

HAFTARAH EXHORTATIONS:

Haftarah Terumah

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1 Kings 5:26-6:13

“God’s Earthly Tabernacle”

In *Terumah* (Exodus 25:1-27:19), the details of the wilderness Tabernacle, which will house the presence of God, are related. Its opening verses not only describe the variety of materials required for construction, but most importantly refer to the stirred hearts that willingly offer the resources:

“Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, blue, purple and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goat *hair*, rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece. **Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.** According to all that I am going to show you, *as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it*” (Exodus 25:2-9).

The balance of the *parashah* gives instructions to Israel so that the constructed sanctuary will be a suitable place for the Holy One to dwell among His people. Unsurprisingly, when the Sages were determining a parallel passage for *Terumah*, they turned to the description of how Solomon’s Temple would be built. In 1 Kings 5:26-6:13, there is an emphasis placed upon the labor demands, the management of the construction project, the timing, the dimensions, and the implements used. While King Solomon was given wisdom by God, it was his father King David who was actually responsible for conceiving the plans and designs of the structure, and the implements for worship:

“Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch *of the temple*, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms and the room for the mercy seat; and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God and for the storehouses of the dedicated things” (1 Chronicles 28:11-12).

As you read through the details describing the construction of the First Temple, you might note one significant difference in comparison to the construction of the wilderness Tabernacle. Despite the wisdom given to Solomon and a time of peace with potential adversaries present, in order to build the Temple, it is apparent that Solomon was required to use *forced labor*. The freewill offerings of the wilderness generation and the obvious supernatural gifting of the Tabernacle, its implements and accoutrements, and the craftsmen employed, are not noted. Instead, there is an emphasis on this as a massive public works project, with all of the moving parts and infrastructure needed to complete the task:

“The LORD gave wisdom to Solomon, just as He promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a covenant. Now King Solomon levied forced laborers from all Israel; and the forced laborers numbered 30,000 men. He sent them to Lebanon, 10,000 a month in relays; they were in Lebanon a month *and* two months at home. And Adoniram *was* over the forced laborers. Now Solomon had 70,000 transporters, and 80,000 hewers *of stone* in the mountains, besides Solomon's 3,300 chief deputies who *were* over the project *and* who ruled over the people who were doing the work” (1 Kings 5:12-16).

For comparative purposes, reflecting upon how God used workers to build His mobile sanctuary, and then His more permanent structure in Jerusalem, allows one to realize that He is intimately involved in the details. Whether He is communicating His construction plans through Moses or David, the fact remains that He uses human instruments to not only receive His instructions, but also implement them using the appropriate materials. After all, when there is something being built to house the glory of God on Earth, a significant degree of holiness is

attached to it. This is verified by the fact that Solomon's construction crew was compelled to avoid the use of construction tools at the site of the Temple. Apparently, the precept established centuries earlier in the wilderness not use tools on the altar, was being honored by those chosen to construct the Temple:

"You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. **If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.** And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it" (Exodus 20:24-26).

"The house, while it was being built, was built of stone prepared at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any iron tool heard in the house while it was being built" (1 Kings 6:7).

It appears that both of these ancient generations were not only aware of the holiness attached to these structures, but were very serious about their specific roles in the construction programs. The concluding remarks recorded in our *Haftarah* selection summarize the primary reason for the construction of the Temple:

"Now the word of the LORD came to Solomon saying, '*Concerning* this house which you are building, if you will walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My commandments by walking in them, then I will carry out My word with you which I spoke to David your father. I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel'" (1 Kings 6:11-13).

Clearly, what the Holy One desires to do is to dwell among an obedient people, who not only walk in diligent remembrance of His commandments, but also walk in His ways and learn from these commandments. The God who glorifies Israel will not only have Him living in their midst, but He promises to never forsake them. What a wonderful promise! **But did you notice the *if caveat* weaved into the exhortation?** Can you discern the nuance between dwelling and living among the people, and Him forsaking them? Let me explain.

God's love for His people and His promises to them are irrevocable. He does not lie, nor can He lie (Numbers 23:19). Yet there is a great distinction to be made between dwelling with someone, and simply not forsaking them from a great distance. In more tangible terms, imagine that you have a very wise and godly grandparent or great-grandparent who actually lives with you in your home. Consider how you would have the opportunity to not only consult with this person, but also be mindful of his or her needs, recognizing that he or she is monitoring all that is going on in the household. Since you respect, and to a certain extent revere, the wisdom and counsel of this elderly person—who is intensely interested in your well being and success—you take the liberty to frequently seek advice and counsel, and perhaps even prayers, when it comes to vital decisions or situations. Since you value their input into your life, you want to please them by your behavior. You want to demonstrate your own growing wisdom and maturity to them via a life that is pleasing to the Lord you both serve. If you have ever had an elderly person live with you, then perhaps you can identify with how their presence adds a valuable dimension to home life.

On the other hand, if you have a grandparent or great-grandparent who lives a great distance away, where you are only seeing them occasionally, you do not have the direct input that comes from close proximity. Your relative is not living with you and interacting with you on a daily basis. **However, because they continue to love you and want you to succeed and have a wonderful life, they will never forsake you.** They might pray for you at a distance and always be available for advice if you call them. They will not necessarily force themselves upon you. Being older and wiser, they will know from life experience that trying to force their opinions on a younger person is not usually successful, unless and until the younger person actually comes to them with questions for advice. **In a similar way, this is what the Lord does, especially if the wayward child is not obeying the basic precepts, ordinances, laws, and ways that have been articulated to receive His blessings.** What often happens, unfortunately, is that those who are not

walking in God's ways do not necessarily want to communicate with godly people, or by extension God Himself.

We see the pattern established from these ancient texts. **God really wants to dwell with us on our "wilderness" journey, and even more so when we finally settle down at a more permanent location.** We are specifically told in the Apostolic Writings that the very presence of God, by His Holy Spirit, takes up residence inside of us as redeemed individuals, who then compose the corporate Tabernacle or Temple of God. Upon receiving a heart of flesh endowed with the Holy Spirit, Believers actually become vessels who are set-apart for the righteous acts that the Holy One will accomplish through us. What a great responsibility and honor to be so chosen to be His representatives on Earth! The desire to dwell in His children (1 Corinthians 6:19) is similar in Moses' and David's era, as it is in the era that Jeremiah foresaw as he foretold the New Covenant that would be manifest:

"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).

God promises that He will give His children a new heart of flesh, and place His Spirit inside of them so that they can obey Him:

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Those who have the Holy Spirit are able to abide with God, keep His commandments, and most significantly manifest His love to others. God's people are able to function no differently than the Tabernacle or Temple were to originally house His presence:

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him" (John 14:16-21).

Our challenge is to recognize that we make up the Temple of God—something far greater than a structure built by the hands of humans. We have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who like that elderly grandparent, is available for counsel without imposing His will. The Lord is still looking for stirring hearts who willingly, not under force, desire to know Him and serve Him with all of their might. May we be blessed to seek Him with all of our hearts!

Until the restoration of all things...

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