

VAY'YACHEL – “AND HE ASSEMBLED”

EXODUS (SHEMOT) 35:1 – 38:20

INTRODUCTION

1. In this *parsha*, Moses addresses the entire nation and invites them to participate in the building of the *Mishkan*.
 - a. Describes in detail how instructions were enthusiastically carried out.
 - b. Construction of *mishkan* was concern of the entire nation.
2. Much of this portion repeats what has been covered in *Terumah*, *Tetzaveh* and part of *Ki Tisa*.
3. That this much of the Torah is dedicated to the details of the *mishkan* illustrates:
 - The great responsibility given to Israel in providing a resting place for the Presence.
 - This was primary reason for their existence.
4. When the Presence departed, it meant national calamity for Israel.
 - The tabernacle at Shiloh
 - The destruction of both temples
5. Also demonstrates that each must place their part.
 - *Mishkan* could not exist without the gifts and talents of the artisans.
 - The artisans could not work if contributions were not given.
 - Contributions can't be given if you don't have them.
6. The story of Tom Lincoln.
7. Also demonstrates that certain things must occur before other things can.
 - a. Things move in cycles; things in subsequent cycle depend on previous.
 - b. i.e. keeping time.

CONTRIBUTION FOR THE TABERNACLE (Ex 35:1-29)

1. Verse 1: Traditionally, Moses assembled the people the day after his return.
 - a. Based on that tradition, this would be 11 Tishri.
2. The things commanded: Rabbis determined there were 39 categories.
 - a. Because next verses deal with Sabbath, there were 39 prohibitions on Shabbat.
3. Verse 2: Again reiterates that building *mishkan* cannot supersede Shabbat.
 - a. “a holy day” is literally “holiness.”
 - b. Shabbat testifies to God's existence and thus is superior to building place where He will be served.
 - c. Acknowledgement of His sovereignty precedes service.
4. In verse 1 “to do them” can be rendered “to repair them.”
 - a. Rabbinically interpreted to say keeping Shabbat can repair damage of golden calf.
5. Verse 3: Kindling fire is understood by most to mean fire for cooking and baking.
 - a. Some sects extend this to not having light – sitting in the dark.
 - b. It had already been pointed out that collection of manna was but six days.
 - c. Implication is that cooking and baking not to be done on Shabbat.
6. Verse 5: They are invited to bring contributions for the *mishkan*.
 - a. Wants those with willing heart – doesn't desire that given begrudgingly.
 - b. We understand that God doesn't need our treasure.

c. He desires our heart thus our treasure should be elsewhere.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” – Matthew 6:19-24

7. Verse 10: “Every wise-hearted man”: wise knew how to appropriate what had been given.

8. Verse 21: “Everyone whom his spirit made willing.”

a. Moses doesn’t have to ply them with smooth words or exact a levy.

b. Could make argument they are motivated by what almost happened to them.

9. Verse 22: “The men came with the women...” is to infer the women were quick to respond.

a. In my opinion, this is typically what happens in relation to spiritual issues.

b. Women tend to be more spiritually sensitive to men; both good and bad.

8. Verse 27: “The leaders” brought the *shoham* and precious stones.

a. These stones to be engraved with the tribes of Israel so leaders brought their tribes’.

BETZALEL AND OHOLIAV (Ex 35:30-36: 5)

1. Verse 30: God called them by name: artist is “called.”

a. Specially endowed with a gift – predestined in a sense – for his mission.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Y’shua for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” – Ephesians 2:10

b. Which is to say, we have been given the tools from birth to perform these works.

c. They are without repentance (Rom. 11:29).

2. Verse 32: “to devise skillful works” is literally “to think thoughts.”

a. Many feel there is no art in Judaism or the Bible.

b. Largely because of command not to have graven images.

c. Greek focus is beauty; Israel is righteousness.

d. Poetry is art (i.e. Psalms, Job)

e. God is said to be the “Incomparable Artist.”

3. The highest artist is not the one who is greatest in self-expression but self-control.

a. Betzalel is expressing God’s purposes not his own.

b. The *mishkan* is picture of self-control allows access to the Incomparable Artist.

4. Verse 34: These things in his heart that he may “teach.”

a. Betzalel’s mission was to think thoughts and teach them to others.

b. Through skillful craftsmanship was to inspire.

c. A light that can’t kindle another is a weak light.

d. The core of art is teaching and inspiring other humans.

- e. Thus, Betzalel was to take pattern shown Moses in mountain and provoke thought through the workmanship of the *mishkan*.
 - f. Through his handiwork, he “teaches” others of the *mishkan* and what it represented.
5. So those given wisdom to understand the pattern given in Torah (mountain) are to provoke thought.
- a. By doing so, they are to teach and inspire others to understand the pattern and teach.
 - b. Light illuminating more light until it culminates in Israel’s mandate: light to nations.
6. That Betzalel is from Judah and Oholiav from Dan illustrates that great and small united.
- a. First and last, so to speak; first shall be last and the last first.
 - b. The Hebrew spelling of ך Dan alludes to the last letter ת *tav*.
 - c. Thus alluding to א *alef* which is 26 equivalent to יהוה YHVH.
 - c. Insert the ד *dalet* into יהוה YHVH and result is יהודה *Y’hudah*.
 - d. Point is, first and last builds the *mishkan*.
7. 36:1: Rabbinical interpretation says, “God gives wisdom to him only who possesses wisdom.
- a. Meaning they already possessed a measure of wisdom but God further endowed them.
 - b. Scripture says if anyone lacks wisdom he may ask of God (James 1:5).
 - c. Solomon wanted wisdom over all else and received it.
 - d. The argument could be made that Solomon exhibited wisdom by asking for wisdom.
 - e. There is a measure of truth to this position.
 - f. Y’shua’s parable of the talents and the unprofitable servant.

“So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” – Matthew 25:28-29

8. Verse 3: The people bring contributions and pile them in a heap before Moses.

CONSTRUCTION OF TABERNACLE AND FURNITURE (Ex 36:6-38:20)

1. Verse 6-7: The people brought more than enough.
2. Notice three things.
 - Generosity of the people.
 - Honesty of the artificers.
 - Modesty of Moses in refusing to accumulate even more treasure.
3. Verse 13: Again mentions that, when curtains are coupled the *mishkan* is אֶחָד *echad*.
4. Chapter 37:1 Betzalel fashions the ark first, then the rest of the furniture.
 - a. Verse 9: Describes *cherubim* facing one another but with eyes fixed upon *khaporet*.
 - b. Verse 17: Hints that the central branch of menorah is the menorah.
 - c. Fascinating to consider 7-branch menorah is one piece of gold.
5. When the furnishings are finished, the picture Betzalel has “painted”:
 - Ark containing God’s teaching.
 - The Light the emanates from His Word.
 - Table representing man’s struggle for His daily bread.
 - Teaching that man lives by the Word of God.
 - The menorah illuminates that Word.
 - Teaches that, with understanding, comes responsibility to spread that light to others.

6. 38, Verse 8: Laver was made exclusively from sheets of copper that women used as mirrors.
 - a. Tradition that Moses reluctant to use this because it promoted self-aggrandizement.
 - b. Yet, this promoted families continuing in spite of the slavery of Egypt.
 - c. Later the laver will serve to resolve marital issues by providing proof of innocence or guilt when woman is accused of adultery (Num. 5:17, 28).