12 Tamuz, 5766 (July 8, 2006) *Summer Schedule: Parasha Chukat-Balak* J. M. Terrett

Chukat-Balak Ordinances of/Balak (Destroyer)
Torah: Num. 19:1-22:1/22:2-25:9
Haftarah: Jud. 11:1-33/Mic. 5:6-6:8
Brit Chadashah: Jn. 3:10-21/1 Cor. 1:20-31 (L) Jn. 3:1-21/Rom. 11:25-32 (F)

As we move through the summer season of serial vacations and the slowing down of momentum which our all too brief period of heat brings, I would like to pause my series of teachings on our congregational Vision Statement. I will resume my emphasis on this vital aspect of our growing community spiritual identity as part of our annual High Holy Days: "Vision Renewal".

Next Shabbat begins the series of ten special shabbats, three of which (the Sabbaths of Affliction) take us to **Tisha B'Av**, the anniversary of the destruction of both temples) and seven of which (the Sabbaths of Consolation) lift us out of our sadness and prepare us for the *High Holy days*, which this year, begin at sundown on Friday, Sept 22 and end at sundown on Saturday, Oct. 14 (though Simchat Torah lasts until sundown on Sunday, Oct. 15th).

So, today, I would like to give you a sermon/study based on the double Torah portion.

1. Paran Adamah (Red Heifer) 19:1-22 (Heb. 4:15, 16 Rom. 8:3)

2. Moses flunks his debut as a rock star. 20:1-13 (speak, don't hit)

3. Edom and Aaron's death. 20:14-29 (setbacks and the generational purposes of G-d)

4. Devoted to Destruction. 21:1-3

5. The burning Serpents. 21:4-9

6. Departure from the Wilderness 21:10-35 (Beating up the biggest bullies)

7. Final Camp and four unwitting blessings of Balaam 22:1-25 (Gen. 12:3, 4 and Is. 54:17)

(7A end of the sad story of Balaam Num. 31:8; 31:16 (and first use of red heifer's ashes?)

8. Idolatry on the plains of Moab. 25:1-19 snatching defeat from the jaws of victory (I Cor.10:12, 13)

Haftarah portions:

9. Judges 11:1-33 (Jephtah, the Ammonites, confusion [11:24] and his foolish oath (devoting his daughter to destruction).

10. Micah 5:6-6:8 (remembrance of Moses, Aaron and Miriam and Balak and Balaam).

Brit Chadashah portions:

11. John 3:1[10]-21 (a unique view of the cross).

12. I Cor. 1:20-31 (the incomprehensible wisdom and grace of G-d).

13. Rom. 11:25-32 (the enduring destiny of the House of Jacob in the purposes of G-d).

14. Conclusion: Rom. 11:33-36 and Deut. 29:29