



Parashiyot Mattot/Massei

July 15, 2023

Torah: Numbers 30:2-36:13

Haftarah: Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

Ketuwim Shlichim: Philippians 3:12-16; James 4:1-12

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Last *Shabbat* we read Solomon's statements about the events of the earth and that history repeats itself. Rabbi Jonathan Cahn also pointed that out in his message at Messiah Conference last week. His point was that the demonic entities represented as gods in the early centuries and which were defeated by Yeshua's disciples have returned. The underlying demons have returned in full force, not by the names of the gods which they represented to the people of the ancient world, but in forms which are today being accepted as normal, such things as homosexuality, gender changes and abortion. But, a time is coming when the demonic entities behind these abominations will be permanently defeated and eliminated. Solomon wrote: *1 For everything there is a season and a time for every activity under heaven:..* (Ecclesiastes 3:1 TLV). The "biggie" activity that is coming is "the Day of ADONAI." And it is getting closer and closer. But, for us, the coming of our Messiah is not a frightening time. The "end of days" is a challenging time to be sure, but also a privilege. We have been chosen to live in this time period and as Yeshua's disciples, our job is to help usher in our King, *Yeshua HaMashiach*. And, we will live in His Kingdom for eternity.

We read this verse recently. Yeshua said: *22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?'"* (Matthew 7:22 TLV). Performing miracles, expelling demons and prophesying are all good things. They are expected to be a part of a follower of Yeshua's life. But, Yeshua said that "on that day," the Day of ADONAI when He returns, doing just these things would not be enough. He continued: *23 "Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'"* (Matthew 7:23 TLV). He was not saying, "don't perform miracles or don't prophesy or don't cast out demons." He was saying that they lacked something else, obedience. Workers of lawlessness are those who follow Him in some ways, but disobey His other laws. As wise servants, it is to our benefit to find out what Yeshua meant by "lawlessness" and when we have learned it, don't "be lawless."

Our *Torah* portion today is a double portion, *Mattot/Massei*. Here is a synopsis. *Mattot* means "tribes." Moses gave instructions from ADONAI to the leaders of the tribes regarding vows in different circumstances. War came with Midian, was won by Israel and the spoils of war were distributed. The Tribes of Reuben and Gad asked that they be given their land inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River because it was good land for their cattle. Moses agreed if they would send their warriors with the rest of the tribes to conquer the Land of Canaan. They agreed and the half-tribe of Manasseh also joined them on the east side of the Jordan. *Massei* means "journeys." The journey of Israel from Egypt was described with a listing of their travels and the places where they camped during their almost 40 years in the wilderness. ADONAI described the boundaries of the land which Israel was being given. Forty-eight cities within it were to be given to the Levites with six of them being cities of

refuge, places to which accidental murderers could flee for safety. The daughters of *Zelofchad* requested permission and were allowed to inherit from their fathers as long as they married within their own tribe of Manasseh.

ADONAI gave instructions to the tribes of Israel and He also gives instructions to those of us in covenant with Him today. Regarding His instructions, the major problem for the body of Messiah today seems to be what the body of Messiah understands ADONAI to be saying. What in His Word is for us and what is not? A part of the answer to that question can be found in understanding the question, “Who is Yeshua and what has He said to us?” This discussion is for you, our *mishpacha*. It is not intended to be instructions for Yeshua’s body at large. Others must answer the questions for themselves. But, what is said here is for anyone who can accept it.

This kind of discussion is necessary because in today's spiritual community, Yeshua is understood in so many different ways. Who is He really and what has He said to us? We look first at who He is. He is the Son of the Father whom we refer to as ADONAI, ADONAI because the proper pronunciation of the Hebrew consonants of His name, *Yod Heh Vav Heh*, יהיה, is unknown. Because we don’t know how to pronounce it and rather than use one of the six or seven pronunciations that some of Yeshua’s followers are using today, we follow the Jewish custom of using an epithet, a word expressing the characteristics of the person or thing. To represent יהיה, we usually use either ADONAI, meaning “My L-rd,” or *HaShem*, meaning “The Name,” but there are many other possibilities. *HaG’vurah*, “the Mighty One,” *HaM’vorakh*, “the Blessed One,” and *HaG’vurah*, “the Power,” are some that Yeshua used Himself to refer to His Father, *YHVH*. *Yochanan*, Yeshua’s disciple, also used an epithet in one of his letters: *5 Loved ones, you are acting faithfully in whatever you do for the brethren and especially for strangers. 6 They have testified to your love before Messiah’s community. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 For on behalf of the Name they went out, accepting nothing from the pagans. 8 Therefore we ought to support such people, so we might become co-workers in the truth.* (3John 1:5-8 TLV). In verse seven, John identifies the Father as *τοῦ ὀνόματος*, “the Name.” According to what is written in the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, His disciples’ writings, Yeshua and His disciples did not pronounce *YHVH*.

Following Yeshua's death on the cross, with the passage of time and the growth of the population of non-Jewish followers of Yeshua, they began to control the affairs of “the body of Messiah.” Different individuals and groups of individuals acting as a ruling body made proclamations in the early centuries regarding their understanding of Scripture. We will look at two of them today. According to the “Online Catholic Encyclopedia,” a certain doctrine was promoted sometime after the year 200 CE by a man named Sabellius. The historian Hippolytus summarized Sabellius’s theological position as being one in which the names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, did not stand for real distinctions in the Godhead, but were “mere names” that described the actions of the “one G-d” at different times in history. In other words, Father, Son and Spirit, in Sabellias’s thought, were only adjectives describing how the “one divine being” acts and is perceived. They called his theology Modalism because his claim was that Father, Son and Holy Spirit were just “modes,” or ways, that the One G-d acted in His relationship with mankind.

A theologian named Tertullian immediately objected to this and responded to Sabellius’s claim. He said that Scripture reveals that the Godhead is three who are at the same time one. Tertullian proposed that the Godhead be spoken of as “one substance consisting in three persons.” His opinion formed the basis for future Christian theology and

it was from Tertullian's opinion that the word Trinity was first written. But, this was not formally adopted as a doctrine by a governing body of bishops and pastors until the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, more than one hundred years later. When it met, the original, called purpose of the Council of Nicaea was to deal with a heresy which had begun to flourish called "Arianism." Arias denied the deity of Yeshua and the virgin birth, and that G-d could have a Son. In response to this, the Council of Nicaea decided on and declared Jesus to be: "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." They only dealt with Father and Son and not the Holy Spirit. It was not until the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, 56 years later, when the Holy Spirit was recognized as being with the Father and the Son, and official endorsement was given to the "doctrine of the Trinity."

It is very important that each of us who follows Yeshua has a knowledge of these early events in the history of His body. They greatly shape his followers understanding of not only Him, but also of his Father and *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit. The majority of the body of Messiah, those who attend churches and Messianic congregations, follow a three person-view of ADONAI (*YHVH*). But there is also a growing number of Yeshua's followers who believe that a form of Modalism is the correct understanding of the nature of *YHVH*. Simply put, this belief is that there is one G-d, a singular spirit, who manifests Himself in different ways, including as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The majority of Christian churches believe and teach a Trinitarian type doctrine. This also includes much of Messianic Judaism, including both the IAMCS, the International Alliance of Congregations and Synagogues of the MJAA, of which *Beit Shalom* is a part, and the UMJC, the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations.

Both of these organizations have Trinitarian-type positions in their statements of faith. The IAMCS statement reads: "GOD - We believe that the *Shema*, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' teaches that God is *Echad*, as so declared: a united one, a composite unity, eternally existent in plural oneness, that He is a personal God who created us and that He exists forever in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." With regard to "the Son," the IAMCS further states: "GOD THE SON (*HaBen*): God does have a Son. The Son, called Yeshua (Jesus), meaning salvation, came to this world born of a virgin. The Son is God (Deity), and is worshipped as God, having existed eternally. This One is the promised *Mashiach* (Messiah) of Israel. He is the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. He is our Passover, the Lamb of God." The UMJC statement reads: "We believe that there is one G-d, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of the L-RD Yeshua, the Messiah, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory." These are the two largest groups within Messianic Judaism and their statements regarding *YHVH*, Yeshua and *Ruach HaKodesh* essentially agree.

Why then, within the greater body of Messiah, do we have two different views of "Who G-d is?" There are probably more than two, but we are only considering these today. One believes God is *echad*, a united one, a composite unity, eternally existent in plural oneness as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The other, the doctrine of the modern form of Modalism, states that there is one God, a singular divine spirit with no distinction of persons, who manifests Himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The reason we have different doctrines is because we are human. Our understanding is limited and very often it separates us into groups within Yeshua's body. But, it should not! Let's face it. We, here, are a group separated from the main body, but we don't want to be separated. We

desire to have fellowship and to promote unity within Yeshua's complete body. We do understand some things differently, but we don't insist that others believe what we believe. And, we understand that neither us nor any of the other groups is without error and that we will all be corrected by Yeshua when He returns. And, it is our prayer that others would feel the same way and desire to have fellowship.

ADONAI has presented His eternal Word to us through men who heard His voice and wrote it down. To understand what ADONAI is saying to us through His *Torah*, His teaching and instruction, from Genesis through Revelation, we must study the Scriptures. Our understanding of the Scriptures is necessary to show ourselves approved as tried and true unashamed workers, as *Sha'ul* wrote to Timothy: *15 Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth.* (2Timothy 2:15 TLV). Second, as we study, we are to prayerfully listen to the Holy Spirit regarding the subject. And then, third, we must take into account, but not necessarily completely agree with, what has been perceived as truth through the centuries and written down by "Godly persons." Then we, ourselves, must assimilate this information and determine what we believe. By combining these elements, we receive the truth of the Scriptures by faith. But, it is also important that as fallible humans, we realize that this is not an absolute formula for correct understanding. Even after we have done these things, we must realize that there are some things that we cannot yet understand, things which we may get wrong. Also, that there are mysteries which remain and that there is not direct Scriptural proof available for everything we wish to understand. We must also understand that we cannot establish "truth" based upon circumstantial Scriptural evidence and especially not from extra-biblical sources. To rightly divide His Word, there must be solid Scriptural evidence. Until Yeshua returns, there will always be some "mystery" in our understanding of ADONAI, Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit. But, we can live with mystery. We don't have to have the answers to everything.

Yes, faith is a very necessary part of the process. To be able to have any meaningful understanding of ADONAI's Word for us as Yeshua's followers, we must have faith. Faith is the attribute most often spoken of with regard to ADONAI's servants. Habakkuk wrote: *4 Behold, the puffed up one— his soul is not right within him, But the righteous will live by his trust.* (Habakkuk 2:4 TLV). Trust is faith. They mean the same thing. The Hebrew word translated as "by his trust" is *b'emunato*, בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ, a compound word based upon the word *emunah*, אֱמוּנָה, a noun meaning firmness, steadfastness or fidelity. Trust is faith and faith in ADONAI is the most important thing for a believer. It is through faith that we believe that ADONAI is our G-d, that Yeshua, His Son, is a righteous sacrifice for our sins, and that we can hear from them through *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit. The writer of Hebrews wrote: *6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For the one who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.* (Hebrews 11:6 TLV). In biblical context, trust and faith are the same. As the verse says, we must believe that ADONAI exists and we believe it through our faith. A second and equally important element of *emunah*, faith, *pistis* in Greek, is faithfulness, defined by *Strong's Online Concordance* as firmness, steadfastness or fidelity. Our faith is translated into action by the acts of our faithfulness.

By studying the Scriptures with faith, I understand *Elohim*, G-d, in the following way: *ADONAI*, יהוה, Himself alone, is the Father. *Yeshua HaMashiach* is the Son of G-d, a divine being, but not G-d the Father, Himself. *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of G-d which proceeds from both the Father and the Son and who also abides in the spirit of those

who have trusted in Yeshua. Here is *Beit Shalom's* statement of faith. You can find it on our website, *www.beitshalom.us*. “YHVH, the *Elohim* (God) of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak* and *Ya’akov* (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), the Creator of all things, the God of Israel, the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent One is the One true *Elohim* (God) and King of the Universe. He revealed Himself in the entire Holy Scriptures as *HaAv* (the Father) and *Ruach HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit). *HaBen* (the Son, Yeshua) is foretold in the *Tanakh* (The Hebrew Bible) and fully revealed in the *Ketuvim Notzrim* (Writings of the followers of the Righteous Branch [Yeshua]; the New Covenant Scriptures). God is a Spirit; as *HaAv* (the Father), He sent His eternally begotten Son Yeshua to die sacrificially for us, yet He remains eternally *Echad* (One).” ADONAI's Word declares that He is One, *echad*. As Hebrews 11:6 says, we must believe that He does exist and we are able to believe this by our faith, our trust. The great men and women of faith spoken of in that chapter are our examples and their acts encourage us to hold fast to that which we have received.

Everything which is directly written about Yeshua is found in the writings of His followers, the *Ketuvim Notzrim*, but He is also pictured throughout the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, in various ways. Yeshua was with the Father in the beginning before the foundation of the earth was laid. John chapter 1 tells us so. This chapter also tells us that Yeshua is “the Word” through whom everything was created. Regarding whether or not Yeshua is “the Angel of ADONAI” depicted in the *Tanakh*, anyone’s statement that He is, is only conjecture based upon circumstantial evidence. My faith is not weakened by not knowing the “complete” answers to these kinds of questions. And I don't believe that any of us will know all the answers for certain until Yeshua returns. Until then, some mysteries remain. Not knowing the answer to certain questions does not in any way prevent us from carrying out His Word. That’s my opinion, but if you believe differently, that’s ok.

“Rightly dividing the Word” also implies that as students of the Word, we are also disciples of Yeshua, *talmidim shelYeshua*. Those who sincerely believe in the effectiveness of Yeshua's sacrificial death and follow him as Savior, *Mashiach*, the Anointed One, and at the same time, understand ADONAI with a modalistic view of the Godhead, are just as much a part of the Body of Messiah as any other follower of Yeshua. The same is true for those who may pronounce ADONAI’s name in one of the several different ways. This also applies to those who understand the Sabbath differently. They are still members of the body. We must resist *HaSatan's* attempts to divide us. We are divided into too many camps already. We must learn to receive each other where we are. Let’s put aside such arguments and work toward the goals that Yeshua has given us. *Sha’ul's* advice to Timothy is for us today: *3 As I urged you, when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay in Ephesus to direct certain people not to pass on different instruction, 4 or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies. These give rise to useless speculations rather than God’s training which is in faithfulness.* (1Timothy 1:3-4 TLV). Whether or not the specifics which *Sha’ul* quoted apply to us today do not matter. What matters is the last part of his statement: *These give rise to useless speculations rather than God’s training which is in faithfulness.* The truth is that these kinds of arguments divert us from faithfully doing ADONAI's work and add nothing to our understanding. Faithfulness is the bottom line of this statement. But, there definitely are issues on which we must hold firm. These include the sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua, that Yeshua is the Son of ADONAI (and is therefore deity), the son of *Miryam*, a Jewish virgin, and the ability of his death to bring us eternal life. And there are many others. With regard to things of this nature, we cannot compromise.

Yeshua's brother, *Ya'acov*, James, not only spoke about faith, but lived his life according to what he taught. He wrote: *14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? Can such faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in shalom, keep warm and well fed, " but you do not give them what the body needs, what good is that? 17 So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith without works and I will show you faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe—and shudder! 20 But do you want to know, you empty person, that faith without works is dead?* (James 2:14-20 TLV). Faith by itself, faith without the action of putting faith into effect, is dead! For us, this not only means that we must do good works, such things as helping to feed the homeless and the less fortunate, but also acting upon ADONAI's Word and obeying His commands which are active for us today.

Yeshua's brother, *Ya'acov*, was the *Nasi*, the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem and was a recognized *tzadik*, a very righteous man. He was also a man of very strong faith as we just read from his letter. As the leader of the Jerusalem congregation, he was respected by not only the Messianic Jews, but also by the non-Messianic Jews. He was respected to such a great degree that he was honored by the people as the equal of the High Priest (*Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History*). But, those of the party of the Sadducees did not like this outpouring of love for *Ya'acov*. Under a pretext, they convinced him to go with them to the wing of the Temple mount and with all the people listening below, demanded that he renounce his faith in Yeshua. He refused. Eusebius wrote that he said: "Why do you ask me about Jesus, the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens on the right hand of The Power and is about to come on the clouds of heaven." After he said this, *Ya'acov* was pushed off the Temple wall and fell to the pavement below. He didn't die from the fall and was stoned. As he was dying, he prayed: "I entreat You, Lord God and Father. Forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And when he said that, one of the crowd beat his brains out with a fuller's club, a wooden mallet used to beat out clothes during laundering. This was *Ya'acov's* faith expressed as faithfulness, the acts of a man who had earlier rejected his brother Yeshua (John 7:5), but who now fully believed in Him with a very great faith. I pray that ADONAI will not call any of us to make such a sacrifice, but our work as Yeshua's disciples requires that we have the same amount of faith that *Ya'acov* had. Having that faith, we must be devoted to the task given to us by Yeshua. It is by our actions that we show our love for ADONAI and our Messiah. And, it is our duty as Yeshua's disciples to be prepared to give our all for him, just as many of his early followers did. As *Ya'acov* and the other disciples were Yeshua's witnesses, we are also called to be His witnesses and to make disciples for Him. (Matthew 28).

Our subject is complex and would take many hours to do complete justice to it. Today, we are just focusing on certain aspects of who Yeshua is and will conclude this topic when I speak again in two weeks. If you would like a more detailed study about Yeshua, you can go to the series of eight messages entitled, "Yeshua Our Jewish Messiah" on our website. They begin on December 25, 2021 and conclude on March 12, 2022. But first, be sure and be here next *Shabbat* for Rabbi Herb's message on *Parasha Devarim*.

The message that you didn't hear today is that Yeshua is the way, the truth and the life, the message about being saved. It too, is an extremely important message, especially for the lost of the world. It is just as important as discipleship. You can't be a disciple unless you are saved. But, being saved is just step one, the important step which brings the benefit

of life after death. Salvation is very important, but all of you are saved and you didn't need to hear that part today. We attended the funeral of a son of a friend yesterday. The pastor who officiated gave a powerful call to turn to Jesus, Yeshua. He is the only way to eternal life and I pray that anyone hearing this message that has not trusted in Yeshua, will trust in Him today. But, trusting in Yeshua is only the beginning. After salvation, we must become His disciples, and as disciples, we must rightly divide the Word of G-d. Today, Yeshua's body is very much divided along denominational and even congregational lines. Don't be one of those who says, "If you don't agree with me, we have nothing in common." Even though we don't agree on every point, we do have very much in common with everyone who has trusted in Yeshua. We believe in the same Messiah and we are all a part of His spiritual body. Yeshua knew what the condition of His body of believers would be in the world of July, 2023 when He sat with His disciples two thousand years ago and through teaching them then, He has given us the perfect way to heal the body. He said: *34 "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 TLV). It's so simple. Love each other! How many in Yeshua's body today have broken His commandment and are continuing to break it? If we don't love each other in the way He has commanded, we are also carrying unforgiven sin. Here in the *acharit hayamim*, the end of days, unity and love in Yeshua's body is what we need more than anything else. A unified, loving body will do more than anything else to reach the lost. They need to see a unified and loving body, not the disorganized and distrustful one which we have now. Salvation messages are important, but it's not just about trusting in Yeshua. It's much more. Once saved, it is to be His faithful disciples, men and women who are not workers of lawlessness who have brotherly love for each other. *Shimon Kefa* wrote: *8 Above all, keep your love for one another constant, for "love covers a multitude of sins."* (1Peter 4:8 TLV). *Shabbat shalom!* We will continue in two weeks.