

Parashah #41

(Updated for 7.16.11)

Pinchas ~ פִּינְחָס ~ Phinehas

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 25:10~30:1 (29:40)

Haftarah: M'lakhim Alef/1st Kings 18:46~19:21

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 26:1-30; Mark 14:1-26; Luke 22:1-20;

Yochanan/John 2:13-22; 7:1-13; 7:37-39; 11:55-12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14;

Acts 2:1-21; 12:3-4; 20:5-6, 16; 27:9-11; 1st Corinthians 5:6-8; 16:8; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:28

Our Parashah this week is named (Pink-ahs) *Pinchas/Phinehas* and is one of the few (Pah-rah-shoat) Parashot named after an individual. To appreciate how unusual this is, stop and think about it. There are no Parashot named for our Patriarchs . . .

- *Avraham/Abraham*
- *Ya'akov/Jacob*
- *Moshe/Moses*
- *Yitz'chak/Isaac*
- *Yosef/Joseph*
- *Aharon/Aaron*

or our Matriarchs . . .

- *Rivkah/Rebecca*
- Rachel (Rahk-el)
- Leah (Lay-ah)

However, the Parashot/Portions named after individuals are . . .

- Noach/Noah
- Yitro/Jethro
- Balak
- Sarah
- Korach/Korah
- Pinchas/Phineas

BACKGROUND INFO

In last week's Parashah, although Balak had paid him to do so, Bil'am was unsuccessful in cursing (Ahm Yis-rah-el) *Am Yisrael/People of Israel*. In order to redeem himself, he tells Balak Yehovah will destroy His own people because of sexual immorality and adding other gods to their worship. So he encourages Balak to have the Moabite women seduce the Hebrew men with the assistance of their god, (Bah-ahl Pay-ohr) *Ba'al-Peor*, which means "lord of the gap" or "lord of the hole". I failed to include in last week's lesson the following information. *Ba'al-Peor* was worshipped by gorging with food and then defecating on this "god". The more the merrier. Needless to say, the English translation of *Ba'al-Peor's* name, above, makes even more sense. Yuck!!! Enough of that!!!!

The word *Mo'av/Moab* speaks of incest. *Mo'av* literally means "of my father". *Mo'av/Moab* began with the drunken incest between Lot and his oldest daughter and descended from this incestuous union. (B'resheet/Genesis 19:31-38) Sexual immorality was not new to *Mo'av / Moab* so they felt free to use it against (B'nay Yis-rah-ehl) *B'nei Yisrael/Children of Israel*.

CHAPTER 25

Actually, we were introduced to *Pinchas/Phineas* at the end of last week's parashah (verses 6-9) BUT because SO much emphasis is placed on the Balak and Bil'am story, in my opinion, Pinchas is over shadowed. All the more reason for this Torah portion to be named for him!!!

Although he is not well known, Pinchas was one of the all-time heroes of Hebrew history. He was a "priest in training". This would make him somewhere between 25 to 30 years old based on information from previous Torah portions. Pinchas was a man of holiness. After all, he was the grandson of Aharon and the son of El'azar. We can imagine, growing up in a family such as his. He was given much opportunity to "soak up" holiness. However, he really wasn't a leader at this time. He was just a "trainee" but knew something had to be done so he did it! As Albert Einstein said, "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." Pinchas understood this and did what needed to be done. In an act of great danger and self-sacrifice, he stopped a public display of immorality which triggered a plague and killed 24,000. Did you notice no one else spoke up or stepped up to stop this unnamed man from the atrocity he was committing? I can see why Pinchas, in his righteous indignation chose to attack this blatantly disrespectful man and his harlot.

Verse 12 tells us, for his boldness, Pinchas was given a *B'rit Shalom/Covenant of Peace*. Shalom means SO much more than peace. It is . . .

- Wholeness
- Completeness
- Fullness and
- Perfection.

One teacher taught it means "nothing missing; nothing broken"! Furthermore, in verse 13, The Holy One makes a covenant with Pinchas and his descendants. They will hold the office of *cohen/priests* forever, because of his zealousness. The word which is translated as *zeal* is the Hebrew word *kana* (כָּנָן). In fact, the anti-Roman, Hebrew revolutionaries of the First Century were referred to by the same word: the Zealots. Consequently, we have the classic mistranslation of the name of one of Yeshua's 12 (tahl-m-deem) talmidim/students/disciples, "Simon the Canaanite." Simon was not a Canaanite; he was a Kanana (כַּנְאָנִי), i.e. a Zealot. First Century Judea and Galilee were filled with political and religious zealots who regularly resorted to Pinchas-like violence to advance their purposes. In many ways, their fervor and ruthlessness is comparable to some religious fundamentalists, who trouble our modern world. The terrorism and blood currently is, however, not Hebrews targeting others as much as Hebrews becoming targets!

Prior to his Damascus road encounter, *Sha'ul/Paul* pursued the believers with a Pinchas-like zeal. As he wrote to the Philippians, he mentioned his history as a persecutor of the believers as evidence of his zeal for The Almighty (Philippians 3:6). From *Sha'ul/Paul's* example, we learn zeal for Yehovah can be sorely misplaced. It is far better to emulate the Master who was

zealous for His Father's house (**Yochanan/John 2:17**) and for His Father's will. Rather than expressing their zeal for The Holy One with acts of violence, the Jerusalem believers were "zealous for the Torah." (**Acts 21:20**)

One commentary indicated the letter **VAV** (ו) is like a person. It is a straight vertical line. It looks like someone standing upright. The numerical value of **VAV** is **SIX**; which is the Biblical number of man who was created on the sixth day. On the Torah scroll, when it is written about Pinchas, in **B'midbar/Numbers 25:12**, "I, (Yehovah) am giving him my **B'rit Shalom**", the letter **VAV** in the word shalom is broken in the middle. We are told, in order to be truly shalom (whole), a person has to be broken ~ contrite and humble in spirit. "This is the one I esteem, he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." **Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 66:2**

It is good to be zealous for The Almighty but we must be careful not to misplace this zeal. We should be zealous for the good standards of the Kingdom. We should be zealous for Messiah and for those things He ascribed to. In our lives, we need to express zealous vigilance in our war with the flesh . . . not following the traditions of men. For Messiah "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every Torah-less deed (including observation of pagan holidays) and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds (mitzvot)" (**Titus 2:14**).

Like Pinchas, the Master, Yeshua, acted zealously on behalf of Yehovah. He turned The Holy One's wrath away from His people. He offered Himself in the place of Israel, receiving the penalty for our sin. As with Pinchas, Yehovah made an eternal covenant of peace with Yeshua, granting Him a perpetual priesthood. Like Pinchas, Yeshua was zealous for His Father and made atonement for the sons of Israel. (**B'midbar/Numbers 25:13**)

At last, the two, whom Pinchas was so bold to "run through" with his sword, are named. The man was (Zeem-ree) **Zimri**, one of the leading officials of the tribe of Shimon. His name means "**my music**" which is indicative of one who does their "own thing" rather than walk in unity with others. The Midianite harlot, whom he took into the tent for his pleasure was (Koez-bee) **Cozbi/Kozbi** which means "**my lie**" indicating the deception Bil'am had instructed Balak to bring upon Israel. And **Midyan** means "**strife**", which is definitely what Bilam wanted to bring about (**verses 14-18**).

Knowing the background of Pinchas sheds light on why he was so zealous to stop this act of immorality. Torah Teacher Mark Ensign, from his research, teaches "**Pinchas** means "**mouth of brass**" which indicates his candidness. His father's name **El'azar** means "**El has helped**". His grandfather's name, **Aharon** means "**light bearer**" and his great-uncle's name **Moshe**, means "**drawn**".

Perhaps these names would indicate The Holy One had . . .

- **drawn** to top leadership,
- those who would **speak boldly** and

- stand against wickedness, **bringing light**
- into darkness **with the help of Adonai.**”

According to **Mattityahu/Matthew 5:16**, Yeshua desires the same thing. “In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

As we consider Pinchas, we acknowledge he was the witness, judge and executioner. If Yehovah had not given His approval, would the actions of Pinchas be consistent with the instructions in Torah? Of course not! There should have been no less than two witnesses and the judge should have been an entirely separate and impartial person. Since Pinchas killed these two and it was not in self defense, he should have been stoned to death for committing murder. But, because of his zealousness for righteousness, The Almighty intervened on his behalf.

In every generation, Yehovah is looking to establish His *B’rit Shalom/Covenant of Peace* with those who would be radical fanatics for Him. Are we prepared to respond to The Holy One – to pick up our spear and drive it through our own? Or will we just look sorrowfully upon the sin of our brothers without the passion to stop the plague which is destroying them? Let ours be the generation willing to defend the holiness of Yehovah! May we be zealous enough to spill blood for the sake of righteousness – and may the first life we take be our own (“our old man”)!!!

CHAPTER 26 ~ ANOTHER CENSUS ~ OY VEY!!!!

In **verses 1-51** Yehovah tells Moshe and El’azar to take another census of the entire assembly of *Am Yishra’el/people of Israel*. The last census was taken 39 years earlier, shortly after they came out of (mitz-rah-yeem) *Mitzrayim/Egypt*. The question is, why was this census taken? Several reasons are proposed.

- One involves preparing the army for battle with the Midianites. The Almighty instructed Moshe to only take 1,000 from each tribe. So, why would they need to take a census of over 600,000 soldiers if they were only going to use 12,000?
- Another, and one of my favorites, is *B’nei Yisrael/children of Israel* were such a (Seh-goo-lah) *Segullah/precious, special treasure* to the Heavenly Father, He counted them after every tragedy, just as a shepherd counts his sheep after being attacked. So Yehovah had Moshe and El’azar count the survivors after the plague caused by their immorality.
- My most favorite compares Moshe to a shepherd. When he took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, he counted them. Now Moshe is near death and he must return the sheep to their owner (*Yehovah*). Therefore, he counts them again since Yehovah will be transferring leadership from *Moshe/Moses* to *Yehoshua/Joshua*.

I was curious . . . how much population change had occurred during the last 39 years? I went back to **B'midbar/Numbers 1 and 2** to compare the two censuses:

<u>Numbers 1 & 2</u>	<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Numbers 26</u>	<u>Change</u>
46,500	Reuven	43,730	-- 2,770
59,300	Shimon	22,200	--37,100
45,650	Gad	40,500	-- 5,150
74,600	Judah	76,500	+ 1,900
54,400	Yissakhar	64,300	+ 9,900
57,400	Zebulun	60,500	+ 3,100
32,200	Manasseh	52,700	+20,500
40,500	Ephraim	32,500	-- 8,000
35,400	Benjamin	45,600	+10,200
62,700	Dan	64,400	+ 1,700
41,500	Asher	53,400	+11,900
<u>53,400</u>	Naftahli	<u>45,400</u>	<u>-- 8,000</u>
603,550	TOTALS	601,730	-- 1,820

There were only 1,820 less than when they started out. That's not bad when you consider some of the plagues they brought upon themselves through disobedience. Remember, in **B'midbar/Numbers 17:14** (English version 16:49), 14,700 died from a plague and an undisclosed number died from snake bites. **B'midbar/Numbers 25:9** tells of the 24,000 who died for consorting with the Midianite women, 250 from the Korach rebellion, not to mention the 3,000 at Mount Sinai because of the Golden Calf incident! And those are just a few off the top of my head!!! Wow! That's a total of 41,950 deaths yet the total decrease in their population was 1,820. Truly HaShem did cause them to grow into a mighty nation!!!

By the way, I heard or read somewhere the 24,000 who died for consorting with the Midianite women were all from the tribe of **Shimon/Simeon**. Can anyone verify or dispute this information? Oh my, I believe I have confirmation!!! When we review the chart of numbers above, we will notice **Shimon/Simeon's** tribe has been reduced by approximately one-third! According to Rabbi Ya'akov Youlus (of blessed memory), "The drastic reduction in the population of the tribe of Simon proves that, in deed, they are the active idolaters in this event . . ."

Have you ever looked at a map and wondered why some of the tribes have much larger territories than others? **Verses 53-56** explain very clearly "the land is to be parceled out among these as a possession to be inherited, according to the number of names. To those families with more persons you are to give a greater inheritance, and to those with fewer you are to give a small inheritance – each family's inheritance is to be given according to the number counted in it." Could this be where our (U.S.) Founding Fathers got the principle for the House of Representatives?

And, according to **verse 62**, there were 23,000 Levites not included in the total numbers because they would not inherit any land. Also, not one of those counted had been alive during the counting in the Sinai desert except *Kalev/Caleb* and *Y'hoshua/Joshua*.

Remember when we studied Korach and his rebellion against Moshe along with Datan and Aviram? Remember how the earth opened up and swallowed them and their households? So what do you think about **B'midbar/Numbers 26:11**? "However, the sons of Korach did not die." In fact, I mentioned at the time, according to **1st Chronicles 6:18-37** as well as **1st Chronicles 9:19**, Korach's sons became servants and singers in King Solomon's Temple.

Very quickly, I would like for us to look up and read the following Psalms:

- Psalm 42
- Psalm 44
- Psalm 45
- Psalm 46
- Psalm 47
- Psalm 48
- Psalm 49
- Psalm 84
- Psalm 85
- Psalm 87
- Psalm 88

All of these Psalms are attributed to "The Sons of Korach". Therefore, we can see in these verses what happened to their father and his cohorts made a lasting impression on them!

CHAPTER 27 ~ EQUAL RIGHTS

The "first mention" of "equal rights" for women is found in **verses 1-11**. Because (Tz-loaf-kahd) *Tz'lof'chad/Zelophehad* had no sons who could inherit land, his family was not going to receive any portion of the tribal allotment of Manasseh. Not only would this leave his four daughters landless, it would mean his name would not be remembered in the tribal allotment. The daughters realizing they had to do something, decided to petition Moshe with their case. Consequently, we have a rather lengthy dissertation on how property is to be distributed should the man have no sons. I applaud the daughters of *Tz'lof'chad/Zelophehad*, who chose not to be silent and stood up for their inheritance.

When the daughters asked Moshe for a ruling, he did not decide the case himself. He brought the question to The Heavenly Father. Why did Moshe need to consult Yehovah? Why was he unable to judge the case himself? Rashi suggests the ruling escaped him because Yehovah was gently chastising him. When Moshe appointed judges, he told them, "The case which is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it" (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 1:17**). The Almighty used the case of *Tz'lof'chad/Zelophehad's* daughters to remind Moshe some cases were too difficult even for him.

This should remind us there is no virtue in answering a question when we are uncertain. Rather than admitting ignorance of a subject, people often bluff competence. Clergy and Bible teachers tend to be the worst offenders. Their congregations and students look to them as

spiritual authorities. Consequently, they pepper them with questions. Rather than appear uninformed or uncertain in a certain area, the Bible teacher will provide an answer off the top of his head. The sages say a wise man answers a question to which he does not know the answer by saying, “I do not know.” The daughters posed difficult matter and Moshe did not know the answer. Therefore, he admitted he did not know.

Rabbi Meir Israel Sagan (*Chofetz Chaim*) offers a different explanation. He says the question was not legally difficult for Moshe, it was morally difficult. Moshe felt unable to settle the case because of the way *Tz’lof’chad/Zelophehad’s* daughters presented it to him. They said, “Our father died in the wilderness, yet he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against Yehovah in the company of Korah” (**B’midbar/Numbers 27:3**). When Moshe heard these words, he realized he could not serve as an impartial judge in deciding the case. He would be inclined to rule in favor of the daughters of a man who had remained loyal to him. Therefore, he removed himself from the case and brought the matter to The Almighty.

So here we have it . . . two different Rabbis with two different opinions and two different answers concerning the matter. Could both have been correct? Perhaps so!

Yehovah directs Moshe, **in verse 12**, to climb the Aviram range in order to view the land which The Holy One was giving to the *Children of Israel/B’nei Yishra’el*. Again Yehovah reiterates why Moshe will not be allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Even righteous men, have consequences for not following Yehovah’s **perfect will**.

A LEADER IS CHOSEN

At this point Moshe asks The Almighty about appointing a new leader. “Let Yehovah, God of the spirits of all human beings, appoint a man to be over the community, to go out and come in ahead of them, to lead them out and bring them in, so Yehovah’s community will not be like sheep without a shepherd” (**verse 15-17**). So The Almighty said to Moshe, “Take *Yehoshua / Joshua* the son of (noon) Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and **lay your hand on him**. Put him in front of El’azar the Cohen and the whole community, and **commission** him in their sight” (**verse 18-19**). “. . . *lay your hand on him*.” is (s’mee-**kah**) *s’mikah* in Hebrew and (sah-**bah**) *sabah* is Hebrew for *commission*.

I wondered if thoughts of Moshe’s own family ran through his mind. But then I thought . . .

- Who was at his side in the *Mishkan/Tabernacle*, day in and day out?
- Who followed Moshe up Mt Sinai and waited at the prescribed distance until Moshe descended?
- Who was always in Moshe’s shadow?

Yehoshua/Joshua, Moshe's right hand man, of course! Truth be known, he was probably closer to Moshe than any of Moshe's own sons. Moshe was instructed to hold a public ceremony at the *Ohel/Tent of Meeting*, rest his hand on *Yehoshua/Joshua* and "delegate to him some of your authority" (verses 22 & 23).

Yehovah answered Moshe's prayer for a successor by appointing *Yehoshua/Joshua*, the servant of Moshe, as the next leader of Israel. Yehoshua was a man in whom the Spirit of Yehovah resided. How did Yehoshua become such a great and worthy leader? He learned the art of leadership by being a careful disciple and faithful servant of Moshe. If a person desires to develop wisdom, he should spend time with the wise. If a person desires to develop righteousness, he should spend time with righteous people. If a person desires to become a good leader, he should stay close to good leaders. Likewise, as we become better disciples of our teacher Yeshua of Nazareth, we will become more and more like Him. "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). (Notice, the spirit mentioned here indicates the "indwelling of the spirit" is not a New Testament exclusive as some have taught.)

The Holy One takes the spirit of Moshe and bestows it upon Yehoshua, just as the authority to Torah (which corresponds to Moshe) is bestowed upon Yeshua. Yehoshua, however, was destined to die a generation later, leaving Israel like sheep without a shepherd once again. For Moshe's prayer to be answered in its fullest, it was necessary for Yehovah to appoint a shepherd over Israel who would not succumb to death.

Yeshua is the man "appointed over the congregation." (Remember, the word "**church**" is a translation of **assembly** or **congregation**.) *Sha'ul/Paul* tells us Yeshua is head of the assembly. "He is also head of the body, the (congregation)" (Colossians 1:18). *Kefa/Peter* tells the congregation of Israel assembled in the Temple . . .

- "Yeshua, the Messiah, [is] appointed for you" (Acts 3:20).
- He is "a Man whom [Yehovah] has appointed, (Acts 17:31)
- "the One who has been appointed by Yehovah" (Acts 10:42).

These words echo the prayer of Moshe for The Almighty to appoint a man over the congregation. The gospels tell us when Yeshua "saw a large crowd . . . He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34). Without the teaching and guidance of Yeshua, Israel is like a flock of sheep without a shepherd. He is the shepherd of Israel and the shepherd of our (neh-feh-sh) *nefesh / soul*. The Apostle Peter says, "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (Kefa Alef/1st Peter 2:25).

Yehovah told Moshe to (s'mikah) *s'mikah/lay his hands on* Yehoshua, symbolizing a transfer of authority and spiritual prowess. The laying-on-of-hands ritual signifies an investment of identity. For example, when a person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands on the animal's head,

he was investing the animal with his own identity so the animal could represent him before The Father. “He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf” (**Vayikra/Leviticus 1:4**)

Moshe laid his hands on Yehoshua in front of all Israel so there would be no question about who was designated to succeed him. He endowed Yehoshua with his authority so the Israelites would obey him. Rashi says, “Just as Moshe’s face shone like the sun because of his encounters with the presence of Yehovah, Y’hoshua’s face glowed like the moon after Moshe laid hands on him” (*Rashi on Numbers 27:20*). The Midrash Rabba, an ancient collection of rabbinic commentary on the Torah likens Moshe’s laying his hands on Yehoshua to one candle lighting another. “Like one who lights one candle with another, (the leaders of Israel) were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Holy Spirit taken from the spirit of Moshe, but the Spirit of Moshe was not diminished. This is like the case of a man who lights one candle with another. The one candle ignites but the flame on the other candle is not diminished.” (*Numbers Rabbah 21:15; 13:20*)

The baton of faith has been passed many times since the beginning of time. Yehovah first gave the baton to Adam who passed it on to his son. Then we see the baton in the lives of others such as Noah, Avraham, Samuel, David, Jeremiah and many others. Sometimes the baton was taken back by Yehovah Himself, for instance, in the person of Yeshua for a brief time, only to be given back to man to carry till the end. Today the baton is still being passed through our generation. Just as in the days of old, we are the same as the ones we read about week after week. We have the same failures and successes in life Moshe did. We hit our fingers with hammers the same as Noach did a few times. We have the same tendency to gaze where we should not as David did. We are just fishermen, tax collectors and regular people the same as the eleven disciples were. And yes, we have been given the same baton to carry. To carry and not drop it!!!!

It appears this generation may be the one who completes the final lap and hands the baton back to the Righteous Judge, Yeshua. If, in fact, this is the case, may we take the baton and hold it high for all to see. Let us run with our heads held high and confidence in our steps. Let’s be sure to finish the lap we have been given to make those who passed it on to us proud of the team. May we all prepare to hand the baton to our Creator and King so the team may hear the words we all long to hear, “Well done, my good and faithful servants, you have run the race and completed the course well. Time for the celebration to begin!” (Batyah’s loose translation of verses) By the way, if you take a good look at the baton it is engraved with “Faith in Yeshua, Obedience to His Torah”. If your baton is engraved with any other message, you’re carrying the wrong baton!!!

CHAPTERS 28 AND 29

These two chapters address the offerings which were to be brought “unto Yehovah”, specifically for . . .

- *Shabbat* (Shah-baht)/*Sabbath*
- *Rosh Chodesh* (Roesh Khodehsh)/*New Moon*
 - *Pesach* (Pay-sock)/*Passover*
- *Shavu’ot* (Shah-voo-oat)/*Feast of Weeks/Pentecost*
- *Rosh HaShanah* (Roesh Hah-Shah-nah)/*New Year*
- *Yom Kippur* (Yome Kip-poor)/*Day of Atonement*
 - *Sukkot* (Sue-coat)/*Feast of Tabernacles*
- *Shemini Atzeret* (Sheh-meny Aht-zehreht)/*Eighth Day Assembly*

Chapter 29:35-38 tells us at the end of *Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles*, The Holy One added a special day, called *Shemini Atzeret* which literally means the “*Eighth Day Assembly*”. It is a day of great intimacy with our Creator!

It’s kinda like the party’s over, everyone is preparing to go their own way and He whispers in your ear “*Please stay with me just one more day.*” You will find it in **Vayikra/Leviticus 23:36** as well as here. Although it is at the end of Sukkot, it is, in fact, a separate holiday.

In your Torah/Bible turn to **Z’kharyah/Zechariah 14:16-17** (mine is on page 784)

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations who came up against Jerusalem, shall go up from year to year to worship Yehovah-Tzva’ot, and to keep the holiday of Sukkot. And whoever does not come . . . to Jerusalem . . . upon them there will be no rain.”

On *Shemini Atzeret*, we are to pray for rain. There are many aspects to consider in this passage but for now, I just want to quickly point out we thank Yehovah for the Arbah Minim ~ the four species . . .

- *Etrog* (eh-trog)/*citron*
- *Lulav* (loo-lahv)/*date palm branch*
- *Hadassim* (hah-dah-seem)/*myrtle branches*
- *Aravot* (ah-rah-vote)/*willow branches*

. . . which were produced because of last years rain AND we are to pray for a generous amount of rain to be allocated for the coming year. Rain represents the blessings of growth and abundance. Now, here is a "clincher", we pray not only for our well being but for the well-being of those who came against us.

According to one commentary, in ancient times, the service in the Holy Temple featured a total of **70 bull offerings**, which corresponds to each of the 70 nations of the world. I couldn’t find specific scripture for this until I applied some simple math to **B’midbar/Numbers 29:12-32**. According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, the daily decline in the number of

bull offerings symbolized the power of those who oppose The Almighty's teachings "will grow progressively weaker over the long sweep of time, until all the nations accept His dominion, under the spiritual leadership of Israel."

The Temple was not just for the Hebrew children. When King Solomon built the Temple, he specifically asked The Holy One to heed the prayer of all people who came to the Temple (M'lakhim Aleph/1st Kings 8:41-43) and the prophet *Yesha'yahu/Isaiah* refers to the Temple as a "House for all peoples/nations" in *Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 56:7*. When I think on this, I believe if the Romans had realized how much benefit THEY were getting from the Temple, they never would have destroyed it.

For those of you who know me, you know I am enthralled with the meaning of numbers. I don't find this too unusual, because, you see; my Abba Father is into numbers as well. Think about this: Seven is the number of the natural world. The Holy One made everything complete, including a day of rest in seven days. Therefore, there are . . .

- seven days in a week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Shabbat)
- seven different notes on the musical scale (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti)
- seven directions (right, left, up, down, forward, backward, and center)
- seven primary colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and black)

Seven represented by the seven days of Sukkot is the world of nature or completion. Eight, represented by Shemini Atzeret, is beyond nature or new beginnings. (There is probably more to this "seven" thing but this is all I have for now . . . maybe next year!!!)

Actually, seven is THE number in the Book of Revelation but that's a whole other matter!!!!

CHAPTER 30

Our Torah portion ends with *B'midbar/Numbers 30:1* (29:40 English versions) showing Moshe's continued obedience as a spokesman for Yehovah, for he told *B'nei Isra'el/Children of Israel* everything, as he had been ordered.

Pinchas ~ פינחס ~ Phinehas

Haftarah: M'lakhim Alef/1st Kings 18:46~19:21

It appears to me the parallel to our Torah portion compares the zealotry of two men in safeguarding Isra'el's loyalty to Yehovah. Whether it was . . .

- Pinchas who went after the Israelite prince and the Moabite princess who were desecrating the Tabernacle or . . .
- *Eliyahu/Elijah* who took on King *Ahav/Ahab* and his wicked wife *Izevel/Jezebel*, killing the prophets of (Bah-ahl) Ba'al, . . .

. . . each one was unflinching in protecting the nation from the inroads idolatry had been making into the Israelite camp and from the treacherous consequences of idolatry.

To quote Rabbi J. H. Hertz, from his book Pentateuch and Haftarah, page 699, “. . . the zeal of Phineas and the zeal of Elijah form the connecting link between the Sidra (Torah portion) and the haftarah.”

Pinchas ~ פִּינְחָס ~ Phinehas

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 26:1-30; Mark 14:1-26; Luke 22:1-20; Yochanan/John 2:13-22; 7:1-13; 7:37-39; 11:55-12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14; Acts 2:1-21; 12:3-4; 20:5-6, 16; 27:9-11; 1st Corinthians 5:6-8; 16:8; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:28

Mattityahu/Matthew 26:1-30 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Mark 14:1-26 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Luke 22:1-20 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 2:13-22 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings as well as the zeal of Pinchas for the sake of righteousness.

Yochanan/John 7:1-13 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:29-34** referring to Sukkot and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 7:37-39 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:35-39** referring to Shemini Atzeret and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 11:55-12:1 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 13:1 These verses parallel **B' midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 18:28, 39 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Yochanan/John 19:14 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

Acts 2:1-21 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:26-31** referring to Shavu'ot and those offerings of first fruits. Some commentary from the Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern reveals the name *Shavu'ot/Feast of Weeks* comes from **Sh'mot/Exodus 34:22** as well as from **D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:9-10**, which, along with **Vayikra/Leviticus 23:15-16** determine the festival is to be seven weeks after the **weekly** Sabbath following (Pay-sock) Pesach. The Bible also says, "You shall number fifty days" (**Vayikra/Leviticus 23:16**); consequently in the *Brit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant*, the Greek name for the holiday is pentekostes, which means fifty and is usually transliterated into English as "Pentecost". Two other names for the festival are found in the *Tanakh/Original Covenant: Yom HaBikkurim/Day of Firstfruits* (**B'midbar/Numbers 28:26**) and *Chag HaKatzir/Feast of the Harvest* (**Sh'mot/Exodus 23:16**).

Acts 12:3-4 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings. An interesting note concerning **verse 4**: Pesach (Pay-sock), in Hebrew, and pascha, in Greek, appears 29 times in the *Brit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant*, but for some inexplicable reason KJV translates it "Easter" here and here alone! Of course, the reference is to Passover (see **Mattityahu/Matthew 26:2**). **Easter was and is a pagan holiday**, which neither Yeshua nor any of his (tahl-me-deem) *talmidim/disciples* **EVER** celebrated. They were Torah observant and **ONLY** celebrated the feasts of Yehovah. Easter became part of Constantine's Catholic Church in 355 AD and was adopted from a much earlier Babylonian fertility celebration. In fact, easter is the English version of the Babylonian fertility goddess' name and, according to scripture, we are not even supposed to mention it! (**Sh'mot/Exodus 23:13**)

Acts 20:5-6, 16 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings, as well as Shavu'ot in **verses 26-31**. **Verse 7** deserves an entire study of its own. Actually, according to the original Hebrew, this "first day of the week" would have been Saturday, after sundown, when the restful spirit of the Sabbath is often preserved into Saturday evening and after the official end of Shabbat itself when it's dark enough to see three stars. It would have been a natural thing for Hebrew believers who had rested on Shabbat, as commanded in number FOUR of the BIG TEN, with the rest of the Hebrew community to assemble afterwards to celebrate their common faith in *Yeshua HaMashiach / Jesus the Messiah*.

Also, in **verse 16**, we see *Sha'ul/Paul's* desire to hurry to *Yerushalayim/Jerusalem* for the *Feast of Shavu'ot/Pentecost*. He was a Messianic Jew, and he remained devoted to the Torah and the practices put in place by The Almighty. We can also see this from another time when

he felt he had to justify a decision to remain in Ephesus and **not** go up to Jerusalem for this pilgrimage festival. (See **1st Corinthians 16:8**)

Acts 27:9-11 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 29:7-11** referring to (Yome Key-poor) Yom Kippur and those offerings. In many translations the following term is used; “the Fast had passed” or it was “past the Fast”. This refers to the High Holy Day of *Yom Kippur / the Day of Atonement*. This is further evidence *Sha'ul/Paul* continued to observe Hebraic practices and kept the Law until the end of his life. It also lends strength to the belief Luke himself was Hebrew or a proselyte to Judaism. Otherwise, he probably wouldn't measure time by the Hebrew calendar.

1st Corinthians 5:6-8 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Matzah, Pesach and those offerings.

1st Corinthians 16:8 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:26-31** referring to *Shavu'ot/the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost*. David Stern says concerning this verse in his “Jewish New Testament Commentary”, “The point here seems to be not merely that Sha'ul, an observant Jew, intends to return in time to keep the holiday in Jerusalem, as prescribed in the Torah, but that he feels he has to justify his remaining in Ephesus until then, that is, during Pesach, which comes seven weeks earlier. He would normally plan to arrive in Jerusalem in time for Pesach, but he intends to forego being in Jerusalem for Passover “*because a great and important door has opened for my work, and there are many people opposing*” – He is saying, I need to deal with this difficult situation, even at the cost of disobeying the Torah command to be in Jerusalem for Passover. In effect Sha'ul issues a halakhic decision that when one must choose between obeying the mitzvah of being in Jerusalem for a Pilgrim Festival and obeying the mitzvah of assuring the propagation of the Gospel, the latter is the more important and must be obeyed.”

Ivrim/Hebrews 11:28 These verses parallel **B'midbar/Numbers 28:16-25** referring to Pesach and those offerings.

The previous seventeen B'rit Hadashah scriptures are an example of how Torah was followed and explained by Yeshua and His apostles. Although we have been told by some, with mistaken theology, Yeshua did away with the Mosaic scriptures, it is clear no one told Yeshua or His disciples. As *Yochanan/John* says in **Yochanan Alef/1st John 5:3**, “For this is the love of Yehovah, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not grievous.”

The designated Psalm for this Torah Portion is: Psalm 50

Next week's lesson: Parashah #42

Mattot ~ מטות ~ Tribes

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 30:2(1) ~ 32:42

Haftarah: Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

B'rit Hadashah: Mattit'yahu/Matthew 5:33-37

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

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

**The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving
of Torah happens all the time, in every generation.**

Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe

**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)!!!