



Parasha Pinchas

July 27, 2024

Torah: Numbers 25:10-30:1.

Haftarah: Jeremiah 1:1-2:3.

Ketuvim Shlichim: John 2:13-22.

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! Our *Torah* portion today is *Pinchas* (Phinehas). *Parasha Balak* set the stage last week for this climactic finish. At the time of these events, Israel had been in the wilderness for over 39 years, and the last of the first generation had died in the previous year. (Year 38: Deuteronomy 2:14). The first generation, which came out of Egypt, rejected ADONAI's plan to take them into the land of milk and honey, and He condemned them to die in the desert. *Aharon's* (Aaron's) son, *El'azar* (*Eleazer*), is now the High Priest. And now, someone we've not seen before, a possible future leader, suddenly appears.

In *Parasha Balak*, we learned that because *Balak* was unable to get *Bi'lam* (Balaam) to curse Israel, they used another tactic. The Moabite and Midianite women began to sexually tempt Israel's males and were very successful. *Pinchas* came on the scene suddenly in our last *parasha* when he pierced through an Israelite man and a Midianite woman with a spear. That it went through both strongly implied that they were having sexual intercourse in the view of those weeping at the Tabernacle entrance. (Numbers 25:6-8).

Our *parasha* today begins with this: *1 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the people began to have immoral sexual relations with women from Moab. 2 Then they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, so the people were eating, and bowing down before their gods. 3 When Israel became bound to Baal of Peor, the anger of Adonai grew hot against Israel* (Numbers 25:1-3 TLV). Bound to *Ba'al* means that they were worshipping this false god as their god. ADONAI was so displeased with this that He commanded Moses to seize all of the ringleaders and hang them. That they were worshipping *Ba'al* had been brought about by a very clever plan. King *Balak* had allied himself with the Midianites against Israel, and the Moabite and Midianite women were sexually enticing the Israelite males to lead them away from ADONAI. It was working so well that many Israelites were worshipping *Ba'al* of *Pe'or*, the local god of Mount *Pe'or*. In being "bound to *Ba'al*," many of the Israelite men and women violated one of the very first commands that ADONAI had given to Israel at Mount Sinai: *3 "You shall have no other gods before me"* (Exodus 20:3 TLV).

We see people like *Pinchas* in every society. They are those who are there, basically unknown for years, and then appear and begin to do great things for ADONAI. That is what happened with *Pinchas*. He was Aaron's grandson and the son of *Eleazer*, the High Priest. We know very little about him except for this earlier brief mention in Exodus: *25 Eleazar, Aaron's son, married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas.* (Exodus 6:25a TLV). We know by this that when Moses was dealing with Pharaoh in Egypt, *Pinchas* was also there, having been born some time before his grandfather Aaron was appointed High Priest. Last year, I presented some additional possibilities regarding *Pinchas* and the priesthood. If you are interested, you can check this out at our website in *Parasha Pinchas*, July 8, 2023. Today, we will concentrate on his heroic actions, however, up until this time, he had not played any part in what was happening among the Israelites. His status as a priest and when

he became a priest isn't all that important. The important point for us is that *Pinchas* did what was necessary at the time it was needed and, in doing so, is an example for us. ADONAI rewarded him for his actions with covenants both of *shalom* and an everlasting priesthood. (Numbers 25:11-13). Any follower of Yeshua can be called upon to step out in faith for ADONAI even though he or she has, up until a particular time, essentially just been sitting in the congregation. *Pinchas* was a priest who, up until this time, had done nothing remarkable. The emergency to which he responded was not just two people having sex in public but the apostasy of the nation of Israel in following a false god. We next see *Pinchas* in Numbers 31 leading Israel into the battle in which the Moabites and Midianites were defeated. *6 Moses sent them into battle, 1,000 from each tribe, and with them Phinehas, son of Eleazar the kohen, who took with him articles from the Sanctuary and trumpets for signaling* (Numbers 31:6 TLV). We also learn that in this battle, the Midianite kings and Balaam were killed. (Numbers 31:8 TLV). After failing to curse Israel, Balaam left the area, but we learn that he later returned and gave Moab advice about enticing Israel with sex: *Why, they (the Moabite women) are the ones—because of Balaam's advice—who caused Bnei-Yisrael to be unfaithful to Adonai in the matter of Peor, so that the plague was on the community of Adonai!* (Numbers 31:16b TLV). Balaam planned the whole thing, and because of it, ADONAI judged him. Many years later, *Pinchas* went on to become High Priest after his father *El'azar*.

What caused *Pinchas* to act so quickly to kill the man and woman having sex? It was because the situation was critical and *Pinchas* had the authority to kill the man. Moses had just said: *5 "Each of you, kill your men who have been joining themselves to Baal of Peor."* (Numbers 25:5 TLV). But, it wasn't just on Moses authority. ADONAI had said to Moses, *4 "Seize all the ringleaders and hang them before Adonai facing the sun, so that Adonai's fierce anger may be turned away from Israel."* (Numbers 25:4 TLV). 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.

We wouldn't be likely to do something like that today 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 our law. Why did *Pinchas* act so forcefully? Was it because he was a *kohen*, and as a *kohen*, he was also a judge? Was it because Moses was his uncle or the High Priest was his father? Or was it the fear of ADONAI? Another reason could be because of his faith?

What kind of faith did *Pinchas* have? Regarding spiritual faith, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*: "Faith is belief and trust in and loyalty to God." I believe that this definition comes very close to a proper biblical answer. It has two components regarding G-d, belief and trust, which are essentially the same thing and loyalty. Is "faith" just about belief? No, it is not but that is what a majority of followers of Yeshua believe that it is. There is a second component which this definition puts as "loyalty to God." But why do so many of Yeshua's followers, including many within the Messianic Jewish Movement, believe that faith is primarily connected with belief? My opinion is that it is because we have been infected with the "leaven of the King James Version." Speaking about false doctrines and teachings of man, Yeshua called them "the leaven of the Pharisees". That is the way that I see the King James Bible. It's not the majority of the Bible that's the problem, but the translator's bias that has been added to it. Did they really need to change Yeshua's brother's name to James? Regardless of what King James named him, he was *Ya'acov*, Jacob, a Jewish man and that's the way that we look at him today. 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. 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 in Messianic Judaism have also come to understand it that way because of early impressions that things learned early are difficult to unlearn.

There is no way that we can know *Pinchas'* mind, but an educated guess is that faith had something to do with his action, but not only the belief kind of faith just described. Saying that some have been infected with the leaven of the King James Version is a reference to its underlying theology, antinomianism. You and I may have had that view of faith at some time in the past, and some may still, if they read the King James Version very much. What does "antinomian" mean? Used as an adjective, it 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."

At this point, it is important that I make clear to whom I am speaking. I am speaking to you who are a part of Messianic Judaism and also to those whom ADONAI is calling into Messianic Judaism and not to the greater part of Yeshua's body, the Church. Since our movement is a last-day resurrection of Yeshua's 1st-century movement and is directed to our Jewish people and their salvation, we seek to understand Scripture as Yeshua's disciples did. Make no mistake about it. Peter, Paul, James, John, and all the others loved the *Torah* and obeyed the *Torah*. The King James Version and many of the new modern versions try to make us think otherwise. We strongly emphasize that having this different understanding in no way affects our love for the other members of the body and our differing view is not a judgment of them. We are directed by Yeshua to love each other and we must obey. He said: 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. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples if you have a love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 TLV). We don't have to agree on everything and it's an impossibility to do so. We do completely agree with Christianity that salvation is by faith through ADONAI's grace. It is trusting in Yeshua's death as the permanent and fully effective sacrifice for our sins that gives us the promise of eternal life. And nothing else is necessary. But after trusting in Yeshua, we who understand that the Bible is not antinomian also know it is our duty to be obedient to those commands which we can obey today. And ADONAI has clearly shown us what they are. Because there is no Temple and no Levitical priesthood today, the commands that He wants us to obey are those remaining which don't require either. While those we cannot obey are "still on the books," so to speak, they are presently inactive as expressed by Yeshua: 18 *"Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass."* (Matthew 5:18 TLV).

The antinomianism of the King James Bible pervades Christianity and has since 1611. It was there even before that time, but this particular Bible has had more influence than any other. There have been a few updates since then but it has retained its antinomian character. And it has also influenced other versions of the Bible which came after it. For the last 413 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 the King James Version, has been a major contributor to the Christian mindset of today. How many sermons have been delivered based upon the theology of the King James Bible since 1909? This is not a rant against antinomianism but an effort to help those called into Messianic Judaism to identify their beliefs. Consider using a Hebrew-based Bible such as the Tree of Life Version or the Complete Jewish Bible. Neither is a perfect Bible, and each

has its own shortcomings, but they usually don't include antinomian comments. We emphasize *Sha'ul's* words to Timothy: *15 Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15 TLV). What is the Word of Truth to which he was referring? It is the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, the only Scripture in existence at that time. (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Today, we are grateful for the added explanations we find in the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the Writings of Yeshua's Disciples. Using the whole Bible and online aids such as *BibleHub*, we can very quickly check out the underlying Hebrew or Greek.

What, exactly, is antinomian about the King James Version? The main thing is that there are words added that support the antinomian theology of the translators. Sometimes they're placed in italics to let you know they're added, and sometimes, they are not. There are additional words in italics in all Bibles, words which, in many cases, help in basic understanding but do not express a theology. I don't believe that Bibles that add words are violating ADONAI's rule if they are innocently used to enhance understanding. This is His rule: *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). In other words, don't change the meaning of His Word. Here, He speaks of keeping His *mitzvot*, His commands. 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 to show us that ADONAI's *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 what He meant. Without any theological additions, the Bible is not antinomian. It very clearly reveals that ADONAI's laws, which Yeshua upheld, are good and are to be followed within the changes which He, Himself, makes, changes such as absence of Temple and Levitical priesthood. According to my estimate, when both disappeared almost 2000 years ago, almost 80% of the *mitzvot* in the Five Books of Moses were rendered inactive for those of us who do not live in Israel. But that 20% is still there for us. This is a caution to those who continually read one of the Bibles with theology added. Without realizing it they may come to believe the additions along with the words of the Bible itself. But, there is a difference with regard to simple added words. Words italicized or put in parenthesis in order to aid in understanding difficult words is one thing, but deliberately promoting a theology is another.

Today, the King James Bible is only the mother of this activity, with many modern versions of the Bible following suit and becoming even more antinomian. Here is an example from the *Contemporary English Version*. It is regarding Yeshua's response to a group of Pharisees who criticized His disciples about eating with unwashed hands: **18** 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. **19** 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). The words "By saying this, Jesus meant that all foods were fit to eat" are added words, words not found in the Greek text. In context, Yeshua was speaking about the Pharisee's use of the Oral Torah, which in other places is called "the traditions of the elders." According to this tradition, ritual washing of the arms up to the elbows before eating was required. It was not about what was eaten, but the CEV took it out of context and added words to support their theology, not even bothering to italicize what they added. This is clearly antinomian and an attempt to negate the kosher *mitzvot* with their readers. The *New International Version* is similar for the same verses: **18** "Are you so dull?" he

asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? ¹⁹ 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). The NIV did use parentheses and italics 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. Eating kosher is according to them, a part of the ceremonial law. Even though these verses had nothing to do with the kosher laws, they took the opportunity to interject their theology.

Here is another example asserting the right to eat things other than what ADONAI said we can eat. *Shimon Kefa* was on the roof of Simon the Tanner’s house, and a sheet came down from heaven filled with all kinds of unclean animals: ¹⁴ But Peter said, “Lord, I can’t do that! I’ve never eaten anything that is unclean and not fit to eat.” ¹⁵ 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? These translators are not afraid to put words in ADONAI’s mouth and have “God” saying that it is ok for Peter to eat whatever he wants. According to the TLV, this verse 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 saying: ²⁸ ..., “*You yourselves know that it is not permitted for a Jewish man to associate with a non-Jew or to visit him. Yet God has shown me that I should call no one unholy or unclean.*” (Acts 10:28b TLV) and a second time to his Messianic brothers in Jerusalem (Acts 11:9-12), was that the unclean animals in the sheet represented Gentiles whom ADONAI declared clean and had nothing to do with food.

But the added words are just the tip of the iceberg. An equally great problem is how words are translated. Regarding taking the action that he did, was *Pinchas*’s faith the kind of faith that most followers of Yeshua think of today? Was his faith only belief, or was it something more? 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). We focus on the last phrase, “children with no faithfulness in them.” This verse is from the Song of Moses, which he gave to *B’nei Yisra’el* just before he went up on the mountain to die, and Israel went into Canaan. In it, Moses prophesied the future and how Israel would sin against ADONAI in the years to come. The Hebrew is *lo-emun bam*, לֹא-אֱמוּנָן בָּם, “no faithfulness in them.” The King James Version and the New King James Version both translate it “children in whom there is no faith.” Is that what Moses intended to say? I don’t believe so. There is a big 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 belief and belief plus action. Belief is necessary but *emun*, faithfulness, includes that understanding in its meaning. You have to believe in order to act on your belief. However, the KJV chose to ignore the fact that ADONAI was speaking through Moses about being faithful to His commands, an antinomian translation of the Hebrew word *emun*. Many years future from that day, ADONAI did hide His face from Israel and punished them severely for their unfaithfulness. He didn’t punish them because they didn’t believe but because they didn’t act. Will ADONAI hide His face from us if we don’t keep His *mitzvot*? We know He is merciful, but the more you know and understand, the more is required of you. After telling us that not one jot or tittle of a

commandment would pass away before heaven and earth pass away, Yeshua, the living Word (John 1:1), said: *“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). That sounds like those who break them will still be a part of His Kingdom, but will be at the bottom of the list of the faithful.

What does the word *emun* mean to ADONAI? What does “faithfulness” mean to Him? We can determine how He views it by looking at the words 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 through Yeshua and ends with keeping His commandments. The word “Judgments” refers to a particular kind of *mitzvot* called *Mishpatim*. The way of faithfulness is keeping His commandments. Yeshua 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־אֱמֻנָה. Its root is *aman*, אָמַן, which means to confirm or support. It is the word from which we get *amen*. I didn’t use the TLV for this verse because they translated *be’ne’emne* as trustworthy and although trustworthy and faithful can be synonyms, faithful better conveys David’s meaning. 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). But, the TLV better conveys the second underlined section, “lives of integrity”. 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 that we associate with obedience to ADONAI’s *Torah*. Its derivative is *halakha*, meaning “how we walk,” a term that we borrow from Orthodox Judaism and use to emphasize the keeping of ADONAI’s commandments. Blameless comes from *tamim*, תָּמִים, meaning complete or perfect. Putting all this together, we understand that, for us, being “faithful” is walking in ADONAI’s *Torah*. That’s what *Moshe* said in his song to *B’nei Yisra’el*. Being faithful, by definition, is being obedient to the *Torah*. That part of ADONAI’s plan has not changed. But there has been a change regarding which *mitzvot* we can be faithful to today.

There are usually several possibilities of translations that Bible translators can use for most words and usually comes down to their choice, that is, how it best fits their theology. I’ll pick on the King James Version again, even though the other Bible versions would have similar numbers. How many times do we find the word “faith” in the “New Testament” of the King James Version? It is found 245 times and the word “faithful” is there 54 times, but the word “faithfulness” is not there at all. However, all three words, faith, faithful and faithfulness, are represented by the same Greek word, *pistis*. It can mean faith, belief, trust, confidence, fidelity, faithful and faithfulness. The translator decides which to use. In the case of the KJV in the writings of Yeshua’s disciples, their translators chose to focus most often, actually five times as much, on the meaning of faith as belief and not as faithfulness.

One of the most famous verses about faith is found in Habakkuk: 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 Concordance, 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.” That “the righteous shall live by

his faith” promotes the idea that the righteous are those who believe, but says nothing about being faithful. IMHOP, the Complete Jewish Bible interprets this verse best: ⁴ “*Look at the proud: he is inwardly not upright; but the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness*” (Habakkuk 2:4 CJB).

Do you want to be considered righteous by ADONAI? *Yochanan* (John) the Immerser’s parents, 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, and 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? That is our goal! 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 to be righteous. You have to be faithful. 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’s 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 is a *tzaddiq* in ADONAI’s eyes? 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. And you’re also saved, a double blessing!

This is not works righteousness. It is not putting ourselves back under the Law. That’s an antinomian statement. Being righteous is how we serve ADONAI by walking in our Messiah Yeshua’s footsteps. It’s a heart thing. Yeshua said: ¹⁵ “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*” (John 14:15 TLV). Yeshua told us about the greatest commandment and the second like it. Keeping Yeshua’s commands and seeking righteousness is making commandment #1 and commandment #2 (Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27) important every day. Love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. If we love ADONAI with all our hearts, we will want to obey Him. Yeshua said: ⁶ “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied*” (Matthew 5:6 TLV). I believe that *Pinchas*’s motivation for acting was his thirst for righteousness. He not only had faith but was also faithful and diligent to serve and obey ADONAI. We not only can be *Pinchas*’s today, but we must be. The world situation is critical! *Sha’ul* wrote of a coming day: ¹⁸ *For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.* (Romans 8:19 TLV). We are the sons and daughters whom Yeshua will reveal. If we, Yeshua’s disciples of today, understand what righteousness is, shouldn’t we be zealous for it? To be like *Pinchas* is our goal! *Shabbat shalom!*

Revival Begins With Me!

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Return to Authority!
Return to Attendance!***

Pass it on!