

Shavua Tov

Weekly  Parsha

A Rood Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn McWilliams

Torah Portion: *Pekudei* פְּקֻדֵי "Numbered / Accounting"

These are the accounts of the Tabernacle (the Tabernacle of Testimony), which were calculated by Moses' order by the Levites under Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

Eleh fekudey haMishkan Mishkan ha'edut asher **pukad** al-pi Moshe avodat haLevi'im beyad Itamar ben-Aharon hakohen.

Scripture for study: *Shemot* (Exodus) 38:21 - 40:38

Our final Torah portion in the book of Exodus concludes this second book of the Torah in a most powerful way. Once again, we see that many of the details of the last three portions are repeated here. Since we have already discussed these details and their symbolic and prophetic significance, we will not be focusing on them in this study. Instead, we will focus upon three interlinking themes that cover the span of our portion.

The first of these themes is that of the "accounting" that takes place at the conclusion of the work on the various pieces of the tabernacle and its furnishing. Our portion begins:

"This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that YHWH commanded Moses. And with him was Aholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan..." (Exodus 38:21)

In the Torah portion Vayakh'el¹, we witnessed the integrity of Moses and the other leaders involved with the building of the tabernacle. When the generosity of the children of Israel exceeded YHWH's architectural demands, Moses called a halt to the giving:

"And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. And all the wise men, that

wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; And they spake unto Moses, saying The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which YHWH commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.” (Exodus 36:5-7)

Even with this demonstration of integrity and fiscal responsibility, still our portion begins with the leaders giving a detailed accounting of all that was gathered and used for the work of the tabernacle and its furnishings. There are two themes that emerge from these opening verses of our Torah portion. The first theme is that everyone counts. The second theme is that everyone is accountable.

As we have already quoted above from our previous Torah portion, the children of Israel responded very generously to the invitation to build of the tabernacle. The people brought what was sufficient and more. This caused Moses to halt the donations. The sages point out an apparent contradiction between the expression “the stuff they had was sufficient” and the phrase “and too much”. Ramban states that the excess was so minute that it did not merit mention in our portion’s lists.² Or Hachayim teaches that the minute excess was kept for necessary repairs and to prevent the embarrassment of a returned gift.³ While I agree with both of these responses, I believe that there is yet another aspect that becomes evident in our Torah portion. What we witness in the verses of Pekudei is that every gift of gold, silver, bronze, wood or wool is accounted for. This is the Torah’s way of telling us that every gift no matter how big or small, no matter how precious or mundane - whether given by a prince, or a pauper - every gift counted. No one’s gift was left out or returned. Or Hachayim declares that a miracle occurred, which condensed the size of the gifts in order that every single piece be utilized in the tabernacle.⁴ When we remember that the tabernacle, made up of its numerous boards, bars, sockets, and coverings, is a shadow picture of the many-member body of Messiah, this message becomes very reassuring.

The Apostle Shaul gives considerable space in his writings to the reality that each believer has a place in the body of Messiah:

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Messiah. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have not need of you. Nay, much more those members

of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Messiah and members in particular.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

In the same writing, Shaul speak of the diverse spiritual gifts bestowed upon each member of the body of Messiah:

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (I Corinthians 12:4-11)

Here we begin to realize the connection with the Tabernacle. YHWH issued an invitation to the children of Israel to bring their gifts of gold, silver, bronze, precious gems, blue, purple, and scarlet dyed wool, wood, skins, oils, spices, and talents.⁵ We must remember that YHWH was the one that provided them with these gifts to give:

“Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And YHWH gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.” (Exodus 11:2-3)

“And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; And YHWH gave favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” (Exodus 12:35-36)

“And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office.” (Exodus 28:3)

“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and silver, and in brass...” (Exodus 31:2-3)

So it is in the body of Messiah as well. YHWH extends his invitation to those He has equipped, that they may bring forth their gifts for the sake of the living temple, the body of Messiah. Y'shua taught:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44)

So we see that YHWH continues to extend His invitation, that we may bring our imparted gifts and give them toward the assembling of the body of Messiah, the living tabernacle. The message of our Torah portion, Pekudei, is that no gift is refused. Every gift counts. No matter how small the gift, no matter how ordinary or precious, whether it be gold or wood, precious gem or wool, it is utilized in the tabernacle. All of us have a place in the body of Messiah. And so it should be among the body of believers. Our conferences, assemblies, congregations, home groups and fellowships should likewise be ready to receive the gifts of YHWH as they are brought forth by our brothers and sisters in Messiah. But, we must also realize that along with this reception of gifts, comes responsibility and accountability.

The second of the interlinking themes is that of accountability. Our Torah portion clearly teaches us the need for accountability. Moses, Bazaleel, Aholiab, Ithamar and the Levites were all called of YHWH to carry out the work of the tabernacle. When they were finished with their labors, Moses and the other leaders stood before the people who had provided the resources of their labors and gave them an accounting of all the offering that was used. This is a wonderful and practical piece of Torah wisdom. We should always be ready to give an accounting for the gifts that have been given to us. This is true not only of the leaders of big ministries and congregations, but for every member of the body of Messiah. The testimony of the Bible is very clear: we shall all give an accounting of our life. We are reminded repeatedly that YHWH records our life:

"Then said I, Lo, I come; In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, they law is within my heart..." (Psalm 40:7-8).

"Thou tellest my wanderings: Put thou my tears into thy bottles: Are they not in thy book?" (Psalm 56:8)

"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." (Psalm 69:28)

"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written,..." (Psalm 139:16)

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and thee shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1)

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” (Revelation 3:5)

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them; And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:11-12)

Accountability is also a consistent theme in the teachings and parables of Y’shua and the writings of the apostles:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.” (Matthew 12:36)

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven is likened to a certain king, who would take account of his servants...” (Matthew 18:23)

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” (Matthew 24:45-47)

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” (Luke 16:10-12)

“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said to unto him, Well thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant...” (Luke 15:23)

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)

“Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Messiah and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1)

"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (1 Peter 4:5)

We are reminded also that everything done in secret will, in the end, be made known in a day of reckoning:

"Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart." (Psalm 44:21)

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." (Psalm 90:8)

"For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad." (Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17)

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Y'shua Messiah according to the gospel." (Romans 2:16)

Here we must realize that we have all been chosen by YHWH to fulfill a sacred purpose.⁶ To this end, YHWH has redeemed us, called us and equipped us with all necessary spiritual gifts⁷ for the sake of building up the living tabernacle, the body of Messiah.⁸ It is based upon the fulfilling of this sacred calling that we shall be held accountable. In our Torah portion we hear YHWH's favorable judgment upon the children of Israel. Again and again, we hear the repeated judgment and declaration that the children of Israel did "according to all that YHWH commanded Moses."⁹ In this, we realize that not only the leaders are held accountable, but all of those who have been entrusted with this sacred calling.

What we see next is possibly the greatest ending of any book of the Torah. After Moses, Aaron, Ithamar, Bezaleel, Aholiab, and the Levites had faithfully completed all the YHWH had commanded Moses, the Glory of YHWH filled their labor.

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of YHWH fill the tabernacle." (Exodus 40:34-35)

What a powerful lesson of obedience this is. Here let us be sure we understand the principle things. The Torah is the self revelation of YHWH. This is to say that the Torah is the image of YHWH. When we do all that YHWH commanded Moses, when we keep the Torah, we become His manifest presence in the world. Messiah said he came to fulfill the Torah¹⁰; that is, to give it meaning and substance. Shaul referred to Messiah as the very image of the invisible God.¹¹ Y'shua referred to himself as the image¹² and temple of God.¹³ When we come together, bringing our God-given gifts for the purpose of doing all that YHWH commanded Moses, we become members of the body of Messiah, the living tabernacle of YHWH. As we learn to keep the Torah, we shall begin to witness the Glory of YHWH present in our lives, our homes, our

fellowships, our assemblies, and our world. This is the goal. This is the hope: that we would all be built up into a living and spiritual habitation for YHWH to dwell¹⁴, that we and the world may behold His glory. Therefore, let us take account of the gifts, talents, treasures, and opportunities that YHWH has given us, and dedicate them to the faithful fulfillment of our calling to be the manifest presence of YHWH in the world.

SHAVUA TOV!

¹ Exodus 35:1-38:20

² Ramban Nachmanides Commentary on the Torah Exodus, Shilo Publishing House, Inc Pg. 603

³ Or HaChayim Commentary on the Torah Vol. II Exodus, Lambda Publishers, Pg. 906-907.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Exodus 25:1-9

⁶ Exodus 19:5-6

⁷ Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:2ff

⁸ Ephesians 4:12

⁹ Exodus 38:21,22; 39:5,7,20,26,29,32,42,43; 40:16,19,21,23,25,27,29,32

¹⁰ Matthew 5:17

¹¹ Colossians 1:15

¹² John 14:9

¹³ John 2:19-21

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:22