



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat February 23, 2008 / I Adar 17, 5768

Parashah #21

Torah: *Ki Tisa* (When you take/elevate), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 30.11-34.35

Haftorah: *M'lakhim Alef* (1 Kings) 18.1-39

Suggested Messianic Writings: 2 Corinthians 3.1-18

Shalom,

As the parashah opens, Moshe is still up on the mount with HaShem, receiving the rulings of living a righteous life that he will deliver back to the nation. The opening thought is translated as, "when you take a census..." but the literal translation is, "when you elevate the heads..." It therefore seems that the taking of the census of the people of Israel was to do more than simply get a count, but rather the idea of lifting up the head was to impress an importance upon each individual – you count, you matter. To lift up the head is to bring hope. Yeshua said, in Luke 21.28 regarding the troubles in the end times, for us to "lift up our heads, for our redemption is drawing near." When one is without hope, the head tends to turn down. "My soul, why are you so downcast? Why are you groaning inside me?" (*Tehillim/Psalms* 42.6(5), 12(11); 43.5). For this census, everyone over twenty years of age was required to give a half shekel offering to the service of the tent of meeting. Each one's offering was an atonement (כִּפּוּר, *kaphar*) for their soul, for their life; an offering was to be taken during a census to avoid an outbreak of a plague. King David learned this lesson the hard way (*Shmuel Bet* / 2 Samuel 24). Atonement is a huge part of G-d's plan for man, and this was a first lesson for Israel.

More instructions are given pertaining to the building of the Tabernacle, through chapter 31, including the express command that Shabbat was to be continually observed, even *during* the building of the Tabernacle. That should cause us to stop and ponder about our current activities. Two items are of particular note here. One is that HaShem considers Shabbat to be *of greater importance* than even building the Tabernacle. "You shall observe... you are to keep... verily you shall keep..." etc are some of the various English translations. The Hebrew in 31.13 says "אֲחַךְ" which literally means "above all, surely, certainly." Nothing regarding the construction of the Tabernacle was more important to HaShem than the observance of Shabbat. Secondly, Shabbat was not a new creation given just to Israel at this time. From the beginning, HaShem set aside, sanctified, separated, and blessed the seventh day. HaShem created a seven-day week, and He blessed the seventh day. Verse 17 infers that from creation the seventh day was to be set apart forever for all mankind. However, somewhere along the line mankind quit observing Shabbat. So HaShem chose a certain people to be His "first-born" set apart people, and instructed them concerning the seventh day. Are not Gentile believers "heirs according to the promise"?

HaShem said, "You are to observe *My* Shabbats... through all your generations; so that you will know that I am HaShem, who sets you apart for Me. You are to keep *My* Shabbat, because it is set apart for you." The duty of Israel then was to bring the Word of G-d to the world. This Israel did, although in a rather stumbling manner, by preserving the Tanakh through the ages, and of course the living Word of G-d, Yeshua, was/is Jewish. The rest of mankind either denied the reality of G-d's truth, a minority accepted it along with the Jewish people, but a large percentage of the non-Jewish world that called themselves believers basically stole the Word of G-d from Israel, then cast Israel, Torah and the seventh day aside.

Sh'mot 19 tells us that Israel came to the Sinai region in the third month from leaving Egypt. Moshe then went up on the mountain to be with HaShem for forty days. The Sages teach that the people miscalculated the time of his return by a day, and became discouraged. People tend to panic and do distorted things if leadership is unclear. Thus *hasatan*, the adversary, came in and easily deceived some of the people. Have you ever had a time when Adoni did not do something you wanted Him to do within your time frame, or at all, and so you became discouraged, or angry, or gave in to a temptation that came?

The golden calf incident is a blot in the history of Israel – while Moshe was receiving the Ten Commandments on the mountain, the people were down below breaking them. HaShem sent Moshe down because of this event, calling them "your people" because He knew the brand-new covenant was being broken. Moshe did not smash the tablets simply in a moment of rage, rather, in the ancient middle-east, a covenant would be written in stone, and whenever violated, the stones would be ceremonially

shattered to signify that the covenant was broken. The people would have realized this immediately when they saw Moshe.

When Moshe asked for whoever was with Adoni to come join him, no tribe but Levi came. He was not only their close relative since he was a Levite, he was actually the head of the tribe just because of who he was; tribalism has always been strong in the middle-east. Because of doing so, the tribe of Levi would soon replace the first-born of Israel as the *kohanim*, the priests, for the nation. The gist of the story has remained the same throughout history – those who are involved in the most grotesque of sins are generally the loudest, hoping to force their way upon the rest of society. The true followers of the Creator will stand firm against the odds, but the large percentage of the fence-straddling population remains quiet, possibly even unsure of their stand. In the Haftorah this week, *Eliyahu* (Elijah) encountered the same problem when telling the people to decide who their stand was with – ADONI or Ba'al. “The people answered him not a word” (1 Kgs 18.21).

Moshe did some strong intercession on behalf of Israel, and persuaded HaShem to re-establish the covenant by appealing for HaShem to remember His promises to the Patriarchs. HaShem relented, and declared that He would go with Israel to drive out their enemies, but Israel was not to go astray after the gods of other nations. HaShem views this as adultery. Then Moshe descended the mountain with the new copy of the Ten Commandments, HaShem's renewed covenant with the nation of Israel.

Moshe had by this time spent so much time “sitting at the feet” of HaShem that his face shone with the glory of G-d. *Sha'ul* (Saul / Paul) wrote concerning this event in 2 Corinthians 3. *Kefa* (Peter) wrote in 2 Kefa 3 that in Sha'ul's words were things difficult to understand and easy to distort. That has happened to this chapter; some people believe that there is no life or truth in the Old Testament, or the Older Covenant, because Messiah has come to remove the veil caused by the reading of such. He has “freed us from the Law!” Far from it; rather, the idea is that the Ruakh has *not yet* been allowed to write the truth upon the tablets of their hearts of those who have *not yet* accepted Yeshua as Messiah. This passage of course is speaking in particular of the Jewish people who follow the teachings of the Tanakh, but still have a veil over their eyes regarding the truth of Yeshua. We must pray for that veil to be lifted, and at the same time pray for the veil to be lifted from the eyes of “New Testament only” believers to the truths of Torah. What exactly will the “one new man” look like? See Acts 15.21 for a hint.

יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁלוֹם יְרֻשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah

(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1.11 CJB)