

**Study 39: The Song of Moses, Part 2 Deuteronomy 28-32**

Last week, we began looking at Israel as a covenant nation, and some of the things associated with that covenant. Moses is retiring (about to die), and the Lord gives him a prophetic song that will act as a witness against the people when they have broken the covenant for the last time (see Deut 32:29).

**Deut 31** 24 After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, 25 he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord: 26 “Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. There it will remain as a **witness** against you. 27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die! 28 Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials, so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to testify against them. 29 For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord and arouse his anger by what your hands have made.”

30 And Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

**Note:** The format of the words used by the NIV and other modern translations shows that this section is poetry. It is, after all, a song, and the language is poetic in nature. Thus, it would be a mistake for us to take the words in a woodenly literal way. This Song of Moses is a prophecy of the **end of the covenant** and of physical Israel as God’s covenant nation (cf. verses 20 and 29).

**Deut 32** 1 Listen, you **heavens**, and I will speak;  
hear, you **earth**, the words of my mouth. [...]

Was this a call to the physical heavens and earth to act as witnesses? Unlikely. This terminology was used to speak of God and His people, and the covenant He had made with them (see, e.g. Isa 51:10, 15-16 Was it not You who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep; Who made the depths of the sea a pathway For the redeemed to cross over? 15 “For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name). 16 I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish [or plant] the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’” The Lord is referring here to the Exodus, not the creation account found in Genesis. The “heavens and earth” that He established after bringing His people through the sea is speaking of the covenant He made with Israel, not the physical heavens and earth.

In verse 5, he begins to talk about Israel:

**Deut 32** 5 **They are corrupt and not his children;  
to their shame they are a warped and crooked generation**

**Matt 12:39** [Jesus said,] “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign!”

In **Matt 17:17**, Jesus called the people living at that time an “unbelieving and perverse generation,” and in **Mark 8:38**, He terms it an “adulterous and sinful generation.” In **Acts 2:40**, Peter called it a “corrupt generation.” In **Phil 2:15**, Paul calls it “a warped and crooked generation.” This ties the fulfillment of this chapter to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.

**Deut 32** 6 Is this the way you repay the Lord,  
you foolish and unwise people?  
Is he not your Father, your Creator,  
who made you and formed you?

7 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. [...]

9 For the Lord’s portion is his people,  
Jacob his allotted inheritance. [...]

13 He made him ride on the heights of the land  
and fed him with the fruit of the fields. [...]

15 Jeshurun grew fat and kicked [*Jeshurun* means *the upright one*, that is, Israel];  
filled with food, they became heavy and sleek.  
They abandoned the God who made them  
and **rejected the Rock their Savior**. [...]  
18 **You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;**  
**you forgot the God who gave you birth.**

This isn't just a reference to God in general, but to Jesus Christ specifically. One frequently quoted passage in Scripture is from:

**Ps 118:22** The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone... [quoted in Matt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; and 1 Pet 2:7].

**Daniel 2:34-35** speaks of a "rock" and is an obvious reference to Christ. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Rock in His parable of the "wise man who built his house on the rock" (**Matt 7:24-25**), and when He told Peter that it was upon "this Rock" (referring to Himself, not to Peter) that He would build His church (**Matt 16:18**).

**Isaiah 8:14** He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. [Paul quotes from this passage in **Rom 9:33**, as does Peter in **1 Pet 2:8**].

**Isa 28:16** "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic." [Quoted by Peter in **1 Pet 2:6** where he says, "the one who trusts in **him** will never be put to shame," referring to Jesus Christ.]

In **1 Cor 10:4**, Paul says that the rock Moses struck in order to provide water for the people (**Ex 17:6**) was Christ. Remember, too, that Moses was placed "in the cleft in the rock" by God and covered with His hand in order to protect him from death in the presence of God's glory (**Ex 33:22**).

**Deut 32 19 The Lord saw this and rejected them**  
because he was angered by his sons and daughters.  
20 "I will hide my face from them," he said,  
"and see what **their end** will be;  
for **they are a perverse generation,**  
children who are **unfaithful.**

21 [...] **I will make them envious by those who are not a people;**  
**I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.** [...]

This verse is quoted in **Rom 10:19** as being fulfilled in the calling of the Gentiles to Christ. **1 Pet 2:10** "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." These verses tie the Song of Moses (Deut 32) directly to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.