

Parashat Vayakhel

פרשת להקיו

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5

Is there hope in the mitzvot?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 35:1-38:20

הפטרה: 1 Kings 7:40-50

הברית: Mark 15

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Shemot / Exodus 35:1-36:19

10

God gifted certain men to be involved in the construction of the Mishkhan (Tabernacle). *Shemot / Exodus 36:1 '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.'* (NASB) The Mishkhan (Tabernacle) was to be a representative model, an earthly tabernacle, a sanctuary, and a dwelling place for the Lord, a place where the Lord will meet with His people. We are told in the Scriptures that there is a true Heavenly original upon which the model Mishkhan was based. The True sanctuary was permanently stationed in heaven and according to *Ivrit / Hebrews 8: 1-13* in Yeshua the Messiah; a new covenant has been enacted where He is now our High Priest seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven.

15

20

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שמות 30:11-16

מְחֻשְׁבֵּת: וַעֲשֵׂה בְּצִלְאֵל וְאֹהֲלִיאָב וְכָל אִישׁ חֲכָם לִי
לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חֲכָמָה וְתִבְוֵנָה בְּהִמָּה לְדַעַת
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מְלָאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־
צִוָּה יְהוָה: וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּצִלְאֵל וְאֶל־אֹהֲלִיאָב
וְאֶל כָּל־אִישׁ חֲכָם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חֲכָמָה בְּלִבּוֹ
כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאוּ לִבּוֹ לְקַרְבָּה אֶל־הַמִּלְאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֹתָהּ: וַיִּקְחוּ מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל־הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר
הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמִּלְאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֹתָהּ וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ אֵלָיו עוֹד נְדָבָה בַּבֶּקֶר בַּבֶּקֶר:
וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־הַחֲכָמִים הָעֹשִׂים אֶת כָּל־מְלָאכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
אִישׁ־אִישׁ מִמִּלְאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּה עֹשִׂים: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־
מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר מִרְבִּים הָעָם לְהֵבִיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה
לַמִּלְאכָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: וַיַּצֵּן מֹשֶׁה

Shemot / Exodus 30:11-16

36:1 '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.' 36:2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it. 36:3 They received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 36:4 And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, 36:5 and they said to Moses, 'The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the Lord commanded us to perform.' (NASB)

25 Today's passages marks the beginning of the construction of the Mishkhan
(Tabernacle) where God sternly warned Moshe to be careful to make everything
according to the pattern shown to him on the Mountain *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:5 who*
30 *serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by*
God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'that you
make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'
(NASB). In *Ivrit / Hebrews* chapter 8, we come full circle, the text in the Ketuvei
Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) marks the conclusion of the earthly Mishkhan by
indicating Yeshua's status as the perfect High Priest including all of the
35 qualifications, in an established place of service, a place God created, the true
Mishkhan (Tabernacle) in Heaven.

Ivrit / Hebrews 8:1-13

40 *8:1 Now the main point in what has been said is this we have such a high*
priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the
Majesty in the heavens, 8:2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true
tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. 8:3 For every high priest is
appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high
priest also have something to offer. 8:4 Now if He were on earth, He
would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts
according to the Law; 8:5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly
things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the
tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'that you make all things according to the
pattern which was shown you on the mountain.' 8:6 *But now He has*
obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator
of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 8:7 For
if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no
occasion sought for a second. 8:8 For finding fault with them, He says,
'Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will effect a new
covenant With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 8:9 Not
like the covenant which 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
continue in My covenant, And I did not care for them, says the Lord. 8:10
'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After
those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will
write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My
people. 8:11 'And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, And
everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' For all will know Me, From
the least to the greatest of them. 8:12 'For I will be merciful to their
iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.' 8:13 *When He said,*
'A new covenant ' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is
becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (NASB)

70 Reading these passages from the Parashat and from Hebrews reminds me
of a video I recently watched at the Moaz Israel website in Tel Aviv, on the
personal testimony of Zev Porat ("Lives changed at Moaz Israel") and videos
documenting their street ministry. Zev come from an ultra-orthodox family in
Yisrael and is working with the ministry to share his faith with people online and

on the streets. In one of the videos, (there are quite a few videos on their website) the members of the ministry talked with an ultra-orthodox rabbi on the street. In this particular instance, the rabbi was wearing Tefillin and preparing to pray. When approached, the rabbi asked the person to put on the Tefillin along with him and to pray. In the orthodox community, wearing the phylacteries wrapping the straps seven times on the forearm and the boxes on the forehead and forehead is the act of performing mitzvot (plural mitzvahs). The rabbi was asking to perform a mitzvah with him right there in that moment. Mitzvahs (commandments) are the method whereby the orthodox earn merit for their salvation. Essentially, the rabbi was asking him to perform this mitzvah with him in order to fulfill the rabbinic requirement for salvation. The person speaking with the rabbi refused to put on the Tefillin and asked the question of how performing the mitzvah would provide a way to heaven when the Torah speaks of the requirement of an atoning sacrifice. The rabbi couldn't answer him but repeated that we must perform the mitzvah with him. Note that the Moaz Israel ministry does not follow the rabbinic tradition; the most obvious is that they are not wearing tzitzit in the videos. Now, I am wondering what would have happened if a Torah observant messianic believer was presented with this same question? Would he have put on the Tefillin and prayed with the rabbi? The question before us is "what kind of message do we as believers want to send to the rabbinic community by performing mitzvahs?" Would there be a mixed message if one performed the Tefillin mitzvah and then afterwards turning around and requesting that in addition to the mitzvah they need to believe in Yeshua? It is also interesting how Zev coming out of the orthodox community and traditions, having his soul lit on fire by God through faith in Yeshua, no longer performs the mitzvahs. Now, what are we to make of these observations? Keeping (observing) the Torah absolutely must be done with the correct heart, the correct mind, and the correct motivations. I have heard that observing the Torah is done so the Orthodox might accept us. I have even heard that this is done to make the Orthodox Jew feel comfortable for attending the messianic service. Do you think this is the correct motivation, the correct heart, and the correct mind for observing the Torah?

The book of *Hebrews*, chapter 8 comes with much controversy within the messianic community and especially within the Torah observant congregations that is related to whether the Torah has passed away or has become extinct. Studying *Ivrit / Hebrews 8*, the author was not making a new point since a significant portion of the chapter is in fact a quote from the Prophets (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*). According to *Hebrews 8* and *Jeremiah 31*, the Torah would no longer be engraved in stone or inscribed on a scroll; God planned to implement the Torah now by recording it in the minds and hearts of His people (see *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:10*). The prophecy foretold a people who would not only know the Word of God, these people would also know God Himself (*Ivrit / Hebrews 8:11*). The means to that end was and is Yeshua the Messiah. According to *Ivrit / Hebrews 8*, Yeshua the High Priest, the promise in Yeshua, the Torah written upon the heart, the covenant, and the true tabernacle are superior to their earthly manifestations, whereby the earthly manifestations are what point us towards Yeshua the Messiah. The temporal was nothing to cling to, but rather a system intended to point to the perfect future that is ahead. It seems that according to the

author of the book of *Hebrews*, the People of faith had no reason to turn back to past traditions (see *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:13*). The future that we have in Christ is so much brighter than the mitzvahs themselves. Knowing these things to be true, have the mitzvahs become something of themselves with Christ added on top in your life? If the mitzvot of the Torah have become something of primary importance in your ministry, before your faith in Yeshua then it is time to take a couple steps backwards and reevaluate the reason for Observing the Torah. Have you become like the ultra-orthodox earning merit for salvation?

Let's have a closer look at the text, specifically at *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:13*:

Hebrews 8:11-13

10 λέγει κύριος . ὅτι αὐτὴ ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ ἰσρα-
 ἡλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας λέγει κύριος διδοὺς νόμους μου
 εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐ-
 τοὺς καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν.
 11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος
 τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων γινῶθι τὸν κύριον ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσου-
 12 σίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν . ὅτι ὕλεως ἔσομαι
 ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν
 13 αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι . ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν
 πρώτην τὸ δε **παλαιούμενον** καὶ **γηράσκον** ἕγγυς **ἀφανισμοῦ** .

In Greek, *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:13* is translated literally as *“In the saying, New, he has made old the first. And the one being old and growing old is near extinction.”*

Three words are very important here in *8:13*, (i) palaioo (palaouioumenon), (ii) gerasko (geraskon), and (iii) aphanismos. The first Greek word “palaioo” means to become worn out, to decay, or declare obsolete in the passive sense. The second word “gerasko” means to be senescent or to be old, to have old age. The third word “aphanismos” means to render unapparent, to actively consume or passively disappear, corrupt, disfigure, perish, vanish away. It isn't difficult to realize how modern translations have rendered this verse to say *8:13 When He said, ‘A new covenant ‘ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (NASB)* based upon the word definitions from the Greek text. Regardless of the lexical form (case, gender, etc) of the words written here in the text, the words palaouioumenon, geraskon, and aphanismos are repeating (three times) by the use of three slightly differing meanings to illustrate the greater nature of the New Covenant in Yeshua over the Mosaic covenant that was given on Sinai. These verses explain to us that first and foremost Yeshua is the way to eternal life by faith and the mitzvot in the Torah point giving direction and instruction that Yeshua is God's Messiah, Savior, King, and Lord.

Now, I realize that both Torah observant and non-Torah observant believers read the Parashat that I send out. This week's study is directed specifically for the Torah observant believer. If you are Torah observant and are presented with the situation were a rabbi asks you to put on Tefillin with him would you have done so? I would hope that you would not have put on the Tefillin. That would have given him false hope, a false hope in the mitzvahs he has trusted in all of his life. What should be done is to explain that in Yeshua, these scriptures are now written upon our heart, on the inside, meaning that we

Ivrit / Hebrews 8:10-13

8:10 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people. 8:11 'And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, And everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' For all will know Me, From the least to the greatest of them. 8:12 'For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.' 8:13 When He said, 'A new covenant ' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (NASB)

literally are changed by God from the inside out. In this instance, performing the mitzvah (as the scriptures say “the letter of the law”) is less important than sharing the “spirit of the law” by sharing one’s faith in Yeshua and point to the one who is our atoning sacrifice. This is the meaning of *Ivrit / Hebrews 8:13*, on the aging of the old covenant. It is interesting to also note that the Greek scriptures say old covenant has grown old and is “ready to disappear” that does not mean that the old covenant has passed away. The imagery and tradition of the Mosaic Covenant provides for us a foretaste of the coming glory that is found in Yeshua the Messiah. We celebrate the New Covenant in the expectation of spending an eternity with the Word of God Himself, Yeshua. We are not meant to be complacent with who we are or where we are in our spiritual growth and walk before the Lord. Our citizenship is in heaven, and our real focus needs to be upon the real home we have yet to enter into. The time is near, Yeshua is coming back soon, but are you really excited and ready for His return? Have you placed your hope and excitement in the true source of hope, Yeshua the Messiah, or have you placed your hope in the fading Mosaic Covenant and the fading mitzvahs? I pray that you have placed your hope in Yeshua and in him alone.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever