

Parashah 34 B'midbar (In the Desert)

B'midbar (In the Desert) {Numbers 1:1 – 4:20}

Haftorah: Hoshea (Hosea) 1:10 – 2:20

B'rit Hadashah suggested readings for Parashah

1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 6:11-18

This week's portion is from Numbers 1:1 – 4:20

(Bold, Underlining and Italics added for emphasize)

{NKJV-New King James Version, CJB-Complete Jewish Bible, TEV-Today's English Version}

Our Prayer today, for understanding of G-d's word with His promises and requirements for us:

Psalm 86:11,6 (NKJV) "6 ***Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer***; and attend to the voice of my supplications... 11 ***teach me your way, O LORD***; I will walk in your truth; ***unite my heart*** to fear your name."

This week, we are beginning with the book of Numbers/B'midbar. Let us retreat and repeat in a nutshell, what we have thus far learned. Exodus/Sh'mot and Leviticus/Vayikra give the history of redemption and escape for Israel from Egypt, starting the wilderness trek to the Promised Land, the offer and acceptance of covenant with Almighty G-d at Mt. Sinai; giving of the Torah/the Law; the building of the Tabernacle (representative of G-d residing among Israel); consecration of the Priests; definitions of holiness; clean and unclean; common and uncommon all with specific instruction for the people and Priests of Israel in matters of proper worship using all the above mentioned instruction. Israel is still in the wilderness, barely into their journey.

B'midbar/Numbers covers two censuses, which were commanded to be performed, the instruction for moving through the wilderness, and the proper method of packing and carrying the tabernacle in a reverent manner, so as not to incur the wrath of G-d. This is covered in the first ten chapters and the rest of B'midbar/Numbers we will follow Israel through the wilderness to the borders of the Promised Land. During this journey we will learn of the trails, tribulations and the death of an entire generation, all because of the difficulty that generation had in obedience to G-d. Yet in His mercy and grace, G-d did not forsake Israel.

There is no coincidence in the timing shown through G-d's instructions. It is precise timing!

Numbers 1:1 (NKJV) "1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:" ***Remember this!!***

1. The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying.

א. וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי בְּאֵהָל
מוֹעֵד בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִי
לְצֵאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר:

Going back a little bit in our Torah study to Sh'mot/Exodus 16, remember the command to Israel concerning the manna? For six days, manna was to be collected and then only what would used that day, with a double portion on the 6th day, to be sufficient for the people through the Sabbath. In verse 16 the

word *omer* is used for describing each person's "portion" and is used interchangeably with manna. Perhaps this also teaches us that the information we need, will be given as needed concerning the times we live in, the last days of the end times. G-d will give the understanding and information needed concerning the prophecies as ***sufficient for the day only!!*** Gathering more or trying to gain more information than revealed by G-d, through speculation and the words of self proclaimed prophets will give rise to spoiled and rotten manna and often times contradict the rest of scripture.

Returning to the precise time frame at Numbers 1:1, reveals how it connects with the manna and the precise timing, *as it is first new moon which is between the waving of the first fruits of barley and Shavuot (Pentecost)*. Note this puts us in the middle of **"counting of the omer", leading to the fiftieth day, Shavuot or Pentecost.**

Continuing with counting as relevant in Numbers/B'midbar, the census is given with great detail in the next couple of chapters. As a part of the census, G-d gave instructions also as to how to organize this vast encampment of the people of Israel. The instructions were according to tribe, who was the "chief" of the tribe, where they were to camp and how to set up around the tabernacle in each location. More importantly, G-d's instructions for this census were according to age and connected to "military service". Only those (males) twenty years and older were counted. There was also an exception to this the ***first*** census, for the tribe of Levi; the Levites were exempted from the census.

Numbers 1:47-53 (NKJV) ⁴⁷ But the Levites were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe; ⁴⁸ for the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying: ⁴⁹ ***"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel; ⁵⁰ but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle. ⁵¹ And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. The outsider who comes near shall be put to death. ⁵² The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies; ⁵³ but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony."***

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| <p>47. But the Levites, according to their father's tribe were not numbered among them.</p> | <p>מז. והלויים למטה אבתם לא התפקדו בתוכם:</p> |
| <p>48. The Lord spoke to Moses saying:</p> | <p>מח. וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר:</p> |
| <p>49. Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, and you shall not reckon their sum among the children of Israel.</p> | <p>מט. אך את מטה לוי לא תפקד ואת ראשם לא תשא בתוך בני ישראל:</p> |
| <p>50. But you shall appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its vessels and over all that belong to it; they shall carry the Tabernacle and they shall minister to it, and they shall encamp around the Tabernacle.</p> | <p>נ. ואתה הפקד את הלויים על משכן העדת ועל כל כליו ועל כל אשר לו המה ישאו את המשכן ואת כל כליו והם ישרתהו וסביב למשכן יחנו:</p> |
| <p>51. When the Tabernacle is set to travel, the Levites shall dismantle it; and when the Tabernacle camps, the Levites shall erect it; any outsider [non Levite] who approaches shall be put to death.</p> | <p>נא. ובנסעה המשכן יורידו אתו הלויים ובחנת המשכן יקימו אתו הלויים והזר הקרב יומת:</p> |
| <p>52. The children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his own camp and each man by his division.</p> | <p>נב. וחנו בני ישראל איש על מחנהו ואיש על דגלו לצבאתם:</p> |
| <p>53. The Levites shall encamp around the Mishkan of the Testimony, so that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel and the Levites shall keep the</p> | <p>נג. והלויים יחנו סביב למשכן העדת ולא יהיה קצף על עדת בני ישראל ושמרו הלויים את משמרת משכן העדות:</p> |

The Levites were commissioned to take care of and also protect the holiness of the tabernacle. We will see how this works in a future Torah study of Numbers, where a Levite, Phinehas stopped the "unholy" that was approaching the tabernacle and thus interceded on behalf of Israel and through his obedience with action, stopped a plague among the children of Israel.

As we have learned previously, G-d had set up as a basis for redemption the principal of exchange or substitution. In this redemptive theme the "first born" are prominent. Retreating back again in our studies, remember G-d's commands that the first born are to consecrated to Him, thus setting apart and owning the first in Israel. However for the special calling or commission G-d gave the Levites, he chooses to use His prerogative of the exchange or substitution principal He instituted.

When G-d called the Levites, the Tribe of Levi to special calling or duty, *another census was needed and this time the age of those counted, the males of Levi, are counted from a very early age.*

Numbers 3:14-16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: ¹⁵ ***"Number the children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above."*** ¹⁶ So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded."

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| 14. The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai desert, saying: | יֵד. וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי לֵאמֹר: |
| 15. Count the children of Levi according to their fathers' house according to their families. Count all males from the age of one month and upward. | טו. פָּקֹד אֶת בְּנֵי לְוִי לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם
כָּל זָכָר מִבֶּן חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה תִּפְקְדֵם: |
| 16. So Moses counted them according to God's word, just as he was commanded. | טז. וַיִּפְקֹד אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה עַל פִּי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה: |

Understand? G-d redeemed the first born of Israel by substituting or exchanging the tribe of Levi who were the caretakers and protectors of the tabernacle, the priests of G-d and representatives of Israel to G-d. However there were **273** more first-born males in the rest of the tribes of Israel than those in the tribe of Levi.

Numbers 3:44-48 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ⁴⁵ ***"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. The Levites shall be Mine: I am the LORD.*** ⁴⁶ *And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites,* ⁴⁷ *you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take them in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs.* ⁴⁸ *And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons."*

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| 44. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: | מד. וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: |
| 45. Take the Levites instead of all the firstborns among the children of Israel and the Levites' animals instead of their animals, and the Levites shall be Mine I am the Lord. | מה. קַח אֶת הַלְוִיִּם תַּחַת כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת בְּהֵמַת הַלְוִיִּם תַּחַת בְּהֵמָתָם וְהָיוּ
לִי הַלְוִיִּם אֲנִי יְהוָה: |
| 46. As for the two hundred and seventy three of the children of Israel who required redemption, who are in excess of the Levites, | מו. וְאֵת פְּדוּיֵי הַשְּׁלֵשָׁה וְהַשְּׁבַעִים וְהַמְּאָתַיִם
הָעֶדְפִים עַל הַלְוִיִּם מִבְּכוֹר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: |
| 47. you shall take five shekels per head, according to the holy shekel, by which the shekel is twenty gerahs. | מז. וְלָקַחְתָּ חֲמֵשֶׁת שֶׁקֶלִים לְגִלְגֶּלֶת
בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ תִּקַּח עֲשָׂרִים גֶּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל: |

48. You shall give the money to Aaron and his sons, in redemption for the firstborns who are in excess of them.

מח. ונתתה הכסף לאהרן ולבניו פדויי
העֲדָפִים בָּהֶם:

Those who were taken in exchange for redemption of the first born of Israel (including their livestock), the Levites belong to G-d as he said, ***“THE LEVITES SHALL BE MINE: I AM THE LORD”***.

Continuing on, with G-d's Grace and Mercy, He gives the instructions for packing up, moving and resetting up the tabernacle in a new location in Israel's journey to the Promised Land. We find a clan in the tribe of Levi is assigned special duties of handling and carrying the tabernacle and all items of the holy and the most holy. Another census, this time within the tribe of Levi itself; counting the clan of K'hat who are given the special duties of physical labor in moving and maintaining the tabernacle. Remember back through Leviticus of all the special instructions concerning whom can do what and what can be done at what times through out the tabernacle. These instructions included warnings of punishment for not obeying the instructions given.

As a matter of practicality and common sense, once G-d was ready for the Israelites to move from a location, the manifestation of His very presence was lifted from the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies and the Most Holy, enabling those charged with the duties of packing, moving everything and then setting it all back up were not in conflict with G-d's commands and did not cause someone to inadvertently "sin" resulting in harsh punishment.

G-d is so great with His workings, instructions and blessings!!

Haftarah - Prophets

Hoshea (Hosea) 1:10 – 2:20

This week's Haftarah begins with the words, "The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea [shore], which can be neither measured nor counted." An appropriate reading for the first Torah teaching of the Book of Numbers.

Hosea 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ "Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You *are* not My people,' *There* it shall be said to them, 'You *are* sons of the living God.'

Hosea first prophesies about the eventual reunification of the houses of Judah and Israel. During the Messianic Era, these two perennial antagonists will make peace and appoint a single leader.

Hosea 1:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great *will be* the day of Jezreel!

Hosea then rebukes the Jewish people for their infidelity, abandoning their "husband," G-d, and

engaging in adulterous affairs with pagan deities. He describes the punishments they will suffer because of this unfaithfulness.

Hosea 2:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ Say to your brethren, 'My people,' And to your sisters, 'Mercy *is shown.*'
² Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, And her adulteries from between her breasts; ³ Lest I strip her naked And expose her, as in the day she was born, And make her like a wilderness, And set her like a dry land, And slay her with thirst. ⁴ "I will not have mercy on her children, For they *are* the children of harlotry.

Hosea 2:13 (NKJV) ¹³ I will punish her for the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, and went after her lovers; But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

Eventually, though, Hosea reassures the Jews that they will repent, and G-d will accept them back wholeheartedly. The Haftorah concludes with the moving words:

Hosea 2:17-20 (NKJV) ¹⁷ For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more. ¹⁸ In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, And *with* the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely. ¹⁹ ***"I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In loving kindness and mercy; ²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the LORD.***

B'rit Hadashah – New Testament

1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 6:11-18

Time to review and summarize this week's teaching and study.

This week, we are beginning with the book of Numbers/B'midbar. As already mentioned above, we have learned from Exodus/Sh'mot and Leviticus/Vayikra the history of redemption and escape for Israel from Egypt, starting the wilderness trek to the Promised Land; the offer and acceptance of covenant with Almighty G-d at Mt. Sinai; giving of the Torah/the Law; the building of the Tabernacle (representative of God residing among Israel); consecration of the Priests; definitions of holiness; clean and unclean; common and uncommon all with specific instruction for the people and Priests of Israel in matters of proper worship using all the above mentioned instruction. Israel is still in the wilderness, barely into their journey.

Reemphasizing, B'midbar/Numbers covers two censuses, which were commanded to be performed, the instruction for moving through the wilderness, and the proper method of packing and carrying the tabernacle in a reverent manner, so as not to incur the wrath of G-d. This is covered in the first ten chapters and the rest of B'midbar/Numbers we will follow Israel through the wilderness to the borders of the Promised Land. During this journey we will learn of the trails, tribulations and the death of an entire generation, all because of the difficulty that generation had in obedience to G-d. Yet in His mercy and grace, G-d did not forsake Israel.

As we know, many things have changed with Yeshua HaMashiach. Through Yeshua we are now of the priesthood, which as is with Yeshua, according to the order of Melchizedek:

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV) ⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own

special people, *that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

While we do not have a tabernacle to guard and defend against un-holiness, we, if a part of this priesthood have the duty and obligation to guard and defend the Holiness of G-d Almighty, His Truth and His word. We are duty bound and obligated to guard and defend the Holiness of the Body of Yeshua, the Body of Christ.

Just as in the physical, the Levites were given the “physical as well as the spiritual tools” to accomplish their duties, we are given the “spiritual tools” for which to perform and accomplish our duties as well. This we find in:

Ephesians 6:11-18 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God*, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—“

Ephesians 6:11-18 (CJB) ¹¹ *Use all the armor and weaponry that God provides*, so that you will be able to stand against the deceptive tactics of the Adversary. ¹² *For we are not struggling against human beings, but against the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers governing this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.* ¹³ So *take up every piece of war equipment God provides; so that when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist; and when the battle is won, you will still be standing.* ¹⁴ Therefore, stand! Have the belt of truth buckled around your waist, put on righteousness for a breastplate, ¹⁵ and wear on your feet the readiness that comes from the Good News of shalom. ¹⁶ Always carry the shield of trust, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of deliverance; along with the sword given by the Spirit, that is, the Word of God; ¹⁸ as you pray at all times, with all kinds of prayers and requests, in the Spirit, vigilantly and persistently, for all God’s people.”

Just as with the charge of the Levites to be a light to the nation of Israel, we are charged with being a light to the world, to bring to them the Good News of the Gospel. To show the world the grace that comes with the Yeshua HaMashiach / Jesus Christ the Messiah and his sacrifice for the salvation of all mankind!

Closing:

I would like to end with a quote from the Messianic Torah Devotional by Kevin Geoffrey:

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“As disciples of Messiah, we have been charged with carrying the burden for all mankind. The question is, are we willing to relinquish ownership over ourselves that we may be used by God to give life to the world? Out of all the people on earth, ADONAI has taken us for Himself – but not for our sake alone. By submitting our lives completely to His will, the loss of self will be gain for others and we will fulfill the sacrifice of service to which we have been called. Is the price of our lives too high to pay for the Master to call us, “Mine”?”

***YOU HAVE TO BE IN THE WORD,
FOR THE WORD TO BE IN YOU!***

Shabbat Shalom, G-d Bless and Keep you!

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