



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat June 21, 2008 / Sivan 18, 5768

Parashah #37

Torah: *Sh'lakh L'kha* (Send for yourself), *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 13.1-15.41

Haftorah: *Y'hoshua* (Joshua) 2.1-24

Suggested Messianic Writings: Hebrews 3.7-4.11

Shalom,

The price of disobedience.

As the parashah begins, we see that HaShem told Moshe to "send men on your behalf" to spy out the Promised Land into which they were to be heading. As Moshe recounts the story in *D'varim* (Deuteronomy) 1.22f, we get a little more insight into this incident, as Moshe spoke to Israel: "You approached me, every one of you, and said, 'Let's send men ahead of us to explore the country for us and bring back word concerning what route we should use in going up and what the cities we will encounter are like.' The idea seemed good to me, so I took twelve of your men..." etc. From the opening words of our current reading, we get a hint that HaShem was only giving reluctant approval to Moshe. "Send men *on your behalf*..." [emphasis added], He told Moshe. *Rashi* points out that it was as if HaShem was saying to Moshe, in effect, "Send them as dictated by your understanding. I am not telling you what to do. Do as you see fit." And so, because it seemed good to Moshe, the spies were selected and sent out.

Moshe was probably figuring that it would be good to scout out the land in advance of the conquest, just to assess the situation. Ten of the spies, as we know, lost their nerve somewhere along the line, and changed the assignment themselves to instead see *if* they should proceed with the conquest. Here is the generation of people that had seen more large-scale miracles from the hand of HaShem than any generation prior or since, yet their faith failed them. The land had been promised to their ancestors – *Avraham, Yitz'khak and Ya'akov* (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) – by HaShem Himself, and now He was prepared to give it to them. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*, and faith would have assumed that the land would have been easily conquered, just from the evidence of the miracles during the past year since leaving Egypt. But faith turned to doubt, which assumed that the land more than likely could not be conquered.

Moshe gave the spies the instructions to check out the land and the people living therein, and to also bring back some of the fruit of the land. Forty days later the spies returned, indeed with some marvelous fruit from the land, yet with a negative report of the people. The key word to the negativity begins in 13.28 with the Hebrew word עִפְּהִים *ephes*, which is translated as, "However," or "nevertheless." It's like having someone speak to you of something you've done, saying, "That's good, *but*..." The first part makes you feel good, then the rug gets pulled out from under your feet. Here we see the power that can be found in just one small word to change the entire atmosphere, for the spies returned and said, "We entered the land where you sent us, and indeed it does flow with milk and honey — here is its fruit! *However*, the people living in the land are fierce, and the cities are fortified and very large." One little word made the bottom drop out of faith, and it became instant doubt and fear for the nation. Only *Kalev* (Caleb) and *Y'hoshua* (Joshua) of the twelve spies remained positive that the land could be conquered easily and quickly, and only these two men remained of that entire generation to eventually enter the Promised Land forty years later. HaShem decreed the punishment – one year of wandering in the wilderness for every day that the spies had been in the land, a heavy price to pay for faith-lacking disobedience.

Faith vs. unbelief.

Rabbi Russ Resnik wrote concerning this subject: "Faith confronts the same circumstances that unbelief does, but interprets them differently. Unbelief, like slander, takes an aspect of truth and develops it toward an evil purpose. Faith takes the same fragment of truth and views it in context of God's revealed purposes, convinced that what He promises He is also able to perform."¹

When Moshe sent the spies out, he said to them a phrase that will be seen often in the following books of *B'Midbar* (Deuteronomy) and *Y'hoshua*, "Be of good courage." Resnik notes that "courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to do what needs to be done despite the fears, which are often entirely realistic."² Courage will *not* ignore the facts, for truly the enemy is powerful; courage does *not* pretend that the facts are untrue, but *rather* courage will turn its gaze upon the promise of HaShem and press in, and press on. Moshe, through the *Ruakh* (Spirit), observed of the enemy in the land that *their defense, their protection, their shadow* has been removed from them (14.9). The Hebrew word is צֶלַע *tselel*, which means their "shade,

shadow, covering.” The idea Moshe presented is that when HaShem moves in, demonic powers have to flee. And certainly, the demonic powers try to stir things up a bit before they go, trying to upset the plans of HaShem, but comparing the power of a demon to the power of the Creator is no comparison at all, like comparing the size of a grain of sand to the expanse of the universe – “Even as the boy was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground and threw him into a fit. But Yeshua rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father” (Luke 9:42). When HaShem rises up, the nations will scatter, the nations will flee. Along with their idols.

The enemy will do its best, however, to get you as a believer to “go back to Egypt.” You cannot listen to them, you cannot allow your “ears to be tickled,” ignoring the truth of the Creator for the lies of the created. The enemy can play with your mind and your spirit, making you think of yourself that you “look like a grasshopper by comparison” with them. The enemy can also come as “an angel of light,” appearing to do the works of ADONAI; those are the ones to be especially watchful for. As believers, we must continue to build upon the foundation of Yeshua, and no other.

Does the *land* you are about to enter seem to be unconquerable? Whose report will you believe – HaShem’s, or the fearful spies? If He has commanded you to go, then enter in, in obedience and faith. The prophet *Havakuk* (Habakkuk) wrote these words: “ADONAI, I have heard the report about you. ADONAI, I am awed by your deeds. Bring your work to life in our own age, make it known in our own time; but in anger, remember compassion” (Havakuk 3:2). In faith, conquer the land, and avoid a lengthy wilderness wandering. “Therefore, let us do our best to enter that rest; so that no one will fall short because of the same kind of disobedience” (Hebrews 4.11).

In D’varim 33, as Moshe blessed Israel near the end of his life, he made this statement, “Yeshurun [Israel], there is no one like God, riding through the heavens to help you, riding on the clouds in His majesty. The God of old is a dwelling-place, with everlasting arms beneath. He expelled the enemy before you and He said, ‘Destroy!’... Happy are you, Isra’el! Who is like you, a people saved by ADONAI, your Defender helping you and your sword of triumph? Your enemies will cringe before you, but you will trample down their high places” (D’varim 33.26-27, 29).

Pray for Israel to return to their G-d in righteousness, so that He will once again defeat their enemies – for the enemies of Israel, the apple of G-d’s eye, are the enemies of HaShem. Pray for Messianics in the land to gain more favor, for Yeshua to be seen as Messiah of Israel, so that the day will come quickly when *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem) will cry out to Yeshua to return – בָּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ *Baruch haba b’shem Adoni*, Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the L-rd!

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)

[All Bible quotes are from the CJB, Complete Jewish Bible]

¹ Rabbi Russ Resnik, *Gateways to Torah*, Lederer Books

² Ibid.