

TORAHSCOPE: Terumah (Offering)

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Exodus 25:1-27:19
1 Kings 5:26(4:29)–6:13

“The Heart of the Matter”

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution’” (Exodus 25:1-2).

This week’s Torah portion, *Terumah*, details the construction of the Tabernacle that the glory of God occupied during the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness. This temporary dwelling place was destined to last until the First Temple was built in Jerusalem by King Solomon. As you read through the details of materials and construction, you can marvel at the minute particulars that come forth from the instructions of the Master Builder. The finest natural materials are utilized that all have significant symbolic interpretations. But regardless of the specificity of the blueprints and materials, two overwhelming themes bubble to the surface as you read the account.

First, from the title of the portion you discover that the Holy One is looking for people who have a strong heart desire to offer valuable contributions for the construction project. God was looking for a people who would love, honor, and respect Him enough so that they are willing—from the heart—to offer up their valuable resources in order to build the Tabernacle and all of the furnishings and accoutrements for the priestly service. We learn from some later comments that the response to the request was overwhelming to the point that an order was issued to stop the outpouring of freewill gifts:

“And they said to Moses, ‘**The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded us to perform.**’ So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, ‘Let no man or woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary.’ **Thus the people were restrained from bringing *any more***” (Exodus 36:5-6).

From the very beginning of the wilderness journey, after witnessing the miracles of the defeat of the Egyptians, the provisions of manna, quail, and water, hearing the voice of the Lord bellowing from Mount Sinai, and receiving the Ten Commandments, the Israelites were prepared to give freely of their possessions for the construction of the Tabernacle. The Holy One articulates the second theme that is evident in this portion, as He makes His declaration known to Moses:

“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

The Lord has a strong desire to dwell among His people. This is an important statement because even though He desires for a sanctuary to be built, our Heavenly Father is really stating that He desires to just dwell among the people. Even though there is a construction project for a specific structure to represent His holiness, He actually says that He wants to dwell among human beings. From this wording, you get the impression that the Holy One just wants to walk among His people in a similar fashion to the way He established the relationship with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden:

“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves **from the presence of the LORD God among** the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8).

As you consider this Scripture, we see the intimate relationship that God is attempting to establish with His chosen people. He desires a people whose hearts yearn for Him and with whom He can dwell. The rest of the account is simply details that have significant symbolic meaning, but nevertheless, are the tangible manifestations of His heart’s desire.

Even when you take a look at the Haftarah portion found in 1 Kings 5:26-6:13, you discover that in spite of the impressive construction project developed by Solomon and Hiram during their time of relative peace, the overwhelming theme is God simply wanting to dwell with

His people. For whatever reasons, it is apparent that humanity needs physical structures in order to imagine spiritual and relational principles. The Creator knows this attribute, and consequently fulfills that need by allowing the wilderness Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple to be constructed.

The Good Shepherd

The far greater point that the Lord is trying to convey in this text has to do with the melding of one's heart attitude and His residence among His people. Probably the most vivid analogy that is used to communicate the essence of this relationship is the image derived from the relationship of a shepherd to his sheep. The Holy One is often described as a Good Shepherd who is constantly walking among His sheep tending to their needs. If you will recall, when the Patriarch Jacob was communicating his final blessings upon Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, he refers to God as a shepherd:

"He blessed Joseph, and said, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, **the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day**'" (Genesis 48:15).

Later, when blessing Joseph specifically, another reference to the Great Shepherd is made:

"But his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (**from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel**), from the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you *with* blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers" (Genesis 49:24-26).

Of course, most remember David's reference to God being his Shepherd in Psalm 23:

"A Psalm of David. **The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.** He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23:1-3).

Less well-known words come from Qohelet, as he is summarizing his life experience:

"The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of *these* collections are like well-driven nails; **they are given by one Shepherd.** But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion *to books* is wearying to the body. The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.* For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:11-14).

Perhaps this conclusion is less discussed because there is a serious reference to *all* people fearing God and keeping His commandments.

The Prophets are also replete about referring to God as a Shepherd:

"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. **Like a shepherd He will tend His flock**, in His arm He will gather the lambs and carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*" (Isaiah 40:10-11).

"Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him **and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock**'" (Jeremiah 31:10).

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. Therefore He will give them *up* until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. **And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.** And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth" (Micah 5:2-4).

And of course, Yeshua used these terms to describe Himself to His Disciples:

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd" (John 10:11-16).

The author of Hebrews summarizes his treatise by calling the workings of the Holy One the works of the Great Shepherd:

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Yeshua our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Earlier in his work, the author quotes extensively from the Prophets in order to communicate many of the principles relating to the wilderness Tabernacle and how it applies to Believers' lives through the inauguration of the New Covenant:

"Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'SEE,' He says, 'THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.' But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first [*priesthood*] had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, 'BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE (Hebrews 8:4-12).

In Hebrews 8-9, the author gives his audience a description of the wilderness Tabernacle, and the distinction made between it and "the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation" (Hebrews 9:11). This is what Yeshua entered into in Heaven, performing the required priestly duties between God the Father and humanity. The author of Hebrews quotes directly from the Prophet Jeremiah, who describes that the New Covenant that God will make will write the Torah onto the hearts of the people by His Holy Spirit:¹

"Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the LORD, '**I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the LORD, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

¹ For an examination of some of the issues circulating around the Messianic movement concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, consult the commentary *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

These conclusions come after Jeremiah has described the work of God the Shepherd to scatter and then gather His flock:

“Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock’” (Jeremiah 31:10).

Hear O Israel

One of the works of the Shepherd is to put His Law within the sheep and write it onto their hearts, so that He will be their God and they will be His people. Jeremiah describes the new heart that is required to love the Lord in the way that Moses communicates in the *Shema*:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The imperative here is that individuals are to each love the Lord God of Israel with all of their hearts, and to personally inscribe the words of the Torah by doing a number of daily exercises. The Father knows human beings’ propensity to wander and to avoid following His commands. In order to help inscribe these words on the heart, He has described some basic instructions to help with the process. This includes a daily routine of waking up and thinking about Him, and instructing our children about Him and His love for us. Going to sleep at night, our final thoughts should be about Him. Everything that we put our hands to, or every thought that we consider, should be viewed through the grid of His understandings. In the *Shema*, we are even told to put the commandments of God on the very doorposts of our houses and gates, so that we will be reminded as we leave our home and return, that we should be focusing all our attention, love, and loyalty to Him.

As you read and reflect upon these words, you almost get the impression that the Holy One of Israel wants as much of our attention as our very soul mate, our husband or wife. He wants our heart to be turned toward Him so that we will be one with Him in thoughts, deeds, and actions. We can yearn for the intimacy with the Father that some of our forbearers in the faith modeled for us. Men like King David knew the Lord intimately, and his psalms reflect that love. Psalm 19 is an excellent example of this love:

“For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; let them not rule over me; then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer”** (Psalm 19:1-14).

Here, King David has such a desire for intimacy that he does not even want his thoughts to be unacceptable in the sight of God. **I pray that our hearts would be as sensitive!**

The Tabernacle of David

Today, the Father continues to look for temporary tabernacles to indwell. The difference is that we as humans are called to be that tabernacle for Him to occupy. We know that the Prophet Amos in his era, and then James the Just after the resurrection of Yeshua, both saw into the future as what was to be labeled the restoration of the Tabernacle of David:

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,’ declares the LORD. **‘For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground.** All the sinners of My people will die by the sword, those who say, “The calamity will not overtake or confront us. **In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old;** that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name,” declares the LORD who does this. ‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘When the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved. **Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,’ says the LORD your God”** (Amos 9:8-15).

If you will recall, the concluding words of Amos’ prophecy looked forward to the restoration of the fallen Tabernacle of David. Amos knew that a sizeable part of Israel had been sown to the nations. As God let him see into the future, Amos knew that days were coming when the captivity of Israel would end and all of the people would corporately return to the Promised Land to rebuild cities, plant vineyards, drink wine, make gardens, and eat their fruit.

James the Just, upon hearing the testimonies of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, and the evangelism that was occurring in the Diaspora among the nations, makes a connection between the non-Jews coming to faith and what Amos prophesies:

“After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, ‘Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, **“AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,”** SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. **For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath”** (Acts 15:13-21).

The difference between what Amos prophesies, is that James says **“SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME”** (Acts 15:17). James does not follow the Hebrew text in Amos, but the Septuagint rendering which reads with *hoi kataloipoi tōn anthrōpōn* (οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων) for the Hebrew *sheareet Edom* (שְׂאֵרֵי אֶדוֹם). The LXX Rabbis understood *Edom* (אֶדוֹם) to be connected to *adam* (אָדָם), also the Hebrew word for **“mankind, people”** (*HALOT*)² and rendered it in Greek as “the remnant of men” (Apostle’s Bible), referring to God’s faithful remnant that would come forth out of humanity’s masses. James makes the connection between the salvation of Israel and those of the nations coming to faith in Israel’s Messiah. James would have had to recognize that a critical part of Israel’s restoration would have been the keeping of the Torah by all coming into the fold. In Ezekiel 37:24,

² Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1:14.

we are told that when all Israel is restored “they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.” As James was considering the salvation of the nations, he was reflecting on the restoration of the Tabernacle of David described by the Prophet Amos.

Today, almost 1,900 years later, these same principles still apply. Now that we know that we are indeed the actual dwelling places of the Spirit of God, we can faithfully turn our attention and energy to make ourselves not only the living sacrifices that emulate Yeshua (Romans 12:1-2). We can be that holy nation and separated people that the Apostle Peter says we will be:

“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah Yeshua.** For *this* is contained in Scripture: ‘BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,’ and, ‘A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE’; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed. But you are A CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR **God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;** for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY” (1 Peter 2:4-10).

When we discover that we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (NIV), we can marvel in our privilege to be one of the stones that makes up the house He has been restoring since the Great Commission was issued by Yeshua to the Apostles. We are closer to the restoration of David’s Tabernacle today, than the Apostles were two millennia ago. We are living in exciting times!

As we contemplate these awesome truths, we must reflect upon our own hearts, wondering what we can give back to the Lord in return for His adoption of us. We need to search our hearts and consider what the meditations of our hearts are. What motivates us? Do we wake up with His thoughts on our minds? Do we go to sleep considering His ways? Are we training up our children according to His precepts? Everyone will be accountable for their actions, deeds, and thoughts. **In the end it comes down to a matter of the heart. May our hearts be His and His be ours!**

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