

### The Song of Moses; Moses Views the Land

#### Deuteronomy 32

**Deuteronomy 32:48-52** - *“Then the Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: <sup>49</sup>“Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; <sup>50</sup> and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; <sup>51</sup> because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. <sup>52</sup> Yet you shall see the land before you, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.”*

#### Background Notes

Mount Nebo is a peak in the Abarim range of mountains that overlooks the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea from the east. From Mount Nebo there's a wonderful view of the Promised Land, all the way from south of the Dead Sea, and sometimes even to the snow-capped Mount Hermon in the north. Looking west you can see the ridge of mountains where Jerusalem is located. When the Lord disciplined Moses, He had said that Moses could **see** the Land but could not **enter** it, so Moses viewed the Promised Land from Mount Nebo - from a distance. It was at Mount Nebo that Moses would die. His brother, Aaron, had died at Mount Horeb.

#### Doctrinal Points

##### 1. God is great in the history contained in the Song of Moses (v1-12).

**Deuteronomy 21:1-4** - *Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass. <sup>3</sup> For I proclaim the name of the Lord. Ascribe greatness to our God. <sup>4</sup> He 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.*

In the first few verses, all heaven and earth were called upon to listen to the words of this song that magnified the Lord. The majestic theme of the song was the greatness of God (v3). Why is God great? Verse 4 gives the answer: God's works are perfect. He is completely righteous, thus all His ways are just. He is faithful to His Word and to His people. And He is the Rock - what a great symbol for God, who is our strong and powerful refuge! (By the way, this is the first mention in the Bible of God as "The Rock.")

Moses extolled the greatness of God in His historical dealings with His people (v5-12). Sadly, even though our gracious God favored Israel above all peoples, Israel turned away from the Lord. As the Lord's people, Israel was in the mind of God when, in His sovereignty, He divided the nations at the time of the Tower of Babel (v8-9). God cared for and guarded them as the valuable pupil of His eye (v10). Even the Egyptian bondage and trials in the wilderness wanderings were part of God's careful and protective training. As a mother eagle forces her young eaglets out of the nest so they learn how to fly, but is always there to catch and rescue them on her strong wings, so in His greatness the Lord alone guided and preserved His people (v11-12). God is great in the history contained in the Song of Moses.

## **2. God is great in the prophecy contained in the Song of Moses (v13-33).**

From verse 13 on, the Song of Moses was prophetic, since it was written before the Conquest. The blessings of entering and possessing the Promised Land were included in verses 13-14.

**Deuteronomy 32:13-14** - *He made him ride in the heights of the earth, that he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock; <sup>14</sup> curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs; and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the choicest wheat. And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.*

In verses 15-18 Israel went from being called "Jeshurun" ("upright one") to a nation that was characterized by idolatry. Notice - demons are associated with sacrifices to idols (v17)! 1 Corinthians 10:20 says, "...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons." God would have to continually discipline His people for their sins of idolatry down through the years (v19-33).

**Deuteronomy 32:19-22** - *And when the Lord saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. <sup>20</sup> And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith.*

<sup>21</sup> *They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God. They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. <sup>22</sup> For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell. It shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*

"Making Israel jealous by the Gentiles" (v21) has been fulfilled by the gospel going out to the Gentiles around the world. Paul quoted this verse in Romans 10:19, and Romans 11:11 says that by Israel's fault, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy.

**Deuteronomy 32:23-27** - *I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. <sup>24</sup> They shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction. I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, with the poison of serpents of the dust. <sup>25</sup> The sword shall destroy outside; there shall be terror within for the young man and virgin, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs.*

*<sup>26</sup> I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men," <sup>27</sup> Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, "Our hand is high; and it is not the Lord who has done all this."*

Some of the different forms God's discipline would take, including famine, and plague, and wild beasts, and boar were included in verses 23-27. While the Lord would discipline His people, He would not destroy them, lest Israel's enemies should think that *they* had destroyed them.

In verses 28-33, the people of Israel were described as having no understanding because they would not see the obvious. As part of His judgment, God would allow wicked nations - as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah - to defeat Israel. All of this came true, and it emphasizes the greatness of God in prophecy. God is great in the prophecy contained in the Song of Moses.

### **3. God is great in the vengeance contained in the Song of Moses (v34-43).**

**Deuteronomy 32:34-43** - *Is this not laid up in store with Me, sealed up among My treasures? <sup>35</sup> Vengeance is Mine, and recompense. Their foot shall slip in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them. <sup>36</sup> For the Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free. <sup>37</sup> He will say: 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge? <sup>38</sup> Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, and be your refuge.'*

*<sup>39</sup> Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. <sup>40</sup> For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, "As I live forever, <sup>41</sup> If I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment. I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me. <sup>42</sup> I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy."*

*<sup>43</sup> Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries. He will provide atonement for His land and His people.*

Verses 40-43 have to do with God's vengeance upon the nations that He allowed to defeat Israel, and they show how complete God's judgment will be upon these enemy nations. God used their evil intentions to punish His people - but that in no way condoned their evil actions.

Notice that God will take vengeance because of enemy attacks on His people and on His Land (v43). What land is that? It's the Land of Israel – and it's located today exactly where it's always been. Do you think present-day Iran or Syria (or any other hostile nations) can escape the vengeance of God after making threats and plans to annihilate Israel? The answer is obvious. God is great in the vengeance contained in the Song of Moses.

## Practical Application

### Capture the content of Scripture in song!

**Deuteronomy 32:44-47** - *So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. <sup>45</sup> Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. <sup>47</sup> For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."*

Moses taught this song to the people of Israel. He told them that this was not just a mere "three-word praise song" - it was a song with much important content! In fact, Moses told them that the song was not "idle words" for them. No! It was their life, because this song captured the content of the Word of God.

The Lord had Moses and Joshua put this content of the Word of God into a song because, as the people of Israel would sing it in their travels, they would come to know the teaching of the Word of God by continuous review.

We should do the same. Yes, let's sing praise songs - but let's also memorize and sing hymns that contain solid biblical teaching.

Capture the content of Scripture in song!