

## VaYak'hel (And he assembled)

by Mark Huey posted 20 March, 2009 www.outreachisrael.net

Exodus 35:1-38:20

1 Kings 7:51-8:21

## "Actions Speak Louder Than Words"

"Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, 'These are the things that the LORD has commanded *you* to do: For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day*, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day' (Exodus 35:1-3).

By the time we come to this week's Torah portion, we discover that it encapsulates a description of the actions of Ancient Israel, as they collectively fulfill the requirements for the Tabernacle construction that were the subject of the previous *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* readings. Without any hesitation, the text reminds us about the commandment to take a Sabbath rest, even in the midst of the building of the Tabernacle and production of the various implements, accouterments, and garments as defined.

If you have been reading closely the past few weeks, you will have noticed that *Shabbat* is of particular concern to the God of Israel. Two times in Exodus 31:12-17 and 34:21, an emphasis is placed not only the "sign" of *Shabbat*, but also the importance to observe it faithfully. **Now as the physical labor for constructing the Tabernacle finally commences, Moses once again reminds Israel about the Sabbath.** Perhaps knowing human nature, these admonitions have been placed by the Lord in these Torah portions so that we may be reminded that having a day of rest is a great blessing to all those who remember and observe it.

Of course, it is important to note that in this section of the Torah, we find that the "whole" congregation of Israel is asked to participate. The overwhelming reaction by many to the offerings that come forth for the various projects requires that Moses command the people to halt their outpouring of freewill offerings:

"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*. For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it" (Exodus 36:5-7).

As I personally pondered the importance of *Shabbat* this week, and rejoiced in the recorded reaction of the people who wanted to contribute to the various construction projects, I was also dealing with how I have dealt with this subject since I came to the Lord in 1978. I was born again at the age of 27, and committed myself to being a Believer, rather than a non-Believer—a member of God's people—rather than a part of the world. From this year forward, I was going to be maturing in my relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ, and was going to learn to live more like Him. Like many of you, it has been a "wild ride," and I have done things since becoming Messianic that I would never have dreamed of when I first came to faith.

First, I thought back to some of the early years of my new life in the Lord when I was confronted by a relative who happened to be a proponent of Dominion theology. At the time, he was trying to persuade me that taking Sunday and devoting it fully to God was a good thing that would honor the Fourth Commandment. At the time, I was faithfully attending Sunday morning services at a church in Dallas, Texas, and then coming back on Sunday evening for a service that would include taking communion. Two times a day I would load my family into the car and proceed to the church for a teaching convocation, and then a second service that was more contemplative.

At that time many years ago, when this relative admonished me, I thought he was being extremely legalistic. After all, I was living in Dallas and the Cowboys were on a roll in the NFL. I also played men's city league soccer, and our games just happened to be played on Sunday afternoon. I could certainly get my time "in with the Lord" between Sunday morning and Sunday evening. As I justified my other activities during the afternoon, I actually thought I was doing pretty well to be a dedicated "twice a Sunday" attendee. With the passage of time, I have witnessed that via God's sanctification in my life my personal attitude has changed substantially since those naïve days many years ago.

In God's mercy to me, as I have continued to beseech Him in order to know Him and understand His ways, He has been faithful to reveal more and more of Himself to me. The Prophet Jeremiah reminds us about the rewards of seeking the Holy One of Israel.

"For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. **Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.** I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile'" (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

Here, we find that our Heavenly Father does have things under control and He does have a plan for our lives. I can personally testify that if you do seek Him with all your heart, He will not only restore your fortunes, but as He has said, He will gather you back where you have been scattered. The Lord will bring you back to Himself no matter what nefarious paths you have chosen to follow for a season. He will take you from the doldrums of sin into a place where you can be used for the growth of His Kingdom.

Today, via the growth of the Messianic movement, Believers are returning to the foundational building blocks of our faith and restoring the understanding of how Yeshua and the Apostles obeyed God. This is exciting to witness. As I study the Torah and read passages about *Shabbat*, the appointed times, and other things that the Lord wants us to follow so that He can bless us, I am immensely blessed. Today, I not only know that the Sabbath begins at sundown on the sixth day and ends on sundown on the seventh day, but also that the "day" does not begin at midnight as I had always been told. I think it is amazing that *Shabbat* is exactly what the Scriptures say it is—and it was there all along. I simply failed to look at it.

As I have been maturing in my walk with the Lord, I can honestly say that I delight in *Shabbat* and look forward to it as the pinnacle of my week. Entering into His rest and putting down the labors of the week is more clearly understood than when I had my debate years ago with this former relative. Today, I might be able to present a more comprehensive understanding of what the Sabbath is for me as defined by the Holy Scriptures, than he tried to present to me years ago. Perhaps now he would be the one considering me "legalistic"!

My second area of contemplation this week appears in some other verses that describe the supernatural endowment of two men, who had specifically been selected by the Lord to oversee the various construction projects of the Tabernacle:

"Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded. Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it" (Exodus 36:1-2).

I have spent some time at the Orlando Convention Center overseeing the construction of "temporary tabernacles," and I could relate to just what it takes to physically construct something and take it down in order to move it. Now these trade show, seminar, and conference booths and displays are not to be compared to the magnificence and significance of the Tabernacle, but there are some parallels. I have had to use my hands to build things that have a degree of temporary usefulness, and as a result can identify with some of what Bezalel and Oholiab had to do.

It does take a certain amount of mental acumen when dealing with the erection of complex structures, and this is where I have been able to consider some of the talents and gifts of men like Bezalel and Oholiab. Not only were these men probably able to physically make the objects of the Tabernacle, but they were also probably gifted with the ability to organize and administer the construction projects. In my work, I have enjoyed learning from the younger and more experienced artisans, who often have specially designed tools crafted for certain needs. Even though I might have some age and wisdom in other areas of life, when it comes to knowing the most efficient and safest way to construct something, I typically defer to the younger people, who I discern are more gifted and experienced for various construction projects.

Additionally, I learned another lesson this week (in 2005) via a gift that I was given for Bible research. I received a Greek lexicon, and I believe that receiving it happens to be timed perfectly with a writing project that I have been inspired to pursue. In recent weeks, while going through the Torah portions, I have been spiritually stimulated by Paul's words of being a "living sacrifice" and what it means as listed in the balance of Romans 12. Pensively, as I began to layout some of my thoughts and started to think about the terms being used, I realized that my Greek study resources were slim. Propitiously, in a providentially timed gift, I was given a reference tool that should hopefully point me in the right direction.

In an ironic sort of way, just like watching the younger and more gifted builders of complex structures at the Convention Center, a gifted young teacher of the Holy Scriptures gave me a resource "tool" that will allow me to be far more effective in my studies. I was delighted that this tool was given to me at just the right time. Just like a Bezalel or Oholiab coming along with a special tool or instrument, or perhaps one first showing you how to build something, it is a sign of maturity when you do not think too highly of yourself and are willing to listen to instruction from someone else. Even if the advice or tool comes from someone younger, I recommend to joyfully receive what is being imparted, and welcome the talents that the Lord wants to instill in you via a young person, so you can be more effective in His service.

This begins to take on even more significant when you realize that in light of the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it is the operation of the Ancient Israelites with all of their collective talents and gifts in unison with one another that accomplishes what God wants. After all, where would Bezalel and Oholiab have been without the gold, jewels, brass, skins, wood, and the laborers to perform certain tasks? If the willing hearts did not give the items necessary for the project, no matter how talented the artisans were, the Tabernacle would have been a conceptual design relegated to theory rather than the reality of a completed temporary dwelling place for the Most High.

Consequently, it takes the whole Body of the Messiah to accomplish His will. Now that I am armed with some more theological tools, I hope that my ability to write and comment about certain aspects of the Scriptures will be greatly enhanced. Just consider some of the things that Paul writes about in Romans 12 that are required of us who serve the Lord diligently:

"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).

With the measure of faith I have **the more I learn to walk in His ways, the more I not only appreciate His rest on *Shabbat*, but also simply resting in Him in all things.** Watching Him orchestrate my life today via the consistent study of the Torah and how it applies to my walk with Him, in so many regards, is fascinating. As I sit back and review Scripture through His illumination, I am beginning to realize more than ever that **my actions do speak louder than words.** I have seen my walk starting to catch up with my talk! Some verses that dramatically changed my life many years ago, echo the prayers that I still offer today:

"More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Messiah, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Messiah, the righteousness which

comes from God on the basis of faith, **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;** in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:8-11)

I am blessed that my earnest actions to know my Lord and Savior, and quite possibly the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, continues to bring me more of His rest, as I personally notice the maturation in my walk with and in Him. **These actions speak volumes to me much louder than all the words I can fathom!** In a like manner, I pray that you would be equally encouraged that our collective actions will be what today’s world sees and hears.

Finally, even though different measures of faith come by hearing, it is often by our Messiah-like actions that people will respond through confession and repentance to the Word that is transforming us. In so doing, others may be drawn to us to hear about how God has transformed our lives by us receiving Yeshua and obeying Him diligently. This must be the testimony that we offer, whether they witness our obedience via the peace only He can give us—or even whether they witness our obedience to following *Shabbat*. May we remember that we testify of Yeshua via our actions—sometimes even more than our words! **Take to serious heart of the immeasurable responsibility that you have.**

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