

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5778 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

July 7th – 10:30 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"



12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Discussion

"Blessed are those whose way of life is blameless; who live by the Torah of Adonai
Blessed are those who observe His instruction; who seek Him with all their heart."

Ps 119

Parsha Pinchas - B'midbar 25:10 - 29:40

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: פִּינְחָס בֶּן-אֱלֵעָזָר בֶּן-אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הַשֵּׁיב אֶת-חַמְתִּי

וַיִּדְבַר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֱלֵעָזָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הַשֵּׁיב אֶת חַמְתִּי

va-y'daber Adonai el-Moshe lemor Pinchas ben-El'azar ben-Aharon ha-kohen

and the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest,

heshiv et-chamati

has turned away My wrath

מֵעַל בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת-קִנְאוֹתַי בְּתוֹכָם וְלֹא-כִלִּיתִי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹתַי

מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת קִנְאוֹתַי בְּתוֹכָם וְלֹא כִלִּיתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹתַי

me-al b'nei-Yisra'el b'kan'o et-kin'ati b'tocham

from on the sons of Israel in his zeal (for) in My zeal in their midst,

v'lo-chiliti et-b'nei-Yisra'el b'kin'ati

and I did not end the sons of Israel in My zeal

The Effects of **Lashon Hara**



In the Torah portions of the last several weeks, we have observed the effects of **lashon hara** (**evil speaking, murmuring and complaining**). Moses was apparently unable or not capable of stopping the complaining of the people through the force of his leadership. Like a virulent, contagious virus, the discontent and distrust of God's leadership through Moses spread and accelerated throughout the people. Everyone was infected, including Moses. At first glance, there was the simple discontent of their immediate circumstances. They were thirsty and hungry. Rather than pray to focus their attention on God, who had continually supplied all their needs, they tried to improve their "plight" themselves, through complaints generated at Moses. "Leaders" decided on their own to send out spies into the "promised land" to determine whether they wanted to follow God into the land or to return to Egyptian slavery. Upon their return, rather than blunting their words of discontent, Moses allowed this "virus of discontent" to continue to spread until a full rebellion developed against God's appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron. Even though God repeatedly judged the leaders of the rebellion and many of their followers, the effects of their evil speaking continued. Moses, as well, was affected by the continuing complaints and discontent of the people. He became depressed and came before God to ask for the assistance of others to bear the burden of the people. God graciously allowed him to appoint 70 elders. Yet the cumulative effects of their discontent, rooted in their disbelief of God's ability to protect and lead His people, continued to weigh on Moses. Finally, we saw the breakdown of Moses. He became angry with the people, exhibiting his anger through self-righteousness. **Anger is the result of self-focus, rather than God-focus.** It is the natural culmination of unabated lashon hara. In his anger, Moses called God's people "rebels," when he produced the water that they desired. And in his anger, he and Aaron publicly took credit for the miracle of God that provided water for the people. **Their anger caused them to publicly substitute their righteous indignation for God's holiness.** God allowed the people to have the water but judged the sin of Moses by keeping him from entering the land of Israel.

We discussed how lashon hara applies to us today. We hear it almost everyday, as people complain about their circumstances; the "plight" of their jobs, their family life, and of their lives in general. **If we fail to blunt their words or to walk away, we, too, become contaminated.** We, too, in time become self-focused and self-righteous. We know we are infected by the contagion of **lashon hara**, when we feel the need to "claim our rights," rather than be content and remain God-focused. If Moses, the most humble of

men, became self-righteous, how can we think that **lashon hara** will not effect us? We must learn to stop the words of **lashon hara** immediately, as we first hear others uttering them. We must decide ahead of time that if we cannot stop others from spewing their evil speaking in our presence, we should immediately walk away. Treating **lashon hara** as a virulent, contagious virus enables us to take preventive measures to maintain in ourselves a Godly life focus.



Out on a Limb

Have you ever "taken a chance," "put yourself out on a limb," or "stuck out your neck?" At some time all of us have been in an uncomfortable situation, where we "took a stand." We all know that it's easier to stay in the background and "not make waves." Our congregation member, Wally Tucker always says that his job is to promote domestic tranquility between spouses. He "takes a chance" every time he "sticks out his neck," giving his opinions in order to promote **Shalom Bayit** (domestic tranquility) among his friends. The fact is that most of us have no difficulty "standing up for our rights," when we believe someone is trying to take advantage of us. What separates most of us from Phinehas is that Phinehas stood up for God's rights, when it might have cost him his own rights. When Phinehas observed one of his fellow Jews, Zimri, a Simeonite leader, flagrantly taking a Midianite woman into his tent, Phinehas was righteously indignant. **"Righteously indignant" meant that he was extremely upset that God's commands were being treated as if they meant nothing.** Without thinking about his own well being, he took action on God's behalf. We should remember that to have directly observed this public flaunting of God's rules and to have responded as he did, Phinehas would have had to have been in the camp of the Simeonites.....away from the help of his brother Levites. Thinking analytically, one might come to the appropriate conclusion that **Phinehas was really "taking a chance," "putting himself way out on a limb"** by taking action against the son of one of the Simeonite leaders right in the Simeonite camp. Wouldn't Zimri have friends and relatives who would take revenge on Phinehas? And how would a priest, the son of the High Priest, who doesn't fight in battle

and is not supposed to defile himself with dead bodies (except for the deaths close family members), possess the skill to take a spear and kill two people? Obviously, this is not something Phinehas had practiced nor probably even thought about doing. But when he saw this display of public immorality by a tribal leader, coming just after God had told Moses to execute other leaders, who had done the same thing, Phinehas could not contain himself. He did not analyze the situation or even think about what might happen to himself as a result. He entered Zimri's private chamber and killed them both. This is the definition of "zeal." His ardor for God's righteousness provoked his zealous behavior. When one takes action (always to be in accord with God's scriptural principles) without regard for himself to protect God's rights, that's **real zeal appeal!!!** Would we have done as much, or would we have simply stayed in the background and complained, "The world is much worse now than when I was growing up.....someone should do something about this"?

From God's viewpoint, Phinehas had atoned for the spiritual adultery of Israel through the shedding of the perpetrator's blood, and God publicly rewarded him. God gave Phinehas and his descendants "My covenant of peace; and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the sons of Israel." Therefore, generations later his relatives who took their priesthood would remember the **zeal appeal for God** shown by Phinehas.

Dr. Jeffrey Feinberg reminds us that "Yeshua showed the same zeal for His Father's House. When he overturned the tables in the Temple, Yeshua radiated a passion born of the love of God. "Zeal for your house will devour Me," (Psalms 69:9) recalled the disciples when they meditated on Yeshua's words: "How dare you turn my Father's House into a market?" (John. 2:17-18).

The application for us today couldn't be more clear. We should never be guilty of immorality. And when we see immorality or other violations of God's laws, we should publicly denounce it without regard to the possible hurt feelings of the perpetrator. Yes, it would be well to tell them of God's standard in a way that could bring them to faith in Messiah, if God convicts them. But being zealous for God by telling others of His righteous standard is primary! **It's also the most loving thing one could do for the perpetrator.** Telling him of God's standard of righteousness gives him the chance to be convicted and repent. When we think of the atonement Messiah provided for us, how can we do less? And when we Jewish believers in Messiah realize that our witness to non-Messianic Jews is so meaningful, coming from a fellow Jew, shouldn't we consider standing up for our Jewish faith in our Jewish Messiah as our primary ministry? **Zeal appeal for our fellow Jews!** Shouldn't we also consider standing up for all the body of believers, who consider God's righteousness as primary in their lives? **Zeal appeal for all God's people!**

Stand Up And Be Counted



God gave Moses instructions to battle the Midianites for their hostility against His people. They purposely tried to seduce Israel into idolatry through immorality. The preparations for battle began with a census of the 2nd generation of those who left Egypt, counting those men from the age of 20 and upward. The census, tribe by tribe, was also to be used for the purpose of dividing the "promised land" among the tribes, according to their proportionate population. **Chapter 26** details the census. While some tribes lost significant numbers (**Simeon** lost 37,100 - perhaps as judgment in the worship of the Baal of Peor), other tribes gained significantly (**Manasseh** gained 20,500). **Judah** remained the largest tribe with 76,500. The total number of battle aged males decreased by 1,820 from the previous census of the first generation. Some observations of this census are as follows: 1) The census order of tribes is nearly the same, but the order of Ephraim and Manasseh are reversed from the census of Numbers, Chapter 1, as the population of Manasseh exceeded that of Ephraim. 2) God accounted for and remembered every individual among such a huge population. a) From the tribe of Reuben, God remembers Dathan and Abiram, who were swallowed up by the earth as a result of their joining in rebellion with Korah against God's appointed leader, Moses. Although Korah died, his sons survived (vs.11). Some became Temple singers (**1 Chronicles. 26:1-9**), others wrote Psalms. b) An individual daughter of Asher named Serah is mentioned. Usually when a woman is mentioned in a census, she has some special significance, but we are not told what was her significance. Rabbinic thought is that she was literally a "daughter of Asher" and was alive during the whole of the Egyptian captivity. What we do know for sure was she was significant to God because he mentioned her name. The daughters of Zelophehad from the tribe of Manasseh, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah, were also mentioned by name for the purpose of answering the question about the inheritance of daughters without brothers.

The "promised land" would be divided proportionally among the tribes, according to their population by lot. Although the term "by lot" might indicate randomness of selection, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (**Proverbs 16:33**). No land inheritance was given to the 23,000 Levites numbered from one month old, whose inheritance was service to God. Although already dead, Nadab and Abihu, the eldest sons of Aaron, were also remembered by God.

The mentioning of these individuals from so many thousands shows us today that **God knows who we are as well**. While God sent Messiah to atone for the sins of the world,

His blood also atoned for the sin of each and every one of us. Since a census seems to be in God's methodology, one might expect to be part of a census in the kingdom of God, where each individual is counted and is important to God. One can just imagine hearing the celestial shofar of God and the voice of Messiah saying, "Stand Up And Be Counted!"

The Emancipation of Women

Chapter 27 enlarged on the question of inheritance by women. The daughters of Zelophehad appeared before Moses and Eleazar and other leaders. They were individually named, which was significant because it put them in the same category with men, who inherit land and are named as inheritors. Their father was part of the first generation, so he had died. But he did not take part of the rebellion with Korah. Since he had no sons, who would inherit his portion of the "promised land" and preserve his name in Israel? The daughters wanted their father's inheritance. Since the question of whether a woman could inherit from her father was not answered in the law, Moses had to inquire from the Lord for the answer. This should be an example for us too. We should take our questions to the Lord via scripture and find His answers. Perhaps if we became well acquainted with scripture, we would better know God's thoughts!

The Right Man For the Job

How does one find the "right man (or woman) for the job?" Well, today we might go to a personnel manager, who is trained to give personality and psychological tests. Fortunately, Moses did not go this route. Instead, he prayed, "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation....that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." Who is better than God to know the spirits of men and choose the right man for the job? When God appoints a leader, that leader serves under the authority and discipline of God. God chose Joshua to succeed Moses and instructed Moses to have a public commissioning ceremony, so that the whole congregation would know that Joshua was God's choice for their leader. Today we might call this method of selection "a compact vertical hierarchy." Moses called it prayer!

Daily Offerings and Yearly Festivals & Offerings

One of the purposes of daily sacrificial offerings was that each day we would acknowledge our sinful state and seek atonement through rules set up by God, submitting ourselves to Him. These daily and yearly times of sacrificial offerings must occur on specific days. The Hebrew word for "appointed times" is "moedim." It means "fixed times." Below is a chart listing the festivals and offerings, as you will find them in Chapters 28 & 29. A terrific and inexpensive book that explains the significance of each festival from a traditional and Messianic Viewpoint is God's Appointed Times by Barney Kasdan. You can find it on-line at Amazon or at Messianic Jewish Resources.

SHABBAT SHALOM

Our Family Thriving in Jerusalem All These years

