

Current Event:

The death of **George Floyd**, an African-American man from Minnesota, occurred on May 25, 2020, when Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer, knelt on **Floyd's** neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, with 2 minutes and 53 seconds of that occurring after **Floyd** was unresponsive.

(A Picture of our Country's Lawlessness, the measure we Judge we will be Judged. A Picture of God's Message of a Call to Repentance . . . either Softened Hearts or Hardened Hearts)

Romans 13:1-2 – **God Appointed Authorities (in accordance to how we have Judged – “the same measure over flowing)**

Submission to the Authorities

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Current Event Response:

Luke 6:27-45

Love Your Enemies

²⁷ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic^b either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³² “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- **God will vindicate the righteous.**
- **God will see that justice is done.**
- **God will reward.**
- **God is the owner of all things.**

In each case, Jesus asked His disciples to do more than was required. In other words, they were to give gifts or bless others. Jesus wants his disciples to be like their Father in heaven, generous, people of an open hand. They should not grasp the things of this world or hold onto their rights, for their Father in heaven shall reward them.

Shavuot 2020

will begin in the evening of

Thursday, May 28 . . . based on the counting of the day after the Passover Sabbath.

Saturday, May 30 . . . based on the counting of the day after the Weekly Sabbath.

and ends in the evening of

Saturday, May 30 . . . based on the counting of the day after the Passover Sabbath.

Monday, June 21 . . . based on the counting of the day after the Weekly Sabbath.

“From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks [shavuot].”

“Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD.”

Leviticus 23:15-16

Ezekiel 22:26

²⁶ Her **priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.**

Matthew 15:1-9

Traditions and Commandments

“for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.” ⁷ *You hypocrites!* Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

⁸“This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;

⁹in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

On Shavuot . . . God’s people mark not just the giving of the Torah by God, but their acceptance of the Torah. Some Jewish writers have compared the exchange to a **marriage** or other sacred covenant.

Exodus 19:3

³ while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and **tell the people of Israel (who are the people of Israel, those who’s name and destiny’s have been changed and infused by the name and destiny of their God, no longer deceivers, but now transformed into “Overcomers”, one’s who wrestle with God and man and prevail):**

The Voice of the Lord

“Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; **announce it to the descendants of Israel . . . ‘Now if you will obey Me and keep My covenant, you will be My own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to Me.’**” (Exodus 19:3, 5) **which then is God’s “I do” to this same Wedding Covenant, that never the two shall break; which opens the door for idolatry, the establishment of a new covenant with another god; in essence, whoever you obey you are slave to.**

The people of Israel do agree to keep God’s commandments and to obey Him: “Then all the people answered together and said, ‘**All that the LORD has spoken we will do.**’” (Exodus 19:8) – **Wedding Ceremony Vows – To God**

G-d instructs that the people **should purify and sanctify themselves** (set themselves apart for the things of God) for two days, “Because on the third day G-d shall descend upon Mount Sinai before the eyes of the entire people.”

Moses consecrates (sets them apart from the things and thinking of this world, the common, for the things and thinking of God’s kingdom, the Holy) the people of Israel and prepares them to meet with God to receive the law at Mount Sinai.

This was the WHOLE PURPOSE of the exodus from Egypt — FOR ISRAEL TO RECEIVE GOD’S TORAH (instruction).

“When you will have brought the people out from Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain.” (Exodus 3:12)

Deuteronomy 30:5-10

⁵ And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶ And **the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring**, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. ⁷ And the Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. ⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the Lord and keep all his commandments that I command you today. ⁹ The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, ¹⁰ when you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and **circumcision is a matter of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Ezekiel 36:24-29

²⁴ **I will take you from the nations** (I will set you apart from the nations) and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness.** (I will make you a new creation (2 Cor 5:16-18), changing your name and destiny (1 Pe 2:9), that you may now be victories over your darkness (1 Pe 2:9)), **and from all your idols I will cleanse you.** ²⁶ **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** ²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and **you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** ²⁹ **And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness.**

Jeremiah 31:33

³³ For **this is the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And **I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

Hebrews 8:10

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws into their minds,

and **write them on their hearts,**

and **I will be their God,**

and **they shall be my people.**

Ezekiel 36:24-29

²⁴ **I will take you from the nations** (I will set you apart from the nations) and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness.** (I will make you a new creation (2 Cor 5:16-18), changing

your name and destiny (1 Pe 2:9), that you may now be victorious over your darkness (1 Pe 2:9)), and from all your idols I will cleanse you.²⁶ And **I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ And **I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and **I will be your God.**²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness.

Prophecy:

Joel 2:28

The Lord Will Pour Out His Spirit

²⁸ “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

Acts 2

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

¹ When the **day of Pentecost** (*Shavuot – Feast of Weeks*) arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? . . . we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.^[b] ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “**And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.**

¹⁹ **And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;**

²⁰ **the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.**

²¹ **And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’**

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ *For David says* concerning him,

“**I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.**

²⁷ **For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.**

²⁸ **You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’**

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

The Book of Ruth was also read because the harvest scenes described in Ruth are in keeping with this harvest festival.

Furthermore, since Ruth was a convert to Judaism, her acceptance of the Torah reflects the theme of the receiving of the law.

It is also traditionally believed that Ruth’s grandson, King David, was not only born on Shavuot, but also died on Shavuot.

Acts 2:30-47

³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ *For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,*

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.”

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “**Brothers, what shall we do?**” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ **So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (see Exodus 32:28).**

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² **And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** (and what happened out of the teachings (*the commands of Jesus . . . “make disciples . . . teaching them to observe everything I have commanded them”*) of the apostles . . .) and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, *attending the temple* together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Redemption and Marriage

Also, the book of Hosea is read during this Feast, it is in this prophetic book, which is the first of the Twelve Prophets, that **God uses Hosea's marriage to a prostitute as a real life parable to reveal His great love for Israel.**

After Hosea's wife bears him children, the Lord tells Hosea to send his wife and children away.

Hosea obeys, but declares his love for them, despite his wife's straying.

Through this dispersion of his family, Hosea comes to understand God's absolute commitment to Israel despite her straying.

With this insight, Hosea rebukes Israel for engaging in adulterous affairs with pagan deities and being an unfaithful spouse to the Lord.

And yet, just as Hosea takes back his wife who played the harlot, **God promises to take back His unfaithful wife, Israel. He promises that the Jewish People will repent and be betrothed to Him forever.**

“I will betroth you to Me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.” Hosea 2:19–20 [2:21–22]

This concluding passage of the Haftarah is a wonderful prophecy of redemption, which is recited by Orthodox Jewish men each morning as they put on the tefillin (phylacteries). **This traditional wrapping of the leather straps around the man's fingers is similar to a groom placing the wedding ring upon his bride. It is meant to be symbolic of the betrothal of God and Israel.**

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This ancient Biblical festival is particularly relevant to New Covenant followers of Jesus.

On Shavuot, the *Holy Spirit* came upon *Jesus' disciples* who had been studying all night, as was the custom. They were waiting according to His final instructions. That outpouring came around 9 a.m. during the morning sacrifices.

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit . . . But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:4–8

On this day, the disciples of Jesus received power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth!

“When the day of Shavuot came . . . All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2:1, 4

Shavuot has significance for all followers of Jesus, both native-born Jews and those “wild branches” grafted into the natural olive tree.

Messianic Believers in Jesus gathered throughout Israel for outdoor picnics where they worshipped the Lord and brought their first fruit gifts and offerings.

Without **Shavuot**, we would not have the power to witness for *Jesus* about the Good News of salvation for all people.

Witnessing to the lost about *Jesus* does not come from our own might or power, but by the *Holy Spirit* that came at Shavuot (Pentecost):

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”
Luke 4:18-19 (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Jesus' "Baptisms" set the model and stage for "All Flesh" future "Holy Spirit Baptism".

Matthew 3:10-17

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 4:14-21

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus Begins His Ministry

¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Review of Last Week's Reading in Numbers 1-4:

In chapter one of Numbers, the Israelites still camp at Mount Sinai after having received the law, built the Tabernacle, and been instructed in worship. Now before they move forward to the Promised Land, they must be prepared for the threats that lie ahead on the journey.

Numbers 1-4

Numbers 1:1

A Census of Israel's Warriors

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses **in the wilderness** (*bamidbar*) of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

“wilderness”: from the *root word* – “dabar” - to speak (also: answer, appoint, bid, command, commune, declare, destroy (to speak; rarely to subdue - in a destructive sense), give, answer, appoint, bid, command, commune, declare, name, promise, pronounce, **rehearse**, say, speak, be spokesman, talk, teach, tell, think, or work.)

Bamidbar (in the wilderness): It is customary that on the Shabbat before a wedding, the bridegroom is called to the Torah. Shavuot, the festival which coincides with the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, represents the marriage of G-d and Israel; this is why the Torah portion of *Bamidbar* ("in the desert") is usually read on the Shabbat before Shavuot. (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch)

Because of G-d's great love for His people, He counts them all the time. (*Rashi*)

This is reflected in the Hebrew word for "count", *pakod*, which also means "remember" and "be concerned with." (*Nachmanides*)

A census expresses two paradoxical truths. On the one hand, it implies that each individual is significant. On the other hand, a head-count is the ultimate equalizer: each member of the community, from the greatest to the lowliest, counts for no less and no more than "one." G-d repeatedly commands to count the Jewish people to emphasize both their individual worth—the fact that no single person's contribution is dispensable—as well as their inherent equality. (*The Chassidic Masters*)

Numbers 1:3

³From twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go to war, you and Aaron shall list them, company by company.

twenty: From the age of twenty and upward, all who are fit to serve in the army of Israel, you shall count them (1:3)

Moses' census of the Jewish people, defined as a count of "all who are fit to serve in the army of Israel," included only those who were "from the age of twenty and upwards." What is the significance of this requirement?

An outline of the phases of a person's education and life:

"At five years of age, the study of Scripture;
"at thirteen, the obligation to observe the mitzvot;
"at eighteen, marriage;
"at twenty, begins the pursuit [of a livelihood];
"at thirty, one attains strength;
"at forty, understanding;
"at fifty, one can give counsel..."

In other words, the first twenty years of a person's life represent those periods and areas of his life in which he focuses almost exclusively on his individual growth: the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom and his moral and spiritual development. "Twenty" represents the point at which he ventures out to the world and begins to concern himself with the material involvements of life.

Therein lies the deeper significance of G-d's instruction to Moses that only "from the age of twenty and upwards" shall a person be counted as one "fit to serve in the army of Israel."

A period of intense self-development and spiritual self-enrichment is a necessary preparation to life, but it must not be seen as an end in itself. The purpose of the "pre-twenty" times and aspects of a person's life is for the sake of the "pursuit" which must follow: that he or she go out into the world and apply his personal attainments to the development and sanctification of the material reality. One who does not graduate to the "post-twenty" phase of life, cannot count himself as a member of the "army of Israel."

(*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

Week 32 - NASO (Elevate) Numbers 4:21–7:89; Judges 13:2–25; Ephesians 1:1–23

“Do the work of transporting the Tabernacle.”

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' houses and by their clans.’”
Numbers 4:21–22

Last week, in *Reading* “*In the Wilderness*” (Bamidbar), a census was taken of the Israelite men of draftable age. The Levites, who were given the duty to serve in the Sanctuary in the place of Israel's firstborn, were excluded.

The title of this week's *Reading*, “*Elevate*” (Naso), means lift up or elevate. It was the term used to take a head count (census) of the children of Israel. In the Hebrew it reads, “Lift up the heads” (נָשָׂא אֶת רֵאשׁוֹ — naso et rosh).

This week, the headcount of the Israelites is completed with a census of the Levites who are between the ages of 30 and 50. They are to do the work of transporting the Tabernacle.

Besides discussing the duties of the Levites, this Scripture portion also provides the law of the nazir, or Nazirite, and **the Aaronic Benediction** (Birkat Kohanim — בִּרְכַת כֹּהֲנִים), more commonly known as **the Priestly Blessing**.

Numbers 4:21-7:89

Numbers 4:21

²¹The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²²“Take a **census** (Naso - “Elevate”) of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' houses and by their clans.

1. The title of this week's Reading, “Elevate” (Naso), means lift up or elevate.

In Naso, a second count is taken, of those who will be doing the actual work of transporting the Sanctuary—the Levite men between the ages of 30 and 50. <https://w2.chabad.org/media/pdf/19961.pdf>

Numbers 4:23-49

²³ From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, all who can come to do duty, to do service in the tent of meeting. ²⁴ This is the service of the clans of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens: ²⁵ they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting . . .

⁴⁶ All those who were listed of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chiefs of Israel listed, by their clans and their fathers' houses, ⁴⁷ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who could come to do the service of ministry and the service of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting, ⁴⁸ those listed were 8,580. ⁴⁹ According to the commandment of the Lord through Moses they were listed, each one with his task of serving or carrying. Thus they were listed by him, as the Lord commanded Moses.

2. Do the work of transporting the Tabernacle.

Having thus concluded its census of the families and tribes of Israel and its designation of their camping places around the Sanctuary, the Torah now commands to “Send out of the camp all who are afflicted with tzaraat, who are contaminated by a bodily discharge, and those contaminated by contact with the dead” until such time as they are cleansed of their ritual impurity. <https://w2.chabad.org/media/pdf/19961.pdf>

2 Corinthians 6:14

The Temple of the Living God

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are God's **temple** and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 3:17

If anyone destroys God's **temple**, God will destroy him. For God's **temple** is holy, and you are that **temple**.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Revelation 3:12

The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the **temple** of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

The Cloud and the Glory (Exodus 40:34-38)

As soon as the tabernacle was erected -- apparently even before it was dedicated -- God entered his dwelling.

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." (Exodus 40:34-35)

Can you imagine what that was like? Whoosh! The cloud of God's direction moves over the tent and the Shekinah glory of God fills the tent in overwhelming Presence -- so much that Moses couldn't enter until later (Numbers 7:89).

Dedicating the Tabernacle

The priests (Leviticus 8) and Levites (Numbers 8:5-26) were consecrated. The tabernacle and all its accoutrements are dedicated (Numbers 7), and the ministry in the tabernacle begins for the first time. At the end of the dedication ceremony, we read:

"Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown." (Leviticus 9:23-24)

http://www.jesuswalk.com/moses/7_tabernacle.htm

Our Dedication

² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. Acts 2:2-3

Numbers 5:1-5

Unclean People

5 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous^[a] or has a discharge and everyone who is unclean through contact with the dead. ³ You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell.” ⁴ And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the Lord said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.

1 Corinthians 5

Dealing With a Case of Incest

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. ² And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? ³ For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. ⁴ So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵ hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,^{[a][b]} so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

Matthew 18:15-17

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵“If your brother or sister^[b] sins,^[c] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”^[d] ¹⁷If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Numbers 5:5-6:24

Confession and Restitution

⁵ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶“Speak to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the Lord, and that person realizes his guilt, ⁷he shall confess his sin that he has committed.^[b] And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong.⁸ But if the man has no next of kin to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the Lord for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for him.⁹ And every contribution, all the holy donations of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. ¹⁰Each one shall keep his holy donations: whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his.”

A Test for Adultery

¹¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹²“Speak to the people of Israel, If any man's wife goes astray and breaks faith with him . . . ¹⁵then the man shall bring his wife to the priest and bring the offering required of her, a tenth of an ephah^[c] of barley flour. He shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance . . .

²³“Then the priest shall write these curses in a book and wash them off into the water of bitterness. ²⁴And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain . . .

²⁹“This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, ³⁰or when the spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife. Then he shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall carry out for her all this law. ³¹The man shall be free from iniquity, but the woman shall bear her iniquity.”

***The Nazirite Vow* - (Nazirite: means crown, consecration, and separation (not a city in Galilee))**

⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord, ³he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. ⁴All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

⁵“All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the Lord, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.

⁶“All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸All the days of his separation he is holy to the Lord . . .

²¹“This is the law of the Nazirite. But if he vows an offering to the Lord above his Nazirite vow, as he can afford, in exact accordance with the vow that he takes, then he shall do in addition to the law of the Nazirite.”

3. Nazirite, or Nazir (נָזִיר) in Hebrew. The word comes from the root NZR (נָזַר), which means to dedicate or separate oneself . .

Another word from the same root is nezer (נֵזֶר), which means crown, consecration, and separation.

Through this vow, the layman's status was raised to something approaching the status of priest.

The focus of sanctity for both the Nazirite and High Priest is their head.

Exodus 29:7

Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head.

In the Hebrew Bible, a **nazirite** or **nazarite** is one who voluntarily took a **vow** described in Numbers 6:1–21. "**Nazirite**" comes from the Hebrew word נָזִיר **nazir** meaning "consecrated" or "separated". **This vow required the person during this period of time to:** Abstain from all wine and anything else made from grapes.

This vow required the person during this period of time to:

- Abstain from all wine and anything else made from grapes. (Traditional Rabbinic authorities state that all other types of alcohol were permitted.)
- Refrain from cutting the hair on one's head; but to allow the locks of the head's hair to grow.
- Not to become ritually impure by contact with corpses or graves, even those of family members.

After following these requirements for a designated interval (which would be specified in the individual's vow), the person would immerse in a mikveh and make three offerings: a lamb as a burnt offering (*olah*), a ewe as a sin-offering (*hatat*), and a ram as a peace offering (*shelamim*), in addition to a basket of unleavened bread, grain offerings and drink offerings, which accompanied the peace offering. They would also shave their head in the outer courtyard of the Jerusalem Temple and then place the hair on the same fire as the peace offering. (Numbers 6:18)

A person can become a nazirite whether or not the Temple in Jerusalem is standing. However, lacking the temple there is no way to bring the offerings that end the nazirite vow. As such the person would *de facto* be a permanent nazirite.

If a nazirite fails in fulfilling these three obligations there may be consequences. All or part of the person's time as a nazirite may need to be repeated. Furthermore, the person may be obligated to bring sacrifices. Whether a nazirite has to repeat time as a nazirite depends on what part of the nazirite vow was transgressed. A nazirite who becomes defiled by a corpse is obligated to start the entire nazirite period over again. Nazirites who shave their hair are obligated to redo the last 30 days of the nazirite period. However, if the nazirite drinks wine, the nazirite period continues as normal.

Becoming a nazirite

An **Israelite** (*sons of those who wrestle with God and man and prevail*) (not a Gentile) becomes a Nazirite by an intentional verbal declaration. This declaration can be in any language, and can be something as simple as saying "me too" as a nazirite passes by. A person can specify the duration as an interval of 30 days or more. If a person does not specify, or specifies a time less than 30 days, the vow is for 30 days. A person who says "I am a nazirite forever" or "I am a nazirite for all my life" is a permanent nazirite and slightly different laws apply. However, if a person says that he is a nazirite for a thousand years, he is a regular nazirite. A father, but not a mother, can declare his son, but not his daughter, a nazirite. However the child or any close family member has a right to refuse this status.

Nazirite vows in the Hebrew Bible

Two examples of nazirites in the Hebrew Bible are Samson (Judges 13:5), and Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11). Both were born of previously barren mothers and entered into their vows through either their mothers' oath (as in the case of Hannah), or a Divine command (in the case of Samson), rather than by their own volition. These vows required Samson and Samuel to live devout lives, yet in return they received extraordinary gifts: Samson possessed strength and ability in physical battle against the Philistines, while Samuel became a prophet.

Jesus was a nazirite during his ministry, the verse ends with the curious statement, "But wisdom is justified of all her children". The advocacy of the ritual consumption of wine as part of the Passover, the tevilah in Mark 14:22–25 indicated he kept this aspect of the nazirite vow when Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." The ritual with which Jesus commenced his ministry (recorded via Greek as "baptism") and his vow in Mark 14:25 and Luke 22:15–18 at the end of his ministry, do respectively reflect the final and initial steps (purification by immersion in water and abstaining from wine) inherent in a Nazirite vow. These passages may indicate that Jesus intended to identify himself as a nazirite ("not drinking the fruit of vine") before his crucifixion.

Luke the Evangelist clearly was aware that wine was forbidden in this practice, for the angel (Luke 1:13–15) that announces the birth of John the Baptist foretells that "he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb", in other words, a nazirite from birth, the implication being that John had taken a lifelong nazirite vow.

James, brother of Jesus, Bishop of Jerusalem, was a nazirite, and performed with rigorous exactness all the practices enjoined by that rule of life.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazirite>

Numbers 6:7–8, which discusses the Nazir. It reads, "They must not make themselves ceremonially unclean ...because the symbol of their dedication [crown (nezer—נֵזֶר)] to God is on their head. Throughout the period of their dedication [nezer], they are consecrated [kadosh / holy] to the LORD." (*Numbers 6:7–8*)

A Nazir is a man or woman who, out of a desire to "separate themselves to G-d," takes a vow of nezirut ("abstinence") from certain worldly pleasures and involvements, either for a set period of time or for their entire lifetime.

Nazarene is a title applied to Jesus, who, according to the New Testament, grew up in Nazareth, a town in Galilee, now in northern Israel. The word is used to translate two related terms that appear in the Greek New Testament: *Nazarēnos* (Nazarene) and *Nazōraios* (Nazorean). The phrases traditionally rendered as "Jesus of Nazareth" can also be translated as "Jesus the Nazarene" or "Jesus the Nazorean", and **the title "Nazarene" may have a religious significance instead of denoting a place of origin.** Both Nazarene and Nazorean are irregular in Greek and the additional vowel in *Nazorean* complicates any derivation from Nazareth.

The Gospel of Matthew explains that the title Nazarene is derived from the prophecy "He will be called a Nazorean", but this has no obvious Old Testament source. Some scholars argue that it refers to a passage in the Book of Isaiah (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8; Isa 53:2; Zech 6:11-12), with "Nazarene" a Greek reading of the Hebrew *ne-tser* (branch), understood as a messianic title.

And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee" Matthew 21:11

In the Book of Acts, "Nazorean" is used to **refer to a follower of Jesus**, i.e. a Christian, rather than an inhabitant of a town. **"Notzrim" is the modern Hebrew word for Christians.**

Nazareth the city is described as the childhood home of Jesus, in many languages **employ the word Nazarene as a general designation for those of the Christian faith.**

"Nazareth", in turn, may be derived from either *na-tsar*, נָצַר, meaning "to watch," or from *ne-tser*, נֵזֶר, meaning branch.

Similar is found in John 1:45-46:

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus, the son of Joseph, he from Nazareth.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth (*ek Nazaret ek Naζapèτ*)? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

The name "of Nazareth" is not used of anyone else, and outside the New Testament there is no reference to Nazareth.

ne-tser (נֶצֶר, n-ts-r), pronounced *nay'-tser*, meaning "branch", "flower", or "offshoot". Derived from *na-tsar*. (See below.)^[15]
Jerome (c. 347 – 420) linked "Nazarene" to a verse in the Book of Isaiah . . . The text from Isaiah is:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Here branch/Nazarene is metaphorically "descendant" (of Jesse, father of King David).

Gnostic works

The Gospel of Philip, a third-century Gnostic work,^[28] claims that the word "Nazarene" signifies "the truth":
"Jesus" is a hidden name, "Christ" is a revealed name. For this reason "Jesus" is not particular to any language; rather he is always called by the name "Jesus". While as for "Christ", in Syriac it is "Messiah", in Greek it is "Christ". Certainly all the others have it according to their own language.

"The Nazarene" is he who reveals what is hidden.

The apostles who were before us had these names for him: "Jesus, the Nazorean, Messiah", that is, "Jesus, the Nazorean, the Christ". **The last name is "Christ", the first is "Jesus", that in the middle is "the Nazarene".**

"Messiah" has two meanings, both "the Christ" and "the measured".

"Jesus" in Hebrew is "the redemption".

"Nazara" is "the Truth".

"The Nazarene" and "Jesus" are they who have been measured.

Writers who question the association of Nazareth with the life of Jesus suggest that **"Nazorean" was originally a religious title and was later reinterpreted as referring to a town.**

"Nazarenes" - a term for the Early Christians

"Nazarenes" for Christians in Greek

In Acts, **Paul of Tarsus is called, "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazoreans,"** thus identifying Nazorean with Christian.

Although both **"Christianos" (by Gentiles)** and **"Nazarenes" (by Jews)** appear to have been current in the 1st century, and both are recorded in the New Testament, **the Gentile name "Christian" appears to have won out against "Nazarene" in usage among Christians themselves after the 1st century.**

"Nazarenes" or "Nasranis" for Christians in Aramaic and Syriac

The Aramaic and Syriac word for Christians used by Christians themselves

Saint Thomas Christians, **an ancient community in India** who claim to trace their origins to evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century, **are sometimes known by the name "Nasrani" even today.**

"Nazarenes" as Christians in Arabic literature

Although Arab Christians referred to themselves as *مسيحي* *Masīḥī* (from *مسيح* *Masīḥ*, "Messiah, Christ"), the term "Nazarene" was adopted into the Arabic language as singular *Nasrani* (Arabic: نصراني, "a Christian") and plural *Naṣāra* (Arabic: نصارى, "Nazarenes, Christians") to refer to Christians in general. **The term "Naṣāra" is used many times in the Qur'an when referring to them.**

"Nazarenes" as Christians in Hebrew literature

In Rabbinic and contemporary Israeli modern Hebrew, the term *Notzrim* (plural) (Hebrew: נוצרים), or singular *"Notzri"* (נוצרי) **is the general official term for "Christians" and "Christian".**

Modern Hebrew usage

Modern Hebrew the word "Notzrim" (נוצרים) is the standard word for Christians

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(title\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(title))

Numbers 6:22-24

Aaron's Blessing

²² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The Lord bless you and keep you;

MAY G-D BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU (6:24)

With G-d's blessing comes His protection of the blessing. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

4. The Difference Between Prayers and Blessings

i.e. *Email sent out to those in relationship with Springs of Living Water:*

May26, 2020, Brothers & Sisters,

I've been praying through the Lord's Prayer daily for months now and the part I always spend the most time on is "may your kingdom come and your will be done...on earth as it is in heaven." Daily we are assaulted by the demands and challenges of this world, and how many of us fight as if this life is the ultimate endgame? We wrestle with stress, fears, anxieties, struggles, strife, striving to make a way, striving in our own strength, all the while wondering where is God's blessing and favor to make the way easy and light. Jesus taught us to pray the kingdom of heaven into existence here and now, in this life on this earth...not just wait

for it up in heaven. If we could learn to bring the holy and divine into our daily lives and let our lives and the world around us be on earth as it is in heaven, consider how very changed our world could be?!

As we come upon Pentecost this week -the Feast of Weeks, Shavuot - it should draw our attention to the heavenly, from which descended the Holy Spirit upon the early church, empowering the disciples to bring thousands into the fold of Christ's family, and the Word of God came down upon the Israelites at Mt. Sinai so many generations before, let us look upward and pray for God's heavenly kingdom come down and reign in us and on the earth all around us, until we are changed and the world is changed because of it.

In Faith, Brandon

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." (*James 5:16*)

The rabbis make a distinction between blessing and prayer.

The blessing of a **tzadik** (righteous man) imparts to us whatever God has intended for our life.

For example, when Jacob blessed his grandchildren, Menasheh and Ephraim, Jacob crossed his hands to give the greater blessing to Ephraim rather than Menasheh. This was not his personal decision; he was being guided by Adonai to give the blessing He intended for these particular tribes.

Prayer, however, can also change circumstances for the better.

It can cause a sick person to recover, a single person to find their **bashert** (chosen match), and a person plagued by poverty to have their needs met.

The Birkat Kohanim (**Aaronic Benediction**), however, acts as both a blessing and a prayer. The Kohanim bless us with God's peace, protection, favor, and grace; but as a prayer, it can also change our circumstances for the better.

Numbers 6:25-27

²⁵ the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

²⁷ “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

5. the Aaronic Benediction (Birkat Kohanim — ברכת כהנים), more commonly known as the Priestly Blessing.

God commands the Kohanim (Jewish High Priests/descendants of Aaron, brother of Moses) to impart a blessing (*Numbers 6:24–26*) called the Birkat Kohanim to the people of Israel through the following three-part benediction:

May the LORD bless you and guard you.

May the LORD make His face shed light upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the LORD lift up His face unto you and give you peace.

The Midrash compares this stance with a passage in the Song of Songs, which suggests that God's **Shekhinah** (Divine Presence) stands behind the Kohanim who bless the people

Although the blessing comes through the raised hands of the Kohanim, God makes it clear that **it is His blessing being transmitted** through the Priests as His chosen vessels. God said, “*So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.*” **Numbers 6:27**

Not only did God place His name on the hands of the Kohanim, **He also engraved the names of the children of Israel on the palms of His hands** **Isaiah 49:16**:

*Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are continually before me.*

Ultimately, the Birkat Kohanim is about experiencing intimacy with God. May our lives be a living testimony of this intimacy — of a people with holy hands and sanctified hearts and heads who carry with them the Presence of the God of Israel.

In the New Covenant, we see that blessings are also imparted through hands. Believers in Yeshua also have the power to bless and even heal by the laying on of hands.

“They will be able to place their **hands** on the sick, and they will be healed.” (*Mark 16:18*)

“Then they laid their **hands** on them and they received the Holy Spirit.” (*Acts 8:17*)

Ephesians 1:3-14

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Numbers 7:1-7:89

Offerings at the Tabernacle's Consecration

7 On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle and had anointed and consecrated it with all its furnishings and had anointed and consecrated the altar with all its utensils, . . .

⁸⁹ And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.

AND WHEN MOSES WOULD ENTER THE SANCTUARY TO SPEAK WITH [G- D], HE WOULD HEAR THE VOICE SPEAKING TO HIM FROM ABOVE THE COVER OF THE ARK OF TESTIMONY... AND IT SPOKE TO HIM (7:89)

A basic tenet of . . . faith is that man has been granted the freedom to choose between good and evil, between adherence to his divinely ordained mission in life and rebellion against, or even denial of, his Creator. As Maimonides writes, “Were G-d to decree that a person be righteous or wicked, or if there were to exist something in the essence of a person’s nature which would compel him toward a specific path, a specific conviction, a specific character trait or a specific deed...how could G-d command us through the prophets ‘do this’ and ‘do not do this’...? What place would the entire Torah have? And by what measure of justice would G-d punish the wicked and reward the righteous...?”

This is the deeper significance of the “short stop” made by the divine voice at the doorway of the Sanctuary. At Sinai, the words “I Am G-d your G-d” resounded throughout the universe, permeating every creature and creation. At that moment, there was no possibility of doubt in G-d’s reality or of nonconformity to His will. But then the world fell silent, and the voice retreated to hover over the “Ark of Testimony” that contains G-d’s Torah and confine itself to the four walls of the Sanctuary that houses it.

The volume was not lowered—the voice is no less infinite and omnipotent than it was at Sinai. One who enters the Sanctuary hears a voice that penetrates and permeates all, a voice that knows no bounds or equivocations. But one can choose to remain outside of the domain of Torah, to deny himself the knowledge and the way of life in which G-d makes Himself heard. One can choose to remain outside, in the field of G-d’s self-imposed silence..

It is this choice that creates the challenge of life, making our every moral victory a true and significant achievement.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Next Week:

**Week 33 - BEHAALOTECHA (When You Raise)
Numbers 8:1–12:16; Zechariah 2:14[10]–4:7; Philippians 2:1–18**