

- False *I will cause their memory to cease from man' —*
 Notions of ²⁷ *were it not that the anger of the enemy was pent up, lest his tormenters misinterpret;*
 the *lest they say, 'Our hand was raised in triumph,*
 Conquerors *and it was not HASHEM Who accomplished all this!'*
- The ²⁸ *For they are a nation bereft of counsel, and there is no discernment in them.*
 Enemy's ²⁹ *Were they wise they would comprehend this, they would discern it from their end.*
 Foolish ³⁰ *For how could one pursue a thousand, and two cause a myriad to flee,*
 Conceit *if not that their Rock had sold them out, and HASHEM had delivered them?*
³¹ *— for not like our Rock is their rock — yet our enemies judge us!*
- Source of ³² *For their vineyard is from the vineyard of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah;*
 Israel's *their grapes are grapes of gall, so clusters of bitterness were given them.*
 Suffering ³³ *Serpents' venom is their wine, the poison of cruel vipers.*
³⁴ *Is it not revealed with Me, sealed in My treasures?*
³⁵ *Mine is vengeance and retribution at the time their foot will falter,*
 Israel is *for the day of their catastrophe is near, and future events are rushing at them."*
 Comforted ³⁶ *When HASHEM will have judged His people,*

28. גוי אבד עזות המה — *They are a nation bereft of counsel.* The non-Jewish conquerors are convinced of their own invincibility because they are too foolish to analyze what happened, for, as verse 29 continues, if they had considered the magnitude of Israel's downfall, they would have realized that only God could have brought it about. They would have understood that the only reason Israel could have suffered such an ignominious *end* was that its sins had caused God to hand them over to their enemies. Otherwise, how was it possible for one soldier to pursue a thousand, and for two people to pursue ten thousand (v. 30)? Clearly, it was God's doing (*Rashi*).

31. כי לא כצורנו צורם — *For not like our Rock is their rock.* The enemy should have realized that their triumphs were not due to the power of their gods, for their *rock*, i.e., god, is no comparison to the true *Rock*. Clearly, therefore, if *our enemies judge us*, i.e., defeat and punish us, it is because God willed it so (*Rashi*).

According to *Ramban*, Moses is chastising Israel's enemies, telling them that they should realize that their victories are temporary and that they should realize that God will bring them to account for their own sins: יבינו לא צוריהם, *they should understand what their [own] end will be* (v. 29), for just as God's hand in Israel's defeat was undeniable, so the victors should have realized that their own downfall at His hands is inevitable.

32-35. Source of Israel's suffering. According to *Rashi*, the Torah has ended its discussion of the nations and reverts to Israel, explaining why they were deserving of such a crushing defeat. According to *Ramban* and *Sforno*, however, the Torah continues to describe the evil of the nations, as will be outlined in the notes.

32. כי מנפח סרם ופנם — *For their vineyard is from the vineyard of Sodom.* The reason Israel suffered so was because they behaved like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as if the Jews were transplants of those two evil cities that became the prototype of wickedness (see *Genesis* 18-19). As a result,

Israel suffered what it had itself wrought: Because the Jews became evil, they were forced to eat the fruits of their wickedness and suffer at the hands of cruel and evil conquerors, as if (v. 33) their wine turned to poison (*Rashi*).

According to *Ramban*, this, too, refers to the nations. They refused to see the truth because they were outgrowths of Sodom and Gomorrah. Israel, however, learns from its suffering and repents, in belated recognition that God made it possible for them to be defeated and exiled. *Sforno* explains the comparison with Sodom. The Sodomites were rich and complacent, thinking only about their selfish pleasures and how to avoid sharing their bounty with anyone else. Such people never imagine that their successes can be due to anything but their personal superiority.

34. הלא הוא במס עמדי — *Is it not revealed with Me? Didn't Israel realize that they could not hide their sins from Me? Didn't they know that all was revealed before Me, and I was waiting for the appropriate time to punish them for their sins?* (*Rashi*).

35. When the time comes that the merit of their ancestors can no longer protect them — *when their foot will falter* — God's *vengeance and retribution* will be at hand, and will come upon them very quickly. The dire prophecies of the Song are now over, and Moses is about to begin the comforting assurance that once they have been punished and have repented, God will bring redemption with equal alacrity (*ibid.*).

According to *Ramban* and *Sforno*, these verses are a continuation of the warning to the nations that their cruelties to Israel would not be forgotten, and retribution will come to them when their own measure of sin is filled.

36-43. Israel is comforted. Neither Israel's sins nor the exiles and suffering they bring about can sever the bond between it and God. Eventually, the closeness will be restored and the final redemption will come.

36. כי ירין ה' עמו — *When HASHEM will have judged His people.* After God has finished the punishment that His judgment has

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