

Let My Doctrine Drop as the Rain (The Song of Moses, Part I) – *Deuteronomy 32:1-14*

Introduction – Yahweh would have Moses end his ministry with a song, a song he was to teach the people (31:22) before he ascended up Mt. Nebo to die and be with his God (32:48-50). The poem has a haunting beauty to it, even in the translation. In the midst of God's promise that Israel will fall away, the song pours out His affection upon His chosen, their faithlessness, and His unfailing, unstoppable purposes to the end. The song was to be sung to stop His people in the future from falling, to turn them back when they had fallen, to bring them to their senses when they found themselves in exile, and to bring hope in the secret purposes of God to those whose faith was being renewed (v47). Music is a powerful tool, and a song written by the omnipotent God is eternally powerful.

Overview – The heavens and the earth are summoned to bear public and prophetic witness to what is being sung over generations (v1). The song is to be a doctrine which penetrates and saturates their hearts and minds like a soft, steady rain (v2). Yahweh's name is proclaimed, describing His attributes (Exod 34:5-6) which are great (v3). He is the Rock, Whose works are perfect and without iniquity (v4). The people are quite the opposite (v5). The rhetorical question is therefore asked – what gives (v6)? As with so much of Deuteronomy, many Psalms, and the teachings of Jesus, the song exhorts us to remember the days of old (v7) when God divided the nations and chose Israel as His portion (vv8-9). Found in the wasteland (probably of their captivity in Egypt), God encircled them and protected them as the apple of His eye (v10). He trained and nurtured them as a mother-eagle does her young (v11). God led them, and there was no help from any other gods (v12). Thinking of the future, Yahweh brought them into a land and blessed them enormously (vv13-14). God is good.

The Dripping, Saturated, Soaked-with-the-Teaching-of-God World (vv1-4) – The heavens declare the glory of God, and His spoken Word grants us His special revelation. It is all around us. The Song does not begin with somber themes of disobedience; rather a cry to "hear" is shouted. People who stubbornly resist His Word cannot hope to please God or find themselves outside of His judgments. But the declarations of His glory are all around, and for people who have His Word, even more so. The rain/dew image pictures His teachings that saturate the soul and produce beautiful fruit; His Words are intended to bring the people to repentance, which is declared even in His name (v3, Exod 34:5-6, Psalm 119, Rom 2:4). The call to ascribe greatness to God is a recurrent theme in the Psalms; there is a spontaneous urge to call others to join with the believer and be saturated with the same (v4). All that God is never changes - nothing within Him, nothing outside of Him - can change The Rock and the works that flow from His nature.

The Blemish of a Crooked Generation (vv5-6) – When Stephen gave his martyrdom speech (Acts 6:8 – 7:60), those who saw him, saw his face as the face of an angel (he had a glow about him as Moses did) and he gave the same testimony as Moses did in these verses of the song (esp. Acts 7:51-53). Even though God had been their Father, they had become a crooked generation. The crookedness is defined foundationally as the rejection of Yahweh, the rejection of Jesus, as King and God. This was how they dealt with (or repaid) Yahweh.

God over All the Nations with a Purpose (vv7-9) – Playing with words, "*Is He not your Father...*" (v6), "*...ask your father, and he will show you*" (v7). What can your elders teach you; what does their written testimony declare? Verses 8-9 refer to the "*Most High*," "*Elyon*," which was the name God used to emphasize His sovereignty and authority over all nations (i.e. Gen 14:18, Num 24:16). God was the One who separated the sons of Adam into nations (Gen 10-11), seventy nations which matched the sons of Jacob (Gen 46:27). However, the LXX translates v8, "*the sons of God*," indicating that each of these nations was placed under an angel or principality. This anticipates the later doctrine of such principalities over the nations in Dan 10:13, 20-21, 12:1. All of this to say that Yahweh appointed other gods temporarily over the other nations, while peculiarly choosing Israel as His own (v9). The other nations were to be blessed through the seed of Abraham (Gen 12:3), and yet Israel rejected this priestly, missionary function, ultimately in rejecting Jesus (Who symbolically sent the seventy out to preach the gospel in Luke 10:1-19.) Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand has established Him over all principalities and powers (Col 2:15).

The Goodness of God in and over You (vv10-14) – The rich imagery in these verses describes the loving protection (v10), the careful discipline and nurturing (v11), and the great and many blessings in times of want and plenty given by God to His chosen children (vv13-14). None of this took place through any other gods (v12); Yahweh was solely sufficient for all their needs. From choosing, to protecting, to sanctifying, to blessing – everything we have is the gift of God to us.

The Song for All Situations – This song is quoted in Romans and Revelation and we will explore these later. Suffice it to say that this song remains a prophetic word in all situations, in all stages of a Christian's life, in the life of a family, a people, a nation, and the world. The song calls the stumbling back to the One who loves His children. It calls the rebellious to repent and return. It reminds the faint-hearted of God's abundant care and purposes in his or her life. There is much warning to come in the song, but it is worth starting here and listening to the first chorus – "He is so good; why would you be so foolish? Return and grow with the One who has your future in His hands."