

Shavua Tov



A Road Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn McWilliams

Torah Portion: *Bamidbar* במדבר "In the Wilderness"

God spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Communion Tent on the first [day] of the second month in the second year of the Exodus, saying:

Vayedaber Adonay el-Moshe **bamidbar** Sinai be'Ohel Mo'ed be'echad lachodesh hasheni bashanah hashenit letsetam me'erets Mitsrayim lemor.

Scripture for study: *Bamidbar* (Numbers) 1:1 - 4:20

The title of the book of Bamidbarⁱ is most appropriate for the fourth book of the Torah. The very heart of this book is the story of Israel's years of journeying through the wilderness on their way to the land of promise. In some ways this book should have been a very short book. The intended journey was to take only a few weeks, but the wilderness proved to be a serious challenge to the children of Israel. So the journey begins in the second month of the second year with the children of Israel preparing to depart Mount Sinai, and ends forty years later with a new generation of Israelites preparing to enter the land of promise.

The English title of this book is simply "Numbers." This title was derived from the Latin Vulgate title "Liber Numerorum" and the Greek Pentateuch's title "Arithmoi." Unlike the Hebrew title, which is derived from the text itself, these later titles were imposed upon the text by translators. While these later titles may have been imposed upon the text they are not without merit, since the book contains several countings and censuses, as well as other lists and numbers. It is the repetition of these numbers and censuses that often becomes a stumbling block to the determination of Bible students to read the Bible from cover to cover. We shall learn over the next few weeks, however, that the book of Bamidbar or Numbers is an incredibly exciting and valuable book. Since it covers Israel's wilderness experience, it has great significance for those of us who yet live in exile and await the greater exodus. I hope that these portions will kindle an appreciation for this phenomenally diverse and dynamic book.

The opening portion of this book concerns itself with three basic themes - number, order, and purpose. As we study this portion we shall see that these themes continue to have relevance for the children of Israel in the present day. We shall also come to recognize that in the book

Bamidbar there are many levels of understanding to be gleaned from. Sometimes when reading a chapter in the Scriptures we tend to skim past the introductory verses in order to get to the meat and substance. Regrettably, by doing so we miss several key pieces of information that could help us unlock even more applications of the particular passage, leading to a deeper understanding. We should realize that the Torah was authored by YHWH ELOHIM, and therefore contains no superfluous words. We should therefore read slowly, deliberately, and above all, prayerfully. Let us begin our study this week by taking a quick look at the development of the three themes of number, order, and purpose as they fit within the historical context of the passage.

Our portion begins historically in the second month of the second year after YHWH delivered the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. During the first year after the exodus the children of Israel traveled through Egypt, crossed the Yam Suf,ⁱⁱ drank water from a bitter pool,ⁱⁱⁱ from springs,^{iv} and from a rock,^v and ate divine provisions of manna and quail.^{vi} The children of Israel also came to Mount Sinai where they corporately encountered the voice of YHWH and entered into covenant with their Elohim.^{vii} It was also at this time that Moses was elected by the people to continue the conversation with YHWH and to receive His Torah.^{viii} It was during this time that the children of Israel fell from their spiritual zenith of communing directly with Elohim and worshipped the golden calf.^{ix} It was also during this first year that the children of Israel received the Torah, including the instructions on building the tabernacle for YHWH and the particulars of the sacrificial system. The erection and dedication of the tabernacle concludes the book of Exodus.

The book of Leviticus continues with the development and institution of the ritual practices that are to be at the very heart of the lives of the people of Israel. Now, after a year of living in the wilderness with YHWH as their benefactor, the children of Israel prepare to take their first steps toward moving and living as a nation. To this end YHWH commands Moses to take a census of the children of Israel. We should note that this is not the first time the children of Israel have been so counted. The first time we read of a counting of the children of Israel is at the time that Jacob and his family descended into Egypt.

Genesis 46:26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six.

Exodus 1:5 And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

We may ask here why it was necessary to tell us the number of those who ascended into Israel. The answer is found in the next census, which gives us the count of the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. ³⁸And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.

By comparing these two numbers we witness the fulfillment of the promise that YHWH made to Jacob prior to his descending into Egypt.

Genesis 46:2 And Elohim spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. ³And he said, I am Elohim, the Elohim of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.

Indeed, from seventy to six-hundred thousand is an impressive increase in number. We should also note that in the first count there was no mention of the means of counting; nor of their families or households. What is described by this count is an indistinguishable sea of humanity. The Torah is very clear that this exiting mass is truly a mixed multitude. We may dare to describe this conglomerate of departing slaves as being *tohu va'vohu*.^x This we should contrast with the census that is taken in our current portion.

Numbers 1:1 And YHWH spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ²Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; ³From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

Within these opening verses we are given a great deal of information. Note that Moses was to count the children of Israel after their families (tribes), by the house of their fathers, and by the number of their names. No longer is Israel simply an indistinguishable mass of people. We should note in this manner of counting a great sense of intimacy between YHWH and His chosen people. YHWH knows His people by tribe, by household, and even by name. That YHWH knows the names of six-hundred thousand people should not surprise us, since the psalmist has already told us that the Holy One has given names to each one of the billions of stars in the heavens.

Psalm 147:4 He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.

To assure that each tribe, household, and person was counted properly, YHWH commanded that Moses and Aaron choose one person from each tribe to stand with them during the counting. Thus we witness the children of Israel beginning to take on a unique identity and order. Not only is each tribe counted, but it is also gathered beneath a banner and given a place in the camp of Israel.

Numbers 2:1 And YHWH spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, ²Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Not only are the children of Israel divided by their tribes; they are also divided into five separate camps. With the tabernacle of YHWH meaningfully located at the very heart of the camp, the children of Israel are positioned around it in five larger camps. To the east is the 186,400 member camp of Judah, made up of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. To the

south is the 151,450 member camp of Reuben, made up of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. To the north is the 157,600 member camp of Dan, consisting of the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Finally, bringing up the rear in the west is the 108,100 member of the camp of Ephraim, consisting of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Between these camps and the tabernacle is the camp of the Levites with the Gershonites camping to the west, the Kohathites camping to the south, the family of Merari camping to the north, and Moses, Aaron, and the *cohanim* camping in the east. Overall, this camp would cover close to twelve square miles of land. We should note here that the numbers given above are only the count of the men twenty years old and upward. This fact combined with the description of the children of Israel as an army gives us a clue to the purpose for the census and the ordering of the camp.

When Israel left Egypt they were an indistinguishable mixed multitude of liberated slaves, but now they are taking shape as a mighty and well-organized army of YHWH. Thus YHWH commanded Moses to count everyone from twenty years and upward that was capable of going to war. While Israel was called to be a people and a nation, it would not fully realize this calling until it had conquered and settled its land. So now in the wilderness YHWH prepares the people to become a great army, ready and able to vanquish any enemy that would assail them. We may remember that when YHWH led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He led them away from the Philistines for fear that the prospect of war would cause them to return to Egypt. We may likewise remember how the people grew weak when they saw the army of Pharaoh drawing near to them. We may also recall how the children of Israel wavered in their conflict with Amalek after leaving Egypt.

Exodus 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that Elohim led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for Elohim said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.

Exodus 14:10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto YHWH.

Exodus 17:11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

In our portion we witness the organizing of a national military prepared and ready to defend their people and to conquer and claim their heritage. It is as though the wilderness has become the training ground for the children of Israel to learn how to live together, camp together, and walk together.

We should note here that the list of the twelve tribes counted in the poll does not include the Levites. There are twenty different lists of the tribes given in the Bible. Generally there are only twelve tribes mentioned. Since Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons as his own, there are technically fourteen tribes. When the tribes are listed, if Joseph is listed, then Levi is likewise listed. It is often, though not always, the case that when Ephraim and Manasseh are listed, then Joseph and Levi are not, as is the case in our portion this week.

We must, however, be careful not to take this exclusion of Levi lightly. Just as there was purpose in counting the men of war among the children of Israel, there was purpose for not counting the tribe of Levi among them.

Numbers 1:49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel.

By separating the tribe of Levi from among their brethren YHWH declares to all of Israel that the Levites are to serve some other purpose.

Numbers 1:50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. ⁵¹And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

The Levites have a very special purpose and role to play among the children of Israel. The Levites have been set apart from their brethren and given the responsibility of the tabernacle itself. Since the tabernacle is portable, someone must be responsible for taking it down, carrying it, and erecting it again at the place where the glory of the Holy One rests. We should also note that just as the children of Israel defend the people of Israel from invaders and enemies, so too would the Levites become a defensive barrier between the children of Israel and holy ground of the tabernacle. The camp of the Levites was between the tabernacle and the children of Israel. This location speaks clearly about the intercessory role of the Levites among the children of Israel. Thus the Levites became in many ways the first line of defense for the tabernacle that it not be defiled by the defilement of the children of Israel. The Levites also became the teachers of YHWH among the children of Israel, that they would learn how to put a distinction between the clean and the unclean.

Leviticus 10:10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; ¹¹And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which YHWH hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

As teachers, servants, and intercessors for the whole nation of Israel the Levites would replace the priesthood of the firstborn. For this purpose YHWH takes the Levites instead of the firstborn among the children of Israel.

Numbers 3:6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

Numbers 3:9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

Numbers 3:12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore

the Levites shall be Mine; ¹³Because all the firstborn are Mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto Me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: Mine shall they be: I am YHWH.

To this end Moses is commanded to count every male among the Levites from one month old and upward. Moses likewise is commanded to count the firstborn of Israel, and an exchange is made. For those firstborn for whom there was no Levite, redemption was made in the customary fashion by silver.

Numbers 3:46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; ⁴⁷Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:) ⁴⁸And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

So we witness within these opening chapters and verses of the book of Bamidbar the emergence of a fledgling nation with number, order, and purpose. We should also note here that everyone was counted; each one of the children of Israel had a place and a purpose. It is important that we realize that no tribe was left out. While Israel was to be ONE NATION, it was never meant to be merely ONE TRIBE. Due to the subsequent history of the nation of Israel and its various exiles, there has been a great deal of confusion over this matter.

In brief, the nation of Israel was divided into two houses after the death of Solomon. The northern tribes, known as the house of Israel, were exiled from the land by the King of Assyria. Nearly two hundred years later the southern tribes, known as the house of Judah, were exiled into Babylon. After seventy years of exile the house of Judah returned to the land of Israel. Since the northern tribes, or the house of Israel, remain in exile among the nations, the house of Judah has spread throughout the land. Now the whole of the land of Israel is occupied by predominantly one house or tribe, that of Judah. The Jews are those who come from the tribe or house of Judah. Unfortunately not only have the remaining tribes been scattered; they have also seemingly been forgotten. Now the Ruach is fulfilling the promise to gather the tribes scattered to the four corners of the earth. For a long time Israel has been identified with one tribe. Now, however, a new concept is emerging that shifts the paradigm significantly. Until these two houses are reconciled and each takes its rightful place with the Torah and the tabernacle occupying its heart, the nation of Israel is incomplete.

With all that has been said as historical context, let us now look a little deeper at this portion, for it contains many wonderful revelations for our day as well. As we said at the beginning of this teaching, the book of Numbers is sometimes a challenge to Bible students who have set a personal goal of reading through the whole Bible cover to cover. While I think it is a good thing to read the whole Bible, I am not an advocate of making cover to cover reading a priority. Often when we read the Bible we have a tendency to read quickly, skipping over introductions that contain key information that may unlock a deeper understanding of a passage. We should always keep in mind that the Torah was written by YHWH, and contains no extra or meaningless words.

Our portion begins this week by giving us a very specific time frame for the events that it records.

Numbers 1:1 And YHWH spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt...

Remembering that YHWH is LORD OF THE CALENDAR, we should ponder why the Holy One spoke to Moses about these things on the first day of the second month of the second year. A quick search of the second month reveals some very interesting and intriguing findings.

- On the seventeenth day of the second month the flood began (Genesis 7:11).
- On the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth dried up (Genesis 8:14).
- On the fifteenth day of the second month the children of Israel left Elim and entered the Sinai wilderness (Exodus 16:1).
- On the first day of the second month the census was taken (Numbers 1:1).
- On the fourteenth day of the second month the second Passover was celebrated (Numbers 9:11; 2 Chronicles 30:2,13,15).
- On the twentieth day of the second month Israel left the Sinai wilderness (Numbers 10:11-13).
- On the second day of the second month Solomon began building the Temple (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chronicles 3:2).
- In the second month of the second year after the return from the Babylonian exile Ezra began rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 3:8).

In every one of these passages there is a common theme of leaving the past and beginning something new. This theme of new beginnings in the second month begins with the flood, continues with the exodus, and culminates with the building and rebuilding of the Temple. The only apparent exception to this pattern is our particular portion which contains the counting. With careful reflection we shall see that even our portion fits this pattern.

Let us remember that the true calling upon the children of Israel is not simply to just be another nation in the world. The nation of Israel has a much higher calling than to be a secular state like all other nations. Israel was chosen to be the manifest presence of YHWH in the world. By accepting YHWH'S marriage proposal the children of Israel became the wife and helpmeet of the Holy One. As such, Israel is to be bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. By living the Torah Israel was to clothe the commandments of YHWH in their own flesh, giving life and substance to the very Word of YHWH. By living YHWH'S Word, His Torah, Israel was to become the very sanctuary of the living Elohim. By faithfully keeping the Torah the nations would be able to see and encounter the Holy One and Creator of the Universe. In this manner Israel was to be both temple and priesthood to the world. If all of this sounds somewhat Messianic - well it should, for this has been the purpose of Israel from the beginning.

There is much we often miss when reading the Torah through the filters of the translators. This is especially true in this particular portion. When we read this passage in Hebrew we not only see the command to count the children of Israel; we are also given their purpose. For the sake of

comparison I will give the passage I am referring to as it is written in the Authorized King James Version, and then give my own literal translation.

Numbers 1:2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls.

Numbers 1:2 Lift up ye (ALEPH TAV)^{xi} the head of all the congregation of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of names, by their skulls (gulgelotam).^{xii}

While at first this may not seem all that significant, I assure you that it is. First let us note that Moses was not commanded to simply take a census. Moses was commanded to lift up the ALEPH TAV, the head of all the congregation of Israel. Note that the word “head” is in the singular. In other words, Moses was not told to elevate all of the heads of the children of Israel, but simply one head. There were over 600,000 people eligible for this count; thus we must ask, which head was Moses to elevate? The Hebrew word ET, spelled ALEPH TAV, is generally a grammatical indicator of the definite direct object. This Hebrew word appears over 7,000 times in the Tanach,^{xiii} and is never translated. The first appearance of the word is found in the creation narrative.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 Bereshit bara Elohim ET ha-shamayim ve ET ha-aretz.

This would not be significant to us except that Messiah, speaking to Yochanan^{xiv} on the Isle of Patmos, declared:

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven congregations which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

While those of us who were raised in the church are familiar with the expression “Alpha and Omega” and recognize these words as the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, most of us have given little thought to the possibility that the Hebrew Messiah speaking to a Hebrew *talmid*^{xv} probably spoke to him in Hebrew, not in Greek. Thus if we were to return this

expression to its original Hebrew, we would hear Messiah saying that he is the ALEPH and TAV. If this were the case, these passages would appear quite different to us.

Revelation 1:8 I am ALEPH and TAV, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am ALEPH and TAV, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven congregations which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am ALEPH and TAV, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:13 I am ALEPH and TAV, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

If this is what Yochanan heard, it should not surprise us that he would begin his Gospel by saying:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim.

I would suggest that the Word Yochanan was talking about was indeed the living ALEPH TAV that we read in Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 Bereshit bara Elohim ET ha-shamayim ve ET ha-aretz.

While I am not suggesting that the ALEPH TAV always refers to the Messiah, I am suggesting that there are some very powerful instances where it clearly does. Our portion is one of those instances. Thus if ALEPH TAV is the Messiah, then our portion takes on a whole new understanding.

Numbers 1:2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls.

Numbers 1:2 Lift up ye (ALEPH TAV) the head of all the congregation of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of names, by their skulls (gulgelotam).

From this we may understand that Messiah is the head of all the congregation of Israel. The testimony of the Brit Chadasha certainly affirms this idea.

1 Corinthians 11:3 *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is Elohim.*

Ephesians 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the assembly, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Ephesians 4:15 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Messiah.*

Ephesians 5:23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the head of the assembly: and he is the saviour of the body.*

Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the assembly: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

What Moses was commanded to do was to lift up Messiah, the head of all the congregation of Israel. We may ask why YHWH commanded Moses to do this on the first day of the second month. I believe the connection is found in the new beginnings of the Temples. The first day is Rosh Chodesh, the day of the sighting of the first sliver of the new moon, marking a new beginning. The second month likewise speaks of new beginnings, especially of the building of the Temple.

Here we may remember the conflict between Yeshua and the religious leaders of Israel. In zeal for his Father's house, Yeshua cleansed the Temple. The religious leaders asked him for a sign of authority to carry out such an action. Yeshua responded to them boldly:

John 2:19 *Yeshua answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. ²⁰Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? ²¹But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Yeshua describes his own body as the Temple, the place where YHWH ELOHIM abides in the world through the Holy Spirit. It is the apostle Shaul who fully understands the power of this revelation and writes to those who believe in Yeshua as the Messiah:

Romans 12:4 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one of another.*

1 Corinthians 12:12 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Messiah.*

1 Corinthians 12:18 *But now hath Elohim set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.*

1 Corinthians 12:25 *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶And whether one member suffer, all the*

members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now ye are the body of Messiah, and members in particular.

Let us take note that just as we witness YHWH giving order to the children of Israel, placing them in tribes and camps, so too does Shaul remind us that YHWH places us in the body as it pleases Him. Shaul reminds us that as the body of Messiah we are the Temple of Elohim, just as Messiah has stated.

John 2:19 *Yeshua answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. ²⁰Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? ²¹But he spake of the temple of his body.*

1 Corinthians 3:16 *Know ye not that ye are the temple of Elohim, and that the Spirit of Elohim dwelleth in you? ¹⁷If any man defile the temple of Elohim, him shall Elohim destroy; for the temple of Elohim is holy, which temple ye are.*

1 Corinthians 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Spirit of the Holy One which is in you, which ye have of Elohim, and ye are not your own?*

2 Corinthians 6:16 *And what agreement hath the temple of Elohim with idols? for ye are the temple of the living Elohim; as Elohim hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.*

Ephesians 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of Elohim; ²⁰And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yeshua Messiah himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of Elohim through the Spirit.*

Revelation 3:12 *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my Elohim, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my Elohim, and the name of the city of my Elohim, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my Elohim: and I will write upon him my new name.*

Clearly we see the prophetic imagery concerning the fulfillment of the calling upon the children of Israel to be the very habitation and body of YHWH in the world. We should recognize that through Messiah Yeshua we are able to achieve this sacred calling even after our downfall and exile. Even now the Spirit of the Holy One is gathering the scattered members of His Bride and body, cleansing us of every spot and wrinkle, and placing us in the body where it pleases Him.

As we watch YHWH direct Moses in the ordering of the children of Israel into the various camps, each with its own place and purpose, so too should we realize that the body of Messiah will be orderly. At present we may appear more as the indistinguishable mass of exiled slaves, but recognize that soon after Messiah returns he will begin to build his Temple, most likely in the second month.

I find it interesting to contemplate the possibility that Messiah will return with the blast of the shofar at Yom Truah on the first day of the seventh month.^{xvi} If Messiah begins to build his Temple – to give order to his many-membered body – in the second month of the following year, it would be exactly eight months later. We should recall from previous studies that the number eight is the number of new beginnings.^{xvii} With this understood, we may now agree that all the events mentioned in the Tanach as taking place in the second month have to do with new beginnings, including our portion. Thus what we witness in our Torah portion this week is the message that the children of Israel have a powerful purpose that in the end will bring about a new beginning through Messiah Yeshua.

SHAVUA TOV !

ⁱ *Bamidbar* is the Hebrew word for “in the wilderness.”

ⁱⁱ Exodus 14:1ff.

ⁱⁱⁱ Exodus 15:22-25

^{iv} Exodus 15:27

^v Exodus 17:1-7

^{vi} Exodus 16:1ff.

^{vii} Exodus 19:1ff.

^{viii} Exodus 20:19

^{ix} Exodus 32:1ff.

^x *Tohu va'vohu* (Genesis 1:1) is Hebrew for “without form and void.”

^{xi} Aleph and Tav are the first and last letters of the Hebrew *aleph bet*, or alphabet.

^{xii} *Gulgelotam* is the Hebrew word for “their skulls.”

^{xiii} Tanach is an acronym for the Hebrew Scriptures – the Five Books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings.

^{xiv} Yochanan is the Hebrew name of the apostle John.

^{xv} *Talmid* is the Hebrew word for “disciple” or “student.”

^{xvi} Leviticus 23:24

^{xvii} See my teaching on the Torah portion Shemini.