SUMMARY OF HAAZINU

The Tora portion we read this week, Ha-azinu, consists of a poem by Moshe. This poem is of a prophetic order since it anticipates the good and the bad that will happen to the Jews in their history.

Moshe invokes the heavens and the earth as eternal witnesses of this prophecy. In this poem, the heavens and the earth begin by praising God, declaring He is righteous and just and that His children, the Jewish people, cause their own misery by forgetting and abandoning God. And especially for not being thankful and deliberately ignoring that God is the source of all blessings.

Moses pleads with the Israelites to contemplate history and see how God protected Israel in the desert as an eagle cares for her young. God will establish them in the promised land where they will lack nothing. But as sometimes happens with a spoiled child who receives everything from his parents, the people of Israel will ignore God, rebel against Him, and abandon Him. Ironically, this will happen because they now have so much blessing and abundance that they feel they do not "need" God. They will be searching now for false gods from pagan peoples.

God will be indignant at this lack of gratitude on the part of His children and as a consequence o will then "hide His Face," that is, suspend His special protection over the Jews. The pagan peoples will then invade the land, and the people will be exiled and on the verge of extinction. And at that moment, the Jewish people will wrongly think that all this happens to them because "God does not exist". That is why this poem represents a testimony: to know that when Israel is not protected, the reason is that they have abandoned their Protector and moved away from Him.

However, the time will come when God will redeem Israel and would punish the nations that made His beloved people suffer. Israel will then sing praises to the Creator.

In the last part of this short but very profound Parasha, Moshe teaches this poem to the Jews. He implores them to pay close attention to it since the Tora is not a superficial text but a Guide that gives meaning to our lives. And only when we cling to it will we strengthen ourselves and B"H have the

merit to live uninterruptedly in our land.
God tells Moshe to go up Mount Nebo. From there, the great leader of Israel will see the promised land before he dies.