

^{32:1}Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; **hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.**

1. Deuteronomy Rabbah x. 4

Another explanation: Why [did Moses call upon] the heavens and the earth? R. Samuel b. Nachman said: He can be compared to a general who held office in two provinces, one a Roman province, the other a colony, and who, being about to make a feast, said [to himself]: 'If I invite this set, this will be offended with me, and if I invite that set, this will be offended with me.' So what did he do? He invited both the one and the other. So it was with Moses. He himself was born on earth, **but he became great in heaven. Whence this? For it is said, And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights**, etc. (Ex. xxxiv, 28). He said: **'If I call upon the heavens the earth will rage, and if I call upon the earth the heavens will rage.'** He [therefore] said: 'I will call upon both of them, the heavens and the earth,' as it is said, GIVE EAR, YE HEAVENS ETC.

a. Genesis 6:9-13

¹¹Now **the earth was corrupt** in God's sight and was full of violence ...

¹³So God said to Noah ... **"I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth ..."**

b. Numbers 16:31-33

³²and **the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them** and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. ³³**They went down alive into the realm of the dead ...**

c. Revelation 12:13-16

¹⁶**But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.**

d. Genesis 28:16-17

¹⁶When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought ... "this is **the gate of heaven.**"

e. Psalms 69:34

³⁴**Let heaven and earth praise (the LORD) ...**

f. Psalms 78:23-25

²³**the doors of the heavens ...** ²⁴**he gave them the grain of heaven.**

²⁵**Human beings ate the bread of angels;** he sent them all the food they could eat.

2. Deuteronomy Rabbah x. 4

Another explanation: Why upon the heavens and the earth? R. Tan-chuma said: Because God will redeem Israel only through the agency of them both, for so it is written, **Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lowest parts of the earth** (Isa. xlv, 23).

3. Deuteronomy Rabbah x. 4

Another explanation: Why unto heaven and earth? Because through them ... God testified [against Israel]: for it is written, *'I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day'*: and through them they sinned: as it is written, *To make cakes to the queen of heaven* (Jer. vii, 18); and through them they were punished: whence? For it is written, *And the heavens, and they had no light* (ib. iv, 23). Whence [do we know that they were punished through the earth]? For it is written, *The earth* (ib.). And against the earth they sinned; for it is written, *Yea, their altars shall be as heaps in the furrows of the field* (Hos. xii, 12). And through the earth they were punished; for it is written, I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void (Jer. iv, 23). And through heaven and earth they will be comforted: for it is written, *For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain* (Isa. lxvi, 22).⁽¹⁾

(1) Heaven and earth were called to testify against them, **so that they might reform**; they sinned through heaven and earth, by ascribing divine powers to them and giving them divine honours; they were punished through them, in that their natural productivity was curtailed, and they will be comforted through them, when their natural productivity will be greatly increased, thereby bringing a blessing upon them ('E.J.).

a. Romans 8:18-28

²¹**the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom** and glory of the children of God.

²²We know that **the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time ...**

²⁸And we know that **in all things God works for the good of those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose ...

^{32:4}**He is the Rock**, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. ⁵They have acted corruptly toward him; **to their shame they are no longer his children**, but a warped and crooked generation. ⁶Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? **Is he not your Father**, your Creator, who made you and formed you?

1. **God's faithfulness—Israel's foolishness**

a. **הַצִּיּוֹר** (*ha-Tzur*)—*rock, cliff*—here taken from the granite crags of Sinai—used of God as support and defense of his people (BDB).

1) It represents God's unchanging nature—Ages pass away, but the rock remains.

2) It is a place of refuge and safety during times of political unrest, during storms and floods (Hertz).

b. 1Samuel 2:1-2

²"There is no one holy like the LORD ... **there is no Rock like our God.**

c. 2Samuel 22:1-3

²He said: "**The LORD is my rock ... ³my God is my rock**, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior ...

d. Matthew 16:17-18

¹⁷Yeshua replied ... ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter (פֶּטְרוֹס - Πέτρος), and on this rock (הַכֶּתֶף - πέτρα) I will build my congregation, (קְהִלָּתִי) and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

2. ^{4b}his works are perfect ...

a. תָּמִים (ta-mim)—complete, whole, entire, sound, wholesome, unimpaired, innocent, having integrity, what is complete, entirely in accord with truth and fact; integrity (BDB)—reliable, faithful.

3. ^{5b}to their shame they are no longer his children ...

a. לֹא בָנָיו מוֹמָם (shi-chet lo, lo banav mumam) – Lit: He has dealt corruptly with him, not his children, their blemish.

1) שָׁחַת—acted corruptly—describes the disloyalty associated with the sin of the golden calf.

2) לֹא בָנָיו—His non-children, i.e., **they have acted as though they were not His children.**

3) מוֹמָם—blemish—usually refers to a physical blemish on an animal, but is occasionally used of a moral blemish as well. It is the antonym of תָּמִים (ta-mim) (see above).

CJB—"He is not corrupt; **the defect is in his children**, a crooked and perverted generation.

JPS—Is corruption His? No; **His children's is the blemish**; a generation crooked and perverse.

KJV—They have corrupted themselves, **their spot is not the spot of his children**: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

LXX—They have sinned, not *pleasing* him; **spotted children**, a froward and perverse generation.

NAS—"They have acted corruptly toward Him, **They are not His children**, because of their defect; *But are* a perverse and crooked generation.

NJB—They have acted perversely, **those he fathered without blemish**, a deceitful and underhand brood.

NKJ—"They have corrupted themselves; **They are not His children**, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.

OKE—They have corrupted themselves, **and not Him; children who worship idols**, a generation that changeth its work, and maketh it another.

JTE—The children have corrupted their works, and not them only, but themselves also: **they have so corrupted that the spot is upon them**; a depraved and perverse generation which changeth its order of this world shall be changed upon it.

PJE—The beloved children have corrupted their good works, **a blemish is found upon them**; a perverse generation which have altered their works; so shall the order of this world's judgment be altered upon them.

b. Leviticus 26:40-45

⁴⁴**I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them.** I am the LORD their God. ⁴⁵But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD."

c. Hosea 1:3-11 (cf., Rom 9:25-26)

⁸After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹Then the LORD said, "Call him **Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.** ¹⁰"Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. **In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'** ¹¹The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader ...

^{32:7}**Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.** ⁸When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. **For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.**

¹⁰In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as **the apple of his eye**, ¹¹like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.

1. ⁷*Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.*

a. If the audience has any doubt the truth of what is said, **it can turn for confirmation to its elders—the custodians of historical tradi-**

tion in a predominately oral culture. Similar challenges to consult the elders appear in the Book of Job (8:8-10).

2. ¹⁰*the apple of his eye ...*

a. The pupil of his eye—the **Heb. phrase is equivalent to the English ‘as his very life’** (Hertz).

1) The pupil is the expanding and contracting opening in the iris of the eye, through which light passes to the retina.

2) The iris is the colored part around the pupil.

b. Since protecting the eye is a reflexive action, the pupil is an effective simile for an object of protected care.

c. Zechariah 2:8

For this is what the LORD Almighty says ... **whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye ...**

^{32:19}The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. ²⁰"I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. ²¹**They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.** ²²For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. ²³"I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them. ²⁴I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust. ²⁵In the treet the sword will make them childless; in their homes terror will reign. Young men and young women will perish, infants and gray-haired men.

1. *I will make them envious by those who are **not a people**; I will make them angry by **a nation that has no understanding** ...*

a. Measure for measure—Just as they had angered God by adopting a no-god, so would God them by bringing against them a *no-people*; i.e. a horde of barbarians (Hertz).

b. *a vile nation*—Or, ‘foolish nation’—ignorant and barbarous—in-human in its habits and methods (Ibn Ezra). And this people will win success over Israel! (Hertz).

c. It is impossible to identify the enemy described in Deuteronomy with certainty, but unless its characterization as barbarian is purely rhetorical, **it is likely to be a nomadic or semi-nomadic invader such as the Midianites, Amalekites, or Kedemites (Judg 6:2-6) (JPS).**

d. The word for foolish, נָבָל (*na-val*)—does not only describe noetic, judgmental deficiency, but moral deficiency as well. The apostle Paul applied the terms “not a nation” and “no understanding” to the Gentile nations generally in Rom 10:19 (EBC).

e. Romans 10:13-11:15

¹⁸But I ask: **Did they not hear?** Of course they did:

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Psa 19:4).

Psalm 19:1-5

¹**The heavens declare the glory of God ...** ³There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. ⁴**Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.**

¹⁹Again I ask: **Did Israel not understand?** First, Moses says,

"I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding" (Deu 32:21).

²⁰And Isaiah boldly says,

"I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me" (Isa 65:1).

Isaiah 64:6-65:5

⁶All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all **our righteous acts are like filthy rags ...** ⁷**No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins ...**

^{65:1}"I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. **To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'**

²¹**But (or And) concerning Israel he says,** "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." ^{11:1}I ask then: **Did God reject his people? By no means!** I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:

³"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me?" (1Ki 19:10,14).

⁴And what was God's answer to him?

"I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (1Ki 19:18).

⁵So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. ⁷What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸as it is written:

"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day" (Deu 29:4; Isa 29:10).

⁹And David says:

"May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. ¹⁰May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever" (Psa 69:22-23).

¹¹Again I ask: **Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious (*better jealous*).**

a. At Shavuot Peter spoke of the ignorance of his countrymen as explaining the crucifixion (Acts 3:17). But as time went on fewer and fewer Jews in proportion to the total population of the nation responded to the gospel (EBC).

1) A hardened attitude set in. The precedent of the Jews who did respond to the gospel, instead of moving their fellow-Jews, only seemed to embitter them.

2) Then, as the gospel spread abroad and was received by Gentiles in ever greater numbers, this served to provoke them still further.

b. It is over against this situation that Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21b, a part of Moses' song to Israel in which he chides the congregation for perversity and (in Deut 32:21a) voices the complaint of God that the people had provoked him to jealousy by their idolatry.

1) This in turn prompts God to resort to something that is calculated to make Israel **jealous**. It will be done through "a nation that has no understanding."

2) **This is to be understood of the Gentile response to God and to his Word in such a way as to surpass the response of Israel.**

3) Exactly such a situation had developed by the time Paul wrote, so that the quotation is apt and telling in its effect.

4) **Those who lacked special revelation and the moral and religious training God provided Israel have proved more responsive than the chosen people.**

^{32:26}I said I would scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind,

²⁷**but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy, lest the adversary misunderstand and say, 'Our hand has triumphed; the LORD has not done all this.'**"

²⁸They are a nation without sense, there is no discernment in them. ²⁹If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! ³⁰How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up? ³¹For their rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede.

1. Isaiah 47:5-11

"I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a very heavy yoke.

2. Ezekiel 35:1-15

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir (Edom); prophesy against it ³and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I am against you** ... ⁴I will turn your towns into ruins and you will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵"**Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity ...**

^{32:44}Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. ⁴⁵When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. ⁴⁷They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess." ⁴⁸On that same day the LORD told Moses, ⁴⁹"Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. ⁵⁰**There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people,** just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. ⁵¹This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. ⁵²Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

1. The Hope—Life Beyond the Grave