

## Deuteronomy 32:1-47 (September 3, 2021)

**Reflection:** *In your own thoughts, what makes music so effective at communicating ideas? What role does music play in a culture? What can the lyrics of a song tell us about a culture?*

**Goal:** Is to realize that music has this power to convey emotion and really connect with the soul. When heard in the context of our culture, it speaks about what a culture thinks are important.

### **Read Deuteronomy 32:1-18 – Perfection of God and the Imperfection of God’s People**

**1. i) How is God described in this section, and how has God’s graciousness been evident to the people of Israel? (v.4, 6b-9, 10-15) ii) How is Israel described, and how have they acted in response to God’s graciousness to them? (v. 5-6, 15-18)**

**Leader, please make this comment to introduce this section after passage has been read:** The opening of this song begins by saying that this song is to be refreshing because of the name and greatness of the Lord, and this section focuses on the greatness of God and the imperfection of Israel.

**i) How is God described in this section, and how has God’s graciousness been evident to the people of Israel? (v.4, 7-9, 10-15)**

*Description of God’s character:*

- Rock (safety, strength, security, permanence) (v.4)
- His work is perfect,
- His ways are just he is faithful and without sin
- He is just and upright

*God’s graciousness:*

- He is their father, he created, made and established them (v.6b)
- The old days where God chose and led the Patriarchs, took the people out of Egypt saved, delivered, and won many battles (v.7)
- God had decided on their land for them when he divided land to mankind (v.8)
  - o Sons of God – probably understood as Israel as it seems to say from footnote b in ESV bible
- God found them in a desert or wilderness (v.10)
  - o Found – probably has the idea of rescue, where the people of Israel would have perished in the wilderness without God
- He encircled them he cared for them shows protection he guards them because he is their precious treasure (v.10b)
- Like an eagle he secures the welling being of its young. (v.11)
- The Lord guides them not foreign gods, their fortunes or “high places” were because of him (v.12-13)
- Out of the rock he feeds him honey and they get precious oil, he provides for them richly
  - o Suckle - description like a wet nurse
  - o Foaming wine, speaks of fermentation stage which draws our mind to Israelite’s joy

**ii) How is Israel described, and how have they acted in response to God’s graciousness to them? (v. 5-6, 15-18)**

*Description of Israel:*

- They have dealt corruptly with God (v.5)
- Blemished and no longer his children
- They are foolish and senseless people (v.6)
- Crooked and twisted generation
- Israel is supposed to be God’s allotted inheritance or heritage (v. 9)

- They grew fat and abandoned Yahweh (v.15-18)
- Scoffed at the God their salvation and turned to strange gods who stirred him to jealousy
- They were unmindful and forgot about God

#### **Leader's Notes:**

- The name Jeshurun means "upright one" or "blessed one." Jeshurun is a synonym for Jacob and is a poetic reference to the nation of Israel. (Gotquestion)
- Jacob is a reference to Israel as Jacob, the person, is renamed Israel (Gen 32:28)

### **2. i) In what ways do we see a contrast between God's character and action and Israel's character and action? ii) What is this song trying to convey by showing this contrast? iii) From your understanding of Deuteronomy, what is the ideal manner of how these two parties should interact with one another?**

#### **i) In what ways do we see a contrast between God's character and action and Israel's character and action?**

- God is their security, but Israel turns to foreign gods for security
- God is perfect, but Israel is blemished
- God's way is justice, but Israel's ways are crooked and twisted, foolish and senseless
- God is faithful without iniquity, but Israel is faithless full of iniquity
- God is mindful of Israel, Israel is unmindful and forgetful of God

#### **ii) What is this song trying to convey by showing this contrast?**

- The main idea of Deuteronomy is the covenant relationship between God and Israel, this song speaks of what this relationship has and will look like
- They are in a covenant relationship each with a role to play. God is living up to his side and really showing his careful care and love for the people.
- Israel is shown to not be living up their side and is unfaithful to and forgetful of to God

#### **iii) From your understanding of Deuteronomy, what is the ideal manner of how these two parties should interact with one another?**

- God is who he says he is and does everything we should desire from a covenant partner, in fact the whole covenant is upheld by God's character and actions
- Israel should be faithful to love God with all of their being (Deu 6:5), and walking in his ways (Deu 5:33)

### **Read Deuteronomy 32:19-43 – God's Justice Kindled, Vindication, and the People Rejoice**

### **3. i) What is God's reaction to Israel's failure to be faithful to him? (v.19-25) ii) What is God's reaction to the nations that are his enemy and that threaten his people? (v.26-35) iii) How and when will God ultimately vindicate and show compassion to his people? (v.36-47)**

#### **i) What is God's reaction to Israel's failure to be faithful to him? (v.19-25)**

- God saw their unfaithfulness and spurned them because they provoked him (v.19)
- He hides his face from them, and he will see what their end will be (v.20)
  - o Meaning he will withdraw his presence from his people including blessing, graciousness, security
  - o Hiding his face does not mean he is blind to what is happening as this section makes clear
- He calls Israel a perverse generation in whom there is no faithfulness (v.20b)
- God is jealous with Israel worshipping these no-gods, so God will make them jealous with gentiles

- Passages about Gentiles used to provoke Israel and being not a people (Romans 11:11-14, Eph 2:13)
- God's anger is kindled, he is ready to devour the earth (v.22-25)
  - He will bring disaster, starvation, pestilence, vicious and dangerous animals, and be a terror for young and old men and women alike
- God doesn't totally reject his people, so that his enemies would draw false conclusions regarding their role in Israel's demise (v.26a)
  - He spares Israel to salvage his own reputation

**ii) What is God's reaction to the nations that are his enemy and that threaten his people? (v.26-35)**

- The people are without counsel, understanding, and if they have understanding they would grasp their end (v.28)
- Whereas the nations think they have won victory by their own military efforts, speaker asserts that Israel's survival is due entirely to God's work, and this should be empirically true to these foreign nations (v.29-30)
  - That their god is not like the God of Israel
  - "Our enemies are by themselves" is better rewritten as "as even our enemies concede" as Bock in his commentary notes
- Their vine is from Sodom and Gomorrah, and this speak of the cup of wrath that is stored away awaiting to be poured out on these nations

**iii) How and when will God ultimately vindicate and show compassion to his people? (v.36-47)**

- God would wait till they had no strength and then come to their aid
- He would taunt them about their choice of foreign gods who they fed and sacrificed to and asked the Israelites to turn to those gods they trusted in to protect them
- God, however, is powerful as it says in v.3, there is only he who is God, and God is in control of life and death, God would judge his foes with wrath when he acts on Israel's behalf, and no power can stop him
- He will punish their brutality to Israel and to make atonement for the land (numb 35:30-34, Deu 21:23)

**4. A major problem in the future for Israel is idolatry. How does this song contrast the God of Israel from the foreign gods to show that the God of Israel is superior?**

- God is the one who created this people, their father, maker, and he established them / The Israelites sacrificed to gods who had come recently who their fathers did not know and basically has done nothing for them
- God is the Rock who is their security / foreign gods do not offer security
- God is their helper / foreign gods offer no help but offer curses
- God is powerful and can heal and save/ foreign gods are powerless and are powerless to heal and save

**Read Deuteronomy 32:44-47 – Moses' words to Israel**

**5. i) What does Moses entrust Israel to do with this song? (v.44-46) ii) What does Moses tell the Israelites is the importance of these words and the words of the Law? (v. 47)**

**i) What does Moses entrust Israel to do with this song? (v.44-45)**

- To "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.

**ii) What does Moses tell the Israelites is the importance of these words and the words of the Law? (v. 47)**

- Moses reminds the people of Israel in v.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.""

**6. In your own words, what is the gospel (or the good news) of Deuteronomy, and is this similar or completely different than the gospel found in the New Covenant?**

There are a lot of ways you can answer this question. Here are some thoughts:

- Deuteronomy is clear about man's condition to follow idols and be wayward
- This book speaks of the laws and consequences of breaking those laws (Deu 27-30)
- The law reveals sin (Rom 7:7)
- This book shows even though there is law, this book is full of God's grace to God's people in the past and in the future if they follow him
- This book speaks of the most important thing: To love the Lord your God (Deu 6:4-5)
  - o All laws flow out of their love of God. Therefore, Deuteronomy is not a works-based salvation, but God centered
  - o Obedience is the proper response to loving God
- Circumcision of heart is necessary (Deu 30:6)

**This song was given to Israel by God to be a witness against them in the future. God's goodness to Israel as a covenant partner is evident throughout the song, and the song warns Israel of the curse and danger they face as they turn to foreign gods. It also points forward to a future worth rejoicing over as God vindicates his people, brings judgement against his foes, and God makes atonement for the land. For us today, this song offers us a chilling reminder of the dangers of idolatry and that our ultimate hope and security rests in God, and because of this, we must love him with all our heart, soul, and might.**