

# GOD'S MERCY AND VENGEANCE

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 31 :16-22; 32:1-47

LESSON 141 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).**

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Deuteronomy 31:16-22**

<sup>16</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go *to be* among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. <sup>17</sup> Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God *is* not among us? <sup>18</sup> And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. <sup>20</sup> For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. <sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear. <sup>22</sup> Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

### **Deuteronomy 32:1-47**

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### **A Charge to Keep**

Moses and Joshua presented themselves before God in the Tabernacle as they were told to do. The presence of the Lord in the form of a cloud was in the Tabernacle just as God had met with Moses in times past (**Exodus 33:9** <sup>9</sup> And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses). The Tabernacle was the place around which the Children of Israel gathered to worship the Lord while the priests offered the sacrifices. No doubt Moses and Joshua were very quiet so they could hear the words that God would speak to them.

The Lord said that the day of Moses' death was near, Joshua would then be the leader of the Children of Israel. This was the charge that God gave Joshua. The responsibility would be great — to lead the Children of Israel into the land of promise. Joshua was told to be strong and courageous, not giving way to fear and weakness. His strength and help would be the Lord who promised to be with Joshua.

Everyone is not given the work of a leader as Joshua was given. God does give to all His children a charge (a work and a responsibility). We have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6).

**"A charge to keep I have,  
A God to glorify;  
A never-dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky."**

#### **A Witness Against Them**

The Lord gave Moses one more thing to do before his death. Moses was directed to deliver a song unto the Children of Israel. Moses had sung a song of deliverance after the Lord had led them through the Red Sea (**Exodus 15:1** <sup>1</sup> Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea). The song that God gave him this time was a witness against the Children of Israel who would again disobey the Lord. The time would come when God would no longer protect and provide for them when they had turned away from the Lord. God never leaves any person until that person first turns away from Him. Even if the song of Moses would not prevent the Children of Israel from disobeying, it might bring them to repentance.

The selfsame day that Moses received the order, he was inspired of God to write the song as a witness of God's faithfulness. Moses wrote the song and taught it to the Children of Israel for instruction. Paul wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

#### **The Song**

By this song, the Children of Israel were reminded of the

dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: <sup>3</sup> Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. <sup>4</sup> *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.* <sup>5</sup> They have corrupted themselves, their spot *is not the spot* of his children: *they are a perverse and crooked generation.* <sup>6</sup> Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? *is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* <sup>7</sup> Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. <sup>8</sup> When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. <sup>9</sup> For the LORD'S portion *is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* <sup>10</sup> He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. <sup>11</sup> As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: <sup>12</sup> *So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.* <sup>13</sup> He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; <sup>14</sup> Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape. <sup>15</sup> But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.* <sup>16</sup> They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger. <sup>17</sup> They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.* <sup>18</sup> Of the Rock *that begat thee thou art*

greatness of the Lord and His righteousness. A heart set to do the will of the Lord would prevent them from sinning. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Psalm 9:10).

Moses likened the Lord unto a rock which would be a shelter for them, one which had foundation and could not be moved. "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?" (II Samuel 22:31, 32).

The Children of Israel should have been inspired to give glory to God for His faithfulness to them, as was their duty. They were told to "remember the days of old," how God had cared for them. If they were too young to remember, their parents could tell them how God led them through the wilderness and kept them "as the apple of his eye."

How different was God from the Children of Israel — "a God of truth and without iniquity"! The Children of Israel had sinned and rebelled against God. The Lord is a God of truth — One who cannot lie (**Titus 1:2** <sup>2</sup> *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; Hebrews 6:18* <sup>18</sup> *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us*). "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45). Such could not be said of the Children of Israel. They served a true and holy God but they were not true to Him as He was to them. Many years before, the Children of Israel had made a vow: "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8). That beautiful vow and pledge of obedience was broken.

God is just and righteous. None will lose by serving Him. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29). The Lord does not send more punishment than one deserves. "The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9). God does not fail to repay one for service or suffering for Him. "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy 2:12).

### The Same Today

Many people today have the same testimony as that which was contained in Moses' song of God's faithfulness. Every one of God's children, at one time, was wandering in the wilderness of sin. The Lord found them in a desert and sent down the spiritual rain. The Lord alone delivered them. He led and guided them into a good land. Just as the Children of Israel were given honey, oil, the finest of the wheat, and juice of grapes, so God's people today are spiritually fed an abundance of the very best. They enjoy the fruit and comforts of His Word and Spirit.

### Warning

The song of Moses is a warning to us today. The theme of the last of the song is not so happy for it tells of the life of backsliders. May we take heed lest the last of the song as well as the first part of it be our testimony. As the Children of Israel prospered, they lost the fear of the Lord. They grew fat, dull, and

unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. <sup>19</sup> And when the LORD saw *it*, he abhorred *them*, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. <sup>20</sup> And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end *shall be*: for they *are* a very froward generation, children in whom *is* no faith. <sup>21</sup> They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. <sup>22</sup> For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. <sup>23</sup> I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. <sup>24</sup> *They shall be* burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. <sup>25</sup> The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling *also* with the man of gray hairs. <sup>26</sup> I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: <sup>27</sup> Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, *and* lest they should say, Our hand *is* high, and the LORD hath not done all this. <sup>28</sup> For they *are* a nation void of counsel, neither *is there any* understanding in them. <sup>29</sup> O that they were wise, *that they* understood this, *that they* would consider their latter end! <sup>30</sup> How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? <sup>31</sup> For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges. <sup>32</sup> For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes *are* grapes of gall, their clusters *are* bitter: <sup>33</sup> Their wine *is* the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. <sup>34</sup> *Is* not this laid up in store with me, *and* sealed up among my treasures? <sup>35</sup> To me

unfit. They could not be pleased, and "kicked" against the Lord. No doubt they thought that they had done well and gave not the credit to God for their victories over the enemy. They wanted their own way and longed for a change. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall And rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

We can see how one sin will lead to another. Probably the Children of Israel were at first just a little careless, by omitting to do good; then they began to commit evil. Instead of honoring God, they forgot Him and worshiped idols (new gods) which had done and could do nothing for them. "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

## Judgment

Those who forsake the Rock of salvation run upon the rock of destruction. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). If people were wise, they would think about how they are living (**Deuteronomy 32:29** <sup>29</sup> O that they were wise, *that they* understood this, *that they* would consider their latter end!). Are you living so that God's blessing can be upon you now as well as in the Judgment Day?

In the time when the Children of Israel would fail to acknowledge the good that God had done for them, He would withdraw all those good things from them. God would tide His face from them (verse 20); no longer would He protect and prosper them. They would not have the Lord to teach and guide them. They would be scattered and destroyed by war from the outside and fear from the inside (verses 25, 26).

When the Children of Israel insulted their Creator, then they would be insulted by their fellow men. God said that He, in judgment, would send His arrows — hunger, war, and trouble (verses 23-25). There can be no escape and none can deliver out of His hand. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

The song of Moses told the Children of Israel all these things before they had happened. So long as the Children of Israel obeyed the Lord and trusted in Him, they had all the good things that He had promised. The blessings included victory over their enemies, as well as food and prosperity. When they depended upon the Lord, one man could chase a thousand of their enemies (**Joshua 23:10** <sup>10</sup> One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you). Samson did more than that: he "slew a thousand men" with the jawbone of an ass (**Judges 15:15** <sup>15</sup> And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith).

Even though the Children of Israel were taught this song of Moses, and were warned about the judgments of God to the disobedient, the time came when they forgot God. By failing to be doers as well as hearers (**James 1:22** <sup>22</sup> But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.), the Children of Israel became captives instead of victors. "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Psalm 81:13, 14).

*belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. <sup>36</sup> For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none shut up, or left. <sup>37</sup> And he shall say, Where *are* their gods, *their* rock in whom they trusted, <sup>38</sup> Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, *and* drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, *and* be your protection. <sup>39</sup> See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand. <sup>40</sup> For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. <sup>41</sup> If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. <sup>42</sup> I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. <sup>43</sup> Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people. <sup>44</sup> And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. <sup>45</sup> And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel: <sup>46</sup> And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. <sup>47</sup> For it *is* not a vain thing for you; because it *is* your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why did Moses and Joshua go to the Tabernacle?
- 2 What work did God give Joshua?
- 3 What words of instruction did God give him?
- 4 What did God ask Moses to do before his death?
- 5 For what purpose was this song given?
- 6 To whom was the song taught?
- 7 What happened when the Children of Israel prospered and forgot God?
- 8 What did they gain by wanting a change and turning to new gods?