



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat July 19, 2008 / Tamuz 16, 5768

Parashah #41

Torah: *Pinchas* (Phinehas), *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 25.10-30.1(29.40)





Haftorah: *M'lakhim Alef* (1 Kings) 18.46-19.21

Suggested Messianic Writings: *Yokhanan* (John) 2.13-25

Shalom,

In the previous Parashah, we saw how *Bil'am* (Balaam) was unable to curse Israel at Balak's request, but rather ended up blessing them with the words and instructions of HaShem. However, when his prophesying was done, Bil'am seemingly slipped out of the council of HaShem, as noted last drash. Before departing, according to *B'Midbar* 31.16 he evidently consulted with Balak and told him how Israel could curse themselves. Thus immediately the women of Mo'av came and seduced the men of Israel, their first downfall in this instance; then the enticed people began sacrificing to and worshipping the false god of Mo'av, Ba'al-P'or. The parashah closed with *Pinchas* (Phinehas), grandson of *Aharon* (Aaron), slaying a leader from the tribe of *Shim'on* (Simeon) along with the Midianite woman he had brought to his tent, who together had gone brazenly right past Moshe and the leaders who had been weeping in repentance at the Tent of Meeting. We might note here that in *B'reshet* (Genesis) 49, as Ya'akov blesses his sons, Shim'on is given more of a curse than a blessing, and later, as Moshe blessed the tribes of Israel near the end of his life, in *D'varim* (Deuteronomy) 33, Shim'on is not even listed. Jewish commentator *Ibn Ezra*, who lived in the 1100's, wrote that the omission was because of the curse from Ya'akov and the sin of Ba'al-P'or. *Ramban*, writing roughly a century later, believed the omission to be because there are always only twelve tribes in any listing, Shim'on was a small tribe, and was eventually scattered among the other tribes, again per the curse of Ya'akov.

This week's parashah begins with HaShem blessing Pinchas for the deed he had done. What Pinchas did may seem harsh in our eyes, but we must realize that idolatry is one of the chief sins in the eyes of the Creator. He is a jealous God; this He had announced in the Ten Words (Commandments) of *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 20.3 & 5, "You are to have no other gods before Me... for I am a jealous God." HaShem would later announce through the prophet *Yeshu'yahu* (Isaiah), in 42.8, "I am ADONAI; that is my name. I yield my glory to no one else, nor my praise to any idol." The Hebrew for *Sh'mot* 20.5 is **אֲנֹכִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא** *Ahno-khee ADONAI Elo-hey-kha El Kah-nah*, which is literally, "I am Adonai your God, God Jealous." We see the name **אֵל** *El* most often in the name *El Shaddai*; *El* means "Almighty". **קַנָּא** *Kah-nah* can be translated as "jealous, zealous, envious," and according to the BDB Commentary¹ is used only for describing HaShem.

The *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*² notes that the original Hebraic pictograph for **קַנָּא** *Kah-nah* the **ק** (*quf*) is , and for the **נ** (*nun/noon*) is ; the  is a picture of the sun on the horizon and the gathering of light; the  is a picture of a seed. The two letters combined mean "gathering for the seeds". The definition given is of building a nest, the idea being that of birds gathering the material for a nest where they will raise their "seed," or chicks from eggs. This picture of **אֵל קַנָּא** *El Kah-nah*, the Jealous Almighty, can help us better understand the description of HaShem as "an eagle that stirs up her nest, hovers over her young, spreads out her wings, takes them and carries them as she flies" in *D'varim* 32.11. Or why Yeshua would say of Himself to *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem), "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings..." (*Mattityahu*/Matthew 23.37). The Psalms are full of verses about "hiding in the shadow of Your wings".

Pinchas carried out an act of extreme jealousy in the Name of HaShem. Thus the role of the *Kohen HaGadol* (the High Priest) was assigned to Pinchas and his descendants after him forever. HaShem notes that Pinchas made "atonement for the people of Israel;" in other words, what he did was accepted by HaShem as a covering for the sin of Israel after this latest defiance against Him. As the account is later related in *Tehillim* (Psalms) 106, Pinchas is rewarded with the same-worded blessing that was given to Avram in *B'reshet* 15.6 concerning his faith and obedience: "it was credited to him as righteousness." This phrase is descriptive of only these two men in all of Scripture.

A somewhat similar incident occurred with Yeshua, included in this week's Messianic Writings reading from *Yokhanan* 2. The outer Temple court had become a marketplace for the Sadducean priesthood. Upon entering the Temple grounds prior to *Pesakh* (Passover), Yeshua found the area crowded with the sellers of

the oxen, sheep and pigeons, and tables full of moneychangers changing foreign coins into Temple coins. Yeshua made a whip from small cords and drove them all out of the Temple. Verse 17 states that later on, His *talmidim* (disciples) recalled the verse from Psalm 69.10(9) that declared that “Zeal for Your house will devour Me” (emphasis added). In what may or may not be an account of a second such incident³, Mark 11.16 notes that the Temple grounds were being used as a thoroughfare, which angered Yeshua so much that He would not permit anyone to even carry goods through the Temple area, declaring that the Temple was intended to be a House of Prayer for all nations, but here it had been turned into a den of thieves. This was the idolatry of Mammon, of money and possessions, and Yeshua taught that we cannot serve G-d and money (Matthew 6.24). Yeshua, of course, acted in complete righteousness, and Mark tells us that the [corrupt] religious leaders tried to find a way to do away with Him at this time; this would eventually lead to the fulfillment of the plan of Yeshua becoming the final and ultimate atonement for sin.

While we may not be called upon to demonstrate our zeal for HaShem in the same way as Pinchas, yet his picture of pure zeal is to be an example to us. His zeal averted a plague that was coming upon Israel. Rabbi Russ Resnik, in his book *Gateways to Torah*⁴, notes that “[Pinchas] displays the distinguishing mark of righteous zeal. It rises up, not in defense of a religious party, nor of holy sites, nor of ethnic or political dominance, but only to counter idolatry. Its purpose is never victory or revenge, but is always redemptive, bringing atonement for those who have offended El Kana, the Jealous God, and restoring them to Him.”

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

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)

¹ Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Hendrickson Publishers 2001 reprint of original 1906 edition

² Jeff Benner, *The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible*, Virtualbookworm.com Publishing 2005

³ Hebraic writing was not always necessarily chronological, as opposed to our western and Greek-cultured mindset. The writers of the Messianic Writings were Jewish, writing from Hebraic mindsets.

⁴ Rabbi Russell Resnik, *Gateways to Torah*, Lederer Publishers 2000