

Tonight we are looking at a hit song given to Moses by God

- It is known as Shirat Ha' azinu which means "listen or pay attention"
- It is about the consequences of Israel's anticipated betrayal of God
- Each line consists of 2 phrases or clauses that are parallel or complementary to each other
- It is divided into 4 sections
- The first section (vs. 1-3) contains the theme of the song... pay attention
- The second section (vs. 4-18) is about God's relationship with Israel
- The third section (vs. 19-42) is about God's decisions concerning Israel and her enemies
- The fourth section (vs. 43) is a celebration of God's deliverance of Israel
- The core theme is that of God's faithfulness and Israel's betrayal of God
- So you could say this song would be a blues song

Every day in the Temple, the Levites would sing a different psalm

- Every Sabbath, the Levites would sing a section of this song
- The entire song would be completed in six weeks

Section 1... pay attention

Deuteronomy 32:1-3 (NKJV)

32 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. ² Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass. ³ For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God.

Moses begins by saying... give ear, o heavens and hear o earth

- Isaiah addressed heaven and earth but reversed the verbs by saying... hear of heavens and listen o earth (Isaiah 1:2)
- The midrash teaches that one can ask someone close to him to listen and someone far from him to hear
- Because Moses is about to die, he is closer to heaven than earth so he asks heaven to listen and earth to hear

Vs 2 says... let my teaching drop as rain

The verb "drop" is in the imperative so it's actually translated... my teaching drops like rain, my speech distills or gives life like dew

It speaks of the life-giving power of the teaching of God's Word

Vs. 3 says... I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God!

- The Israeli's take this verse literally
- In the Temple, when the name of the LORD was proclaimed the people responded by saying "May the Name of the glory of His kingdom be blessed forever and ever."
- Today they respond by saying... "Blessed is He and blessed be His name"

Section 2 is about God's relationship with Israel

Deuteronomy 32:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.* ⁵ "They have corrupted themselves; *They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.* ⁶ Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? *Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?*

- This section describes the faithfulness of God against the backdrop of the unfaithfulness of Israel
- God has shown kindness to Israel from the beginning
- Israel repays God's kindness by corrupting themselves... so God calls them to remember....

Deuteronomy 32:7–14 (NKJV)

⁷ "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 divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. ⁹ For the LORD's portion *is* His people; *Jacob is the place of His inheritance.* ¹⁰ "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. ¹¹ As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, ¹² So the LORD alone led him, And *there was no foreign god with him.* ¹³ "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock; ¹⁴ Curds from the cattle, and milk of the

flock, With fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.

Remember what I've done for you

- He divided the earth into many nations, but He took Israel as His own people
- He alone provided for Israel's needs in the wilderness
- He brought Israel safely into the Promised land... a land of abundance
- No foreign god helped Israel
- Rather under God's blessing Israel grew prosperous

Deuteronomy 32:15–18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God *who* made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁶ They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods*; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not to God, *To gods* they did not know, *To new gods*, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. ¹⁸ Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful, And have forgotten the God who fathered you.

- But the success and prosperity given to them by God turned Israel's head and they forgot God and turned to pagan deities
- God says they sacrificed to demons, to gods they did not now
- That is the result of pride... I forget my humble beginnings... I forget where I've come from

Section 3 is about God's decisions

Deuteronomy 32:19–25 (NKJV)

¹⁹ “And when the LORD saw *it*, He spurned *them*, Because of the provocation of His sons and His 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 faith. ²¹ They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. ²² For a fire is kindled in My anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. ²³ ‘I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. ²⁴ *They shall be wasted*

with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust. ²⁵ The sword shall destroy outside; *There shall be* terror within For the young man and virgin, The nursing child with the man of gray hairs.

- God informs Israel of the consequences of rejecting God to serve idols
- God's protection will be withdrawn from them
- They will be exposed to war, disease and natural disasters
- Enemies will attack Israel and they will misinterpret their success as a sign of their own power

Deuteronomy 32:26–31 (NKJV)

²⁶ I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men," ²⁷ Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, Lest their adversaries should misunderstand, Lest they should say, "Our hand *is* high; And it is not the LORD who has done all this." ' ²⁸ "For they *are* a nation void of counsel, Nor *is there any* understanding in them. ²⁹ Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *That* they would consider their latter end! ³⁰ How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them? ³¹ For their rock *is* not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves *being* judges.

- Although God withdraws his protection of Israel and Israel is attacked by their enemies, it doesn't mean their enemies can destroy them
- It also doesn't mean their enemies can take credit for their victory over Israel
- The enemies of Israel are winning simply because God has withdrawn His protection, not because they are so powerful

Deuteronomy 32:32–35 (NKJV)

³² 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. ³³ Their wine *is* the poison of serpents, And the cruel venom of cobras. ³⁴ '*Is* this not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up among My treasures? ³⁵ Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in *due* time; For the day of their calamity *is* at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.'

- Because the enemy takes credit for the victory over Israel, God will punish the enemy like He did Sodom and Gomorrah

Deuteronomy 32:36–42 (NKJV)

³⁶ “For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that *their* power is gone, And *there is* no one *remaining*, bond or free. ³⁷ He will say: ‘Where *are* their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? ³⁸ Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, And be your refuge. ³⁹ ‘Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He, And *there is* no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand. ⁴⁰ For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, “As I live forever, ⁴¹ If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And 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 heads of the leaders of the enemy.” ’

God is the champion of Israel

- When Israel’s enemies begin to take credit for Israel’s destruction, God will deliver Israel and destroy their enemies
- Now this is an interesting boundary that God sets
- God withdraws His protection from Israel because of their idolatry
- Because Israel is in a place of judgment, they are exposed to war, sickness, poverty and natural disasters
- BUT God will not let the enemy triumph over Israel
- Rather God will deliver them they are His people
- That’s what it means when it says for the sake of His name... it doesn’t mean for the sake of His reputation
- God’s name is on His people and because His name is on them, He defends them and destroys the enemy

Section 4 is a celebration of God’s power

Deuteronomy 32:43 (NKJV)

⁴³ “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.”

- God calls on the nations to rejoice over God’s deliverance of Israel
- This invitation implies God’s salvation of Israel has global importance
- The implication is God will treat all nations like He treats Israel and that is cause for rejoicing

Now we come to the album release party

Deuteronomy 32:44–47 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. ⁴⁵ Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ and he said to them: “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”

This is right before Moses dies

- Moses gives them one last word of encouragement... set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today... all the words of the law.
- He says, this is not a futile (unimportant, empty) thing to do
- Their survival as a nation depends on it

Hammurabi said something similar

“My words are choice, my deeds have no equal; it is only to the fool that they are empty; to the wise they stand forth as an object of wonder.”¹

¹ Jeffrey H. Tigay, [Deuteronomy](#), The JPS Torah Commentary, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 316.

- There is nothing empty or unimportant in the Word of God
- The rabbi’s teach If it is empty, it’s due to your failure to study it thoroughly

Now God Summons Moses to die

Deuteronomy 32:48–52 (NKJV)

⁴⁸ Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: ⁴⁹ “Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; ⁵⁰ and die on the mountain which you ascend,

and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; ⁵¹ because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. ⁵² Yet you shall see the land before *you*, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.”

- Aaron died on Mount Hor and yet God says Moses will be gathered to his kin...
- God is speaking of the reunion of the spirit with those who have died

Now we come to the last section of Deuteronomy

- It's called Parshah Vezot Habrachah and it means... this is the blessing
- Before Moses dies, he blesses the people

Deuteronomy 33:1–29 (NKJV)

33 Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. ² And he said: “The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand *Came* a fiery law for them. ³ Yes, He loves the people; All His saints *are* in Your hand; They sit down at Your feet; *Everyone* receives Your words. ⁴ Moses commanded a law for us, A heritage of the congregation of Jacob. (The Word of God is Israel’s heritage) ⁵ And He was King in Jeshurun (speaking of God who is King of Israel), When the leaders of the people were gathered, All the tribes of Israel together.

- Vs. 5 According to the Rabbi’s Jeshurun translated “The Upright” comes from “yashar” which means “upright” is the poetic name for “Israel”
- The first 3 Hebrew letters in Israel and Yeshurun are the same and that is the connection between these two words

Moses blesses Reuben first

⁶ “Let Reuben live, and not die, *Nor* let his men be few.”

- Reuben is Jacob’s firstborn and the blessing is a prayer of survival, that Reuben may live

- However, because Reuben slept with his father's concubine he will not receive the blessing of inheritance
- Reuben will be blessed with survival as a tribe until it is exiled into captivity by the Assyrians

Then Judah which means praise

⁷ And this he said of Judah: "Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people; Let his hands be sufficient for him, And may You be a help against his enemies."

- Judah will receive the inheritance from Israel and thus Judah is second
- Judah will become the dominant tribe of the Southern part of the land
- The blessing anticipates a time of war and Moses blesses Judah with God's help

Then Levi

⁸ And of Levi he said: "*Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, Whom You tested at Massah (the testing place), And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah (contention),* ⁹ Who says of his father and mother, 'I have not seen them'; Nor did he acknowledge his brothers, Or know his own children; For they have observed Your word And kept Your covenant. ¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar ¹¹ Bless his substance, LORD, And accept the work of his hands; Strike the loins of those who rise against him, And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."

- Moses blesses Levi with the joy of serving the LORD as Israel's priests
- They will be the ones to whom Israel will turn for direction from God
- They will be the teachers of God's Word to Israel

Next is Benjamin

¹² Of Benjamin he said: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, *Who* shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

- Benjamin's territory is between Judah and Ephraim
- Moses blesses Benjamin with secure borders

- Benjamin will be the only other tribe that remains loyal to God in the Southern Kingdom with Judah

Next is Joseph

¹³ And of Joseph he said: “Blessed of the LORD *is* his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, And the deep lying beneath, ¹⁴ With the precious fruits of the sun, With the precious produce of the months, ¹⁵ With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, ¹⁶ With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let *the blessing* come ‘on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.’ ¹⁷ His glory *is like* a firstborn bull, And his horns *like* the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they *are* the thousands of Manasseh.”

- The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are the sons of Joseph adopted by Israel
- Ephraim will become the leader of the Northern Tribes of Israel

Next is Zebulun

¹⁸ And of Zebulun he said: “Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, And Issachar in your tents! ¹⁹ They shall call the peoples *to* the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they shall partake *of* the abundance of the seas And *of* treasures hidden in the sand.”

- Although only Zebulun is mentioned, the rabbits teach the blessing includes Issachar
- Issachar and Zebulun were the fifth and sixth sons of Leah
- They will be blessed with success on the seas

Next is Gad

²⁰ And of Gad he said: “Blessed *is* he who enlarges Gad; He dwells as a lion, And tears the arm and the crown of his head. ²¹ He provided the first *part* for himself, Because a lawgiver’s portion was reserved there. He came *with* the heads of the people; He administered the justice of the LORD, And His judgments with Israel.”

- Gad will be one of the tribes, along with Reuben and half of Manasseh, that remain on the East side of the Jordan

Next is Dan

²² And of Dan he said: “Dan *is* a lion’s whelp; He shall leap from Bashan.”

- Dan is blessed with strength, but will use it’s strength to lead the nation into idolatry

Next is Naphtali

²³ And of Naphtali he said: “O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing of the LORD, Possess the west and the south.”

- Naphtali is blessed with fertile territory in the upper Galilee

Next is Asher

²⁴ And of Asher he said: “Asher *is* most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil. ²⁵ Your sandals *shall be* iron and bronze; As your days, *so shall your strength be.*

- Asher is blessed with fertility and strength
- Genesis 49:20 says Asher’s bread will be rich and he shall yield royal dainties

Moses ends with a general blessing over Israel

²⁶ “*There is* no one like the God of Jeshurun (Israel), *Who* rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds. ²⁷ The eternal God *is your* refuge, And underneath *are* the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, And will say, ‘Destroy!’ ²⁸ Then Israel shall dwell in safety, The fountain of Jacob alone, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens shall also drop dew. ²⁹ Happy *are* you, O Israel! *Who is* like you, a people saved by the LORD, The shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, And you shall tread down their high places.”

- Vs. 29 it says... your enemies will submit to you... but in the Hebrew it says your enemies will lie to you and you will tread down their high places

- This prophecy was fulfilled when the Gibeonites lied, tricked the Israelites into making an alliance with them
- The Amorites from the mountains attacked the Gibeonites and Joshua came to their defense and defeated the Amorites

After giving his farewell blessing, Moses goes up to Mount Nebo

Deuteronomy 34:1–12 (NKJV)

34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, ³ the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. ⁴ Then the LORD said to him, “This *is* the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.”

⁵ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. ⁶ And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. ⁷ Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. ⁸ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.

⁹ Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰ But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ¹¹ in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, ¹² and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

- A couple of quick observations....
- First... God gave Moses a vision of the future (vs. 1-4)
- Second... Joshua was anointed but couldn't set into his role until after Moses was dead...

- There is a principle that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance and we should help each other finish our race well... not compete against each other to get our opportunity
- Joshua was anointed without question, but he needed to be patient
- Third... Moses was unique in the history of Israel
- There are those unique figures in history who will never be repeated... like Pastor Chuck Smith... and that's okay