

THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE SONG OF MOSES :  
DEUTERONOMY 32.1-43

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ABSTRACT

This study will discuss the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32.1-43) from a form-critical perspective. The scholarly consensus is that the Song is a lawsuit in which YHWH charges his people with unfaithfulness. Israel's history is recounted, stressing both God's faithfulness and Israel's rebellion. As a result of this rebellion YHWH sentences the nation to punishment by a "foolish nation."

In contrast to this consensus, it will be argued that the internal evidence of the Song points to its origins in Israel's liturgy. Comparing it to the Psalter, parallels to hymns will be demonstrated that will strengthen this argument. The implication of this conclusion is that the Song does not describe an historical event. The Song does not recount YHWH's judgment upon his people; it was meant to inculcate them in the consequences of infidelity.