

PARASHAT VAYAKHEL

(HE ASSEMBLED)

EXODUS 35:1-38:20

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

1 Kings 7:13-26, 40-50

Testimony of Yeshua

On violating YHVH commands: **Hebrews 10:26-31**

On giving to YHVH's work: **2 Corinthians 9:1-15**

On YHVH's spiritual temple: **1 Corinthians 3:9-17**

On spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up the spiritual house of Elohim: **1 Corinthians 12:4-11; James 1:17**

On the ministry of the Tabernacle: **Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-28**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 35:1 The Sabbath: No Work, No Fires
- 35:4 The People to Contribute Materials for the Building of the Tabernacle
- 35:10 The Israelites Invited to Participate in the Construction of the Tabernacle
- 35:30 The Master Craftsmen Are Selected: Bezalel (of Judah) and Aholiab (of Dan)
- 36:1 More Than Enough Workers and Materials Pour In
- 36:8 The Work of Building the Tabernacle Begins: Making the Curtains
- 36:19 Making the Cover
- 36:20 Making the Planks (Walls) of the Tabernacle and Their Components
- 36:35 Making the Partitions for the Interior
- 36:37 Making the Screen for the Entrance to the Tabernacle
- 37:1 Making the Ark of the Covenant
- 37:6 Making the Cover (Mercy Seat) for the Ark
- 37:10 Making the Table of Showbread
- 37:17 Making the Menorah
- 37:25 Making the Altar of Incense
- 38:1 Making the Elevation Offering Altar

- 38:8 Making the Bronze Laver
- 38:9 Making the Linen Fence Around the Outer Courtyard
- 38:18 The Screen of the Gate of the Courtyard

Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion)

1 35:2, *The seventh day ... shall be ... a set-apart day.* In our journey through the Torah, the subject of the seventh day Sabbath keeps popping up. When YHVH said in Exodus 20:8 to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it set-apart (Heb. *kadosh*),” he keeps reminding them of it so that they won’t forget it! What does this tell us about the importance YHVH places on the weekly Sabbath? With each reminder, he gives additional instructions about how to keep the Sabbath. (Quickly review YHVH’s instructions in the Torah up to this point pertaining to the Sabbath: Gen 2:2–3; Exod 16:23–30; 20:8–11.)

2 Exodus 35:3, *Kindle no fire...on the Sabbath day.* There are several prevailing viewpoints on the exact meaning of this passage. Let’s explore them.

The Orthodox Jews take literally the Torah’s prohibition to kindle no fire on the Sabbath. As such, many do not turn on a light switch or start their cars (i.e., fire in the spark plugs) on the Sabbath for fear of violating this command. To counter balance this viewpoint, the Torah does indicate that the priest lit the menorah in the tabernacle each morning, the Sabbath not excluded (Exod 27:21–21; 30:7). So, for ministry purposes, lighting a fire seems not to be prohibited.

There is also the viewpoint that since the next verse (Exod 34:4) begins YHVH’s instructions to build the tabernacle, the immediate context of the Sabbath-fire passage has to do with not starting fires that pertain only to one’s trade or job—in Israel’s case, their job was the building of the *mishkan*. Fires would have been needed for tanning hides, working with metal, and possibly bending wood and dyeing cloth along with other activities.

This we know for certain. On the Sabbath, YHVH’s people are not to bake, cook or prepare food from scratch (Exod 16:23), but reheating food seems not to be prohibited—something that is even permitted in some Orthodox Jewish circles today. What is the bottom line issue here? We are to cease creating on the Sabbath, and cooking food from scratch (as opposed to reheating) changes the chemistry of the food which constitutes creating something (i.e., transforming something from its original state into another state). So fires for cooking would have been prohibited, to be sure. Food must be prepared ahead of time on the sixth day.

Is this Torah command forbidding the lighting of fires for heat and light? Some would say yes, since part of preparing for the Sabbath involves insuring that your heating fire and lights will stay burning through the Sabbath without having to relight them. Was this always possible in ancient times? That’s a question we’ll explore below.

For one thing, it is doubtful that YHVH would have expected his hapless people to sit in the cold darkness on the Sabbath should their fire have gone out—especially in the winter months when the days are shorter and colder, and when snow and cold rain are realities. This would result in the loss of the delight of the day, which, in itself, is a violation of the Sabbath (Isa 58:13).

The harsh realities of life in a primitive agrarian culture are evident. The ancient Israelites, obviously, didn’t possess electric or gas push-button heat or lights. If YHVH forbade them from lighting a fire for heat and light purposes, then they would have had to start a fire on Friday before sundown and keep it burning all night and through the Sabbath. This means that if the fire happened to go out during the night because someone slept too soundly and didn’t wake up to add wood to the fire or olive oil to their small terra cotta lamps (which burned only for a short time), then they would either sit in the cold and dark on the Sabbath, or they’d have to fetch some coals from a neighbor who hadn’t let their fire go out. The Israelite who lived in town had another option as well. Often in towns, there were public ovens built into the earth with clay cooking tubes for baking bread. For those who lived nearby, they could bring back some embers from these public ovens to restart their home fires (*Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, pp. 47–48, by Fred H. Wight).

In modern times, for those who heat their homes with a wood stove, the most energy efficient home-sized

wood stove will burn only for six to eight hours if one has access to hardwoods (like oak, maple or fruit-wood) as fuel. Despite one's best efforts to keep the stove burning all night and the house warm, at times the fire goes out. In the land of Israel, large hardwood trees aren't prevalent. In ancient times, if they had been, no doubt several million Israelites constantly foraging for hardwood to keep their fires burning would have quickly depleted the region of trees—especially in that arid land where trees grow slowly. In reality, the Israelites were more likely to have used sticks (1 Kgs 17:10), thorn bushes, bundles of dried grass (Matt 6:30; Luke 12:28), charcoal (John 18:18; 21:9 Williams New Testament) or dried dung for fire fuel (Ezek 4:15; Ibid., p. 30). Furthermore, warming fires were often built in courtyards (John 18:18). Such fires don't burn long. At the same time, making fire wouldn't have been an easy process either, since this was accomplished by rubbing sticks together or by striking flint and steel (Ibid. p. 31).

For sure we know that in days before matches, lighters, push-button furnaces, lights and stoves, starting and maintaining a fire wasn't a simple task. At the same time, it seems that YHVH wouldn't have expected the Sabbath to end up becoming a miserable, weekly lesson in wilderness survival by having many of his servants freeze to death in the darkness on this day of joyful rest because their fires went out. He did, however, expect his people to make every possible effort to prepare for the Sabbath ahead of time to keep it from being just another day of laborious work (Exod 16:23). However, this author finds it hard to believe that the Torah forbids starting a fire for heat and light if necessary—especially during the winter months. Therefore, I maintain that starting fires for work purposes (including cooking) was forbidden, but for heat and light purposes, if unavoidable, was permitted.

(For more information on the Sabbath, please see my article entitled, "The Sabbath, Spirit and Truth" at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/shbt.pdf>.)

3 **35:5**, *Whosoever is of a willing heart*. In Hebrew, the word *nadiyb*/נָדִיב translated as *willing* means "noble, inclined, generous." With regard to the people contributing building materials for the construction of the *mishkan*, note verses 35:5 and 21. YHVH only wanted those who could contribute out of a willing heart of joy. What kind of a person does the Testimony of Yeshua say that YHVH likes as it relates to giving to the work of the ministry? (See 2 Cor 9:7.) Every facet of our relationship with YHVH must be out of a heart of love for him and our fellow man. If we don't, other than an empty religious activity, how does the Word of Elohim view it? (See 1 Cor 13:1–13.)

The heart attitude of those contributing to the building materials of the tabernacle was obviously of paramount importance to YHVH. The Torah mentions it again several more times later in this chapter (see verses 21–22, 26, 29).

Are you a cheerful giver who contributes regularly to those servants of YHVH who are blessing you and who are doing his work on earth today? (For more information on this subject, see my article, "Is Tithing for Us Today?" at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/tithing.pdf>.)

4 The building of the *mishkan* was very much a joint-effort of gifted Israelites who had a willing heart and whose spirit stirred within them (Exod 35:25, 26, 29, 30–31; 36:1). Shouldn't this be a picture of building the work of YHVH within any congregation or ministry? The church-system has often made ministry into a spectator sport where paid professionals are watched by the rest. The biblical Hebraic way mandates that everyone participate and contribute according to their giftings, callings, resources and abilities. YHVH is not looking for capability among his workers as much as he is looking for availability from those who have a willing heart. The congregation of redeemed believers is to be a spiritual *organism*, not a spiritual *organization*. (Read 1 Cor 14.)

5 **35:30–35**, *YHVH has called*. YHVH will always raise up leaders for his spiritual work who have special giftings and callings as he did with Bezalel and Ohaliab who were to oversee the work party building the tabernacle. Does this not correspond with the fivefold ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11 and the residential motivational gifts of Romans 12:6–8? What are your giftings and callings? Are you growing in these areas so that you can function fully within the spiritual body of Yeshua, or are you burying your talents in the ground like the wicked and lazy servant in the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:24–28) What was Yeshua's response to this man and what was his fate? (See verses 28–30.)

6 In the outer court of the tabernacle, all the rituals and furnishings pointed to death, judgment, washing or cleansing. These prophetically foreshadowed salvation through Yeshua's atoning death on the cross, Yeshua being the door to salvation, and baptism for the remission of sins. In the set-apart (*kadosh* or holy) place inside the tabernacle, everything there pointed to life, light, food, fragrant incense, and the fruits and gifts of the Set-Apart Spirit. The outer court speaks of basic salvation for the redeemed believer in Yeshua, while the set-apart place speaks of spiritual growth and maturity, of moving from spiritual babyhood into spiritual adulthood or maturity.

Paul speaks of man being subdivided into body, soul and spirit (1 Thess 5:23). The tabernacle's outer court seems to relate to the physical realm, while the Set-Apart Place speaks more of the psychological, volitional and emotional aspects of man's inner realm or psychological realm (i.e., his soul), and the most set-apart place (*kadosh hakadoshim* or the holy of holies) portrays man approaching YHVH through the realm of his spirit man.

As one progresses into the tabernacle, it is as if YHVH is drawing man into an ever deeper relational walk with him starting at the most basic level progressing upward until man is finally communing with YHVH on a Spirit to spirit level (in the most set-apart place). It is the Father's desire that men progressively grow until they are communing with him at a high spiritual level (see John 4:23–24).

The three pilgrimage festivals mentioned in last week's Torah study (Exod 34:18–22) seem to suggest this three-part spiritual progression in a believer's life as well.

Discuss with others or meditate on the implications and ramifications of what you have just read. What are your thoughts about this? Where would you place yourself in the tabernacle? What object or location in the tabernacle best represents where you're at in your spiritual journey toward inclusion in YHVH Elohim's eternal and spiritual family. Why did YHVH take such great pains to construct a physical layout of the steps we must take in our spiritual journey toward ultimate spiritual intimacy and oneness with him as represented by the most set-apart place in his tabernacle, which represented his dwelling place on earth among his chosen people (Exod 25:8)?

It is interesting to note that there are also three stages in the Hebraic or Biblical wedding. They are the betrothal, consummation and celebration stages. In the "godhead" there are also three subdivisions. They are the Father, Son and the Set-Apart Spirit. Additionally, John talks about three classes of believers, which are children, young men, and fathers (1 John 2:12–14). Does any of this relate to the tripartite subdivision of the tabernacle? (Reflect on this and discuss the spiritual implications of the tabernacle and how this relates to you as a born-again believer.)

7 36:19, The tabernacle had four outer coverings. The outermost covering was made of either seal or badger skin (Exod 26:14; 36:19). This covering was ordinary and unattractive. How does this symbolize Yeshua and the gospel message? Was Yeshua attractive? (See Isa 53:2.) How many people are attracted to the gospel message because it is appealing to them? In reality, most people have to reach rock bottom in their lives spiritually before they are willing to reach out to the gospel's message of hope much as a drowning man frantically grasps a thrown life ring!

Another covering was made of goats' skins (Exod 26:7–13). What is the significance of this in relationship to the Day of Atonement? (See Lev 16.) Another covering was made of rams' skins dyed red (Exod 26:14; 36:19). What does this picture? (See Isa 1:18; 1 Pet 1:18–19; Rev 13:8.)

The inner most covering over the tabernacle (Exod 26:1–6) formed the ceiling of the tabernacle and was covered with embroidered cherubim. It was blue, purple, white and scarlet. Cherubim are mentioned in several places in the Scriptures (see Gen 3:24; Exod 25:18–22; Ps 18:10; 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16; Ezek 10:1–20). What do the cherubim represent? (What was around the throne of YHVH Elohim in heaven? See Ezek 1:4–28; 3:13; 10:1–22; Rev 4:7.) Of what is the earthly tabernacle a type? (See Hebrews 8:2; 9:11.)

8 37:10, The table of showbread was constructed of acacia wood covered in gold, which speaks of both the humanity and divinity of Yeshua. What is the significance of the 12 loaves of unleavened bread? Why the two stacks of bread? (See Ezek 37:15–17.) The loaves were replaced weekly each Shabbat (Lev 24:5–9) by the

priests who then ate the old loaves. What does this picture? If you are the leader of a congregation what does this teach you about the teachings you prepare for your congregation each week? Do you feed the spiritual sheep YHVH has placed under your care stale or fresh bread? The loaves of bread were covered in frankincense (Lev 24:7). What does frankincense represent? (See Rev 5:8 and 8:3–4.) If you are a Bible teacher, how much time in prayer do you spend before teaching YHVH's people?

9 There were three doors to the tabernacle or *mishkan*. In this Torah portion, two are mentioned (36:35–37; see also 26:31–37). They are the veil or *parokhet* between the set-apart place and the most set-apart place, and the outer door or screen to the tabernacle. The door to the set-apart place of the tabernacle was held up by five gold-covered acacia wood pillars. To what might these prophetically point? (See Eph 4:11–13.)

Each of the three doors was blue, scarlet, purple and white. All three colors point to different aspects of Yeshua, his origin and mission (blue is for heaven, scarlet is for blood, white is for spiritual purity or righteousness, purple is for royalty or kingship). The four colors point to the four Gospels each of which highlights a different aspect of Yeshua's life and ministry, and each of which are the doors through which one enters into a spiritual relationship with him.

Why was there a the veil between the set-apart place and the most set-apart place? Who does this represent? (See Heb 10:19–20.) Why could no one except the high priest once a year enter through that veil into the most set-apart place without dying? (Rom 3:23; Rom 6:23; Ezek 18:4). How do we now have access to the Father through the veil? (Heb 10:19–22) Why was the veil in the temple rent at the time of Yeshua's death on the cross (Matt 27:51)?

The Tabernacle, Its Furnishings & Seven Stations

For a complete discussion of the Tabernacle of Moses and its furnishings including ...

- The Curtain Surrounding the Tabernacle
- The Outer Gate
- The Altar of Sacrifice
- Bronze Laver
- The Boards of the Sanctuary
- Transition and Contrast Between the Outer Court and the Sanctuary
- The Door to the Sanctuary
- The Golden Menorah
- The Table of Showbread
- The Altar of Incense
- The Veil (*Parokhet*) to the Most Set-Apart Place
- The Ark of the Covenant
- The *Shekinah* Glory of YHVH Above the Ark

We invite you to read Natan Lawrence's extensive article on the Tabernacles of Moses, which discusses how everything therein points to Yeshua the Messiah and Redeemer of Israel and how it is a revelation of the gospel message. It also outlines the steps a born-again believer must take to grow spiritually, and shows the blueprint of YHVH's plan of redemption for mankind as outlined in YHVH's seven annual feasts and the biblical wedding. This article is available for free download at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/tabernacle.pdf>.

HAFTORAH READING—1 KINGS 7:13-26, 40-50

The Tale of Two Temples

AS YOU READ THE ELABORATE DESCRIPTIONS of Solomon's Temple you may ask yourself about the relevance of these passages to the redeemed believer in Yeshua. To help steer the reader's mind along the proper spiritual track, and thereby gain some relevant insights into this passage, please keep in mind the following passages in the Testimony of Yeshua.

Do you not know that you are the temple of Elohim and that the Spirit of Elohim dwells in you? (1 Cor 3:16)

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Set-Apart Spirit who is in you, whom you have from Elohim, and you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:19)

For you are the temple of the living Elohim. As Elohim has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor 6:16b)

... but Messiah as a Son over his own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Heb 3:6)

... you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a set-apart priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Elohim through Yeshua Messiah. (1 Pet 2:5)

Realizing that Yeshua predicted that the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matt 24:1-2), and that some of the above passages were written just prior to that destruction, the apostles had in view a spiritual understanding of the temple as it relates to the redeemed believers of Yeshua. With this in mind, consider how the descriptions in this Haftorah portion can be applied (at the *drash* or allegorical or metaphorical level of biblical interpretation) spiritually to the believer, and how everything therein points in some way or another to Yeshua. For example, consider and reflect on the following:

- ☞ **Verse 13**, What is the Hebrew meaning of the name *Solomon* and how does that relate to Yeshua, the Prince of Peace?
- ☞ **Verses 15-22**, What is the spiritual significance of the two brass pillars at the entrance of the temple? Each had a name. The right pillar was named *Yakhiyn* meaning "he will establish," and the name of the left pillar was *Boaz* meaning "in it is strength." Keeping in mind that all this points to Yeshua, and that Yeshua is both the *Logos* or *Written Word* or *Torah* (instructions, precepts, teachings) of *Elohim* (John 1:1), as well as the *Living Word of Elohim made flesh* (John 1:1,14). Relate these concepts to the two pillars.
- ☞ **Verse 18**, What else do the two pillars resemble? How about a giant Torah scroll with the two pillars resembling the spindles or *eytzim* (trees) of the scroll? What might the two capitals of five cubits each atop each pillar represent? As a hint, figure out the following riddle: Five plus five equals what? What is the significance of that number? Two lists of five that were written on two what? Why would this have been placed at the door to the temple and what did Yeshua say about this? (Read Matthew 5:17-19 and John 14:15. If you are really bold, read 1 John 2:3-6.)
- ☞ **Verse 18**, What is the significance of the pomegranates that ringed the top of the pillars? What color are pomegranates and the juice that flows from them? What does this color point to, and what are pomegranates full of? How does this point to Yeshua? Here is a hint: In a Bible concordance, look up the word *seed*. Especially note the spiritual significance of this word as used in the Testimony of Yeshua. (Read Gal 3:29, for starters.)
- ☞ **Verses 19 and 21**, To whom does the lily point? (Read Song of Solomon 2:1-2.) Here the Beloved is speaking about herself in rich Hebraic poetic terms. If we are to be the bride of Yeshua, as represented by the Shulamite maiden who is speaking here, then how are we a lily in the eyes of Yeshua (here represented by Solomon)? In this light, what is the significance of the lilies on the brass pillars at the door of the temple? Now relate this to what YHVH says about his people being "a peculiar treasure unto me *above* all the people ... you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a set-apart nation" (Exod 19:5-6, emphasis added). (Compare this with 1 Peter 2:9.)

- ☞ **Verse 46**, The two brass pillars were cast in huge clay molds dug out of the earth. If these two brass pillars represent Yeshua, then how does this piece of information prophetically point to the dual nature of Yeshua? Here is a hint: What does the name *Adam* mean, and who is the Second Adam? (Read Rom 5:12–21.)
- ☞ **Verses 48–50**, All the vessels, implements, door hinges and furnishings were made of solid gold. How does this point to Yeshua, and to his saints, if they are to become like Yeshua in all ways? (Read Rom 8:29 and compare to 1 Cor 3:10–17 with emphasis on verses 12–15.) What are the unique properties of gold that make it unlike any other metal, and why should we, as followers of Yeshua, become like gold?