

# TORAH PORTIONS WITH

*Rabbi Jason*



**JOURNEY THROUGH  
NUMBERS**

*Parashat Nasso*

THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

**NUMBERS 4:21-7:89**

*Parashat Nasso* / פרשת נשא

**In this week's guide...**

Our **COMMENTARY** from Rabbi Jason tackles the long and seemingly tedious passage that details the tribal offerings which were brought at the consecration of the Tabernacle. Rabbi masterfully teaches us the relationship between the qualities of the tribes and their gifts. We know that God is a God of detail, so nothing in the text is wasted—it all has meaning and purpose. AND...if we have to dig around to discover that meaning, the Lord uses even that process to build us up and bless us!.....1

The **NEW TESTAMENT TIE-IN** invites you to pause at the very end of this week's portion and consider the profound moment described in that final verse. After all of the consecrating and anointing and offering was finished, God spoke! The connections to the voice of God, the life of Yeshua, and our life in God's presence today will inspire you to press into the Lord and listen for His voice in your life.....2

**BY THE NUMBERS** examines what is almost certainly the most well-known and loved section of this week's portion: the Aaronic blessing. Rabbi Jason reveals how the number of words that blessing contains in the original Hebrew signify the work and presence of God among us as well as within us. It's time to move up, to go higher in the things of God! We need to choose blessing and walk in the fullness of all that the Lord has for us.....3

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**OVERVIEW**

The second reading from the book of Numbers finishes up the census of the Levites before going on to discuss the purification of the camp, the ritual for a woman suspected of adultery, the laws of the Nazirite vow, and other ceremonial details. This portion's name comes from the first word of the second verse in Hebrew, which could literally be translated to say, "Lift up the heads of the sons of Gershon." Friends, you need to know that you count, that your God is "the glory and the lifter of your head" (Psalm 3:3)!

FUSION GLOBAL WITH RABBI JASON  
Weekly Torah Portion – *Parashat Nasso* / פרשת נשא

*Numbers 4:21-7:89*

QUESTIONS & COMMENTARY

by Rabbi Jason Sobel

*On the surface, it seems odd that the Torah would devote seventy verses to the donations of the tribal leaders at the altar's dedication since all twelve gifts were identical (Numbers 7:12-82). What is the Torah trying to teach us?*

One reason the Torah devotes so many verses to the tribal leaders' gifts, even though they were the same, is to underscore the point that every one of their offerings was equally precious in God's sight. As the Midrash states: "R. Judan said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, considered it as though they had all presented their offering on the first day as well as on the last, none being greater than another.'"



Thus, the lengthy twelve-fold repetition of the princes' offerings highlights the vital truth that all the gifts of God's people are equally meaningful and valuable to Him. Like the tribal leaders, we must learn to become proactive givers.



Secondly, even though all the tribes' gifts were identical, the order in which they brought them and what they symbolically communicated about each tribe's role was different.



The leaders brought their gifts according to the order in which they set out to travel in the wilderness rather than the tribes' birth order, hence, *Nahshon* from the tribe of Judah took the lead in both cases. Judah represented the royal tribe chosen by God to lead the people and was the one from whom the King-Messiah was ultimately a descendant.



As the *Midrash Rabbah* states, "*Nahshon* led off by presenting an offering to symbolize authority, since his father had appointed him king over his brethren." Since Judah represented the crown of kingship, he had the honor of leading the people. From this, we learn that the Lord honors those who are willing to sacrifice to lead His people.

Next came *Nethanel* from the tribe of Issachar. God honored this tribe because of their dedication to and knowledge of the Torah. Concerning this *Midrash Rabbah* says: "The prince of Issachar, when his turn arrived, made an offering to represent the Torah; because the members of his tribe loved the Torah more than any of the other tribes; as may be inferred from the text, 'And of the children of Issachar, men that had an understanding of the times, etc.'" (1 Chron 12:33). Since this tribe represented the "crown" of Torah, they had the honor of following Judah, the royal tribe. From this, we learn that God honors those who honor His Word.

JOURNEY THROUGH  
NUMBERS  
*Parashat Nasso*

One the third day, *Eliav ben Chailon*, the leader of Zevulan, brought his donation. Zevulan, along with Issachar and Judah as its head, made up the first of four encampments of Israel. According to our Sages, they were given this honor due to their generous support of Torah learning. Concerning this, the *Midrash* states: “Why was Zebulun privileged to be third to present his offering? Because he loved the Torah and lavished money without stint on Issachar so that the tribe of Issachar might not be compelled to seek a livelihood and thus have to neglect the study of the Torah.”

From this, we learn that God grants great honor and blessing to those who support individuals, organizations, and institutions that are committed to the spiritual service of educating people in the way of Torah and *Brit Hadasha* (the New Covenant Scripture).

Ultimately, each of the twelve tribes’ gifts added something of great value to the mission and spiritual well-being of God’s people. When we strive to the same, we bring great joy to Messiah and become precious in His eyes.

### NEW TESTAMENT TIE-IN

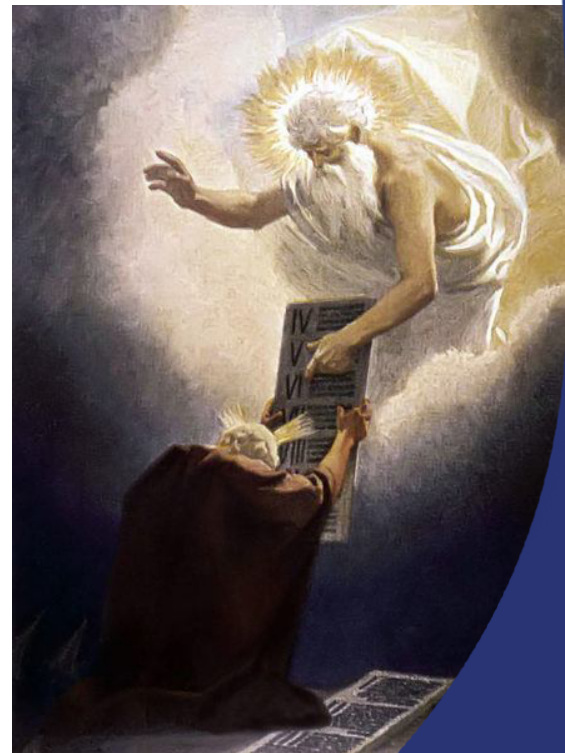
**A**fter eighty-eight verses of somewhat repetitive details related to the offerings the tribes presented at the Tabernacle’s consecration, the final verse of this week’s portion stands out from those that precede it.

*When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with Adonai, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the atonement cover atop the Ark of Testimony between the cheruvim. So he spoke with Him. — Numbers 7:89*

The first thing worth noting here is that in this verse, we see the faithfulness of God. If you recall, after the giving of the Law on Sinai, the Lord gave Moses detailed instructions for the Tabernacle, starting with the Ark of the Covenant. Look at the verse which immediately follows those directives, as the Lord says to Moses: “I will meet with you there. I will speak with you from above the atonement cover—from between the two cheruvim that are on the Ark of the Testimony—about all that I will command you, for *Bnei-Yisrael*” (Ex 25:22). With the priesthood that would serve in that Tabernacle now consecrated, its furnishing anointed, and the tribal offerings presented, God did what He said He was going to do—He spoke.

It’s worth taking the time to imagine that holy moment. This experience wasn’t like the intimidating thunder and smoke of Sinai. This moment was awesome yet intimate. “Intimate” is appropriate because the text says that Moses heard “the voice speaking to him.” This phenomenon was not a mere impression or a vague sense. This was the Voice of Genesis 1 that spoke the worlds into existence! Our voices convey our personality and essence much more than almost anything else about us.

What did Moses hear? What does God’s voice sound like?  
What a privilege it was to hear the voice of God the way that Moses did! After their encounter at Sinai, the Israelites said, “You, speak to us, and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, or we will die” (Ex 20:19). No, what Moses experienced before the Ark, coming down from the Mercy Seat, must have been too glorious for words. Maybe this is why even Moses’ siblings would feel a tinge of jealousy....



JOURNEY THROUGH  
NUMBERS  
*Parashat Nasso*



*Jesus Carrying Lost Sheep Home, Melani Pyke*

But you and I do not need to be jealous of Moses. John's Gospel tells us that some two thousand years ago, the "Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Notice that here we read of the "Word," but not a written or disembodied word—flesh! Personal. Touchable. Visible. Audible. And notice that John uses the word, "tabernacled" (Gr. *skēnoō/σκηνώω*: to tent or encamp), and it was in the "Tent of Meeting" that Moses "heard the voice speaking to him."

The Word was known as Yeshua-Jesus. And whether it was Peter on the shore of Galilee or Nathaniel who had been sitting under the fig tree or the multitudes, when they heard Him speak, they heard the same Voice that Moses heard in the wilderness. So much so, Yeshua would say that "My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). That powerful, yet personal and intimate voice of God is speaking to you. You have heard things that the angels themselves have longed to see (1 Pet 1:12). We find ourselves standing in the very space few in Israel ever had the privilege to go. Consider what it says in Hebrews:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have boldness to enter into the Holies by the blood of Yeshua. He inaugurated a new and living way for us through the curtain—that is, His flesh. We also have a Kohen Gadol over God's household. So let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and body washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the unwavering confession of hope, for He who promised is faithful. —Hebrews 10:19-23 (emphasis added)

In the same way that Moses heard God's voice in the Tabernacle because God promised he would, we enter God's presence because God's Word became our tabernacle. And there we don't just hear, we confess!

## BY THE NUMBERS

**T**he structure of the Aaronic benedictions reveals several critical spiritual truths. The number of words in the priestly blessing is "15." Hidden within this number is the name of God. One way to write "15" in Hebrew is with the letters Yud (10) and Hei (5), which spell YaH, a shortened form of the full Divine name, YHVH. The fifteen words used in this priestly blessing are a means by which the name of the LORD, YaH, was placed upon the people. As it is written, "In this way they will pronounce my name over the Israelites and I will bless them" (Num 6:27/Holman Christian Standard Bible).

Creation and praise both connect to God's name *YaH* and the number "15." In Jewish tradition, God created this world by the Hebrew letter *Hei* (5) and the "World to Come" by the letter *Yud* (10), totaling "15." The letter *Hei* sounds like literal breath and represents the divine breath by which God created the world. "By Adonai's word were the heavens made, and all their host [stars] by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). There are also fifteen Hebrew expressions of praise to God.

But there is more! In the Second Temple, where *Yeshua* worshiped, there were fifteen steps that one ascended to go from the Court of the Women into the Court of Israel. Upon these fifteen steps stood the Levites who recited the fifteen Psalms of Ascent: Psalms 120-134. The climbing of the fifteen steps while reciting those fifteen Psalms was symbolic of spiritual ascent.

JOURNEY THROUGH  
NUMBERS  
Parashat Nasso



Ascending into God's presence with praise and worship led to spiritual elevation when done with pure love and devotion.

The number "15" also represents bonding and connection. In Hebrew, the word for "man" is *ish* (א/aleph-י/yud-ש/shin), and the word for "woman" is *ishah* (א/aleph-ש/shin-ה/hei). *Ish* (man) and *ishah* (woman) share two Hebrew consonants — *aleph* and *shin*—which spell the word "fire" (*aish*). They each have one distinct letter: *ish*/"man" has a *yud*, and *ishah*/"woman" has a *hei*. Do you remember what these two letters spell? *Yah*, the Divine Name.

What does this teach us? When God is not at the center of a man's or woman's personal life and marriage—when the two letters of God's name are missing—the result is a consuming fire that destroys. This detail also teaches us that man and woman together were made in God's image. It's only the unity of male and female that fully reflects the divine image.

The removal of God from marriage alludes to the destructive fire that will be released society removes the Lord from all aspects of life before His return. There are fifteen signs of the imminent appearance of the Messiah as taught in the *Talmud*:

"When the footsteps of the Messiah can be heard: (1) insolence will greatly grow; (2) inflation will skyrocket; (3) the vine will be fruitful, but wine will be expensive; (4) the dominant world power will promote the heresy and deny the Lord; (5) no one will be able to reprove another; (6) the meeting place of Torah scholars will be used for promiscuity; (7) the Galilee will be destroyed, and the Golan will become desolate; (8) the people who live on the border will go from city to city but will no mercy; (9) the wisdom of the Torah scholars will be rotten, and those who fear sin will be treated with disdain; (10) the truth will be absent; (11) the young will shame the old, and elders will stand up before minors, a son will disgrace and dishonor his father, and a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; (12) a man's enemies will be the members of his own household; (13) the face of the generation will be like the face of a dog; (14) a son will not be ashamed before his father; (15) On whom can we rely? On our Father in Heaven" (BT South 49b).

This sounds increasingly like the days we live in and is thus a sign of the times. What is the cure for these ills that are causing this fifteen-fold destructive curse? It is coming together in love and unity. The blessing of *YaH* represented in the fifteen words of the Aaronic benediction can only be fully realized and released when there is unity. God's name is not fully manifest in this world. As the Prophet Zechariah writes, "**Adonai will then be King over all the earth. In that day Adonai will be Echad [One] and His Name Echad [One]**" (Zech 14:9). God's name is not *Echad* [One] in the world because His people are not *echad* [one] in the world.

Consequently, the full revelation of God and His true nature will not be fully seen or known until all God's people come together as *echad* [one] in Him. It is for this reason that one of Yeshua's last prayers was, "**I pray not on behalf of these only, but also for those who believe in Me through their message, that they all may be one...that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them as You loved Me**" (John 17:20-23).





### THOUGHTS for REFLECTION

Take some time this week to prayerfully consider and discuss with friends:

- We often underestimate our leadership potential. But like the tribe of Judah, each one of us bears the King—*Yeshua*— within us. Think of one or two people in your life that you could “take the lead” with and be proactive in bringing them Good News. Pray for divine opportunities this week to share *Yeshua* with them.
- If there ever was a time when our world needed to see the unity *Yeshua* prayed for, it’s now! Will you join us in praying together each day that the Lord’s name would be one in the earth as His people live in unity and connection? If you’re wrongly divided or cut-off from someone in your life, ask God for the wisdom needed to pursue restoration for His glory.

**NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:** *Parashat Beha'alotcha* / פרשת בהעלתך

**TORAH**

Saturday / Numbers 8:1-14

Sunday / Numbers 8:15-26

Monday / Numbers 9:1-14

Tuesday / Numbers 9:15-10:10

Wednesday / Numbers 10:11-34

Thursday / Numbers 10:35-11:29

Friday / Numbers 11:30-12:16

**Prophetic Reading (Haftarah):** *Zechariah 2:14-4:7*

**New Covenant Reading:** *Matthew 14:14-21*