

פרשיות במדבר / Parashat Bamidbar

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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5

A Midrash on Bamidbar / Numbers 3:11-13

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 1:1-4:20

הפטרה: Hosea 2:1-2:23

הברית: Romans 9:22-33

החדשה

- 10 In Parashat Bamidbar (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 3:11-13*) HaShem makes an interesting statement about the sons of Yisrael and in 3:13 says “*for all of the firstborn are mine.*” What is the significance of the firstborn (bechor) and why does HaShem say all of the firstborn are mine? In the portion of the Torah we are discussing (see below) HaShem also says that “*I sanctified to Myself the first born in Ysierael from man to beast.*”
- 15 What is HaShem trying to tell us in this week's reading on the firstborn?

במדבר 3:11-13

11 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה לִקְחֹתִי אֶת־
12 הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחַת כָּל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר
13 רֶחֶם מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיוּ לִי הַלְוִיִּם: כִּי לִי כָּל־בְּכוֹר
בְּיוֹם הַבְּתִי כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לִי
כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאָדָם עַד־בְּהֵמָה לִי יְהִי אֲנִי
יְהוָה:

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In the Ketuvei Shelachim Yeshua is presented at the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) in *Luke 2:22-40*. The presentation of Yeshua took place after Mary's purification according to the Torah mitzvah in *Vayikra / Leviticus 12:1-8*. The visit to the Temple is called “Pidyon HaBen” which means “redemption of the firstborn son,” a ceremony that occurs at the 31st day after ones birthday (see *Shmot / Exodus 13:13* and *Bamidbar / Numbers 18:16*).

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Luke 2:22-40

2:22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 2:23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’), 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, ‘A

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Bamidbar / Numbers 3:11-13

3:11 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 3:12 ‘Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. 3:13 ‘For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord.’ (NASB)

Pidyon HaBen

is a ritual in Judaism when a firstborn son is redeemed from a Kohen in order to release him from his obligation to serve in the Beit Hamikdash.

35 *pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’ 2:25 And there was a man in
Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and
devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon
him. 2:26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he
would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 2:27 And he
40 came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the
child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, 2:28 then he took
Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 2:29 ‘Now Lord, You are
releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;
2:30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation, 2:31 Which You have
45 prepared in the presence of all peoples, 2:32 A Light of revelation to the
Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.’ 2:33 And His father and
mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.
(NASB) Luk2:34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother,
‘Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and
50 for a sign to be opposed 2:35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul
to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.’ 2:36 And
there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of
Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven
years after her marriage, 2:37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-
four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and
55 prayers. 2:38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks
to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for
the redemption of Jerusalem. 2:39 When they had performed everything
according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own
city of Nazareth. 2:40 The Child continued to grow and become strong,
60 increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (NASB)*

The firstborn (bechor) son had the responsibility of being the Kohen (priest) of the family in the temple services. As the bechor the firstborn would be required to offer the avodah (offering) on behalf of the other family members.
65 HaShem said in *Shmot / Exodus 13:2 ‘Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.’ (NASB)* so according to the scriptures the bechor was sanctified to serve as a Kohen. It is interesting in *יצִיאָה הַמּוֹנִיָּה* (the exodus) HaShem spared the bechorim when he issued the 10th plague which was the death of the firstborn.
70 It is here we find the connection to HaShem’s Messiah and the source text for many references in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) on the “firstborn.”

The connection with Yeshua to this week’s portion involves the firstborn son of Mary. Yeshua was of the kingly lineage of Yehudah, he was not a Levite or even from another of the tribes of the Kohanim therefore according to the Torah Yeshua needed to be redeemed. This redemption process was not on account of sin rather, it was in fulfillment of the mitzvah on the bechor (the firstborn). Yeshua’s presentation at the Beit HaMikdash (in *Luke 2:22-40*) the Kohen represented the avodah at Yeshua’s birth. At the end of Yeshua’s life He
80 became the avodah offering on our behalf. The traditional sense of the word

“avodah” was applied to the Korban (sacrifice) in the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) and the word today is used in reference to the main services of the Kohen HaGadol (the High Priest). It is also interesting that Caiaphas (the High Priest) said in *Yochanan / John 11:49-53* that it is better that one man die for the people.

Yochanan / John 11:49-53

11:49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, 11:50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.’ 11:51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 11:52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 11:53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him. (NASB)

Bechor means “firstborn,” referring to both children and livestock in the Tanach (*3:13*). Reading through the Torah it is interesting to note that there appears to be a connection between the firstborn and the first fruits through the use of the word בכור. The root word for Bikurim (ביכורים, first fruits) is בכר which is the same root used for bechor (firstborn). (i.e. The word bikurim is derived from the same hebrew root word for firstborn.) In the Torah, the first fruits must be brought before HaShem in a symbolic act of recognition that all of our fruits are really HaShem’s and not our own. In the Torah, the principle is that the firstborn of man and beast belongs to HaShem and similarly this is also applied to the firstfruits which ripen in the fields beginning with the sheaf of the new barley harvest (the omer) on Reishit Katzir and which culminates upon Shavuot (Shavuot is also known as Chat HaBikurim and refers to the festival of the firstfruits). The various occurrences of bechor and bikur in the Torah are listed below.

בכור (bechor)

Shmot / Exodus 4:22-23, 6:14, 11:5, 12:12, 12:29, 13:2, 13, 15, 22:29

Vayikra / Leviticus 27:26

Bamidbar / Numbers 1:20, 3:2, 12-13, 40-46, 50, 8:16-18, 18:15, 17, 26:5, 33

Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:19, 21:15-17, 25:6, 33:17

בכור (bikur)

Shmot / Exodus 23:16, 23:19, 34:22, 26

Vayikra / Leviticus 2:14, 23:17, 20

Bamidbar / Numbers 13:20, 18:13, 28:26

HaShem’s instructions concerning the bechor (firstborn) is closely linked to the festival of first fruits through the root word בכר. Another connection here is the day following the first day of unleavened bread, called “Chag HaKatzir” (חג

Note:

It is interesting that in sefer *Bereshit / Genesis* we find different stories where the bechor is not taking the lead position. For example, in Parashat Toldot, Yaakov and Esav, where Yaakov takes the lead rather than Esau. In Parashat VaYeshev, Reuben is a failed leader where his calls to spare Yoseph’s life are ignored by his brothers. Yaakov calls him as my first issue first fruit of my vigour but also “unstable as water” (see *Bereshit / Genesis 49:3-4*). Judah being the fourth born becomes the leader of the nation when Yaakov tells him the sceptre shall not depart from Judah.

130 (הקציר), is also a reference to the harvest festival. In ancient times on this day a sheaf (omer) of barley (the first of the grain to ripen in the fields) was waved before HaShem in order to mark the beginning of the counting of the omer which indicated the forty nine day countdown to the harvest festival of Shavuot (feast of weeks, Pentecost).

135 In the Ketuvei Shelachim, Shaul made a connection between the Bechor (firstborn) and Bikurim (first fruits), the wave offering and the resurrection of Yeshua in his letter to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

140 *15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, (NASB)*

145 Here Shaul connects the bikurim (first fruits) with the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua is the first-begotten of the Father (see *Ivrit / Hebrews 1:6*), the firstborn of creation (see *Colossians 1:15-16*), the first born from the dead (see *Hitgalut / Revelation 1:5*), and the first fruits of those who are to be resurrected (*1 Corinthians 15:20-23*).

150 In the bechor (firstborn), the bikurim (first fruits), the festival of Pesach, the counting of the Omer, and the festival of Shavuot, HaShem is trying to tell us something about His ultimate plan for redemption and forgiveness. What then as believers should be our position on celebrating and/or participating in these biblical festivals?

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1. In the Pesach (Passover) salvation and deliverance is represented in the lamb of HaShem which is represented by Yeshua the Messiah.
 - 160 2. In Chag HaMatzot sanctification is represented as leaven is removed from our lives which represents sin. It is in this aspect we put to death our bodies, and the carnal nature.
 - 165 3. In Reishit Katzir, the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah is represented and the glorious hope we have as part of the coming harvest at the end of the age.

170 The Pesach meal is a Torah mitzvah and should be kept by all who call Yeshua Lord of their life. The Pesach meal gives a full picture of Yeshua's death and provision of redemption by His death. The festival of Chat HaMatzot (festival of unleavened bread) is connected to the festival of Shavuot via the counting of the 49 intervening days (counting the Omer). The Hebrew word עמר is translated as "sheaf" and is a reference to the first fruits festival and indirectly to the firstborn according to the Torah. Finally, the

175 Reishit Katzir is a picture of the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah and the
hope that we have in taking part in the coming harvest as we entered into the
Olam Habah (the world to come).

180 In the world today there are many voices that come to us calling us to this
way or to that. In this week's study, the Bible itself stands as our sure guide
and standard revealing the true Messiah Yeshua. In the holy text we are
called once again to the sure and eternal Word of G-d. In all that we have
learned here, it all boils down to the forgiveness of sins. How does HaShem
forgive sin? He forgives on the basis of the eternal and sufficient payment for
sins made by His own Son, Yeshua the Messiah, in his death upon the
execution stake. This is why it is important to view the scriptures as a whole
185 in the Torah, the Neviim (prophets), the Ketuvim (writings) and the Ketuvei
Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) we see how the sacrifices of the Tanach
foreshadow the revealed and ultimate sacrifice in the lamb of G-d (Yeshua).
Believing in Yeshua the Messiah and His Shed blood you too can become a
part of the family of G-d. *Colossians 1:13 For He rescued us from the
190 domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (NASB)*

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever