

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE REDEEMED
A Devotional Meditation on Ha'azinu (Give Ear)

Deuteronomy 32:1-52; 2 Samuel 22:1-51; Exodus 15:1-21; Hosea 1:1-11;
Matthew 13:33; Romans 11:11-15; 1 Peter 2:9-10, 4:12-19; Revelation 15:1-4

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Music may be the most effective way nations identify themselves. Often, I find myself humming or whistling a national anthem – not only the United States National Anthem, but the anthems of many countries. These are the songs that tell the world what and who a nation is. They sing the history, glory, culture, and hopes of peoples from every part of the globe. Such is the purpose of *Kimigayo*, the Japanese National Anthem. *Kimigayo* is the oldest of all national anthems, and the shortest. In two brief lines of poetry, the anthem sings the praise of Japan's greatest symbol, the Emperor, and breathes a prayer that his reign may continue for thousands of generations. Japan was already an ancient nation when *Kimigayo* was written twelve centuries ago. Today, the hymn links the people of Japan to that ancient past and the identity they share with their ancestors from time immemorial.



That's the same purpose the Song of Moses serves for the people of God's Covenant Nation. That means the Jewish people, the visible remnant of Israel, and also those from the nations who have attached themselves to Israel by pledging allegiance to Israel's Messiah. We all can sing the praises of the Redeemer Who brought Israel through the Red Sea and executed judgment on the Egyptian army that pursued them. That's what Moses sang about in the first version of his song, which begins:

I will sing to *ADONAI*, for He is highly exalted!
The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea.
ADONAI is my strength and song,
and He has become my salvation.
This is my God, and I will glorify Him,
my father's God, and I will exalt Him.

Exodus 15:1-2 TLV

That's the song we like. The one we don't like as much is the second version – the one Moses composed at the end of his life. It starts out like the first song, but then it goes in an unpleasant direction:

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak!
Let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
May my teaching trickle like rain,
my speech distill like dew—
like gentle rain on new grass,

like showers on tender plants.
For I will proclaim *ADONAI's* Name,
ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock—blameless is His work.
Indeed, all His ways are just.
God of faithfulness without iniquity,
righteous and upright is He.
Did it corrupt Him? No!
The blemish is His children's—
a generation crooked and twisted.
Is this how you pay back *ADONAI*,
O foolish, unwise people?
Isn't He your Father who ransomed you?
He made you and established you.

Deuteronomy 32:1-6 TLV

The song goes on to relate how God established the borders of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel, and that He chose Israel as His own special portion. Then it tells how Israel fell from their exalted status by wandering away from their Redeemer and serving other gods, which moved God to say:

They made Me jealous with a non-god.
They vexed Me with airy idols.
So I will make them jealous with a non-people.
With a foolish nation I will vex them.

Deuteronomy 32:21 TLV

That sounds familiar to students of the New Testament. Paul writes about Gentiles – those from the nations – making Israel jealous:

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their false step salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy. Now if their transgression leads to riches for the world, and their loss riches for the Gentiles, then how much more their fullness! . . . For if their rejection leads to the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Romans 11:11-15 TLV

Peter picks up this motif when he says of Gentile followers of Messiah Yeshua:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were "not a people," but now you are "God's people." You were shown "no mercy," but now you have been shown "mercy."

1 Peter 2:9-10 TLV

For far too long, Christians have pointed to these passages to justify the argument that Gentile believers in Jesus have replaced the Jewish children of Abraham. That has led to a world of woe, not only for the Jewish people, but for Christians who have had great difficulty overcoming the bias that says they can learn nothing from the Jews

because they are cut out of God's Covenant. What we have overlooked, however, is that Paul quotes Moses, and Peter quotes Hosea, both of whom proclaim that the Redeemer of Israel has staked His Name and reputation on the continued existence of Israel and the Hebrew people as partners in His Covenant. Israel is chief of the nations because God works through Israel to redeem all the nations.

Peter's reference to Hosea gives us a key to understanding. Hosea writes of judgment on both houses of Israel: the non-Jewish northern kingdom, and the Jewish southern kingdom. The northern kingdom of Israel would be scattered into all the nations and lose their identity as a people, but God would not forget them. Neither would He forget the southern kingdom of Judah:

But on the house of Judah I will have compassion and deliver them by *ADONAI*, their God, yet not by bow, sword or battle, nor by horses and horsemen."

Hosea 1:7 TLV

God did save Judah, time and time again, and now in our day, the remnant of Israel is again in the Promised Land. But there is more to the story about the rest of Israel that was scattered into all the nations and ceased to be a people. That story concerns the Almighty's love for all the nations He had established, and who remain in rebellion against Him. If the nations would not come to Him, He would go to the nations, where He had hidden the fragments of Israel as leaven in lumps of dough so they would prepare the way for the Redeemer-King. First, He would break the power of sin and death, offering a way back into His good graces, and then He would break the power of the nations that held His people in exile. After that, He would establish His Kingdom as chief among all the nations. All who desire access to Him would come through Israel to do so. There in Zion He would have His throne, and there He would receive the delegations of the nations at His appointed times.

The third version of the Song of Moses tells us about that. That's the complete version, relating not only Israel's birth, calling, apostasy, exile, and final redemption, but the praises of the One Who accomplished that redemption with His life's blood. John the Revelator calls this the Song of Moses the Servant of God and the Song of the Lamb. Multitudes sing it as the Creator's final judgment is poured out on the world. The refrain of that song is an ode of praise:

Great and wonderful are Your deeds, *ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot* [LORD God Almighty].
Just and true are Your ways, O King of the nations!
Who shall not fear and glorify Your name, O Lord? For You alone are Holy.
All the nations shall come and worship before You,
for Your righteous acts have been revealed!

Revelation 15:3-4 TLV

The Song of Moses says a lot about judgment, especially that judgment begins at the House of God. It has to be that way. The Almighty can't judge this wicked world if He hasn't yet set things right among His own people. Once He has set things right, both within each of His people's hearts, and within His people as a people, then all creation will hear at last the National Anthem of the Redeemed.