



## Parasha Pinchas

July 3, 2021

*Torah:* Numbers 25:10-30:1

*Haftarah:* 1Kings 18:46-19:21

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* John 2:13-17

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* Our *parasha* today is *Pinchas*. It is named for the son of *El'azar*, Eleazar, Aaron's son who succeeded his father and was the new High Priest. What *Pinchas*, Phineas, did was described in last week's *parasha*, *Balak*. What he did brought him a reward from ADONAI, a covenant of *shalom*. *Pinchas* and his zeal for serving ADONAI is our focus today.

There are four other subjects in this *parasha*. ADONAI commanded *Moshe* and *El'azar* the High Priest, Aaron's son, to take a census of the men twenty years of age and over who could serve in the army. The total was 601,730 men. The census was also for the purpose of dividing the Land of Canaan by lottery among the tribes and families of Israel. At this time, none of the regular Israelites who came out of Egypt remained alive except Joshua and Caleb, men who were counted in the census as fighting men. Moses, Eleazar and the other priests and Levites remained alive along with the women. Only the men who could bear arms had died out. The Levites were also counted in the census and there were 23,000 of them, but they were not counted for the purpose of inheritance. ADONAI's plan for them was that they would not receive a land inheritance, but a set number of towns and the surrounding pastureland.

The five daughters of *Tzelof'chad*, Zelophehad, went before Moses and asked to be allowed to inherit the portion of the land belonging to their father who died without having sons. These were women of the first generation who lived to see the Land of Promise. This *parasha* tells that their father died in the wilderness for his sin. Tradition has it that he picked up sticks on *Shabbat*. ADONAI accepted their claim and it became *Torah* law for inheritance that females could inherit as well as males.

ADONAI told Moses that he was to go up on a mountain and view the Land. After he had seen the Land of Promise, he would be gathered to his ancestors. This was his punishment for rebelling against ADONAI and striking the rock for water rather than speaking to it. In Deuteronomy 34 we are told that the mountain was Nebo and it was not until then, right before Israel entered Canaan that Moses died, some 15 *parshiyot* later. This was just advance warning. ADONAI also told Moses to place some of his spirit on Joshua and give him *s'micha*, ordination and he did that by laying hands on him before Eleazar the High Priest.

The final subject of this *parasha* is a detailed list of the daily offerings and additional sacrifices which were to be brought to the Tabernacle. They were enumerated for *Shabbat*, *Rosh Chodesh* and the festivals of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot* and *Shemini Atzeret*.

What did *Pinchas* do to earn a covenant of *shalom* from ADONAI? We have to go back to last week's *parasha* to get the details. The men of Israel were having sexual relations with the women of Moab and worshipping their idol god *Ba'al Peor* with them. 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you, kill your men who have been joining themselves to Baal of Peor." 6 Then behold, a man from Bnei-Yisrael came and brought a Midianite woman to his brothers before the eyes of Moses and of the whole assembly of Bnei-Yisrael, while they were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting! 7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the kohen saw it, he arose from the midst of the assembly, took a spear in his hand, 8 and went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced them through—both the Israelite man and the woman's belly. Then the plague among Bnei-Yisrael was stopped (Numbers 25:5-8 TLV).

What do we know about *Pinchas*? From what we just read, we know that he was Eleazer's son and was the grandson of Aaron. That's all we know at this time. It just says *Pinchas*, not *Pinchas* the *kohen*. But he was actually a *kohen* at the time of this event. He is not listed as a priest in any previous Scripture for good reason, he was not a priest. But, his father *El'azar*, a son of Aaron, was a priest, and he had recently succeeded his father Aaron as High Priest. That's when *Pinchas* became a priest; when his father became the High priest. There is a theory by *Rashi* that he was not a priest because he was already born when his father Eleazar became a priest. Exodus 6:25 does tell us that *Pinchas* was born before the Exodus. But, that's not it. It is simply that only sons are priests, not grandsons. And *Pinchas* did not become a *kohen* until his father became High Priest. Then he was a son of the High Priest.

By putting a spear through the bellies of two fornicating people, *Pinchas* stopped the plague which ADONAI had brought. ADONAI approved of his response to this emergency and rewarded him with a covenant of *shalom* which was a covenant of everlasting priesthood for his family. 12 "So now say: See, I am making with him a covenant of *shalom*! 13 It will be for him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood—because he was zealous for his God and atoned for Bnei-Yisrael" (Numbers 25:12-13 TLV). Our Scripture readings today reflect the zeal of Yeshua, Elijah and *Pinchas*. Zeal is what ADONAI wants from us.

What caused *Pinchas* to act so quickly? *Torah* tells us that this Israelite man brought a Midianite woman: *before the eyes of Moses and of the whole assembly of Bnei-Yisrael, while they were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting*. The implication is that they engaged in sex defiantly before the Tabernacle. *Pinchas* had the authority to kill the man because Moses had just said: "Each of you, kill your men who have been joining themselves to Baal of Peor." But, it wasn't just on Moses authority. ADONAI had commanded it: Adonai said to Moses, "Seize all the ringleaders and hang them before Adonai facing the sun, so that Adonai's fierce anger may be turned away from Israel." ADONAI's fierce anger against Israel had brought about a plague and 24,000 had already died. But, *Pinchas's* action stopped the plague. What he did pleased ADONAI and he received a covenant of *shalom* with the benefit of "an everlasting priesthood," whatever that means. We won't go into that now.

We wouldn't be likely to do something like that here in our day even if someone blatantly defied ADONAI in the synagogue. In our society that would be murder. We can't compare our actions with what *Pinchas* did, except that we know that we should act for ADONAI within the limits of law in some way. Did *Pinchas* act because he was a *kohen*? Did he do it because as a *kohen*, he was also a judge? Did he have confidence to do it because Moses was his uncle or the High Priest was his father? Or was it something else? Was it

fear of ADONAI? I believe that fear of ADONAI may be close to the answer. What character trait do you think would have motivated him to take such drastic action? What was it?

Would you say that it was faith? Do you think that might be it? What kind of faith did *Pinchas* have? According to the most common definition, it is defined as “trust or confidence, a belief in religion or G-d, or a strongly held belief.” Is “faith” just about belief? But, that is what a majority of followers of Yeshua believe that it is. Why do you think that they believe that and why do many of us in Messianic Judaism believe that? This is my opinion and my terminology, but it is because we have been infected with the leaven of the King James Version. Today, faith in Jesus is understood most often to be spiritual zeal, earnestly believing that G-d will do something that you want Him to do or something that He said He will do. Don't misunderstand me. That kind of faith, that kind of trust in ADONAI is important. But, it's only a part of what the word means. And, many of us in Messianic Judaism have also come to understand it that way because early impressions, things that we learned early are difficult to unlearn.

There is no way that we can know *Pinchas*' mind, but I would make an educated guess that faith had something to do with it, but not the kind of faith which we just described. When I said that we have been infected with the leaven of the King James Version, I was referring to its underlying theology, antinomianism. This is not a new subject for us. We've discussed it a number of times before, but maybe it's time to go into it more deeply. The fact that you and I may have had that view of faith at some time in the past or still do, is because the King James Bible is antinomian. What is it? As an adjective, antinomian is the view that Christians are released by grace from the obligation of observing the Mosaic law. It can also be a noun, and as a noun, an antinomian is a person who holds that belief.

The antinomianism of the King James Bible pervades Christianity and has since 1611. It was there before that, but this Bible has had more influence than any other. It's had a few updates since then, but has kept its antinomian character. And it has also influenced other versions of the Bible which came after it. For 410 years, Christianity has been majorly influenced by the theologians, the translators of the Bible authorized by King James of England. The Scofield Study Bible which came out in 1909 in King James Version has been a major contributor to the Christian mindset of today and also to the mindset of many who have become Messianic in belief. We have been influenced by this too. Think of how many sermons you may have heard in past years which were unknowingly following the theology of the King James Version. It sinks in and is hard to get rid of.

What is antinomian about the KJV? We have talked before about additional words in italics, words which in many cases did help in the basic understanding. And, you find those in all Bibles. But there were also words which supported the antinomian theology behind it. The publisher of this and other Bibles which add words are really not violating ADONAI's rule if they are innocently used to enhance understanding. 2 *“You must not add to the word that I am commanding you or take away from it—in order to keep the mitzvot of Adonai your God that I am commanding you”* (Deuteronomy 4:2 TLV). ADONAI also has a theology and He made it clear through the writers whom He inspired. His command is not to add or take away anything which has to do with the keeping of His *mitzvot*. This verse is really about the understanding that *mitzvot* are for us and not about a word of explanation here or there. It is about the intent to change what ADONAI said and meant. Without any theological additions, the Bible is not antinomian. It very clearly reveals that ADONAI's laws, really Yeshua's laws, are good and are to be followed within the changes which He, Himself, makes.

For example, with the destruction of the Temple and the disappearance of the Levitical priesthood 2000 years ago, about 80% of the *mitzvot* in the Five Books of Moses were rendered inactive for those who do not live in Israel. That's my estimation. But if we continually read a Bible with something that's been added, without realizing it we eventually come to accept it right along with the words of the Bible itself. That particular Bible's theology merges right into the text and becomes one with it. But, there is a fine line here. Words italicized or put in parenthesis in order to aid in understanding difficult words is one thing. But, deliberately promoting a theology is another.

But, the KJV is just the mother of this activity, and today most modern versions of the Bible have followed suit and have become even more antinomian. Here are two verses from the Contemporary English Version: <sup>18</sup> He answered, "Don't you know what I am talking about by now? You surely know that the food you put into your mouth cannot make you unclean. <sup>19</sup> It doesn't go into your heart, but into your stomach, and then out of your body." *By saying this, Jesus meant that all foods were fit to eat.* (Mark 7:18-19 CEV). Yeshua was talking about the Pharisees addition to *Torah* which required ritual washing of arms up to the elbows before eating. It was not about what was eaten. But, the CEV blatantly took it out of context and added other words to support their theology. And they didn't even bother to italicize what they added. This is my underlining. This is clearly antinomian. The NIV is similar for the same verses: <sup>18</sup> "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? <sup>19</sup> For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) (Mark 7:18-19 NIV). That's my underlining again. The NIV did use parentheses to designate the added words, but their message is the same as the CEV. The general teaching of antinomianism is that Christians do not have to keep what they call the ceremonial law or the judicial law, but only the moral law. Even though these verses had nothing to do with the kosher laws, they took the opportunity to interject their theology. Here is one more example. *Shimon Kefa* is on the roof of Simon the Tanner's house and a sheet came down from heaven filled with all kinds of unclean animals: <sup>14</sup> But Peter said, "Lord, I can't do that! I've never eaten anything that is unclean and not fit to eat." <sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him again, "When God says that something can be used for food, don't say it isn't fit to eat" (Acts 10:14-15 CEV). That's a pretty blatant violation of context, wouldn't you say? According to the TLV, verse 15 reads: *15 Again a voice came to him, a second time: "What God has made clean, you must not consider unholy"* (Acts 10:15 TLV). The context, which *Kefa* himself explained twice, once to Cornelius and once to his Messianic brothers in Jerusalem, was that the unclean animals in the sheet represented Gentiles and had nothing to do with food.

Please don't think that I am trying to tell Christians how to interpret Scripture. These words today are for us Messianics who may still be holding onto what we may have learned earlier. Christians and their leaders are to be the interpreters of what they believe. My prayer for them is that they would be Berean (Acts 17:10-11) and search the Scriptures to see if what they heard or read is true. We are all guilty of just hearing and reading and not checking. Just think what the body of Yeshua would be like today if we all found out for ourselves if what we heard or read was true.

But the added words are just the tip of the iceberg. An equally great problem is how words are translated. In taking the action which he did, was the faith of *Pinchas* the kind of faith most thought of today? Was his faith only belief or was it something more? The *Torah* says this about it. Moses spoke these words just a few months after the incident at *Peor*: *19 "Adonai saw, and He spurned His sons and His daughters out of vexation. 20 He said, "I will*

*hide My face from them, I want to see their hereafter. For they are an upside down generation, children with no faithfulness in them*” (Deuteronomy 32:20 TLV). This verse is from what is called the Song of Moses which he spoke just before he went up on the mountain and died and Israel went into Canaan. Moses was prophetically seeing the future, that is, how Israel would sin against ADONAI in the years to come. The Hebrew for “no faithfulness in them” is *lo-emun bam*, לֹא-אֱמוּנָם בָּם. The King James Version translates it “children in whom there is no faith.” Do you see the difference? According to Strong’s Concordance, the Hebrew word *emun*, the word in this verse, means faithfulness. The King James translators chose to avoid the word “faithfulness.” The difference in the two words is the difference between just belief and belief plus action. Belief is necessary and *emun*, faithfulness, includes that understanding in its meaning. You also have to believe in order to act. But, the KJV chose to ignore the fact that ADONAI through Moses was speaking about being faithful to His commands. This is an antinomian translation of the Hebrew word *emun*. And, years future from that day, ADONAI did hide His face from Israel and punished them severely for their unfaithfulness. Will ADONAI hide His face from us if we don’t keep His *mitzvot*? Does it apply to us? The more you know, the more is required of you. I don’t believe that not keeping all of the *mitzvot* will keep you “out of heaven,” so to speak, but it can affect us. Yeshua, the author of *Torah*, said: 19 “Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19a TLV).

What does the word *emun* mean to ADONAI? What does “faithfulness” mean to Him? We can determine how He views it by understanding the inspiration which He gave in other verses of Scripture. David said: 29 “Turn me away from the deceitful way, and be gracious to me with Your Torah. 30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness. I have set my heart on Your judgments” (Psalm 119:29-30 TLV). Faithfulness begins with trust in ADONAI and ends with keeping His commandments. The way of faithfulness is keeping His commandments. Yeshua, the author of *Torah*, said: 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments”. (John 14:15 TLV). David also said: 6 “I look to the faithful of the land, so that they can be my companions; those who live lives of integrity can be servants of mine” (Psalms 101:6 CJB). Faithful is translated from *be’ne’emne*, בְּנֵי־אֱמוּנָה. It’s root is *aman*, אָמַן, which means to confirm or support. It’s the word from which we get *amen*. You can also see *amein*, the *aleph*, *mem* and *nun* in *be’ne’emne*. I didn’t use the TLV here because they translated *be’ne’emne* as trustworthy and although trustworthy and faithful are synonyms, faithful better conveys David’s meaning. But, the TLV conveys the second underlined section, “lives of integrity,” better. 6 “My eyes are on the trustworthy of the land, to be in my company. One walking in a blameless way will serve me” (Psalm 101:6 TLV). Walking comes from *halak*, הָלַךְ, a word which we associate with obedience to ADONAI’s *Torah*. Its derivative is *Halakha*, meaning how we walk, how we are to keep His commandments. Blameless comes from *tamim*, תָּמִים, meaning complete or perfect. Putting all this together, we can understand that being “faithful” means that we walk in ADONAI’s *Torah*. There is not always one best Bible version and we should regularly go deeper than just the translated words.

Each of us should be consulting Hebrew and Greek concordances when we seek to understand a Scripture passage. There are usually several possibilities of translations that Bible translators could use for most words and it usually comes down to their choice, how it best fits their theology. I’ll pick on the King James Version again even though the other

versions would have similar numbers. The numbers that I am referring to are how many times we find the word faith in the “New Testament” of the King James Version. It’s actually found there 245 times and the word faithful is only found there 54 times. Faithfulness is not found there at all. But, all three words, faith, faithful and faithfulness, are represented by the same Greek word, *pistis*. It can mean faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity and faithfulness. The translator chooses which to use. In the case of the KJV in the writings of Yeshua’s disciples, their translators chose to focus most often on the meaning of faith as belief and not faithfulness.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that faith is a substance: 1 *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of realities not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1 TLV). The TLV entitles this chapter “The Faithful See From Afar.” In most Bibles it’s called “the Faith Chapter.” Perhaps a better name for this it would be “The Faithfulness Chapter.” The word faith in this verse is translated from *pistis*, meaning either faith or faithful. Substance is translated from *hupostasis*, meaning a support, substance, steadiness, hence assurance. *Hupostasis* relates to an action and not just a belief. When you have faith, you believe, but you also do something. 8 *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he was going* (Hebrews 11:8 TLV). Abraham believed G-d, but he also obeyed Him. He did what he was told to do. The TLV translated this as faith, but if we go deeper, we understand that it was also faithfulness because Abraham’s faith led him to quite a bit of action.

Yeshua’s brother *Ya’akov*’s words show us what Abraham understood: 17 *“So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself”* (James 2:17 TLV). Faith comes from *pistis* and works comes from *ergon*, meaning work, task, employment, a deed or action. In saying this, *Ya’a’cov* was not just talking about good works such as giving to the poor or helping to repair someone’s house. He was talking about obeying *Torah*. He also said: 26 *“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead”* (James 2:26 TLV). Faith and works are again *pistis* and *ergon* and *Ya’a’cov*’s message is the same. Faith in ADONAI and Yeshua without obedience to their commands is dead! That’s what *Ya’a’cov* meant. If you only believe, your faith is dead. This lines up with ADONAI’s words through Ezekiel: 27 *“I will put My Ruach within you. Then I will cause you to walk in My laws, so you will keep My rulings and do them”* (Ezekiel 36:27 TLV). Everybody doesn’t hear it, but ADONAI’s Spirit is urging us to be faithful, to walk in His *Torah*.

One of the most famous verses about faith is Habakkuk 2:4: 4 *“Behold, the puffed up one— his soul is not right within him, But the righteous will live by his trust”* (Habakkuk 2:4 TLV). I really think the TLV missed it here by using trust. They are essentially saying the same thing as the KJV which uses the word “faith.” The underlying Hebrew word is *emunah* and according to Strong’s, it means firmness, steadfastness or fidelity. *Emunah* comes from *emun* which means faithfulness. In my opinion, this verse is best interpreted as “the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.” In my opinion, the Complete Jewish Bible interprets it best: 4 *“Look at the proud: he is inwardly not upright; but the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness”* (Habakkuk 2:4 CJB). This again shows the need to be Berean in our study. I hope that each of you is reading from a Hebrew based Bible and not an antinomian Bible.

Do you want to be considered righteous by ADONAI? Zechariah and Elizabeth were. 5 *In the days of Herod, King of Judah, there was a kohen named Zechariah from the priestly division of Abijah. Elizabeth, his wife, was from the daughters of Aaron. 6 Together they were*

*righteous before Adonai, walking without fault in all His commandments and instructions* (Luke 1:5-6 TLV). They were *tzaddiqim*, righteous ones. This had nothing to do with salvation because it was before Yeshua was even born. Did you know that you can be both righteous and saved, all at the same time? Salvation is based upon a decision to trust Yeshua as the perfect sacrifice for your sins and is provided for us as an act of ADONAI's grace, His *chesed*, חֶסֶד. But, righteousness is different. You have to do something. You have to be faithful. And, what does faithfulness mean Biblically? It means that we do what ADONAI has told us to do. It means that we do our best to walk in His commandments. We won't be perfect because we're human. But, if our heart intent is to be faithfully obedient to His *mitzvot*, and so also are our actions, I believe that He considers us righteous. What is a *tzaddiq*, צַדִּיק? The dictionary says that it is: "a righteous and saintly person by Jewish religious standards." But, what about G-d's standards? It is someone like Zechariah and Elizabeth who seek to walk blamelessly in His commands. You, too, can be a *tzaddiq*, a righteous person just like Zechariah and Elizabeth if you make every effort to walk faithfully in the *mitzvot* which we can keep today.

This is not works righteousness. This is how we serve ADONAI by walking in our Messiah Yeshua's footsteps. It's a heart thing. Yeshua said: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." It's making commandments #1 and #2 important daily. Love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. If we love ADONAI that strongly, we will want to obey Him. Yeshua's said: 6 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied*" (Matthew 5:6 TLV). If we understand what righteousness is, shouldn't we be zealous for it? *Shabbat shalom!*