



Parsha Matot ~ Tribes / Massei ~ Journeys

Bemidbar 30:1-36:13

Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA

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As often happens with the *parash'ot* this week we have a double *Torah Portion*. And, this double *parsha* holds a message for us, who are returning to Yahweh and Torah, in these “*Last Days*”. There’s a lot in these chapters, so we’re going to hit the “*high points*”. But, I hope that you’ll go back and study these chapters thoroughly.

In the first half of this “Double Header” (***Parsha Matot***, or ***Tribes***), something rather unusual happens. We’re told that Moshe speaks directly to the “*Heads of the Tribes*” of the Children of Israel, instead of speaking to the entire congregation. In the Hebrew it reads; “***V’dabar Moshe el rosh’a ha Matot l’benei Yisra’el***”. Moshe speaks directly to them, some particular instructions for them to give to the people. Let’s look at it from the beginning, with **B’midbar / Numbers 30:1-16**; ***And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Yisra’el, saying, “This is the word which YHVH has commanded: “When a man vows a vow to YHVH, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he does not break his word, he does according to all that comes out of his mouth. Or if a woman vows a vow to YHVH, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father’s house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father has kept silent towards her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself stands. But if her father forbids her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself stand. And YHVH pardons her, because her father has forbidden her. But if she at all belongs to a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, and her husband hears it, and he has kept silent towards her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself do stand. But if her husband forbids her on the day that he hears it, then he has nullified her vow which she vowed, and the rash utterance of her lips by which she bound herself, and YHVH pardons her. But any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, stands against her. And if she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, and her husband heard it, and has kept silent towards her and did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself stands. But if her husband clearly nullified them on the day he heard them, then whatever came from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it does not stand – her husband has nullified them, and YHVH pardons her. Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her being, let her husband confirm it, or let her husband nullify it. But if her husband is altogether silent at her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her – he***

confirms them, because he kept silent towards her on the day that he heard. But if he nullifies them after he has heard, then he shall bear her crookedness.” These are the laws which YHVH commanded Moshe, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father’s house.

Let me start here by saying that regarding the father’s or husband’s authority to nullify the vow; Judaism teaches that this is because a vow that a daughter or wife might have obligated herself to affects the whole family. It may have been a vow from a young age that may not be expedient for a married woman. Thus, the husband has the opportunity to nullify it. Of course it may be something that the wife has recently vowed also. OK. This section really has to do with “**chee’yeedar neder**” or “**vowing a vow**”; also, “**ha sheva shevuah**” (*hey-shin-bet-ayin*) and (*shin-bet-ayin-hey*) or “**swear an oath**” or to “**bind yourself by an agreement**”. This has to do with agreements that we make with one another, as well as “**vows**” or “**promises**” we make to Yahweh. The words “**sheva shevua**” for “**swear an oath**” can also be translated as “**seven sevens**”, or “**seven times sevens**” This really gives us a picture, I think, of how serious Yahweh takes the swearing of oaths.

Yahshua affirmed this, **Wayyiqra / Leviticus 19:12** and **Debarim 23:21**, when He said, according to the DuTillet & Shem Tov Hebrew **Mattityahu 5:33-37** reads; “**Again, you have heard that it was said by those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely by My Name’, but shall perform your vow to YHVH.’ “But I say to you, do not swear by anything falsely, not by the heaven, because it is Elohim’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Yerushalayim, for it is His city; nor by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. But let your word ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’. Anything added to this is evil.”**

Faulty translations from the Greek read not to swear at all, period. But, these are not correct and not consistent with Torah. Yahweh clearly states, through Moshe, in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 6:13**; “**Fear YHVH your Elohim and serve Him, and swear by His Name.**”

I don’t know about all of you; but, I do know that most of the people I talk with about Torah and about how they began to understand who they are in Yisra’el, seem to have one thing in common; a desire to know the “**Truth**”. For most of you, it involved, at some point, making a vow or promise to Yahweh. That’s exactly what happened with me, as I’ve shared with most of you. I was recovering from a rather serious surgery; and I simply promised Yahweh that if He showed me His “**Truth**”, I would walk in it. He certainly has done His part and I’ve tried to “**perform my vow to Yahweh**”, as Yahshua and Torah have instructed.

You see, it goes back to Sinai. As Yahweh prepared His people (B’nei Yisra’el then and now) for the Covenant, our Ketubah, that He was about to give our forefathers, the Children of Israel “**vowed a vow**”, “**swore an oath**”, “**ha sheva shevuah**” as is recorded in **Shemot / Exodus 19:7-8**; **And Moshe came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which YHVH commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, “All that YHVH has spoken we shall do.” So Moshe brought back the words of the people to YHVH.**

Is that what you’ve said to Yahweh? Think very carefully about your answer. Have you made a “**vow**”? Have you bound yourself with an agreement to Elohim? If your intent is to be His Bride, then He requires it of you. Your marriage agreement, your promise to “**love, honor and obey**” has **not** been “**done away with**” or “**nailed**” to any kind of *stake, tree or cross*. Remember, Yahshua said in **Yohanah / John 14:15**; “**If you love Me, you shall keep my commands**”; “**love, honor and obey**”.

Now, as we move on to the second half of our *parsha*, this week, **Massei**, let us remember what the prophet wrote in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 46:9-10**; **“Remember the former events of old, for I am El, and there is no one else – Elohim, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from of old that which has not yet been done, saying, ‘My counsel does stand, and all My delight I do.’”** Remember too that the word used here for *counsel* is Strong’s #6098, **“etsah”** and literally means **“purpose”**. Yah’s **“purpose”** does stand and all that delights Him, He does.

As I said, our *parsha* this week is **“Massei”** (*Mem-samech-ayin*) and is Strong’s #4550 and literally means **“journeys”** or **“stages”**. We’ll read, in a few minutes, the recap of our forefathers’ journey in the wilderness those forty years. We’ll see and learn about the 42 encampments along the way, and what their names mean, along with some pictures of our present and our future. But, it’s really kind of summed up in the word **“Massei”** ~ **“journeys”** or **“stages”**. There were *stages* in the process of their deliverance and restoration as Yahweh’s **“chosen people”**. And, these “stages” and “journey” very much apply to us, here and now.....and tomorrow.

The numeric value of the letters in **“Massei”** is 170. I was stunned when I saw the words from Torah that matched the value of **“Massei”**. In Torah, 170 equals, from **B’reshith** (*the formation and history of Yisra’el*), **“I’Olam”** or **“forever”**, **“I’panah”** or **“before me”**, **“ni’milayim”** or **“were circumcised”**; in **Shemot** (*the exodus & giving of Torah*), **“m’ahnee”** = **“our affliction”**, **“mei’leyanim”** = **“murmurings”**, **“pe’sel”** = **“graven image”**; from **Vayiqra** (*the priesthood & ordinances*), **“y’kalail”** = **“curses”**; from **B’midbar** (*the wilderness testing*), **“tsal’may”** = **“idols”**, **“lema’ol”** = **“to trespass against”**; and from **Debarim** (*the Words*), **“ma’eyul”** = **“deliver”** or **“rescue”** and **“m’sinai”** = **“from Sinai”** or **“from the clay”**.

As I said, **Massei** means **“stages”**, in addition to **“journeys”**; which is rather fitting when you consider that these encampments show the stages of Yahweh’s dealings with B’nei Yisra’el, through the trials, testings and miracles. And, as we will see that our journey home to Eretz Israel and our restoration to the Kingdom is made up of these same **“stages”**.

Parsha Massei starts out in **B’midbar / Numbers 33:1** by saying; **These are the departures of the children of Yisra’el, who went out of the land of Mitsrayim by their divisions under the hand of Moshe and Aharon.** It’s interesting to note that the journey from Mitsrayim to the Promised Land could have been accomplished in as little as 11 days. That’s right, 11 days. But instead, it took 40 years. There were 13 encampments during the first year and a half, 19 during the next 37 1/2 years and 10 during the 40th year. There were basically three stages to their journey of deliverance from bondage to freedom to the Land of their inheritance. In order to get a clearer picture of what all of this meant to them and to us today, I believe we need to look at this journey in the stages in which it played out.

Before we go on, let’s consider the beginnings of this process. **“Mitzrayim”** literally means **“worshippers of ra”** or **“sun god”**. In the Hebrew, the words used for Egypt are **“Mitzrayim”** (#4714), **Matsowr / Matswur** (#4693 & 4692) and **“Tsuwr”** (#6696). These words all mean one form or another of **“besieged”** and **“bondage”** or **“constricted”**. So, just as Yahweh took our forefathers, B’nei Yisra’el, into the wilderness to remove all the vestiges of bondage from them, He will do that with us. However, Our hope is that He’ll deal with us in much less than 40 years. Just as Sha’ul says in **Romans 9:27-28**; **And Yeshayahu cries out on behalf of Yisra’el, “Though the number of the children of Yisra’el be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. For He is**

bringing a matter to an end, and is cutting it short in righteousness, because YHVH shall cut short a matter on the earth.”

So, let's read about and consider "**Stage #1**" in B'midbar / Numbers 33:1-17; *These are the departures of the children of Yisra'el, who went out of the land of Mitsrayim by their divisions under the hand of Moshe and Aharon. And Moshe wrote down the starting points of their departures at the command of YHVH, and these are their departures according to their starting points: So they departed from Ra'meses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month, on the morrow of the Passover the children of Yisra'el went out with boldness before the eyes of all the Mitsrites, and the Mitsrites were burying all their first-born, whom YHVH had smitten among them. Also on their mighty ones YHVH had executed judgments. Then the children of Yisra'el departed from Ra'meses and camped at Sukkoth. And they departed from Sukkoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. And they departed from Etham and turned back to PiHahiroth which is east of Ba'al Tsephon. And they camped near Migdol. And they departed from before Hahiroth and passed over through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. And they departed from Marah and came to Elim. And at Elim were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, so they camped there. And they departed from Elim and camped by the Sea of Reeds. And they departed from the Sea of Reeds and camped in the Wilderness of Sin. And they departed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. And they departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. And they departed from Alush and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. And they departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai. And they departed from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Qibroth Hatta'awah. And they departed from Qibroth Hatta'awah and camped at Hatseroth.*

So, let's define **Stage #1**. When they left *Mitzrayim* (**bondage / constraint**), they left from **Ra'meses** – Strong's #7486, meaning "**child of the sun**". They camped at **Sukkot** – #5523, meaning "**booths**" or "**tabernacles**". I know I've mentioned this before; but, I want to remind you about the "**Mystical City of Sukkot**". "**Sukkot**" was an ancient Bedouin city, that was home to as many as 200,000 people and was literally a moving city. As Bedouins have done for millennia, they would move their tents, families and herds as the seasons and grazing changed. This is where B'nei Yisra'el learned to "**camp out**" in tents, or Sukkot. They had been city dwellers in Goshen and the Nile Valley for several generations and lost their knowledge of tents. So, Yahweh brought them here, to "**Camping R Us**", in order to learn how to be tent dwellers again.

They left *Sukkot* and pitched in **Etham (Aetom)** – #0864, meaning "**a multitude**" or "**you are many**".

They turned unto **PiHahiroth** – #6367, meaning "**mouth of the cave**" which is before **Baal Tsephon** – #1189, meaning "**lord of the north**" or "**lord of the hidden**" or "**secret place**", remember that the "**north**" represents "**hidden**" in scripture; and they pitched before **Migdol** – #4024, meaning "**tower**" or "**fortress**".

From there they passed through the midst of the *Yam Suf* (Sea of Reeds) and went three days' journey into the **Wilderness of Shur** - #7788, meaning "**journey**" and pitched in **Marah** – #4785 meaning "**bitter**", "**angry**" or "**heavy**". If you'll remember, it was here that the water was bitter. Remember, **Shemot 15:23-26**; *And they came to Marah, and they were unable to drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. So the name of it was called Marah. And the people*

grumbled against Moshe, saying, "What are we to drink?" Then he cried out to YHVH, and YHVH showed him a tree. And when he threw it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a law and a right ruling for them, and there He tried them. And He said, "If you diligently obey the voice of YHVH your Elohim and do what is right in His eyes, and shall listen to His commands and shall guard all His laws, I shall bring on you none of the diseases I brought on the Mitsrites, for I am YHVH who heals you." Marah still exists today. There is a village there. The water is still bitter. But, guess what? The bitter water is not harmful. In fact, it has health benefits in that it kills parasites and bad bacteria in the digestive system, while not harming the good bacteria. Could it be that Yahweh wanted to cleanse their bodies internally from the effects of Mitzrayim?

They then pitched at **Elim** – #0362, meaning "**rams**" (as sacrifices or offerings), "**righteous men**" or "**upright trees**"; where there were twelve fountains (*the twelve tribes*) and 70 palm trees (*original nations representing the whole world*). Here **Shemot 15:27** says that "**they camped by the water.**" Here, they were being fed and given living water. However, there is a prophetic picture here also. We have a picture of the fulfilling of the "*Great Commission*" of making taught ones in all the nations, during the time leading up to the second exodus; the "**Remnant**", the "**Two Witnesses**" from the twelve tribes (*House of Ya'aqob*) teaching (*feeding & watering*) all those still scattered among the nations of the world.

Then, B'nei Yisra'el encamped by the **Reed Sea / Yam Suf** – #5488 meaning "**sea of reeds**" or "**an end**" (as *uttermost part* or *farthest reaches*).

They then moved from the *Yam Suf* and encamped in the **Wilderness of Sin** – #5512, meaning "**clay**". Clay is a scriptural euphemism for man or mankind. Also, the Hebrew word for "**wilderness**" (**midbar**) also means "**mouth**". So, the **Wilderness of Clay** can also be the *mouths of men*. Within the *Wilderness of Sin* they then encamped in **Dophkah** – #1850, meaning to "**knock at the door**". They then encamped in **Alush** – #0442, meaning "**I will knead (as bread)**". From our perspective, you can see the test coming.

Next, Yahweh provides *rest* for them as they encamped at **Rephidim** – #7508, meaning "**rests**" or "**support**". But, we're told that they were tested, as there was no water. However, we learn from **Shemot / Exodus 17:1-8**; *And all the congregation of the children of Yisra'el set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the command of YHVH, and camped in Rephidim. And there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people strove with Moshe, and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moshe said to them, "Why do you strive with me? Why do you try YHVH?" And the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moshe, and said, "Why did you bring us out of Mitsrayim, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" Then Moshe cried out to YHVH, saying, "What am I to do with this people? Yet a little and they shall stone me!" And YHVH said to Moshe, "Pass over before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Yisra'el. And take in your hand your rod with which you smote the river, and go. See, I am standing before you there on the rock in Horeb. And you shall smite the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people shall drink." And Moshe did so before the eyes of the elders of Yisra'el. And he called the name of the place **Massah (temptation)** and **Meribah (strife)**, because of the 'strife' of the children of Yisra'el, and because they 'tried' YHVH, saying, "Is YHVH in our midst or not?"*

They pitched their tents next in the **Wilderness of Sinai** – #5514, while Strong's defines it as "**Wilderness of Clay**", Klein's Etymological translates "**Sinai**" as "**scholar**". This would make it "**Wilderness of the Scholar**" or "**Mouth of the Scholar**". Keep both in mind, as we move on.

They pitched at **Qibroth Hatta'awah** – #6914, meaning "**graves of lust**", "**appetite**" or "**covetousness**". It was here that the people lusted after meat to eat in **B'midbar / Numbers 11:32-34**; *And the people were up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail. He who has least gathered ten Homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. The meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, and the wrath of YHVH burned against the people, and YHVH smote the people with an exceeding great plague. Then he called the name of that place Qibroth Hatta'awah, because there they buried the people who had lusted.*

They encamped next at **Hatseroth** – #2698, meaning "**a place surrounded by a fence**", as in a "**settlement**" or "**village**", a "**place of protection**". But, it is also a conjunction of two words, #2690 "**ha'tser**", meaning "**to sound the trumpet or shofar**" and #226, "**oth**" which is a "**sign**" or "**banner**". It was here that Moshe sent the twelve spies into Kena'an to spy out the Land. This was indeed the place of a significant sign, both then and for the future.

As we complete "**Stage 1**", what pattern or "**bigger picture**" do we see? We see that B'nei Yisra'el, having discovered that they are oppressed and enslaved, cry out to Yahweh for deliverance. We know that as they were leaving the land of "**sun god**" worship, that they were indeed a "**multitude**" living in **tents** (*temporary housing*). We see that they grumbled that the **water** tasted **bitter**, even though it was provided to cleanse the parasites of Mitzrayim out of them; just as His Word (Water) does for us today. And there are those who grumble at that today. We also know that they came through the Yam Suf and Pharaoh's army was brought to "**an end**". We also see that even though they were tested and failed, Yahweh cared for them, fed and watered them and gave them rest. It's so fitting that Elohim would bring them to **Sinai**. Because here, on Mount Sinai, the "**Mouth of the Scholar**" Yahweh spoke with His Mouth the Covenant. We know that He brought them to the border of Eretz Yisra'el, at **Hatseroth** and that they rejected their "**inheritance in Him**" because of the "**evil report**" of giants in the Land. And, as this "**place of protection**" which became a *loud*, or *notable* "**sign**" for future generations, as to what rejecting Yah's provision and promise brings. It brought judgment on an entire generation.

I don't know about you; but, I've seen myself at Sinai. I received the Torah from the Mouth of the Scholar. Sha'ul taught that Torah is indeed our Teacher. I've seen myself at "**Qibroth Hatta'awah**" (**the graves of lust**), as I've been convicted in my heart about lust of the eye and pride, through Torah. And now, I see myself, and many of you, at "**Hatseroth**", the place of protection, where we have a choice, whether to believe the evil report of giants in the Land, or whether to accept our inheritance and go in. Here, we can choose to hear and listen as the "*shofar blows as a banner to His people*". It is written in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 11:12-14**; *And He shall raise a banner for the nations, and gather the outcasts of Yisra'el, and assemble the dispersed of Yehudah from the four corners of the earth. And the envy of Ephraim shall turn aside, and the adversaries of Yehudah be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Yehudah, and Yehudah not trouble Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they plunder the people of the east, their hand stretching forth on Edom and Mo'ab, and the children of Ammon shall be subject to them.* We're standing at the entrance to Eretz Israel. And, some of us will go in, as the 12 spies went in, from the **Wilderness of Paran (caves)**. Only this time, they will represent the whole House of Ya'aqob for the judging of Esau and the beginning of

Ya'aqob's Trouble. Then, in the middle of Ya'aqob's Trouble, Yehudah and Ephraim will come out to meet the rest of B'nei Yisra'el that escape the sword in the land of their punishment, in Ammon, Mo'ab and Edom; and there, we'll await Mashiach together.

Next, we continue with *Parsha Massei* and “Stage #2” in B'midbar / Numbers 33:18-36; *And they departed from Hatseroth and camped at Rithmah. And they departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perets. And they departed from Rimmon Perets and camped at Libnah. And they departed from Libnah and camped at Rissah. And they departed from Rissah and camped at Qehelathah. And they departed from Qehelathah and camped at Mount Shapher. And they departed from Mount Shapher and camped at Haradah. And they departed from Haradah and camped at Maqheloth. And they departed from Maqheloth and camped at Tahath. And they departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. And they departed from Terah and camped at Mithqah. And they departed from Mithqah and camped at Hashmonah. And they departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. And they departed from Moseroth and camped at B'nai Ya'aqan. And they departed from B'nai Ya'aqan and camped at Hor Haggidgad. And they departed from Hor Haggidgad and camped at Yotbathah. And they departed from Yotbathah and camped at Abronah. And they departed from Abronah and camped at Etzion Geber. And they departed from Etzion Geber and camped in the Wilderness of Tsin, which is Qadesh.*

OK, let's look at “Stage 2” for a few minutes. They pitched in **Rithmah** – #7575, meaning “**to bind**”. Then, they camped in **Rimmon Perets** – #7416 and #6556, meaning “**abundant fruit**” or “**stand in the breach**” and also “**he who breaks**”. “**Perets**” was the name of King David's grandfather and was an ancestor of Yahshua. In fact, the Hebrew name of the constellation known as Orion is Perets and refers to Mashiach, “**The Breaker**”.

They then pitched in **Libnah** – #3841, meaning “**frankincense**” from #3835 *laban*, meaning “**made white or purified**”. This refers to “**purification**”.

They pitched at **Rissah** – #7446, meaning “**to temper**”.

They camped next in **Qehelathah** – #6954, meaning “**the assembly**” or “**entire congregation**”.

They pitched in **Mount Shapher** – #8234, meaning “**beauty**” or “**brightness**”.

They encamped next in **Haradah** – #2732, meaning “**a great fear**” also “**fear of Yahweh**”.

They then pitched in **Maqheloth** – #4722, meaning “**place of assembly**” or “**place of gathering**”.

They camped at **Tahath** – #8480, meaning “**beneath**”, “**under the authority of**” and “**in the place of**”.

They pitched next at **Terah** – #8646, meaning “**to delay**” or “**to tarry**”.

They pitched in **Mithqah** – #4987, meaning “**sweetness**” or “**pleasantness**”.

They pitched in **Hashmonah** – #2832 meaning “**fatness**” (euphemism for the best) or “**ambassadors**”.

They encamped at **Moseroth** – #4149, “**admonition**” or “**correction**” by one in authority, such as a king or ruler.

They then pitched in **B’nei Ya’aqan** – #1121, meaning “**sons**” or “**children**” and #3292 “**Ya’aqan**” in another pronunciation of Akin the Aramean, whose name means “**twisting**” or “**lying**”. It would be another Akin who would attempt to steal from the booty of Yeriho, which Yahweh forbade.

They encamped at **Hor Haggidgad** – #2356. “**Hor**” means “**mountain**” or “**cave**” and #1412 “**Haggidgad**” means “**the thunder**”. Here we see “**mountain of thunder**”.

They pitched in **Yotbathah** – #3193, meaning “**pleasantness**” or “**rejoicing**”.

They encamped next at **Abronah** – #5684, meaning “**passage**” and is also a variation of the word “**Hebrew**”, meaning “**to pass over**”.

They encamped at **Etzion Geber** – #6100, meaning “**strength of a warrior**”.

They pitched in the **Wilderness of Tsin** – #6790, meaning “**palm tree**” which is **Qadesh** – #6946, meaning “**set apart, consecrated (holy)**”. Palm trees represent righteous men in Scripture. Here it speaks of righteous men as being set apart. It was here that two righteous men, Moshe and Aharon, got angry with the people for contending with Yahweh in their thirst and Moshe “**struck**” the “**rock**” twice, while Elohim instructed Moshe to “**speak**” to the rock. As a result, Yahweh called the place *Meribah*, or the “**waters of contention**” and Moshe and Aharon were forbidden to enter the Land, as they did not set Yahweh apart in the eyes of the people.

As we look at “**Stage 2**”, we see that **Verse 19** speaks of **Rimmon Perets**; which indicates that the *testimony* or *Word* of the “**Breaker**” produces *abundant fruit*. There are quite a few references to the *purification, tempering, brightness, sweetness, fatness* and *correction* this Word brings to the *assembly*.

But, there is “**twisting of truth**” mentioned also; referring to the various attempts to pollute the Truth with false and contentious teachings that are designed to split the assembly of Yahweh and take some of His people off task. I can’t help but see at the end of “**Stage #2**”, there was contention over the **waters** (*living water* or *water of the Word*). That contention caused even Moshe and Aharon, two of Yahweh’s most righteous men, to get angry and lose their own opportunity to go into the Land. Let their mistake be a lesson to us, not to lose our tempers or our focus, which is always to set Yahweh apart and be obedient to Him. Remember here also, that at the beginning of this “**stage**” in **B’midbar / Numbers 13**, the “**spies**” returned and the ten who gave the “**evil report**” caused a whole generation to forsake their inheritance, when they refused to go into the Land. This is where we make the decisions of “**if**” and “**how**” we go home. Do we encamp at “**Abronah**” (*our passage*)? Are we “**Hebrews**” (those who *pass over*)? And will we encamp at “**Etzion Geber**” (with *a warrior’s strength*)?

Let’s look now at “**Stage 3**”, as we continue with **B’midbar / Numbers 33:37-49**; ***And they departed from Qadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom. Then Aharon the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of YHVH, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Yisra’el had come out of the land of Mitsrayim, on the first day of the fifth month. Now Aharon was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he***

died on Mount Hor. And the sovereign of Arad, the Kena'anite, who dwelt in the South in the land of Kena'an, heard of the coming of the children of Yisra'el. So they departed from Mount Hor and camped at Tsalmonah. And they departed from Tsalmonah and camped at Punon. And they departed from Punon and camped at Oboth. And they departed from Oboth and camped at Iye Ha-Abarim, at the border of Mo'ab. And they departed from Iyim and camped at Dibon Gad. And they departed from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathayemah. And they departed from Almon Diblathayemah and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the desert plains of Mo'ab by the Yarden of Yeriho. And they camped by the Yarden, from Beyth Yeshimoth as far as the Abel Shittim in the desert plains of Mo'ab.

In “**Stage 3**”, they then pitched in **Mount Hor** – #2023, meaning “**mountain of the cave**”, in the edge of **Edom** – #0123, meaning “**red – children of Esau**” or another word for “**Adam or man**” where Aaron (whose name meant “**enlightener**”) died.

After Aaron's death, they pitched in **Tsalmonah** – #6758, meaning “**shadow of death**”. Remember **Tehillim / Psalm 23**? David walked through his own wilderness experience. It's also interesting that it was here, near the end of their journey, that Yisra'el grumbled and rebelled in their hearts once again and Yahweh sent fiery serpents among the people to bite them, and many died. Two weeks ago, in **Parsha Pinchas**, we learned a lot about those “**seraphim**” or “**fiery serpents**” and how Yahshua became sin for us and was “**lifted up**” that we might live and not die.

Next, they camped next in **Punon** – #6325, meaning “**darkness**” or “**obscurity**” (as in outer darkness).

They pitched in **Oboth** – #088, another Hebrew word with two meanings. First there's “**water skins**”, or second “**those who have familiar spirits**”. This word “*aleph-beit-tav*” refers to those who worship the “**fathers**” or dead ancestors, practice necromancy, as many eastern religions do.

Then, they pitched in **Iye Ha-Abarim** – #5856 and #5674, meaning “**ruins of Abarim**”. Abarim is the plural of “**passing over**” or “**emigrating**”. It's as if this verse is referring to crossing the ruins of past “**emigrations**” or “**passings over**”; kind of like repeating what's been done before in the same location. This is in the border of **Mo'ab** – meaning “**of his father**”; again, referring to the emigrations of our fathers. It is here that those wandering see and discover the path of those who went before them into the Land.

They departed from **Iyim** – #5864, meaning “**the ruins**”, and pitched in **Dibon Gad** – #1769, meaning “**wasting**” or “**pining away**”. The word “**Gad**” was added by translators, as this ruined city was later rebuilt by the B'nei Gad, the Tribe of Gad. It's interesting though, that by adding “**Gad**”, you would get “**wasting fortune**” for *Dibon Gad*.

They encamped next in **Almon Diblathayemah** – #5960, meaning “**concealed**” or “**hidden**” and #1690 which means “**fig cakes**”. This is an interesting word play as “**figs**” represent the fruit of Yisra'el and “**cakes**” refer to the individual tribes. Remember the “**showbread**” was made into cakes. Here we see the reference to the “**hidden (or dispersed) tribes of Yisra'el**”. There is also a spiritual meaning here, in that “**figs**” represent the fruit of the Spirit and “**cakes**” represent “**bread**”, the substance of nourishment. So, in this picture, we see a people hidden or concealed being nourished by the fruits of the Spirit.

B'nei Yisra'el then left and pitched in the **Mountains of Abarim** – #5682, meaning “**region beyond or across**”, before **Nebo** – #5015, meaning “**prophet**”.

They then pitched in the plains (#6150 - wilderness) of **Mo'ab** – meaning “**of his father**”, by the **Yarden** – #3383, meaning “**descended or came down**” (which is from “**yarad**” meaning “**as revelation**”), near **Yeriho** – #3405, meaning “**city of the moon**” or “**fragrant place**”.

They finally pitched at the **Yarden** – meaning “**descend or came down (as revelation)**” from **Beyth Yeshimoth** – #1020, meaning “**house of desolation**” even unto **Abel Shittim** – #063, meaning “**meadows of acacias (or scourging)**”. Remember, the first time they came to this place the daughters of Midyan tempted the sons of Yisra'el, fornicated with them and caused them to serve Ba'al Pe'or (*lord of light*). From there, the Children of Yisra'el would pass over into the land of **Kena'an**– #3667, meaning “**lowland (to be humble or under authority)**”.

Folks, “**Stage 3**” is all about the future, and not the distant future. In these final encampments of the **fathers**, we can easily see men passing through the **Valley of the Shadow of Death** (the *Great Tribulation*). Those of us, who hear the shofar now and go in to the Land to prepare and be a witness to all Israel, as **Tehillim 122** states, won't escape Ya'aqob's Trouble. But, since we'll be in Tzion, we will be spared much of the temptation to serve the Beast System and the “**Oboth**”, those familiar spirits who will influence many in the world toward worshipping the Beast and its religion. **Stage 3** also speaks of those who'll hear the “**words of the Father**” and His “**prophet**” (*Nebo*), that come down as revelation and will accept His “**scourging**”; will acknowledge their fathers' sins and accept their punishment. **Yirmeyahu 3:13-14** says that when Ephraim acknowledges his sin and accepts Yahweh's punishment; then, he will be restored. Then, all Israel will gather in Ammon, Mo'ab and Edom to meet Mashiach and submit to His authority, to rule and reign with Him.

In the end, it all comes down to choices. And, they're the same choices B'nei Yisra'el had in the Wilderness. They're the same choices mankind has always faced. Will we follow Yahweh and His commands and right-rulings; or will we follow our own desires? Will we follow other men's voices that speak flatteries and tickle our ears? Yahweh has placed me here as an under-shepherd for a small part of His flock, both here and who listen on PalTalk. But, don't submit to me. Submit yourselves to Abba Yahweh and His Authority alone. I am responsible to Him for what I say and teach in His Name. But, you must bear the responsibility for your decisions, including whether to go home or stay behind, when that choice is presented to you. I've made my choice. All I can do is lead His flock, those who will follow, home to the “**sheepfold**”. And, we all know that the Master Shepherd's sheepfold is on the mountains of Eretz Yisra'el. And so, that's where we're going.

However, let's don't get ahead of ourselves. **B'midbar / Numbers 33** ends with another command. One that is all too important for our return home. Let's finish the parsha for today with **B'midbar 33:51-53**; “**Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and say to them, 'When you have passed over the Yarden into the land of Kena'an, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and shall destroy all their engraved stones, and shall destroy all their molded images, and lay waste all their high places, and you shall possess the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.**”

I know that I speak to this at least two to three times a year. Understanding these verses plays a huge role in our study of the Counting of the Omer; and, is key to our restoration from “**lo Ami**” (*not My people*), to becoming the “**People of Elohim**”. He tells us that we cannot do it alone. It is by and through Him that we overcome these seven nations (*strongholds*) that are stronger than us. Four

times in Scripture, Yahweh refers to “**entering His rest**”. And, the context is entering the Land. It shouldn’t be a surprise to us that these tribes (*nations*) of Kena’an have personal significance to us by the meanings of their names.

Debarim / Deuteronomy 7:1-5 further defines this; *“When YHVH your Elohim brings you into the land which you go to possess, He shall also clear away many nations before you: the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Kena’anites and the Perizzites and the Hiwwites and the Yebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you. And when YHVH your Elohim gives them over to you, you shall smite them and put them under the ban, completely. Make no covenant with them, and show them no favor. And do not intermarry with them – you do not give your daughter to his son, and you do not take his daughter for your son, for he turns your sons away from following Me, to serve other mighty ones. Then the displeasure of YHVH shall burn against you and promptly destroy you. But this is what you do to them: Break down their altars, and smash their pillars, and cut down their Asherim, and burn their carved images with fire.”*

Remember, that these all make up Kena’an which means “**under the authority**”. So, let’s see what nations we are currently under the authority of, and must dispossess, by the Hand of Yahweh:

- 1) **Hittites** – Strong’s #2850, meaning “**sons of Heth**” or “**terror**” We must first conquer fear.
- 2) **Girgashites** - #1622, meaning “**on clayey soil**” or “**unsure foundation**”. In these times of “**truth twisting**”, deception and traditions of men, we need to be responsible for the Truth that Yahweh gives us.
- 3) **Amorites** - #0567, meaning “**boaster**”. The Amorites, or Emori, were the biggest and strongest people in Kena’an. Isn’t pride the strongest of strongholds within each of us?
- 4) **Kena’anites** - #3669, meaning “**brought down**”, “**defeated**” or “**made low**”. Equate this today, with depression and hopelessness.
- 5) **Perizzites** - #6522, regarding a village its meaning is; “**having a breach in the wall**” or “**a breach of promise**”. We must learn to become the repairers of the breaches and restore honesty and justice in our relationships.
- 6) **Hiwwites** - #2340, meaning “**dwellers of the high place**” whose capital was on Mt. Ba’al Hermon (#1179, meaning “**lord of destruction**”). We must tear down the high places of false worship in our hearts.
- 7) **Yebusites** - #2983, “**sons of Yebus**” #2982, meaning threshing, trample, trodden down, “**desecrate and utterly reject**”. This speaks plainly to rebellion and what it brings about in people. Be careful about what you reject, and how you do it.

If we are going to be able to hear, in order to follow His voice, we must clear out these strongholds in us, by Ruach Elohim. We must get rid of the noise of this world. And, as usual, Yahweh tells us why. Let’s finish with **Debarim 7:6-26**; *“For you are a set-apart people to YHVH your Elohim. YHVH your Elohim has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a treasured possession above all the peoples on the face of the earth. YHVH did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more numerous than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples, but because of YHVH loving you, and because of Him guarding the oath which He swore to your fathers, YHVH has brought you out with a strong hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh sovereign of Mitsrayim. And you shall know that YHVH your Elohim, He is Elohim, the trustworthy El guarding covenant and kindness for a thousand generations with those who love Him, and those who guard His commands, but repaying those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He does not delay to do so with him who hates Him, He repays him to his face. And you shall guard the*

command, and the laws, and the right-rulings which I command you today, to do them. And it shall be, because you hear these right-rulings, and shall guard and do them, that YHVH your Elohim shall guard with you the covenant and the kindness which He swore to your fathers, and shall love you and bless you and increase you, and shall bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. Blessed are you above all peoples – there is not going to be a barren man or a barren woman among you or among your livestock. And YHVH shall turn away from you all sickness and put on you none of the evil diseases of Mitsrayim which you have known, but He shall put them on all those who hate you. And you shall consume all the peoples whom YHVH your Elohim is delivering over to you – your eye shall not pardon them. And do not serve their mighty ones, for that is a snare to you. When you say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I, I am unable to drive them out,’ do not be afraid of them. Remember well what YHVH your Elohim did to Pharaoh and to all Mitsrayim, the great trials which your eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders, the strong hand and the outstretched arm, by which YHVH your Elohim brought you out. YHVH your Elohim does so to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. And YHVH your Elohim also sends the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. Do not be afraid of them, for YHVH your Elohim, the great and awesome El, is in your midst. And YHVH your Elohim shall drive out those nations before you, little by little. You are not allowed to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. But YHVH your Elohim shall deliver them over to you and destroy them with a great destruction until they are consumed. And He shall give their sovereigns into your hand, and you shall destroy their name from under the heavens. No one is going to be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. The carved images of their mighty ones you are to burn with fire. Do not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it, for it is an abomination to YHVH your Elohim. And do not bring an abomination into your house, lest you be accursed like it. Utterly loathe it and utterly hate it, for it is accursed.”

So, as you “**clean your house**”, remember what Adonai Yahshua said in **Mattityahu 12:43-45**; *“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then it says, ‘I shall return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and decorated. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”* Let’s make sure that we have filled it back up with the Word and Ruach of Elohim.

Our return to Yahweh, Torah and Israel is made up of “**Stages**” (*Massei*). The choices you make from now on have considerable weight and consequence. But, there is great blessing and joy awaiting us all, who endure to the end. Please be in prayer and seek Yah’s perfect will in your “**journey**”. **Baruch HaShem Yahweh!**