

APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

for *V'yak'heil-Peukei*

by Mark Huey posted 13 March, 2010 www.outreachisrael.net

2 Corinthians 9:1-15; Hebrews 9:1-14; Revelation 11:1-13
Revelation 15:5-8

"Gifts and Glory"

The last two Torah readings of the Book of Exodus, being considered this week (Exodus 35:1-38:20; 38:21-40:38), bring the narrative to the point of just one year after the Israelites deliverance from bondage in Egypt. The culmination of a tumultuous year (Exodus 40:2) not only saw these former slaves led into freedom, but saw them receive the Law of God from a smoking mountain, and being given some basic social structures for worshipping and following their God. As the Book of Exodus closes, we witness the summary:

"From it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel" (Exodus 40:31-38).

After following the instructions of the Lord to build a transportable Tabernacle and all of the accoutrements for proper worship, the glory of the Lord takes up residence inside this structure. Apparently, the weight of His glory (Heb. *kavod*, כְּבוֹד) was so heavy that even Moses could not enter into the Tent of Meeting to commune with the Lord. The details of the Tabernacle, including the various implements used for offering sacrifices, and the garments of the high priest, are to create in readers' minds images of holiness. What was to be employed in the worship of the Holy One on Earth is considered to simply be a representation of a Heavenly reality, noted centuries later by the author of Hebrews in comparing and contrasting the priestly service of Yeshua with that of the Levites:

"Now the main point in what has been said is *this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. 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' [Exodus 25:40]" (Hebrews 8:1-5).

Naturally, when the Jewish Sages contemplated *V'yak'heil-Peukei*, they instinctively connected it with Haftarah selections detailing the construction of the First Temple during the reign of King Solomon.¹ The descriptions of the materials used are similar, and the completion of the First Temple is quite similar to how the Tabernacle was completed during the time of Moses.

In both instances, whether it was the desert Tabernacle or the Temple of Solomon, two common themes persist. The first is the necessity for acquiring the materials for the construction projects, and the second is an emphasis on the unique skills and abilities Divinely given to the various artisans and builders. Within *V'yak'heil-Peukei*, we see that the key to being involved in

¹ 1 Kings 7:40-50 (A); 7:13-26 (S); 1 Kings 7:51-8:21 (A); 7:40-50 (S).

either the giving of materials or in receiving the ability to build—is a **matter of the heart**. Consider the references to the heart in not only one giving to the project, but also the abilities of Bezalel or Oholiab or the skilled women who are able to help build it:

- “Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze” (Exodus 35:5).
- “Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came *and* brought the LORD's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments” (Exodus 35:21).
- “All the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' *hair*” (Exodus 35:26).
- “The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring *material* for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD” (Exodus 35:29).
- “He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple *and* in scarlet *material*, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs” (Exodus 35:34-35).
- “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 36:2).

Here, the heart of the giver—whether of materials, or the time and ability to fabricate the different aspects of the objects for worship—is what makes the building of the Tabernacle so special. The merger of the heart and the seeming compulsion to give are of paramount importance, as the opportunity to be involved in the work of God does not always present itself. No doubt the moving of the Spirit was also instrumental in what took place, but critically, those in proximity simply had followed their heart and got involved in whatever capacity they were able.

In comparing our Torah portion to the recommended Apostolic Scriptures references, we once again encounter the ability for one to give. Paul writes the Corinthians about the offering that he is collecting for the Believers in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4), and the impact that he hopes such an offering will have in testifying to the transforming power of the gospel among the nations:

“For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness. Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, ‘HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER’ [Psalm 112:9]. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. **Because of the proof given by**

this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Messiah and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:1-15).

Note that one of the keys to being a cheerful giver, is that one follows the dictates of his or her heart. Very much like the Ancient Israelites in the desert—to give of their material wealth or heartfelt skill—Paul speaks to the Corinthians of how they should give “not grudgingly or under compulsion.” They will be able to help others in need, and in so doing demonstrate great thanksgiving to God. The blessing as described to be an “increase in the harvest of righteousness,” while being enriched in everything. Anyone who is such a gracious giver from the heart knows inherently that it is indeed, much more of a blessing to give than receive, just as Paul had spoken to those in Ephesus:

“I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Yeshua, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:33-35).

When we think about the elements of the Tabernacle, one cannot help but be impressed. The artisan skill to shape various objects out of different precious metals, jewels, and sew rare fabrics together—had to be quite exquisite. So important are the elements of the Tabernacle and the Levitical priesthood, that the only major thing that can be superior to them in relating to God, is what the Son of God, Messiah Yeshua, has inaugurated with His priesthood. The author of Hebrews shows a great deal of appreciation for the previous Levitical priesthood, so that in expressing its detail, what Yeshua has accomplished for us can be even more greatly magnified. His priestly service enables a complete cleansing of the soul, that the Levitical priesthood could not perform:

“Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. But when Messiah appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. **For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**” (Hebrews 9:1-14).

While you reflect on these passages, and picture the images of the Tabernacle, lampstand, table of showbread, the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies, and also the Temple of Solomon—perhaps a mediating on the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah and what He has achieved would be most beneficial. If you have truly embraced a saving knowledge of the risen Yeshua, then you know just how important it is to have a cleansed and perfect conscience. You know that

your sin and transgressions have been remitted by His shed blood. You have come to have peace and reconciliation with your Creator. You know that the judgment you should receive has been taken away.

Accordingly, your heart might be prompted to help others who may not yet know about the Messiah Yeshua and His work at Golgotha. You can pray for them and speak words of life and encouragement into them. We know that faith comes by hearing the word of the Messiah:

“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’ [Isaiah 52:7]. However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, ‘LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?’ [Isaiah 53:1] So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah” (Romans 10:14-17).

Regardless of how you go about in specifically declaring the good news—do it from your heart! You will receive a reward that accrues to your account in righteousness, or simply the blessing of knowing that some are being ministered to by your efforts. No matter what you do with your gifts or abilities when it comes to being useful in the kingdom of God, ultimately, it is the Holy One of Israel who receives *all* the glory. He alone deserves to be glorified throughout eternity!

To Him be all the glory!

Until the restoration of all things...

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