

Vayakhel + Pekudei

Portion for the week leading up to March 25, 2017

Making a Home for God



After instructing Moses on the specifications for the building of the tabernacle, it is now time for Moses to lead its construction. When all the work was completed, it was examined and everything was found to have been done exactly as God had specified. Scripture tells us that we as believers are a tabernacle, and we will also be examined and tested to see if we meet up to God's specifications. Let's take a closer look.

The work of building the tabernacle required a great amount of skill. There would be weaving, metalworking, stonemasonry, and other tasks which required a great deal of talent. God therefore appointed two men named Bezalel and Oholiab, endowing them with the Holy Spirit in order to give them supernatural wisdom and skill in making everything precisely according to God's instructions. Since God was going to dwell in this place, it needed to be perfect, and so there was no room for artistic license in this endeavor. These two men were not the only ones who were to work on the tabernacle: "Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the Lord has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded." The role of most people was to provide the materials such as gold, silver, and cloth (**Exodus 35:21-29**). These two men, however, were both explicitly mentioned as having been specially gifted for the purpose of creating some of the finer parts of the tabernacle, such as the engraving, embroidery, and stonemasonry.

"So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses. And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the Lord had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them" (**Exodus 39:43**). Once all of the items had been completed, all that remained was for everything to be set up and for the services of the tabernacle to begin. While everything else had been done by the people, the completion of the task,

including setting up and arranging everything in its proper place, was Moses' job: "He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work" (**Exodus 40:33**).

All of this time and effort has been leading up to the moment when its purpose would be realized. God shows His acceptance of the work of the tabernacle by descending into it and filling it with His presence: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (**Exodus 40:34-35**). Since everything has been done according to God's instructions, He is able to dwell in the tabernacle amidst the people of Israel, communing with them and leading them through all of their travels (**verses 36-38**).

The construction of the tabernacle has many lessons to teach us about our role as believers, especially in the light of the New Testament Scriptures. We are told that we, like the tabernacle, are God's dwelling place (**1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Peter 2:5**). Once we come to believe in Yeshua (Jesus), we are called to allow the Holy Spirit to work within us, building us up into a place where God can dwell: "Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (**1 Corinthians 3:12-13**). This is not a passive work on our part, but a conscious effort to obey God in love through the Holy Spirit and to make our heart a place where He can dwell not only temporarily, but permanently, leading us and speaking with us everywhere we go. God has endowed us with the skills necessary to do this work through the Holy Spirit, but we must stay diligent to stay within God's framework. He knows what must be done in each of us in order for Him to use us and dwell within us in the fullness of His power. We must not speculate what God wants to do within us, but rather we must simply obey Him.

Just as we as individuals are a tabernacle/temple, how much more so is the body of believers in Yeshua a tabernacle. Like Bezalel and Oholiab, some have been gifted for certain tasks more than others for the purpose of building up God's people into a tabernacle: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Messiah" (**Ephesians 4:11-12**). Just as with the building of the tabernacle, however, each and every person has a role to play, and no role is more or less important than any other position.

Let us each continue the work of the tabernacle of our hearts so that we may all become a place where God can dwell in the fullness of His power.