

BEHA'ALOTCHA

FUSION
WITH RABBI JASON



with
Rabbi Jason Sobel

5786 - THE YEAR OF OPEN WINDOWS

TORAH PORTIONS
Parashat Beha'alotcha



THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTIONS

NUMBERS 8:1-12:16

Parashat Beha'alotcha / פרשת בהעלתך

In this weeks guide...

COMMENTARY..... 1

Parashat Beha'alotcha highlights the importance of generational transfer within the Kingdom of God. The Levites' mandatory transition from active service to mentorship reminds us that healthy spiritual leadership is not about holding onto power indefinitely, but about intentionally preparing the next generation to step into their calling. True humility recognizes that the Kingdom is bigger than any one person, and faithful leaders create space for others to thrive.

NEW TESTAMENT TIE-IN..... 2

The New Testament tie-in explores Israel's repeated complaints in the wilderness and reveals that their rejection of manna was ultimately a rejection of God Himself. Yeshua later identifies Himself as the true bread from heaven, teaching that God's provision is often found in ordinary, daily faithfulness rather than dramatic experiences. The passage challenges believers to recognize and value God's sustaining presence even in the seemingly mundane rhythms of life.

HEBREW WORD STUDY..... 3

The Hebrew word *ner* refers to a small oil lamp that provides steady light and requires continual care. Throughout Scripture, the lamp becomes a picture of God's guidance, His enduring faithfulness, and the inner spiritual life of His people. Just as the lamps of the Tabernacle had to be tended daily, believers are called to nurture their spiritual lives through prayer, obedience, and attentiveness to God's Word.



OVERVIEW

The Hebrew for "when you step up," Beha'alotcha, is the 11th word and the first distinctive word in the parashat; it is the 36th weekly Torah portion. Highlights include the setting up of the Golden Menorah in the Tabernacle and the descent of the cloud of God's glory once the Tabernacle was erected. The camp would move in response to the cloud's movement over the Tabernacle. On a more somber note, we also read how Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses and his authority. This event leads into the selection and consecration of seventy elders to assist Moses.

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Parashat Beha'alotcha / פרשת בהעלתך | with **Rabbi Jason Sobel**

Staff Contributor

COMMENTARY

One of the most important aspects of the Kingdom is generational transfer. There is a Hebrew phrase for this, לדור ודור (*l'dor vador*/from generation to generation). We see this in the Bible regarding the Passover. In Exodus 13:1-16, God instructs the people to retell this story so that your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, and so on know what happened and why it happened. The Shema, the proclamation of the Lord being the one and only God, contains within it the need to transmit this understanding to our sons and daughters (Deut 6:4-9). The Kingdom is a matter of continuity.

Parashat Beha'alotcha gives us a great example of how this plays out practically in the service of God:

"ADONAI again spoke to Moses saying, "This is for the Levites. Men 25 years old and upward are to present themselves for service to work in the Tent of Meeting. But at the age of 50 he is to retire from his service and work no longer. He may assist his brothers in the Tent of Meeting to do their duties, but he himself will no longer do the work. Thus, you are to assign to the Levites their responsibilities" (Lev 8:23-26).

The Levites were full-time ministers. They had special cities in which they lived. The people's tithes sustained them. They served in the Temple in shifts, assisting the priests. And they were only allowed "to do the work" for 25 years. 50 was a hard stop. They could continue as assistants, but the work had to be passed on to the next generation. No matter how one felt, what shape they were in, or how well they worked in the past, when they reached half a century, they retired.

This implies something else important. Young Levites, probably from puberty through their early twenties, had to be trained so they could take over at age 25. Assumably, working and retired Levites would raise up the next generation in the way they should go. Since 50 was the final year for everyone, investing in the up-and-comers was a necessity.

Many within the Church and the Messianic world would do well to pay attention to the way God set up His own ministry. This isn't to say that all congregational leaders must step down at 50, but it needs to be emphasized that a practical retirement plan needs to be in place and that a new generation is actively being raised up. If the next generation is delayed too long from stepping into its own, it just may go elsewhere to find where it may thrive and live out God's calling. The beauty and blessing of one generation stepping down at an appropriate time is that it says to the younger generation, "I believe in you. God has something for you to do that I can't do. I want the Kingdom to thrive. It's your turn."

Humility and an attitude of worship make this possible. When we realize who we are and who He is in the grand scheme of things, we can step aside and allow someone younger to step into their own in the Lord. It undoubtedly takes a big adjustment, and it requires wise planning, but it is the best thing for the Kingdom.

New Testament Tie-In

This week's parsha has a bit of a whiplash vibe.

After last week's "liturgical tedium" (remember all the repetitious details in chapter seven?), we begin with some straightforward—yet obviously rich in symbolic meaning!—instructions for Aaron: the lampstand, protocols for the Levites, and more. Chapters nine and ten maintain a steady pace, revisiting Pesach and describing the nation's move from Sinai. All good.

"The people were murmuring in the ears of *ADONAI* about hardship..." (v 1)

"The grumblers among them began to have cravings, so *Bnei-Yisrael* began to wail repeatedly..." (v 4)

"We remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt..." (v 5)

"We never see anything but this manna..." (v 6)

When people hold Scripture accountable to contemporary cultural presumptions, this is the sort of thinking that often emerges. In an effort to make God look "respectable," modern scholarship reduces the inspired Scripture to "archaic magic," probably inspired by adjacent pagan cultures. Don't blame God for this—blame Hammurabi!

Not good. And we should state the obvious: this behavior isn't a new development.

The Israelites were chronic complainers, accusing Moses of murderous intentions at the Red Sea (cf. Exodus 14.11–12) and insisting that Egyptian slavery was better than wilderness starvation (cf. Exodus 16.2–3). There is such a vast range of admonishing responses available: Israel is delusional, ungrateful, weak of faith, and more.

But look closely at how the Lord sees Israel's grumbling in Numbers 11: "you **rejected** *ADONAI* who is among you" (v 20 *emphasis added*). A reader could easily skim over that line, as if something obvious were being communicated, but we should ask ourselves: *what did the Israelites think they were rejecting (if anything)?*

They were longing for the fish and meat they (allegedly) ate for free whilst enslaved in Egypt. That "craving" was stirred because the wilderness menu was not very diverse. It essentially contained one item ... **manna**.

Friends, when the Israelites thought they were complaining about manna, they were actually rejecting the Lord. But here's the point: both perspectives are accurate.

So they said to Him, "Then what sign do You perform, so that we may see and believe You? What work do You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'Out of heaven He gave them bread to eat.'" Yeshua answered them, "Amen, amen I tell you, it isn't Moses who has given you bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the One coming down from heaven and giving life to the world." So they said to Him, "Sir, give us this bread from now on!" Yeshua said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty." (John 6.30–35) God accused the Israelites of rejecting Him because, in rejecting the manna, they were rejecting the "bread of life."

God's presence and provision in our lives often fail to satisfy our fleshly desires and expectations. Sometimes, God reveals His goodness in spectacular and astonishing ways; other times, His faithfulness is hidden in the mundane, boring stuff of everyday life. By God's grace, may we humbly learn from this account that was "written down as a warning to us—on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10.11).

Hebrew Word Study

ner [נר] / "small oil lamp"

Let's think about the Hebrew word, ner (נר), which means a small oil lamp. Instead of a roaring fire, it gives off a soft, steady glow. In ancient Israel, a ner was just a simple clay pot with a wick and olive oil, and it needed regular care to keep burning. If ignored, it would go out. This lamp is a helpful picture of how God guides us—not in a dramatic way, but with steady faithfulness, always close by.

Psalms 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Imagine walking in the dark with just a lamp to show you each step. God's Word might not show us the whole road ahead, but it gives us enough light to make choices today. When we feel unsure or lost, His teaching gently leads us.

God's promises are like lamps that never burn out. In 1 Kings 11:36, God says, "I will give one tribe to his son, so that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put My Name." Even when life is uncertain, God's faithfulness endures and never fails.

Proverbs 20:27 tells us, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Adonai, searching all the innermost parts." Deep inside, God has given us a light—a conscience and a sense of right and wrong. This light can shine brightly or fade if we ignore it. We are meant to care for this inner lamp by praying and staying close to God's Word.

Sometimes, the Bible warns us that lamps can go out. Job 18:5 says, "Yes, the light of the wicked is put out, and the spark of his fire does not shine." If we ignore God's guidance, we might lose our way and end up in darkness.

God is our real source of light. 2 Samuel 22:29 says, "For You are my lamp, Adonai, and Adonai shines in my darkness." When life feels dark, God's presence is the steady flame that gives us hope and direction. In the Tabernacle, God told Aaron to keep the lamps burning at all times before the veil (Exodus 27:20; Leviticus 24:2-4). This was a quiet reminder that God's light keeps us going when our own strength is not enough.

The נר shows us that faith isn't about seeing far into the future, but about seeing clearly, one step at a time. God rarely shows us the whole path, but He always gives enough light for the next right step. As you read His Word this week, let His light show you what needs to change, help you make choices, and bring comfort to your heart. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

May God's gentle lamp shine in your heart and lead you forward in trust, until you stand fully in His presence. Like the old lamps, we are fragile, like clay jars holding the oil of the Spirit. If we don't care for our light, it fades, but when we are filled with God's Word and prayer, we shine and show Yeshua, the Light of the world.

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Rabbi Jason & Fusion Global present
HEBREW WORD STUDY

נֵר

נֵר / ner n. small oil lamp

נֵר (ner) denotes an oil-fed lamp or its flame. While the object is small and ordinary, Scripture employs it in ways that span everyday life, priestly service, royal covenant, wisdom teaching, judgment, and messianic hope. Ancient Israelite homes depended on the humble נֵר for light after sunset.

The Davidic “lamp” anticipates the true Light. Zechariah’s night vision of a lampstand supplied by two olive trees (Zechariah 4) points to the Spirit-empowered rule of the Branch. Psalm 132:17 foretells, “There I will make a horn grow for David; I have prepared a lamp for My anointed.” Revelation completes the arc: “The Lamb is its lamp” (Revelation 21:23).

Taken from Lexical Summary at biblehub.org

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THOUGHTS for REFLECTION

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

- Parashat Beha'alotcha emphasizes the importance of raising up the next generation. Who has invested spiritually in your life, and how are you intentionally investing in others? Are there younger people around you who may need encouragement, opportunity, or guidance to step more fully into their calling?
- Israel's dissatisfaction with manna reminds us how easy it is to overlook God's daily provision when it feels ordinary or repetitive. In what areas of your life might you be struggling to recognize God's faithfulness because it does not look dramatic or exciting? How can you cultivate greater gratitude for His steady presence and provision?

GLOBAL

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: *Parashat Sh'lach* / פרשת שלח-לך

TORAH

Sunday: Numbers 13:1-20

Monday: Numbers 13:21-14:7

Tuesday: Numbers 14:8-25

Wednesday: Numbers 14:26-15:7

Thursday: Numbers 15:8-16

Friday: Numbers 15:17-26

Saturday: Numbers 15:27-41

Prophetic Reading (*Haftarah*):

Joshua 2:1-24

New Covenant Reading:

Matthew 10:1-14

Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *Tree of Life Version*.