



Parasha Bemidbar

May 20, 2023

Torah: Numbers 1:1-4:20

Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22

Ketuwim Shlichim: 1Corinthians 12:12-31

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *parasha* today is *Bemidbar*. Today, we begin a new book of *Torah* which is also named *Bemidbar*, meaning, “In the wilderness.” The English name of the book is Numbers. It begins: *1 In the wilderness of Sinai, on the first day of the second month in the second year from the Exodus from the land of Egypt, Adonai spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting...* (Numbers 1:1a TLV). Here is a brief synopsis of the *parasha*. ADONAI told Moses to take a census of the males of Israel who could serve in its army. He counted men between the ages of 20 and 60 and found 603,550 men. The Levites were not be counted in this census because they were appointed to serve in the Tabernacle. They would carry it, tend to it and camp around it. Around the Levites, the twelve tribes camped in four groups of three tribes each. Each tribe had a flag with its color corresponding to the color of the stones in Aaron’s breastplate. To the east were Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400) and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad (45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200) and Benjamin (35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500) and Naphtali (53,400). By dividing Joseph into the two half-tribes, without Levi, Israel remained twelve tribes.

ADONAI also commanded Moses to count the Levites by their ancestral clans from a month old and up. 7,500 Gershonites were counted. Their duty was the outer Tabernacle and its parts. The Kohathites numbered 8,600. They cared for the Sanctuary, including the Ark, the table, the *menorah*, the altars, the implements and the curtain. The descendants of Merari numbered 6,200 and they were in charge of the frames of the Tabernacle and its parts. The total number of Levites was 22,000. (7,500 + 8,600 + 6,200 = 22,300. It is suggested that the Hebrew may have been misinterpreted and there were 8,300 descendants of Kohath.) Moses also counted the first-born of other tribes and found 22,273. ADONAI required that the 273 more firstborn of the eleven tribes be redeemed at five shekels each. After the total of the Levites had been counted, the Kohathites of service age for the Tabernacle, 30-50 years old, were counted. Eleazar, Aaron’s son, was in overall charge of the Tabernacle and was their supervisor. He was also in charge of the *menorah* oil, the incense, the grain offering and anointing oil. The *parasha* concludes with ADONAI telling Moses and Aaron that the Kohathites could die in the Holy Place if they looked upon the holy things. The priests were to cover everything for travel before the Levites entered to get them.

The Tabernacle and everything in it were physical objects used by ADONAI under the Covenant given at Sinai to unite Israel with Him. While they are important as symbols for our understanding, they are no longer physically needed. Without a Tabernacle and Levitical Priesthood today under the active covenant, the New Covenant, these things are no longer necessary because ADONAI now deals with those in covenant with Him through His *Ruach*,

His Holy Spirit. We don't have specific information about all of the items of the Tabernacle, but ADONAI did speak about one. He said that the Ark of the Covenant was no longer needed: *16 "It will be in those days when you multiply and become fruitful in the land." It is a declaration of Adonai. "They will no longer talk about the ark of the covenant of Adonai, nor will it come to mind or be remembered. Neither will it be missed or another one made again."* (Jeremiah 3:16 TLV).

Our topic today is Jerusalem, a subject inspired by Jerusalem Day which was celebrated in Israel yesterday. Jerusalem is very important in ADONAI's eyes. It is mentioned in Scripture more than 600 times by the name "Jerusalem," more than any other location. We know that it is important to ADONAI because He is the one who has focused all of the attention on it. Here is a look at the history of the place that is so important to not only Jews, but also to Gentiles who understand ADONAI's plan for the Land of Israel and its ancient capitol.

The first mention of it is in the Book of Genesis, but not as Jerusalem? In about 1,850 BCE, Abraham's nephew Lot was captured and carried away by King Chedorlaomer. Abraham took his 318 household servants, pursued them and defeated them and brought back Lot, the other people and all of the possessions. On their return from far north, they stopped in a city called Salem: *18 Then Melechizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine—he was a priest of El Elyon.* (Genesis 14:18 TLV). This city, ruled by a king who was also a priest of the Most High G-d, would later become known as Jerusalem.

The next mention of Jerusalem was not by name but by location. Around 60 years after Lot was rescued, ADONAI commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac: *2 Then He said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love —Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains about which I will tell you."* (Genesis 22:2 TLV). Isaac was not sacrificed. This was a test of both Abraham's and Isaac's loyalty, Isaac because he was a man of more than thirty years old and could have resisted his elderly father. It is believed that a mountain in the Land of *Mori'yah* (מֹרְיָה), to which Abraham and Isaac went, is the Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. What the word means is not certain, but it has ADONAI's name in it, and in some way linking Him with this historic place.

Almost 400 years later, just before the Israelites entered the Land that ADONAI promised them, He told them that He would designate a place where they were to go to worship Him: **<7>** *5 "Rather you are to seek only the place Adonai your God chooses from all your tribes to put His Name to dwell—there you will come."* (Deuteronomy 12:5 TLV). We learn later that where He would place His name was Jerusalem. But, when Israel entered Canaan to conquer it, the place that was called *Shalem*, Salem, when Abraham visited it, had a different name. It was then called *Yevus*, Jebus, which means "threshing floor." In the Book of Joshua, that place is said to be adjacent to the territory that was given to the Tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:8). Joshua's army killed Jebus's king, but couldn't completely drive them out and the Jebusites continued to live there. About two hundred years later, around 1000 BCE, David became king over all Israel and moved his capitol from Hebron to the city that was to become Jerusalem. His men captured the stronghold of the Jebusites and He renamed that southern portion of the city as "the city of David" (2Samuel 5:6-9; 1Chronicles 11:4-8).

Some years later, when King David sinned by taking ADONAI's census with a wrong heart, ADONAI brought a plague on Israel. During the plague, David saw the Angel of ADONAI with a drawn sword standing on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ADONAI told the Angel to withhold his hand and Gad the prophet told David to erect an altar

there. That threshing floor was the site on which the Temple would later be built. David purchased it from Araunah (or *Araunah*; אַרְוֹנָה) (2Samuel 24:16-25). He wished to build a House for ADONAI there, but was not allowed to because he was a man of war.

David's son Solomon would be the one to build a House for ADONAI. Around 960 BCE, 480 years after Israel came out of Egypt, its construction began in Jerusalem (1Kings 6:1). *1 Then Solomon began to build the House of Adonai in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah—where Adonai appeared to his father David—at the place that David prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah; אַרְוֹנָה) the Jebusite.* (2Chronicles 3:1 TLV). After construction was completed ADONAI appeared to Solomon: *3 Adonai said to him: “I have heard your prayer and your petition that you made before Me. I have consecrated this House, which you have built, to put My Name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there every day.”* (1Kings 9:3 TLV). The mountain to which Abraham took Isaac for sacrifice is the same mountain on which the Temple was built.

Thus far, we have seen Mount Moriah in Jerusalem as a location for sacrifice. The first sacrifice was the ram caught in a thicket, the substitute for Abraham's son Isaac. The second time that sacrifices were offered there was by King David, sacrifices to ADONAI in praise and thanksgiving that the plague on Israel had stopped. And, there were Temple sacrifices. After Solomon built the Temple, sacrifices took place there for another 374 years, from 960 to 586 BCE, when it was destroyed by the Babylonians. Its destruction was ADONAI's judgement for the sins of Israel, a judgment which included 70 years of captivity in Babylon. After they returned from captivity, Israel completed rebuilding the Temple in about 515 BCE and sacrifice began again. Through the years, Jerusalem and ADONAI's house in it continued its importance as the place where ADONAI placed His name.

In 332 BCE, Babylon was conquered by Alexander the Great and Jerusalem came under Hellenistic rule. This included the Hellenistic rule of Antiochus, the Syrian general, who was defeated in 160 BCE by the Maccabees. Following their victory over the Syrians, Israel ruled itself under the Hasmonean dynasty, the descendants of the Maccabean family (142-63 BCE). Then, in 63 BCE, the Roman general, Pompey, captured Jerusalem and Rome began its rule (699 years).

With Rome in control of Israel, Solomon's Temple was remodeled by the Roman puppet king Herod over a 46 year period and completed in 4 CE. As magnificent as Solomon's Temple was, Herod's reconstruction eclipsed it. The size of the platform on which the Temple stood was doubled in size as well. That was the Temple that Yeshua knew, from His first visit there as a thirty day old infant for dedication to ADONAI to His last look at it in the distance as He was taken to be crucified.

Two days before His death on the stake, as Yeshua was leaving the Temple, He told His disciples that it would be destroyed and not one stone would be left on top of another (Matthew 24:2). Later that same day, sitting on the Mount of Olives, he continued to speak on the subject. He said: *20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must get out, and those in the countryside must not enter her.”* (Luke 21:20-21 TLV). 40 years later, what Yeshua prophesied, happened. The “abomination of desolation” (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20), the pagan Roman army, destroyed the Temple and not one stone was left on top of another. All that remained were the retaining walls. It happened in the year 70 CE, 40 years after Yeshua spoke these words. The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans continued the domination of

Jerusalem by Gentile nations which began in 63 BCE and would eventually become more than 2000 years of Gentile domination. Continuing His conversation, Yeshua said: 24 “*Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*” (Luke 21:24b TLV). About 62 years after the Temple was destroyed, Jewish fighters under the leadership of the false messiah, *Bar Kochba*, tried again to defeat the Romans, but failed (132-135 CE). Enraged at the uprising, the Roman Emperor Hadrian completely destroyed Jerusalem and rebuilt it as a Roman city named Aelia Capitolina.

Jerusalem continued life as a Gentile dominated city of the Roman Empire with its pagan ways of worship for another 178 years when Constantine became emperor and declared religious toleration of Christianity (313 CE). For the next 323 years, the Byzantine Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire, a Christian empire, ruled Jerusalem and Israel. But, in 636, they were defeated by the Arabs who had been unified under Mohammed and his new Muslim religion. Although Mohammed died in 632, his religion continued and in 688 construction was begun on a Muslim shrine, the Dome of the Rock (completed 691). It was built on Mount Moriah atop the Temple mount platform, where both the first and second Temples had stood. Then in 1099, the controlling Fatamid Arabs, a dynasty descended from Mohammed’s daughter, were defeated by the Crusaders and they ruled Jerusalem and Israel for 192 years (1099-1291). In 1291, the Crusaders were defeated by the Mamluk Arabs, Turks who ruled until 1517 when they were defeated by their fellow Turkish Ottoman Arabs. It was during the Ottoman reign that the present city walls of Jerusalem were built (by Sultan Suleiman 1537-1541). Then, in 1918, the Ottomans were defeated by the British under General Allenby, who captured Jerusalem without firing a shot. In 1922, Britain granted a mandate for what was then called Palestine, a name given by the Emperor Hadrian. In his anger after the *Bar Kokhba* revolt in 135 CE, he renamed Israel for their ancient enemies, the Philistines. The British Mandate only gave one-fourth of its rightful territory to Israel and they wound up in a war, fighting for that small portion, after they declared Israel a state on May 14, 1948.

In early 1949, Israel won the war with the Arab nations of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt and took control of the one-fourth of territory given to them plus about sixty percent of the territory given to the Arabs. However, Jerusalem remained under Arab control. About 19 years later, Israel won another miraculous victory after an unprovoked attack by Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The war lasted just six days and on June 7, 1967, Israel recaptured Jerusalem, the place where ADONAI placed His name. Israel’s victory in 1967 fulfilled Yeshua’s prophecy of Luke 21:24. *Yerushalayim* was no longer trodden underfoot of the Gentiles.

We know that Jerusalem is a very important place in ADONAI’s eyes. As a place of sacrifice, it was located on the Mountains of Moriah where the called for “sacrifice” of Abraham’s son Isaac took place. That sacrifice was a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of ADONAI’s Son Yeshua many years later on that same mountain (just about 1,500 feet to the west). ADONAI said to Abraham: **<12 both>** 2 ..., “*Take your son, your only son whom you love —Isaac and offer him there as a burnt offering*” (Genesis 22:2 TLV). Yeshua, ADONAI’s Son, was brought to the same mountain as a sacrifice: 6 “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*” (John 3:16 TLV). ADONAI connected the two, Isaac and Yeshua, in these two verses separated by more than 1000 years. **<13>** ADONAI’s *monogenés* (mon-og-en-ace’) Son, His only begotten Son, became the perfect fulfillment of His foreshadowing by Isaac, Abraham’s *yachid* (יָחִיד) son, his only son. ADONAI said *yachid*, only, but, Isaac wasn’t

Abraham's only son. He was also the father of *Yishma'el*, but ADONAI said that Isaac was his *yachid* son. Strong's Concordance tells that *yachid* means "only, only one, solitary." Although Isaac wasn't actually Abraham's only son, he was the only one in ADONAI's plan for the world, Abraham's descendant, who would be a father of the Jewish people. Yeshua, ADONAI's only *monogenés* (mon-og-en-ace') Son, His only begotten Son, is the perfect fulfillment of ADONAI's plan to redeem His chosen people Israel and also the world. Yeshua is the only begotten, but we are also sons and daughters: **<14>** *12 But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God.* (John 1:12 TLV). Children is from the Greek, *teknon*, meaning children of both sexes. ADONAI has many sons and daughters, but only one *monogenés* Son, one only begotten Son, the Son whom He implanted in the womb of a virgin girl from the Tribe of Judah.

Har Mori'yah and *Yerushalayim*, the place where ADONAI placed His name forever, was the place where His Son, the Servant, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: *10 Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of Adonai will succeed by His hand.* (Isaiah 53:10 TLV). Even though it was painful, both to ADONAI and to Yeshua, as testified by the Scriptures, ADONAI caused His Son to suffer and die as an *asham* (אָשָׁם), a guilt offering, the fulfillment of His plan of redemption which He made before the creation of the earth. He had said to Solomon that His name was placed where the Temple was forever (1Kings 9:3). Forever is a long time. That means that even today with the pagan Dome of the Rock (and Al Aqsa Mosque) atop Mount Moriah, ADONAI's name is there too.

How should we understand the Book of Revelation? Is it all past tense? Is it mostly future? There are a lot of different ideas about how it should be interpreted. I believe that it is progressive, beginning with events in the time of John and progressing through time. It is primarily symbolic with word pictures representing actual events. Reverend Ellis Skolfield, a man whom I have quoted quite a bit, attaches great significance to the Dome of the Rock and connects it with events found in Revelation. What I am about to describe is his understanding.

In Revelation 11:2 there is a prophecy usually described as "The Court Outside the Temple Given to the Gentiles for 42 Months." Reverend Skolfield has determined how to convert prophetic days, months and years to current years on the Gregorian calendar. *2 "But do not measure the court outside the Temple—leave it out, because it has been given to the nations, and they shall trample the holy city for forty-two months."* (Revelation 11:2 TLV). Do not measure the court outside the Temple. It was not measured because the Dome of the Rock was not built where the Temple had been located. Yeshua said to John that the court outside the Temple was given to the Gentiles and they would control it for 42 months. The Dome of the Rock is outside the actual Temple location, approximately 300 feet south of where it was. Reverend Skolfield gives a more detailed explanation which you can read in Appendix A.

42 prophetic months is 1,279 Gregorian years. Add that figure to 688, the year that construction began on the Dome of the Rock and you get 1967. These prophetic years speak of the time from the Dome of the Rock being constructed on Mount Moriah in 688 CE to 1967 CE. This period of time is the portion of the time that Jerusalem was trodden underfoot by the Muslims specifically, 1,279 years of the more than 2000 total years that Gentiles controlled Jerusalem. The court outside of the Temple was given to the Gentiles, the Muslims, for forty-two months. This prophecy by Yeshua tells that Muslim Gentiles would

dominate Jerusalem for that period of time, but eventually, authority over all of Jerusalem, including the space occupied by the Dome of the Rock, would be given back to Israel. Yeshua said that to John around the end of the 1st century CE. General Moshe Dyan and his troops recaptured the old city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount on July 7, 1967, a perfect fulfillment of the 42 month prophecy. But, history also tells us, that at that time partial authority was returned to the Jordanian King as the overseer of the Islamic properties on the Temple Mount, while Israel retained overall control of the area.

Dispensationalism makes the 42 months mean something else. The 42 months are not about the Antichrist stopping Temple worship during the middle of the 7 year tribulation in a future 70th Week of Daniel. This verse in Revelation is about Jerusalem being trodden underfoot of the Gentiles as said by Yeshua and its eventual return to the authority of Israel.

In the next chapter of Revelation, we see “The Woman in the Wilderness”: 1 “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 She is pregnant—crying out in birth pains, in agony to give birth.” (Revelation 12:2 TLV). This is a picture of the twelve tribes of Israel. The verses following describe *HaSatan* and his angels when he rebelled and were thrown from heaven. He awaited the birth of Yeshua to destroy Him, but Yeshua ascended to the Father. The next verse reads: 6 “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God so they might take care of her for 1,260 days.” (Revelation 12:6 TLV). This is symbolism like that in the chapter before, a timeline tied to Israel. The woman, symbolizing the Jews of the world, was taken care of for 1,260 days by G-d. These 1,260 prophetic years can be read directly and extend from the time of the Dome of the Rock in 688 to 1948 and the re-establishment of the Nation of Israel. This is not a prophecy about Yeshua’s Body of believers literally being protected in a miraculous wilderness during a future time of tribulation. It is a symbolic timeline about ADONAI’s miraculous preservation of the Jews of the world. Israel, a small group of people, less than ½ of 1% of the world’s population, was miraculously preserved, protected by G-d, to allow them to reach the time of the re-establishment of their nation (Isaiah 66:7-9).

Jerusalem, the place where ADONAI has placed His name, is a place very important to Him. He said to Solomon: <20> 3 ...I have consecrated this House, which you have built, to put My Name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there every day.” (1Kings 9:3b TLV). ADONAI’s House on *Har Mori’yah* in the City of Jerusalem is not there today, but ADONAI’s name is. He has returned control of Jerusalem to the Jews and in His perfect timing, He will deal with the abomination that is there and Yeshua will return to the city in which He died. Until that time, there is a tangible benefit for those of us who love the city where ADONAI has placed His name. King David encourages us: 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem— “May those who love you be at peace! (Psalm 122 6 TLV). May we have *shalom* proportionate to our prayers for Jerusalem. 1 “But at the end of days the mountain of Adonai’s House will be established as chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills. Peoples will flow up to it. 2 Then many nations will go and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will direct us in His ways, and we will walk in His paths.” For Torah will go forth from Zion, and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:1-2 TLV). *Barukh HaShem!* Praise ADONAI for Him who is coming to set up His throne in Jerusalem! *Shabbat shalom!*

Addendum A: “Excerpt from *Forty-two Months*” by Reverend Ellis Skolfield.

Then in 649AD, Jerusalem fell to the Moslems. In 685AD, the Muhammadan governor of Jerusalem, Abd el Malik ibd Marwan, cleared the temple mount to bedrock. He used the local people to do so, including the Christians and Jews still living in the city. On the exposed bedrock, they found two solid rock promontories within 300 ft. of each other. The one to the south they named "as-Sakhra." Over as-Sakhra they built the Islamic memorial, the Dome of the Rock, construction beginning in 688AD. 1290 Hebrew day-years of Daniel 12:11 span from the abolition of sacrifices in Daniel's day to the Dome of the Rock (688AD). Over the other promontory (an unusually flat stone to the north and slightly west of as-Sakhra), a little, unimposing cupola was constructed they aptly named "The Dome of the Spirits," or "The Dome of the Tablets." Having no science of archaeology during those days, guess what? The Muslims built the Dome of the Rock on the wrong rock! The rock they built that dome on, "As-Sakhra," has no historic or spiritual significance whatever. The Dome of the Rock is right in the middle of what was once the court of the Gentiles. Even ceremonially unwashed Canaanite slaves were allowed into the court of the Gentiles. You didn't have to be a priest, or a Levite, or even a Jew to go there. The House of the Lord, where only the sons of Aaron could enter, stood over that little flat rock some 300ft north of where the Dome now stands. We know exactly where the temple stood because of holes (spaced on the sacred cubit) drilled in temple mount bedrock. (Documentation: "Foundation stone for the Ark of the Covenant Identified" Biblical Archeology Review, March-April, 1983) The sacred cubit could be used only in the temple itself, and these holes pinpoint the exact location of the House of the Lord. The Kodesh ha-Kodeshim, the Holy of Holies, was directly over that little flat rock 300 feet North of the Dome.