

Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat June 9, 2007 / Sivan 23, 5767

Parashah #37: *Sh'lakh l'kha* (Send for yourself), *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 13:1-15:41

Haftarah: *Y'hoshua* (Joshua) 2:1-24

Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: Mark 9:14-27

Shalom,

In this Parashah we have the infamous story of the twelve spies. If you are familiar with this passage, you know that of the twelve – one leader from each tribe – who went to reconnoiter the Land, only two returned with positive reports, placing faith in HaShem to bring victory, and that was Joshua and Caleb. The title of this Parashah suggests that perhaps HaShem did not command Moshe to send the spies, but was giving permission if Moshe felt the need. The mission itself was not wrong, but in this narrative we see an example of obedience vs. disobedience to HaShem; faith vs. doubt. Faith says “yes” and seeks ways to obey; doubt says “show me the proof first,” needing to be convinced before moving on.

One little word, one little thought can make the difference between faith and doubt. The spies came back and reported the good of the Land, but ten of them said, “nevertheless... however... but... [the enemy is strong and will easily defeat us].” The Hebrew word is *eh-phen*, and its grammatical usage here is called a “Particle of Negation”; that is, this one little word negated all the positive reports of the Land, and the words that followed dwelt on the bad. And because the people as a whole believed the ten, the nation was sent back out into the wilderness for forty years of wandering.

In B'Midbar 13:31, the ten reported that the inhabitants of the Land were “stronger than us.” The Hebrew for “than us” is *meem-noo*, and Rashi notes that it can also be translated as “than him.” Rashi wrote that, without directly saying so, the spies inferred that the Canaanites were stronger than Him, that is, stronger than HaShem. So it is no wonder that the people were demoralized, for if these leaders felt this way, what hope was there? Again Moshe interceded for the people, saving them from total annihilation. This gives us a picture of what forgiveness sometimes has to be about, for HaShem did forgive the nation, yet they had to bear their punishment.

How can we turn doubt into faith? Certainly not on our own. We find our example in *Kalev* (Caleb), for HaShem said of Kalev, “He has a different Spirit with him and has fully followed me.” Kalev was human, just as the rest of the spies. He had the same limitations, fears and temptations, yet he was motivated by something else. He had the Spirit on him, and he had a desire to follow HaShem fully. HaShem rewards such a desire, and faith grows.

There is a phrase that has been used by nearly everyone at some point in their lives, and it can control adults as well as children: “Everybody else is doing it.” Very obviously, as we watch society crumble, the majority opinion is not always the right opinion. In reality, the only opinion that is truly correct is Adonai's, and that is the opinion we must follow. Our foundation, our faith, must be built on the Rock – Yeshua – for anything else is shifting sand, or doubt. Our flesh man is weak on its own, and is more likely to destroy our faith rather than build it up. True power and strength can only come from the *Ruakh HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit. May we all be like the father in Mark 9:24 who cried out to Yeshua, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

In Mark 9, when Yeshua sent the demon out of the boy, he had all the appearance of being dead; in fact everybody thought that he was. But Yeshua reached out His hand, and the child stood to his feet, whole. I would like to paint a picture here. Imagine that the hurting son is Israel and all [Messianic or pre-Messianic] Jewish people today. They are in trouble, life is spinning out of control, and it seems that no one likes them or wants to be around them [speaking of the re-emerging trend of global anti-semitism today, secular or religious]. Now imagine that the father is the Gentile believers who are beginning to understand that Israel is still a huge part of G-d's plan, and needs help. With just a small measure of faith, this father brings his son to Yeshua, not quite sure if that is the right thing or not. After all, no one else will help these people. Yeshua responds, and the boy is delivered. Life from the dead – have we heard that somewhere else? If you want to see revival world-wide, pray for the salvation of Israel. The Jew first... then the nations. Truly, *sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* (pray for the peace of Jerusalem).