

Parasha Bamidbar (In the Wilderness)
June 4, 2005/26 Iyar 5765

Torah: Num. 1:1-4:20

Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22

Brit Chadashah: 1 Cor. 12:12-20(L)

Romans 9:22-33(F)

While Moses was leading the Israelites through the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt, the L-rd asked him to take a census. He gave instructions on how it was to be carried out:

Numbers 1:1 The L-RD spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: ² "Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. ³ You and Aaron are to number by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army. ⁴ One man from each tribe, each the head of his family, is to help you. (NIV)

Needless to say, this was a very big job. But it had to be done, because every Israelite was important to G-d. These were G-d's people, and He appointed Moses to be in charge of them during their time on earth. The Torah portion progresses with an extensive list of names of the tribes, then concludes with very specific instructions on the part of Aaron and his sons on how to care for the Tabernacle.

The prophetic portion is from Hosea. Hosea was commanded by G-d to marry a harlot, despite her corrupt and atrocious behaviour. Through his love, Hosea was able to redeem her.

Hosea 2:19 I will betroth you to me forever;
I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion.

²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge the L-RD. (NIV)

Hosea's love for his wife reflects G-d's love for His people – for even when our actions and thoughts and lives are against His standards, He still loves us and wants to draw us closer to Him.

In the New Covenant portion, the Apostle Paul lists how different parts of the body make up the whole being of a person, and how each part of the body works together so that the entire body functions as it should. This is a metaphor for

how each one of us as Believers make up the body of Messiah. Paul's main point comes in this verse:

1 Cor. 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (NIV)

When we accept Messiah Yeshua, we automatically are counted in G-d's census. It's not just open to Israelites anymore, but to everyone. As well, each one of us has gifts and abilities that G-d gave us and that we need to use in order for the Body of Messiah to work properly. Have you made sure that you are counted?