

#34 Bamidbar Numbers 1:1-4:20

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Stand firm in the truth.
- * Be calm; don't stir yourself up; get stirred up to follow God where you will find peace and goodness.
- * Be sensible how you go through this tough time.
- * Be strong; do what is right; God will not forget the good we do.

Bamidbar means, "In the wilderness." We now begin our study on the book of Numbers. Numbers teaches us some stories of unbelief so that we don't fall into the same trap; they are object lessons for faith. There will always be some who fall into sin and unbelief. Even believers in the Messiah are warned, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; Hebrews 3:12 NKJV. We are to remain, "Steadfast to the end;" Hebrews 3:14 NKJV. The believers who started out in the desert desired the promised land. In a similar way, believers in the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) who live in this evil world seek the future good kingdom of God.

On the first day of the second month of the second year, God told Moshe (Moses) to take a census of all the people of Israel and to write down the names of all the men twenty years and older for military service. God chooses the heads of the tribes by name that are to help Moshe count the census and the total of those counted 20 and older was 603,550 not including the Levi'im (the tribe of Levi). This is just men above 20, so the 2 million or more of population projected by some is a reasonable estimate. The miracle of Israel was quite an amazing miracle when we consider all that God did for them; He kept them safe, He fed them and gave them water, and He gave them the land of evil people who were even killing their own children.

The Levi'im are to be in charge of the tabernacle and camp around it. Israel was to set up camp by each tribe's banner around the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). There were three tribes on each side of the Mishkan. The encampment formed a rectangle. Moshe and Aharon and his sons camped to the east of the Mishkan and the tribe of Judah east of them. The tribe of Judah had one tribe on each side of them to the east. Israel was developing a sense of identity with God as their King. The decedents of Moshe and Aharon are then given. Nadav and Avihu the sons of Aharon died because they offered a sacrifice they weren't supposed to. El'azar and Itamar served as Cohanim and the Levi'im were to help out at the Mishkan. The first-born males of Israelites and animals belong to the Lord. The clans of the Levi'im and their duties are then given.

The Levi'im take the place of the first born of Israel (as an act of redemption). Extra money is needed to redeem the first born of Israel. Then the portion describes how they were to wrap the articles of the Mishkan and the decedents of K'hat were to carry them, but not look at them or touch them. El'azar is responsible for the items of the Mishkan and each Cohanim is to be assigned a task.

This portion begins with God telling Moshe to take a census on the 1st day of the second month of the second year since they left Egypt; that would be on the first of Iyyar, just a couple of weeks after Pesach (Passover). It is notable here that God chooses the leaders by name. Next God tells them how they are to arrange their camp, the duties of the Levites, and the numbered Levites redeemed the firstborn of Israel.

When God chooses leaders by name here it should help us to understand that God knows us and who we are; Yeshua (Jesus) tells us in Luke 12:7 that even the hairs on our head are numbered; God values us. On the average, there are 100,000 hairs on our heads. Yeshua makes quite a statement and it demonstrates that God is all knowing. The Levites stand in to redeem the firstborn of Israel; Yeshua came from heaven to redeem mankind. He was an example for us and redeemed us through His blood. We needed redemption through the Messiah. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon

the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul;" Leviticus 17:11 NKJV. We need to believe in the Messiah Yeshua and His act of redemption. He redeemed all believers both from Old Testament times and New, including Abraham. Yeshua said that Abraham looked forward to Yeshua coming (John 8:56).

Also, this year, Shavuot (Pentecost) is on May 28th, we should be thankful for the law which was given on Shavuot and also the Holy Spirit which was given on Shavuot. We will talk about Shavuot next Saturday. We ask all those who celebrate God's feasts to **make sure to celebrate His feast**. Since they are God's feasts; shouldn't we celebrate them? After all, we have all kinds of celebrations. Are our birthdays and other celebrations more important than God's appointed days? Shouldn't our lives revolve around God's timing and not just our own celebrations? Leviticus 23:1 NKJV says, "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **these are My feasts.**'"

(The Bible says that we are to count 50 days after the day of rest (Shabbat means rest). The day of rest following Passover is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. God's feasts often have a day of rest (Shabbat). Some argue that we are to count 50 days from the weekend day of rest which then means in most cases that they are beginning the count on the 2nd day of rest following the Passover. It doesn't seem to make sense, but people argue over this anyway. **It is important to celebrate God's feasts** whether you believe it is 50 days from the first or second day of rest after Passover. **They are God's feasts.**)

The Haftarah for Bamidbar is Hosea 2:1-22. This Haftarah portion begins by saying Israel will number as the grains of the sands of the sea. They will be called the sons of the living God and both Israel and Judah will gather together and have one King. This refers to the future end time kingdom of Israel. Hosea then talks about their present state by talking about their idolatry as spiritual adultery and that God will not favor them because of it; He will punish them. Some day they will come to understand that their true love, God, is their true provider. Instead of calling God Ba'ali (my master), they will call Him Ishi (my husband). At this future time, all the earth will submit to God and Israel will be his people. At that time God will make a covenant with the animals, there will be no more war, He will be betrothed to His people Israel, and Israel will again say that Yēhōvāh (Hosea 2:16) is their God. Yēhōvāh is God's real name (Exodus 3:15) and means – He was, He is, and He will be.

We need to stand firm in the truth of the Bible. I find it remarkable how people can become so opinionated and so easily follow the fads and opinions of others. Remember, the news is trying to get you to watch their show. They are mostly interested in drawing you into their production. They are not interested in helping you to do what is right. The same is true for YouTube and all the sensationalists who post there. A lot of times, they are just trying to get you to watch their nonsense so they can make money off you or because they like the power trip (the feeling of power from the attention).

God really wants to help us; why not listen to Him? God wants to give us wisdom and understanding. The Bible says that the people of the world will see that we are a wise people through God's commandments. This is amazing and wonderful, isn't it? God is so good to us and wants to help us. The God of the universe cares about us; it is beyond our imagination that we are so fortunate. Of course, that is only true if you want to do what He tells us to do.

Deuteronomy 4:5-6 NKJV

"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; **for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who**

will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'"

We need to share this verse with others. They don't know about it and need to know it. People are more interested in developing their ability to hit a baseball, work in their garden or on their house, or watch TV than actually learning something that is wonderful and amazing. If you want to get stirred up about something, forget about YouTube and learn how to keep the Torah (God's instructions).

We can allow ourselves to get stirred up about all the stupid little things of life instead of being stirred up for God. The world is not going to give you peace, wisdom, goodness, and satisfaction. We talked a little bit about how lashon harah (evil speaking) is an important biblical principle the last couple of weeks. How many of us know about the biblical principle of not speaking evil of others and practice it? How many of us know it is an important biblical commandment from the Old Testament? James 3:5-6 NKJV says, "See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell." Ya'akov (James's real name) was sharing a principle from the Old Testament; you know, the part of the Bible that makes us a wise and understanding people.

People aren't being taught the truths of the Old Testament portion. They are not working on applying the commands of the Old Testament, so they know very little truth. Don't we all want truth? Don't we all want to do what is right? Most of what many people believe they make up. Someday we are going to have to give an account to God for how we lived. Are you going to say to God, "I was too busy watching sports or gardening instead of learning how to live right?" Some of us need to stop having our brains filled with mush instead of the substantial sensible thinking from the exercise of God's commandments.

That is why people are all over the place during this tough time we are going through. Be sensible how you go through this tough time. Life is not all about what we have. Yochanan said that those who sin are of the devil. So, you better learn all the couple of hundred of God's commandments from the Old Testament. So, it's not true it is hard to keep the Old Testament (it, "Is not too hard for you;" Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB). You've been lied to. The New Testament wasn't put together until 150 AD when they put together the Hebrew New Testament. The Greek New Testament was put together much later. Of note, because there was considerable anti-Semitism when they put together the Greek New Testament, there are quite a few anti-Jewish heretical additions to the Greek New Testament manuscripts.

Remember there was no New Testament at the time Yochanan wrote this. Early believers kept the law. **Yochanan says that sin is "anomia" (translated lawlessness – namely, living without the law of God).** "Nomia" (law) is the word used in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament translated by 70 rabbis in the 2nd century BC) for the Old Testament commandments (the law).¹

"Anomia" (lawlessness) then is to not keep the Old Testament commandments. So, Yochanan says here that not keeping the Old Testament commandments is sin; also, he says sin is of the devil.

1 John 3:4-8 NKJV (comments in parenthesis)

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."

(Sin is "anomia;" so, it is sinful not to keep the Old Testament commandments.)

¹ "g0458. ἀνομία anomia; from 459; illegality, i.e. violation of law." [Strong's Enhanced Dictionary](#). A violation of the law (not keeping God's commandments from the Old Testament) is sin Yochanan said.

"And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin."
(Yeshua came to help us not sin; He didn't sin.)

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him."
(If we live by Yeshua, we don't keep sinning. If you do, you don't know Yeshua!)

"Little children, let no one deceive you. **He who practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous."
(Don't be deceived; those who actually do what is right are righteous. We are to be like Yeshua.)

"**He who sins is of the devil**, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."
(**Those who don't keep the commandments of the Old Testament are sinning and sin is of the devil.** Yeshua came to help us to not sin and destroy the works that come from the devil.)

He said that those who actually do what is right are righteous. Then those who say we are okay without having to keep God's commandments are wrong. Those who sin and don't keep the law are of the devil. That's what it says. That's what Yochanan (John) wrote. Don't listen to those false teachers who say the opposite. Instead of working on your own ideas of life, work on doing things God's way. Hebrews 5:14, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Stop being a baby and grow up! Try working on being good and kind to your family and teaching them about God. Stop just thinking only about yourself. We need to be spiritual leaders for our family. The Bible says that those who don't do what is right are headed to the lake of fire. Tell you family about the lake of fire. It's in the Bible. "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire;" Revelation 20:15 NKJV. Don't think that God is going to judge you on your own values. He gave us the wisdom we need for life it said in Deuteronomy. I think some of you think you are fine and I am concerned for you.

Be strong; do what is right; God will not forget the good we do. In biblical thought, doing good is not our interpretation of the Bible, but we do what is right (righteous); we do what is good by keeping God's commandments and applying them properly.

I remember years ago asking a farmer if he went out into the field and pulled weeds. I was looking at all the long furrows in his crop at the time and it looked like a very difficult job. He said that the weeds take the nutrients from the soil that his crops need, and that he needed to go out and weed. The Bible says that those who don't do what is good are like weeds that get burned up. We are to be diligent to live right until the end and not be sluggish. With faith and patience, we keep God's commandments so that we will receive God's promises.

Hebrews 6:7-12 NKJV

For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. **And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end**, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

It's not too hard to understand. Why do people make an issue out of doing what is right? Make up all the excuses you want to make up, but you will have to stand before God with your excuses. It says in the Haftarah for today that God will restore Israel someday; this demonstrates that God is a merciful God and it says in Romans that He wants **mankind to be able to come to Him and be His objects of mercy to be glorified. God will forgive you.** Show others God's glory by doing what is right.

There are many things that can get in the way of our walk with the Lord that can blur our direction and the purpose God has for us. Just like Israel, we are not perfect. It is through God's mercy that we can glorify Him both now and eternally. Accept His mercy and start living right. Be thankful for the riches of His glory that He has made known to us.

Romans 9:22-33 CJB

"Now what if God, even though he was quite willing to demonstrate his anger and make known his power, patiently put up with people who deserved punishment and were ripe for destruction? What if he did this in order to make known the riches of his glory to those who are the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory."

God cares about us and loves us. Why do you think He gave us wisdom and understanding through His commandments? It wasn't to torture us. He is a good God. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all;" 1 John 1:5 NKJV. There is no evil in God! Rejoice and be thankful. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NKJV says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks."

There are mostly commandments for the Levites in the portion. Some of the commandments in the Old Testament are not for everyone. The commandments that are for us give us wisdom and understanding. God is wonderful and amazing. God chose their leaders by name. It shows us that the creator God knows each of us. Yeshua said God knows all the hairs on our head (about 100,000). The Haftarah says that in the future, we will call Yēhōvāh by His real name. We should get stirred up for God instead of just worldly things. We seek the promise of a blessed life and the future kingdom, just as Israel sought the promised land while they were in the desert. We need to learn God's commandments so we can do what is right. Be strong and do things God's way. God wants us to do what is right and to glorify Him. He will not forget the good we do. He cares about us. He is a good God and our Yēhōvāh – Yēhōvāh means, He was, He is, and He will be. That is His name forever according to Exodus 3:15.