

6-12-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene *Shlach L'cha* ("send for yourselves")
Torah Portion: Numbers 13 - 15:16:1 – 18:32
Haftarah: Josh 2:1-24
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Eph 2:13-18

Joshua and Caleb – Standing Alone

Central question of this message: Are you willing to stand for G-d, against the majority?

We are in parasha *Shlach L'cha*, which is also known by the shorter title, *Shlach*. Its name comes from the 8th through 11th words in English, and the 6th and 7th words in the original Hebrew.

Num 13:1-4

Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 2 "**Send out for yourself** men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them." 3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel.

13:1

וַיִּדְבֹּר	יְהוָה	אֶל-	מֹשֶׁה	לֵאמֹר:		
And spake	the Lord	unto	Moses,	saying,		
1696	3068	413	4872	559		

2

שְׁלַח-	לָךְ	אֲנָשִׁים	וַיִּתְּרוּ	אֶת-	אֶרֶץ	כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר-
Send	thou	men,	that they may search		the land of	which
7971	3807a	582	8446	853	776	834

אֲנִי	נָתַן	לְבָנִי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	אִישׁ	אֶחָד	אִישׁ לְמִטָּה
I	give	unto the children of	Israel:	every	a	of
589	5414	1121	3478	376	259	4294

אֲבֹתֵיךָ	וַתִּשְׁלְחוּ	כָּל	נָשִׂיא	בֵּינֵם:		
their fathers	shall ye send	every one	a ruler	among them.		
1	7971	3605	5387	871a		

3

וַיִּשְׁלַח	אַתֶּם	מֹשֶׁה	מִמִּדְבָּר	פָּאֲרָן	עַל-	פִּי
And sent	them	Moses	from the wilderness of	Paran:	by	the commandment of
7971	853	4872	4057	6290	5921	6310

יְהוָה	כָּלָם	אֲנָשִׁים	רָאשֵׁי	בְנֵי-	יִשְׂרָאֵל	הֵמָּה:
the Lord	all	men	heads of	the children of	Israel.	those
3068	3605	376	7218	1121	3478	1992

I first want to focus on the spies, and in particular two of them.

Num 13:3-16

3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel. 4 These then were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;

5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori;

6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;

7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph;

8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun;

9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu;

10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11

from the tribe of Joseph, from the tribe of Manasseh,

Gaddi the son of Susi;

12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13

from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14

from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15

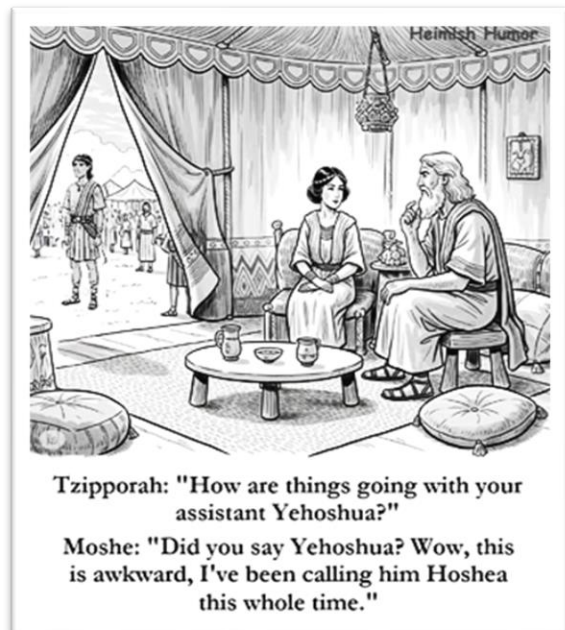
from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to

spy out the land; **but Moses called Hoshea the son of**

Nun, Joshua.

In the final sentence of the selected passage. Hoshea's name was changed by Moses to Joshua. In Hebrew, that name is actually "Yehoshua" and it means "G-d, He is salvation." There is no "J" in Hebrew.



The Hebrew name Hoshea means “He is salvation.” It leaves out precisely *who is* salvation. It might suggest that the bearer of that name carries salvation with him. Moses wished to make it clear for the rest of time. Name changes normally accompany a big event.

From this point forward, Hoshea would have a changed name, and that new name would memorialize the source of salvation for our people. The name Yehoshua makes it clear that G-d is our salvation.

It is no accident that Yeshua’s name is a shortened version of Yehoshua. We see the same thing in English, the way that Johnny is a shortened form of the name Johnathan. Or Liz is a shorter form of Elizabeth, and so on.

Num 13:21-27

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath. 22 When they had gone up into the Negev, ~~they~~ [lit. “he”]¹ came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi, the

¹ Tradition says that only Caleb had the courage to go all the way to Hebron

descendants of Anak were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs. 24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut down from there.

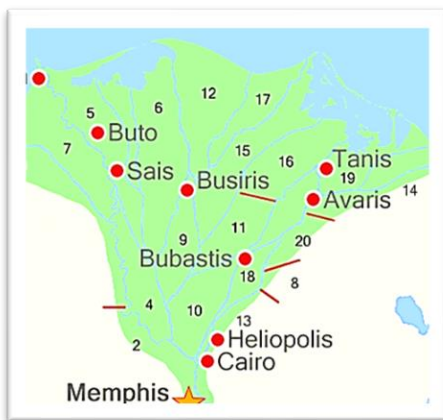
25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, 26 they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.

The symbol, of two Hebrews carrying a pole between them, with a single cluster of grapes hanging upon it, has been adopted by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism as their governmental seal.



Tso-an was a very ancient city, and is thought to have existed before Abraham was born. Tso-an was the capital of Egypt (where Pharaoh lived) at the time of the plagues and the departure from Egypt.

The meaning of the name Tso-an has come to be understood in Hebrew culture as “place of departure”. I suspect it took that meaning very soon after that departure.



Another ancient name you have likely heard for this place is “Tanis”. It is also known as “Raamses”. It is in the northeastern part of the Nile delta, very close to the sea. It is also just north of the ancient town of Avaris, in the “Land of Goshen”.

Avaris is today called Tel el-Dab’a. The site was excavated by the Austrian Archeological Institute, and about 20 years ago, they used ground-penetrating radar imagery to identify the houses, streets, and even a port that served the city. It was a very large city, and its port is estimated to have served 300 ships per year.

Some archeologists have documented, in the second half of the 18th century BCE, a very strong influx of what they call “syrio-palestinian” people. The Scriptures tell us those people were our forefathers.

Nobody living today knows for certain, but it does appear that Avaris went from being occupied by a thriving cohesive community... to being suddenly abandoned... coincidentally with the exodus.

There is a very good documentary, called *Patterns of Evidence – The Exodus*.² It uses the dating of events occurring at Avaris to adjust the dating of the exodus, and is compelling.

Manfred Beitzak in his book *Avaris, the Capital of the Hyksos*,³ catalogues some very important finds.

"While the palace was being expanded and refurbished, activity suddenly stopped. In the courtyard pots of paint,

² It is available on Amazon at: https://www.amazon.com/Patterns-Evidence-Kevin-Sorbo-Narrator/dp/B07NRTD6SZ/ref=pd_sbs_d_sccl_1_1/147-0680527-3320457?pd_rd_w=G14E5&content-id=amzn1.sym.aa738fbd-ad05-4d11-aae2-04b598db6305&pf_rd_p=aa738fbd-ad05-4d11-aae2-04b598db6305&pf_rd_r=NJEFS3NFCNM0FANBD2NN&pd_rd_wg=6s11i&pd_rd_r=190c4adf-47b7-4680-9a9

³ Available on Amazon at: https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Avaris%2C+the+Capital+of+the+Hyksos%2C&i=movies-tv&crd=3J8KN7GYOKCKF&srefix=avaris%2C+the+capital+of+the+hyksos%2C%2Cmovies-tv%2C164&ref=nb_sb_noss_1

a plumb bob and other instruments were simply dropped on the floor. The doors of the palace were closed up by brickwork and the palace was abandoned"

Dr. Rosalie David wrote in her book, *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt*,⁴ about a city further to the south, called Kahun (Lahun). She likewise describes a sudden departure.

"There are different opinions of how this first period of occupation at Kahun drew to a close... The quantity, range and type of articles of everyday use which were left behind in the houses may indeed suggest that the departure was sudden and unpremeditated" (p. 199).

She also describes mass graves, and without referring to Scripture, feels compelled to attribute a mass death to some sort of natural epidemic.

⁴ Available at Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Pyramid-Builders-Ancient-Egypt-Investigation/dp/0415152925/ref=sr_1_1?crd=GJ5D0VB1073O&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.m1X4DadIAH34D5HBejdyJaMIEPwmTZOznI9blwdDP7ic2kgjoCCWNaKNKMHJIG8nkfQlzNX9JK4_jERj3UeWc2mU4UaUTtNWxIqrBYgMLNkKua9tjy8NB78kxQOtrOl1WtBY9q_pwcDkBTE4EgfZs1ZUszHb-x5JvfUpjXuBpgSOAh-C51T3YiHDRZ8QIVSy9Z3TIxNNIfsoRSJkIEkzO-M4CNwE-zBV1k_5RuJ1mM.JUr0HwEXTSbQ6_c9PotYINo2YKaDCgYtsBT2N6F5LjQ&dib_tag=se&keywords=The+Pyramid+Builders+of+Ancient+Egypt%2C&qid=1780950452&s=movies-tv&prefix=the+pyramid+builders+of+ancient+egypt%2C%2Cmovies-tv%2C130&sr=1-1-catcorr

"Tombs found in excavation areas F/I and A/II, areas which are more than 500 metres apart from each other, were obviously emergency graves. Some of them are merely pits into which bodies were thrown. Most were without offerings. We think the evidence suggests that an epidemic swept through the town. It may have been the bubonic plague" (p. 35).

Epidemic? I would suggest that this coincidental timing of a mass death provides archaeological proof of the accuracy of Scripture, recording the death of the firstborn of Egypt.

A book entitled, *The Ancient Egyptians, a source book of their writings*, (pages 94-101) gives us further insight as it quotes the *Ipuwer Papyrus*,⁵ a secular Egyptian record of that time, which tells us that there were so many dead, that there were few men left to bury them. There were dead from every family.

"Nay but men are few. He that lays his brother in the ground is everywhere".

⁵ This is available from Amazon only in a Kindle audio book. There is much criticism of this papyrus being a historical record, but then again, the documentary *Patterns of Evidence – The Exodus* also documents considerable criticism for the actual date of the Exodus, as established by the movie. I believe the more reasonable conclusion is that the papyrus contains a record of actual events witnessed by (or passed down to) the author.

In other words, “Everywhere I look, somebody is burying a family member.”

The spies had lived all their lives, and were very familiar with, the lush delta of Egypt and you can see in their report they were trying to relate to the people around them what they saw in the Promised Land as compared to what those people had known before in Egypt.

According to tradition, the report of the spies was delivered on Tisha B’Av, a date that marks calamity for our people for generations. Their report was a “good news – bad news” type of report.

Num 13:27-29

27 Thus they told him, and said, "We went into the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. [now the bad news] 28 Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large ⁶and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the

⁶ This was a false report. Archeology tells us that all these ancient cities in the Holy Land were smaller than Avaris.

Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country,
and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side
of the Jordan."

Why did the spies mention the “descendants of Anak”? Because these Anakim were somewhat famous for being large people. Not only that, they were reputed to by tyrants, and quite fierce.

And we know that it was one of those descendents of Anak, a huge man from the city of Gath by the name of Goliath, who was sent out as the champion of the Philistines to fight the armies of Saul generations later.⁷

So, we know that all but two of the spies were frightened of not only the Anakim, but considered unconquerable the fortified cities of the other inhabitants of the Land. These spies feared men, not G-d.⁸

They multiplied their sin by voting on matters of observance. G-d does not approve of “majority rules” in matters of holiness. Majority rule is pure democracy, and was rejected as a viable form of governance by our founding fathers, for they knew that fear and greed often drives a majority vote.

⁷ 1 Sam 17:1-5

⁸ The same sin as Pharaoh.

Today, normative Judaism has adopted “majority rule” as a way of determining halacha.⁹ This might work well, if all the leaders were as closely connected to G-d as was Moses and Joshua. But sadly, some leaders are not, and have made some rulings which were clearly contradicted by the very word of G-d.

I believe that the concept of “majority rule” began to dominate Jewish life during the Talmudic period of our history. An event recorded in Talmud shows us an early example. A discussion was being held between our Sages regarding whether an oven could be considered ritually pure if it were cut into segments and the segments separated by veins of sand. We find that discussion recorded in tractate Bava Metzia at 59b:

If a man made an oven out of separate coils [of clay, placing one upon another], then put sand between each of the coils — such an oven, R. Eliezer declared, is not susceptible to defilement, while the sages declared it susceptible. It is taught: On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument, but the Sages did not accept any of them. Finally he said to them: "If the

⁹ Halacha is a term used to describe how we as Jews will live our lives in observance of the Commandments of G-d. It means “walking” and refers to the life of obedience. It is the responsibility of the leaders of the Jewish community to set halacha for that community.

Halakhah (religious law) is in accordance with me, let this carob tree prove it!" Sure enough the carob tree immediately uprooted itself and moved one hundred cubits, and some say 400 cubits, from its place. "No proof can be brought from a carob tree," they retorted. And again he said to them "If the Halakhah agrees with me, let the channel of water prove it!" Sure enough, the channel of water flowed backward. "No proof can be brought from a channel of water," they rejoined. Again he urged, "If the Halakhah agrees with me, let the walls of the house of study prove it!" Sure enough, the walls tilted as if to fall. But R. Joshua, rebuked the walls, saying, "When disciples of the wise are engaged in a halakhic dispute, what right have you to interfere?" Hence in deference to R. Joshua they did not fall and in deference to R. Eliezer they did not resume their upright position; they are still standing aslant. Again R. Eliezer then said to the Sages, "If the Halakhah agrees with me, let it be proved from heaven." Sure enough, a divine voice cried out, "Why do you dispute with R. Eliezer, with whom the Halakhah always agrees?" R. Joshua stood up and protested: "The Torah is not in heaven!" (Deut. 30:12). We pay no attention to a divine voice

because long ago at Mount Sinai You wrote in your Torah at Mount Sinai, 'After the majority must one incline'. (Ex. 23:2)"

After the majority determined the halacha to be contrary to Rb. Eliezar, the majority determined to ban him (an equivalent action to being removed from authority in the normative church). Someone needed to go tell Rb. Eliezar of this severe judgment against him. Rb. Akiva volunteered to do so, as the account continues:

And the Sages said: Who will go and inform him of his ostracism? Rabbi Akiva, his beloved disciple, said to them: I will go, lest an unseemly person go and inform him in a callous and offensive manner, and he would thereby destroy the entire world. What did Rabbi Akiva do? He wore black and wrapped himself in black, as an expression of mourning and pain, and sat before Rabbi Eliezer at a distance of four cubits, which is the distance that one must maintain from an ostracized individual. Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Akiva, what is different about today from other days, that you comport yourself in this manner? Rabbi Akiva said to him: My teacher, it appears to me that your colleagues are distancing themselves

from you. He employed euphemism, as actually they distanced Rabbi Eliezer from them. Rabbi Eliezer too, rent his garments and removed his shoes, as is the custom of an ostracized person, and he dropped from his seat and sat upon the ground. The Gemara relates: His eyes shed tears, and as a result the entire world was afflicted: One-third of its olives were afflicted, and one-third of its wheat, and one-third of its barley. And some say that even dough kneaded in a woman's hands spoiled. The Sages taught: There was great anger on that day, as any place that Rabbi Eliezer fixed his gaze was burned. And even Rabban Gamliel, the Nasi of the Sanhedrin at Yavne, the head of the Sages who were responsible for the decision to ostracize Rabbi Eliezer, was coming on a boat at the time, and a large wave swelled over him and threatened to drown him. Rabban Gamliel said: It seems to me that this is only for the sake of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, as God punishes those who mistreat others. Rabban Gamliel stood on his feet and said: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that neither was it for my honor that I acted when ostracizing him, nor was it for the honor of the house of my father that I acted; rather, it was for Your honor, so that disputes

will not proliferate in Israel. In response, the sea calmed from its raging.

I relate this Talmudic account as what I believe to be the basis for how normative Judaism determines its halacha today. The majority makes the rules. And it seems that in our days the majority has been sadly mistaken regarding Yeshua and His ministry.

And it does seem that the very voice of G-d coming from heaven won't be sufficient to change the minds of spiritual leaders who are so full of pride that they will not follow a dissenting proclamation of one standing alone for righteousness.

I don't wish for you to consider that only the Jewish people are susceptible to this kind of error. I see ample evidence even in the normative Christian church of the same dynamic. Some Christian congregations simply disregard (or explain-away) clear passages of Scripture which differ with their preferred man-created denominational "walk."

But after offering proof of this unfortunate state of affairs in the body of faith, I wish to caution you that it is improper to discard any

segment of the body of faith because of what they get wrong.¹⁰ I urge you to rejoice in the things others get right, and if they are open to learning more about the truth of G-d and His ways, you might help them in that regard. Always resort to Scripture as the guide.

Only two of the spies stood with G-d against the majority. Joshua and Caleb.

Joshua was son of Ephraim. In the Hebraic way of association, he could be known as “Yehoshua ben Ephraim” – Yehoshua in the pattern of Ephraim. Not only does Yeshoshua’s name invoke Messiah, but so does Ephraim. Our Sages have associated Messiah so clearly with the pattern of Ephraim, that we have actually given Messiah the name “Ephraim” in our writings. We find in our ancient writings some clear references to Yeshua in a story naming Him as Ephraim, in Pesikta Rabbati 36:¹¹

Arise, my light, for your light has come, and the glory of
the Lord has risen upon you [For behold, darkness will
cover the earth, and thick darkness will cover the nations,

¹⁰ This is not to say that some groups, whose theology denies G-d and Yeshua as Messiah, are to be embraced. There are some which masquerade as true believers, but whose teachings are completely false. Scripture reminds us that we should have nothing to do with such a group or a person – other than to attempt to bring them to a proper faith walk with G-d.

¹¹ This compilation of sermons was compiled around the year 845. The portion cited above shows how clearly our people understood the prophecies of Messiah at that time.

and the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you] (Isaiah 60:1-2): This is what was said by the Holy Spirit through David, king of Israel, for your people are a fountain of life. In your light, light will be seen (Psalms 36:10). Against whom does David say this verse? They did not say it, but against the assembly of Israel. They said before the Holy One, blessed be He, the Lord of the world, because of the Torah that you gave me, which is called the fountain of life, I will delight in your light in the future to come. What is it in your light that light will be seen? What light is it that the assembly of Israel expects? This is the light of the Messiah, as it is said, And God saw the light, that it was good (Genesis 1:4). This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, anticipated the Messiah and his works before the creation of the world (and also) [and] reserved it for his anointed for his generation under the throne of his glory. Satan said before the Holy One, blessed be He, [Lord of the world, the light that was reserved under the throne of your glory, to whom is God, to whom is he to return you and to disgrace you with shame. [God] The Lord of the world, show him to me, he said to him, "Come and see him." And when he saw him, he was shocked and fell on

his face and said, "Surely this is the Messiah who is destined to cast me and all the rulers of the nations of the world into hell, as it is said, "And he will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:8). [At that time the nations were moved.] They said before him, "The Lord of the world, who is this that we fall into his hand? What is his name? What is his nature?" The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them, "He is the Messiah, and his name is Ephraim, the Messiah of righteousness (from the height of the heavens)." His stature and the stature of his generation, and the light of the eyes of Israel and the Savior of his people, and no nation or tongue can withstand him," as it is said, "No enemy will triumph over him, and the son of a foreigner will not answer him." (Psalms 59:23) And all his enemies and his adversaries flee, as it is said, "And I will crush his adversaries before him" (Ibid. 24), and even the rivers of the sea, as it is said, "And I will set his hand in the sea and in the rivers of our right hand" (Ibid. 25:8). 26) The Blessed One began a gift with him and said, "These are the ones whose sins are hidden with you. They will put you in a yoke of iron and make you like this calf whose

eyes are closed and who strangle your spirit with a yoke. And with the sins of these ones, your tongue will stick to your jaws. Your desire for this is that the Messiah said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, that perhaps that sorrow will last for many years. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, "Your life and the life of the first week (you) [one] that I have decreed for you. If your soul is sad, I will trouble you from now on. The Lord of the worlds said before him, "In the joy of my soul and in the joy of my heart, I accept it upon me, so that not one of Israel will perish, nor will the living alone (be saved) [saved] in my days [but also those who are hidden in the dust, and not only the dead will be saved in my days, but also those who have died from the days of Adam until now], and not only those who have fallen, and not only those who have died in my days, but (for) [all] that you have thought of creating, and they were not created (in them)." In this I want in this I accept upon me At that time, the Blessed One appointed four living creatures to bear the throne of the glory of the Messiah At that time, his enemies and the princes of the kingdoms said, Come, let us argue about the generation of the Messiah that will never be created The Blessed One said to them, How do

you argue about that generation that is lovely and beautiful and I am happy in it and I desire it and I will support it and I want it as it is said, "Behold, my servant, I will support him [my chosen one, whom my soul desires, I have put my spirit upon him, etc.]" (Isaiah 42:1) And how do you argue about him? I will destroy you all, fiery furnaces from the lights of kinship and not one soul will I lose. For this it is said that with you is a source of life in the light of which light is seen: [They said] A week that the son of David came, in which they brought iron beams and put them on his neck until his stature was bowed down (and it was) [and he] cried and wept and his voice ascended to heaven. He said before him, "The Lord of the universe, how much is my power and how much is my spirit and how much is my soul, how much will be my life?" My limbs are not flesh and blood. I am as at that time David was weeping and saying, "My strength is as dry as clay" (Psalms 22:16). At that time, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Ephraim, the Messiah of my righteousness, you have already received upon you from the six days of the beginning.

Look more closely at Caleb. Caleb was the “son of Jephunneh”.
We get more information in parasha *Masei*.

Num 32:11-13

11 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, **12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the Lord fully.'**

“Jephunneh the Kinizzite?” Yes. He was a descendent of Kenaz.

Gen 36:40-43

40 Now these are the names of the chiefs descended from Esau, according to their families and their localities, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, 41 chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, **42 chief Kenaz**, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, 43 chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau,

the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession.

So, Caleb is the son of Jephunneh who was a son of Kenaz, who was a son of Esau. Jephunneh was not initially a member of the tribe of Judah, nor an ethnic Hebrew. Actually, his tribe began as an enemy of Israel. How did he get into Judah? Much as Ruth did.

In today's parasha we have an ethnic Jew from Ephraim, and a grafted-in Jew who is now in the tribe of Judah. They stand alone against a majority who is defying G-d. The grafted-in one stands firm alongside the representative of Messiah and will not be moved, even when the majority of Jews are opposing G-d's plan.

We have in our congregation the same dynamic. We have Jews and grafted-in Jews, together with others who are in the covenant with G-d, but not yet fully grafted-in. We are standing together, for G-d and His ways, regardless of what some in the normative church and the normative synagogue say against us.

Stay closely connected to G-d and His truth. Be strong and courageous, for our numbers are increasing day by day.