



Deuteronomy 32

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Deuteronomy 32.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

INTRODUCTION: this is a continuation of the previous chapter; Israel is soon to cross over the River Jordan and enter into the Promised Land. The primary focus of all the following chapters is upon Moses re-telling to the new generation about to cross the River Jordan all the covenant laws the LORD originally gave to Israel at Mount Sinai so that the new generation would renew the covenant with the LORD before they enter the Promised Land. The final chapter finishes with the LORD burying Moses and Joshua being ready to lead Israel over the River Jordan and into the Promised Land (see also the introduction to chapter one).

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

DEUTERONOMY 32 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

- **Deuteronomy 32:1-52** “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. ² May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb. ³ For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴ “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. ⁵ They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation. ⁶ Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? ⁷ Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you. ⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. ⁹ But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. ¹⁰ “He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, ¹² the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him. ¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. ¹⁴ Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat— and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape. ¹⁵ “But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. ¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth. ¹⁹ “The LORD saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters. ²⁰ 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 faithfulness. ²¹ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. ²² For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. ²³ ““And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them; ²⁴ they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust. ²⁵ Outdoors the sword shall bereave, and indoors terror, for young man and woman alike, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs. ²⁶ I would have said, “I will cut them to pieces; I will wipe them from human memory,” ²⁷ had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, “Our hand is triumphant, it was not the LORD who did all this.”” ²⁸ “For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. ²⁹ If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end! ³⁰ How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up? ³¹ For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves. ³² For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of

Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; ³³ their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps. ³⁴ “Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries? ³⁵ Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.’ ³⁶ For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. ³⁷ Then he will say, ‘Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, 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 protection! ³⁹ “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. ⁴⁰ For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, ⁴¹ if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. ⁴² 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 long-haired heads of the enemy.’ ⁴³ “Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.” ⁴⁴ Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. ⁴⁵ And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.” ⁴⁸ That very day the LORD spoke to Moses, ⁴⁹ “Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel for a possession. ⁵⁰ And die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. ⁵² For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there, into the land that I am giving to the people of Israel.”

THE SONG OF MOSES

Prior to entering the Promised Land, the LORD told Moses to write a song, he did and it was called: “The Song of Moses.” This song is stunning and majestically prophetic since it not only speaks of Israel’s past prior to Moses death, but also lays out the history of Israel and their rebellion toward the LORD and God’s mercy and compassion toward them right up to the Lord Jesus Christ’s return as, King of kings and Lord of lords.

A brief overview of the lyrics of Moses song: God the Father created and established Israel and upon finding them in the waste of the wilderness kept them as the apple of His eye and God like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings and catching them bore them on its pinions. He guided them and made them to ride on the high places of the inheritance He had given them and Israel grew fat and sleek, but they provoked God to jealousy and anger with strange gods and abominations and forgot the God who gave them birth. Therefore, God heaped disasters, hunger, plagues and pestilence upon them until all their power was gone and they were taken captive by their enemies. While in captivity God will say, “Where are the idols and gods you worshipped and trusted in to give you victory and prosper your nation now?” Israel was so full of abominations and acted so corruptly that God even thought to utterly destroy them so that they would be wiped from human memory, but the LORD kept Israel during their captivity and stored up all the cruelty their enemies had committed against His people for the day of judgement when God will have compassion toward Israel and take vengeance on their enemies and those who hate him and thereby vindicate His people. Moses and Joshua recited all the words of the song of Moses in the hearing of the people.

A summary of each verse of the song:

- Israel is to listen to the words of the song (v1).
- The purpose of the song is to teach and confront Israel (v2).

- The song is proclaimed and sung in the name of the LORD (v3).

The Song states:

- God is upright, faithful, without iniquity, His work is perfect and ways just (v4).
- Israel has dealt corruptly with God and are no longer his children because they are blemished, crooked and a twisted generation (v5).
- God is Israel's Father, who created and established them but Israel does not repay the LORD they are a foolish and senseless people (v6).
- Israel is to remember the days of old and ask the elders to remind them (v7).
- God gave Israel nations for their inheritance and fixed borders for Israel (v8).
- God's portion is His people (v9).
- God found Israel in a desert waste of the wilderness He cared for them and kept them as the apple of His eye (v10).
- God protected Israel like an eagle with its young (v11).
- God alone guided Israel there was no foreign god with him (v12).
- God made Israel ride on high places of the land and they ate of the field (v13).
- God prospered Israel so they ate abundantly from the herd, the flock, the wheat and drank foaming wine (v14).

Israel's Rebellion

- Jeshurun grew fat and sleek and forsook God who made them and scoffed at the Rock of their salvation (v15) (Jeshurun is a poetical or ideal title of Israel). It is used as a title of honour in (Deut. 33:5, 26) (Isa. 44:2), but, in (Deut. 32:15) it is used in reproach of Israel, because Israel had departed from God.
- Israel stirred God to jealousy and anger with strange gods and with abominations (v16).
- Israel sacrificed to demons that were no gods and to new gods (v17).
- Israel forgot the God who gave them birth and was unmindful of Him (v18).

God's response to Israel's Rebellion

- God spurned Israel because of their provocation (v19).
- God will hide His face from Israel, because they were a perverse generation with children in who is no faithfulness (v20).
- Israel has made God jealous with what is no-god and provoked Him to anger with idols. God will make Israel jealous with those who are no-people and provoke Israel to anger with a foolish nation (v21).
- A fire is kindled by God's anger and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains (referring to Israel's kings and priests) (v22).

Israel's Destruction

- God will heap disasters upon Israel and destroy them by arrows (v23).
- Israel will be wasted with hunger, devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence and the beast and insects (v24).
- Outdoors the sword shall bereave all Israel and indoors terror (v25).

Israel to be wiped from Human Memory

- God thought to cut Israel to pieces and wiped them from human memory (v26).
- But; God preserved Israel for fear their adversaries would misunderstand and boast, "That their hand had been triumphant" and not realise it was God that destroyed Israel (v27).

Israel's Lack of Wisdom

- Israel was a nation void of counsel that had no understanding (v28).
- If Israel was wise, they would understand and discern their latter end (v29).
- It would only take a small army to destroy Israel if the LORD gave them up (v30).

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The enemies of Israel

- The gods of Israel's enemies are not like Israel's God because their enemies' gods are no-gods so they fight by themselves (v31).
- The enemies of Israel are of the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah full of poison and bitterness (v32).
- Israel's enemies are like poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps (v33).

The vengeance of God

- God; aware of the evil cruelty of Israel's enemies has Israel in His hand (v34).
- Vengeance is God's the day of Israel's calamity and doom comes swiftly (v35).
- God will vindicate and have compassion when Israel's power is gone (v36).

Then God will say:

- Where are Israel's gods in which they took refuge (v37).
- Israel let their gods help them and be their protection (v38).
- But; see now there is no god beside the LORD their God, He kills and He makes one to live, He wounds and He heals and no-one can deliver out of His hand (v39).

- For God lifts up His hand to heaven and He lives forever (v40).
- God judges and takes vengeance on those who hate Him (v41).
- God destroys all His enemies (v42).

Israel is called to Rejoice

- Rejoice with the LORD, O heavens (referring to Israel) and bow down to him, all gods. The LORD avenges the death of His children and takes vengeance on His adversaries. The LORD will repay those who hate him and cleanse His people's land (v43).

Moses and Joshua recite the words of the song

Moses and Joshua recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people of Israel. When Moses had finished speaking all the words of the song to all Israel, he said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which God has warned them in this song." These are not empty words for Israel, but their very life. They would live long in the Promised Land if they keep all the words Moses has taught them in this song and teach the words of the song to their children so that they would be careful to do all the words of this law.

The Death of Moses

The very day of Moses death the LORD told him he would not go into the land that the LORD was giving to the people of Israel, because he broke faith with the LORD and did not treat Him as holy, in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, but he would see the land the LORD was giving to the people of Israel. The LORD told Moses to go up on Mount Nebo in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho to view the land of Canaan on the opposite side of the Jordan River that the LORD is, giving to the people of Israel for a possession and he will die on it and be gathered to his people as Aaron his brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people,

The story of Massah

Not long after Israel had crossed the Red Sea and before they'd reached Mount Sinai (Num. 33:15) they are camped at Rephidim in the wilderness. There was no water for the people to drink, so they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us with thirst? Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" Then Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

The LORD said He would stand on the rock at Horeb (Mount Sinai), and told Moses to take the staff that he struck the Nile with and strike the rock and water will flow out, Moses struck the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel and water flowed out, he named the place Massah meaning tempting and Meribah because of the striving of the children of Israel and because they tempted Jehovah. Israel had tested God by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" They had seen the mighty and awesome miracles and extraordinary wonders of the LORD and should have had faith that He would provide. (Exodus 17:1-7).

Forty years later we read of a similar story

Moses is told to speak to the rock at Kadesh just before Aaron dies (Num. 20:22) Aaron death is recorded in (Num. 20:22-29) (Num. 33:36-39). The people committed the same sin once again, when they thirsted. They grumbled against Moses saying, "Why, have you brought us into this wilderness, that we should die here?" This time the LORD commanded Moses to speak to the rock to show His glory to the people, but Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, nevertheless water flowed out but Moses and Aaron were forbidden to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:1-13). Since the smiting of the rock happened before the covenant was established at Sinai some say that it symbolized Christ being smitten to establish the new covenant. While the speaking to the rock at the end of the forty years wanderings was to represent Christ's return to redeem the world, but Moses ruined the intended symbolism by smiting the rock. After having said this it should be highlighted that Moses was not punished for ruining a symbolism, but for striking the rock instead of speaking to it.

The meaning of Massah

Massah: comes from the Hebrew word (*Maccah*). From Strong's Concordance it carries the idea of testing, temptation or trial of men or of God (i.e., complaining against God) while the word Meribah comes from the Hebrew word (*Me'riybah*). From Strong's Concordance it means quarrel, provocation and strife.

FOOTNOTE

Israel did become grossly rebellious they not only turned to idolatry, astrology, and occultism and had altars for worshipping the host of heaven (the sun, moon, stars and planets) in the court of the God's temple, but also worshipped at the altars of Baal and were even sacrificing their sons on the altars of, Molech in the Hinnom Valley. Added to these abominations they were shedding innocent blood, cheating the innocent out of justice, not helping the less fortunate and oppressing the poor for their own gain all of these gross wickedness's eventually permeated the land of Judah and Israel. Because of this gross wickedness God used Babylon as His servant to bring the city of Jerusalem to ruin, to destroy the temple and to lay the farmlands of Judah and Israel waste. Babylon invaded Jerusalem and took its inhabitants (the two tribes of Judah) into captivity later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. While in captivity God molded them like a master potter molds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His Shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) gave permission to Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly, Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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