

TORAH portions – Book 4 Numbers

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Numbers 1 verse 1 to 4 verse 20 (Bamidbar).

The book of Numbers commence *'in the wilderness'* – transliterated as Bamidbar in Hebrew, also known as Numbers in English. We read in verse 1 of Numbers 1, ***'Then YHVH spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,'*** The word wilderness as used in this verse simply means uncultivated land. It symbolizes the unknown surroundings that we come across on our way back from exile. But it also literally means the place of words as it comes from the same root as 'word' in Hebrew, namely: *'dalet, bet, resh'* or dabar. So it is telling us that in this uncharted region in which we find ourselves after our exile, we need to pay special attention to the word(s) of Elohim.

Similarly to the way in which YHVH got Moses' attention in the wilderness in Exodus 3: 2, where the angel of YHVH appeared to him in the burning bush, so He wants us to listen to His word, after we come out of our personal Egypt or sinful ways. When we are immersed, we usually experience a great deal of pressure from friends, family and Satan to fall back into the sin where we come from. Even though Yahshua never sinned, we know from the Scriptures that this also happened to Him, our perfect example, of how to overcome our personal sins. We read in Matthew 3: 16 to 4: 1, ***'And after being immersed, Yahshua went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of Elohim descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, (17) and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."*** (1) ***Then Yahshua was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.'*** Our response to the temptations that come our way, should be similar to Yahshua's response, when He answered Satan quoting from the Torah (Deuteronomy 8: 3), saying: ***"It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF ELOHIM.'"*** We, who are called at this time,

need to obey the word of Elohim, by doing exactly what He says. If we refuse to obey or if we contradict (or deny) the word of Elohim, we will be driven back into the wilderness of sin, with all its consequences. We should familiarize ourselves with the word of Elohim, in order to know how to act and react, when we are tempted.

The remainder of Numbers 1 has to do with numbering the sons of Israel, as we read in verse 2, as follows: ***“Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head.”*** The literal translation of ‘head by head’ is ‘for their skulls’. Names in the Hebrew culture have to do with who we are, and this is how the ancient Israelites were taken account of. Each person had his special place in the nation. Rav Shaul similarly tells us that each of us who are called at this time, represent a member (or part) of the body of Messiah, in 1 Corinthians 12: 13 -14 & 27, in this way: ***‘For by one Spirit we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (14) For the body is not one member but many. (27) Now you are Messiah’s body, and individually members of it.’*** The census was therefore personal and individual, showing that every head (or skull) counts. This is perhaps why Yahshua’s death for each and every one of us on Golgotha, which means place of the skull(s), has a special meaning for every believer.

After the census of the sons of Israel were completed and the Levites completed their duties, YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron again in Numbers 2, saying in verse 2: ***“The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance*** (some distance away from YHVH).’ The twelve tribes of Israel were organized to inherit intimacy with YHVH – as structure brings intimacy. The organization to turn these Israelite nomads into a nation required that the tribes be formed around the tent of meeting in

a special way. On the east side of the tent of meeting were Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; on the south side were Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the west side were Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin; and on the north side were Dan, Asher and Naphtali, totaling 603,550 in all. The Levites were not numbered at the same time, and we see in Numbers 3 that the Levites were to serve in the tent of meeting and to maintain the furniture in the tent of meeting. We read further in verses 11 – 15 of Numbers 3, ***'Again YHVH spoke to Moses saying, (12) "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every first-born, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. (13) For all the first-born are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the first-born in the Land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the first-born in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am YHVH (14) Then YHVH spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai saying, (15) "Number the sons of Levi by their father's households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number."*** The role of the Levites as first-born is explained in Numbers 3: 41 & 45, as follows: ***"And you shall take the Levites for Me, I am YHVH, instead of all the first-born among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the first-born among the cattle of the sons of Israel. (45) Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am YHVH."*** Because of the sin at the golden calf, YHVH gave a special place in His plan to the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi upheld the set-apartness of YHVH by slaying about three thousand men who turned from YHVH and worshipped the golden calf.

Interestingly enough, after Yahshua's resurrection and ascension to heaven the three thousand souls lost after the golden calf incident were recouped, as we read in Acts 2: 41, as follows: ***'So then, those who had received his word were immersed; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.'*** We see here that YHVH made up the almost three thousand lost from the house of Israel, by adding

about three thousand believing Israelites. In addition we see as the Levites took up Elohim's call to protect His honor, those of us whom He brought forth by the word of truth, are called at this time to become the first-fruits among His creatures (James 1: 18). However, we are called from the remnant of Israel, to serve YHVH. We read in Romans 9: 22 – 27, ***'What if Elohim, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? (23) And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, (24) even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (25) As He says in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE', AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"***(26) ***"AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING ELOHIM."***(27) ***And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISREAL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED.'***

Many of the modern day descendants of Israel have become so arrogant, that they believe that by being blinded to the identity of Yahshua our Jewish brothers are lost forever. But, we should not forget that Yahshua Himself said in Matthew 15: 24, ***"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*** This means that Yahshua came specifically for the lost ten tribes of Israel, and not for the Jews. We like the prodigal son have left our heavenly Father, whilst they remained loyal to Him. However, YHVH has blinded them to the fact that Yahshua is the Messiah for almost 2000 years now. We read in Romans 11: 1 & 5, ***'I say then, Elohim has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be? (5) In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to Elohim's gracious choice.'*** We, the ones being called now, are that remnant. Continuing in verse 7, we read: ***'What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it***

has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened.' Then on to verse 11 and 12, as follows: **'I say then, they (the Jews) did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. (12) Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!'** By blinding the Jews to Yahshua at this time, YHVH is calling the remnant from the lost ten tribes, so that we may provoke our Jewish brothers to jealousy, by keeping the same Sabbath, Set-apart Days, kosher and other Torah laws that they do.

Next we read verses 17 – 21 of Romans 11, **'But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, (18) do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root (namely Yahshua), but the root supports you. (19) You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." (20) Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; (21) for if Elohim did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.'** We continue in verse 23, as follows: **'And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for Elohim is able to graft them in again.'** When will they not continue in their unbelief and when will they be crafted in? The natural branches that Romans 11 talks about are the Jewish Israelites who know that they are Israel and in fact call their nation and country by that name. However, they are not the only Israelites alive today. The difference is that the majority of Israelites alive today have lost their identity and believe that they are gentiles. The gentiles that Romans 11 talks about are in fact mostly bloodline Israelites who have lost their identity, because they were assimilated into the pagan nations in which they live today. Romans 11 further talks about us a remnant of those

Israelites who lost their identity, who have now been called back to Elohim and His ways.

We see an example of what will happen to our Jewish brothers when Yahshua returns in John 20, subsequent to His resurrection in verses 25 to 29, as follows: ***'The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Master!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprints of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."*** (26) ***And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Yahshua came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."*** (27) ***Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."*** (28) ***Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Master and my Elohim!"*** (29) ***Yahshua said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."*** Note that Yahshua did not rebuke Thomas for calling Him Elohim, but said instead, that we, who have not seen Him and believe that He is our Elohim, are indeed blessed.

We know that this is exactly what will happen to our Jewish brothers at Messiah's return to come and rule us from Jerusalem. We read accordingly in Zechariah 12: 9 – 14, ***"And it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. (10) And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. (11) In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. (12) And the land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house***

of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; (13) the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; (14) all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.' This will happen on Yom Teruah (also known as Rosh Hashanah), when Yahshua returns, finding our Jewish brothers observing this important Feast Day in their synagogues, with the men separate from their wives, as per their custom.

We also read in Zechariah 12: 7, **“YHVH also will save the tents of Judah first in order that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah.”** Those of us called at this time together with our Torah observant Jewish brothers, who will accept Yahshua at His return, will possibly be the two witnesses, spoken about in Revelation 11; one a Torah observant group and the other, a group honoring the Set-apart Name of YHVH our Elohim¹. We the remnant of the lost tribes of Israel along with the (remnant of) Torah observant Jews, are Elohim's witnesses, as we read in Isaiah 43: 10 – 11, **“You are My witnesses,” declares YHVH, “And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no Elohim formed, And there will be none after Me. (11) “I, even I, am YHVH; And there is no savior besides Me.”** We together with our Jewish brothers testify about the Oneness of Elohim; that His Torah is binding forever and that He is our Savior. This is precisely what we read about in Romans 11: 25 - 27, as follows: **‘For I do not want you,**

¹ *We honor the name of Elohim, by obeying His Torah and not necessarily by using His name. If we use His name and yet decide for ourselves when to keep His Feast Days, we are dishonoring His name, as we are warned about in Malachi 2: 1 - 8. Many commentators say that this is specifically talking about the Jews and even though it did, because of the duality principle that runs throughout the Scriptures, this is talking to those modern day Israelites who contradict the word of Elohim, today.*

brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation; that a partial hardening has happened to (Jewish) Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles (those Israelites who think they are gentiles) has come in; (26) and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." (27) AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS. We read about our Father's mercy in verses 32 & 33, in this way: ***'For Elohim has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. (33) Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of Elohim! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!'***

As part of the olive tree, we need to bear fruit, as we read in Matthew 7: 16 – 19, ***"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? (17) Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. (18) A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. (19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."*** We need to take our calling very seriously and continue preaching the gospel of the kingdom of Elohim to the entire world as a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come, as per Matthew 24: 14. This does not say that we need to convert anybody. However, we need to understand that by preaching the good news of Elohim, we will be persecuted, as we are told in Matthew 24: 9, ***"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name."*** Are we prepared to die for our beliefs? I have personally witnessed Christians vehemently opposed to Yahshua's name, stopping a believer in an opening prayer at a worship service, to refrain from using 'that name' immediately. Yes, we are going to be persecuted for using the Set-apart Names of YHVH and Yahshua, as well as for obeying the Torah of Elohim.

We conclude this Torah portion in Numbers 4, where we see that the Kohathites were responsible to dismantle the Ark of the Covenant when it was time to move on. During this procedure they had to be extremely careful not to look at the set-apart articles in the Ark of the Covenant, with the assistance of Aaron and his sons, as is recorded in Numbers 4: 19. We read in verse 20 of Numbers 4, ***'but they shall not go in to see the set-apart objects even for a moment, lest they die.'*** In this way Aaron and his family became the keepers of their brothers the Kohaths.

Numbers 4 verse 21 to 7 verse 89 (Naso).

This Torah portion is called Naso, literally meaning to *'lift'*. The census of the first few chapters of Numbers continues in Chapter 4 of this portion. YHVH was preparing an army to go into the Promised Land and take possession of it for themselves. The census also regulates that the Gershon and Merari families be required to take apart, transport and reassemble the Tabernacle during the Israelites travel en route to the Promised Land.

Even though this portion starts off with the English word *'take'*, the Hebrew text uses the word Naso (*'noon, sin, alef'*) which implies *'lifting up'*, since the Gershonite priests is given the burden to lift up and carry loads, such as the curtains of the Tabernacle. The Meraris' census was to ensure that they load the boards of the Tabernacle and its bars and its pillars and sockets, as well as pillars around the court and their sockets and their pegs and their cords, with all their equipment and with all their service. Each man were assigned the items that he should carry. We see in verse 48 that all the Kohathite, Gershonite and Merari family members were 8580 men between thirty and fifty years of age in total.

Numbers 5, begins where YHVH commands that the sons of Israel send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of contact with a dead person. Numbers 5 also spells out rules concerning the relationships between a husband and wife. When YHVH joins a husband and his wife, they share the same flesh. The Hebrew term for marriage is *'kiddushin'* meaning sanctified or set-apart. It implies the chastity of both husband and wife and the instructions in this Torah portion applies to both parties. When the groom puts the ring on his bride's finger, he tells his bride that she is consecrated. The bride's consecration means that she cannot be touched by another man. In Numbers 5: 12 – 31 this Torah portion deals with the Law of jealousy – If a woman is accused of adultery by her husband, and there are grounds for suspicion, she has

a choice to either accept a divorce, or take a test involving drinking the water of bitterness that brings a curse. The priest shall uncover the woman's head and shall put the jealousy offering in her hand. The priest will let her take an oath, that she was not unfaithful to her husband, after which he pronounce a curse over her and let her drink the bitter water. We read in verse 24 of Numbers 5, ***'Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness.'*** If the woman is guilty the water will cause her belly to swell, and her thigh shall rot and she shall become a curse among her people. But if she is not defiled she shall be free to conceive.

But the woman is not forced to drink the bitter water at all. She may admit to adultery and accept a divorce. In fact she does not have to drink anything. She may refuse to drink the bitter water, by saying that her husband is a suspicious type anyway. All she has to lose is her marriage settlement – which is merely a monetary loss. If and when proven that the woman has transgressed her marriage vows, after having gone through the various rites she has to bear her iniquity. Whereas the Levites had to bear the burdens of the Tabernacle, the unfaithful wife had to bear her iniquity. This is how the idea of lifting comes into the law of jealousy as well as into the duties of the specified Levites.

Yahshua our Messiah was sinless, nevertheless, let's consider his final moments, as described in John 19: 29 & 30, in this way: ***'A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. (30) When Yahshua therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.'*** In Hebrew *'it is finished'* is transliterated as Kalah; the same word that means Bride. This essentially freed Yahshua from the curse of the adulterous woman (His Bride). Continuing in Romans 7: 1 – 4 we read: ***"Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law***

(the law of an adulterous woman discussed in Deuteronomy 24) ***has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? (2) For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. (3) So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from this law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. (4) Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to this Law through the body of Messiah, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for Elohim.***” When we are immersed into Yahshua’s Name, we are immersed into His death and have been buried with Him through immersion into death, as we read in Romans 6: 3 & 4. Because both Yahshua and those of us who were immersed died, and since He was resurrected from the dead, we might be joined to Him again as his bride, to bear fruit for Elohim.

Numbers 6 deals with people who make a special vow, known as the Nazirite vow, to dedicate themselves to YHVH. A person who takes the Nazirite vow shall abstain from drinking wine, strong drink, vinegar, grape juice, or eating fresh grapes or raisins. He is also forbidden to cut his hair during the time of his separation. In addition he shall not go near a dead person during the days of his separation. But if a person dies very suddenly next to the person who took the Nazirite vow, and he defiles his dedicated head of hair, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave his head on the seventh day. The next day he shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest at the door of the tent of meeting. The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and one for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him concerning his sin because of the dead person. On the same day he shall consecrate his head and shall dedicate to YHVH his days as a Nazirite, bringing a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former days shall be void, as his separation was defiled.

However, if the Nazirite has fulfilled his days of separation, without being defiled, he shall bring his offering to the doorway of the tent of meeting. He shall present one male lamb a year old, without defect for a sin offering and a ram without defect for a peace offering, as well as a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offerings and libations. The priest shall present them before YHVH, after which the Nazirite shall shave his beard and hair at the doorway of the tent of meeting and take it and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. The priest shall take the ram's shoulder when it has been boiled, and one unleavened cake and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite, after he shaved his dedicated hair. Then the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before YHVH. It is set-apart for the priest, together with the breast offered by waving and the thigh offered by lifting up. After this the Nazirite may drink wine.

There are many believers in Yahshua our Messiah, who insist that He had long hair, because they believe He took a Nazirite vow. Since Messiah was reared in the town of Nazareth in the land of Galilee, the word '*Nazirite*' is sometimes erroneously connected with the place where He lived. As Elohim in the flesh Yahshua led a perfect life while in human form, it was not necessary for Him to make a specific vow to be of special service. There is no record of Yahshua having taken a Nazirite vow anywhere in the Scriptures, and if He did, it would definitely be recorded as such for us. Instead we read what He said about Himself in Luke 7: 33 & 34, as follows: "***For John the Immerser has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon!'*** (34) ***The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gathers and sinners!'***" In addition Yahshua would not have had long hair, as He inspired Rav Shaul to write in 1 Corinthians 11: 14 and the first part of verse 15, in this way: "***Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, (15) but if a woman has long hair, it is a***

glory to her?’ Yahshua is our High Priest as we read in Hebrews 7 & 8, especially in verse 24 of Hebrews 7: ***‘but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.’*** And verse 1 of Hebrews 8, as follows: ***‘Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.’*** We read in Ezekiel 44 about the Levitical priests, the Sons of Zadok, during the millennium rule of Yahshua the Messiah. We see that they will not have long hair, in verse 20, as follows: ***“Also they shall not shave their heads, yet they shall not let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads.”*** From these Scriptures the pictures of Yahshua wearing shoulder-length locks of hair are not consistent with what the word of YHVH said to be appropriate hair for men to wear.

Yahshua was a Nazarene, reared in Nazareth, but never a Nazirite. Messiah did not live by the rules of a Nazirite, as He drank wine (as is recorded in Luke 5: 29 & 30 and Matthew 11: 18 & 19) and ‘healed’ the dead, by touching or getting near to them, doing so (as is recorded in John 12: 1 and Mark 5: 38 – 42). If He truly was a Nazirite, this would have meant that He would have broken the Nazirite vow and sinned. If Messiah sinned even once, He could not have become our Savior, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5: 20 – 21, as follows: ***‘Therefore, we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though Elohim were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to Elohim. (20 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of Elohim in Him.’***

We see that the phrase *‘lift’* appears again in the Priestly blessing given in Numbers 6: 22 – 27, as follows: ***‘Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying, (23) “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: (24) YHVH bless you, and keep you; (25) YHVH make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; (26) YHVH lift up His countenance on you, And give***

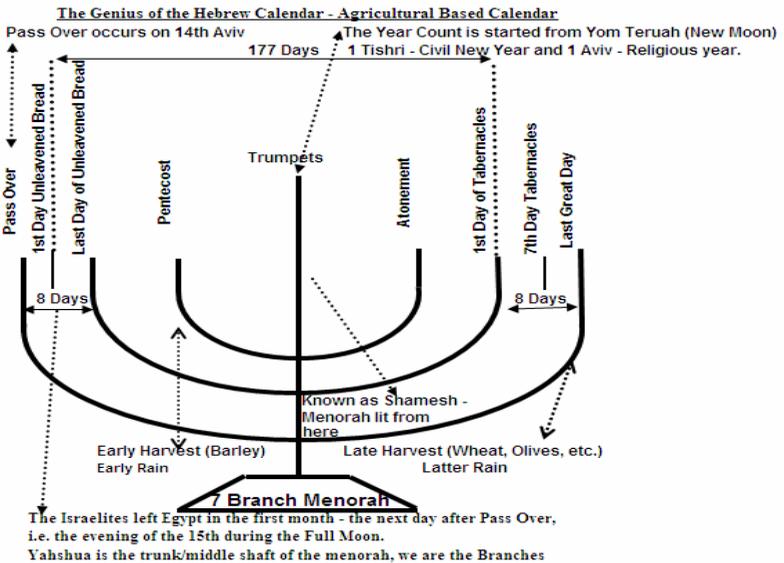
you peace.' (27) ***“So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.”*** The whole blessing is read in the second person singular, indicating that each individual member of the nation is being blessed. Verse 26 in Hebrew reads: *‘yisa YHVH panav.’* What is the meaning of *‘yisa’*? The root word is *naso*, meaning to lift, rise up, or to magnify. Even though the priest does the blessing, only YHVH provides the power required to bring us in a right relationship with Him, through Yahshua our Messiah who brings about change in us through the Set-apart Spirit.

Numbers 7 is devoted to the offerings brought to the dedication of the Tabernacle with all its furnishings and the altar and all its utensils, by the leaders or princes of the tribes – those who are lifted up. We end reading the last part of verse 88 and verse 89, as follows: ***‘This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed. (89) Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.’*** This was YHVH talking to Moses from between two cherubim, as He promised in Exodus 25: 22, saying to Moses: ***“And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.”***

Numbers 8 verse 1 to 12 verse 16 (B'eha'lotcha).

The literal translation of this Torah portion is 'When you raise'. The English translation of Numbers 8: 1 & 2 is as follows: **'Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying, (2) "Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you mount the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in front of the lampstand (the Menorah)."'** This Torah portion starts off with a short commandment regarding the maintenance of the Menorah which is found in the Set-apart place.

The Menorah is one of the historical symbols of Judaism and was made from pure gold. The Menorah pictures the Set-apart Days of Elohim, in accordance with the Hebrew calendar, as depicted below:



The word of Elohim frequently uses word pictures to call the reader's attention to understanding Elohim's truth and purposes for mankind. In the next topic discussed in Numbers 8, YHVH tells Moses to take the Levites from amongst the Israelites and cleanse them. After they cleaned themselves up, they went in to perform their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and his sons. The Levites started serving at the age of twenty five and retired from their duties at the age of fifty. This sanctification of the Levites in Numbers 8 had to do with keeping the Passover, for those unable to celebrate it on its given date in Numbers 9.

We read in verses 1 - 3 of Numbers 9: ***‘Thus YHVH spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,*** (you will notice that Numbers 9 seems to be out of sequence here, since we read in Numbers 1 that YHVH spoke to Moses on the first of the second month, in the second year since the Israelites left Egypt – this shows that Torah is not always a sequential account of what happened to our forefathers in the wilderness). (2) ***“Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time.*** (3) ***On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all the statutes and according to all its ordinances.”*** We see in the next two verses that the Israelites did as YHVH commanded them through Moses.

In verse 6 to 14 of Numbers 9, we are given the details of the second Passover, which may be taken by people who could not partake of the normal Passover, because they were either on a journey or were considered unclean at the time of the Passover, because of a dead person². They may then partake of a second Passover to be observed in the second month on

² *If at the time of the Passover a family member died and you had to bury your next of kin, you will be considered Scripturally unclean. You may therefore only partake of the second Passover, exactly a month later than the normal Passover on the 14th of Aviv.*

the fourteenth day at twilight. This Passover is observed in exactly the same way as the Passover observed on the fourteenth of the 1st month. However we notice that if those who did not keep the first Passover, neglects to keep the second Passover, they shall bear their own sin. When we repent and are immersed into Yahshua's saving Name, our acceptance of Messiah Yahshua constitutes a covenant with YHVH - the terms of which is sealed with the shed blood of Yahshua the Messiah (as per Hebrews 9: 11 - 12 & 15) and is renewed every year when we partake of the Passover.

There are some believers in Yahshua, who insist that because, as they believe He took a Nazirite vow, He could not partake of the last Passover before His death on the cross (or impalement tree). Others say that He could not partake of the Passover, since He became the Passover lamb that died for the sins of the world, at the time when the Jews of His day slaughtered their Passover lambs. However, we know that Yahshua was a law keeper and He did not come to do away with the Law, as He said in Matthew 5: 17, ***“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”*** The word 'fulfill' here means to complete, as we see in the rest of Matthew 5, where Yahshua shows that the Torah is to be obeyed with the spiritual intent, meaning that He came to make it (Torah) more binding, as explained (for example) in Matthew 5: 27 & 28, as follows: ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; (28) but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*** We also see that Yahshua did not abolish the Sabbath command as some claim, but as is recorded in Luke 4: 16, ***‘(And) He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.’*** Yahshua did not only keep the letter of the law by not working on the Sabbath, but He also kept the spiritual intent by attending Sabbath services, in the synagogue. As explained in Torah portion Naso, there is no record of Yahshua having taken a Nazirite vow anywhere in

the Scriptures, and if He did, it would have been recorded as such: Instead we read what He said about Himself in Luke 7: 33 & 34, as follows: ***“For John the Immerser has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ (34) The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gathers and sinners!’”***

We know that Yahshua definitely kept the Passover, as He instructed His disciples to go to a certain man’s house to tell him that they will keep the Passover in his house, as is recorded in Mark 14: 14. Yahshua was obedient to Torah and we may say with Scriptural authority that He would not have neglected keeping the final Passover. We know that John the Immerser referred to Yahshua as the Lamb of YHVH, who takes away the sins of the world. If Yahshua did not partake of the Passover prior to His death, he would have broken the commandment given in Numbers 9: 13, as follows: ***‘But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of YHVH at its appointed time. That man shall bear his sin.’*** If indeed Yahshua sinned by not partaking the Passover, He would not have been a perfect Passover lamb, and we would still be in our sin. But, we know that according to Elohim’s plan of salvation, a small part of Him became ‘the man’ Yahshua, which He purposed to die for the sins of the world. In addition we read in Mark 14: 23 - 25 ***“And when He had taken a cup, and given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the renewed covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink (meaning that He must have drunk it at this time) of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of Elohim.”*** We also know that in Judaism, if you give thanks for something you will also partake of it. The Passover was part of the Sacrificial Laws, which Yahshua came to fulfill. He instituted new symbols on the night during which He was betrayed, for us to remember His death by, until He returns.

Yahshua kept the Passover like the Israelites did on the evening of the 14th of Aviv, which starts as the 13th of Aviv comes to a close. This is what Rav Shaul recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 26, as follows: ***‘For I received from the Master that which I also delivered to you, that the Master Yahshua in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; (24) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (25) In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it (once a year), in remembrance of Me.” (26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Master’s death until He comes.’***

In the remainder of Numbers 9, we read a description of the cloud covering and its function along the Israelites’ journey in the wilderness. Sometimes the cloud cover remained a few days over the Tabernacle according to the command of YHVH. Sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning and then lifted in the morning, when the Israelites would move out. Sometimes it would lift at night time, indicating that the Israelites should move. We read in Numbers 9: 23, ***‘At the command of YHVH they camped, and at the command of YHVH they set out; they kept (YHVH)’s charge, according to the command of YHVH through Moses.’*** In Numbers 10 some more instructions are added regarding two silver trumpets, used to assemble the leaders of the camp of Israel; to pitch the camp; to move on; to ready the Israelites for war; or to remind the nation about the New Moons and Feast Days of Elohim. In verses 11 - 13 of Numbers 10, we read: ***‘Now it came about in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, that the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; (12) and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. (13) So they moved out for the first time according to the commandment of YHVH through Moses.’*** Commandment here means ‘word’ or literally the ‘mouth’ of

YHVH. The word *'through'* in verse 13 means *'direction'* or literally the *'hand'* of Moses. They obeyed the *'mouth'* of YHVH through the *'hand'* of Moses. It was a test of faith to trust Moses' judgment that it was time to move, and this time the Israelites passed the test.

The Talmud refers to Numbers 10: 35 & 36 as a separate book. By making these two verses as a separate book in itself, the book of Numbers consist of three separate books, i.e. Numbers 1 – 10: 34, Numbers 10: 35 – 36, and Numbers 11: 1 – 36: 13. This would make a total of seven Torah books, which is based on Proverbs 9: 1, as follows: ***'Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars.'*** Therefore the Torah based on seven pillars is seen as the ultimate wisdom. In Numbers 11: 1 we read: ***'Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of YHVH: and when YHVH heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of YHVH burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.'*** The people cried out to Moses and he prayed to YHVH and the fire died out. So they called the name of the place Taberah, or burning. Continuing in verse 4, we read: ***'And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?'*** The word rabble here refers to those who are not totally part of the community. However, their attitude spread to the heart of the camp. These people had no excitement for a while: they did not have the miracles they experienced when they left Egypt and became bored. In addition they focused on the things that they did not have any longer. It is much like us; we always want to be entertained, and as soon as we get bored we start complaining. Those of us, who come from other religions, miss the many friends we had in church and the programs they had for our children, but we forget that we now have a better understanding of the word of Elohim and about who we are. Instead of complaining we need to learn to thank YHVH for calling us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Israelites wanted more than the manna that YHVH provided for them, so they complained and Moses became displeased with them. He asked YHVH why He was so hard on the people and why should he (Moses) alone carry the people of Israel. In verse 16 of Numbers 11, we read: ***‘YHVH therefore said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. (17) Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so you shall not bear it alone.”*** These seventy elders represent the first-fruits called out at our time to become Spirit beings at Yahshua’s return, when we are resurrected, to rule under Him during the Millennium.

After this a wind went forth from YHVH and brought quails from the sea, and let it fall all around the camp, about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground. And the people spent all day and all night gathering the quails, and spread them out for themselves all around the camp. However, we read in verse 33 & 34 of Numbers 11, ***‘While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of YHVH was kindled against the people and YHVH struck the people with a very severe plague. (34) So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah (the graves of greediness), because there they buried the people who had been greedy.’*** Only the greedy people died – those who went out of the camp to collect the quails that were on the outskirts of the camp.

In Numbers 12 we see that Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman that he had married. They questioned the fact that YHVH spoke through Moses alone. In fact our Jewish brothers hold, that the fact that YHVH appointed 70 elders to assist Moses resulted in this attack against Moses. Our Jewish brothers also correctly say that Zipporah was actually a Midianite woman, the daughter of a

Midianite Priest named Jethro, as may be read in Exodus 2: 16 – 22. In addition they (our Jewish brothers) say the word Cushite here refers to her beauty. Moses' wife's beauty was as obvious to all, as the blackness of a Cushite is obvious to all. We see in verse 3 of Numbers 12, that Moses was a very humble man, more humble than any man on the face of the earth. Next we see that YHVH intervenes for Moses and calls him, Aaron and Miriam to come before Him. We read in verses 6 -8, ***'He (YHVH) said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, YHVH, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. (7) Not so with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; (8) With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of YHVH. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?"*** Moses saw the form of Elohim, the visible image of the invisible Elohim, the word who became flesh and was named Yahshua, meaning the salvation of YHVH. YHVH departed and when the cloud had withdrawn over the tent, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. However, Moses cried out to YHVH. YHVH told Moses that Miriam had to dwell outside the camp for seven days before she will be healed. The people did not move on whilst waiting for Miriam. When Miriam returned to the camp the people moved out from Hazereth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 13 verse 1 to 15 verse 41 (Sh'lach Le'Cha).

This weeks Torah portion is called Sh'lach Le'Cha, meaning to 'send on your behalf'. We read in Numbers 13: 1 & 2, ***'Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying, (2) "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes every one a leader among them."*** This was into the second year that the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, and it became time for them to get a feel for what their future home will be like. Twelve leaders from each of the tribes of Israel were chosen to see what the land of Canaan is like. We find that Caleb the son of Jephunneh was chosen from the tribe of Judah and Hoshea the son of Nun was chosen for the tribe of Ephraim. However, we see in verse 16 of Numbers 13, that Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua, as follows: ***'These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.'***

The question is will the twelve leaders see the land of Canaan, the way YHVH sees it, or will they bring an evil report of what they see? We read from verse 18 to the first part of verse 20 of Numbers 13 what Moses expected from the 12 leaders, as follows: ***"And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. (19) And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? (20) And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land."*** We see in verses 22 to 24 what these 12 men saw in the land which they spied out, like this: ***'When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahimin, Shehai and Talmai the descendants of Anak were. (23) Then they came to the valley of Eschol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs.'*** We see that upon their return

after spying out the land for forty days, they showed the people the fruit of the land, telling them that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. But, they also proceeded to tell the people that the nations who live in the land are strong and their cities are large and fortified. They continued in this vein, saying that the sons of Anak, who were giants also lived in the land. At this point Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said (as recorded in verse 30): ***“We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.”***

But, the other men who had gone up, warned that the people are far too strong for the Israelites and they gave Israel a bad report of the land that they spied out. Continuing in Numbers 14, we see that the Israelites lift up their voices and cried all night and the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying to them in verses 2 & 3 of Numbers 14, ***“Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in the wilderness! (3) And why is YHVH bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”*** Moses and Aaron were most disappointed, and at this point both Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes, saying (in verses 7 – 9 of Numbers 14), ***“The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. (8) If YHVH is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us – a land which flows with milk and honey. (9) Only do not rebel against YHVH; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and YHVH is with us; do not fear them.”*** But, the congregation wanted to stone these two men and at this point the glory (Shechinah) of YHVH appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel. YHVH was most displeased with the behavior of the people and told Moses in verse 12, ***“I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you (meaning Moses) into a nation greater and mightier than they.”*** However, Moses interjected, saying that the Egyptians will come to hear about

YHVH who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and will tell the inhabitants of Canaan that YHVH could not bring them into the land, which He swore to them by oath, but slaughtered them in the wilderness. Moses also begs that YHVH pardon the iniquity of the people, according to the greatness of His lovingkindness.

We read in verses 20 to 24 of Numbers 14, YHVH answering Moses, saying: ***“I have pardoned them according to your word; (21) but indeed as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of YHVH. (22) Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, (23) shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. (24) But my servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.”***

Then YHVH told the congregation to set out to the wilderness by the Red Sea. He tells Moses and Aaron to tell the people that their corpses shall fall in the wilderness, all the men from twenty years and over, because they grumbled against Him. However, YHVH again tells Moses that Caleb and Joshua and their children will settle in the land. He also informs Moses that the children of Israel shall be shepherds for forty years, until their corpses lie in the wilderness. However, we see that when Moses told the sons of Israel what YHVH said they mourned saying they acted foolishly and will now go up into the promised land. However as YHVH warned, the Amelekites and the Canaanites who lived in the hill country came down and beat the sons of Israel down as far as Hormah.

We see that this incident is also mentioned in the Brit Chadashah to warn those of us called out at this time, to remain faithful to the end, in Hebrews 3: 14 – 19 and 4: 1, 2, 6 – 11, as follows: ***‘For we have become partakers of Messiah, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; (15)while it is said, “TODAY IF YOU***

HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”(16) *For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? (17) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest (the promised land), but to those who were disobedient? (19) And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.”*

(1) *‘Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest (the millennium rule of Yahshua), any one of you should seem to have come short of it. (2) For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. (6) Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, (7) He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying, through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.” (8) For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. (9) There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of Elohim. (10) For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as Elohim did from His. (11) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience’* This is saying that the Sabbath is still applicable to us today, but it is also saying that those of us who remain faithful in Torah observance will make it into the kingdom, as kings and priests, under Yahshua during his Millennium rule. We need to believe the good news of the coming kingdom of Elohim and repent from breaking the commandments of Elohim (which is what sin is), and return to full Torah obedience.

We read in Numbers 15: 15 that the same Torah is applicable to natural born Israelites as well as those aliens who sojourn with them, as follows: **‘As for the assembly, there shall be**

one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before YHVH' This is very similar to what we read in Isaiah 56: 6 & 7, like this: ***"Also the foreigners who join themselves to YHVH, To minister to Him, and to love the name of YHVH, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant: (7) Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."*** We also read In Numbers 15: 33 about a man who violated the Sabbath. We see that when they asked what should be done to this man, YHVH told Moses to put him to death, by stoning. In the light of what we read in the book of Hebrews, this should be a severe warning to us. However, we might not be stoned to death for breaking the Sabbath command at this time, but we could lose our position in the kingdom of Elohim, as well as die the second death. Next we read in Numbers 15: 37 - 39, ***'YHVH also spoke to Moses saying, (38) "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels (tzitzit) on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. (39) And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of YHVH, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and after your own eyes, after which you played the harlot."*** We see that these tassels must be worn in such a way, that they may be seen. In addition we see from Deuteronomy 22: 12 that the tassels must be part of a garment used to cover ourselves, as follows: ***"You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself."*** The tzitzit may be attached to the four corners of a garment worn inside or outside. However, it must be attached to a garment, made from material and covering part of the body – a typical example is a tallit katan; a garment with fringes at each corner. Each of the four tassels must according to the command have at least one chord of

blue (transliterated as techelet in Hebrew) – showing that we are royalty. However, the Techelet, a small sea creature to be found in the Mediterranean Sea, used to make the specific color of blue, has according to the Rabbinical Jews, become very rare (or are even extinct) at present. It is for this reason that the Jews wear pure white tzitzit at this time. I purchase my tallit katan from a Jewish source and therefore also wear white tzitzit, but will not criticize those who wear a chord of blue in their tzitzit.

Women may wear tzitzit, but If a woman wears tzitzit, it must be worn as part of the clothing that she uses to cover her head with, such as a shawl or scarf and not as the garment worn by men, as we are warned about in Deuteronomy 22: 5, as follows: ***‘A woman shall not wear man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to YHVH your Elohim.’*** The tzitzit is worn to remind us to keep the commandments of Elohim. We see in Matthew 9: 20 – 22 that Yahshua used to wear tzitzit, as follows: ***‘And behold, a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him (Yahshua) and touched the fringe of His cloak (outer garment NASB), (21) for she was saying to herself, “if I only touch His garment, I shall get well.” (22) But Yahshua turning and seeing her said, “Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.” And at once the woman was made well.’*** Notice in Matthew 23: 5, Yahshua said that the religious leaders broaden their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels to make it more visible to others, but He did not say that they should not wear them any longer, did He? As Nazarene Israelites, Yahshua should always be held up as our example. Ask yourself, did Yahshua wear tzitzit? Was Yahshua immersed? Was Yahshua circumcised? Let us therefore determine to follow the Master Yahshua as the perfect standard of YHVH, by which we need to measure ourselves.

Numbers 16 verse 1 to 18 verse 32 (Korah).

This Torah portion is called Korah; it is the account of the treason of the son of a Levite named Korah and his rebellious cohorts. We read in verse 1 of Numbers 16, ***'Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took action.'***

We all understand that the way of YHVH is a way of giving and sharing, as opposed to that of Satan and the world - which is in essence a way of get. We notice from the quoted verse that Korah who 'took' was one of those people in the world who are simply out to get, usually something that they don't have. I am certain that most of us know people in both categories mentioned. Korah was much like Satan, who rebelled against YHVH, when He wanted to make himself like the most High, as we read in Isaiah 14: 12 – 14 (KJV³), as follows: ***"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars⁴ of G-d: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."*** Like Satan who influenced a third⁵ of the angels to follow him in his

³ I quote from the King James Version to make it clear that Isaiah 14 is talking about Lucifer, who is Satan the devil; because there are some who assert that this is in fact talking about Adam. A second witness is found in Luke 10: 18, where Yahshua said to the seventy that He sent out ahead of Him to every city where He Himself was going to go, as follows: ***"I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."***

⁴ We know that the stars of Elohim as used in the Scriptures, refer to angels, as is explained in Revelation 1: 20, in this way: ***'As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands; the seven stars are the angels of the seven ecclesia, and the seven lampstands are the seven ecclesia.'***

⁵ We read in Revelation 12: 3 – 4 & 9, ***'And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his head were seven diadems. (4) And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour the child. (9) And the great***

rebellion, Korah influenced, those mentioned in verse one, but also a total number of 250 men to join him in his rebellion against Moses and Aaron.

Korah and his followers made up of 250 leaders of Israel, chosen in the assembly, men of renown challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron, saying to them in verse 3 of Numbers 16, ***“You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy (set-apart), every one of them, and YHVH is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of YHVH?”*** Obviously Moses was shocked to hear Korah’s accusation. He therefore challenges Korah and his followers to a test to prove their authority, by letting Elohim choose the appropriate leader for the congregation. In verse 12 - 15 of Numbers 16, we read, ***‘Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; but they said, “We will not come up. (13) Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of the land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but you would lord it over us? (14) Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!’*** At this point Moses really became angry, and said to YHVH in verse 15, ***“Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them.”*** Moses also instructs Korah and his men to take firepans and put incense on it, and tell them to each bring a censor before YHVH. He also told Aaron to do likewise.

The next morning Korah assembled the entire congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Then YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron saying (in verse 21): ***“Separate yourselves***

dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.’ The quoted section also serves as a 3rd witness to the fact that Isaiah 14 is indeed talking about Satan.

from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly.” So Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, saying to YHVH (in verse 22): **“O Elohim, Thou Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, wilt Thou be angry with the entire congregation?”** Next YHVH tells Moses to move the congregation away from Korah and his men. Moses obeys YHVH and said to the congregation in verse 28 - 30 of Numbers 16, **“By this you shall know that YHVH has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing. (29) If these men die the death of all men, or if they suffer the fate of all men, then YHVH has not sent me. (30) But if YHVH brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallow them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned YHVH.”** When Moses finished speaking, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and his men, with all their households and their possessions. The nation fled at the outcry of Korah and his cohorts and then fire also came forth from YHVH and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense. After this YHVH told Moses to tell Eleazar the son of Aaron, that he should take up the censers out of the midst of the fire as they are set-apart. In addition Moses told him to take the censers and let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they are set-apart and shall be a sign to the sons of Israel. Eleazar obeyed and made an altar as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should come near to burn incense before YHVH, that he might not become like Korah and his company – just as YHVH had spoke to him through Moses. Like I said in Torah portion Shemini, we should not ever burn incense before YHVH.

However, this initial outburst triggered another challenge from the sons of Israel, when they grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying in verse 41 of Numbers 16, **“You are the ones who have caused the death of (YHVH)’s people.”** Next the congregation assembled against Moses and Aaron, and they turned to the tent of meeting. Afterward the cloud covered the

tent of meeting and the glory of YHVH appeared. When Moses and Aaron came to the tent of meeting YHVH spoke to Moses saying that they should get away from the congregation, so that He may consume the congregation. However, Moses instructed Aaron to quickly take his censor and put fire from the altar in it and burn incense on it, thus making atonement for the congregation, for the wrath of Elohim has gone forth from YHVH and a plague started. Aaron did as Moses told him and took his stand between the dead and the living, and so the plague was checked. However, we see that 14700, besides Korah and his men, died by the plague.

Continuing in Numbers 17, we see that YHVH has now gained the attention of the nation, He tells Moses to take the rods of all the leaders according to their father's households and write their names on their rods. YHVH also tells Moses to write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. Then YHVH tells Moses to deposit the rods in the tent of meeting in front of the tent of meeting, saying that it will come about that the rod of the man whom YHVH chooses will sprout. Moses did as YHVH told him and the next day, he saw that Aaron's staff not only sprouted buds, but also bear flowers and almonds. Moses brought the rods out in the presence of YHVH showing it to all the sons of Israel. Each man took his rod, but YHVH instructed Moses to put Aaron's rod before the Ark to bear testimony, to be kept against the rebels that they may put an end to their grumblings against YHVH, so that they should not die.

This should also serve as a warning to those of us whom YHVH has called out of the world, to follow Him, not to entertain thoughts of rebelling against Him. As much as Yahshua chose His own disciples, we know that one of them were chosen to betray Him. Similarly are some who follow Him, appointed for condemnation, as may be deduced from the parable of the dragnet recorded in Matthew 13: 47 – 51, as follows: ***“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; (48) and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers,***

but the bad they threw away. (49) So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, (50) and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” An explanation of this may be read in Jude verses 3 & 4, as follows: **“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (called out believers). (4) For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our Elohim into licentiousness and deny (contradict) our only Master Yahshua Messiah.** Rav Shaul puts it like this in 1 Corinthians 11: 19, **‘For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.’** A point to remember is that the Israelites were at that time observing the Sabbaths (weekly and annual), the Kosher food laws and the other commandments of YHVH. Rav Shaul wrote about them in Romans 9: 31 - 33, as follows: **‘but Israel pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. (32) Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,(33) just as it is written, “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’** Rav Kepha (Peter) talking about Yahshua says in 1 Peter 2: 8, **‘and, “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;** **for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.**’

It is as simple as that, if we are disobedient to the word, after we have been called, we will not make it into the kingdom of Elohim. We read in 2 Timothy 2: 11 – 15, **‘It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him (in immersion), we shall also live with Him; (12) If we endure, we shall also reign**

with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; (13) If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself. (14) Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of Elohim not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. (15) Be diligent to present yourself approved to Elohim as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. How do we deny or contradict Yahshua the word of Elohim? By saying for example that: the Sabbath starts at any other time, as we are told in the Scriptures. According to Genesis 1: 5, the first day of the week starts in the evening like indeed the Sabbath and any other day of the week does. Leviticus 23 verses 27 & 32, confirms that the 10 day of the seventh month (The Day of Atonement) also starts on the ninth day of the month at evening, and lasts until the tenth day at evening. This is similar to the seventh day Sabbath, and any other day. In addition we read in Nehemiah 13: 19 that the Sabbath starts in the evening after it grows dark. If we argue that the Scriptures talk about the Sabbath day as if the day part of the Sabbath is what is Set-apart, we are merely wrangling about words, and could lead people astray. Similarly, we as Israelites may not declare a feast day unto YHVH, since Judah is Elohim's Lawgiver, as we read in Psalm 60: 7; they have the Oracles of Elohim, according to Romans 3: 1 - 4 and Romans 9: 4 and are therefore responsible for the calendar. They are presently running the small country in the middle-east called Israel, according to the same calendar. YHVH is pleased with their calendar as we read in Nahum 1: 15, ***'Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace! "Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; Pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.'***

The main theme of this Torah portion is contained in the idea, that YHVH enters a covenant of salt with Aaron, his sons and the Levites. The covenant of salt essentially implied that Aaron and the Levites were to influence the people, not the other way round. Similarly those of us who are called out at this time, are

called the salt of the earth by Yahshua in the first part of Matthew 5: 13, saying: ***“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”*** We are supposed to show people in the world how to keep the Torah, with a spiritual intent. If we turn back to where we come from, we will have lost our saltiness and will be good for nothing. The covenant of salt is spelt out in Number 18, where YHVH tells Aaron and the Levites that they shall serve in the tent of meeting and offer up sacrifices to YHVH. We read in verses 20 to 24 of Numbers 18, ***‘Then YHVH said to Aaron, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. (21) And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. (22) And the sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, lest they bear their sin and die. (23) Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. (24) For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to YHVH, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, ‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”*** However, we read further that the Levites had to give a tithe of the tithe that they receive to Aaron the priest.

Numbers 19 verse 1 to 22 verse 1 (Chu'kat).

This week's Torah portion is called Chu'kat, meaning the 'statutes of'. This Torah portion deals with five different topics. We commence in Numbers 19: 1, and read to verse 9 to try and understand the first topic, ***'Then YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, (2) "This is the statute of the law which YHVH has commanded saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed. (3) And you shall give it to Eleazer the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. (4) Next Eleazer the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. (5) Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burnt. (6) And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet (scarlet was the color red which was obtained from a red or crimson worm or maggot of the fly) material, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer. (7) The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. (8) The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. (9) Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin.'*** The ashes of the red heifer was to be used for purifying from sin.

Reading the remainder of Numbers 19, we see that the water (ash obtained from the red heifer) was used to purify anyone who touches a corpse of a person. Such a person is regarded to be unclean for a period of seven days and has to purify himself on the third day after he touched the corpse and again on the seventh day, then he shall be clean. The Torah of the red heifer is an ordinance which is not fully understood, yet fully

binding, known as a Chuk. There are a number of Chukim (plural of Chuk) in the Scriptures which even though we do not understand are binding upon us. One of these is the law that we shall not wear a garment made from two different fabrics. Even though we do not understand the logic behind this law, there are many lessons to be learnt from obeying the same. One such lesson is found in Amos 3: 3, where we read: ***'Do two men walk together unless they have an appointment?'*** This is essentially saying that we cannot walk together with people who keep the appointed times or Feast Days at different times to us; or that a believer cannot fellowship with an unbeliever. The wearing of tzitzit is to remind us to obey the commandments and is therefore not a Chuk, because we know the reason for wearing it.

The lesson about the red heifer is very specific, in that the heifer had to be female (a cow), between two to three years old, with no blemish upon it: its hide should only be covered in red hairs and its hooves and horns should also be red. In addition it had to be an animal on which a yoke has never been placed. We see that the person who burns the heifer becomes unclean and has to wash his clothes and bathe himself after performing the ritual. But we see that the ash obtained from the burned out heifer is used for purification. What is the reason for this strange law? We see that the ashes of the heifer is used for the purification of people who came into contact with dead people. Real cleansing or healing comes from YHVH, but in this case the substance obtained from the thing causing them to be unclean, is used for purification. This ritual deals with death, which we know separates us from Elohim. When we come in contact with the dead, it separates us from YHVH, who is Set-apart. We also know from reading the first part of Romans 6: 23, that ***'(For) the wages of sin is death.'*** The lesson behind the ritual of the red heifer was to warn the Israelites to keep away from sin, as it leads to (the second) death. We saw in Torah portion B'ehe'Lothca in Numbers 9, that a person who came in touch with a dead person, could not partake of the first Passover kept on the fourteenth day of the 1st month at twilight. Such a

person could only partake of the second Passover, kept exactly a month later, because he was considered unclean because of contact with a dead person.

The red heifer which had to be unblemished, reminds us of Yahshua, who like the Passover lamb, had to be without sin (or unblemished), to be able to take away the sins of the world. Messiah is the one who takes away our sins and even though it is red like scarlet, he washes us to be white as snow, as we read in Isaiah 1: 18, as follows: ***“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says YHVH, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.”*** We keep the Passover annually as a memorial to Messiah’s death, using wine as the new (or renewed) covenant in His blood, which was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We eat the unleavened bread, representing his body. Like the ashes of the red heifer, used for healing, began by defiling the people preparing it, so even though we are forbidden in Torah to consume blood, we are cleansed by the blood of Messiah, as He said in John 6: 53 – 58, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. (54) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (55) For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. (56) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him.”*** We know from reading about the Passover in Mark 14, that the unleavened bread that we eat at Passover represents His body and that the wine that we drink at that time, represents His blood. We are commanded in the Torah not to eat the blood of the clean animals that we slaughter for food, since imbibing the same will result in us taken on the nature of such an animal. But by partaking of the Passover wine, which represents Yahshua’s blood, we take in of Yahshua’s nature. After all, we do not keep the Torah to be saved. Because Yahshua already died for us, we keep Torah to show our faith in Him. Our obedience to Torah does not save us, but we show our faith, by our works, as we read in James 2: 26, as follows: ***‘For just as the***

body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.'

In Numbers 20 we read about the second topic of this week's Torah portion. We notice that the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Zin, in the first month and that Miriam died there. We see further that there was no water there and the people assembled against Moses and Aaron. They repeated their complaints as in previous instances, asking in verse 4 & 5 of Numbers 20, "***Why then have you brought (YHVH)'s assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beast to die here? (5) And why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.***" Then Moses and Aaron went to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces and the glory of YHVH appeared to them. Then YHVH told Moses to take his staff; to let the people assemble and to speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield water. So Moses took the rod as YHVH commanded, and he and Aaron gathered the people before the rock. Then in verse 10 of Numbers 20, Moses said to the Israelites: "***Listen now you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?***" Then Moses lifted his hand and hit the rock twice with his rod; and water came out and the people and their animals drank. Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying: "***Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as set-apart in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.***" We see that because Moses became impatient with the people and did not do exactly as YHVH told him, he was not allowed access to the land of Canaan. In fact Moses made as if he was the one giving the water to the Israelites. However, this should be a warning to all of us not to become impatient with weaker members in our midst. We should also be mindful to do exactly as we are told in the Torah of YHVH and not try and find reasons not to obey certain commandments. Talking about our fathers in the wilderness Rav Shaul tells us that the rock from which they drank was Yahshua as we read in 1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 4, like this: ***'For I***

do not want you to be un-aware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) and all were immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea: (3) and all ate the same spiritual food; (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from the spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah.' We read in verse 13 (of Numbers 20) a second time that those were the waters of Meribah (as we have in Torah portion Beshalach in Exodus 17), because the sons contended with YHVH, and He proved Himself set-apart among them.

We move onto the next topic in verse 14 of Numbers 20, where Moses approaches the Edomites, to seek their compassion, asking that they allow the Israelites to pass through their land. He promises that they will not touch anything on their way, until they have reached the end of the Edomites' territory. However, the king refused. The sons of Israel asked a second time to pass through the land of the Edomites, promising that if their animals should drink any of its water, they will pay for it. However, the Edomites refused a second time to let the Israelites pass through their land. The Israelites moved on and came to Mount Hor, where YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron, telling them that Aaron will die there. So Moses in obedience to YHVH took Aaron and his son Eleazer up Mount Hor where he took off Aaron's garments and put it on Eleazer, after which Aaron died. Moses and Eleazer came down from the mountain and when the sons of Israel saw that Aaron died, they wept for him for thirty days.

Following the death of Aaron on Mount Hor, we read in Numbers 21, that: when the Canaanite king heard that Israel is coming by the way of Atherim, he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. However, we see that Israel made a vow with Elohim, saying in verse 2 of Numbers 21, **"If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."** We see that YHVH heard the voice of Israel and delivered them from the Canaanites. We read in the last part of verse 3, **'Thus the name of the place was called Hormah** (meaning a devoted thing or,

destruction).’ The next topic is found in verses 4 – 9 of Numbers 21. We read in verse 4, ***‘Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey.’*** Again they spoke against Elohim and Moses, saying in verse 5, ***“Why have you brought us up out of the land of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water and we loathe this miserable food*** (meaning the manna).” This is when YHVH sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many died. So the people told Moses that they sinned and asked him to intercede for them, to remove the serpents. YHVH instructed Moses to make a fiery serpent out of bronze and put it on a pillar (or standard), and when the people look upon this serpent they shall live, even if they were bitten by the serpents. Moses did as instructed and the people who were bitten by the serpents lived when they looked upon the bronze serpent. Again, like in the case with the red heifer, we see that the very cause of the problem amongst the Israelites, became the cure. This bronze serpent put on a pillar also represented Yahshua who was impaled for the sins of the world: consequently, if we accept Him as our personal savior, and after immersion into His saving name, start obeying the commandments of Elohim, we shall have eternal life, as we read in John 3: 14 & 15, as follows: ***“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; (15) that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”***

We read in verse 17 & 18 of Numbers 21, that the Israelites sang this song: ***“Spring up, O well! Sing to it! (18) The well, which the leaders sank, Which the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and their staffs.”*** This song was obviously aimed at Moses (and Aaron) who obtained water for the people using their staffs. Israel moved on asking Sihon the king of the Amorites, if they could pass through his land, but he refused and he gathered his people and attacked the children of Israel. Israel struck them with the edge of the sword and took possession of their land and we read in verse 31 that Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. Then Moses sent out

spies to spy out the land of Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites living there. The people continued on, but Og the king of Bashan went out to battle against Israel. Nevertheless, YHVH told Moses that Israel should not fear, as He will deliver them into their hands. So they killed the king and possessed his land.

We conclude in Numbers 22: 1, where we read: ***'Then the sons of Israel journeyed, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.'*** Here we find the people of Israel opposite the entrance of the promised land again, but as we will see in the next Torah portion, they will not enter the land of Canaan, yet.

Numbers 22 verse 2 to 25 verse 9 (Balak).

This week's Torah Portion is named after Balak the king of Moab of that time. We commence the Torah portion in verses 2 & 3 of Numbers 22, where we read: ***'Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. (3) So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel.'*** Balak heard how the Israelites killed the Amorite king and his people and was trying to find a way to destroy the apparently unstoppable Israelites. He decides that he cannot fight them with military force and send messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor with fees to hire this highly acclaimed pagan prophet to come and curse the people of Israel, so that he may defeat them and drive them out of the land.

When these elders came to Balaam, they asked Him to curse the nation of Israel on behalf of Balak. From reading the next few verses we see that Balaam is a prophet who converses with the Elohim of Israel, even though he does not follow the Torah of Elohim. He asked the elders of Moab and Midian to spend the night, because as he said, he will bring back word to them if YHVH the Elohim of Israel will speak to him. The elders agree to stay over with Balaam. We read in verse 9 of Numbers 22, ***'Then Elohim came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"*** Balaam tells YHVH that Balak the king of Moab sent word to him, about the Israelites who came out of Egypt and now covers the land, asking that he curses the Israelites, with a view to drive them out of the land. We read what YHVH said to Balaam in verse 12 of Numbers 22, as follows: ***"Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed."*** Balaam obeys and the next morning tells Balak's leaders to go back to their country, because YHVH refused to let him go with them.

So the leaders of Balak went back to their land and told Balak that Balaam refused to come with them. Balak therefore send more leaders, more distinguished than the former to convince

Balaam to come with them, saying they will honor him richly, if he will come and curse the Israelites. However, Balaam answered Balak's servants that he will not come against YHVH his Elohim's will, even if they give him a house full of silver and gold. Note at this point Balaam also calls YHVH his Elohim. But Balaam tells Balak's servants to stay over that night, so that he may find out what else YHVH will say to him. We see in verse 20 of Numbers 22, ***'And Elohim came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do."*** The next day Balaam arose and saddled his donkey and went with Balak's men to Moab. We see that Elohim was angry because Balaam was going with the men, and the angel of YHVH took a stand against Balaam and his two servants as an adversary against him. The donkey saw an angel standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; the donkey turned from the way and went into the field.

However Balaam struck the donkey to turn back. Then the angel stood in the path with a vineyard on the one side and a wall on the other side. The donkey seeing the angel in the way, pressed against the wall and in the process pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. Balaam struck the donkey again. So the angel went and stood where there was no way to turn. When the donkey saw the angel, she lay down under Balaam, and he struck her once again. At this point YHVH opens the donkey's mouth and she said to Balaam in verse 28, ***"What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"*** Balaam is not even surprised at the miracle that his donkey spoke to him, but answers the donkey, saying in verse 29, ***"Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand I would have killed you by now."*** In verse 30, the donkey said to Balaam, ***"Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?"*** ***And he*** (Balaam) ***said "No."*** At this point YHVH opens Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of YHVH standing in the way with his sword drawn, and he bowed all the way to the ground. Balaam was so greedy to receive honor from Balak

that he was too blind to see a miracle from YHVH happening right before his eyes. The angel questioned Balaam and he admits that he sinned, promising to turn back. But we read in verse 35 what the angel of YHVH said to him, in this way: ***“Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I shall tell you.”*** So Balaam went with the men and upon hearing that Balaam is on his way Balak went to the border of Arnon. Upon arrival Balak said to Balaam in verse 37, ***“Did I not urgently send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really unable to honor you?”*** But we see that Balaam answers saying in verse 38, ***“Behold, I have come now to you! Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that Elohim puts in my mouth, that I shall speak.”***

Balaam went with Balak and we begin to see his greedy nature, as the increased reward that Balak offered him, was actually beginning to appeal to him. He tells Balak to build seven altars for him, and to prepare seven bulls and seven rams for him. Balak who wanted the Israelites to be cursed obeys and he and Balaam offers up a bull and a ram on each altar. He then tells Balak to stand beside his burnt offering whilst he goes, saying that perhaps YHVH will come and whatever He shows him, he will tell Balak. Balaam went to a bare hill and YHVH tells him to return to Balak, so he went and stood next to Balak and all the leaders of Moab, and said (as is recorded in verse 7 – 10 of Numbers 23): ***“From Aram Balak has brought me, Moab’s king from the mountains of the East, ‘Come curse Jacob for me, And come, denounce Israel!’ (8) How shall I curse, whom Elohim has not cursed? And how can I denounce, whom YHVH has not denounced? (9) And I see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people who dwells apart. And shall not be reckoned among the nations. (10) Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, And let my end be like his!”*** Balak realized that Balaam actually blessed the sons of Israel; however, Balaam tells Balak that he could not help himself, as he had to be

careful to say only what YHVH puts in his mouth to say about Israel.

Again Balak took Balaam to another place to curse the people of Israel for him. He took Balaam to the field of Zophim and again built seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. So Balaam tells Balak to stand beside his burnt offerings, while he will meet YHVH some distance away. When Balaam returned and Balak asked him what YHVH said, Balaam said (the words recorded in verses 18 to 24 of Numbers 23): ***“Arise, o Balak and hear, Give ear to me, O son of Zippor! (19) Elohim is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Wow, do you realize what this means? Whatever YHVH promised the children of Israel He will do! This means that eventually He will honor the promise made in Deuteronomy 30: 4; to gather us from the ends of the earth and bring us back to the land which He promised us through Abraham!) (20) Behold, I have received a command to bless; When He has blessed, then I cannot revoke it. (21) He has not observed misfortune in Jacob; Nor has He seen trouble in Israel; YHVH his Elohim is with him, And the shout of a king is among them. (22) Elohim brings them out of Egypt, He is for them like the horns of the wild ox. (23) For there is no omen against Jacob, Nor is there any divination against Israel; At the proper time it shall be said of Jacob and to Israel, what Elohim has done. (24) Behold, a people rises like a lioness, And as a lion it lifts itself, It shall not lie down until it devours the prey, And drinks the blood of the slain.”*** Balak asks Balaam to stop, as he realizes that Balaam was actually blessing Israel. Again Balaam tells Balak that he may only speak what YHVH tells him to say. Next Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor and again build seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. We read in Numbers 24, that when Balaam saw that it pleased YHVH to bless Israel, he did not go as before to seek omens, but set his face toward the wilderness, and saw Israel

camping tribe by tribe, and the Set-apart Spirit of YHVH came upon him and he continued to bless Israel again.

We see that Balaam realized that he was powerless against YHVH the Elohim of Israel. He also realized that because YHVH blessed the nation of Israel through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he is powerless to try and curse them, as Elohim will not allow anyone to pronounce a curse over them. Finally Balaam pronounced another blessing over Israel, which included a vision of the star of the Messiah that came forth from Jacob, as recorded in Numbers 24: 17, like this: ***“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth (tumult).”*** But, as we continue on in Numbers 25 we see that even though Balak was unsuccessful to get Balaam to make the nation fall, due to his trying to curse them, they did fall, because of the lust of the flesh. We read in Numbers 25 that when Israel stayed at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab, who invited them to the sacrifices of their gods. The people ate and bow down to the pagan gods of the Moabites, including Baal-peor and YHVH became angry with the people of Israel. So YHVH said to Moses in verse 4 of Numbers 25, ***“Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before YHVH, so that the fierce anger of YHVH may turn away from Israel.”*** Moses obeyed and instructed the judges of Israel, as we read in verse 5 of Numbers 25, saying: ***“Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor.”*** At this same time one of the sons of Israel brought a Midianite woman in full sight of Moses and the sons of Israel, whilst they were still weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron saw it, he got up from the midst of the people, taking a spear in his hand; he went into the tent of the man and pierced both the man and woman through their bodies, effectively checking the plague and those who died by the plague were 24,000.

Were it not for the quick action of Phinehas, the plague might have slain countless more. The actions of Balaam and his dealings with the king of Moab had a lasting effect on the Israelites, but also on Renewed Covenant believers. The Moabites became the enemy of YHVH and therefore also of Israel, as we read YHVH saying in Deuteronomy 23: 3 – 6, as follows: ***“No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of YHVH; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of YHVH, (4) because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. (5) Nevertheless, YHVH your Elohim was not willing to listen to Balaam, but YHVH your Elohim turned the curse into blessing for you because YHVH your Elohim loves you. (6) You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.”*** We read in the Renewed Covenant where Rav Kepha (Peter) warns those who have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, in 2 Peter 2: 1 – 3, 15, 16, 20 & 21, like this: ***‘But false prophets (like Balaam who knew Elohim, but did not obey His Torah) also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying (or contradicting) the Master⁶ who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned; (3) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. (15) forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, son of Beor, who loved the***

⁶ An example are those anti-Semitic groups who teach that Yahshua did not say the words recorded in Matthew 23:1 – 3, as follows: ***‘Then Yahshua spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, (2) saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses: (3) therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them.”’***

wages of unrighteousness, (16) but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. (20) For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Master and Savior Yahshua Messiah, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (21) For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy (set-apart) commandment delivered to them.' Those who do not know the way of Elohim, will be brought back to life during the second resurrection, in time for the Great White Throne Judgment. At that time YHVH will open their minds to His truths and will give them understanding. Those of them who willingly accept Yahshua as their personal savior, will be filled with the Set-apart Spirit and be given salvation in Elohim's everlasting kingdom. But those who will not accept Yahshua, will be burnt with the wicked to become ashes under the feet of the righteous (as per Malachi 4: 1). There is no second chance and this will be the first chance for those not called during this age, to be saved. But, those of us called during this age are having our only chance of salvation at this time. We read accordingly in Hebrews 10 : 26 & 27, **'For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.'**

Balaam is a perfect example of an unscrupulous man who even though Elohim at times spoke to him, preferred to seek his own personal gain. We read further about him in Revelation 2: 14, where Yahshua tells Rav Yochanan to write to the angel of the ecclesia in Pergamum, saying amongst other: **"But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality."** Yes there are even today

teachers who teach people to commit acts of immorality: Some teach that it is ok to have more than one spouse, whilst, even though other are not teaching immorality in the flesh, they teach either a different gospel, or strange ideas about the calendar, the starting times of the Sabbath and the Set-apart Name of YHVH, in order to make believers stumble. They are deceived and are deceiving many believers to follow their deception. The sons of Israel stumbled, whilst they were bracing themselves from an attack by Moab: As soon as they thought that they were successful in that Balaam could not curse them, they were blindsided and were overcome by their appetites and lustful passions. Phinehas' action saved the Israelite nation from total annihilation and it is for this reason that the next Torah portion is named after him.

Numbers 25 verse 10 to 29 verse 40 (Pinchas).

This week's Torah portion is called Pinchas, the Hebrew transliterated name of Phinehas the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest. We read in verses 10 & 11 of Numbers 25, ***'Then YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, (11) "Phinehas the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy."*** In verses 12 & 13 YHVH says: ***"Therefore say, 'Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; (13) and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his Elohim, and made atonement for the sons of Israel."***

In the previous Torah portion we saw how Phinehas slew the son of an Israelite leader of the tribe of Simeon and a Midianite woman, thus stopping the plague that killed twenty four thousand among the children of Israel. By so doing Phinehas made atonement for the sons of Israel and brought an end to the plague. In addition we read in Psalm 106: 28 – 31, ***'They joined themselves also to Baal-peor, And ate sacrifices offered to the dead. (29) Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds; And the plague broke out among them. (30) Then Phinehas stood up and interposed; And so the plague was stayed. (31) And it was reckoned to him for righteousness, To all generations forever.'*** The Simeonite Leader's name was Zimri and the Midianite woman's name was Cozbi. She was the daughter of Zur, who was head of the people of his father's household in Midian. We know from the previous Torah portion that it was clearly the intention of the Moabite-Midianite coalition to lead the children of Israel astray.

YHVH gave Phinehas this covenant of peace (shalom in Hebrew), thus making a covenant with him and his descendants after him that they will hold the office of priest (or Cohen) forever. We see that a similar blessing was given to our great father in the faith Abraham in Genesis 12: 1 – 3, as

follows: ***'Now YHVH said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; (2) And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; (3) And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*** Balak wanted to curse Abraham's children the Israelites and we saw in the previous Torah portion that it resulted in a major curse for the Ammonite and Midianite people, as recorded in Deuteronomy 23: 3 – 6. Do we believe the blessings that YHVH gave Abraham? Do we realize that if we bless Israel, including Judah, we will also be blessed? Yes, the blessing includes both the Jews and us the remnant of called out Israelites, who like Isaac, are children of promise. However, there are some Nazarene/Messianic Israelite and like-minded believers who are so anti-Semitic that they will not accept that Judah is even today, the lawgivers of YHVH (Psalm 60: 7). They maintain that the Oracles of Elohim was removed from Judah because of their unbelief. But we know that YHVH does not lie and cannot change as we read in Malachi 3: 6, ***"For I, YHVH do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."*** In addition, we read in Romans 3: 3 &4, ***'What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of Elohim, will it? (4) May it never be! Rather, let Elohim be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED IN THY WORDS, AND MIGHTEST PREVAIL WHEN THOU ART JUDGED."*** Even thinking evil of a true fellow Israelite or Jew could result in us cursing ourselves.

South Africa used to be an Israelite country and the Israelites as well as the other inhabitants of this country were blessed by the blessings of Abraham. Our country produced the most gold and diamonds in the world. However, things have changed and I noticed that some of the previously very productive mines are going bankrupt today. This morning on the news we heard of 62 illegal miners who died in a fire in one of South

Africa's gold mines. That was something that was unheard of in previous times. Like in the UK and the USA the blessings of Abraham are fast becoming a thing of the past in South Africa. It is time to start praying earnestly for the kingdom of Elohim to come, as Yahshua taught us in Matthew 6: 9 – 13.

Cozbi the woman Phinehas pierced through together with Zimri, was a Midianite woman. According to Genesis 25: 2, Midian was Abraham's son by his second wife Keturah. We see further that Moses also married a Midianite woman named Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. The Midianite people were aware of the Elohim of Israel, as we've seen with both Balaam and Jethro, Moses' father in law. This is why the judgment that YHVH pronounced upon them was so much more severe. We read in Numbers 25: 16 – 18, ***'Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying, (17) "Be hostile to the Midianites and strike them; (18) for they have been hostile to you with their tricks, with which they have deceived you in the affair with Peor, and in the affair of Cozbi, the daughter of the leader of Midian, their sister who was slain on the day of the plague because of Peor."*** This passage emphasizes the deceptive way of life of the Midianite people. In the beginning of this Torah portion, the word jealous and its derivative jealousy are repeated a number of times. Jealousy is a word which is especially related to a marriage relationship. We know that Elohim is depicted in the Scriptures as Israel's husband. We also know that Elohim says that He is a jealous Elohim. Because Phinehas was jealous for Elohim's love, he killed Zimri who was unfaithful to Israel and Elohim, together with Cozbi, when they provoked Phinehas to jealousy. The word slay or slain appears a number of times in verses 14 – 18. Phinehas as (an agent of) the 'jealous husband' slew both Zimri and Cozbi and thus stayed the wrath of 'divine' jealousy.

Those of us who are called out of the world to become priests under Yahshua in the coming kingdom of Elohim, have to be like Phinehas, jealous (or rather zealous) for YHVH. We who are presently being trained to become priests (teachers) in the world tomorrow should not shirk our responsibility. It is our

duty to warn the people of Elohim about their transgressions, as we read in Isaiah 58: 1, as follows: ***“Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, And declare to My people their transgression, And to the house of Jacob their sins.”*** Every person that YHVH calls is important to Him and no one of us are beyond correction. YHVH wants each and every one of us to be ready to take action, when there is a need to do so. Are we going to do what YHVH requires of us, or are we going to make excuses for not doing so? Are we going to defend the helpless amongst us? Are we going to correct those who make coarse jokes? Are we going to point out those who teach falsehood in our community? Or are we going to remain quiet and avoid our responsibility as Nazarenes? The duty of a Nazarene or watchman is as described in Ezekiel 3: 17 – 21, as follows: ***“Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. (18) When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. (19) Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. (20) Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he shall die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. (21) However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself.”***

We see that YHVH made a covenant with Phinehas and his descendants after him that they will hold the office of priest (or Cohen) forever. It seems odd that since Phinehas is a descendant of Aaron the High Priest, that YHVH did not give him the office of High Priest forever. However, we find the

reason for this in the fact that Yahshua our Messiah has become the one and only High Priest for ever. However, He is a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek and not in the order of Levi. The difference is that the priesthood of Melchizedek is the priesthood of the first-born – the true priests of YHVH, of whom Yahshua is the High Priest. In addition we read about Yahshua in Zechariah 6: 13, as follows: ***“Yes, it is He who will build the temple of YHVH, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”***

Numbers 26 is dedicated to the census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, from twenty years and older. We see in verse 51 of Numbers 26, that there were 601,730 sons of Israel at that time. The Levites were not numbered among the sons of Israel since no inheritance was given to them amongst the Israelites. Those who were numbered among the Levites, came to 23,000, every male from a month old and upward. This brings us to Numbers 27, where we read about the daughters of Zelophehad, namely Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. These daughters of Zelophehad came before Moses and Eleazar the priest, and the leaders and all the congregation, before the tent of meeting, saying, as we read in verses 3 & 4 of Numbers 27, ***“Our father died in the wilderness, yet he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves against YHVH in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. (14) Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father’s brothers.”*** Moses brought the request of the daughters of Zelophehad before YHVH and He told Moses that if a man has no sons, he should transfer his inheritance to his daughters. He also adds that if a man has neither sons nor daughters, he should transfer his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, he should transfer his inheritance to his father’s brothers. And finally if his father has no brothers, he should transfer his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family.

Next we see that YHVH reminds Moses of the fact that the day of his death is fast approaching. Moses spoke to YHVH, as we read in Numbers 27: 16 & 17, saying: ***“May YHVH, the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, (17) who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of YHVH may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”*** It is clear from Moses’ request that he understood that man is composed of both flesh and spirit, as well as that YHVH our creator knows our frame. Moses cares for the nation of Israel and request that YHVH will provide them with a good leader to take them into the promised land. When YHVH tells Moses to take Joshua the son of Nun as the next leader, he did not quibble at all. We read in verse 22 & 23 of Numbers 27, ***‘And Moses did just as YHVH commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. (23) Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as YHVH had spoken through Moses.’***

Numbers 28 and 29 is a repetition of Leviticus 23, about the timing of the appointed times of YHVH our Elohim. We see that the Israelites were to burn offerings every Sabbath, at the beginning of each new month, as well as during the Set-apart Days of YHVH our Elohim. Mention is again made of the Passover, to be kept on the fourteenth day of the first month, followed by the seven Days of Unleavened Bread starting on the 15th Aviv: The First Day of Unleavened Bread is the first annual Sabbath or day of rest on Elohim’s Set-apart Day calendar. We start counting the Omer from the day after the first annual Sabbath and count seven complete weeks to the Feast of Weeks or Shavuot, as it is called in verse 26 of Numbers 28, as follows: ***‘Also on the day of the first fruits, when you present a grain offering to YHVH in your Feast of Weeks, you shall do no laborious work.’*** The weekly Sabbath and the Day of Atonement are the only two set-apart days on which absolutely no work may be done – as those are the only two Sabbaths of complete rest. On all the other High

Day we are not allowed to do any laborious work. Laborious work entail work where we labor to earn an income. However, our ladies are free to prepare food on those days – something which may not be done on either the weekly Sabbath or the Day of Atonement. The First and Last Days of Unleavened Bread, Shavuot, The Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah) and both the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great day are days on which food may be prepared, but no laborious work may be done. As we read in verse 1 of Numbers 29, ***‘Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a Set-apart convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It shall be to you a day for blowing trumpets*** – a day of remembrance that YHVH is still working with us.‘

We are commanded to have a Set-apart convocation or worship service on each of the High Days of Elohim. The Feast Days of Elohim are very important to Him and we are reminded to keep them throughout the Scriptures. We read in Exodus 31: 13 that all the Sabbaths (weekly and annual) are important to YHVH, as follows: ***“But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am YHVH who sanctifies you.”***

Numbers 30 verse 1 to 32 verse 42 (Matot).

This Torah portion is called Matot which is the transliterated word meaning 'tribes' in Hebrew. From Numbers 30 verse 1 to the end of the book of Numbers, the subject matter deals with the 12 tribes of Israel. Numbers 30, deals with vows and prohibitions, as well as the setting aside of the same. Commencing in verses 1 & 2 of Numbers 30, we read: ***'Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which YHVH has commanded. (2) If a man makes a vow to YHVH, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."***

Vows are considered very important by YHVH our Elohim, as we read in Ecclesiastes 5: 4, as follows: ***'When you make a vow to Elohim, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!'*** It is for this reason that the vows and promises of children were considered void, unless such vows were ratified by their father, giving express consent to it. The same applied to the vows of married woman – their vows were not considered valid unless they were confirmed by the express or tacit consent of their husbands. However the vows of a widow or divorced woman were considered to be binding. We see in this Torah portion that YHVH through Moses, allowed individuals to take vows and oaths. The Nazirite vow discussed in a previous portion is an example of the vows that individuals were allowed to take. Those of us coming from Christian backgrounds often misunderstand Torah concepts and see contradiction to it in the well-known passage in the Renewed Covenant, where Yahshua said in Mathew 5: 33 - 37, ***"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO YHVH.'*** (In other words, do not swear falsely at all). (34) ***But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of Elohim, (35) or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY***

OF THE GREAT KING. (36) **Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.** (37) **But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; and anything beyond these is of evil.”** This statement by Yahshua appears to be contradicting what YHVH taught us through Moses in Torah. However, we know that Yahshua is the embodiment of Torah; in addition we know that Scripture cannot contradict Scripture. The question therefore is: What is Yahshua really saying in this passage of the Scriptures?

Yahshua’s teaching in Matthew 5 is definitely not contradicting any part of the Torah teachings of Elohim, as we read his very important words to this end in verses 17 – 19 of the same chapter in Matthew, like this: **“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. (18) For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. (19) Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”**

Yahshua’s teaching in verses 33 – 37 quoted before, is an admonition to be true to one’s word. This is made clear in His closing statement in verse 37, that a plain ‘yes’ or ‘no’ carries the same weight as a complex vow or oath. For the sake of clarity, we need to understand that Yahshua’s statement to **“make no oath at all’**, was a prohibition against perjury (the willful act of making a false statement) and not against vows and oaths as such. The crux of Yahshua’s teaching here is that we should not take vows and oaths in vain, thus upholding the intent of what Moses taught in Torah. We should never swear falsely, but we are told in Deuteronomy 6: 13 (and 10: 20) **“You shall fear only YHVH your Elohim; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name.”** We see examples of how believers in Israel used to swear by the name of Elohim in

amongst other, the following Scriptures, Judges 8: 19; Ruth 3:13; 1 Samuel 14: 39; 1 Kings 17: 12; 2 Kings 2: 2, 4, 6 and Jeremiah 38: 16, by saying: **“As YHVH lives,....”** The proviso for adding these words to any statement that we make is that it must be absolutely true and never false! The fact is that most married couples in South Africa, as well as in most western nations exchanged vows with their partners, which are binding in the eyes of YHVH. Do we consider these vows against Yahshua’s teaching in Matthew 5? Definitely not! Marriage vows are usually taken truthfully, and those making such vows have every intention to follow through with it. This is exactly what Yahshua was teaching here: He was simply trying to put an end to the ever increasing practice to swear falsely or to regard our marriage and other vows flippantly.

In Numbers 31 YHVH instructs Moses to take full vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites. We read in verses 3 & 4, ***‘And Moses spoke to the people, saying. “Arm men from among you to the war, that they may go against Midian, to execute (YHVH)’s vengeance on Midian. (4) A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to war.”*** So the children of Israel made war against Midian, as per the command of YHVH. We see that Phinehas was amongst the soldiers of Israel and they killed every male, including the Kings of Midian as well as Balaam the son of Beor. However, they did not kill the Midian woman and their children. They also took as spoil all the cattle, their flock and all their goods. When the Israelites returned to the camp, Moses, Eleazer the priest and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. We see that Moses was not happy, since they saved all the women alive. He added that these women caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against YHVH in the matter of Peor, which resulted in the plague that came amongst the congregation. He therefore instructed the men of war, to also kill every Midianite woman who has known man intimately. In addition Moses tells the men to undergo seven days of purification, since they came in contact with the dead. He further instructed them to cleanse every piece of clothing

and pass everything else through fire in order to ensure that such items become kosher for use by the Israelites.

The spoils of animals taken during the war included 675,000 sheep, 72,000 heads of cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 virgin women. The soldiers were allowed to keep half the spoil, but had to give a levy of 675 sheep, 72 heads of cattle, 61 donkeys and 32 human captives to the high priest; and 6750 sheep, 720 heads of cattle, 610 donkeys and 320 captives to the Levites. The other half of the spoil went to the congregation. Everything else, such as the jewelry and utensils were decreed to belong to the men of war. But the officers in charge of the men of war told Moses that because not one of the men of war went missing during the war, they gave the jewelry to Moses, to make atonement for their souls before Elohim. The donated gold totaled 16,750 shekels which Moses placed in the tent of meeting.

We read in Numbers 32 verse 1 – 5, that the children of Reuben and Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock and they saw that the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead was extremely suitable for livestock. They therefore approached Moses and Eleazer the priest, as well as the leaders of the congregation with the request to take possession of this land. However, Moses being concerned that they may be separating themselves from the rest of their brethren, and that such a move will have a negative impact on the rest of Israel, speaks out against these men as may be read in verses 6 – 15. We read his concluding statement to the sons of Reuben and Gad in verses 14 & 15 , as follows: ***“Now behold, you have risen up in your father’s place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of YHVH against Israel. (15) For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all these people.”*** Moses ascribed the same spirit that worked in the hearts of the ten spies who brought an evil report, to these two tribes. So the two tribes declared that after they have made provision for their families and livestock in the land which they sought, they

will go ahead of the sons of Israel until every one of the sons of Israel had taken possession of his inheritance. In response Moses agreed, but held them to their word, to first settle their families and livestock, and then to go before the sons of Israel to subdue the land before the Israelites, before they could return to their own families. They agreed and confirmed their readiness to go over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, before the other tribes, so that the land of their inheritance on this side of the Jordan may be theirs.

We conclude by reading in verse 33 of Numbers 32, ***‘So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph’s son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with their territories, the cities of the surrounding land.’*** The final few verses of Numbers 32 tell us how this portion of land is taken and subdivided amongst the sons of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Numbers 33 verse 1 to 36 verse 13 (Masa'ey).

This Torah portion is known as Masa'ey meaning the '*journeys of*'. We read accordingly in verse 1 of Numbers 33, ***'These are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.'*** We see in verse 2 of Numbers 33, that even though Moses was totally familiar with the name of each place that the sons of Israelites passed through and camped at, the verses covering the details of their travels (verses 3 – 49 of Numbers 33), are given by the command (or mouth) of YHVH. As we have seen in a previous Torah portion, the children of Israel went out of Egypt by the command (or mouth) of YHVH, at the hand of Moses.

Moses and Aaron were responsible to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, as instructed by YHVH. We have often seen that the Scriptures refer to Yahshua as the right hand of YHVH. We read in Jeremiah 32: 17 & 21, ***'Ah YHVH Elohim! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee. (21) And Thou didst bring Thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders, and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror.'*** We read further in Isaiah 52: 10 ***'YHVH has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our Elohim.'*** And also in Isaiah 53: 1, ***'Who has believed our message? And to who has the arm of YHVH been revealed? We who are called at this time are the only ones who know that Yahshua is the right hand and power of Elohim, as we see explained in John 12: 37 – 40, as follows: 'But though He (Yahshua) had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; (38) that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "YHVH, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF YHVH BEEN REVEALED?" (39) For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, (40) 'HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND***

HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED, AND I HEAL THEM.” Most of the Jews are

blinded to the identity of the true Messiah at this time. But, we also know according to Romans 11, that YHVH is at this time calling out a remnant from the lost tribes of the house of Israel, to make those who do not understand who the right hand and power of Elohim is (i.e. the Jews), jealous. Once all of those from the lost ten tribes (including a few genuine Gentiles) have come in, then all Israel (including the Jews) will be saved.

When Moses and Aaron lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the promised land, they acted like a type of Yahshua. Moses acted as the ruler or king of Israel and Aaron served as their High Priest, both in place of YHVH. Yahshua will one day come and rule us as both King and High Priest. In doing their duties Moses and Aaron served Elohim's chosen people as representatives of YHVH on earth. Another interesting fact is that Israel was the chosen people of YHVH and that He loves them as the apple of His eye above all the other nations upon the earth. He continues to add to His chosen people allowing sojourners access to the gates of His people. However, along the way, we see that many bloodline Israelites lose their way and wander away from the chosen people. Interestingly enough, we see as they depart, others (including gentiles) come in and take the place of those who have lost their way. But some of these 'new Israelites' who enter in place of the bloodline Israelites, at times forget that they are new and must learn the ways of Israel as given in the word of Elohim. They forget their place, and try to make the true Israelites change their ways to fit with those that they have brought along with them. In many cases they cause their brethren to become unstable and to follow every wind of doctrine. Even though such people express the desire to be part of Israel, they show contempt for the ways of Judah, without trying to understand them and their position. They usually feel their knowledge is far superior to that of the Jews, because of the unfaithfulness shown by the Israelites in the wilderness. However, they fail to realize that the way of the Jews are the ways of Israel. The

only difference between Ephraim and Judah at this time, is the fact that Judah is blinded to the identity of Yahshua. However, this is Elohim's doing, as we read in Romans 11: 32, talking specifically about the Jews, in this way: **'For Elohim has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.'** Yahshua came only for the lost tribes of Israel. That is why we need to turn to Judah to get to know the customs and traditions which we have forgotten. It is also for that reason that I am not ashamed to say, that even though I have some Jewish ancestry, I have learnt many of the truths that I am teaching you, from our Jewish brothers.

In addition there are many of us who have been around for quite some time now, and over time some of us have become weary of well doing. We need to overcome our sins and continue doing the work of Elohim if we eventually want to make it into the coming kingdom of Elohim. We read Yahshua's words in this regards in Revelation 2: 2 – 5, as follows: **'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; (3) and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. (4) But I Have this against you, that you have left your first love. (Talking about the love we all had when we discovered the truth for the first time - We studied incessantly to discover new truth, but sad to say, many have lost that zeal.) (5) Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first: or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place – unless you repent.'**

The names of each of the places listed in Numbers 33 are used as a way to help the Israelites call to mind the care which YHVH showed them during their journey through the wilderness. By reading about each one of these places, we call to mind the many miracles that YHVH performed to sustain His people. He gave them manna from heaven – another picture of Yahshua, who said that He is the bread from heaven, as we

read in John 6: 49 – 51, as follows: ***‘Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. (50) This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. (51) I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.’*** In addition we see that YHVH instructed Moses to talk to the rock, to obtain water for our fore-fathers in the wilderness. We know that the rock from which Moses obtained the water was Yahshua, as we read in 1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 4, as follows: ***‘For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) and all were immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) and all ate the same spiritual food; (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from the spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah.’*** Moses wrote down the destinations and places of departure. At times they met with evil and at times they left without any prior notice. The nation had many grumblers who resulted in many losses to the lives of those who rebelled against the leadership appointed by Elohim. However, because of Elohim’s loving kindness they continued to follow Him through the wilderness.

We continue to read in verses 51 – 56 of Numbers 33, ***“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, (52) then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; (53) and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. (54) And you shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. (55) But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you,***

then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land in which you live. (56) And it shall come about that as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you,”

Numbers 34 gives details of the territory which each of the tribes were to inherit. We read in verse 17 & 18 of Numbers 34, YHVH saying to Moses: ***“These are the names of the men who shall apportion the land to you for inheritance: Eleazer the Priest and Joshua the son of Nun. (18) And you shall take one leader of every tribe to apportion the land for inheritance.”*** After these instructions, the towns to be occupied by the Levites are listed among the inheritance of the other tribes. The next topic under discussion is the cities of refuge and the procedure whereby a person who has unintentionally slain a fellow human being, is to stay until the death of the High Priest. We have similarly been redeemed by the death of our High Priest Yahshua Messiah, as we read in Hebrews 9: 11 – 15, in this way: ***‘But when Messiah appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; (12) and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the set-apart place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of the (red) heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to Elohim, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim? (15) And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant (or rather priesthood), those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.’***

There are so many people and countries against the death penalty, yet we read Elohim's instructions in Numbers 35: 30 - 34, in this way: ***"If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. (31) Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. (32) And you shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest. (33) So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. (34) And you shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I YHVH am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel."*** Sad to say: If we as a nation refuse to obey YHVH in these commandments, we cannot expect Him to dwell amongst us.

In Numbers 36 we see that the inheritance of the sons of Israel shall not pass from one tribe to another, and each of the sons of Israel shall cling to the inheritance of their father's tribe. We see that mention is again made of Zelophehad who died and how Moses gave his inheritance to his daughters. We read in verse 6 - 8 of Numbers 36, ***"This is what YHVH has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whom they wish; only they must marry within the family of the tribe of their father.' (7) "Thus no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. (8) And every daughter who comes into possession of an inheritance of any tribe of the sons of Israel, shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers."***

We read further that the daughters of Zelophehad married those from the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of

Joseph, and their inheritance remained with the tribe of the family of their father. We conclude in verse 13 of Numbers 36, as follows: ***‘These are the commandments and the ordinances which YHVH commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho.’***

We end the book of Numbers with the customary blessing: **Chazak Chazak V’Nit Chazak! (Be strong, be strong, and may we be strengthened).**