



Parashiyot Vayakhel/Pekudei

March 13, 2021

Torah: Exodus 35:1-40:38

Haftarah: 1Kings 7:40-8:21

Shlichim: Revelation 15:5-9

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! We have a double *parasha* today, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*. With these last verses, the Book of Exodus and the construction of the Tabernacle are concluded. What do they mean to us today? How are we to understand them? Looking back from our position in time, the symbolism of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, the actual way that Israel related to ADONAI then, are a foreshadowing and a symbolic picture of our present day relationship with ADONAI and Yeshua. Each of the items in the Tabernacle had a specific meaning for Israel through their worship of ADONAI under the Covenant of *Moshe*, the First Covenant.

In the main courtyard of the Tabernacle was found the Altar of Burnt Offering and also the Laver, the container of water for washing. The Altar of Burnt Offering was the place where animal and grain offerings were offered and burned and their blood covered sins. The laver was the place where the *kohanim*, the priests, washed off the blood of the sacrifices. They had to be especially clean before entering the Holy Place, an area that only priests could enter.

Inside the Holy Place, *HaMakom Kodesh*, were found the *Menorah*, the Golden Altar of Incense and the Table of Showbread. No one is really sure what the *Menorah* signified. Some say it was the seven days of creation with the central light signifying ADONAI. Some say the seven branches represent the seventh day, the Sabbath. And, some say it represents the burning bush. It is interesting that there is a plant growing in Israel, I have seen it, a type of sage, which looks just like the Menorah but with nine branches rather than seven. Someone removed two branches from this plant so that it would look exactly like the menorah. Here is what it really looks like. It is possible that it was the bush that was burning, but not consumed. The Golden Altar of Incense represented the prayers of Israel ascending to ADONAI. And, the Table of Showbread represented ADONAI's watchful care and provision for the twelve tribes as represented by the twelve loaves of bread.

The room beyond the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, contained the Ark Of The Covenant. Only one person could enter it, the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest, and he could only enter one day per year, the Day of *Yom Kippur*. The symbolism of the Ark was that it was the place where ADONAI would meet with the people through their representative, the Mediator of the Covenant, the High Priest. The two tablets in the Ark containing the Ten Words also symbolized the presence of ADONAI. We could add many more details about every part of the Tabernacle, but this is the basic symbolism.

We don't really know why ADONAI decided to wait 1,450 years after the construction of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness before sending His Son. But, He gave us a picture of His Son in the elements of the Tabernacle and we know that He had a reason for waiting. 850 years after the Exodus He announced through Jeremiah that He was going to make a New Covenant and then He waited another 600 years before sending Yeshua to activate the covenant. We don't have to know why. We just have to believe. 6 "*Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For the one who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*" (Hebrews 11:6 TLV). Once the New Covenant was in effect, the Altar of Burnt Offering was replaced by the stake, the cross. And, on it only one sacrifice was needed, the sinless body of Yeshua Himself. Our sins were permanently covered by the blood of His sacrifice. Today, under the New Covenant, we don't need a physical laver in which to wash daily or even several times daily as the *kohanim* did. Our acceptance of Yeshua's sacrifice has made us clean and we can enter confidently into the Holy of Holies and approach the throne of grace without the need for physical washing. The veil is open for us immediately after we trust in Yeshua. However, Yeshua did say that immersion is necessary; we must be born again. On the *Shavuot* after Yeshua ascended to the Father, *Shimon Kefa* said to the crowd assembled in the Temple courtyard: 38 "... , *Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the removal of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh*" (Acts 2:38b TLV). Those like the thief on the cross who have no opportunity for immersion are saved, but for all of us who have time, *tevilah*, immersion, is a necessity.

Representing one of the elements of the Holy Place today we have the *Menorah*. Our seven branched *menorah* here on the *bima* symbolizes the "light of Messiah," the truth of Messiah, which is proclaimed in this place. Yeshua referred to the *menorah* as a symbol of congregations that were in good standing with Him. To the congregation at Ephesus, He said: 5 "*Remember then from where you have fallen. Repent and do the deeds you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your menorah from its place—unless you repent*" (Revelation 2:5 TLV). We want to be in good standing with Him and not have our *menorah* removed. We also have another reminder of the Tabernacle *Menorah*, the *Ner Tamid*, the eternal flame above my head. It represents the western light in the Holy Place, the light which was closest to the Holy of Holies. Both the complete *menorah* and the *Ner Tamid* represent Yeshua, the light of the world. 12 *Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. The one who follows Me will no longer walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12 TLV). The Table of Showbread also represents Yeshua who said: 35 "... , *I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty*" (John 6:35b TLV). Finally, the Golden Altar of Incense and its ascending incense represents our prayers going up to Yeshua who is now seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us (Romans 8:34).

The Holy of Holies of the Temple, *Kodesh HaKodeshim*, no longer exists on the earth. The Temple was destroyed almost 2000 years ago and the Holy of Holies along with it. But, forty years before the Holy of Holies was destroyed, it was permanently physically changed. Scripture tells us that when Yeshua died on the stake, the actual curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:1-9), the *parokhet*, was ripped in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50-51). We are not told its thickness, but tradition says it was four

inches. It could not have been ripped by human hands. It was done by a mighty supernatural force set in motion when Yeshua died on the stake and His sacrifice was accepted by ADONAI. In the Tabernacle and later in the Temple, only the High Priest could go through the *parokhet* into the Holy of Holies and then only once per year. Upon His death, Yeshua superseded Caiaphas, the Levitical High Priest of that day, and became the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest after the order of *Malkitzedek*, an eternal priesthood with a priest who lives forever. That brings up a question. If there is no longer a physical Holy of Holies, where do we meet the Father when we enter through the torn veil? It was suggested by Josephus and Philo that the veil was a boundary between heaven and earth and technically that could have been so. But, I believe that where we now meet ADONAI and Yeshua through the veil is in our hearts. Those of us who have accepted His sacrifice and trusted Yeshua have been given the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit resides in our hearts and it is in our hearts that we meet them. In effect, the veil in our hearts was ripped when we trusted Yeshua and through that circumcision of the heart, we have direct access to Him and the Father through the *Ruach*, the Spirit.

Yeshua's disciples had trusted in Him and had received direct access to Him and the Father through the veil. But, what were they to do now that He was gone? Put yourself in their place. Even though He met with them and explained some things to them, they still didn't have all the answers. What would they do? What did they do? The answer is that they continued doing what they always did. They followed the *Torah* as they always had. They worshipped in the Temple when in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1) and worshipped in synagogues when elsewhere (Acts 17:2). They rejected anything other than Scripture for determining what they were to do. In Acts 15, for the new Gentile followers of Yeshua they rejected the Oral Torah, a collection of additional laws supposedly passed down by mouth from Moses. *Shimon Kefa*, Simon Peter, brought it to the elders attention and recommended that they not place "the yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear," the Oral Torah, on the new Gentile believers: 10 "Why then do you put God to the test by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples—which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" (Acts 15:10 TLV)? The *Talmud* had not yet been written. Today, we reject both the Oral Torah which became the *Mishnah* and the *Talmuds* as having any scriptural authority for us. We have a complete teaching on Acts 15 if anyone would like to look further into this.

What is being discussed today is an understanding which the *mishpacha* of *Beit Shalom* already have. It is not new. This teaching is not directed to any other group of Yeshua's followers, just for you who have chosen to follow the Way of Messianic Judaism. Everyone else must decide for themselves how they will relate to the Scriptures. So, ultimately, how today do we as Messianic followers of Yeshua decide which Scriptures we are to follow? I would suggest to you that it is ADONAI Himself who decides which Scriptures we are to follow. *Sha'ul* told us this: 16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for restoration, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed" (2Timothy 3:16-17 TLV). We take note of the fact than when he said this, the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, was the only Scripture. Even years later when *Sha'ul's*, *Kefa's* and *Ya'acov's* letters were being passed around, they were not considered Scripture. And it was several hundred years later before they were canonized and became Scripture. Of course, today, Genesis through Revelation fits *Sha'ul's*

words to Timothy and is indeed, “all Scripture.” But, all of Yeshua’s disciples trusted in Him by seeing Him pictured in the *Tanakh*. That’s all there was. That was also how *Sha’ul* preached Yeshua to the many different Jews and Gentiles that he encountered, from the *Tanakh*. Apollos did the same thing. In Achaia, he helped those who had already trusted in Yeshua by this: *28 For he powerfully refuted the Jewish people in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that the Messiah was Yeshua* (Acts 18:20 TLV). Apollos used all of the Scriptures that were available, the *Tanakh*.

So, after Yeshua’s death and ascension, how did His *talmidim* deal with Temple worship? When He died on the stake in about the year 30, did they stop following *Torah* with regard to the festivals and the other directive verses, verses which commanded them to do something? The answer of course is no. Acts 2 tells how they met in the Temple on *Shavuot* when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. In Acts 3 we read that: “Peter and John went up to the Temple to pray. They met a lame man on the way. He held out his palm and asked for an alm, but this is what Peter did say: “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of *Yeshua HaMashiach*, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). *Kefa* and *Yochanan* were on their way to afternoon prayer in the Temple: *1 Now Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the ninth hour, the time of prayer* (Acts 3:1 TLV). They did worship at the Temple, but I don’t believe that they would have offered sin sacrifices because they believed that Yeshua’s sacrifice was a permanent covering of their sin and that His one sacrifice was effective every time that they made *teshuvah*, every time that they repented of their sin. In the writings of Yeshua’s followers, there is no mention of observing *Yom Kippur*. That does not mean that they did not attend at the Temple when in Jerusalem and it occurred. The only mention that I could find seemed to be just as a marker of where in time they were. It occurred during *Sha’ul’s* sea voyage to Rome: *9 “Since considerable time had passed and the voyage was already dangerous because the Fast had already gone by, Paul kept warning them,..”* (Acts 27:9 TLV). They recognized that there was no atonement in it for them and there is no atonement in it for us today, yet we commemorate it each year. But, we are not required to do it because it was only to be observed in Jerusalem in the presence of a priesthood. For us, it is a commemoration, a rehearsal of the coming day of *Yom Kippur*, when Yeshua will judge mankind. The Book of Hebrews describes how Yeshua, Himself, was the *Yom Kippur* sacrifice and how He took His own blood into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle in heaven.

But, did Yeshua’s disciples offer blood sacrifices? You know the answer. Yes, they did. *Sha’ul* is our primary example there. While he was sailing to Syria with Priscilla and Aquilla, he stopped in Cenchrea and had his hair shaved off because he had taken a vow (Acts 18:18). There are several different positions on what kind of vow this was, but I believe that it was a Nazirite vow. Cutting the hair was the beginning point of the vow. According to Numbers chapter 6, a *nazir* was to be separate for *Adonai* and was to abstain from any fermented drink and was not to eat or drink anything from the grape vine. During this period of serving as a *nazir*, after the initial cutting of their hair, he or she was not to cut their hair. It seems very possible that *Sha’ul* may have been living as a *nazir* for five years or more when he arrived in Jerusalem. When he met with *Ya’acov* and the other elders there, he learned that his detractors were telling the people that he was teaching people to forsake *Torah* and not to circumcise their children (Acts 21:21). This was obviously not true and the brothers

suggested that he disprove this by taking a Nazirite vow: 23 “So do what we tell you. We have four men who have a vow on themselves. 24 Take them, and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. That way, all will realize there is nothing to the things they have been told about you, but that you yourself walk in an orderly manner, keeping the Torah” (Acts 21:23-24 TLV). These four men, also followers of Yeshua, had taken the vow sometime earlier and were now ready to end it by having their hair cut and offering the required sacrifices. Because of his arrest, *Sha’ul* did not get to the end of the seven days of purification before cutting his hair and offering the sacrifices. His being a *nazir* is not mentioned in the remainder of the Book of Acts, but it would seem that because he was unable to end his vow, *Sha’ul* remained a *nazir* for the rest of his life. And, presumably, the four Messianic Jews who were purified with him did offer their sacrifices to complete their Nazirite vows.

In all these things, we see that Messianic Jews of the 1st century were faithful to the commands of *Torah*. But, what was their relationship to *Torah* with regard to the New Covenant? They, and also us, became covenant members when we trusted in Yeshua’s sacrificial death. Jeremiah 31 foretold what was put into effect by Yeshua through His death on the stake some 600 years later: 30 “Behold, days are coming” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...” (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). Yeshua was the Mediator, the High Priest of the covenant, and also the sacrifice. ADONAI’s New Covenant is with Israel and every Jew who trusts in Yeshua continues in that covenant relationship. Every Gentile who trusts in Yeshua enters into and becomes a part of the Commonwealth of Israel, covenant partners along with the with Messianic Jews (Ephesians 2:12). What does it mean to become a covenant partner? It means that we must be obedient to the terms of the covenant. ADONAI spelled it out for us: 32 “But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people” (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV). His *Torah*, His Laws, are written on our hearts. The desire to be obedient to them has been imprinted in our spirits. Not everyone realizes it, but they are there and when we realize it, the desire to please ADONAI increases. But, which *Torah* and which Laws are we to keep? We are to keep the only *Torah* that was in effect when this proclamation was made through Jeremiah; the *Torah* of *Moshe*. That’s what has been written on our hearts.

Here is a question for you. Is the Bible antinomian? That is, is it against *Torah*, the keeping of *Torah*? The answer is no. As written, the Scriptures themselves are not antinomian. They just tell what ADONAI inspired His writers to say to us. But, many Bibles are antinomian in that the translators have added words to them to uphold their antinomian theology. Someone may say, “But those added words are in italics. That means it’s not Scripture.” You are correct, that’s what it means, but the reality is that these added words are being accepted as Scripture; accepted as a part of the Bible by many people. And, a huge part of Yeshua’s body is antinomian. In Deuteronomy 12:32, ADONAI told Israel that they were not to add to or take away anything that He had commanded them. Yeshua also said this: 18 “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his share in the Tree of Life and the

Holy City, which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19 TLV). This is serious business. Our only scriptural authority is found within the pages of this book, Genesis to Revelation. Not, the Oral Torah, not the *Talmuds*, and not any other writing or tradition of man is to guide us in faith and practice, only the Holy Bible.

Here is one example of an addition to Scripture. **13** In that He says, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13 NKJ). Understood in this way, the writer of Hebrews is said to be telling us that the first covenant is obsolete and about to vanish. They did put “covenant” in italics so that we would know that it is not in the Greek text, but the truth is that most just read it as being a part of the Scripture anyway. Written this way, what this says to most readers is that the New Covenant good and the First Covenant is bad!

Here is how the Tree of Life Version puts it: 13 “*In saying “new,” He has treated the first as old; but what is being made old and aging is close to vanishing*” (Hebrews 8:13 TLV). They didn’t add in anything that wasn’t in the Greek text. Now that we’ve read from this version of the Bible, we must answer a question: what is the “first” that is growing old? It’s obvious in reading through the complete chapter 8 that “the First Covenant,” the Covenant of Moses, is a part of the discussion: 6 “*But now Yeshua has obtained a more excellent ministry, insofar as He is the mediator of a better covenant [than the First Covenant] which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first one [the First Covenant] had been faultless, there would not have been discourse seeking a second*” (Hebrews 8:6-7 TLV). What was the problem with the First Covenant? The problem was that it was mediated by a human High Priest who not only had to have his own sins forgiven, but he also had to offer sacrifices year after year after year. This is a tip, a tip that what is fading is a part of the First Covenant, but it is not the *Torah* part of the covenant. Verse 13 is not referring to the *Torah* because the writer of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31, verse 32, and affirms ADONAI’s *Torah*. He calls it *My Torah*: 10 “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Adonai. I will put My Torah into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write it. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people*” (Hebrews 8:10 TLV). So, if it’s not about ADONAI’s *Torah*, then what is it about? It’s about the mediator, the High Priest and the Aaronic priesthood. 1 “*Now here is the main point being said. We do have such a Kohen Gadol, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (Hebrews 8:1 TLV). This verse affirms Yeshua as the replacement for the Aaronic High Priest. The “first” which was fading in verse 13 was everything which had to do with the Aaronic High Priest, the Aaronic priesthood and the parts of the *Torah* associated with Temple worship. 13 “*In saying “new,” He has treated the first as old; but what is being made old and aging is close to vanishing*” (Hebrews 8:13 TLV). That is what is close to vanishing. This letter is thought to have been written in either 63 or 64 CE, only a few years before the destruction of the Temple. That part of *Torah* was fading. At the time of the writing of Hebrews, Temple worship was still going on. But, in the year 70, the Temple was destroyed and the Aaronic priesthood and Temple worship completely vanished and remains so today.

The question which remains for us is how do we know today what to observe in the Bible? We have shown that Scripture does not say that following *Torah* has been done away with. It’s exactly the opposite. ADONAI said that He will write His *Torah* that we are to keep on our hearts. Here are *Sha’ul*’s words on this subject: 30 “*Since God is One, He will set right*

the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then nullify the Torah through faithfulness? May it never be! On the contrary, we uphold the Torah" (Romans 3:30-31 TLV). Faith is indeed important, but it does not nullify *Torah*. But what then, do we do with the other verses in *Torah* which we referred to in Hebrews 8? We continue to read them, but we do nothing with them. We don't follow them. They are inactive without a Temple and an Aaronic priesthood. And, the priesthood which we have now is far better than Aaron's. 6 "*But now Yeshua has obtained a more excellent ministry, insofar as He is the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises*" (Hebrews 8:6 TLV). Yeshua, our *Kohen HaGadol*, is now the Mediator of the New Covenant and has been since His death on the stake. He has clearly told us: 17 "*Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass*" (Matthew 5:17-18 TLV). The commands which we cannot obey are still there, but inactive. Whether or not ADONAI ever makes them active again is unknown to us.

It has always been ADONAI's intention that we should obey all of *Torah*, but only that which He has kept on the books for us. Now, it seems apparent that He does not want us to follow these other commands because he has taken away the means to follow them. He has taken away the Temple and the Aaronic priesthood. It is ADONAI, Himself, who makes commands active or makes commands inactive and He is the ultimate determiner of what we are to observe.

The separate parts of the Tabernacle and later the Temple, were a means to allow the people of Israel to interact with their Creator through the First Covenant. Under it, the blood of animals covered their sin. ADONAI cannot look upon sin. Without a blood covering to shield Israel from His glory, they would die. The terms of the First Covenant were clearly spelled out. Obedience was required. Under the New Covenant, that has not changed. Obedience is still required, but it is not obedience which brings the covering, our salvation. You can't be saved by keeping Laws. Salvation comes only by faith through ADONAI's grace when we trust in Yeshua. Nothing else. Under the New Covenant, it is Yeshua's blood which is the permanent atonement for our sins and the covering between us and the Father. Those who don't have Yeshua's blood covering over them will die a spiritual death at their earthly death. We must get that message of the *Besorah*, the Good News, to as many as we can. After we trust in Yeshua, it is our service to ADONAI, our following in the footsteps of Yeshua, our obedience to His commands, which produces spiritual growth in us as individuals. That is sanctification. We are sanctified by walking in obedience to Yeshua and our goal is to become more and more like Yeshua, our Master. The New Covenant is about what we do! What we must do is to trust in Yeshua and then walk in His *Torah*. *Shabbat shalom!*