

# פרשת האזינו

Parashat Ha'azinu

Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1-32:52, Hosea 14:2-10  
Micah 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-27, John 20:26-21:25

## The Vine of Sodom

In this week's Torah portion we read the following according to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:29-35*,  
כט לו חֲכָמָו יִשְׁכַּילוּ זֹאת יִבְינֵנוּ לְאַחֲרֵי רַקְבָּה אֶם-לְאָכִי-צֻוְרָם מִכְרָם וַיְהִי הַסְגִּירָם: לֹא כִּי לֹא כִּי צֻוְרָנוּ צֻוְרָם וַיִּבְינֵנוּ פְלִילִים: לְבָב כִּי-מְגַפֵּן סְדָם גְּפַנְם וַיְמַשְׁךְ מִתְעִמָּרָה עֲנָבָמוּ עֲנָבָי-רוֹשָׁ אַשְׁכָּלָת מִרְרוֹת לְמוֹ: לְגַחְתָּה תְּבִינָם יִיְגַּם וַרְאֵשׁ פְתַנְיִם אַכְזָר: לְדֹבָר הַלְאָ-הוּא כִּמְס עַמְקִי חַתוּם בָּאוֹצֶרֶתִי: לְהָ לְיִנְקַם וַיְשַׁלֵּם לְעֵית פְמֹוֹת רְגִלָּם כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֵיךְ וְחַשׁ עֲתָדָת לְמוֹ:

32:29 'Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future! 32:30 'How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the Lord had given them up? 32:31 'Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this. 32:32 'For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter. 32:33 'Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the deadly poison of cobras. 32:34 'Is it not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries? 32:35 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are

*hastening upon them.* '(NASB) The interesting point from these Scriptures is how it is written, one will put a thousand to flight, and two ten thousand. This describes the one who has the God of Israel on his side, he can do anything! The foundation stone upon which we stand is powerful. Moshe compares the foundation upon which the nations stand does not compare to our Rock, our God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth! Moshe goes on to describe those nations, and those who do not join with the God of Israel, as being grafted into a vine that is from Sodom and Gomorrah. This description sounds as one who draws his life from sin and death. Rashi states the following concerning *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32*.

### *Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32 Part 1*

**כִּי מֵגֶפֶן סְדָם גַּפְנָם** *FOR THEIR VINE IS OF THE VINE OF SODOM — This is to be connected with what is stated above, (v. 26, verses 27—31 being a parenthesis): “I said in My heart, I would scatter them into corners and make the remembrance of them cease...” because (כִּי) their doings are as the doings of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

The Lord would scatter them due to their actions of sinful rebellion before God and Sodom draws on the context of sexual perversion and immorality. This analogy describes these people as the people of these wicked cities, all their thoughts were sinful, there was nothing sacred in their precincts or their philosophies. (*Chizkuni on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32 Part 1*) The prophet Jeremiah describes the people in this way saying *Jeremiah 2:21 I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine? (NIV)* Notice how the prophet describes these as having been planted in a choice spot, in the garden, from a vineyard. **לֹב כִּי-מֵגֶפֶן סְדָם גַּפְנָם וּמִשְׁךְמִתְּעִמְרוֹת עַנְבָּתוֹ** 32:32 ‘*For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter. (NASB)* where Moshe writes **מֵגֶפֶן** to indicate that these are “from the vineyard” instead of simply **גַּפְנָם**. This

means that everything that exists within the domain of sanctity has its counterpart in the domain of the spiritually negative. (*Or HaChaim on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32 Part I*) In *Ecclesiastes 7:14* Solomon wrote that the Lord God makes both the righteous and the wicked. The Lord God picked a vine from Egypt (*Tehillim / Psalms 80:9*) and the counterpart is from Sodom. The disgrace Moshe is speaking of here is related to the origin of the vine which is from Sodom has fruit from hell, and connects the measure of one's guilt to destruction, it wasn't until the measure of guilt was complete before God until that place was destroyed. This is an important point, and demonstrates the mercy of God towards all men.

In the commentary *Or HaChaim on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32 Part 2*, the rabbis discuss the idea of a holy tree, the higher the branches the more holy its character. This involves the concept of drawing nearer to the Lord the higher one goes in elevation. Moshe described Israel's attachment to an evil root the vine and the field of Sodom (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32*), to a low place which is further away from God. Where we are planted has as much an effect upon us as it is related to the type of vine we are connected to. This suggests that we have to be discerning to not allow the world to influence our hearts. The Torah goes to great lengths, especially in the book of Devarim / Deuteronomy to warn us against the nations. The Torah warns us against globalism and open borders. The reason this is so is because it is related to giving up our sovereign rights, immigrating foreigners into the Land who bring their pagan practices, and then our children learning and joining with their practices. In the history of Israel, we see this happening a lot, the nation learning the ways of the nations and sinning greatly against God. This was the point Moshe was making at the end of Parashat Haazinu when he said in

**מו ויאמר אליהם שيمו לבבכם לכל דבריהם אשר אנחנו מעיד בכם היום אשר מצnom את-בנייכם לשמר לעשות את-כל-דברי התורה הזאת: מז כי לא-דבר רק הוא מכם כי-הוא חייכם ובדבר הוה פאריכו ימים על-האדמה אשר אפים עברים את-הירדן שמה:**

*32:46 he said to them, 'Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. 32:47 'For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will*

*prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.*’ (NASB) Moshe writes of the importance of taking God’s Word to heart and states these are not idle words, but they are our life and hope, and the Word of God will prolong our days in the land that we live. There is great wisdom in taking to heart the Word of God and applying God’s Word to our lives!

This week we are looking at the Scriptures from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1-52*.

### ***Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1-52***

32:1 ‘Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth. 32:2 ‘Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb. 32:3 ‘For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God! 32:4 ‘The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. 32:5 ‘They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation. 32:6 ‘Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you. 32:7 ‘Remember the days of old, Consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you. 32:8 ‘When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel. 32:9 ‘For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. 32:10 ‘He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye. 32:11 ‘Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. 32:12 ‘The Lord alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him. 32:13 ‘He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the rock, And oil from the

flinty rock, 32:14 Curds of cows, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs, And rams, the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the finest of the wheat And of the blood of grapes you drank wine. 32:15 ‘But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked You are grown fat, thick, and sleek Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation. 32:16 ‘They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 32:17 ‘They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 32:18 ‘You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 32:19 ‘The Lord saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 32:20 ‘Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. 32:21 ‘They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, 32:22 For a fire is kindled in My anger; And burns to the lowest part of Sheol, And consumes the earth with its yield, And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. 32:23 ‘I will heap misfortunes on them; I will use My arrows on them. 32:24 ‘They will be wasted by famine, and consumed by plague And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust. 32:25 ‘Outside the sword will bereave, And inside terror Both young man and virgin, The nursing with the man of gray hair. 32:26 ‘I would have said, ‘I will cut them to pieces, I will remove the memory of them from men,’ 32:27 Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy, That their adversaries would misjudge, That they would say, ‘Our hand is triumphant, And the Lord has not done all this.’” 32:28 ‘For they are a nation lacking in counsel, And there is no understanding in them. 32:29 ‘Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future! 32:30 ‘How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them,

*And the Lord had given them up? 32:31 'Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this. 32:32 'For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter. 32:33 'Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the deadly poison of cobras. 32:34 'Is it not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries? 32:35 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near; And the impending things are hastening upon them.' 32:36 'For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free. 32:37 'And He will say, 'Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? 32:38 'Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you, Let them be your hiding place! 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. 32:40 'Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, And say, as I live forever, 32:41 If I sharpen My flashing sword, And My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My adversaries, And I will repay those who hate Me. 32:42 'I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword will devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the long-haired leaders of the enemy.' 32:43 'Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land and His people.' 32:44 Then Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun. 32:45 When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 32:46 he said to them, 'Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. 32:47 'For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to*

*cross the Jordan to possess. ' 32:48 The Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, 32:49 'Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. 32:50 'Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, 32:51 because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. 32:52 'For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.' 33:1 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. (NASB)*

When the people turn from the way of God to follow after false gods, their life situation will change, they will suffer due to their turning from the One True God. Moshe writes of their impending doom, and then he writes of the Lord responding to those who turn from the Lord saying, *32:37 'And He will say, 'Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? 32:38 'Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you, Let them be your hiding place! 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. (NASB,*

*לוֹ וְאָמַר אֵלֶּה יְמֹנוֹ צוֹר חִסְיוֹ בָּזָן לְהָנִילָה אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זְבַחִימָוּ יְאַכְלוּ יְשַׁתּוּ יְין נְסִיכָם יְקֻומָו וַיְעַזְרְכָם יְהִי עַלְיָכֶם סְתִרְהָה: לֹט רָאוּ | עַתָּה כִּי אֲנִי הָוָא וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עַמְךָ אֲנִי אָמִית וְאַחֲרָה:*

*(מְחַצְתִּי וְאֲנִי אָרֶפֶא וְאֵין מִקְדֵּי מַצְילָה.)* The Lord will speak of their gods, and their sacrifices, and the thing they placed their trust in cannot save them. The God of Israel states that he is the one who puts to death and gives life, He wounds and He heals, there is none other besides Him (*32:39*), He sustains, and none can deliver from His hand! These who do such things boast about their secure and unthreatened existence, concerning themselves exclusively with their own physical gratifications, just as the people of Sodom had done. This is the vine analogy

that is given of these people being a part of the vine of Sodom. The True Vine is an allegory or parable given by Yeshua in the NT, it is found in [\*John 15:1–17\*](#). This story describes Yeshua's disciples as having a part in him, being grafted into Yeshua as the vine, and we are the branches where God the Father is the husbandman (the vine dresser, the one who prunes and takes care of the branches).

### ***John 15:1–17***

*15:1 ‘I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-dresser. 15:2 ‘Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 15:3 ‘You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 15:4 ‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 15:5 ‘I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 15:6 ‘If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 15:7 ‘If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 15:8 ‘My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 15:9 ‘Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 15:10 ‘If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 15:11 ‘These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 15:12 ‘This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 15:13 ‘Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 15:14 ‘You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15:15 ‘No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master*

*is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 15:16 ‘You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 15:17 ‘This I command you, that you love one another. (NASB)*

Yeshua speaks of abiding or remaining in him because it is from him we receive strength to go on, to bear fruit, and to have life. Yeshua says those who do not have a part with him are cut off, dry up, and are cast into the flames. The abiding is paralleled to the Torah in the sense that God’s Word is to remain in us, upon our hearts, which produces fruit. This causes our Father in heaven to be glorified. The most important commandment is to love one another. In this one command, all of the other commandments are fulfilled, since having love for one another, we do not steal, we do not covet, we do not lie, we do not murder, etc. Love is demonstrated by the laying down of one’s life for another. Yeshua explains we are his friends, he has revealed to us the truth, and all of the things the Father has spoken to Yeshua from heaven, he has revealed to us so that we would bear fruit, the kind of fruit that has meaning and purpose. There are numerous passages from the Tanach which refer to the people of Israel as a vine (תְּבִיעָה), *Tehillim / Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 15:1-8, 17:5–10, and 19:10–14, Hosea 10:1*, just as we see the vine analogy being used for the sinful peoples and their connection to Sodom (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32*). These passages use the vine symbolism in regards to Israel being faithful and also to being the object of punishment due to their sins. *Ezekiel 15:1-8* states the following:

### ***Ezekiel 15:1-8***

*15:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 15:2 ‘Son of man, how is the wood of the vine better than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest? 15:3 ‘Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can men take a peg from it on which to*

*hang any vessel? 15:4 ‘If it has been put into the fire for fuel, and the fire has consumed both of its ends and its middle part has been charred, is it then useful for anything? 15:5 ‘Behold, while it is intact, it is not made into anything. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it still be made into anything! 15:6 ‘Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 15:7 and I set My face against them. Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them. Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I set My face against them. 15:8 ‘Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have acted unfaithfully,’ ‘declares the Lord God. (NASB)*

Ezekiel speaks of wood that is not useful, as is the case for the vine, it does not have much value in and of itself. A branch cut from a vine is worthless except to be burned in the fire. This fits with what Yeshua spoke of himself and the disciples who do not remain in him by keeping His Words. In *Ezekiel 17:5-10* we read about the vine imagery which refers to the last king of Judah (Zedekiah) before the destruction of Jerusalem, he broke his covenant that he made with Nebuchadnezzar. We also read how he allied himself with Egypt which is what gave him confidence to break with Nebuchadnezzar. The vine imagery that is given here in Ezekiel applies to Zedekiah's disobedience. By his joining with Egypt, he broke faith with God. In *Ezekiel 17:22-24* we read about a cedar sprig which grows into a lofty tree, this is a figurative description of the Messiah. It is significant here that the Messiah himself is not described as a vine but as a cedar tree, something that is sturdy, solid, things can be built by its wood, it provides shade, etc. Zedekiah thought in his heart that it was OK to make a covenant with Egypt. The spiritual parallels to this is found in this attitude of being secure, unthreatened, or as one who reads the curses in the Torah and says in his hear that he is OK (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:19*). Such people boast in themselves and their existence with physical gratifications just as the people of Sodom. (*Sforno*)

*on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32, Part 1)* The rabbis describe this situation of the one who looks to maximize one's gratifications is by his completely eschewing all manner of caring for the less fortunate (*Ezekiel 16:49*) The vine analogy given in Parashat Haazinu describes those who have joined themselves with Sodom (like Zedekiah with Egypt) and they sprout forth poison grapes. This growth of something that is not natural in the clusters of grapes, the spoiled fruit, comes out in the development of erroneous philosophies, doctrines, and theologies, that primarily focus upon justifying one's conduct and rationalizing sin. The correlation of this to the sins of the flesh are self-centeredness, pride, and arrogance. This leads to the idea that the Lord God does not see or does not care suggesting there is no personal God. (*Sforno on Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:32, Part 3*) They misunderstand God's presence among His people, and God's patience with the sinner. (*1 Timothy 1:16*) This is why what Moshe states after his words of the song in Parashat Haazinu according to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:46-47*

מו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שְׁיוֹם לְבָבְכֶם לְכָל-הַדָּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי,  
מֵעֵיד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תְּצֻוּם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְשָׁמֶר לְעֵשֶׂזֶת אֶת-כָּל-דָּבָרִי הַתּוֹרָה  
הַזֹּאת: מֹזֶה כִּי לֹא-דָבָר רַק הַוָּא מִכֶּם כִּי-הַוָּא חַיִּיכֶם וּבְכֶר הַזָּה פָּאָרִיכֶם  
*32:46 he said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. 32:47 For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."*" (*NASB*) These are some of the final instructions of Moshe to the people on the importance of God's Word prior to his going up the mountain and dying. (*Mount Nebo, see Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:6*) Moshe describes the importance of instructing our children in God's Word, and how God's Word is not empty, but it is the very life that we are to live! Yeshua the Messiah, prior to his death, He gave similar instructions. Specifically, in *John 15* Yeshua uses the vine analogy and he uses the word "*abide*" which occurs 10 times in *John 15*. This is a Torah centric picture that accurately conveys our relationship with God, between the Messiah and His people (disciples). The word "*abide*" means to dwell, continue, endure, or to tarry. This suggests a continuing thing, it is not a one time event, it is the act of faithfulness on behalf of God's

people, it is the consistent walk with God in heaven according to His Word. Yeshua said "*I am the vine and you are the branches*" (*John 15:5*); this is everyone who believes in Yeshua as the Messiah of God, and he tells us to abide in Him (*John 15:4*). This signifies our responsibility as the branches to abide, just as the Torah is commanding us to remain in God's Word, and the counterpart / warnings we read of Zedekiah and others who turned from this truth. Remaining in the word is essential for remaining in Him, in the Messiah! Yeshua explained this when he said let His word abide in us (*John 15:7*). The writing of God's Word into our hearts and minds, is what Moshe is describing here in Parashat Haazinu (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:46-47*). Obedience is a central aspect of abiding (*John 15:10*). Obedience is impossible without the indwelling of God's Spirit, direction, and guidance. The abiding is also a community thing, where we have fellowship with others, and this is illustrated in His command to love one another just as He loved us. (*John 15:12*) Can you see the connection to the Torah and the rabbinic interpretation that the one who does not abide seeks to maximize pleasures and eschews all manner of carrying for others as the main focus is upon self, this parallels one who joins himself with Sodom? Only spoiled fruit is the result of those who turn from God's ways, and the result is the development of erroneous philosophies, doctrines, and theologies, that primarily focus upon justifying one's conduct and rationalizing sin. God's desire is that we bear much lasting fruit by abiding in Christ. This isn't a sporadic endeavor done only when convenient as is the concept of "*every man doing what he feels is right in his own eyes.*" This is a matter of consistency, it's an enduring commitment to remain in God's Word and continue in obedience and love. This is how the Torah and the Gospel Message go hand in hand!