

Deuteronomy 31-32 • The Lord will go before you

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Chapter 31 of Deuteronomy begins by saying, *“So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. (And check out this next statement) ² And he said to them, “I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in....” (ESV)*

We don't use that kind of phraseology anymore. That's an idiom for basically doing a day's work. And he's just talking about how I'm at the end. Now we're going to read here a little bit later on, how during the entirety of Moses's life, 120 years, that's a long time. That's twice as old as I am right now. We're going to read how it's going to tell us that his strength never abated and yet he felt old, and he felt like he was at the end, and he says here, I'm no longer able to do the things that I used to do and so forth. And so, he goes on to tell them, *“...the LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not go over this Jordan.’”*

And this is something we're going to see repeated a lot in these two chapters. And so, Moses is basically announcing his imminent death. Now, the most natural question that this would raise among the people to whom Moses is speaking is, well then who? Now, most of them might know that it was Joshua coming up, and he's going to talk about Joshua here very quickly or very soon. But before he does that, before he answers the question of who physically is going to carry on for my ministry, the big question is who's going to bring us into the land, right?

Would you look please with me at verse 3, *“The LORD your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, (Meaning he will go, he will lead you, He will lead you in. He finishes that verse by saying) as the LORD has spoken.”*

But before he says anything about Joshua, and this is important for you and I to see. Before we look to any human leaders, before it comes down to you and I saying, okay, this guy is, he's gone, or he's going to be gone so now who are we going to look to? The first thing the Lord says through Moses is, the Lord. The Lord will go before you. The Lord himself, he says, will go before you. He, and

that's what he says there in verse 3, He's the one who's actually going to destroy those nations. You're going to be able to go in there and take the land because the Lord is going to go before you. He's going to fight for you. He's going to work out all the issues and details related to clearing out the land.

The battle belongs to the Lord. Oh, doesn't that sound like a trite phrase? Sometimes, you hear Christians saying that when they're in the midst of a difficulty. Well, you know, the battle belongs to the Lord. And what you can hear in their voices, man, I hope that's true. You know, it's not like we necessarily believe it, but we're going to quote it anyway, because I don't know, maybe if I do, I can work myself up a little bit here into a place of believing.

The battle belongs to the Lord. Moses is telling the nation of Israel, in no uncertain terms, the battle belongs to the Lord. The Lord himself is going to go before you. He's going to fight the battles. He's going to clear the land.

And then, oh, and by the way, Joshua is going to go in, in a leadership role, but listen, look at verse 4. *“And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. ⁵ And the LORD will give them over to you, (Notice this isn't Joshua doing this. This is the Lord) and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. (And so he says) ⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”*

⁷ Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. ⁸ It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

Notice what he says to Joshua here in verse 7. You're going to go with the people into the land. Notice what he says to the people about, or to Joshua and to the people about the Lord. It's the Lord who goes before you. Joshua goes with you. The Lord goes before you. Those are very, very important prepositions to keep in mind related to the things that we go into where we desperately need the presence of God in our lives. So, he says, don't fear or be dismayed. Fear is a universal reality in life. Is it not?

Funny I had a question that was emailed me just today from a young man who's been writing and asking me questions. I don't even know where he lives. Just

found us on our YouTube channel, and he just asked me, he said, is it true, pastor Paul, that when we give our worries to the Lord, that He'll take them?

A simple question, but a question that was on his heart. Is this something that I can really depend on? When I'm worried, when I'm fearful, and I lay those things down before the Lord, is He really going to take that stuff? Is He really going to make it better? Is it going to be different? In other words, is this real? Are these promises real?

And I was able to share, well, on God's side of the equation, He's true to His Word, and what He said to you, and I is basically, if you're burdened, if you're heavy laden, He said, come to me. And He said, here's what He said. You will find rest for your souls. You guys remember, don't you, that the soul, we're made up of three parts, physical, body, spirit, and soul. And the soul is made up of our emotions and our intellect. And that's the part that needs rest, doesn't it? Because our emotions get all jumbled and our thinking just man, we go a million miles an hour trying to figure things out, trying to work things out in our mind.

How are we going to fix this? And we're all worried and what Jesus said was, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28) Rest for your souls. That's where we need the rest. So, the promise from God is that when we become fearful, if we come to Him and we lay those burdens down and we're just overwhelmed with life, that He's going to bring rest to our souls. Now, what's interesting about that is He didn't say, come to me, all you who are weary, heavy laden, overwhelmed, stressed out, fearful, or whatever and I will change your circumstances.

That's what we usually want. And that's often why we come to Him, isn't it? I come to God because I want Him to change things. And what He wants to do is He wants to change me. And what He says to me is, hey Paul, when you come to me, I may not change your circumstances, but I'll change you. I'll give you rest. Rest for your soul. Your emotions, your intellect that are just so jumbled and so stressed and strained. I can give you rest. But you know, like anything, when we become fearful, the natural tendency for us to do is to look at our fear, to put our eyes on what is on what we're afraid of.

And that of course only magnifies it and makes it worse, but that's what we do. I mean, that's just, that's human nature, but we have to recognize it. When Peter and the disciples were in the boat one night it says that it was stormy, and they were really fearing for their lives, and they suddenly see Jesus walking on the water and they start screaming. The Lord speaks to them. He says, don't be

afraid, it's me. And you remember what Peter said. He said, Lord, if it's you, let me come to you walking on the water. The Lord said, come. And Peter did that for a while. I don't know how long, maybe just a few seconds. But he walked on the water. Pretty powerful, pretty amazing. But then we're told that he got his eyes off Jesus, and he started looking at the wind, and what it was producing, and these waves.

And here's a man, Peter, who was raised on the water. He was a fisherman probably from his earliest remembrance, and he knows how dangerous wind and waves can be. And it says he looked at the waves and he became afraid, and he began to sink, and he cried out, "*Lord save me!*" (Matthew 14:30) And, of course, Jesus was right there, and He helped him back into the boat, and the statement that He said to Peter was so significant. It's, why did you doubt, oh you of little faith? Why did you doubt that I had the ability, had the power? Why? In other words, why did you put your eyes on something you shouldn't have? Why did you look?

Why did you look at the problem instead of the solution? Why do we do that? It's like, ahhh, if I could just get this through my head and consistently keep my eyes on the Lord! So, the fact that God is saying to the people of Israel and to Joshua, do not fear, do not be dismayed. This is a message for all of us because we all struggle with fear. Jesus said, do not fret about your life, what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear, what you're going to, God's going to take care of you. In fact, He challenged us and said, can you add an hour to your life by worrying?

And the answer, by the way, is no, but you can probably take a few away. So, what good, is it going to do in the end? Oh, but yet we just keep worrying. Some of us, we even title ourselves. Well, I'm a worrier. I'm a worrywart. It's kind of in my DNA. Well, it's in all of our DNA! That's why the Bible; you ever notice the Bible talks a lot about this? I mean, the Bible spends a lot of time talking about fear, or the antidote to fear, which is trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. That's what I can see, right? That's what I can see with my eyes.

When Peter looked at the wind and the waves and was afraid, he was leaning on his own understanding of what the wind and the waves can do to an individual when they crash into you. He knew what could happen. He'd seen it all his life. So, at that moment in time, he leaned upon that understanding. Well, that's again, that's human nature, isn't it? We learn, we experience, and we apply that experience to other situations. If I go and talk to somebody and they act very badly toward me, I'm going to use that experience when I go to talk to the next

person and I'm probably going to hold back a little bit. But that's leaning upon my understanding you see.

God's Word says, trust in me with all of your heart and don't lean upon what you know, because what you know is flawed and incomplete. So, trust in God. So, God is saying to the people of Israel, be careful, don't get your eyes on the problem, keep it on the solution. I'm the One who goes before you. I'm the One who fights the battle. I am the One. Remember how 40 years ago, that's exactly how they got into trouble. When they sent those spies into the land and the spies came back, what did they say? Well, it's a great land, but there's giants in there.

We can't do this. We can't take this land. It's people too big. They'll have us for lunch. And Moses said to the people, wait a minute. God promised you. Don't think about the problem. Think about the promise. Think about the solution. God said He would give it to you, and He'll give it to you. They wouldn't be dissuaded from their position at that time, and they spent another 38 years in the wilderness because of it. Don't be a wilderness Christian. That's kind of the definition of a wilderness Christian.

It's somebody who lives in constant fear, and never really comes to a place of trusting God for life. They may have trusted God for salvation. Isn't that funny? We'll trust God to save us from our sin. But when it comes to the issues of life that we deal with on a daily basis, like a job or a relationship or whatever it may be, suddenly that's too much. Too big. Can't trust God with that. It's weird.

Verse 9 goes on and says, *“Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, (Meaning when debts and so would be released at the end of seven years. Basically) at the (time of) Feast of Booths, (Your Bible may say, Feast of Tabernacles) ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, (And of course that ended up being Jerusalem) you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.”*

And here's how they were to do it. *“¹² Assemble the people, men, women, and little (kids) ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”*

So, what's going on here? Well, it's another common theme in Scripture. Remember. Moses commanded the priests to read through this covenant every 7 years when they gathered to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, which is, the feast of the remembrance of God's provision for them during the 40 years in the wilderness. And they were to do this in that year of releasing debt, and they were to read through it and celebrate together and remember together. And of course, the point for this command was that each successive generation would hear and remember concerning what the Lord had said in the Scripture and that they would fear God.

And it's the same reason we read the Scripture; we study through the Scripture today. It's the reason we're doing it tonight. It's the reason you guys do it in your home. Hopefully you're doing it with your families. If you've got kids in your family, you're reading the Bible with them. You don't have to, family devotions don't have to be, you don't have to have a service to have family devotions. In our family, of course, I am a teacher, and I had to hold back sometimes from doing that too much with my kids. But it was mostly just reading a chapter in the Bible.

We'd go through a book of the Bible, and we'd get up in the morning and read a chapter. And it can be a challenge to sometimes stick with it when things come up or whatever. But why are we reading the Scripture? Here's a remembrance. So that our kids might learn and understand the fear of the Lord that they might know what the Word of God has to say. Here's the sad reality. They didn't follow this. We get into the book of Judges, and you read the first part of the book of Judges. What does it say? It says the next generation came up and they knew not the Lord.

After Joshua and all of his support structure basically passed away. That was it. The kids grew up and they didn't know. They were like, what, huh? The Lord? Egypt? What? The parents did not follow through and train their children properly. I tell you, remembering is so important. So important. And not just remembering, but I think explaining. Over the years, we've watched Sue and I as couples. Or it may not even be a couple, it might be just a single parent, but whether single parent or couple, we've watched when sometimes they'll come to the Lord when their kids are like 9, 10, up to 14, 15 years old or something like that, and the parent comes to Christ, they receive the Lord.

So, they start coming to church and the kids basically just get hauled along, and they're sitting in church, and they have no idea what's going on. Last week we didn't go to church, now, this week, here we are. What in the world are we doing here? And then it happens week after week and they just keep getting

drug along to church, and they get thrown into Sunday school and youth group and whatever. And you know what? Sometimes the parents come to talk to us and talk about how their kids are just not really connecting and we'll say, well, have you sat down and explained to them what happened to you? Did you ever sit down with your child and go, "You probably noticed some pretty drastic and radical changes in our family of late, right?"

Yeah. Well, let me tell you what happened. I met Jesus. He saved me. He wiped out my sin because I put my faith in Him. And now, I've made Him Savior, and Lord. And part of that Lordship is being obedient to be in church where I need to be to hear the Word of God, to be accountable to other believers, to be serving the Lord and so forth. And that's why I go because I need to be there. That's why we started going to church. It's because He saved me. Well, how much the kids are going to actually absorb from that, is hard to say, but at least they're going to have an explanation.

Oh! Mom got saved or mom and dad got saved or whatever the thing might be. They came to Christ. Well, and it's like if parents would say, hey, if you ever have any questions, about I mean, I'm just learning this whole thing myself too, but if you have some questions about what I went through and why we're doing what we're doing now, just come and talk to me because we need to be talking about this thing. So, remembering and explaining to the next generation is really, really important. You guys, do you guys know what happened to me?

Do you guys know how good God is? Do you know what His Word says? Do you guys understand the geography of the Bible? Do you know there's an Old Testament and a New Testament? And the New Testament is where we learn about Jesus and you teach these things at home and you and they get trained and, very, very important.

Verse 14 goes on and says, *"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, the days approach when you must die. (good word) Call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.'"* (Your Bible actually may say ordain) *And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. ¹⁵ And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. And the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent. ¹⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them.'*

Can you imagine? Moses has spent the last 40 years speaking into these people's lives. That's a long time. Can you imagine hearing from the Lord, by the way,

these people are going to all fall away. They're going to all fall away. They're going to turn. They're going to become corrupt and they're going to fall away. Just wanted you to know. I'd have been devastated. 40 years, that's a long time to invest. I can't even imagine how it affected Moses. But the Lord keeps going on here.

He says, *"¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸ And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods."*

And we made the point last week, and I'll reiterate it. The greatest evil that Israel committed was turning to other gods. It wasn't sin that kept the Lord's favor away from them. God made a way for dealing with sin under the Law, and it was the sacrificial system. It was the sin of turning from God because when they turned from God, they no longer had a means by which to turn and be forgiven. You with me? It's the same thing, if somebody turns from Christ, the writer of Hebrews talks about that.

There's some pretty challenging passages if you've read through Hebrews lately, particularly in Hebrews chapter 6, where the writer of Hebrews makes it sound like if you fall away from God, there's no coming back. You ever read that passage in there? And people, they read that all the time and they scratch their head like, what in the world does that mean? Well, the writer of Hebrews, remember, was writing to people who were being drawn back into Judaism, back into the Old Testament sacrificial legalism.

And basically, what the writer of Hebrews was saying was, when you throw away the only means of salvation, then there's nothing left to cling to. There's nothing else. There's no other means by which we can be saved. There's nothing then to look forward to except judgment. Right? When you throw away the answer, what do you have? You have nothing. And that is what God is saying through Moses to the people of Israel. On that day it's not just that you sinned. We all sin. That's what Paul tells us, or excuse me, John tells us, well, actually both of them.

They both say that. Paul says, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. John says, anyone who says he doesn't sin, isn't playing with a full deck, and that's a paraphrase. But they both say the same thing. So, we know that it isn't sin that keeps us from God. We all sin. It's when we reject the only means

of forgiveness. Right? You can't throw away Christ. So, God is saying to Israel, because they turned to other gods, where are they going to turn now?

Verse 19. *“Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. (And by the way, the song, the lyrics to the song are in the next chapter) Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel.”*

Isn't that interesting? Moses was to teach the people of Israel a song. And you're going to; I can't imagine the tune it went to. You'll read it here with me in the next chapter, but it was basically a song that would remind them of their own disobedience whenever they sang it. And furthermore, what God says to Moses here, you'll notice this in a minute, He's going to say, And I'm going to make sure they never forget it. And God can do that because how many songs have you learned and then forgot?

It's like, oh yeah, I forgot the lyrics to that song. Well, God comes along, and he goes, Moses, I want you to teach them this song, and I'm going to make sure they never forget it. They might forget me, but they won't forget the lyrics to this song. It'll be so ingrained in them. Isn't that amazing? In fact, yeah.

He says in verse 20, *“For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them and despise me and break my covenant.”* Stop there for a moment.

When are they going to break His Covenant? It says here, when they've eaten, when they're full, and when they've grown fat. What does that speak of? Prosperity. Speaks of blessing, doesn't it? Yeah. When we go through a time of plenty, we get lazy. We do. We always have; it's human nature. We get lazy and we back off. We back off in our commitment to God. We back off reading our Bible. We back off praying. Don't really need to pray. There's really nothing to pray about because we're so me centric in our prayers.

Never mind that other people's lives are falling apart. I'm doing just fine. Somebody says, hey, let's pray together. Well, I just, I'm doing good. Yeah, well, what about your neighbor? Well, he can pray. I mean, what a weird people we are sometimes. But He says, that's when you're going to despise me and break my Covenant.

And look what He says in verse 21. *“And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (And then he says*

here) (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). (In other words, they won't forget the lyrics. Crazy) *For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give.*” ²² *So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel.* ²³ *And the Lord commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them. I will be with you.”*

²⁴ *When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end,* ²⁵ *Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord,* ²⁶ *“Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.* ²⁷ *For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord. How much more after my death!*

²⁸ *Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them.* (He's talking about the song now) ²⁹ *For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.”*

³⁰ *Then Moses spoke the words of this song until they were finished, in the ears of all the assembly of Israel: “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. (Again, heaven and earth bearing witness)* ² *May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.* ³ *For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God!* ⁴ *“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”*

Now you notice this song, which is by the way is going to speak a lot about the unfaithfulness of Israel. Begins by talking about the faithfulness of God, and that's the backdrop of course upon which we see the unfaithfulness of Israel. So, it's important that we kind of understand that, but this song is also a testimony. Remember, this is supposed to confront Israel in years to come, but it's going to confront them, not necessarily with their failures. It will do that. But largely with God's faithfulness.

I want you to notice again, the things that it says about God in verse 4. It says, His work is perfect. It says that He's just and upright. It says that He's without iniquity. It says He's a God of faithfulness. Here's the question. Do you and I believe that? Do we believe it? It's an easy thing to believe when life is going good, and then something happens like scores of people in Las Vegas get gunned down by some madman from the 32nd floor and then we begin to wonder. Well now wait a minute, maybe God isn't so faithful after all. And we allow circumstances and situations, whether they're outside of us or whether they're going on in our lives, to begin to cause us to question. Well, I wonder. I wonder if that's true. I wonder if that's real.

Listen, it's always true. It's always real. No matter what you see. We live in a fallen world. The world that we live in is not the world that God originally created. He never intended people to die. He never intended people to murder one another. He never intended people to sin. That wasn't His plan. The curse that's on this world in which we live is enormous and we see it every day. We see signs of it. Good grief, when you wake up in the morning with aches and pains, it's a sign of the curse. Not that you're being cursed personally. That you live in a fallen world and you're now living in a fallen body.

This is the world in which we live. But it doesn't change who God is. God is upright. God is just. God is perfect in all of His ways. The fact that you and I have a hard time embracing that doesn't make it any less true it just makes you and I limited in our understanding. Isn't that funny that when we've come up against something that we have a hard time understanding, what's the first thing we do? We question the very thing that we're trying to figure out, rather than questioning our ability. We just don't do that.

I've had an interesting email correspondence going on for about the last week with a guy who's been trying very desperately to get me to leave Christianity. Seriously. And of course it isn't going to happen, but we've had an interesting conversation, nonetheless. One of the big stumbling areas that he brought up immediately in our correspondence was the Trinity, which a lot of people do. And he's like pressing me, explain this to me, explain this. Well, I can't. I can't explain it. It's beyond, all I can tell you is what the Bible says.

That's all I can tell you. The Bible says there is one God, and He has revealed Himself in the Scripture in the person of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That's all I can tell you. Well, how can that be? I don't know. We're talking about God here for heaven sakes. You think I can explain God? Just exactly what do you think I am? And what do you think you are, that you're having trouble with it and therefore you're rejecting it? Well, I just don't

understand that. There's no possible way that can be. Yeah, it's because you have a pea brain. That's what we, but we don't admit that. That's the last thing we admit.

Why is it that people don't read through the Bible and go, wow that one's beyond my comprehension. It's because of human arrogance and pride. We say, I can't understand it, so I'm going to reject it. That must mean it's not true, because I can't get it. And if I can't get it, nobody can get it, and that must mean it's not true. Right? That's pride. That's nothing just, except human pride. I even wrote him back, and I even said tell me something. What kind of arrogance is necessary for someone to look God in the face and say, that's not possible? What exactly does it take for us to do that? Anyway, it's interesting.

He says, verse 5, *“They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation. ⁶ Do you thus repay the Lord, you foolish and senseless people? (In other words, for all the good things God has done for you) Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? (In other words, is He not God?) ⁷ Remember the days of old; (Hey guys, remember, this is a song. You got the tune going through your head? Remember the days of old) consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.*

⁸ *When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. ⁹ But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. ¹⁰ “He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, ¹² the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.*

¹³ *He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. ¹⁴ Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat— and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape.”* The Lord's recounting all the good things He's done for Israel.

“¹⁵ But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; ...” By the way, the name Jeshurun is kind of an ironic title because it means the upright one. And so, God is using it in a tongue in cheek sort of a fashion because He's

describing how they have been anything but upright. And yet He calls them, the upright one, in sort of an ironic way.

“...then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. ¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.”

It's possible for us to do that same thing as he talks about in verse 18, isn't it? It's possible for us to be unmindful of the rock that bore us, in other words, the Creator. And then the God who gave us birth. And I'm not just talking about physical birth. Talking about new birth.

“¹⁹ The LORD saw it and spurned them because of the provocation of his sons and daughters. ²⁰ “And he said, ‘I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. ²¹ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; (in other words, not the people of God) I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. ²² For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

²³ “‘And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them; ²⁴ they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust. ²⁵ Outdoors the sword shall bereave, and indoors terror, for young man and woman alike, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs. ²⁶ I would have said, “I will cut them to pieces; I will wipe them from human memory,” ²⁷ had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, “Our hand is triumphant, it was not the LORD who did all this.”’

In other words, it's a very strong propensity for man to take credit for what God has done. And God says, you know what? I probably would have wiped my people from the earth had it not been for the reminder that if I did, their enemies would have said, look what we did when in fact it was me.

“²⁸ “For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. ²⁹ If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their

latter end! ³⁰ *How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?"*

You guys understand that this is a song that they're learning before any of these things happen? They haven't even gone into the land and they're learning a song about what's going to happen to them when they depart from the Lord. And what they're going to do is they're going to remember the lyrics to their song and they're going to think, this is what we've been singing since our earliest days. This is exactly what the Lord said would happen.

³¹ *"For their rock (meaning the rock of their enemies) is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves. (In other words, they fight on their own)* ³² *For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; ³³ their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps. ³⁴ (Look what God says now) "Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasures?"*

In other words, do I not have the perfect ability to see into the future and know exactly what's going to happen? And is it not my right to bring these very judgments out of the treasury of my own remembrance to bring them to pass? Now, as we go on in verse 35 and following, you're going to see how the Lord is going to begin to refer now to a time when the enemies of Israel who will be used to spank Israel, to discipline Israel, will then themselves be judged.

And so, He says in verse 35, *"Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; (Now he's talking about the enemies of Israel, right? He's not talking about Israel anymore right now. Talking about their enemies. He says, there's going to be a time when their foot's going to slip) for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly."* Here's what's going to happen) ³⁶ *For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. ³⁷ Then he will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge,*

³⁸ *who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!* ³⁹ *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. (Boy that is a powerful declaration of a sovereign God isn't it?) ⁴⁰ For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, ⁴¹ if I sharpen my flashing sword and my*

hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.

⁴² I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh—with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy. ’ ⁴³ “Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land.”

Interestingly enough, the song ends with God calling for heaven and earth to rejoice and worship as God carries out His swift judgment on Israel's enemies.

Verse 44 says, *“Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. ⁴⁵ And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “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. 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.”*

So, Moses gives them the lyrics to the song and then he warns them that they are prophetic. He says, this is not just an empty word. This is God's Word. This is prophetic.

⁴⁸ “That very day the LORD spoke to Moses, ⁴⁹ “Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel for a possession. ⁵⁰ And die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. ⁵² For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there, into the land that I am giving to the people of Israel.”

And that's where we stop for tonight.