

## Rejoice, O Nations, with His people! (Song of Moses, part 3) – *Deuteronomy 32:30-44*

**Introduction** – We come to the end of the Song of Moses, a song so well known by the apostle Paul (and other NT writers) that it is strewn throughout the pages of his magnum opus, the Epistle to the Romans, which means that this song is about the great story of the salvation of the world.

**Overview** – Commenting on the prophetic judgment upon Israel brought by God through another nation (v21, 25-26), the Song declares that Israel could not have been defeated unless God had sold them (v30). They have no “rock;” they are corrupt (vv31-32) and deceitful (v33). There was nothing in the invading army that would make you think they could defeat Israel. This action is stored up in God’s inscrutable wisdom (v34), and God declares His intentions to take righteous vengeance (v35).

God promises to vindicate and have compassion on His people (v36) but not until they were drained of self-assurance and their alliance with impotent idols (vv37-38). The Bible is not a collection of “Precious Moments,” or, as Otto Scott said, “God is no buttercup” (vv39-42). When God raises His hand of wrath, it is a terrible thing to see.

And then the song ends, with a call for the Gentiles to rejoice in this judgment (v43). Moses and Joshua teach the words of this song in the hearing of the people (v44).

**Vengeance is Mine** – As we have seen, the Song of Moses is very important in the theology of the New Testament. Once Jesus had come, the old order was passing away, and believing Jews were warned not to return to Jerusalem, where God’s judgment was about to be poured out upon unbelieving Israel. In the midst of persecution, primarily from the hand of the Jews up until the latter reign of Nero, Christians were exhorted to remain faithful and endure the trials (Heb 10:32ff). They were not to retaliate because of what God had promised in the Song of Moses (Heb 10:26-31).

Similarly, in Rom 12:19, Paul uses this verse to remind the Christians there not to avenge themselves when wronged. While it is right and proper to apply this command in varied situations, remember the first application for the Christians in Rome especially after chapters 9, 10, and 11. Israel was going to pay for her apostasy, but the timing and avenue for this to happen was to be left in the hands of the True Judge. For us, the archetypical vengeance has already happened and the first century Christians lived through it. This established a pattern for us to imitate when we live through anything that is comparable, which many Christians have.

**Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God** - In addition, all covenant members can be tempted to the same sin of presumption Israel was charged with, and the terrible wrath of God was to be preached as a warning to covenant breakers. Jonathan Edwards knew this and so he preached his famous sermon based on this part of verse 35 – “*Their foot shall slip in due time.*” This sermon was not preached by a hell-fire, pessimistic premillennialist who believed the church was going to go apostate in this age. It was not preached by an Arminian who believed that no one can have assurance of salvation. It was preached by a postmillennial, covenantal, reformed evangelical to a congregation of church members. But Edwards understood the text, understood the original audience and the similarity of temptations his own audience had as well. As should we.

**When and Why Will the Nations Rejoice?** - *Deuteronomy 32:43 (NKJV)* “*Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.*”

The nations are commanded to rejoice in the coming demise of Israel, and as Israel received this actual judgment, which is exactly what John said believers would do (Rev 19:1-5). The saints sing the Song of Moses and “*of the Lamb*” in Rev 15:3-4; here, the song is conflated into just two verses, but v43 can be clearly seen in Rev 15:4.

**Romans Again** – Paul defends his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles quoting Deut 32:43 along with other verses in Romans 15:7-13. The nations were not simply to be spectators to the hand of judgment upon Israel, for God would confirm His promises, “that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy” (v9). Paul quotes David’s final words (v10, 2 Sam 22:50) who knew his kingdom would bless all the nations. Then he quotes Deut 32:43 where the Gentiles are invited to rejoice over the coming demolition of Jerusalem. He quotes Psalm 117, for the salvation God is bringing upon the earth is by no means limited to the Jews. The salvation is for the whole world, all nations, tribes, and peoples. Finally, he quotes Isaiah 11:10, but it is worth considering all of Isaiah 11:1-10.

There is no place in the gospel for any anti-Semitism. We are to rejoice in the judgment brought upon Jerusalem, not because “they got what they deserved,” but because in God’s judging them, He was showing mercy to us. But this cutting away for a time of Israel is not the end of the story, and so we should be stirred up to pray for the Jews, not to be established as Jews in their homeland, but to be brought to faith in the Messiah they previously rejected. Why? “*For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*” (Rom 11:15).