
- **because:** Lev 10:3 1Ki 13:21-26 Isa 8:13 1Pe 4:17



### Kadesh in Wilderness (Desert) of Zin

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 17:7+ (FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAEL - "NO WATER" TEST WHERE MOSES STRUCK ROCK IN OBEDIENCE) He named the place Massah and **Meribah** because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

Numbers 20:1-14+ Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 There was (SECOND - FIRST "NO WATER" TEST WAS IN Ex 17:7 ABOVE) **no water** for the congregation (SECOND GENERATION), and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. 3 The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! 4 "Why then have you brought the LORD'S assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? 5 "Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, **nor is there water to drink.**" 6 Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. **Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them;** 7 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and **speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water.** You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD, just as He had commanded him; 10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" 11 **Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly,** and the congregation and their beasts drank. 12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "**Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.**" 13 Those were the waters of **Meribah**, because the sons of Israel contended with the LORD, and He proved Himself holy among them.

14 From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom: "Thus your brother Israel has said, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us;

Dt 1:37+ "The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there.

Dt 4:21-22+ "Now the LORD was angry with me on your account, and swore that I would not cross the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 22 "For I will die in this land, I shall not cross the Jordan, but you shall cross and take possession of this good land.

Dt 31:2+ And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.'

### BROKEN FAITH PENALIZES MOSES

**because** - Term of explanation, explaining why Moses must die on Mount Nebo.

**You** (plural pronoun) **broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah ([meribah](#))-kadesh ([Qadesh](#)), in the wilderness of Zin** - Note that the pronoun "**you**" is plural so the NET renders it "**both of you rebelled against me**" (NLT = "you betrayed me") reasoning that the plural pronoun signifies both Moses and Aaron were guilty of rebelling. The verb **broke faith ([maal](#))** is rendered in the Lxx with the verb [apeitheo](#) which means to disobey (to willfully disbelieve) signifying deliberate disobedience to God's authority. He had said *speak*, but Moses *struck* the rock and God in essence "*struck*" him with the punishment of preventing passage into the Promised Land!

**THOUGHT**- Be very careful when you make the foolish choice to deliberately disobey God's clear authority! You are free to choose to disobey, but you cannot choose your consequences and they might be far worse than you might think you deserve. God is a just Judge and does not grade on a curve (for anybody, even Moses!)

**Meribah-Kadesh** (Nu 27:14; Dt. 32:51; Ezek. 47:19; Ezek 48:28) means 'place of strife,' and refers to two places in the desert named Meribath, where Moses struck a rock to produce water for the Israelites. The second, located near Kadesh (Nu 20:1–13), became known as Meribath-kadesh because of its proximity to Kadesh. Because Yahweh was displeased with Moses and Aaron there, he barred them from entering Canaan (Nu 27:14; Dt 32:51). Meribath-kadesh is used as a synonym for Kadesh (aka [Kadesh-barnea](#)) in descriptions of the southern border of Judah (Ezek 47:19; 48:28).

In Numbers 20:24+ we read "Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because **you** (BOTH AARON AND MOSES) rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah." So Aaron died without being allowed into the promised land because he also rebelled when Moses rebelled at Meribah-Kadesh.

Note this location is distinct from [Massah](#) and **Meribah** in Ex 17:7+. This preceding "Meribah" should be distinguished from the **Meribah** in Dt 32:51 where a similar contentious incident occurred near [Kadesh-barnea](#) (thus the name to distinguish it = "Meribah-Kadesh").

**Broke faith ([maal](#))** means Moses did not believe Yahweh and instead seems to allow his anger take over his reason causing him to strike the rock (twice - Nu 20:11+) when God had told him to speak to the rock. Had he simply spoken, God would have given water, Israel would have witnessed this event and would see that Moses had treated God as holy. **Broke faith** in the Lxx is [apeitheo](#) which means to disobey God and His clear command to speak not to strike the rock.

**Broke faith** (be or act unfaithful) ([04603](#)) **Maal** means to act unfaithfully, to trespass, to violate one's duty, to break faith, to commit a violation, to act. in a manner which is untrustworthy or unreliable in relation to an agreement or relationship. It is often used in Hebrew together with the noun **maal** ([04604](#)), so literally it could be translated "**trepasses a trespass.**" (NIV = "*commits a violation*") (following use both verb and noun forms of maal - Lev 5:15, 6:2, Nu 5:6, 27, Josh 22:20, 22:31) The idea of **maal** is that of a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. In fact in Ezek 39:23 and Da 9:7 **maal** describes the sin which resulted in Judah's exile to Babylon! They were unfaithful to their covenant with Yahweh. Maal describes the horrid sin of Achan (Josh 7:1) in which he took "the things that were under the ban." (Josh 6:18) **Maal** describes King Uzziah's prideful usurping of priestly authority and offering incense in the Temple in 2Chr 26:16-18. **NET NOTE** - The word **maal** refers to some kind of overstepping of the boundary between that which is common (i.e., available for common use by common people) and that which is holy (i.e., to be used only for holy purposes because it has been consecrated to the LORD).

**NET NOTE** - The use of the plural ("**you broke faith**") in the Hebrew text suggests that Moses and Aaron are both in view here, since both had rebelled at some time or other, if not at Meribah Kadesh then elsewhere (cf. Nu 20:24; 27:14).

**because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel**- Literally - "did not esteem me holy." NIV "did not uphold my holiness"; NLT "failed to demonstrate my holiness." "you did not show me proper respect among the Israelites" (Dt 32:51NET)

Moses pleaded with God in Deuteronomy and other scriptures, to have God change His mind and let him go into the Promised Land. But God said, "No." When Moses struck the rock the second time, it was like crucifying Jesus Christ afresh. It was like saying, you know, what you need is not already being provided, so something has to be done to provide you with your needs. And we do not crucify Jesus Christ afresh. We don't need to, why? Because He is the smitten rock, and so we just come to Him in faith. When we come to Him in faith and speak to the Rock in faith, what we need is supplied. There is victory in Jesus Christ. Everything and anything you will ever need is going to be supplied, according to [Php4:19]. Whatever "no water" situation you are in, don't walk out. It may be hard, but don't walk out because God has something better for you. Trust Him in His word & His promises & He will supply your every need or He is not Jehovah jireh, your helper & He is not El Roi, the God Who sees your abased state & He is not Jehovah rapha, the God Who heals the brokenhearted. But He is Who He says He is and in His perfect timing, He will meet you where you are and you will see His sufficiency and the Victory in Jesus.

**Deuteronomy 32:52 "For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel."**

- De 32:49 Dt 34:1-4 Nu 27:12 Heb 11:13,39
- Deuteronomy 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**SEE BUT NOT  
ENTER**

**For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel** The penalty for a single act of disobedience. May God grant us grace to learn and be very wary of testing God's patience by willfully sinning against Him. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**John Maxwell** - I vividly remember the thoughts that rushed through my mind some years ago when I stood on top of Mount Nebo and reflected on this incident. As a communicator and spiritual leader, I tried to place myself in the shoes of Moses. No doubt he was both glad and sad. What a joy to see the land that he had worked so hard to reach. What a sorrow to know the effects of a few brief self-indulgent moments of sin. Many times previously Moses had wrestled with God, asking permission to enter the land. Now he rested, knowing that God had another leader and the mission would be accomplished. Moses would be an example to all of Israel that God will not allow His people to get away with disobedience. ([Preacher's Commentary](#))