

Message #42

Deuteronomy 32:28-44

When we come to this text of Scripture, the subject of the passage is difficult to interpret. Some have taken the position that this passage is addressing heathen people, but frankly these words are aimed straight at Israel, God's own nation and God's own people (Deut. 31:1).

What we actually have here is a complete historical overview of what would happen to Israel. The great and glorious God had called her to be His nation, His people. He chose this nation of all nations of the world and His desire was to take her to the Promised Land and bless her. God gave Israel His Perfect word and He told them if they would follow it, He would lead them to prosperity and prominence.

But God knew what these people would do when they got into the Promised Land. He knew what would happen just as soon as they got over in that Land and experienced those blessings. They would become fat and undisciplined. They would forsake God. They would end up mocking God and they would get involved in demonic religion, and they would actually come to a point where they would forget God (Deut. 32:15-18).

The logical thing for God to do would be to forget about this nation and pick another nation and start over. But that is not what God did and it is not what God is going to do. Eventually God will vindicate His own people. Eventually God will have mercy on His own people. He will take them to the lowest possible level and then He will save them (Deut. 32:36). Israel as a nation will one day be God's nation, shining forth the glory of God. But to get to this moment, she will go through some very dark and horrible things because she is not right with God.

God told Moses to write this story in a song anthem. This section of Scripture is still part of the national anthem song that Moses wrote for Israel. It describes Israel. It describes God. It describes what God does do and will do. In fact, the point of this section is this:

GOD GIVES A NEGATIVE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF HIS OWN PEOPLE AND OF HIMSELF WITH THE GOAL OF GETTING THEM TO PROPERLY FOCUS ON THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND WHAT HE WILL DO IN THE FUTURE.

What God and Moses hoped this song would do was keep them on track. He wanted Israel to realize that if you wander away from God, things will be bad, but if you stay close to God and His word, things will be blessed.

Moses wanted God's people to think realistically about themselves in regard to God. He wanted Israel to carefully weigh decisions in life. He wanted His people to take His word seriously and live life in a way that pleased God. God has a great future in store for Israel and she could experience great blessings now if she obeyed, but if she didn't, life would not be pleasant. This is a hard hitting song. In this part of it, there are five hard hitting, instructive themes:

INSTRUCTIVE THEME #1 – The humiliating setbacks that God’s people experience are due to the fact that God, who is the rock of His people, has caused it. **32:28-30**

If God is the security rock for His people, then His people who experience negative things should ask what has gone wrong. Moses describes what went wrong and he describes the way God views His people:

(Way #1) - They are a people lacking counsel. **32:28a**

(Way #2) - They are a people lacking understanding. **32:28b**

(Way #3) - They are a people who should think about their future. **32:29**

The future for Israel is bright, but the problem is present life is not bright.

(Way #4) - They are a people who should realize God does not favor them. **32:30**

Had God’s people been in a right relationship with God, their Rock, He would have crushed their enemies. But instead a small number of enemies have chased Israel and put her to flight.

God’s people should have enough sense to realize that when everything is falling apart in their world, God is not happy and pleased with them.

INSTRUCTIVE THEME #2 – The enemies of God’s people realize their gods are no match for the true God. **32:31-33**

By using the Sodom and Gomorrah imagery here, God is certainly alluding to the fact that His own people had become perverted and immoral.

The enemies of God’s people realized that the God of Israel was far superior to any of their gods or deities. They realized that in what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verse 32 clearly shows that they realized they were involved in unclean and immoral things that ultimately would lead to death. The heathen people realized this.

Their religious system was the venom of serpents and the poison of cobra. The doctrines and teachings of false religions are deadly. Their Satanic religion was evil and led people to death. They were no match for God. God’s people should certainly recognize this.

INSTRUCTIVE THEME #3 – God is the One who is responsible for sovereignly causing chastising calamity against His own people, but eventually He will vindicate His people. **32:34-36**

God says the mysteries of how I discipline and judge are laid up in store by Me. They are sealed up in My treasure chest. No man knows and sees or understands all I can do. There is a great mystery to the work of God and the program of God.

But when sin is not faced, in due time, their calamity will come. **Verse 35** that says “in due time their foot will slip” is a verse that was used in one of the most famous sermons in the history of Christianity. This was the verse Jonathan Edwards used in his famous sermon “Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God.” He made a specific application to rebellious national Israel, but then took it to all who are lost. There will come a point when all unbelievers, who are dangling over the fires of hell, will fall and slip into hell.

God permits bad things to happen, but in **verse 36** He is also a God who will vindicate His people and have compassion on them. The compassion and the forgiveness of God are available when His people hit rock bottom and turn to Him.

God sees when the strength of His people is gone and there is none remaining bond or free. God would permit Israel to reach a point where she had nowhere else to turn but to Him.

Now this is here a glimpse of what God will do in the Great Tribulation. He will pour out His vengeance on the world, and when His people have finally reached a point where their strength is gone and their only hope is to cry out to Jesus Christ, He will save them.

There is a tremendous mystery to all of this. God permits people to do bad things to His own people as way of chastisement judgment. But He keeps the records of the bad things the people do and there will come a day when He will pay it all back. He would pour out His vengeance on a God mocking people who did bad things against Him and His people.

INSTRUCTIVE THEME #4 – God challenges His people to come to terms with who is the real true God. **32:37-38**

God is a compassionate God, but His people must come to terms with truth. God challenges His people to look and say, “Where are the gods that people worship?” Where is the protection that the rock should offer? The people went to their places of worship and they ate of the sacrifices and they drank the drink offering wine, what good did it do? Their religion did not and could not help them.

Any who trust in anything but the true God of the Bible will one day come to a point when they will ask, where is the Deity in whom we trusted? Where are all the gods we thought would save us? We sacrificed to our religious systems and causes, where are they now?

INSTRUCTIVE THEME #5 – God challenges His people to see and know the truth about Him.
32:39-43

There are 15 key truths people need to know about God.

Truth #1 - The God of Israel and the God of the Bible is God. **32:39a**

God says, “I am God.” See it now. The God of the Bible and the God of Israel is God.

Truth #2 - There is no God in existence but God. **32:39b**

There is no other God who is God. The God of the Bible and the God of Israel is God. There is no other. There is no other God who can get you out of despair. There is no other God who can save you from your sins. There is no other God who can give you meaning and fulfillment in life. You must reach a point where you totally believe only God can save me.

Truth #3 - God is the God who ends a person’s life. **32:39c**

God is the one who determines who dies and when one dies.

Truth #4 - God is the God who gives a person life. **32:39d**

God is the One who determines who is born and who lives.

Truth #5 - God is the God who wounds people. **32:39e**

God is the One who inflicts people and wounds people.

Truth #6 - God is the God who heals people. **32:39f**

God is the One who heals people and restores people.

Truth #7 - God is the God who holds people securely in His hand. **32:39g**

When God holds someone in His hand, no one can touch them. Jesus referred to this very point in saying that any who believed in Him were secure because they were held in the Father’s hand (John 10:28-29). He said, “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

Truth #8 - God is the God who lifts up His own hand to heaven. **32:40a**

God says I lift up My own hand to heaven in an oath I make with Myself. I will avenge My name. I promise you this by My own oath, I will pour out My wrath on My enemies.

Truth #9 - God is the God who lives forever. **32:40b**

God is eternal.

Truth #10 - God is the God who has a sharp sword. **32:41a**

We have been going through the book of Revelation on Sunday nights. In the Great Tribulation Judgments there are two that mention a sword - Seal Judgment #2 (Rev. 6:4) and Seal Judgment #4 (Rev. 6:8).

As we analyzed those judgments we discovered that there were two different nouns translated sword. The first one was a short dagger for close range killing (macaira). The second one was a large sword for long range killing (romfaia).

Now here in the Greek Septuagint the word for sword is the first word that refers to a short weapon that is used in close range killing. By God saying I sharpen My sword (**v. 41**) and My sword will devour flesh (**v. 42**), God is saying I Personally determine who I individually attack and destroy. God says I determine who lives and dies. I determine who is killed and who isn't killed.

Truth #11 - God is the God who pours out justice. **32:41b**

God says I am a just God and My hand will take up the cause of justice and when I do, justice will be meted out.

Truth #12 - God is the God who pours out vengeance on adversaries. **32:41c**

Do not overlook this verse. Those who are the enemies and adversaries of God have a date coming when they will receive God's vengeance. You are either a friend of God through Jesus Christ or you are an adversary of God.

Truth #13 - God is the God who repays those who hate Him. **32:41d**

Don't be fooled, the vast majority of people hate God and hate His word. They want a God they invent in their own minds. God says I will fully repay them.

Truth #14 - God is the God who will pour out vengeance on His enemies. **32:42**

God will, not might, pour out His vengeance on His enemies.

Truth #15 - God will bring joy to His people by vengeance against enemies and the blessings to His people. **32:43**

According to verse 44, Moses spoke to the people with Joshua at his side. All the people listened as he spoke these words about God.

This was taught to the men, the women and the children (Deut. 31:12).