

PARASHAH: Tetzaveh (You are to order)
ADDRESS: Sh'mot (Exodus) 27:20-30:10
READING DATE: Shabbat
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(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

*Updated: February 26, 2006

Let's begin with the opening blessing for the Torah:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher bachar banu m’kol ha-amim,
v’natan lanu eht Torah-to.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you, O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have selected us from among all the peoples,
and have given us your Torah.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

Welcome to **Parashat Tetzaveh**. With the exception of the Golden Calf incident coming up in chapters 32-34, the details of the Mishkan, with the Priestly Temple duties take up the remainder of our study in the book of Sh'mot. Why is the Sovereign of the Universe so determined to give us the minute details concerning each important piece and function of his Tabernacle? While I cannot be dogmatic about my answer, I believe that a thorough study of Hebrews, the most informative book of the B'rit Chadashah (the New Covenant) concerning this subject, would give us our answer: our Great High Priest Yeshua is the reality of every type and shadow, described about in the Torah. Why won't I be dogmatic about a well-known fact such as this? Because, while it is true that Yeshua can be found in almost every single piece and function of the Mishkan, the Mishkan was in fact, a temporary dwelling structure built for the Glory of HaShem, for the express purpose of making his dwelling among his people. The Mishkan was not the man Yeshua. If we negate the "natural," we might lose sight of its significance for the people of that day. Consequently, we may stray down the dangerous path of spiritualizing away some of the literal promises and blessings that are due to the People of Isra'el, in the process. In our haste to apply Yeshua to everything that we find in the Torah, we just might inadvertently replace God's natural people in the process.

Although it is crucial that the student of the Bible understand that Yeshua is the reality of faith, blessings, and promises taught in the whole of the TaNaKH, allow me to state this next point in no uncertain terms: the Church has not replaced the Jews as the "Chosen People of God." Yes, Yeshua has inaugurated a better and

more blessed covenant with his Church, but this covenant is actually built upon the promises of the original covenants. Accordingly, it should be noted that the well-known New Covenant promises (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12) are actually made with the houses of Judah and Isra'el! If the church has replaced either of these two, where is the evidence found in the Bible? There simply is none. Where is the Church to be found in such covenants? The Church, largely comprised of former Gentiles (i.e. historically pagans), and a good number of Isra'elites (those who lost their identity due to gross idolatry), has now been miraculously grafted into the Natural Olive Tree, which is Isra'el (Romans 11:13-32)! These people, who the Torah describes as "once far off" have now been "brought near" by the shedding of our Messiah's blood, and have now been made "fellow-citizens" with God's people and members of God's family (Ephesians chapter two). Gentiles don't replace Jews; they become grafted into the One Family. There is room in Abba's house for both Houses of Isra'el and sincere former pagans!

Our study of the Mishkan will give us a better appreciation for the ultimate work that Yeshua accomplished with his life, death, and resurrection, yet, the Mishkan is not really Yeshua himself! The Torah explicitly states that the earthly items were copies of the Heavenly originals. Yeshua is not a copy of anything—he is the Original himself. If anything, the sacrificial lambs slain year after year, are copies of Yeshua. The Mishkan is a shadow. There is no shadow without a body. There is no shadow without a light shining upon the body. The Glory of the Father is the Light. Yeshua is the Body. The functions and details of the earthly Mishkan are the shadow. Let us study accordingly.

The Light of the World

The detailed account of the Tabernacle and its functions begins with a recount of the maintenance of the Menorah (Lamp Stand) that was found in the Holy Place. This lamp, if you will remember from last week's reading, was formed from a solid piece of pure gold. It is believed that this lamp weighed as much as sixty-six pounds! This was no light structure (pardon the pun). The menorah easily symbolizes the Messiah. Yeshua stated that he is the Light of the World. The menorah provided a glorious, eternal light to the priests who ministered within the Holy Place. Our previous parashah described the menorah as having seven lamps. The number seven in the Torah represents perfection. If the menorah is a symbol of our perfect Messiah, then where in the Torah can we find a correlation to the number seven? Let's take a look at a familiar passage in Yesha'yahu (Isaiah).

In Yesha'yahu 11:1-5, we are given a vivid description of the coming Messiah. All rabbinical sources, as well as Christian scholars agree that this passage is a prophecy concerning the long-awaited Savior. The "Branch of Yishai" is a reference to his bloodline. Yishai (Jesse) was the father of Dah-vid the King. It

was a well-known fact that the Messiah was to be born from Dah-vid's loins. The Torah describes him this way:

"The Spirit of ADONAI will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fearing ADONAI—he will be inspired by fearing ADONAI." (11:2)

As can be observed, the Spirit is referred to SEVEN times, and in an orderly fashion: (1) - the Spirit of ADONAI; (2) and (3) – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; (4) and (5) – the Spirit of counsel and power; (6) and (7) – the Spirit of knowledge and fearing ADONAI. This is not an arbitrary use of words coined by the naviy (prophet). Yesha'yahu was writing under the direct inspiration of the very Spirit that he was speaking about!

The Torah frequently employs the use of "word pictures." These are phrases and words coined for the explicit purpose of calling the reader's attention to a certain Truth of the understanding of HaShem and his purposes among mankind. When the Torah uses the word "anoint" for example, the "picture" that is painted is one of a horn of oil (presumably olive) being poured out and down upon an individual. In the case of the High Priest Aharon, the Torah describes the oil as being poured upon his head as an anointing (Sh'mot 29:7). I can almost imagine seeing the oil as it runs down his head, down his face, into his beard, and down his shoulders, as Moshe makes sure of these instructions. The oil is a representation of the Spirit of ADONAI! The Torah is explicitly teaching us that the office of Cohen HaGadol (High Priest) cannot function properly without the supernatural anointing from the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit)!

We know again, from the book of Hebrews, that Yeshua is our Great Cohen HaGadol. As such, he would also need to walk in this very anointing in order to fulfill his earthly ministry. What does the Torah say of him in Luke 4:16-18a?

"Now when he went to Natzeret, where he had been brought up, on Shabbat he went into the synagogue as usual. He stood up to read, and he was given the scroll of the prophet Yesha'yahu. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of ADONAI is upon me."

Now this verse goes on to actually quote another passage found much farther into the scroll of Yesha'yahu (61:1-2, 58:6), yet Yeshua starts by announcing that the **"Spirit of ADONAI is upon him!"** What we have here is a double application, which amounts to a play on words. His listeners would have immediately recognized the Messianic phrase **"The Spirit of ADONAI is upon me,"** especially since in the passage found within the TaNaKH, the phrase from Yesha'yahu 61:1 reads, **"The Spirit of ADONAI Elohim is upon me."** Yeshua does not use the title for HaShem "Elohim" here in Luke. I believe that he is

making reference to the Yesha'yahu 11 passage, and simultaneously tying it into the Yesha'yahu 61 passage. In other words, he wants his listeners to realize that he is the "mashiach" (anointed One) of both passages! But what of the reference to "seven"? Let's look at the last book of the B'rit Chadashah.

In Revelation 5:6, our visionary Yochanan (John) is given a glimpse of the Heavenly Throne. In his vision, he sees a Lamb, which appears to have been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes. The Scripture tells us that these "seven" are the sevenfold Spirit of God. Whence do we find the sevenfold Spirit of God in the Bible? In our Yesha'yahu 11 passage of course. The Spirit is described as a total of seven, yet laid out a pattern of one, with three pairs of two along with it. Does this pattern look familiar? It is the very same pattern that the menorah was fashioned into! The seven-branched lamp consisted of one central shaft with three pairs of two surrounding it. Focusing on just the top of the structure, the following alphabetic equation will demonstrate its pattern:

D---C---B---A---B---C---D

This is representative of the sevenfold Spirit of God! This is the very same description given to Yeshua—who is the Lamb that was slain!

Now we can understand that the Spirit, represented by oil, gave the lamp its light. Yeshua was empowered (anointed) by the "oil of the Sprit." Our current parashah instructs 'Am Isra'el to make sure that the menorah burned continually. Doesn't this perfectly describe our Messiah, who's Spirit continually shines for the entire world to see? I don't want to spend all of our time on the menorah, for the portion does describe many of the other Mishkan and priestly functions as well. Yet I wanted to study the menorah in much detail, since it historically remains one of the most easily recognized symbols used in Judaism today. As such, it has become the national symbol of the State of Isra'el, in conjunction with the Star of David. Lets' move on into our parashah.

K'dushah (Holiness)

The whole thrust of the instructions given in **Parashat Tetzaveh** is a teaching on holiness. The word "tetzaveh" shares the exact same root word as "mitzvah." The root word is a verbal imperative used to express the desire for a definitive action on the part of the hearer. In other words, the Torah uses this word as a call to action. God the invisible Creator of the Universe has chosen to reveal his Glory in such a way as to be visible in the Mishkan. He informs us that he will "take up residence" in the Most Holy Place, between the wings of the k'ruvim, which forms the lid of the Aron Kodesh (Ark of the Covenant). Now he is "commanding" his people to become holy, that is, set apart for the specific service of conveying his Holiness to the surrounding peoples. This begins with a personal consecration (28:2-3, 36, 41; 29:1, 9, 20-22, 26-37, and 43). HaShem's holiness would not always be confined to Isra'el. However, for now, Isra'el was

the primary focus of his Glory. HaShem has always, since the promise given to Avraham in B'resheet 12:1-3, been interested in blessing all of the families of the earth. This he would accomplish through Isra'el. He started with one man (Avraham), and now he is establishing the priestly line within the offspring of that one man. Ironically, the ultimate focal point of HaShem's glory would culminate in One Man (Yeshua).

Holiness permeates the entire theme surrounding the Mishkan and the priestly functions. The golden breastplate, containing the twelve precious stones that represented the Twelve Tribes of Isra'el, spoke of the chosen-ness of the offspring of Avraham. Holy and set apart to perform the task of demonstrating the holiness of the One, True God of the Universe. Special in the fact that HaShem placed the stones close to the heart of the priest who wore the breastplate. HaShem wanted each man and each woman to know that they were created to fellowship with their Creator, and that there was a unique way in which they were to demonstrate this fellowship; Isra'el's chosen-ness was a picture of this fellowship, to the rest of humanity.

The mysterious "urim" and "tumim" were "divining stones" set in the breastplate for the purpose of making judgments among the tribes of Isra'el. HaShem would supernaturally illuminate a specific stone in conjunction with the ruling in question. The priest would then make his (HaShem's) judgment known. As the Talmud even testifies, this speaks to us of the ruling function that the priestly line enjoyed as well. All of these specifics pointed to the exclusivity of the power and position of the coming Messiah. The specific offices and ministries of the priests demonstrated that only the One to come—the ultimate Cohen of the heavenly order, would one day be able to administer ultimate judgment and atonement for the sins of the entire world. No other "high priest" would do! Just as Aharon and his sons were the only ones permitted to enter into the Holy Places, so our High Priest Yeshua was the only one able to approach the Holy Place that is in heaven.

Drawing Near

In chapter 29 of our current portion, we catch a glimpse of the importance of blood sacrifice. Our God is a God of covenants. His covenants are ratified with the shedding of blood. The old Christian hymnal says it all: "There's power in the blood!" Actually, the reason that there is "power" in the blood is because the Torah explicitly teaches that there is "life" in the blood. The Torah paints a picture in 29:10-45 that an acceptable sacrifice sanctifies both the altar and the person who touches the altar (29:37). The sacrifice served an important function in the life of the average Isra'elite. Allow me to conduct a word study to explain.

In our text of Ephesians chapter two we read,

"But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood." (2:13)

There is a play on words found in the Hebrew thought conveyed in this passage, but not found in the English or the Greek. The Hebrew word for "sacrifice" is קָרְבָּן "korban." The sacrifice in question here is undoubtedly Yeshua's own. His was the spotless offering that was placed on God's altar, for the remission of the sins of the world. In our parashah we are told that the offerings of the morning and evening lambs, offered at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, would create a pleasing aroma before ADONAI. These offerings would be at the place where HaShem would meet with and speak to the people (29:38-43). Moreover, verses 45-46 go on to promise that HaShem would live among his people (read last week's parashah), and that they would indeed know that he was the very one who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt.

The sacrifice brought the people near to their God and it brought God near to his people.

The Hebrew word translated as "near" in our above passage in Ephesians, is "**karav**." Here is the play on words: because of the sacrifice (**korban**) of Yeshua, we have been brought near (**karav**) to our Holy God! In fact, the two Hebrew words share the exact same root word. These words are not to be confused with the Hebrew word "keruv" which is translated as "cherub." Even though it was between the wings of the "k'ruvim" (cherubim) that the Glory of God was manifested, and it was the Mercy Seat (cover to the Ark) where the blood was splashed.

The point is clear: our God instructed his people to offer the blood sacrifices in order that the covenant requirements might be met. Covenants are our key to relationship with an otherwise unapproachable, Holy God. It started with a sacrifice in B'resheet 3:21, and since then, there has existed a "**scarlet thread**" that has run through the entire Bible! Whoever said that we New Covenant believers are not under the sacrificial system anymore?! Of course we are!—we are under blood of the sacrifice of the Spotless Lamb of God! Our parashah ends with the pervading theme of the entire Mishkan and of the priestly functions:

"...it is especially holy to ADONAI."

The closing blessing is as follows:

***"Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-'Olam,
asher natan lanu Torah-emet,
v'chay-yeh o'lam nata-b'tochenu.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn."***

(Blessed are you O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have given us your Torah of truth,
and have planted everlasting life within our midst.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

“Shabbat Shalom!”

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