

# Deuteronomy 32:5-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-32/deuteronomy-325-6/>

*Moses contrasts God's justice, steadfast love, and faithfulness with Israel's foolishness and apostasy.*

In stark contrast to the Suzerain (Ruler) God Who is *perfect, righteous, upright, and without injustice* (v. 4), the Israelites (His vassal) *have acted corruptly* (or "dealt falsely") *toward Him* (v. 5). In spite of the countless blessings He has given His people, they have repaid Him with depraved and disloyal behavior. The episode of the golden calf ([Exodus 32-34](#)) was one of many examples.

The Israelites acted as if *they are not His children*. How could the LORD's covenant people be so disobedient? Moses reasoned that it was *because of their defect* (Hebrew "mūm," "blemish"), that they were a *perverse and crooked generation*. They were supposed to act like they were the LORD's people, but instead they did quite the opposite. Instead of following in the life-giving ways of communal harmony and mutual benefit, they chose instead to follow the pagan ways of human exploitation.

For this reason, Moses asked Israel two questions in verse 6 to invite them to think about their perverse condition. The first question was *do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people?* (v. 6). In this question, Moses addressed Israel directly, accusing them of responding to the LORD's benefactions with ingratitude. To depart from God's righteous ways is *foolish*, because it leads to self-harm and death ([Romans 6:23](#)).

In the Hebrew text, the personal name "LORD" is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. It is the ways of the LORD that lead to life and flourishing. The verb translated *repay* in the phrase *do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people* accuses the Israelites of dealing unfaithfully with their Suzerain (Ruler) God. The Israelites are then described as *foolish*, meaning that they showed no understanding of what was in their own self-interest. They did not recognize that their righteous God always deals righteously with humans, so they sought their own self-destructive ways. The Israelites were also described as *unwise*, meaning they did not act in a way that was actually in their true self-interest. They showed no fear of

the LORD. They did not heed His warnings, and chose instead to plummet headlong into ways of destruction.

In the second question, Moses asked *Is not He your Father who has bought you?* This rhetorical question expected a “yes” answer from the Israelites. Yes, God was Israel’s father. And as their father, the Suzerain (Ruler) God *had bought* Israel, redeeming them from slavery in Egypt and bringing them into existence as a people. Not only had He *bought* them, the Suzerain God had *made* Israel and *established* them as a national entity. He made them a people of His treasured possession ([Exodus 19:4-6](#)). God alone caused Israel to exist as a nation.

Therefore, they owed Him loyalty and gratitude. Moreover, they should have sufficient wisdom to understand that this God who has the power to deliver them also knows the path that leads to their greatest self-interest. But the people were stiff-necked, and instead sought their own way. The One who *has made you and established you* is the One they ought to trust to know what is best for them. But rather than trust the benevolence of their God, they chose to seek their own way.

#### **Biblical Text:**

**<sup>5</sup>They have acted corruptly toward Him,  
They are not His children, because of their defect;  
But are a perverse and crooked generation.**

**<sup>6</sup>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.**