

Parashat Haazinu

Deuteronomy 32:1-33:29

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020



SUMMARY

Ha'azinu is the second-to-last Torah portion and almost the whole thing is a song or poem that Moshe recites to the Israelites. The poem reminds us of God's justice and patience even when Israel does things that are wrong. The words of the poem are written in the Torah scroll two columns.

Moshe also tells the Israelites to remember their history and their connections--through their families--with God. After Moshe recites the poem God tells Moshe to go up on top of Mount Nebo so Moshe can see the land of Israel--even though God will not let him enter it.

From Our Commentators:

Rashi--

יערף כמטר לקחי . .
שֶׁאֲנִי אוֹמֵר בְּפִנְיֵכֶם .
תּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּתְּתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
שֶׁהִיא חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם
בְּמִטֶּר זֶה שֶׁהוּא חַיִּים
לְעוֹלָם (עי' ספרי);
בְּאֶשֶׁר יַעֲרֹפוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם
טל ומטר

... I declare that the Torah which I gave to Israel (לקחי) is life to the world as the rain which is life to the world (cf. Sifrei Devarim 306:17) — even as the heavens drop down dew and rain.

For Discussion:

1) Moshe begins some of his last words of inspiration and guidance--in the form of a poem--by saying:

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־יְיָ:

Give ear, heavens, and I will speak;

Listen, land, to the sayings of my mouth.

But do the heavens have an ear? The heavens are a place, not a person. And can the land really listen? What might Moshe mean when he asks for the heavens to give him their ear and for the land to listen to his words?

2) In the second verse of this week's *parasha* there were a lot of water words:

Let my teaching drip like rain,

Let my words flow like dew,

Like droplets on new-growth,

Like showers on grass.

Why do you think Moshe might have water on his mind right now?

3) Moshe asks that his words of Torah poetry should be like droplets on new growth, like showers on grass. What do you think this might mean? How can hearing words be like water on new grass?