

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Parashat Haazinu

Deuteronomy 31:1-30

Taught By:

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



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

הָאָזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבֶּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי:

*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?**

**SHIRA:** Maybe Moshe is saying that he has been listening to G\*d for a long time and--in this final poem of his long speech--he wants G\*d to listen to his poem about justice and patience.

**NOAH:** I agree that Moshe must want G\*d to listen, and I think of G\*d as in heaven. I also think he might be talking to the Land of Israel-- which he has seen but will not enter. Maybe he wants the Land of Israel to hear the poetic story of the Israelites and the rules that he is speaking so that the Land knows that the Israelites have heard it.

**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?**

**SHIRA:** All these water connections remind me of the stories of Moshe hitting the rocks to bring water out of them--the first time because G\*d told him to and the second time, even when G\*d told him not to, but to talk to the rock instead. This second time--when he was supposed to talk to a rock to bring water out of it, but he hit it instead--is the reason that G\*d will not allow Moshe to enter the Promised Land. Maybe he has water on his mind because he is standing on the border of the Promised Land and is remembering why he can't go in.

**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?**

**SHIRA:** Sometimes when I get nervous about trying something new, my parents say, "What's the worst that can happen?" Then I think about it and it's never anything so bad, so it gives me strength to do what I want to do.

**NOAH:** My mom told me not be afraid of what you want to do with your life and not turn back and it made me feel strong like water on new grass.

