

פְּרִשְׁתֵּי
פִּינַחָס
Parashat Pinchas

*Bamidbar / Numbers 25:10-30:1, 1 Kings 18:46-19:21
Mark 11:27-12:37*

**Why did Moshe Pray “God of the Spirits” rather than
God of Heaven and Earth?**

In this week’s Torah portion, we read about the zeal of Pinchas (25:10-18), the census of a new generation of people (26:1-65), the Torat of inheritance (27:1-14), Joshua to succeed Moshe (27:15-23), the Torat on the offerings (28:1-31), and the offerings of the seventh month (29:1-40). It is interesting what the Torah has to teach us this week that is found in the Lord telling Moshe he will not enter the Promised Land and Moshe commissioning Joshua to take over according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 27*. We begin by looking at *Bamidbar / Numbers 27:12-14*, יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֶל-הַר הָעֲבָרִים, וְרֵא אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יג וְרֵאִתָּה אֹתָהּ וְנָאֲסֵךְ פֶּתַח אֶל-עַמִּיךָ גַם-אֶתָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר נָאֲסַף אֶהֱרֹן אָחִיךָ: יד כַּאֲשֶׁר מָרִיתָם פִּי בְּמִדְבַר-צֹן בְּמַרְיַבַת הַעֲזָבָה לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי בְּמַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם הֵם מִי-מָרִיבַת קִדְשׁ: *27:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. 27:13 ‘When you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; 27:14 for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water.’ (These are the waters*

of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) Here the Lord God tells Moshe to ascend the mountain (עֲלֵה אֶל-הָרַ), that he is to survey the land that was promised to Israel before he will be gathered to his people. The phrase וְנִאֶסְפָּתָ אֶל-עַמִּי means that he will die, just as his brother Aaron had died. The reason for Moshe not being allowed to enter the land was due to his failure to sanctify (לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי) the Word of the Lord in the eyes of the people. The Targum Jonathan on the Torah states מטול דסרבתון על מימרי במדברא דצין that Moshe spoke against (דסרבתון על) my Memra / word (מימרי) in the wilderness of Zin (במדברא דצין) because Moshe had failed to sanctify (לקדשותי) the Lord. Upon being informed that he was going to die, Moshe was concerned with the people of Israel as not having a shepherd and so he prays to the Lord the following: וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: טוּ יִפְקֹד יְהוָה: אֱשֶׁר-יֵצֵא לִפְנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לִפְנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאֲשֶׁר יְבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדוּת יְהוָה כְּצֹאֵן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-לָהֶם רֹעֵה: 27:15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 27:16 ‘May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 27:17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’ (NASB) While reading this statement, it is interesting how Moshe addresses the Lord when he sates, יִפְקֹד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכֹל-בְּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל-עַל- Moshe states “Lord God of the spirits” (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת). Why do you think Moshe addresses the Lord here in this way as opposed to saying, “God of the heavens” or “God of the earth?” Rashi asks this same question stating the following:

Rashi on Bamidbar / Numbers 27:16 Part 2

GOD OF THE SPIRITS [OF ALL FLESH]
— Why is this expression used? (i.e., why does it not state simply בשר כל בשר?) He said to Him: “Lord of the Universe! the personality of each person is revealed to you, and no two are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will tolerate each person according to his individual character (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 10;

cf. *Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 776*).

Here Rashi draws out the possible reason for Moshe addressing the Lord God in this way was due to the number of persons in Israel. Note just prior to this we are told how Moshe had Israel numbered, all of those men who were able to go to war were approximately 600,000 people. The commentary Or HaChaim draws out another particular aspect of this request saying the following:

Or HaChaim on Bamidbar / Numbers 27:16 Part 1

תַּרְוַחַת אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת, “Let the Lord, the G’d of the spirits appoint, etc.” 1) *Why did Moses choose this most unusual way of describing G’d’s virtues?* 2) *Why was Moses so long-winded in describing the functions of a leader of the people such as ?ואשר יבא?* 3) *Why did he add “let not the Lord’s congregation be as a flock without shepherd?” Whatever possessed Moses to imagine that but for him the Jewish people would remain leaderless and that G’d would abandon them?*

Or HaChaim draws out the idea that Moshe is worried without the proper leadership Israel will walk a way from the Lord and God will abandon her. Israel needs a strong leader who will show them how to follow God’s ways in unity with one another. The rabbis ask the question of why Moshe chose this unusual way of describing God’s attributes saying, אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכָל-בָּשָׂר, “*God of the spirits of all flesh.*” They say this is connected to his request saying יְהוָה עֲדַת יְהוָה וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֲדַת יְהוָה כַּצֹּאֵן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-לָהֶם רֹעֶה “*let not the Lord’s congregation be as a flock without shepherd.*” The people needed someone who would go before them, and lead them in the way of the Lord, to do battle against their enemies, and to led in the ways of God by the Word of God. The rabbinic parallel is to what we read according to *Ezekiel 1:12*, וְאִישׁ אֶל- 1:12 עֵבֶר פָּנָיו יֵלְכוּ אֶל אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה-נְשָׁמָה הָרוּחַ לְלֶכֶת יֵלְכוּ לֹא יִסְבּוּ בְּלִכְתָּן: *And each could move in the direction of any of its faces; they went wherever the spirit impelled them to go, without turning when they moved.* (*Chizkuni on Bamidbar / Numbers 27:16 Part 1*) So the point

of Moshe addressing God in this way was for the purpose of revealing a particular truth in regards to His people. Moshe describes God as inspiring the spirit within a man as well as something more than this, as how the Lord God will bring about a unifying principle within His people, a future expectation of His presence in the hearts and lives of His people. This aspect of unity is a fundamental part of the Gospel Message that is expounded upon in the Apostolic Writings (NT text).

The Scriptures that we are looking at for this week are from *Bamidbar / Numbers 27:12-23*.

ספר במדבר פרק כז

יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֶל-הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה וּרְאֵה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יג וּרְאִיתָה אֹתָהּ וְנִאֲסַפְתָּ אֶל-עַמִּיךָ גַּם-אֹתָהּ כְּאֲשֶׁר נִאֲסַף אֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ: יד כְּאֲשֶׁר מְרִיתֶם פִּי בַמִּדְבָּר-צֹן בְּמְרִיבַת הָעֵדָה לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי בַמִּים לְעֵינֵיהֶם הֵם מִי-מְרִיבַת קֹדֶשׁ מִדְּבַר-צֹן: טו וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: טז יִקְדֹּד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכֹל-בָּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל-הָעֵדָה: יז אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדוּת יְהוָה כִּצְאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אִין-לָהֶם רַעַה: יח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה קַח-לָךְ אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסַמְכָתָ אֶת-יָדָךְ עָלָיו: יט וְהֶעַמְדָתָ אֹתוֹ לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַפָּהֵן וּלְפָנֵי כָל-הָעֵדָה וְצוּיַתָּה אֹתוֹ לְעֵינֵיהֶם: כ וְנִתְמַתָּה מֵהוֹדֶךָ עָלָיו לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ כָל-עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כא וּלְפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַפָּהֵן יַעֲמֵד וְשָׂאל לֹו בְּמִשְׁפַּט הָאוּרִים לְפָנֵי יְהוָה עַל-פִּי וְעַל-פִּי יָבֹאוּ הוּא וְכָל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹתוֹ וְכָל-הָעֵדָה: כב וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיַּעֲמֵדְהוּ לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵי-זָר הַפָּהֵן וּלְפָנֵי כָל-הָעֵדָה: כג וַיִּסְמְךָ אֶת-יָדָיו עָלָיו וַיְצַוְהוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה:

Bamidbar / Numbers 27:12-23

27:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. 27:13 'When you have seen it,

you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; 27:14 for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water.’ (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadash in the wilderness of Zin.) 27:15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 27:16 ‘May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 27:17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’ 27:18 So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 27:19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 27:20 ‘You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 27:21 ‘Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation.’ 27:22 Moses did just as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 27:23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses. (NASB)

The exact number of men able for war is given according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 26:51*, נֹא אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ-מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאַלְפֵי, 26:51 *These are the ones who were numbered of the sons of Israel, 601,730. (NASB)* Taking the census into account, Moshe had been placed in charge of more than 600,000 men and this comprised of 600,000 different personalities. This could easily lead to 600,000 differences in opinion. By this logic, how could Moshe or any leader following Moshe for that matter be expected to bring uni-

formity to all of these men such that they would become a like-minded congregation? The rabbinic mystical approach draws out a particular aspect of faith, the rabbis say that this was accomplished by reason that *“Moshe was able to find a common denominator with each one of them, i.e. to tune in to the wavelength of each Israelite,”* (Or HaChaim on Bamidbar / Numbers 27:16 Part 2) This is the Jewish mystical principle of a soul being the root of all other souls. This follows from the idea of being *“the children of Abraham”* or as having *“the faith of Abraham,”* something we read so often about in the NT. The rabbis say this is also the mystical dimension of *Isaiah 63:11* *Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?* (ASV) Note the parallel here to what we are reading and to Isaiah. This is why God answered Moshe’s prayer saying, - יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי מֹשֶׁה קָח-לְךָ אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסִמְכָתָ אֶת-יָדָי עָלָיו: 27:18 *So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; (NASB)* The significant statement is בּוֹ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-רוּחַ *“the man whom the Spirit is in him.”* This what the Almighty God states is showing us the importance of having the Spirit of God within. This was to answer Moshe’s statement as calling out the attributes of God calling him the God of spirits within all flesh (אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת לְכָל-בָּשָׂר) because only a man having the Spirit of God can lead these people.

These verses speak to a future expectation of a unifying principle in the lives of God’s people such that all of the congregation, all of God’s people would be of one-mind, in unity together. This is expressed according to *John 13:33-35*, as Yeshua giving us a new command to love one another.

John 13:33-35

13:33 Little children, I am with you only a little while longer. You will look for Me, and as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you: ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ 13:34 A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. 13:35 By this everyone will know that you

are My disciples, if you love one another.”

Yeshua describes this principle of unity as loving one another, as we will be known by our love as the disciples of Yeshua. A couple other examples, not limited to these two examples, from *Acts 4:32-35* and *1 Peter 3:8-9*.

Acts 4:32-35

4:32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 4:34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 4:35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. (NASB)

1 Peter 3:8-9

3:8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 3:9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (NIV)

It is important to note how the Torah draws this aspect of our faith out, as Moshe teaching on these things, of unity, love, and righteousness in the midst of God's People. It is interesting how the Torah draws out this aspect of the Gospel message, as the Holy Spirit of God being given to God's people, because the Lord God Almighty is אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַוּחַת the God of the spirits of all flesh! This is a fundamental principle the Torah speaks about which supports this principle of a soul being the root of all other souls, where the Messiah Yeshua is the root of the children of God, having faith in Him we receive the Holy Spirit of God in our midst. What happens then is this unifying of the con-

gregation of God's people! Just like we read according to *Acts 4* and *1 Peter 3*, being of like-mind, sympathetic to one another, compassionate, and humble, where all of these things become easy as having the power of God in our lives by His Spirit and His presence! Because the Torah teaches on this principle, this is why Paul wrote in *1 Corinthians 1:10* to the church in Corinth to "*be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*" Paul's instruction to the Corinthians was to "*be united in the same mind*" calling them to eliminate the "*divisions*" that were causing "*quarreling*" among them. Later, in *2 Corinthians 13:11*, he instructed this same congregation to "*Aim for restoration, ... agree with one another, and live in peace.*" Another parallel is found in *Philippians 4:2* where Paul implored Euodia and Syntyche, members of the church in Philippi, "*to be of the same mind in the Lord.*" These two women were divided over an unspecified issue that caused serious disagreement. In fact, parallel translations reveals to us that Paul is asking them "*to agree in the Lord.*" (*ESV*) The problem was so serious that Paul instructed the entire congregation in Philippi to "*help these women*" (*Philippians 4:3*), and wrote to the whole congregation about being "*of the same mind*" and possessing the "*same love*" (*Philippians 2:2*). Taking these examples from the Apostolic Writings, it is easy to see how significant this week's Torah portion on new leadership is, and the role of the Spirit, love, and peace plays in the life of a believer! These things also reveal to us how the power of God in our lives requires His Spirit to dwell in our midst, in our hearts, in our lives! It is only then that we are able to bring glory to God in our lives, living for Him, and remain in His Messiah as being the root of our faith and life! This week's study reveals to us how deeply rooted the Torah is in the gospel message and the importance, significance, and need to believe in the Messiah of God, Yeshua, Savior and King!