



#34 Bamidbar Numbers 1:1-4:20
Torah Teaching and teaching Give Glory to God
By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged
Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah
(There are also transliterations from Hebrew)

The Torah portion for this week is Bamidbar and it means, "in the wilderness." Israel would follow the cloud which usually stood over the tent of meeting in the wilderness. When it moved, they would move and follow it. So, Israel literally followed where God wanted them to go while they were in the wilderness. This is a foreshadowing of the gift of the Holy Spirit which believers in the Messiah are to receive. The Holy Spirit leads us; in a sense, just like Israel was led by God.

The Holy Spirit is the backbone of our faith in Messiah. The Holy Spirit gives us strength, inspires us, and is life giving. When we think of faith in God, we often think about what is involved in living that out. One of the most important things to consider in these Messianic times is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, we should follow God's commandments. Yeshua mentions that is our first helper, but then adds that we have another helper for life. John 14:15-16 NKJV says. "Keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him."

God provides the Holy Spirit as a helper for those who believe in and trust in the Messiah. Notice I said trust. Trusting in God means that we follow what He tells us to do. If we do not, we are then pushing away God and the work and blessings of God. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 NKJV says, "Abstain from every form of evil." It makes sense; if we do evil instead of listening to God, why would God bother trying to speak to us through the Holy Spirit?

Interestingly, I heard someone once say that it seems that those who do not believe in keeping God's commandments in the Old Testament portion have been blinded with theology. Shaul alludes to this in Romans. Shaul says in Romans 1:28-29 NKJV, "And even as they did not like

to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness." There was no New Testament at the time; Yochanan (John) is talking about the Old Testament portion commands. 1 John 2:3-4 NKJV says, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Do not be deceived by those who are duped and deluded.

Back to talking about the Holy Spirit. Shaul said that the power of the Holy Spirit strengthens us. Ephesians 3:16 NKJV says, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." I have experienced the inner work of the Holy Spirit in a number of ways and many times; for example, sometimes God has given me strength to move forward and accomplish what I needed to do. God has given me supernatural peace at times as well as patience. The Holy Spirit has helped me with life's situations in many different ways. Who would not want the help of the Holy Spirit! The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to believers in the Messiah; we are commanded to receive this good gift from our good God. Acts 2:38-49 NKJV says, "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Study the truths of the Bible over and over so you will know how to live and what to do in every situation. God expects us to use our minds and abilities. When I first started playing basketball, I could not even get the ball to hit the rim of the basketball hoop, but I kept at it. Just like we work at our abilities so that we can do them well, we also need to work on our spiritual life and keep our spiritual skills sharp.

Now when I shoot baskets, I still start out with the basics, the short shots and dribbling, and then try to increase my skill level. My skills come back quickly because of my previous practice. As we practice our spiritual skills, we make ourselves better able to do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18). Remember, most importantly we are to follow God's commands. Man-made commands can sometimes be practical, but God's commands are always right and good. God never intended us to be micromanaged by man-made commandments. Yeshua said that man-made commandments can actually keep us from a relationship with God. Matthew 15:9 NKJV says, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Enjoy life, and value the goodness of God. Find ways to celebrate our good and blessed life. Be thankful for all you have. Colossians 3:17 NKJV says, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." If you are being blessed by God, do not forget to give thanks. For example, we have a festive Shabbat meal on Friday nights and enjoy what God has provided.

There is great blessing in standing strong. God's ways are best; after all, He is the creator. Shaul says in Romans 11:33 NKJV, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" Shaul is talking about God's commandments when he says, "**wisdom and knowledge.**" He is probably directly referring to Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV where it is talking about God's

commandments: "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.'" Shaul was Jewish so when he was talking about God's wisdom, he must have been thinking about God's commandments. God's commandments give us wisdom and understanding!

Also, never forget that this life is short, and we have so much to look forward to in eternity. 1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV says, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." It says in the book of Revelation that the streets are going to look like gold!

The Torah portion for this week is Bamidbar and means, "In the wilderness." We now begin our study on the book of Numbers. Numbers teaches us some stories of unbelief so that we do not 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 2 million 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 – *ohel meod*). 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 were not 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. The Levites were not numbered among the soldiers. They had not committed the sin of the golden calf so instead they were to be spiritual defenders of the faith.

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).

Shavuot is near; on Shavuot (Pentecost), 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 more about Shavuot on Shavuot. **Make sure to celebrate God's feast (Leviticus 23:2).** 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 23:1-2 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 Hebrew word for feasts is "moedim." From the inception of creation, we were designed by God to meet with Him on His feast. Genesis 1:14 NKJV says, "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and **seasons.**'" **The word seasons is "moedim" which means meetings and is translated feasts in Leviticus!**

(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 after 2 Shabbatot instead of what the Bible says, 'the day of rest following the Passover.' It does not 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 day of rest or after two days 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 Yĕhōváh (Hosea 2:16) is their God. Yĕhōváh is God's real name (Exodus 3:15) and means – He was, He is, and He will be.

Give Glory to God **(An accompanying teaching to the Torah portion)**

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 and He wants us to be a people of glory or glorify Him. 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 do not 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).

Get stirred up for God.

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 are not 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.

Be sensible how you go through life.

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 have been lied to. The New Testament was not 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.)

"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 did not sin.)

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.

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him."

(If we live by Yeshua, we do not keep sinning. If you do, you do not 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 do not 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 do not keep the law are of the devil. That is what it says. That is what Yochanan (John) wrote. Do not 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 do not do what is right are headed to the lake of fire. Tell you family about the lake of fire. It is in the Bible. "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire;" Revelation 20:15 NKJV. Do not 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 do not 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 briars, 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 is 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 was not 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.