

## Men of the Covenant and Yeshua

This weeks reading is from **Parsahat Nasso** (*Bamidbar / Numbers 4:21-7:89*). the Lord speaks to Moshe telling him to number the sons of Gershon and the fathers of their household by their families. Moshe obeys the Lord and numbers the Gershonites and details the duties of the sons of Levi in their work in carrying the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) in its construction and deconstruction (*4:21-49*). The Lord tells Moshe to command the people to send away the person who is unclean, the Leper, and every person having a discharge of the skin (*5:1-4*) so the camp is not defiled. The Lord commands when a person sins he is to make restitution by confessing his sin and then adding one-fifth and giving it to the person that he has wronged. The scriptures then describe what to do if a man's wife is unfaithful (*5:12*), the husband and wife go to the Tabernacle and make an offering of jealousy. (*5:13-15*). The Scriptures continue in detailing the requirements of the one who makes the vow of a Nazarite he or she is (i) not to drink wine, vinegar, strong drink or anything from the fruit of the vine, (ii) not to shave the head, and (iii) not to touch any dead thing (*6:1-21*) throughout the length of their vow. Following the Nazarite vow, the Lord tells Moshe to have Aharon bless the people (*6:22-26*). Moshe then constructs the Tabernacle and consecrates it (*7:1-11*). Each tribe participates in the dedication ceremony presenting a silver dish weighing one hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, and a grain offering. One gold pan of ten shekels full of incense, one bull, one ram, one male lamb for an Olah Korban (לְעֹלָה, Burnt Offering), one male goat for a Khatat Korban (לְחַטָּאת, Sin Offering) and for the Shelamim Korban (הַשְּׁלָמִים, Peace Offering) two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs (*7:10-17*). This dedication is repeated twelve times, one per day for each of the tribes of Israel totaling twelve days. This week's Parashah ends detailing the total number of animals offered as sacrifices for the dedication of the altar of God.

### ספר במדבר פרק ה *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:5-8*

ה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 5:5  
 דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה  
 כִּי יַעֲשֶׂוּ מִכָּל-חַטֹּאת הָאֵדָם לְמַעַל  
 מֵעַל בִּיהוָה וְאָשְׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא: 5:6  
 וְהִתְוַדָּו אֶת-חַטֹּאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וְהָשִׁיב  
 אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְחָמִישְׁתּוֹ יֹסֵף עָלָיו  
 וְנָתַן לְאִשֶּׁר אָשָׁם לּוֹ: 5:7  
 לְאִישׁ גַּאֲל לְהָשִׁיב הָאֲשָׁם אֵלָיו הָאֲשָׁם  
 הַמְּוֹשֵׁב לִיהוָה לְכַהֵן מִלֶּבֶד אֵיל הַכֹּפֶר-  
 רִים אֲשֶׁר יִכָּפֵר-בּוֹ עָלָיו: 5:8

*5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:6 'Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged. 5:8 'But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the Lord for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. (NASB)*

Reading through this week's portion, the Lord spoke to Moshe saying the fol-

lowing in *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:5-6*, וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 5:5 וַיְשַׁרְאֵל אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל-חַטָּאת הָאֵדָם לְמַעַל מֵעַל בִּיהוָה וְאָשְׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא: *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:6 'Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, (NASB)* The Hebrew text is particularly interesting in the way in which it is written. In *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6* there are three Hebrew words that are used “man” (אִישׁ), “woman” (אִשָּׁה), and “man” (אָדָם). The Scripture states “speak to the sons of Israel” and describes the sons as a man or a woman. In the Hebrew bible, there are two root words that may be used to refer to “man,” (i) “ish” (אִישׁ) and (ii) “adam” (אָדָם). The use of the word “ish” to refer to a “man” is very important when brought into the context of the word “adam” which refers to an ordinary man. According to Brown, Driver, and Briggs lexicon, “adam” (אָדָם) may refer to a “man,” “mankind,” or a “human being” in the general sense (or to men in general) whereas the word “ish” (אִישׁ) refers to a “man” or a husband as someone belonging to a place or people. The “ish” (אִישׁ) who belongs to a place or people, as we read here “the sons of Israel,” such men are involved in a covenant relationship in marriage to his wife and to God. For example, according to the Torah, the “ish” loves his wife and honors her, honors his parents, and honors the Lord God Almighty, and loves his neighbor living amongst and in the midst of his people. The Torah in *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:5* is referring to men of distinction (a covenant man) rather than mere ordinary men (the nations). The word “ish” (אִישׁ) understood from a Torah perspective in and of itself excludes the men of this world (the nations, goyim, גוֹיִם). These men have God honoring, wife honoring, parent honoring, and neighbor honoring lives. They live in a covenant community of respect towards one another and this is the reason for the high standard of the Torah we read here to repay any wrong that was done by adding a fifth on top of the amount of payment in return. This is very important when thinking about who we are as a covenant people in the Messiah Yeshua. And, this is the kind of high standard we are supposed to have for our Savior whom we serve.

Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parashat 6, Part 1 (ו סִימָן) מדַרְשׁ רַבָּה בַּמִּדְבָר פֶּרֶשֶׁה ו סִימָן) speaks of the kind of person the Messiah is, in whom we serve, in the explanation of the numbering of the sons of Gershon at the beginning of the Torah portion. Midrash Rabbah on Bamidbar says the following:

***Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parashat 6, Part 1***

*Take the sum of the sons of Gershon also, etc (Bamidbar / Numbers 4:22). Hence, it is written, She is more precious than rubies; and all the things you can desire are not to be compared unto her (Mishley / Proverbs 3:15). We have learned elsewhere, A Sage takes precedence over a king of Israel, for if a Sage dies, well, all Israelites are eligible for kingship. A king takes precedence over a High Priest for it says, And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, etc. (1 Kings 1:33). A High Priest takes precedence over a prophet;*

*for it says, And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there (1 Kings 1:34). Zadok is mentioned before Nathan. Rabbi Huna in the name of rabbi Khanina said, A prophet must bend his hands and feet and sit before a High Priest. What reason is there for saying so? Because it is written, Hear now, O Joshua the high priest you and your fellows that sit before you (Zechariah 3:8). You might think they were ordinary folk. It is therefore stated, For they are men that are a sign, and the expression “sign” can only refer to prophecy; for it says, And he gave you a sign or a wonder (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:2). A High Priest anointed with the anointing oil takes precedence over one who is consecrated only for the additional garments. A prophet takes precedence over a priest anointed for war. One anointed for war takes precedence over a deputy High Priest.*

On the numbering of the sons of Gershon, a comparison is made between persons and titles in the midrash.

### **Summary of the Midrash**

- *A Sage takes precedence over a king of Israel, for if a Sage dies, well, all Israelites are eligible for kingship...*
- *A king takes precedence over a High Priest...*
- *A High Priest takes precedence over a prophet..*
- *A High Priest anointed with the anointing oil takes precedence over one who is consecrated only for the additional garments.*
- *A prophet takes precedence over a priest anointed for war.*
- *One anointed for war takes precedence over a deputy High Priest.*

The Midrash begins a discussion on numbering the sons of Gershon and who takes precedence over another. The midrash speaks about the relationship between the people of Israel, a Sage, a King, a Prophet, a anointed High Priest, and a priest that is anointed for war. A priest annointed for war? The Jewish encyclopedia says the following regarding one who is anointed for war.

*“Rabbinical tradition distinguishes also between the regular high*

*priest and the priest anointed for the special purpose of leading in war—mashuah milhamah (Soṭah, viii. 1; Yoma, 72b, 73a). According to tradition (see Josippon, xx.; Chronicle of Jerahmeel, xci. 3; compare I Macc. iii. 55), Judas Maccabeus was anointed as priest for the war before he proclaimed the words prescribed in Deut. xx. 1-9”*

It is also interesting to find in the midst of Midrash Rabbah on Bamidbar in Parashah 18 section 21 that Jewish tradition attests to the interpretation of the “*tsamekh tsadik*” צמח צדיק “*the righteous branch*” as referring to the title of the Messiah. Verses from Jeremiah and Zechariah provide a Messianic expectation. The rabbinic commentary calls upon *Zechariah 6* and *Jeremiah 23* as the proof texts for the interpretation of “*the righteous branch*” being the Messiah. According to the Scriptures, the Messiah would be a great teacher (a Sage), he is the Righteous Branch, the King Messiah, the Priest Messiah, the Anointed One (משיח), the One who would one day come to deliver God’s people (an anointed priest for war) and the One in whom God’s kingdom is to be established in Israel. The hope of the Messiah runs throughout the Tanach where the Messiah will restore the Kingdom of David (*Jeremiah 23, 30:9, and Ezekiel 34:23*). He will restore the Temple in Zion (*Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1, Zechariah 6:13, and Ezekiel 37:26-28*). He will regather the exiles (*Isaiah 11:12, 43:5, and 51:11*). He will offer a New Covenant to Israel (*Jeremiah 31:31-35*). He will usher peace into this world coupled with the knowledge of the true God (*Isaiah 2:4 and 11:9*). He will swallow up death and disease (*Isaiah 25:8*) bearing our iniquities (*Isaiah 53*). He will raise the dead to new life (*Isaiah 26:19*), and He will teach the Torah with the knowledge of the God of Israel for the purpose of uniting all of mankind as one (*the greatest of all Sages*). *Zechariah 14:9* states יהיה יהוה: למלך על-כל-הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד: “*God will be king over all the world and in that day God will be one and His name will be one.*” The key verse on which the idea of the “*King Messiah*” sits is found in Nathan’s oracle to King David in *2 Samuel 7:10-16* which states the following:

### **2 Samuel 7:10-16**

*7:10 ‘I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, 7:11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you. 7:12 ‘When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 7:13 ‘He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 7:14 ‘I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away*

*from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 7:16 'Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.' (NASB)*

The covenant spoken of here was not fulfilled by Solomon and therefore the Seed that is raised up after David (וְהַקִּימְתִי אֶת-יִרְעָה אַחֲרָיִךְ) is the very seed that is referred to in the covenant blessings the Lord had spoken to Abraham and to his children in Parashat Lech Lecha. The One referred to here is the Messiah, the Anointed King who will sit upon the throne forever and ever (וְכִנְנֹתִי אֶת-כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם).

Based on the Scriptures, Yeshua is the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, he is the greatest of all Sages, and He is anointed for war because He will return to bring judgment. There is no person who is greater than Him in this world. Both the Scriptures and the rabbinic literature speak of the Messiah occupying each of the offices as Teacher, Prophet, Priest, King, and the Anointed One. Based upon the Midrash we can say without a doubt that He (Yeshua) is the head over all just like the Apostle Paul wrote in *Colossians 1:17-20*.

#### ***Colossians 1:17-20***

*1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say whether things on earth or things in heaven. (NASB)*

Can you see the importance of the Scripture reading this week from *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:5-6*, ה' וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵיךְ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל-הָהָא: *5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:6 'Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, (NASB)* The importance of these Scriptures for revealing who we are in Christ the Messiah, a covenant people, and what He has done for the forgiveness of our sins? Praise the Lord for such a wonderful Salvation!

