



## Parasha Vaya'khel-Pekudei

March 18, 2023

*Torah:* Exodus 35:1-40:38

*Haftarah:* Ezekiel 45:16-46:18

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Hebrews 9: 1-28

*Shabbat shalom Mishpacha.* This week's *parashiot*, *Vaya'khel* and *Pekudei* begin with the holiness of the Sabbath day, but are primarily about the construction of the Tabernacle. Three *parshiot* ago in *Parasha Terumah*, ADONAI commanded: 8 *"Have them make a Sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them. 9 You are to make it all precisely according to everything that I show you—the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all the furnishings within—just so you must make it.* (Exodus 25:8-9 TLV). Now, ten chapters later, they are getting ready to build it and then complete it as we complete the Book of Exodus. There's an interesting point in these two verses. ADONAI called this structure by two different names. There is no real consensus among the rabbis as to why He used these two different terms and to what they refer. One says one thing and another says another. My understanding is that when ADONAI said "Build Me a sanctuary" in verse 8, He was referring to the place where His presence would reside, the Holy of Holies. This was the place where ADONAI would accept the *Yom Kippur* sacrifice. It could only be entered by the High Priest once per year. The Hebrew word translated "sanctuary" is *mikdash*, מִקְדָּשׁ. Its root is *kadosh*, "holy" and it is logical that this would refer to the Most Holy Place. Then, when ADONAI said "tabernacle," *mishkan*, מִשְׁכָּן in verse 9, my understanding is that He referred to the whole structure, the complete enclosure. Its root is *shachen*, meaning "to dwell" and is also sometimes referred to as "dwelling place." ADONAI gave Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus. The Tabernacle with its Holy of Holies was ADONAI's instrument for administering justice for the people of Israel under the Covenant given through Moses at Sinai, the First Covenant. More than three thousand years later, it was revealed in the Book of Hebrews that the Tabernacle on earth was a copy of ADONAI's Tabernacle in heaven. Speaking of the Levitical priests, in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the writer said: 5 *They offer service in a replica and foreshadower of the heavenlies—one that is just as Moses was instructed by God when he was about to complete the tabernacle.* (Hebrews 8:5a TLV). The Greek word translated "tabernacle" is *skéné*, (skay-nay'), meaning "a tent." The Hebrew word

translated “tabernacle” in Exodus 25 is *mishkan*. This would add strength to the proposed definition of *mishkan*, tabernacle, as being the total structure, a structure covered by a tent that has within it a *mikdash*, a sanctuary, the Holy of holies.

The Tabernacle was a place where ADONAI would meet His people Israel. Originally built in the wilderness, it moved wherever He moved His people. After Israel entered the Promised Land, it was for a time in Gilgal, Shiloh and Gibeon and served as ADONAI’s meeting place with His people for about 480 years. King David desired to build a permanent house for ADONAI, but was not allowed because he was a man of war. His son Solomon was permitted to build the Temple and it was completed in about 957 BCE. In 586 BCE, the First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, a judgment brought about by ADONAI. Jacob’s descendants had not walked in ADONAI’s statutes and kept His commandments, grieving Him by continuing to worship other gods. His judgment was that the people in the Southern Kingdom of Judah would be taken to Babylon and remain there for 70 years, one year of punishment for each year of Sabbath rest for the land which they failed to provide. The actual judgment against Israel was because they failed to observe the *sh’mittah*, the Sabbath rest of the land and were exiled to Babylon for not allowing the land to rest: *34 Then the land will enjoy its Shabbatot all the days of its desolation, while you are in the land of your enemies. Then the land will rest and enjoy its Shabbatot. 35 As long as it lies desolate it will have rest, that rest which it did not have from your Shabbatot, when you lived on it.* (Leviticus 26:34-35 TLV).

During Israel’s time in Babylon, they had no Temple and no annual day of *Yom Kippur*. But, even without a Temple, ADONAI’s presence was with them. They began to meet together in homes and the result was what later became known as a *mikdash me’at*, “a little sanctuary,” (*מִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט*), a synagogue. During Israel’s time in Babylon, there was no longer the Temple in which ADONAI met with them annually. We read this verse last *Shabbat*: *16 Therefore say, thus says Adonai Elohim, “Though I removed them far away, among the nations, though I scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I was a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.”* (Ezekiel 11:16 TLV). Sanctuary is *mikdash*. It was ADONAI’s holy presence among them which provided a place of safety and protection for His people until He returned them to the Land of Israel. This verse did not refer to synagogues per se, but shows us that ADONAI’s presence is with us wherever we worship Him.

After the Jews returned from Babylon in 538 BCE, Solomon's Temple was rebuilt and Temple worship resumed, continuing there for about 518 years. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the Temple in which Yeshua worshipped, was a completely new building. Herod had torn down Solomon's Temple and built a new one, completing it around 20 BCE. There was a major difference between Solomon's Temple and Herod's Temple. The Holy of Holies of Herod's Temple was empty. The Ark of the Covenant had disappeared in 586 BCE when Babylon destroyed the First Temple. This is a continuing question today. Will the Ark of the Covenant be found and restored to Jerusalem? Many have looked for it and an Ethiopian Christian group even claims to possess it, something I seriously doubt. But, even though the Ark was not in Herod's Temple, ADONAI continued to honor the Temple service and the sacrifices year after year. Daily sacrifices and the *moadim*, the annual Festivals of ADONAI, continued to be conducted year after year at their proper time and atonement given as it was before.

We no longer have a physical Temple, but it is important for us to understand ADONAI's purpose for it. The writer of Hebrews lists the similarities: *1 Now even the first one had regulations for worship and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tent was prepared: in the outer part were the menorah, the table, and the presentation of the bread—this is called the Holy Place. 3 Beyond the second curtain was a dwelling called the Holy of Holies. 4 It held a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, completely covered with gold. In the ark was a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant— 5 and above it, cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. But it is not now possible to speak in detail about these things.* (Hebrews 9:1-5 TLV). In the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant contained the two tablets with a jar of manna and Aaron's rod placed before it. In Solomon's Temple, the manna and the rod had disappeared and only the two tablets remained. (1Kings 8:9). In Herod's Temple, even the ark was missing and the Holy of Holies was completely empty. But, even though there was no Ark, ADONAI continued to honor the sacrifices.

The author of Hebrews continued, describing the earthly *Yom Kippur* service: *6 Now with these things prepared this way, the kohanim do continually enter into the outer tent while completing the services; 7 but into the inner, once a year, the kohen gadol alone— and not without blood which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.* (Hebrews 9:6-7 TLV). The next verse is very important in our understanding as followers of Yeshua. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the author of Hebrews, tells us that a new way into the

Holy of Holies was coming, a way which was not revealed while the Temple, the symbol of sacrifice by the Levitical priesthood, was still standing. *8 By this the Ruach ha-Kodesh makes clear that the way into the Holies has not yet been revealed while the first tent is still standing. 9 It is a symbol for the present time.* (Hebrews 9:8-9a TLV). These four verses (9:6-9a) explain that ADONAI had a new plan coming, a plan not revealed while the Temple was still active, but a plan which would change the way that sin was covered. Hebrews continues: *9 ... Accordingly, gifts and sacrifices are being offered that cannot make the worshiper perfect with respect to conscience. 10 These relate only to food and drink and various washings—regulations for the body imposed until a time of setting things straight.* (Hebrews 9b-10 TLV). The offerings in the Temple only provided limited atonement, not complete forgiveness, and would only continue until ADONAI's time of setting things straight. During that time in the Temple, there was incomplete access to the Holy of Holies because only the High Priest could enter. But, a change was coming.

Next, the writer of Hebrews explained ADONAI's new plan which He put into effect at His time of setting things straight: *11 But when Messiah appeared as Kohen Gadol of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect Tent not made with hands (that is to say not of this creation), 12 He entered into the Holies once for all—not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.* (Hebrews 9:11-12 TLV). In about the year 30 CE, Yeshua appeared as *Kohen Gadol*, High Priest, something He was not before His death on the cross. Now, with authority as High Priest and in the symbolism of *Yom Kippur*, He entered the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle in Heaven. Just as Aaron had done with goat's blood in the wilderness, Yeshua entered the heavenly Holy of Holies with His own blood, not year after year as Aaron had done, but once for all time and for all sins. With His holy blood, Yeshua provided eternal redemption for everyone who trusts in Him. With His sacrifice of Himself, a change occurred in *Torah*. The blood of bulls and goats was no longer effective. ADONAI gave His own Son to replace them. But, the change did not affect the requirement for blood. It was still required. Yeshua's blood was perfect blood, blood which would not just cover unintentional sins for a year as goat blood had, but totally remove even the most horrendous of sins: *11 For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.* (Leviticus 17:11 TLV).

According to the Babylonian *Talmud*, in the year 30 CE something different happened at the Temple. (*Yoma 39b*, Soncino version). We are told that during the 40 year period before the destruction of the Temple, the crimson colored strap did not become white. Every year, a crimson colored strap was cut into two pieces with half nailed to the Temple door and half tied to the horns of the Scapegoat. Each year up until that time, the crimson strap on the Temple door would turn white when ADONAI accepted the Scapegoat in the wilderness. Why did the crimson strap not become white? To *Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai*, the man who was said to have seen these things happen, it was a mystery. He knew that even though there was no Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, up until that time ADONAI had continued to provide atonement on *Yom Kippur*. But, now, something was different. Something happened in the year 30 to change the status quo. Before that time, the High Priest had entered the Holy of Holies of Herod's Temple with the blood of a goat on *Yom Kippur* and sprinkled it on the floor of the empty room. Then, a second goat, the scapegoat, was sent into the wilderness. Every year, ADONAI accepted it as atonement for the sins of the people causing the strap on the Temple door to turn white. According to the *Talmud*, as long as the custom of placing this strap had existed, it had always turned white on *Yom Kippur*. But each year after the year 30, for the next forty years, the crimson strap did not turn white. Sacrifices continued to be offered *Yom Kippur* after *Yom Kippur* and the strap was attached to the goat and the door each year, but the strap never turned white again. Then, in the year 70 CE, the Temple was destroyed.

That the crimson strap failed to turn white after the year 30 is not a mystery to us. But, *Yochanan Ben Zakkai*, the rabbi who had seen these things happen, did not understand. He did not understand that the crimson strap failed to turn white on *Yom Kippur* that year because earlier in the year, the perfect sacrifice had been offered. On that *Pesach* in the year 30, Yeshua, the sinless Passover lamb, died for the sins of Israel. But, not only as the Passover lamb. The writer of Hebrews has shown us that Yeshua not only died as the *Pesach* lamb, but also as the *Yom Kippur* goat. The crimson strap didn't turn white that year, but the sins of all those who had trusted in Yeshua did. Isaiah prophesied: 18.....*"Though your sins be like scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they will become like wool* (Isaiah 1:18 TLV). The crimson strap symbolized our sins. The writer of Hebrews explains why it turned white: 12 *He entered into the Holies once for all—not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.* (Hebrews

9:12 TLV). That year, Yeshua, the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest after the order of *Malkitzedek*, took His own blood into the Holy of Holies of the heavenly Tabernacle and obtained eternal redemption for all who place their trust in Him.

The importance of the Book of Hebrews for our understanding of ADONAI's new plan, His New Covenant, cannot be underestimated. In it, we not only understand Yeshua's role as the High Priest, but also what changes were made in His covenant with Israel. The Book of Hebrews was written by one of Yeshua's disciples, probably either *Sha'ul* or Luke, around the year 64 CE, about six years before the Temple was destroyed in the year 70. Why, today, is there no Temple and no sacrifices? We are given a clue in the Book of Hebrews, but it is not obvious and many miss it. They miss it for two reasons: 1) because they have a fixed mindset about the nature of ADONAI's covenant and 2) because most Bibles render this particular verse incorrectly. We will consider it in a moment.

The answer to our question about why there is no Temple and sacrifices is that "because of Yeshua they are no longer necessary." Hebrews says: *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 9:6 TLV). As our High Priest, His service is in the Heavenly Tabernacle, not the Temple on earth. Because He is the perfect one time sacrifice, multiple animal sacrifices are not needed. Hebrews continues to explain about the First Covenant, the one made at Sinai: *7 For if that first one had been faultless, there would not have been discourse seeking a second.* (Hebrews 9:7 TLV). But, there was a fault in that first covenant, and because of it, ADONAI implemented His plan for a second covenant, the New Covenant. What was the fault? The fault was with the people. The next verse says: *8 For finding fault with them,...* (Hebrews 9:8a TLV). ADONAI found fault with Israel. It was something that the people did. Hebrews continues: *8 ... He says, "Behold, days are coming, says ADONAI, when I will inaugurate a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not remain in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says ADONAI.* (Hebrews 9:8b-9 TLV). What is the fault that ADONAI spoke about? Verse 9 says that it was that "they, Israel, did not remain in My covenant." Can ADONAI make a covenant which has fault? Absolutely not! Jeremiah chapter 31, which the writer of Hebrews is referencing here, gives additional understanding about the fault: *31 ... "For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them." it is a*

*declaration of Adonai.*” (Jeremiah 31:31b TLV). The fault was with the people. They broke His laws and violated His covenant. It was the people, but not just the people. According to Isaiah, Jeremiah and the other prophets, it was also the High Priests and the ordinary priests who broke His covenant. Because Israel broke ADONAI’s First Covenant, He cut a New Covenant with them, a perfect covenant. It had been ADONAI’s plan from before the foundation of the earth to cut a New Covenant with Israel.

Because Israel violated ADONAI’s First Covenant so flagrantly, He instituted a New Covenant with a new 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. 2 He is a priestly attendant of the Holies and the true Tent—which Adonai set up, not man. 3 For every kohen gadol is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary for this One also to have something to offer.* (Hebrews 8:1-3 TLV). We now have a new High Priest, Yeshua, who is seated at the right of the Father in heaven. He has something to offer in the Tabernacle there, just as the Levitical High Priests did in the earthly Temple. The next verse, verse 4, tells us that if He were serving on the earth He would not be a priest at all. He would not be a priest because He is not from the tribe of Levi, the tribe from which the priests were to come, but from the Tribe of Judah.

We have a New Covenant. But, many who have trusted Yeshua through that covenant, also believe that the First Covenant has passed away. Is that true? Let’s see if there is Scriptural evidence to refute that. Jeremiah prophesied: *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). The Hebrew says: covenant, new, בְּרִית הַדְּשָׁה, *B’rit Chadasha*. It is a New Covenant, no question about that. New, because it was cut with Yeshua’s blood and not the blood of animals. But, in a sense, it can also be considered renewed, renewed because the original covenant is still there, but with changes. The changes are a better sacrifice and a new and better priesthood. Are they correct in saying that the First Covenant has passed away? No! Never! It cannot pass away because it is ADONAI’s eternal covenant. How do we know that? Jeremiah tells us. Referring to the people of Israel and Judah who were returning from Babylonian captivity, he wrote: *5 They will ask about Zion, the way— here are their faces! Come! They will join themselves to Adonai in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.* (Jeremiah 50:5 TLV). When did they join themselves to ADONAI in an everlasting covenant? It was when the Jews

returned to Israel from their punishment in Babylon. They re-consecrated themselves to ADONAI, re-consecrated themselves to His everlasting covenant. Everlasting covenant is *עוֹלָם בְּרִית*, *B'rit Olam*, meaning an eternal covenant, one which will never pass away. This is the evidence that we were looking for. ADONAI is referring to His First Covenant, the covenant which was in effect at that time. Through Jeremiah, ADONAI said that “it will never be forgotten.” Referring to the commands of this First Covenant, Yeshua, the Mediator of the New Covenant, said they will never pass away until heaven and earth pass away. (Matthew 5:17-18).

Why is there no Temple and no sacrifices today? Another verse which helps to explain this is Hebrews 8:31. Its meaning is not immediately obvious. Many have overlooked it because they had already decided that the New Covenant had completely replaced what they call “the Old Covenant.” They also miss it because translators with the same mindset have added a word to the verse to make it fit their theology. But, as it is currently written, Hebrews 8:13 is incorrect in most Bibles? If you have the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, the King James Bible, the New King James Bible or many others, this verse is incorrect in your Bible. The New American Standard Bible renders it this way: *13. When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear* (Hebrews 8:13 NASB). They believe that this verse means that the “first covenant” is obsolete. The problem with their understanding is that the word “covenant” is not in the Greek manuscript of the Book of Hebrews. It was added by the translators. The Strong’s Concordance direct translation of the Greek reads: “In saying new, He has made obsolete the first, and that then growing old and aging is near vanishing.” The Tree of Life Bible renders it correctly by saying: *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). What is being referred to as “new” and what is being referred to as “first?” Knowing this will explain the whole verse. This verse in those Bibles I mentioned are that way because their translators have an antinomian theology, a theology “against Law.” They are biased against the principle of *Torah* and Laws being for today. Believing that G-d’s Laws have no further importance in the life of a follower of Yeshua, they have made a theological statement supporting that belief by adding the word “covenant” to verse 13. They believe that “first” refers to the “Old Covenant” and that it was in the process of passing away. But, is that true? If this verse was referring to the covenant, it would have already passed away,

passed away long before the time of the writing of Hebrews in 54 CE. If that statement is true, “the Old Covenant” would have passed away when Yeshua died on the cross and instituted the New Covenant in 30 CE, some thirty-four years before this time. But, the truth is that verse 13 is not referring to all of the “First Covenant,” only to a portion of it. “New” refers to “new priesthood,” Yeshua’s priesthood and “first” refers to “first priesthood,” the Levitical priesthood. The reason the first priesthood was fading in the year 64 and would soon pass away was because the Temple would soon be destroyed. When this verse was written, the Levitical priests were still offering sacrifices and the Temple was still standing, but just six years later, the Romans destroyed the Temple and the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices ended, vanished as the writer of Hebrews correctly prophesied. During the 40 year period between the years 30 and 70, the “first priesthood,” the Levitical priesthood, was aging as Aaron’s descendants continued to offer sacrifices while the New Covenant was in effect. But, in the year 70 CE the Romans destroyed the Temple and the “first” system of priests vanished completely.

Today, almost two thousand years later, there is no Tabernacle or Temple. How are we to worship ADONAI and Yeshua our Messiah today? We worship them today in spirit. We no longer have need of a Temple with an Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies: *16 “It will be in those days when you multiply and become fruitful in the land.” It is a declaration of Adonai. “They will no longer talk about the ark of the covenant of Adonai, nor will it come to mind or be remembered. Neither will it be missed or another one made again.”* (Jeremiah 3:16 TLV). The Jews are definitely back in the Land of Israel and fruitful today. Over 7 million of them live there. But, the real reason that the Ark of the Covenant and a physical Holy of Holies are not necessary is because of Yeshua. When He died, He opened the way into the Holy of Holies, the one in the Tabernacle in Heaven: *50 And Yeshua cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the Temple was split in two, from top to bottom.* (Matthew 27:50-51a TLV). In Herod’s Temple, the *parochet*, the heavy curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, was nearly 60 feet high, said to be four inches thick and must have weighed hundreds of pounds. The *parochet*, the curtain of the physical Temple was torn, ruined, and made unusable for worship by Yeshua’s death. At the same time, its tearing also opened the way for those who would trust in Him to direct access to the Father. The spiritual Holy of Holies is now open to us because we have trusted in Yeshua who has given us His *Ruach Kodesh*, His Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, now resides in us, Yeshua's followers. *Sha'ul* said: *19 Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Ruach ha-Kodesh who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?* (1Corinthians 6:19 TLV). The Greek word for "temple" is *naos*, from *naiō* meaning dwell, the counterpart of the Hebrew word, *mishkan*. This means that "temple" in this verse is a reference to our whole physical body. Look again at the two verses with which we began: *8 "Have them make a Sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them. 9 You are to make it all precisely according to everything that I show you—the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all the furnishings within—just so you must make it.* (Exodus 25:8-9 TLV). In verse 9, Tabernacle is ADONAI's *mishkan*, the complete structure. In 1Corinthians 6:19, *naos* is a reference to our whole body as temple. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but just as sins were brought to the altar in the outer court in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, our bodies, our outer court, also exhibit sins. We sin with our hands, our feet, our eyes and ears and with our minds in our bodies, our Temples of the Holy Spirit. But, just as there was a "most holy place" in the Tabernacle in which ADONAI's Spirit resided, so also is there one in our bodies. It is ADONAI's sanctuary for His Holy Spirit, His *mikdash*, our human spirit. That is where His Holy Spirit resides, in our *mikdash*, His sanctuary within the *mishkan*, the temple of our bodies.

Our subject last *Shabbat* was "Holiness." ADONAI said: "You are to be holy because I am holy." The purpose of His Temple on earth was holiness for His people Israel. It allowed sinful people to be in relationship with a holy G-d. But, even though they eventually turned away from Him, He never stopped loving them and because of His love, He sent His Son Yeshua to Israel, the Jews, to provide a way for them to obtain holiness. Yeshua cut the New Covenant with His own blood, a covenant which provides salvation to both Jew and Gentile. As disciples of Yeshua, our goal is to make our *mishkan*, our physical Temple, our body, holy. Our spirit, located in our *mikdash*, our sanctuary for ADONAI's Spirit within our Temple, is now holy. It is the rest of our body to which we must turn our attention for holiness. It is our physical body which must respond to ADONAI's command to "be holy." Because Yeshua loves us and gave His life for us, let each of us who is sincerely committed to Him, strive to "be holy." We must be holy because He, Yeshua our Messiah, is holy. *Shabbat shalom!*