**Figurative Language for God in Deuteronomy**

| Theme | Reference | Hebrew Verse | English Verse | Figurative Language Analysis |
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| **Familial** 👪 | Deut. 1:31 | וּבַמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ **אֲשֶׁר נְשָׂאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ' כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא־אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ** בְּכָל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הֲלַכְתֶּм עַד־בֹּאֲכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה | and in the wilderness, where you saw **how your God ה' carried you, as a householder carries his son**, all the way that you traveled until you came to this place. | **Simile:** God's protective guidance is directly compared to a father tenderly and tirelessly carrying his young son, emphasizing gentleness, strength, and intimate care. |
|  | Deut. 8:5 | וְיָדַעְתָּ עִם־לְבָבֶךָ כִּי **כַּאֲשֶׁר יְיַסֵּר אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ' מְיַסְּרֶךָּ** | Bear in mind that **your God ה' disciplines you just as a householder disciplines his son**. | **Simile:** Divine discipline is framed as the corrective, loving action of a father. This casts God's difficult decrees not as mere punishment but as instruction intended for Israel's growth and benefit. |
|  | Deut. 14:1 | **בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם'** לֹא תִתְגֹּדְדוּ וְלֹא־תָשִׂימוּ קָרְחָה בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם לָמֵת | **You are children of your God ה'**. You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead. | **Metaphor:** Israel's identity is defined by a filial relationship with God. This establishes a covenantal bond of belonging, mutual obligation, and special status that dictates their behavior. |
|  | Deut. 15:15 | וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם **וַיִּפְדְּךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ'** עַל־כֵּן אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה הַיּוֹם | Bear in mind that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and **your God ה' redeemed you**; therefore I enjoin this commandment upon you today. | **Metaphor:** The term "redeem" (פדה) draws from the legal act of a kinsman buying back a relative from slavery. It frames God's liberation of Israel not just as an act of power, but as the fulfillment of a familial duty. |
|  | Deut. 32:6 | הֲ לַה' תִּגְמְלוּ־זֹאת עַם נָבָל וְלֹא חָכָם הֲלוֹא־**הוּא אָבִיךָ קָּנֶךָ** הוּא עָשְׂךָ וַיְכֹנְנֶךָ | Do you thus requite ה', O dull and witless people? Is not this **the Father who created you**—Fashioned you and made you endure! | **Metaphor:** God is identified as Israel's "Father," whose act of "creating" or "acquiring" (קנך) establishes their very existence and God's foundational claim upon them. |
|  | Deut. 32:18 | צוּר **יְלָדְךָ** תֶּשִׁי וַתִּשְׁכַּח **קֵל מְחֹלְלֶךָ** | You neglected the Rock **who begot you**, Forgot **the God who labored to bring you forth**. | **Metaphors:** Divine creation is depicted with intensely maternal imagery. God is the one who "begot" (ילד) and "labored" (חול) like a mother in childbirth, signifying an origin of profound intimacy, pain, and effort. |
| **Bodily** 💪 | Deut. 29:19 | לֹא־יֹאבֶה ה' סְלֹחַ לוֹ כִּי אָז **יֶעְשַׁן אַף־ה'** וְקִנְאָתוֹ בָּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרָבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל־הָאָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה... | ה' will never forgive that party. Rather, **ה'’s anger will rage [lit. ה''s nose will smoke]** and passion will rage against them, till every sanction recorded in this book comes down upon them... | **Metaphor:** An intense image of divine anger. A "smoking nose" (יעשן אף) portrays an imminent and furious eruption of destructive power, making the divine emotion visceral and terrifying. |
|  | Deut. 31:17 | וְחָרָה אַפִּי בוֹ בַיּוֹם־הַהוּא וַעֲזַבְתִּים וְ**הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי מֵהֶם** וְהָיָה לֶאֱכֹל וּמְצָאֻהוּ רָעוֹת רַבּוֹת וְצָרוֹת... | Then My anger will flare up against them, and I will abandon them and **hide My countenance from them**. They shall be ready prey; and many evils and troubles shall befall them... | **Metaphor:** The withdrawal of divine favor is depicted as God "hiding his face" (פני). This anthropomorphic act signifies a complete relational rupture, abandonment, and a refusal to see or respond to Israel's suffering. |
|  | Deut. 32:41 | אִם־שַׁנּוֹתִי בְּרַק חַרְבִּי וְ**תֹאחֵז בְּמִשְׁפָּט יָדִי** אָשִׁיב נָקָם לְצָרָי וְלִמְשַׂנְאַי אֲשַׁלֵּם | When I whet My flashing blade And **My hand lays hold on judgment**, Vengeance will I wreak on My foes, Will I deal to those who reject Me. | **Metaphor:** The abstract concept of "judgment" is personified as a physical object that God's "hand" (ידי) can seize. This conveys God's direct, active, and sovereign control over the execution of justice. |
|  | Deut. 33:27 | מְעֹנָה אֱלֹקֵי' קֶדֶם וּמִתַּחַת **זְרֹעֹת עוֹלָם** וַיְגָרֶשׁ מִפָּנֶיךָ אוֹיֵב וַיֹּאמֶר הַשְׁמֵד | The ancient God is a refuge, A support are **the arms everlasting**. He drove out the enemy before you By His command: Destroy! | **Metaphor:** God’s eternal power to support and protect is personified as "everlasting arms" (זרעת עולם). This image gives a tangible sense of being held, upheld, and secured by an inexhaustible divine strength. |
| **Physical** 🤝 | Deut. 4:4 | וְאַתֶּם **הַדְּבֵקִים בַּה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם'** חַיִּים כֻּלְּכֶם הַיּוֹם | while you, **who held fast to your God ה'**, are all alive today. | **Metaphor:** Covenant loyalty is described with the physical verb for clinging or gluing (דבק). This powerfully casts the ideal relationship with God as one of inseparable, steadfast adherence and intimacy. |
|  | Deut. 7:7 | לֹא מֵרֻבְּכֶם מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים **חָשַׁק ה' בָּכֶם** וַיִּבְחַר בָּכֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם הַמְעַט מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים | It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that **ה' grew attached to you** and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; | **Metaphor:** God's elective choice is described with חשק, a verb denoting deep, passionate, physical desire or attachment. This frames divine love not as a sterile theological concept but as a profound, emotional bond. |
|  | Deut. 33:26 | אֵין **כָּקֵל** יְשֻׁרוּן **רֹכֵב שָׁמַיִם בְּעֶזְרֶךָ** וּבְגַאֲוָתוֹ שְׁחָקִים | O Jeshurun, there is none like God, **Riding through the heavens to help you**, Through the skies in His majesty. | **Metaphor:** God is depicted as a divine warrior riding a celestial chariot. This image portrays God's supreme power, majesty, and swift ability to traverse the cosmos to intervene on Israel's behalf. |
| **Elemental** 🔥 | Deut. 4:24 | כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ' **אֵשׁ אֹכְלָה הוּא** **קֵל** קַנָּא | For your God ה' **is a consuming fire**, an impassioned God. | **Metaphor:** God's nature is equated with a "consuming fire" (אש אכלה). This highlights the dangerous and purifying nature of divine holiness and jealousy, which destroys all rivals and unfaithfulness. |
|  | Deut. 31:15 | וַיֵּרָא ה' בָּאֹהֶל **בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן** וַיַּעֲמֹד עַמּוּד הֶעָנָן עַל־פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל | ה' appeared in the Tent, **in a pillar of cloud**, the pillar of cloud having come to rest at the entrance of the tent. | **Metaphor:** The visible, manifest presence of the invisible God is represented by a "pillar of cloud" (עמוד ענן). This natural element serves as a physical vehicle for divine immanence, guiding and revealing God to the people. |
|  | Deut. 32:22 | כִּי־**אֵשׁ קָדְחָה בְאַפִּי** וַתִּיקַד עַד־שְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּית וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ וִיבֻלָהּ וַתְּלַהֵט מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים | For **a fire has flared in My wrath** and burned to the bottom of Sheol, Has consumed the earth and its increase, Eaten down to the base of the hills. | **Metaphor:** This combines a bodily metaphor ("my nose/wrath") with an elemental one. The "fire" (אש) that erupts from God's anger is depicted as a cosmic, destructive force capable of consuming the entire created order. |
| **Geological** ⛰️ | Deut. 32:4 | **הַצּוּר** תָּמִים פָּעֳלוֹ כִּי כָל־דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפָּט **קֵל** אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין עָוֶל צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא | **The Rock!**—whose deeds are perfect, Yea, all God’s ways are just; A faithful God, never false, True and upright indeed. | **Metaphor:** A primary epithet for God, "The Rock" (הצור) signifies ultimate stability, strength, steadfastness, and reliability. God is the unshakeable foundation upon which Israel's existence is built. |
|  | Deut. 32:15 | וַיִּשְׁמַן יְשֻׁרוּן וַיִּבְעָט שָׁמַנְתָּ עָבִיתָ כָּשִׂיתָ וַיִּטֹּשׁ אֱלֹקַ' עָשָׂהוּ וַיְנַבֵּל **צוּר יְשֻׁעָתוֹ** | So Jeshurun grew fat and kicked... They forsook the God who made them And spurned **the Rock of their support**. | **Metaphor:** This specifies the function of the Rock metaphor. God is the geological foundation of Israel's salvation (ישועה), their source of safety and deliverance. |
|  | Deut. 32:31 | כִּי **לֹא כְצוּרֵנוּ צוּרָם** וְאֹיְבֵינוּ פְּלִילִים | For **their rock is not like our Rock**, In our enemies’ own estimation. | **Metaphor:** The "Rock" metaphor is used polemically to assert God's unique power. The "rocks" (i.e., gods or sources of security) of other nations are declared incomparable and inferior to Israel's divine foundation. |
| **Military** ⚔️ | Deut. 32:41 | אִם־שַׁנּוֹתִי **בְּרַק חַרְבִּי** וְתֹאחֵז בְּמִשְׁפָּט יָדִי אָשִׁיב נָקָם לְצָרָי וְלִמְשַׂנְאַי אֲשַׁלֵּם | When I whet **My flashing blade** And My hand lays hold on judgment, Vengeance will I wreak on My foes, Will I deal to those who reject Me. | **Metaphor:** God's impending judgment is depicted as a divine weapon, a "flashing sword" or "lightning-blade" (ברק חרבי). This portrays divine retribution as swift, terrifying, and decisively powerful. |
|  | Deut. 33:29 | ...עַם נוֹשַׁע בַּה' **מָגֵן עֶזְרֶךָ וַאֲשֶׁר־חֶרֶב גַּאֲוָתֶךָ** וְיִכָּחֲשׁוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ לָךְ וְאַתָּה עַל־בָּמוֹתֵימוֹ תִדְרֹךְ | ...A people delivered by ה', **Your protecting Shield, your Sword triumphant!** Your enemies shall come cringing before you, And you shall tread on their backs. | **Metaphors:** God is identified directly with the instruments of a warrior. As a "Shield" (מגן), God provides impenetrable defense. As a "Sword" (חרב), God secures victory and triumph. God *is* Israel's defense and offense. |
| **Natural World** 🦅 | Deut. 32:11 | **כְּנֶשֶׁר יָעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל־גּוֹזָלָיו יְרַחֵף יִפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו יִקָּחֵהוּ יִשָּׂאֵהוּ עַל־אֶבְרָתוֹ** | **Like an eagle who rouses its nestlings, Gliding down to its young, So did [God] spread wings and take them, Bear them along on pinions;** | **Simile:** An extended simile comparing God's actions during the Exodus to an eagle teaching its young to fly. It beautifully combines images of majestic power, gentle nurturing, protection, and parental instruction. |