



*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
46 and upon finding a single pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:45*

4th June 2022 5th Sivan 5782

Bamidbar - ‘In the Wilderness’

Shabbat Shalom Talmadim,
Blessings for a great Shabbat and for the week ahead. From Shabbat to Shabbat may the name of the Lord be praised.

The parsha for this week, lies over the feast of Shavuot. Shavuot, is the time when the laws of God, the Torah, were given to the people on Mount Sinai. We finished reading the book of the priestly law last week with parsha ‘Bechukotai’, My Regulations’ and the week before was parsha ‘B’har’ - the Mount.

The Bamidbar, means ‘in the wilderness’, and was given the title, ‘Numbers’, in the Greek form, because the passage focuses on the two censuses of the people and the priests.

In the timeline we are about to see the real embarkation of the people into the wilderness from Sinai. The first ten chapters will deal with the preparation for the outward journey.

Having received the binding laws between themselves and YHVH, Israel as a unified nation, and established by tribal division and leadership, will continue their journey following the fire and cloud of YHVH as He guides them. They will make many stops along the way and will be fed by manna from heaven and protected by God.

The parsha begins:

1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: 2 “Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. 3 You and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel who are twenty years old or more and able to serve in the army. 4 One man from each tribe, each of them the head of his family, is to help you. 5 These are the names of the men who are to assist you:

from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;

6 from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

7 from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab;

8 from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar;

9 from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon;
10 from the sons of Joseph:
from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;
from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;
11 from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideon;
12 from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;
13 from Asher, Pagiel son of Okran;
14 from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel;
15 from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.”

16 These were the men appointed from the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes. They were the heads of the clans of Israel. 17 Moses and Aaron took these men whose names had been specified, 18 and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. The people registered their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, 19 as the Lord commanded Moses. And so he counted them in the Desert of Sinai: The opening passage tells us that we are now in the second year of the exodus. Now the Lord tells Moses to take a census of all the entire nation of Israel. All men, 20 years and older were considered to be of fighting age. **Every clan and family name was to be recorded. In total 603,550 fighting men were counted. Numbers 1**

Here is a question: if YHVH was to be the protection over His people, and His presence manifesting in a cloud of smoke and a pillar of fire for all to see, and don't forget those who would see this amazing phenomena by simply coming into proximity of this exodus caravan, why did Israel have to have an army, and if the Hebrews were the slaves to their Egyptians masters, who among them could possibly teach them the art of war and how could a weakened trodden down ensemble find the resolve to become such a formidable fighting force?

Under Moses in Exodus 17:8-16, we read how they contended with the Amalekites at the battle of Rephidim; even then they seemed to have the skills of war.

During this battle, Moses' hands are held high by Aaron and Hur. On this occasion the intercession of Moses as the conduit to God, acts as the divine route to victory. However, though YHVH will be the defender of Israel, not all will go according to plan. Supernatural intervention will occur only when the people adhere to the rules of the covenant. Disobedience and discontent, grumbling and moaning, will see the nation disciplined throughout the wilderness years; however, the covenant will remain. YHVH Nissi will be the banner over the people.

Making sense of the census of fighting troops, will show us how formidable, if only by numbers, was the army of Israel. Even today a fighting force of such number is considerable, and when you have the armaments of God raining down upon your enemies, how can you be defeated?

Friends, we have to realise that YHVH never changes. The power of His might can assemble the power of the universe and myriads of angels. He is Adonai T'zavot', the Lord of the Army of Heaven, and if He is for us, who can be against us ?

Josephus, in the 'Antiquities of the Jews', Book II chapter 10, gives us an insight into the life of Moses and the training he received in the court of Pharaoh. We must remind ourselves that it was known among the Hebrews that Moses, as a Hebrew child was being brought up in Pharaoh's house. He was an adopted Egyptian son. This account by Josephus, tells us that Moses, showed considerable prowess in the art of war and as a leader. Thus we can reasonably conclude that those skills were transferred to the Hebrews. We must be aware that new recruits to this precursor of the IDF, would most probably take time each day to train in weapon and battle skills.

We see also that when the people contested with God, the battles became harder, and at such times, because of God's anger with them, the Israeli army would lose force. Winning would not always be easy and neither was it a forgone conclusion. The people had to learn that God and His benefaction could not be taken for granted.

Have you ever considered what it must be like to live under the constant threat of attack?

We might think today, as 21st century people, in a post modern church, that we are somehow aloof to God's judgment, despite having a new covenant agreement under grace, but we are only fooling ourselves. YHVH is the same yesterday, today and forever. His hand is far reaching through the annals of human history and even into the future. We might think that we are different from these ancient peoples, but we are not. Even though we have advanced in knowledge and reach beyond the atmosphere of our world, we are the same. We can, fundamentally, never be different. Human dreams and hopes, struggles and wars will prevail throughout every generation.

The human pursuit, whether in spirit or in the physical, seeks peace and harmony with each other and nature. This comes from longing to return back to the place from which we were exiled, and thus the exodus out, is in fact a returning back to the place of expulsion. This is the theme throughout God's word. Through it the wilderness years are a sign for every believer and for all God's people throughout time until the end of counting. Thus we realise that even in the numbering of the people, we wait for a final fulfilment or census, which YHVH Himself has counted.

Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved.

On a deeper level, this count, will conclude and set in process the salvation of Israel.

As this passage and Shavuot come together we see that the relationship between God and man becomes even more profound. There is revelation at this time.

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

The giving of the law and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in essence, convey that YHVH can only dwell with man when His law becomes intrinsic in the heart of the people. We need to remember that YHVH Himself is also travelling with the people during their wilderness journey. He is not detached from them. He is very much with them, because He wants to be with them. The building of the Mishkan therefore provides a dwelling place for Him with them.

God graces us with His presence, despite His intention not to strive with man for long. This notion infers that the span of a man's life is finite. However, things are going to change. Contention between man and God will come to an end.

As we finish the count of the Omer, we have come to the end of the 50 day period or seven weeks since Pesach.

'Teach us to count our days' scripture tells us.

Psalm 90.

*9 All our days ebb away under your wrath;
our years die away like a sigh.*

*10 The span of our life is seventy years,
or if we are strong, eighty;*

*yet at best it is toil and sorrow,
over in a moment, and then we are gone.*
11 *Who grasps the power of your anger and wrath
to the degree that the fear due you should inspire?*
12 *So teach us to count our days,
so that we will become wise.*
13 *Return, Adonai! How long must it go on?
Take pity on your servants!*
14 *Fill us at daybreak with your love,
so that we can sing for joy as long as we live.*
15 *Let our joy last as long as the time you made us suffer,
for as many years as we experienced trouble.*
16 *Show your deeds to your servants
and your glory to their children.*
17 *May the favor of Adonai our God be on us,
prosper for us all the work that we do —
yes, prosper the work that we do.*

Our days are filled with trouble.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Yeshua said, 31 “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. 32 “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. 33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16.

These passages speak to us about a time aspect, to count our **days**, the **years** of a man’s life, a **period** of trouble to come.

Just look again at what the psalmist says in psalm 90. We can apply every aspect to our own journey and to the people the Lord has chosen to be His throughout time. The psalm culminates in asking the Lord to prosper the work we do. Does this pertain to just the work we toil over, or is this to do with faith?

My thoughts recently, have meandered into asking the question: what is the significance of prophecy to a people or several generations, who will never see it come to pass? For example, we read about YHVH telling Abraham about the enslavement of Israel. Long after the death of Abraham and some 54 years after the death of Jacob, Joseph dies and things change drastically for the Hebrews in Egypt. Did the Israelites know about the prophecy concerning their enslavement to Pharaoh?

Joseph says this before he dies:

24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die. **But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**” 25 And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.” Gen 50.

You can imagine the hope and endurance of the people waiting for this time to come, and of course the many who never got to witness the deliverance of their people.

Believing in the prophecy demands faith, but faith in what or in whom? We know the outcome of the story, and we know that God did what He said He would do. However, we are told that many people did not have a hopeful outcome in their minds. The wilderness journey, is God establishing a method of getting His people to believe in Him. They saw His power unleashed in Egypt, but could He get them through the desert?

Prophecy, establishes YHVH's sovereignty and faithfulness to humanity, in the past, present and future. He is showing to every power and principality that He is 'I Am', Yehovah, Adonai the creator of all, and everything. He is, and was, and is to come.

And so, in the Badmidbar, we see a pattern revealed. If we each look a little deeper into our own journey, we will see it. The secret to our answer lies in our proximity to God.

Shavuot, which falls during the time of the reading of this parsha, is also know as the feast of weeks, falling seven weeks or 49 days after Passover. It is also known as the feast of first fruits. The Levite priesthood would be taken by God for Himself.

Numbers 8:15 "After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come to do their work at the tent of meeting. 16 They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. 17 Every firstborn male in Israel, whether human or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself. 18 And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel.

Shavuot also shows us that in order for God to establish a working relationship with His people, He had to set rules in place and thus the Law given at Sinai is remembered at this time. We also see that YHVH chose a select group of people among the tribes to serve Him in the Mishkan. The tribe of Levi, whose name means 'joined', will receive YHVH as their portion instead of receiving an allotted land. They will be supported by Israel and will minister before the Lord day and night. God also stipulates that they must encamp around the tabernacle and court perimeters. The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari, were given the honoured duties, by God, in preparing the Mishkan and all the sacred elements and furnishings for travel.

v19 From among all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the tent of meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary."

YHVH has shown us that He is a God of order. And thus we see that the law of love establishes Gods sovereign rule through the journey into the land. In the Renewed Covenant language we see the reflection of Christ, through love fulfilling the rule of law — death because of sin, in order for us to enter the kingdom.

In essence the wilderness represents the bridge between God's love and the fulfilment of the martyring of His bride. She will have to go through it to get to the land of her promise.

And so, we see that the law of God is the bridge from His love to the land. This is how the two words Midbar - 'wilderness', and Dvar, 'word' or speaking voice of God are linked.

The word is the manifest voice of God and thus the word of God was written to be spoken — revealing the direct path to us in order that we may find a new life through the born again event.

In this way we are given the idea that a nation can indeed be born in a day or in a moment when YHVH sees that all has been prepared.

Let us hear the word of the Lord revealed: Yeshua, the manifestation of God's love, took the sentence of the law upon Himself in order for us to enter the kingdom.

In other words, what happened in the wilderness is not only pattern and prophecy, but a foreshadow of the first fruit of the Lord, Yeshua, fulfilling the law and leading us into the Kingdom of God.

For further thoughts, how do you think the Israelites, in their exodus journey, dealt with their faith and how did God prosper them?

Finally, the wilderness reminds us of walking through the Torah, so it may serve us well to examine our own faith walk in the journey that we are all called to make. But before we go, let us read this passage in Luke.

Can you see something here?

Luke 4:1 Then Yeshua, filled with the Ruach HaKodesh, returned from the Yarden and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days of testing by the Adversary. During that time He ate nothing, and afterwards He was hungry. 3 The Adversary said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, order this stone to become bread." 4 Yeshua answered him, "The Tanakh says, 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

5 The Adversary took Him up, showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world, 6 and said to Him, "I will give you all this power and glory. It has been handed over to me, and I can give it to whomever I choose. 7 So if you will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Yeshua answered him, "The Tanakh says, 'Worship Adonai your God and serve Him only.'" 9 Then he took Him to Yerushalayim, set Him on the highest point of the Temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, jump from here!

10 For the Tanakh says,
'He will order His angels
to be responsible for You and to protect You.

11 They will support You with their hands,
so that You will not hurt Your feet on the stones.'"

12 Yeshua answered him, "It also says, 'Do not put Adonai your God to the test.'" 13 When the Adversary had ended all his testings, he let Him alone until an opportune time. CJB.

We see that the Spirit of the Lord, filled Yeshua in order to take Him into the wilderness for 40 days. This is a prophecy fulfilled. The illustration is of the *Word*, Yeshua, entering the wilderness, just as He did with Israel at the time of their deliverance. We see God's people in the wilderness being led by His presence, along with them the spirit of the adversary, contending with them. He does not want Israel to follow God, and tries to tempt her back into the kingdom they have just left.

Today, at this time of Shavuot, the sign for us is even more acute, as we, in our own walk, are filled with the Holy Spirit. As Yeshua left the desert place, overcoming adversity, He returned in power.

The passage continues in v14. Yeshua returned to the Galil in the power of the Spirit, and reports about Him spread throughout the countryside. **15** He taught in their synagogues, and everyone respected Him.

Friends, we must understand that there is a great difference between being filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit that empowered our Lord on that day and throughout His ministry, will do the same for us today, if we only humble ourselves, repent and pray, consecrating ourselves for the Lord's service. Let us be encouraged by knowing that a new time is coming when the people of God will conquer this world, achieving all that God has asked them to do, in that same power.

Don't you want that?

Then let us also be encouraged to pray and spend some wilderness time with Him.

Be blessed and walk in the Light of His love and may this shabbat bring harmony and peace to your week.



Numbers 6:

24 'Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha.

[May Adonai bless you and keep you.]

25 Ya'er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka.

[May Adonai make his face shine on you and show you his favour.]

26 Yissa Adonai panav eleikha v'yasem l'kha shalom

[May Adonai lift up his face toward you and give you peace.]

Shabbat Shalom

Grant Marshall

Co-founder Arrows of Ephrayim Ministries.

Readings for Shavuot: Acts. 2:1-21, Acts. 2:22-42

Ezekiel. 1:1-28, 3:12, Hab. 3:1-19

Additional readings.

Haftarah B'chukkotai: Hosea 2:1-2:22

B'rit Hadashah: Matt 4:1-17

Glossary

*Midrash: In Judaism, the **Midrash** is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (Aggadah) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (halakha), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (Tanakh)*

*Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)*

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**), otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian Talmud. The Talmud has two components:

1. The Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law;
2. The Gemara (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.

Rashi , whose real name is Shlomo Yitzchaki was born in France in the 11th century. Rashi wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Hebrew Bible.

Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides became better known by the acronym Rambam. He was born in 1138 in Cordoba, Spain. He was a Sephardic Jew and influential philosopher. He is considered to be among the greatest of Torah Scholars.

Nachmanides- 13th century French Jewish Philosopher, commonly known by the acronym; Rambam.