

Parashah #35

(Updated for 6.04.11)

Naso ~ נשא ~ Take (Lift, Bear Up, Carry, Elevate)

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 4:21~7:89

Haftarah: Shof'tim/Judges 13:2-25

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 7:53~8:11; Acts 21:17-32

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On several occasions I have mentioned my friend in Jerusalem, Orthodox Rabbi Ya'akov Youlus. I would like for you to keep his family in prayer, as Rabbi is no longer with us. He passed away Monday evening Jerusalem time (about 9:00 a.m. Monday our time). I will miss him greatly but will continue to "study with him" through the books he wrote.

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B'midbar/Numbers seems to be a continuation of things in the previous books:

- *B'resheet/Genesis* was historical.
- *Sh'mot/Exodus* depicted . . .
 - the birth of a nation
 - its rise from slavery to accepting HaShem
 - HaShem accepting the people
 - recording the laws and ordinances
- *Vayikra/Leviticus* dealt with . . .
 - Civil legislation
 - Social legislation
 - as well as detailing the laws and standards of living.
 - Ethical legislation
 - Ritualistic legislation
- This particular portion of *B'midbar/Numbers* addresses . . .
 - Details
 - Jealousy
 - and offerings, and offerings, and offerings, and offerings, and offerings, and offerings, and offerings, etc. etc.
 - Special vows
 - Blessings and offerings

For whatever reason, this week I wasn't able to really wrap myself around any one thing in particular in the Torah portion but here are some "bits and pieces" I found interesting. So I hope you will bear with me as I meander my way from here to wherever!

One thing I learned is: this Parashah is the longest one of the entire year. It contains 176 verses! Normally, *Naso* means *take* as in *to take a census* as Moshe was directed by HaShem to count the people. However, as one teacher indicated, the other meanings are also significant when you consider the following . . .

- The Sons of K'hat were to “lift, bear up, carry and take” the sacred items of the *Mishkan/Tabernacle*
- The Sons of Gershon were to “lift, bear up, carry and take” the hangings and coverings such as all things of fabric and/or animal hide of the entire Tabernacle structure.

Similarly, from the *B'rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant*, **Galatians 6:2** we are taught to take and “bear one another’s burdens – in this way you will be fulfilling the Torah’s true meaning, which the Messiah upholds.”

In our last Parashah, I could hardly get out of **B'midbar/Numbers 1 & 2** and felt badly about it. However, as we have learned in the past, when Abba wants us to learn something, He usually repeats it. Such is the case here. There are interesting statistics which are important for us to review before going on.

We acknowledge the Tabernacle sat in the center of the camp and the *L'vi'im/Levites* set up their tents immediately on the South, West, and North sides of the Tabernacle. **Chapters 3 & 4** gave us additional information concerning the counting of the Li'vi'im. Levi's sons, in order of birth, were . . .

- Gershon
- K'hat
- M'rari.
- Moshe and Aharon camped to the East or in front of the Tabernacle.
- K'hat's clan of 8,600 camped to the South.
- Gershon's clan of 7,500 camped to the West or behind the Tabernacle.
- M'rari's clan of 6,200 camped to the North.

In **Chapter 3**, Adonai instructed they should be counted from one month of age and over. **Chapter 4** indicates those between the ages of 30-50 should be counted and would enter the corps doing the work in the *Mishkan/Tabernacle/Tent of Meeting*. Those meeting this criteria totaled 8,580. Specifically, their numbers were . . .

- Gershon ~ 2,630
- K'hat ~ 2,750
- M'rari ~ 3,200

A little side note: Thirty is the number of consecration and maturity for ministry.

- **B'midbar/Numbers 4:35** “All the men from thirty to fifty . . .”;
- **B'reshet/Genesis 41:46** “Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh . . .”;
- **Sh'mu'el Bet/2nd Samuel 5:4** “David was thirty years old when he became king . . .”;
- **Luke 3:23** “Now Yeshua himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.”

Somehow, the number fifty, representing *Yovel/Jubilee* and the “right of return” probably figures in here also. For one thing, *Yovel/Jubilee* is a time of rest. With regard to the

Tabernacle work, those fifty and over were no longer required to do heavy work. I would imagine after 50 years of age, these men would become what we consider supervisors in today's culture. I still don't have all the details yet!

CHAPTER 4

Verses 4-15 tell in detail how Aharon and his sons are to pack and cover the most holy items in the Tabernacle. (Packers, only of the most holy items)

Then **verses 24-28** tell us the 2,630 eligible members of Gershon's families were responsible for serving and for transporting loads. They were to carry . . .

- the curtains of the tabernacle,
- it's covering and the leather covering above it,
- the screen for the entrance to the Tabernacle,
- the tapestries for the courtyard,
- the screen for the entrance to the courtyard by the tabernacle,
- the screen around the altar,
- along with the ropes and all the utensils they needed for their service
- AND they were to do the work connected with these items.

All of this was supervised by Aharon and his sons, specifically Itamar, who was to assign which person was to carry what. (Pack & Carry people ~ I wonder, were these the original cross – country movers?)

The 3,200 eligible members of M'rari's clan were responsible to carry . . .

- the frames,
- crossbars,
- post and sockets of the Tabernacle,
- the posts for the courtyard with their sockets,
- tent pegs,
- ropes and other accessories
- and everything having to do with their service.

Itamar assigned particular loads to specific persons by name. (**Verses 31-33**) (Pack & Carry people)

According to **verse 36**, K'hat's eligible clan members were 2,750. These members were responsible for carrying the especially holy things, after they had been covered and packed by

Aharon and his sons. The K'hat clan members were not to go into the Tabernacle nor look at or touch any of the items. They only carried them after the items had been packed and covered. (Carriers only)

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash offers this commentary on **verse 47**. Several translations use “. . . the work of service and the work of burden . . .” According to Rashi, the Sages explain the “work of service” is musical accompaniment, which was work done to enhance the service.

I don't want to seem sacrilegious but could this be where Walt Disney came up with “Whistle While You Work” and “Hi Ho Hi Ho It's Off To Work We Go” in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?

CHAPTER 5

Verses 1-4 address the issue of expelling from the camp . . .

- everyone with tzara'at,
- everyone with a discharge,
- everyone unclean from touching a corpse.

“The people of Isra'el did what Adonai had said to Moshe.”

The L~rd instructs Moshe to tell the people when they commit any kind of sin against another person, it breaks faith with HaShem (**verses 5-6**). Then follows the process to be absolved of ones guilt.

1. Confession of sin
2. Make full restitution
3. Add twenty percent
4. Give it to the victim or relative if victim is no longer living

If there is no relative, then restitution belongs to Adonai through the *Cohen/Priest*. Then a ram is to be offered for his atonement. It will belong to the Cohen as well (**verses 7-8**).

Verses 9 & 10 “Every contribution which the people of Isra'el consecrate and present to the Cohen will belong to him. Anything an individual consecrates will be his own (to allocate among the cohanim), but what a person gives to the Cohen will belong to him.” I address these verses because many people believe they can give large amounts of money to a particular ministry (so they can get their tax write-off) and then they want to tell the ministry what to do with it. According to these two verses, this isn't scriptural.

FIDELITY OR LACK THERE OF

Certain regulations concerning the relationships between husband and wife are covered next. Specifically, the “spirit of jealousy” may come over the man in the event his wife is unfaithful without his direct knowledge (verse 14). This particular mitzvot is called Sotah. While I considered those passages to be somewhat bizarre I found some commentaries concerning it, interesting. One of the Torah teachers spoke of the unique and mysterious *echad/one-ness, unity*. Even *Rabbi Sha’ul/Apostle Paul* spoke of in the *B’rit Hadashah / Renewed Covenant*. When HaShem joins a man and woman, they share the same (bah-sahr) *basar/flesh*. I believe our Abba Father preserves the holy union of two individuals made one, by giving them divine insight in matters of fidelity. As far as jealousy goes, it’s an okay emotion. Scripture tells us even Yehovah is a jealous G~d.

What I do not understand is, these actions were taken against the wife, whether she is guilty or not. However, not one word is mentioned concerning the husband who may or may not be guilty of the same!!!

We do know from Vayikra/Leviticus 20:10 **BOTH** the man and the woman caught in adultery were to be stoned to death, not just the woman.

In verse 22, we find the “first mention” of the word(s) Amen! Amen!

A side note: Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai, a leader of the Pharisees of Jerusalem before the destruction of the second Temple in 70 AD, became the founder of the Jewish academy at Jamnia. He emphasized the study of Torah as the primary religious duty for which humankind was created. He is remembered for his precise examination of biblical texts. It was this Rabbi who put a stop to the mitzvot of Sotah, which involved only the wife being subjected to drinking bitter water because the husband had a spirit of jealousy. His reasoning, it is reported, was many husbands were doing the very thing they were accusing their wives of doing and were not suffering any consequences. Way to go, Rabbi Zakkai!!!

A side, side note ☺: The above is also an example of the rabbinic attitude that they (the rabbis) are HaShem’s appointed on earth and, as such, have the right to change or delete scripture at will. This attitude has also spilled over into the church.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter Six describes the unique vow of (nah-zeer) *nazir/consecration to Adonai*. Known in English as the Nazerite vow, Verses 3 & 4 state the Nazir is to . . .

- Abstain from wine and other intoxicating liquor
- Not drink vinegar from either source

- Not drink grape juice
- Not eat grapes or raisins

And further more, he is not to eat **anything** from the grapevine, not even the grape-skins or the seeds! That's pretty stringent but apparently HaShem meant business if someone chose to take this particular vow.

The special vow of the Nazirite is best exemplified for us by . . .

- *Shimshon/Samson* in **Shof'tim/Judges 13:5**,
- *Sh'muel/Samuel* in **Sh'muel Alef/1st Samuel 1:11**,
- *Yochanan the Immerser/John the Baptist* in **Luke 1:13-15**
- *Yeshua, HaMashiach* (Jesus, the Messiah) in **Mattityahu/Matthew 26:29**
- *Rav Sha'ul/Apostle Paul* in **Acts 21:23-26**.
- *Ya'akov/James* (Yeshua's brother)***

The first three of these Nazirites were called to this vow before birth. Interestingly, our Haftarah, **Shof'tim/Judges 13:2-25**, tells of *Shimshon's/Samson's* parents' dedication of him to Adonai. One thing is sure, when HaShem calls us, He supernaturally equips us to perform the specific task to which we are called.

***Many people refer to James (Yeshua's brother) as James the Just. Actually, in the original Hebrew, James was referred to as (tzah-deek) *tsa'deek/righteous*. James the righteous. While there is no Biblical evidence, according to early church writings, James also took a lifelong Nazirite vow. He alone was permitted to enter the holy place, for his garments were not of wool but of linen. He used to enter the Sanctuary alone, and was often found on his knees beseeching forgiveness for the people. Eusebius quotes Hegesippus in his Ecclesiastical History, "James drank no wine or intoxicating liquor and ate no animal food; no razor came near his head." (Ecclesiastical History 23:4) Many wonder why the Nazirite vow was so popular among the early believers. Perhaps they regarded taking the vow as a mark of imitation of Yeshua. Gosh, they must have had WWJD, make that WWYD, way back then!

Note: Nazarite is frequently confused with Nazarine (from Nazareth).

Also in **verses 22-27**, we receive what is referred to as the Aharonic Blessing or Benediction, which follows:

Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha

(May Adonai bless you and keep you.)

Ya'er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka

(May Adonai make his face shine on you and show you his favor.)

Yissa Adonai panav eleikah v'yasem l'kha shalom

(May Adonai lift up his face toward you and give you peace.)

Adonai told *Moshe/Moses* to tell *Aharon/Aaron* and his sons to speak this blessing over the people. **Verse 27** “In this way they are to put my name on the people of Israel so that I will bless them.”

Rabbi Yehuda Appel made some interesting comments concerning this blessing.

Y’varekh’kha Adonai v’yishmerekha
May Adonai bless you and keep you.

This verse means the quantity of success bestowed upon you should be so great it needs special guarding.

Ya’er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka
May Adonai make his face shine on you and show you his favor.

This second verse is a blessing for us to be very close to HaShem and be infused with the drive to do well.

Yissa Adonai panav eleikah v’yasem l’kha shalom
May Adonai lift up his face toward you and give you peace.

And this final verse affirms the hope of all the impediments we have caused in our relationship with HaShem should be put aside and we should attain true peace through our wholeness with HaShem.

Today, it has become the custom for parents to use these beautiful words to bless their children every *Erev Shabbat/Friday night* at the Shabbat table. Additionally, this blessing is recited by the *Kohanim/Priests* at the daily morning service in Israel and on holidays in the Diaspora. The Sephardic Jews say the blessing every day, even in the Diaspora.

Another interesting note is the actual procedure of the priestly blessing. It involves more than the simple utterance of words. The positioning of the Kohen’s hands during the blessing is as important as the words themselves. The fingers of the Kohen are actually aligned in such a way as to represent HaShem’s holy name. (Remember how “Spock” on Star Trek would place his hands to make, what looked like a “W” with his fingers? That wasn’t a Star Trek thing IT WAS A HEBREW THING!!!! (And . . . in case you didn’t know, Leonard Nimoy, who played the role of “Spock”, is Jewish!) Also, the *right hand*, which represents *kindness*, is to be slightly elevated above the *left hand*, which represents *judgment*. According to the Sages, all this is designed to draw HaShem’s presence down upon the congregation.

CHAPTER 7

Did you notice in **verse 1** *Moshe/Moses*, all by himself . . .

- Erected the Tabernacle
- Anointed and consecrated the Tabernacle
- Anointed and consecrated all the furnishings
- Anointed and consecrated the altar and its utensils
- Anointed and consecrated each tribal leader

Well, maybe he didn't really do it by himself; maybe he was the "job foreman" and the credit for the Tabernacle being erected was given to him. Who knows?!?!?!?!?

On the first day of Nissan, in the second year, after being anointed and dedicated, the leaders of each clan made an offering of six covered wagons and twelve oxen ~ one ox for each leader and one wagon for every two leaders. Moshe received them and distributed them for the service of the Tabernacle.

- Gershon received two wagons and four oxen
- M'rari received four wagons and eight oxen
- K'hat received nothing (verses 1-9).

At first I thought "How unfair!" However, after re-reading Chapter 4 it became quite clear. Our Abba, Father, really does make provision for the ministry to which He calls us. K'hat's clan was to carry the most holy things on their shoulders. M'rari and Gershon, on the other hand, were in charge of carrying much heavier objects and were in need of oxen and wagons!

In the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, Rashi commented on **verse 2** "they were the leaders of the tribes". "They earned their position because they had been the Jewish foremen in Egypt and they willingly suffered beatings at the hands of the Egyptians rather than persecute their brethren."

The day the Altar was anointed and dedicated, according to **verse 10**, the leaders brought their offerings for the dedication. In other words, they were all going to make their offerings on the same day but according to **verse 11**, HaShem told Moshe, "one leader each day" was to bring his offering. The Chumash states the reason was to give honor to each leader and to prolong the celebration. (I keep tellin' ya . . . the Hebrew people love to party and on top of that, it appears to be a G~d idea!!!) Also, it is said Moshe didn't know which order they should follow so HaShem instructed them to bring their offerings in the order the tribes followed during their trek through the wilderness. In case you have forgotten, here it is:

From the East side:

- 1st day Nachshon, leader of the tribe of *Y'hudah/Judah*
- 2nd day N'tan'el, leader of the tribe of *Yissakhar/Issachar*

- 3rd day Eli'av, leader of the tribe of *Z'vulun/Zebulun*

From the South side:

- 4th day Elitzur, leader of the tribe of *Re'uven/Reuben*
- 5th day Shlumi'el, leader of the tribe of *Shimon/Simeon*
- 6th day Elyasaf, leader of the tribe of Gad

From the West side:

- 7th day Elishama, leader of the tribe of *Efrayim/Ephraim*
- 8th day Gamli'el, leader of the tribe of *M'nasheh/Manasseh*
- 9th day Pag'i'el, leader of the tribe of Asher

From the North side:

- 10th day Achi'ezer, leader of the tribe of Dan
- 11th day Avidon, leader of the tribe of *Binyamin/Benjamin*
- 12th day Achira, leader of the tribe of Naftali

Did anyone besides me wonder why each tribe offered the SAME thing and why it was repeated twelve different times? Why not mention it just once and state each of the other eleven tribes brought the same thing? Rabbi Shraga Simmons indicates when each brought a silver basin weighing 70 shekels; it was for a different reason. For one it symbolized the 70 Jewish souls who went down to Egypt. For another it symbolized the 70 judges in the Sanhedrin. For another it symbolized the 70 nations of the world. For another it symbolized Abraham's age (70) at the "Covenant Between the Pieces" (**B' resheet/Genesis 15**) and so on.

According to the Artscroll Chumash, "Although the twelve leaders brought identical offerings, they arrived at their formulations independently, and they intended different symbolisms in their choice of components." Apparently the Midrash discusses the inner meanings of these offerings in great detail. The following represents only Nachshon's offering:

- The numerical value of "**silver bowl**", in Hebrew, is 930 which corresponds to the years of Adam. Its weight of 130 shekels corresponds to the age at which Adam and Eve had Seth (**B' resheet/Genesis 5:3**)
- "**One silver basin**", in Hebrew, has the numerical value of 520. 500 alludes to Noah's age when his first child was born. Twenty is an allusion to the number of years before that child was born when HaShem told Noah there would be a flood.
- "**Seventy shekels**" corresponds to the seventy nations which descended from Noah.

- “**One ladle**”, which is similar to a hand, symbolizes the Torah, given from the hand of Yehovah, and its weight of “ten shekels” corresponds to the Ten Commandments.
- “**Incense**”: Somehow in the juxtaposition of letters in Hebrew this word’s numerical value may be reckoned at 613, an allusion to the 613 commandments of the Torah.
- The “**one young bull**” alludes to *Avram/Abraham*, who used such an animal as an offering (B’resheet/Genesis 18:7).
- The “**ram**” alludes to *Yitz’chak/Isaac*, who was replaced on the altar by a ram (B’resheet/Genesis 22:13).
- The “**sheep**” alludes to *Ya’akov/Jacob*, who tended sheep during his years with *Lavan/Laban* (B’resheet/Genesis 30:40).
- The “**he-goat**” as a sin-offering atoned for Joseph’s brothers, who sold him into slavery and slaughtered a goat after doing so (B’resheet/Genesis 37:31).
- “**Two cattle**” for peace-offerings allude to *Moshe/Moses* and *Aharon/Aaron*, who brought peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven.
- The **three groups of five animals** allude to the three components of the nation . . . Kohanim, Levites, and Israelites; and the three parts of Scripture – Torah, Prophets, and Writings. The number five alludes to the Five Books of Moses and the five commandments on each of the Tablets of the Law.

Just as each of the 12 Leaders of the 12 Tribes brought their identical offerings, nevertheless, each was unique. We, too, should daily bring our unique offerings to our Abba Father, as we offer up our sacrifice of praise to Him.

Verses 87 & 88 tell us about the offerings brought for dedicating the altar after it had been anointed. I wondered how many animals, total, were brought to the *Kohen/priest* during those 12 days, so I counted them. 12 bulls, 12 rams, 12 male yearling lambs, 12 male goats, an additional 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats and 60 male yearling lambs. 252 animals, in all! . . . that was quite a barbeque!!!

The Torah further tells us everything these leaders brought – so many bowls weighing such and such, so many basins, so many incense bowls, so many animals – were deliberately purposely chosen. The weights and the many different items had to correspond to the things they symbolized. By reiterating, each time, the weights and numbers of each item, the scripture emphasizes they were evaluated and calculated as such.

These number totals are significant given the fact there were seven items of twelve each:

- 12 bowls
- 12 sacrificial basins
- 12 incense bowls
- 12 oxen
- 12 rams
- 12 sheep
- 12 male goats

They allude to seven twelve-fold things:

- 12 constellations of the zodiac
- 12 solar months of the solar year
- 12 lunar months
- 12 major organs of the body
 - Two hands
 - Two feet
 - Two kidneys
 - The spleen
 - The liver
 - The gall
 - The stomach
 - The intestines
 - The heart
- The bulls symbolize kings
- The rams symbolize princes
- The sheep correspond to the officers.
- The 24 oxen of the peace sacrifice correspond to the 24 priestly watches in the Temple
- Their sacrifice was intended to atone for the 24,000 people who died at Ba'al Peor (B'midbar/Numbers 25:9)

Naso ~ נָשָׂא ~ Take (Lift, Bear Up, Carry, Elevate)

Haftarah: Shof'tim/Judges 13:2-25

This chapter is the story of *Shimshon/Samson* prior to his conception and the first several verses show the direct correlation to our Torah portion regarding a “nazir for HaShem”. However, there is more interesting information . . .

In **verses 2-22** the angel of Yehovah is mentioned a total of twelve times in the Complete Jewish Bible. Have you noticed this before? Rose Crownover's book of numbers indicates TWELVE is the number of divine government, divine power, rule and authority. And in **verses 11 and 18** we are told exactly who this angel is!!!

When Manoach asks the man (verse 11) if he was the one who had spoken with the woman earlier, his response is “I am”. In **Sh’mot/Exodus 3:14** HaShem clearly states He is “I AM”. Then **Yochanan/John 10:30**, Yeshua says He and the Father are One.

Manoach wants to make an offering and the angel of Yehovah tells him if he prepares a burnt offering, it must be to **ללה** (verses 15-16). Therefore, he takes no glory for himself as he does nothing on his own but only the will of his Father (**Yochanan/John 5:19 & 20**).

In **verse 18** Manoach wants to know the name of the angel of Yehovah “so when your words come true we can honor you”. Did Manoach want to name their child after this angel? I don’t know but the response of the angel is so incredible!!! “Why are you asking about my name? It is wonderful”. When we turn to **Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 9:6**, we learn in the prophecy concerning the Messiah “. . . he will be given the name Wonderful . . .”

Lastly, **verse 20** says “as the flame went up toward the sky from the altar, the angel of Adonai went up in the flame from the altar”. I believe this alludes to the resurrection (**Mattityahu/Matthew 28:7**) and ascension (**Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:51**) of our Messiah, Yeshua.

Naso ~ נשׂו ~ Take (Lift, Bear Up, Carry, Elevate)
B’rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 7:53~8:11; Acts 21:17-32

Yochanan/John 7:53~8:11 According to a foot note in the Complete Jewish Bible, as well as some other manuscripts, “most scholars believe **Chapter 7:53-8:11** is not from the pen of Yochanan. Many are of the opinion it is a true story about Yeshua written by another of his talmidim.”

“Then they all left, each one to his own home” (**7:53**). If this is in chronological order, it seems to refer to the end of the *Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles* holiday and everyone returning to their homes in areas distant from *Yerushalayim/Jerusalem*. “Yeshua went to the Mount of Olives (**8:1**) instead of going home to Nazareth. Perhaps He chose to stay in Bethany, not far from the Mount of Olives, at the home of His friends, *Miryam/Mary, Marta/Martha*, and *El’azar/Lazarus*. Some speculate He may have stayed and ministered in the area for approximately two months, until *Chanukkah/Feast of Dedication*.”

Actually, **verses 8-11** are the connection to our Torah portion and they are the story of the woman “caught” in adultery. We know from **Vayikra/Leviticus 20:10** both the man and the woman caught in adultery were to be stoned to death, not just the woman. So when the “religious righteous” brought this woman before Yeshua, I’m sure He knew they had a “game plan”. However, His response revealed four things . . .

1. He was merciful toward the woman
2. He opposed her sin (Sh'mot/Exodus 20:13[14])
3. He could silence His hecklers
4. He put them to shame (Mattityahu/Matthew 22:46)

We have no documentation concerning what Yeshua was writing in the dust with His finger but this is what I think . . .

- First, when He began writing in the dust, I believe He was writing the verse from Vayikra/Leviticus 20:10, proving to uphold the Torah. Then He stood up and said “The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. Then He bent down and wrote in the dust again.
- When He wrote in the dust the second time, I think He began writing down names. The Word says “they began to leave, one by one, beginning with the older ones first.”

Also, He told her to “go and sin no more”. Since sin is transgression of Torah (1st John 3:4), He was telling her to go and follow Torah! In addition, where was the man this woman was caught in adultery with?

Another interesting commentary is in “The Power New Testament” by William J. Morford. He indicates the verses from John 7:53-8:11 were added to the New Testament in the fifth century and teach a valuable lesson. We are not to be quick to condemn others. Each of us must know and do what is right. The textual scholars determined these verses were added by examining ancient manuscripts rather than criticizing content. Also the content tells us the person writing these verses was not familiar with Scripture and Jewish practice. If you catch someone in adultery, you have to catch two because one person cannot commit adultery. Yet only the woman was brought to be stoned. This was the practice of the societies of the ancient world, except for Judaism. In all the other societies, except for a few which were matriarchal, the wife was a chattel, a possession of the husband, so if she was caught in adultery it was a crime against her husband and he could punish her any way he wished. She was just like any other possession and was treated like furniture or a slave. Adultery in those societies was not sin. It was a crime against the husband. Only in Judaism was adultery a sin against Yehovah. Since it was a sin against **יהוה**, both participants were to be stoned. It was not a lesser sin for one than for the other. Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 say “If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; so shall you put away evil from Israel.” Although the verses, John 7:53-8:11, were added long after the Scriptures were written, we need to keep the basic message of the addition: we are to love the sinner, but hate the sin. It is more important for each of us to focus on his own shortcomings rather than on the shortcomings of others.

Acts 21:17-32 The actual connection to our Torah portion here is specifically in **verses 22-24**, where *Sha'ul/Paul* along with four other men were . . .

- Purified
- Shaved their heads
- Paid the appropriate expenses
- Gave notice at the Temple when their purification would be over and the offering for each of them would be made, thereby upholding Torah.

Some of the things to note in these verses are . . .

Sha'ul/Paul and those traveling with him went in to *Ya'akov/James*, the brother (half-brother) of Yeshua who was the leader of the Messianic Community in *Yerushalayim/Jerusalem* (**verse 18**). *Sha'ul* shares about all the great things HaShem had been doing among the Gentiles (**verses 19**). In addition, *Sha'ul* and the others brought a rather substantial collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Sometimes an attempt is made to prove the believers in Jerusalem opposed *Sha'ul's* efforts to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel but the words in **verse 20** prove just the opposite! These believers who were greatly committed to their Hebrew roots, praised HaShem for what *Sha'ul* was doing and addressed him as “brother”.

Many in the churches today believe or have been taught when *Sha'ul/Paul* came to faith in Yeshua, he stopped being Jewish, stopped observing the Law/Torah and began teaching other believers to do likewise. Nothing could be further from the truth! Consider these matters: *Sha'ul* himself did not violate the Torah but continued to keep it after coming to trust in Yeshua.

- He had Timothy circumcised (**Acts 16:3**).
- He regularly attended synagogue services and could teach in them (**Acts 17:2**)
- He kept many Torah customs – taking a vow (**Acts 18:18**).
- Observing festivals (**Acts 20:16**)
- Paying for the vow-ending sacrifices of four men at the Temple (**Acts 21:23-27**)
- After becoming a Messianic Jew, he remained a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6**)
- He could say he believed everything which is in accord with the Torah (**Acts 24:14**)
- He had a clear conscience in the sight of G~d and man (**Acts 24:16**)
- He committed no offense against Torah or the Temple (**Acts 25:8**)
- His accusers failed to make a case against him in court (**Acts 26:31-32**)
- Evidently fasting on Yom-Kippur (**Acts 27:9**)
- He said, “I have done nothing against either our people or the traditions of our fathers” (**Acts 28:17**)

It is important for us to not lose sight of the fact our Messiah Yeshua was Jewish. Also, all the early believers and (tahl-meh-deem) *talmidim/disciples* were Hebrew. They all observed Torah. The Tanakh (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) was the only scripture they had at the time. According to **Mattityahu/Matthew 5:17** Yeshua came to fulfill the Torah, to make it full, not to do away with it! Hallelujah!!!! (This is a whole other teaching in itself!!!! No time nor space right now!!!)

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 67

Next week's lesson: Parashah #36

B'ha'alotkha ~ בהעלתך ~ When You Set Up

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 8:1~12:16

Haftarah: Z'kharyah/Zechariah 2:14~4:7

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 19:31-37; Ivrim/Hebrews 3:1-6

It's only 6 more days until Shabbat!!! Baruch HaShem!!!

Remember, it is not we who keep Shabbat;

It is Shabbat that keeps us!

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

**Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah,
since it can best be acquired in association with others.**

Talmud: Berkot 63b

Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!