

Pinchas

פינחס "Phinehas"

Numbers 25:10 - 30:1

Torah Together



This *Torah* portion begins with the story of Phinehas, son of Eliazar the High Priest. His zealousness for God earns him high praise from YHWH. The portion ends with another listing of God's "appointed times," his feast days. This emphasizes the importance God places on these special celebrations.

1. Phinehas - 25:10-18

a) Looking back to the end of last week's parashah, describe the actions of Phinehas.

b) What did God say had motivated Phinehas? What would have been the effect of God's zealousness?

c) What promise did God make to Phinehas? According to verse 13, what did Phinehas' actions do for the Israelites?

d) What were the names of the people killed by Phinehas? Where were they from?

e) How were the Israelites to treat the Midianites? What were God's reasons for this command?

Who were the Midianites?

The Midianites lived in Moab and were intermingled with the Moabites. The term "Midianite" may have referred to their religious practices whereas the term "Moabite" may have referred to where they lived or their heritage as they were descended from Moab, an offspring of Lot. Moab refers to a land area north of Edom, south of Ammon and east of the Dead Sea. The Midianites, however, were a people group that populated the area of the northern Arabian peninsula. This is the same group of people that Jethro (Reuel), Moses' father-in-law, was from. He was said to be a priest of Midian.

Scripture Link:

For another perspective on this incident, see what Saul of Tarsus had to say about it in **1 Corinthians 10:8 - 9**.

2. The Second Census - 26:1-65

a) When and where was this second census taken? Who exactly was counted? Why just these? Why was this important at this time?

Scripture Links:

As we learned in **Numbers** chapter 1, the usual purpose of a census was to prepare for war. The first census was taken soon after the Israelites had left Egypt and were supposedly ready to enter the land of Canaan. Their lack of faith after sending the 12 spies into the land kept this from happening (**Numbers 13**). Now, some 40 years later, the Israelites were again ready to enter the land that God had promised them. So this was a good time to take another census.

Comparing the results of the census at the beginning of their time in the wilderness with the results 40 years later can provide some insight into how the Israelites had changed during that time.

b) Compare the results of this census with that recorded in Numbers 1 and 2. What differences do you notice?

Comparison of Israel's Census

Tribe	Numbers 1 & 2	Numbers 26
Rueben	46,500	43,730
Simeon	59,300	22,200
Gad	45,650	40,500
Judah	74,600	76,500
Issachar	54,400	64,300
Zebulun	57,400	60,500
Ephraim	40,500	32,500
Manasseh	32,200	52,700
Benjamin	35,400	45,600
Dan	62,700	64,400
Asher	41,500	53,400
Naphtali	53,400	45,400
TOTALS	603,550	601,730

c) There are several interesting details included with this census. For example, what happened to the sons of Eliab the Reubenite? Do you remember the story of Judah's sons? Why are Joseph's sons mentioned separately?

d) Why were the Levites counted separately? How many male Levites were counted over the age of 1 month? Why weren't the men over age 20 counted in this case?

e) How many of those who had been counted in the first census (**Numbers 1**) were also included in this census?

3. Zelophehad's Daughters - 27:1-11

a) Who were the daughters of Zelophehad? From what tribe were they? What was unusual about their situation? What did they do about it?

b) What did Moses do about their situation? What instructions did God give to Moses?

c) How did this situation effect future generations of Israelites? Do you think this is a good example of how the Israelites develop their legal system?

Scripture Links:

To read about what happened to the sons of Eliab (verses 8 – 9), see the story of Korah's rebellion in **Numbers 16:1 – 40**.

The story of Er and Onan, sons of Judah (verse 19), can be found in **Genesis 38**.

For the story of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu (verse 61) see **Leviticus 10**.

Scripture Link:

The subject of Zelophehad's daughters is addressed again in **Numbers** chapter **36**. This passage includes further instructions that the daughters are to marry within the tribal clan of their father, thereby assuring that their inheritance would not leave the tribe. Maintaining the original tribal inheritance was of prime importance to the Israelites.

Joshua Succeeds Moses

In Hebrew, his name is *Yehoshua*, which means “YHWH is salvation.” We first meet Joshua in **Exodus 17:9**, when Moses gives him the task of choosing the men who will fight against the Amalekites as the Israelites are leaving Egypt. We next see him as “Moses’ aid” who went with Moses part way up Mt. Sinai when he received the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 24:13**). (Joshua stayed on the mountain until Moses came down with the tablets.) Joshua was also one of the 12 men sent to spy out the land of Canaan in **Numbers 13**. (He was one of two who came back with a good report, noting that the Israelites could indeed take the land.) And Joshua did in fact lead the Israelites into Canaan and presided over the division of the land among the 12 tribes, as told in the **book of Joshua**. Joshua is a great model of a strong and devoted man of God. It’s no accident that our Messiah shares his name.

4. Joshua to Succeed Moses - 27:12-23

a) What did God tell Moses to do at the beginning of this passage? How do you think Moses felt about the news God gave him? What was his first concern?

b) What was God’s solution to Moses concern? What part were Moses and Eleazar to have in the process God commanded? Why do you think this process was necessary?

“May YHWH, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so YHWH’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

Numbers 27:16 - 17

c) Do you think Joshua would have the same type of relationship with God that Moses had? Why or why not? What were his qualifications for the job?

5. Daily, Sabbath and Monthly Offerings - 28:1 - 28:15

a) What was to be offered as a burnt offering to YHWH each day? When were these offerings to be made?

b) In addition to the daily sacrifices, what was to be offered on the Sabbath?

c) In addition to the daily sacrifices, what was to be offered as a burnt offering on the first of each month? What other type of offering was to be made at this time? How was the first of the month recognized?

6. The Passover - 28:16-25

When was the Passover to be celebrated? In addition to the daily offerings, what other offerings were to be made at this time? How many days were these offerings to be made?

7. Feast of Weeks - 28:26-31

In addition to the regular daily offerings, what offerings were to be made at *Shavaot* (the Feast of Weeks)?

8. Feast of Trumpets - 29:1-6

When was the Feast of Trumpets celebrated? In addition to the regular daily and monthly offerings, what other offerings were to be made?

The New Moon Offering

The calendar that God defined in the Torah is based on both the sun and the moon. The first day of any month occurs at the new moon which is fairly easily observed. (The word "month" is derived from "moon.")

This description of the New Moon festival and offering is unusual in that it only appears in the book of **Numbers**. One might expect that it would be included with the description of the other feasts in the book of **Leviticus**. The reason for this is not known.

The Appointed Times of God

God's appointed times (*moedim* in Hebrew) are also described in **Leviticus** chapters **16** and **23**. In addition to the weekly *shabbat*, and monthly New Moon feasts, there are seven set times in the year when God's people are to do no regular work and to hold a sacred assembly. The description of these appointed times given here differs from the one given in **Leviticus** in that it focuses on the offerings that are to be made at each one. Both passages should be studied together to get a complete picture of God's holy days.

In general, each appointed time serves two purposes. One is to remember a time in the past when God blessed His people in some way. A second purpose is to rehearse for a future event yet to come in God's prophetic calendar, so that His people might be prepared for the future. For more information on this subject, see the companion study on the book of **Leviticus**.

9. Day of Atonement - 29:7-11

There are several offerings made on this day. What is the specific offering described here? What other offerings (described elsewhere) are made in addition to these?

10. Feast of Tabernacles - 29:12-40

a) When is the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated? How long does it last?

b) Prepare a table listing the different offerings to be made for each of the days in **Sukkot** (the Feast of Tabernacles). Did these offerings take the place of the regular daily offerings? Why do you suppose this celebration is so different than the rest?

Digging deeper

1. The story of Phinehas has many interesting implications. For example, why was Phinehas rewarded by God for such a violent act instead of being reprimanded or punished? Or, how did the killing of Zimri and Cozbi “make atonement for the Israelites?” What can you learn by rereading and considering this story further?

2. **Numbers** Chapters **28** and **29** list the sacrificial offerings that the Israelites were to make during the year. Calculate how many animals and how much grain, wine, and oil were used. Now read **Hebrews** chapter **10**. Does this take on any new significance to you?

Total Yearly Sacrifices

	Bulls	Rams	Lambs	Grain	Drink	Goats
Daily (x 365)			730	1,460 l.	730 l.	
Shabbat (x 52)			104	416 l.	104 l.	
Rosh Hodesh (x12)	24	12	84	360 l.	147 l.	12
Pesach	14	7	49	210 l.	86 l.	1
Shavaot	2	1	7	40 l.	12 l.	1
Yom Teru'ah	1	1	7	24 l.	10 l.	1
Yom Kippor	1	1	7	24 l.	10 l.	3
Sukkot Day 1	13	2	14	112 l.	42 l.	1
Day 2	12	2	14	106 l.	40 l.	1
Day 3	11	2	14	100 l.	38 l.	1
Day 4	10	2	14	94 l.	36 l.	1
Day 5	9	2	14	88 l.	34 l.	1
Day 6	8	2	14	82 l.	32 l.	1
Day 7	7	2	14	78 l.	30 l.	1
Day 8	1	1	7	24 l.	10 l.	1
TOTALS	113	37	1,093	3,218 l.	1,361 l.	26

For further study, see

Haftarah : 1 Kings 18:46-19:21

Brit Hadashah : Matthew 26:1-30; Mark 14:1-26; Luke 22:1-20;
John 2:13-22; 7:1-13, 37-39; 11:55-12:1; 13:1;
18:28,39; 19:14; Acts 2:1-21; 12:3-4; 20:5-6;
16: 27:9-11; 1 Cor 5:6-8; 16:8; Hebrews 11:28