Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

If you don’t mind, I am going to assume that you do not know the very important history of these words. It is in gathering the knowledge of the history found here that the wonder of these words becomes so very apparent.

The history is simple. The Israelites following the Exodus and their refusal to enter the promised land, have been in the wilderness for 40 years and the generation of Jews who were the adults at the time of the Exodus have now completely died out, just as God said would be. It is now time for Moses to die, time for Joshua to begin to lead the people of God. Moses as you will recall, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because he did not do as the Lord had commanded him. That’s right, the people needed water and God had told Moses to “speak” to the rock and have the water flow. Moses, in anger, struck the rock but because of that act of disobedience before the people God told Moses he could not enter the Land of Canaan with them. Do you get the feeling you shouldn’t mess with God?

So here we are getting ready for the end of Moses’ leadership and death. To prepare the people a complete review of their history with God and his goodness is recounted, that is basically the reason for Deuteronomy. Once this is concluded and it is made clear that Joshua is to be the next leader of the people God does one more thing. He gives Moses a song. Chapter 32 is that song, today we call it “The Song of Moses.” God tells Moses, Joshua and the people that they are to learn this song and sing it. The purpose of the song is given in Dt. 31:19 and 21: **“Have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them…this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants.”**

Now honestly, I doubt that after Joshua anyone ever sang this song as was commanded. It is a shame. It is an interesting song. It is a truthful song. It is a song worthy of our contemplation. Let’s consider then our verses under this theme: **A SONG OF TRUTH. 1st. A Song of Sin. 2nd. A Song of Salvation. 3rd. A Song of God.**

I have got to tell you when you read this song, or even sing it after the fashion of singing our Psalms, you will be utterly amazed. It is not what you would call a happy song. In many ways it is a very sad song because the Lord simply lays out in this song the truth of how His people are going to be, of how His people are going to treat Him as the Lord God, the true and only God.

You get a flavor of the song from verses 36-38: **“The Lord will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free. He will say; “Now where are their gods, the rock they took refuge in, the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up to help you! Let them give you shelter!”**

Almost immediately you get the sense of the judgmental, actually the damning sense of these words. Our verses are toward the end of the song and yes, they are verses that sum up the whole of the song. Like I said it is not necessarily a happy song but it is a truthful song.

Wait a minute Pastor, these words seem to contain ridicule. You mean to say that God would be a part of ridicule? The answer has to be “Yes.” When you have the truth of God before you, when you have seen the wonders and marvels of the Lord God, been direct recipients of his power, love and goodness and exist only because of the goodness of God, when all of those things are true and you determine to ignore, despise and reject God, how do you suppose a righteous and just God should act?

The whole reason God gave this song was to be a witness against his people. God point blank tells Moses, **“You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them…And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods”** (Dt 31:16ff).

As we look at the history of the Israelites in the coming centuries we are going to have to admit that God knew what He was talking about. And don’t blame God. Don’t take the attitude that since God said it would be it would and the people are blameless. In truth, God said it would be because He could see, He knew what they would do, that they would reject and spurn His love. They would chase after other gods, in our verses called, “the rock they took refuge in”, in other words false gods, gods they made up, gods that were really nothing more than man made idols. God does ridicule them when he says, **“Now where are their gods!”** You worshiped them, chased them, adored them even though they were absolutely false. You had the true God before you, had seen his power, felt his grace, knew his love and you despised Him, ignored Him and rejected Him. I believe these people got just what they deserved.

Now did you actually notice verse 36? Most people don’t, they are so wrapped up in being enraged at God’s supposed unfairness. Verse 36 says, **“The Lord will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.”** Here is one of those verses that just takes a lot of thought. Here is one of those verses that helps put everything into perspective and few will get it. Let’s make sure we do.

The problem people have is they refuse to grasp the truth of the human nature. People get upset with God and say, “Well, he should have picked a better people and then all of this would not have happened.” But that is just the problem, there aren’t any better people, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Any people God would have chosen would have done the same thing the Jews did. No offense but you and I do the same thing these people have done. We have the marvel and wonder of God before us. We know about Jesus, our Savior from sin. We know how Jesus paid for sin so that every soul can enter God’s eternal kingdom and for the most part we treat that grace of God like rubbish. We take God’s love for granted. We have throughout history determined that we can do whatever we want, follow false gods, live heinous lives and completely despise His Word and truth as if somehow His Word and truth is not clear. And then we have the gall to blame God. To act as if God is the one who is mean and filled with evil. People, even after we know the wonder of God in Jesus we still act like the Jewish nation of old. There aren’t any better people, there is only God’s grace and love.

That’s the point of our words here. **“The Lord will judge his people.”** God knows our hearts and everything there is to know about us. God is the only one who will judge righteously and with perfect justice, the only one who will make absolutely no mistakes in his judgments. Yes, God has this right to judge. He is God.

And God says, **“He will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.”** In these words God tells us He knows our problem. He knows we are inclined to evil, inclined to reject and abhor Him as the world certainly has done. But note that God declares he is going to have compassion on his servants. Even when we have no strength, even when we think we are lost and forsaken, God is going to be there with his compassion.

By the way, I have to point out what I consider a bad translation. That last phrase, “and no one is left, slave or free” is pretty fanciful and I believe inaccurate. I believe it should be translated “and he is lost or forsaken.” Here is the truth of man. Can we save ourselves? Can we reach up to heaven and grab what is of God? Or as we hear in Romans, **Who has ever given to God that God should repay him.”** We have nothing before God. We are as nothing before God. On our own we cannot even see the riches of God or grasp his majesty. We by nature are dead in trespass and sin. And yet, we have a God who is going to be there with his compassion.

And now, listen to the last words, **“See now that I myself am He! There is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”**

These words simply remind us that everything is in the hand of God. He is our everything. There is no other god or gods, but only this One God who has revealed himself and more. This God has promised and sent His Son. This God while we were dead in trespass and sin, paid for our sin, made us alive in Christ Jesus, gave us by grace the gift of eternal life and salvation. That’s what those words are speaking of: **“I put to death and I bring to life.”** God has complete charge of your life. God with his grace and compassion never wants to do what is hurtful or harmful to your soul but God’s will and desire is that your soul inherit eternal life. Make no mistake, God is the judge. He does put to death, yes, even sends those who have rejected Him to eternal death and He does bring life. He did that for us in Jesus! Today as we contemplate Jesus riding into Jerusalem grasp that he does so in order to be our savior and the atoning sacrifice for our sin. Jesus brings life. The Son of God grants new life and salvation in and through his resurrection from the dead. And there is more.

God says, “**I have wounded and I will heal.”** Now if you are going to look at those words in the shallow manner of man, you will miss their wonder. Yes, God will wound. But he has not wounded us, rather, He wounded His Son Jesus on our behalf. Isaiah put this truth this way, **“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”** Actually in Isaiah’s words we see the whole truth…in Jesus wounds we are healed.” And there is more.

**“And no one can deliver out of my hand.”** Our salvation is sure and certain in Jesus. That is the key, Jesus. To believe in Jesus. To trust in Jesus and then there is nothing to fear or be concerned with. Now be careful, I like to warn. Gal. 6:7-8 tells us why. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”

To reject God, to follow our sinful nature, to delude ourselves with false gods…that’s what our problem is. Believe in Jesus. Believe in God’s sure and certain salvation by grace through faith. That is always the promise of God’s Word. God will heal in Jesus. Amen.