



PARASHAT
SH'LACH L'CHA
פרשת שלח-לך

Numbers 13:1-15:41

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

Great Discoveries in This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 13:1 Moses Sends Spies to the Promised Land
- 13:27 The Spies Give Their Report
- 13:30 Caleb Gives a Good Report and Is Shouted Down by Those With an Evil Report
- 14:1 The People Murmur and Accuse Moses
- 14:6 Joshua and Caleb Attempt to Encourage the People's Faith; The People Attack Them; The Glory of YHVH Protects Joshua and Caleb
- 14:11 YHVH Threatens to Destroy the Faithless Israelites
- 14:20 Elohim Forgives the Complaining Israelites But Sentences Them to Forty Years of Wandering
- 14:40 Israel Recognizes Its Sin and Some Defiantly Determine to Go Up to Possess the Land Only to Be Defeated by the Canaanites
- 15:1 More Laws About Offerings
- 15:32 A Man Is Executed for Purposely Breaking the Sabbath
- 15:37 YHVH Commands the Wearing of Fringes with Blue Thread to Help in Remembering His Torah Commandments

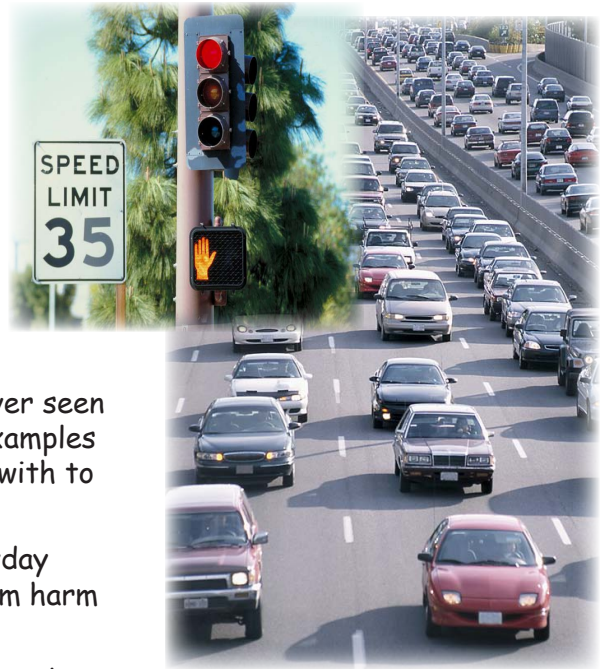
Exploring This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

1 Learning to Trust in YHVH

Is it possible to trust in something we can't see, feel or touch? No one has ever seen YHVH, yet he asks us to believe and trust in him. Is this possible? Perhaps you have heard someone say, "I won't believe it unless I see it," or heard the saying, "Seeing is believing"?

Some people say that they believe only what they can see, feel, hear, understand or have control over. Therefore, since they can't see Elohim with their physical eyes they claim that we can't believe in God. But when you stop to think about it, actually we all have faith in many

things we can't actually see, feel, hear or have no control over. For example, we place our lives in danger every time we get into a car and go down the road. We have faith that the drivers of the automobiles will stay on their side of the road and not run into us, that they will obey the traffic lights, stop signs, and so on. We don't really know if they will or not, for we are putting our faith in people that we don't know and have never met and hope that they will follow the rules of the road. You have faith that the brakes in your car will work, though most people have never seen their car brakes. We could give many everyday examples of the things we have faith in and trust our lives with to protect us from harm and danger.



(a) What are some other common and everyday things that you trust to protect you from harm and danger?

As a child, did your parents ever tell you to do something that you thought was impossible to do, or that if you did



you were sure that you'd get hurt, but because they said so you did it anyway only to find out that you could do it, and you didn't get hurt? Did they ever play with you by tossing you in the air, or telling you to jump into their arms and you had faith that they would NOT let you drop, but would catch you?

Our Father in heaven is asking us to expand our faith a little and to put our faith in him. This is the lesson of today's Torah study.

Can you trust the Elohim (God) who makes the sun to rise every day, who keeps oxygen forming in the atmosphere so that we have air to breathe, and makes it rain so that crops will grow so that we have food to eat? Can you trust the Elohim who keeps the billions of stars in their places so that they do not fall or collide with each other, who made your bodies so that all your organs like your heart, brain, liver, lungs, eyes, ears and stomach all function perfectly together so that you can live?

What happens when you don't clean your house, or mow the grass or remove the weeds in your yard and garden or wash your car? Do things stay clean and orderly on their own, or do you have to work to keep them that way? How is it that the universe and the earth stay working in such an orderly manner? Who keeps it that way? You and I don't for we have no control over the universe. Someone does, and we have blind faith that he will continue to do so, even though we have never seen, heard, touched nor do we fully understand him. His name is YHVH Elohim, and he is our loving Father in heaven.

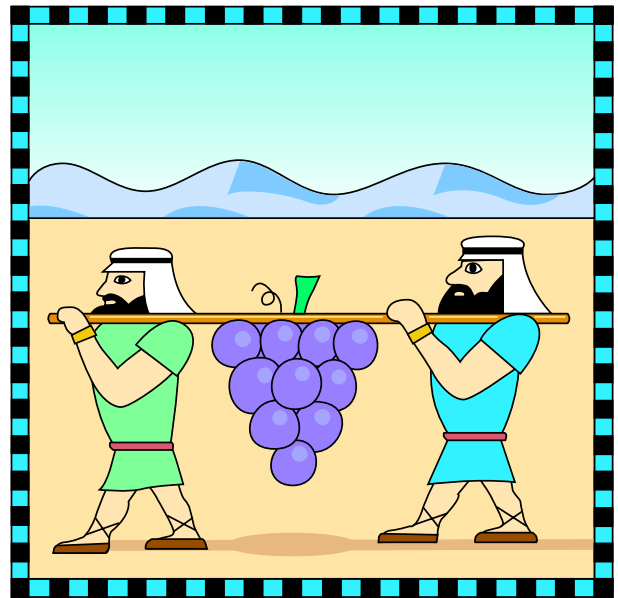
Again, putting our faith in YHVH is the lesson of today's Torah portion, and this is the lesson YHVH was trying to teach the children of Israel when he told them to go up and to take the Promised Land (Land of Canaan) that he was giving to them.



2 The Israelites Spy Out the Land of Canaan (Numbers 13:1)

Moses sent 12 men to spy out the Promised Land and to bring back a report about it to the Israelites.

- (b) What specifically was the mission of the 12 spies? (Read Numbers 13:17-20.)
- (c) Did the Israelite spies find the land to be a rich and bountiful land, or a poor and desolate one? (See Numbers 13:23-25, 27.)
- (d) Even though the spies brought back a good report and some fruit of the land, and even though YHVH told them to go up and to take the land and that he would be with them if they did so, what stopped the Israelites from moving forward? (Look at Numbers 13:28-29, 31-33.) Did they have faith in YHVH's promises?
- (e) Did all the spies bring back an evil report about the Promised Land? (Read Numbers 13:30.) What was the difference between Caleb (and Joshua) and the other ten spies who didn't believe in YHVH's promise to give the Land of Canaan to the Israelites? How is it that one group of men had faith in YHVH, and one group did not?
- (f) Did the Israelites believe the good report that Caleb brought back about the land, or the evil report that the others brought back? (See Numbers 14:1-4.)



3 Joshua and Caleb Stand Their Ground

Joshua and Caleb were men of faith. They believed in YHVH's Word when he told the Israelites that they could take the Promised Land. The Israelites believed the report of the ten evil spies and were ready to give up and return defeated back to slavery in Egypt instead of going forward into the Promised Land. Even though nearly all of Israel believed the evil report, Joshua and Caleb stood their ground and refused to lose faith in YHVH (Read Numbers 14:7-9.)

- (g) What was the response of the crowd when Joshua and Caleb expressed faith in YHVH and told the truth that the land was good and with YHVH's help they could take it? (Note Numbers 14:10.)





It is not easy to stand for truth when it seems that the whole world is against you. Have you ever taken an unpopular stand, even though your friends were against you, but you knew you had to do it, since it was the right thing to do? This is what Joshua and Caleb did.

- (h) Was YHVH pleased with Joshua and Caleb for standing up for truth and for having faith in him? Did YHVH let the crowd of faithless Israelites kill them? (Read the last part of verse 10.)
- (i) What was YHVH's attitude toward those who refused to trust in him and toward those who wanted to kill his faithful servants? (Look at verses 11-12. Also read Psalms 5:5 and 7:11)

4 The Consequences of Israel's Sin of Faithlessness

Of course, we read a little further that YHVH once again showed mercy to the Israelites because of the prayers of Moses and because of his deep love for his people (Numbers 14:13-20), but this does not mean that the Israelites did not suffer the consequences of their sin. Evil cannot go unpunished, or else evil doers will continue doing evil over and over again becoming more and more evil until evil would take over the entire earth. YHVH disciplined his people Israel to teach them that sin does not pay, even as good parents discipline their children when they do wrong. The purpose of discipline is to teach us the difference between good and evil, right and wrong.



-  (j) How did YHVH punish the children of Israel for their sin of faithlessness and disobedience? (See Numbers 14:22, 27. Read verses 23, 28, 32-37.)
-  (k) Who were the only two men of the older generation, besides the children of the Israelites, who were allowed to enter the Promised Land? (Look at verses 24, 30-31.)
-  (l) What was different about Joshua and Caleb from the ten faithless spies? (Read verse 24.)
-  (m) Can you imagine doing some wrong and your parents grounding you for 40 years? How do you think it made the Israelites feel to know that they'd be stuck wandering in the desert for 40 years? Even Caleb and Joshua who did not sin had to remain in the wilderness for 40 years while YHVH was punishing the others. Sometimes even the innocent suffer because of other people's sins. What can we learn from this?

Sin not only hurts the person sinning, but hurts other innocent people as well. **So whatever you do, JUST DON'T SIN (that is, don't go against YHVH's written Word and break his commandments), but have faith in his Word and trust him!!**

