



Parasha Shelach

June 25, 2022

Torah: Numbers 13:1-15:41

Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24

Ketuwim Shlichim: Hebrews 3:7-19

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *Torah* portion is *Shelach* and begins with these words: *1 Adonai spoke to Moses saying, 2 “Send some men on your behalf to investigate the land of Canaan, which I am giving to Bnei-Yisrael.”* (Numbers 13:1-2a TLV). This *parasha* begins with the sending out of the twelve spies. ADONAI was ready to fulfill His promise to Israel regarding giving them the land of Canaan and He commanded Moses to send out twelve men to investigate it. The twelve men are spoken of as each being a *nasi*, a prince; a sub-leader from each of the tribes, a man able to bear arms and fight for Israel. There was no man among them from the tribe of Levi. Thus, the twelve were made up of leaders from ten tribes plus men from the two half-tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manassah. But, after forty days of investigating the land which ADONAI promised to Abraham, a land ADONAI described as a land flowing with milk and honey, ten of the twelve men returned with a bad report. But, Caleb and Joshua felt the opposite. *30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “We should definitely go up and capture the land, for we can certainly do it!”* (Numbers 13:30 TLV). The report of the ten was a report of fear and through their own fear, they influenced all of the people to rebel against ADONAI. *6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes.* (Numbers 14:6 TLV). But, the people continued in their rebellion. As a result, the ten unfaithful spies were killed by ADONAI and He sentenced all that were twenty years and older to wander for forty years in the desert; one year for each of the forty days the twelve spies investigated the land of Canaan. The Levites were not included in this group.

This terrible event was to be the first of a number of events which are commemorated in the history of Israel on that specific day. Our reading from the *Sh’lichim* today in Hebrews 3 refers to what happened then as “the rebellion.” *7 Therefore, just as the Ruach ha-Kodesh says, “Today if you hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness.”* (Hebrews 3:7-8 TLV). As time went on, what happened on that day remained in the hearts of the leaders of Israel. Later leaders of Israel decided that “the rebellion” occurred on the ninth of the month of *Av*, in Hebrew, *Tisha b’Av*. Later, the destruction of both the first and second Temples and other tragic national events occurred on the 9th of *Av*. They were great tragedies for the Jews, tragedies which continue to be mourned every year. We wish that we could say that these three major things which happened were unfortunate events which occurred to a faithful people. But, that is not the case and Scripture reveals the truth. There is no doubt that the ten spies and the people themselves rebelled against ADONAI when they were in the wilderness. Solomon’s Temple was also destroyed on *Tisha b’Av*. When it was destroyed in 586BCE by the Babylonians, the judgment had already been predicted by the prophets. It was a judgment from ADONAI for the people’s idolatry and their turning away from Him. Almost beyond belief, the Second Temple was destroyed on *Tisha b’Av* in the year 70CE by the Romans. There is no direct Scriptural evidence that ADONAI motivated the Romans to do this. There is only one

reference to the destruction of the Temple in the *Ketuvim Sh'lichim* and it is by Yeshua, a prophecy predicting its destruction. *1 Now when Yeshua went out and was going away from the Temple, His disciples came up to point out to Him the Temple buildings. 2 "Don't you see all these?" He responded to them. "Amen, I tell you, not one stone will be left here on top of another—every one will be torn down!"* (Matthew 24:1-2 TLV). Even though none of Yeshua's *talmidim* wrote that ADONAI motivated the Romans to be His instrument of judgment as He had done with the Babylonians, we, nevertheless, have the strong feeling that the destruction of the Second Temple was a definite part of ADONAI's plan. A number of other sad events happened to the Jewish people on *Tisha b'Av*. These, however, were not their fault and a result of antisemitism.

The rabbis in the years after 70CE pondered this and they presented their own ideas about why the Temple was destroyed. It was, they say, because of *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred. It was a hatred so strong among the Jews themselves, division between the different sects of Judaism, that it prevented them from coming together to resist the Romans. This reminds us of what we see today in our nation. We have groups of people placing their own interests, their own hates, above the needs of our nation. This kind of mob activity if left unchecked could actually destroy our nation from within.

Even though there was sin against ADONAI leading up to these three instances of *Tisha b'Av*, in each of these situations there were also righteous ones. In Numbers 13 they were Joshua and Caleb. The righteous were also present in Israel during the times of the destruction of the First and Second Temples. The righteous had to suffer the consequences along with the guilty. There has always been a faithful remnant in every generation, but their voices were not always powerful enough to overcome the multitude of unfaithful ones.

It is necessary that we be faithful, faithful to understand and follow ADONAI's instructions to us. We must be a calm voice of reason, a voice which encourages others to seek a relationship with ADONAI through Yeshua. ADONAI created mankind to be in fellowship with Him. He wants to have a relationship with us. But, how can we have a relationship with a holy G-d Who cannot look upon sin? It's a simple answer, one which many reject because of its simplicity. It's through the blood of an innocent sacrifice whose blood covers our sin. ADONAI said: *11 "For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life."* (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). Yeshua is that sacrifice for all who call upon Him. A holy G-d cannot look upon sin and we must have His bloody covering between us and ADONAI.

Today, some followers of Yeshua minimize sin. One very popular teacher even teaches that the grace provided through salvation is sufficient to provide forgiveness for all future sins; without ever having to confess or ask for forgiveness ever again. According to him, it's all taken care of at one time and all one has to do after the salvation experience is to live in love; love G-d and our neighbors. But, it's not quite that easy. The truth is that sin can be crouching at our door as it did with Cain (Genesis 4:7). When we are tempted, if we don't rule over temptation, sin separates us from the holiness of our Creator.

Sin was unknown in the earth until our ancestor Adam disobeyed ADONAI in *Gan Eden*, the Garden of Eden. The earth that G-d created was a perfect and sinless one. But, once Adam sinned, sin continued. *Sha'ul* teaches us: *12 "So then, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, in the same way death spread to all men because all sinned."* (Romans 5:12 TLV). Sin caused death, both physical and spiritual. Sin

continued with Adam and Eve's son Cain and continued in their descendants for the next thousands of years, but it was not considered sin at that time because there was no *Torah*. Without guidelines to tell what sin is, even though there was evil, no violation occurred. *Sha'ul* continued: 14 *"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in a manner similar to the violation of Adam, who is a pattern of the One to come"* (Romans 5:14 TLV). What does this mean? From the time of our ancestor Adam's sin until Moses and the giving of the *Torah*, death reigned, physical death and also spiritual death. Spiritual death occurred for those during that time because there was no method of redemption. But, when the *Torah*, symbolized by "Moses" in this verse, was given, it brought both guidelines for living and a method of redemption. At that point in history, the giving of *Torah* at Sinai, we can ask the question; what is sin? Yeshua's disciple John, an Israelite who lived under the Mosaic Covenant, put it this way: 4 *"Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness"* (1John 3:4 TLV). Sin is lawlessness; the breaking of laws which we are legally required to follow. We, who are in covenant with ADONAI have agreed to these laws. *Torah* means teaching or instruction, but contains laws within it. The Complete Jewish Bible puts that same verse this way: 4 *"Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah - indeed, sin is violation of Torah"* (1John 3:4 CJB). From that point on, the giving of *Torah* at Sinai, those in covenant with ADONAI must deal with sin. Those outside *Torah*, the people of the nations, the pagans of the world, had no requirement not to sin. They robbed and stole, killed babies and practiced homosexuality and committed many other wicked things. But, they were not judged by *Torah*. They were not judged because they had no laws and they died without redemption because they had no means of redemption. *Torah* only judges those subject to *Torah*.

Looking further into the question of sin, we go back to *Sha'ul* in Romans: 18 *"So then, through the transgression of one, condemnation came to all men."* (Romans 5:18a TLV). The "one" referred to is Adam and "condemnation" is a reference to what we know as "original sin." Because Adam sinned, he brought sin into the world and into the nature of his descendants. The condition of being in sin, condemnation, is spiritual and causes a separation from our Creator for both pagan and worshipper of ADONAI, unless there is a way to re-establish the relationship. The second part of this verse provides the answer to that condemnation: 18...*"likewise, through the righteousness of one came righteousness of life to all men."* (Romans 5:18b TLV). That "one" is Yeshua through Whom we can achieve righteousness in our lives, right standing before ADONAI. But, we can only achieve righteousness through Yeshua by being in covenant with ADONAI.

How does that work in our American Christian society? In a typical church setting, a person convicted of sinfulness in his heart, accepts Jesus as his Savior, trusts in His sacrifice. What he does that, he also enters into covenant with ADONAI through the New Covenant which Yeshua inaugurated with His blood, a covenant between ADONAI and Israel. But, that person usually doesn't know it because he hasn't been taught. Nevertheless, he is in covenant with G-d, a covenant partner of Israel and in the covenant there are covenant requirements. How he obeys or disobeys is only judged by Yeshua. He has free will and the right before Yeshua to make his own decision regarding obedience. But, it is clear from Scripture that a person cannot continue sinning without risk of judgement.

What is the make-up of a human being? We are very complex beings. We live in a body and have a soul, but Scripture teaches us that a person is more than just a body and a soul. A person also has a spirit, a G-d breathed spirit, through which we can connect with ADONAI on a spiritual level. 7 *Then Adonai Elohim formed the man out of the dust from the*

ground and He breathed into his nostrils a breath of life—so the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7 TLV). ADONAI breathed into Adam's body *nishmat chayim*, נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים, breath of life, and he became a *nefesh chaya*, נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, a living being. We live as living human beings because G-d's breath has been breathed into us. When we trust in Yeshua, something more happens. The *Ruach ADONAI*, רוּחַ אֲדֹנָי, the Spirit of G-d, enters us and joins with our *ruach*, our spirit. Our body will die at our appointed time, but our spirit is eternal and will live forever. It will live with ADONAI if we know Yeshua, but those not in covenant with G-d will live forever totally separated from Him. Scripture doesn't address it directly, but seems to indicate that our soul, our consciousness, also lives. Consider, Saul's calling up of the spirit of Samuel (1Samuel 28:7-20).

Orthodox Judaism also believes in the immortality of the soul and life after death. And, they look forward to the resurrection of the dead when the Messiah comes. They believe He will come, but they don't believe that Yeshua is He. They expect a living Jew to rise up and fulfil the role of *Mashiach*. Their understanding of the soul is complicated and depending upon whom you are listening to, there are also differences in what is believed. Within whatever framework modern Judaism believes with regard to the soul, we can add what the *Talmud* teaches. It says that people are born with two natures within them. There is the *yetzer ha-tov*, the good impulse, an inclination to do good and the *yetzer hara*, the evil impulse, an inclination to do evil. According to Jewish teaching, *Yetzer hara* is not a demonic force that pushes a person to do evil, but rather a drive toward pleasure or property or security, which if left unlimited, can lead to evil. But, Judaism teaches that when properly controlled by the *yetzer hatov*, the good impulse, the *yetzer hara* leads to many socially desirable results, including marriage, business, and community. But, it is also taught, that until a person is 13 years old, they only have the *yetzer hara*, the evil impulse, and therefore they require guidance from their parents. But, at age 13, the *yetzer hatov*, the good impulse is born in their life and it becomes a guiding and controlling force over the *yetzer hara*. I find it difficult to believe this about the impulses, but it is good that they do believe in life after death and in the coming of the Messiah. All that they now need to understand is that He is Yeshua and then receive Him as the One for whom they've been waiting. It will come for all Israel, but the timing is in ADONAI's hands.

What is the truth about good and evil thoughts in the soul, the mind, of one who is created in ADONAI's own image? There is a certain amount of truth in the conflict between good and evil in our thought processes and decision making because of our flesh. We know very well that we don't always seek to do the right thing. But, just understanding about the spiritual and mental makeup of a person doesn't answer the most pressing question. Why does a person need redemption? To be able to understand why, we must understand and believe what the Scriptures teach us regarding the "sin nature" within Adam's descendants. Why do we all sin? Understanding this question is a first step, a step which can lead to the place where an unbeliever can make a decision regarding his own redemption. Disregarding this question permanently will cause a person to close the door to his opportunity to be in fellowship with our Creator, not only in his lifetime, but for all eternity.

The answer as to why every person sins can be found in Scripture. But, in the beginning Adam did not sin. ADONAI created humankind, Adam and Eve, as good and without a sin nature. 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness! Let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the flying creatures of the sky, over the livestock, over the whole earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the land." 27 God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created

them. (Genesis 1:26-27 TLV). When first created, man was sinless. He was created in the image of ADONAI. And, then in Genesis chapter 3 we learn about the sin which Adam and Eve committed. With that one act of disobedience, sin entered into these two previously sinless creatures which G-d made. And when they had children, this sin nature was passed on, inherited, by their offspring. Each and every person descended from Adam and Eve has inherited the sin nature of their parents. Every one of us here today was born with that sin nature. David said: 5 *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.* (Psalm 51:5 NASB). His son Solomon wrote: 20 *“Surely there is not a righteous person on earth who does what is good and doesn’t sin.* (Ecclesiastes 7:20 TLV). *Sha’ul* adds: 23.....*”for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23 TLV). *Yochanan*, John, also speaks about sin: 8 *“If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* (1John 1:8 TLV). We are the children of *Adam* and *Chavah*, Adam and Eve, and left to ourselves, it is our nature to sin. We may also have some of the *yetzer hatov*, the "good impulse" in us, and do some good as well. But, without something to change the sin nature which we have inherited, the sin nature is constantly present in our lives. ADONAI created us with free will and we can choose the path which we will take in life. We have the choice to walk in the likeness of ADONAI or to follow the path offered by *HaSatan*, the Adversary, the one who tempted our ancestors? If you have chosen life through *Yeshua*, you are now in right relationship and have *shalom* with ADONAI. *Sha’ul* said: 1 *“Therefore, having been made righteous by trusting, we have shalom with God through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.”* (Romans 5:1 TLV). He also said: 45 *“So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”* (1Corinthians 15:45 TLV). When we trust *Yeshua*, the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit, our old sin nature is changed. *Sha’ul* also teaches us: 17 *“Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”* (2Corinthians 5:17 TLV). When we have trusted *Yeshua*, when we have made Him our Messiah, we have *shalom* with ADONAI and that is the door into everything else which He has for us. But, being a new creation doesn’t make us perfect. We still live in the flesh with a soul and must make the choice as to whether we sin or not. Read *Sha’ul’s* words in Romans 7:21-23. You will see that he also faced the sin problem. When we do sin, which we most certainly will, we must repent to remain in right relationship with ADONAI through *Yeshua*. But, it should be our spiritual desire not to sin.

There is a righteous remnant in every generation. There were *Joshua* and *Caleb* and the Levites when the twelve spies were sent to Canaan. There was *Jeremiah* and others when the First Temple was destroyed. And, there were many of *Yeshua’s* disciples when the Second Temple was destroyed. We want to be a part of the righteous remnant of this generation. How can we be? We must be in right relationship with ADONAI. We enter a right relationship through *Yeshua’s* sacrifice and we maintain that relationship by *teshuvah*, repentance, as often as necessary. Sin in our lives is unrighteousness. *Yochanan* said: 9 *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1John 1:9 TLV). *John’s* not talking about before salvation. He’s talking about after salvation. Unrighteousness can come in with unconfessed sins after salvation. All of us here has a relationship with *Yeshua*. But, each of us must continually work on keeping that relationship clear of sin by confessing our sin to our *Kohen HaGadol*, our High Priest *Yeshua*, who stands between us and ADONAI, the Father.

Yeshua’s disciple *John* had a lot to say about sin. He made it clear that it is very necessary that we deal with it. *John* describes the follower of *Yeshua*. 1 *“Everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves*

the one born of Him. 2 We know that we love God's children by this—when we love God and obey His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God—that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone born of God overcomes the world. And the victory that has overcome the world is this—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world, if not the one who believes that Yeshua is Ben-Elohim?" (1John 5:1-5 TLV).

1 "Everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the one born of Him. When we trust in Yeshua, we are spiritually reborn to love our fellow believers. When we are born again we receive a spiritual implantation of love for everyone who is a follower of Yeshua. 34 "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another." (John 13:34 TLV).

2 We know that we love God's children by this—when we love God and obey His commandments. This is the Shema: love ADONAI with all your heart, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself. This is loving all of ADONAI's children.

3 For this is the love of God—that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. We show our love for G-d by keeping His commandments. And, these are not just the Ten Commandments, but many other commandments which can be kept without having a Temple or Aaronic priesthood. Yeshua said that not one would pass away before heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:18).

4 For everyone born of God overcomes the world. And the victory that has overcome the world is this—our faith. Not everyone who has said: "yes to Yeshua" is born of G-d. Yeshua said: 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21 TLV). Our faith in Yeshua is not only trust, but also faithfulness to walk according His Word. Our faith should also lead us to desire to study to ensure that we are walking rightly.

5 Who is it that overcomes the world, if not the one who believes that Yeshua is Ben-Elohim?" The world is a symbol for HaSatan, the Adversary. It is he and his temptations to do evil that we must overcome: 11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even in the face of death. (Revelation 12:11 TLV). Our belief that Yeshua is the Son of G-d is not just a superficial belief, but a belief which leads us to walk in His ways even in the face of death. Read these five verses and let them sink in. This is a description of the overcomers who are in Yeshua. We see our lives pictured in John's words. We are the righteous, those who daily recognize our sin and deal with it as we have been commanded to do. In dealing with our sin and walking after Yeshua, we are expected to sin less and less and become more and more like Yeshua.

We believe and walk in this belief because of something which our Creator placed inside us, faith. In Jewish Biblical and rabbinic literature, the concept behind faith is always action. It is never just a mental exercise. The English word "faith" comes from the Hebrew term, *emunah*. It means firmness, steadfastness, and faithfulness. The heart of faith, *emunah*, אֱמוּנָה, is faithfulness and it is linked to the Hebrew word, *emet*, אֱמֶת, truth. *Emunah* is not just a passive belief. It is our active belief, our walking out of ADONAI's commandments. We understand that "faith in ADONAI" is to trust in His teachings. The writer of Hebrews said: 6 *And without trusting (emunah), it is impossible to be well pleasing to God, because whoever approaches him must trust that he does exist and that he becomes a Rewarder to those who seek him out. (Hebrews 11:6 TLV).* This means that our "belief in Yeshua as Messiah" is not

just mental belief. It is active. We must walk out our *emunah* in Yeshua by doing what He has commanded us to do.

As the writer of Hebrews also said regarding the rebellion against ADONAI in Numbers chapters 13 and 14: *7 Therefore, just as the Ruach ha-Kodesh says, "Today if you hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness.* (Hebrews 3:7-8 TLV). ADONAI is speaking to the hearts of His faithful today. Yeshua has called us to be the Joshua's and Caleb's of our generation, the overcoming righteous remnant!
Shabbat shalom!