

God promises that He will give His children a new heart of flesh, and place His Spirit inside of them so that they can obey Him:

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Those who have the Holy Spirit are able to abide with God, keep His commandments, and most significantly manifest His love to others. God’s people are able to function just like the Tabernacle or Temple was to originally house His presence. As Yeshua tells us,

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him **because He abides with you and will be in you**. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him” (John 14:16-21).

Our challenge is to recognize that we make up the Temple of God—something far greater than a structure built by the hands of humans. We have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who like that elderly grandparent, is available for counsel without imposing His will. The Lord is still looking for stirring hearts who willingly, not under force, desire to know Him and serve Him with all of their might. May we be blessed to seek Him with all of our hearts!

Haftarah Tetzaveh “God’s Glory”

Ezekiel 43:10-27

Contemplating the glory of the Lord from the pages of the Holy Scripture does not necessarily do justice to what the presence of His glory actually entails. Reading details about the candelabra, olive oil, sacred garments and accouterments for priests, or even the elaborate instructions about anointing the priests and consecrating the altar—still can leave a person somewhat empty without something more tangible to draw upon. No doubt, when we ponder the work to bring clear beaten olive oil into the sanctuary of God for a continually burning lamp of testimony, the visual image and symbolic illustration is stunning:

“You shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD; *it shall be* a perpetual statute throughout their generations for the sons of Israel” (Exodus 27:20-21).

In this same section of Exodus, after considering the various aspects of the priesthood, the description of the continual morning and evening sacrifices is given. It is punctuated by the statement that God will not only consecrate the place of meeting, but most importantly, consecrate the priests who will be ministering unto Him. The admonition is to continually maintain the burning lamp and provide a burnt offering. It is to ascend to the Lord in Heaven as He dwells among them:

“The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and there *shall be* one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with one lamb. The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering and the same drink offering as in the morning, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God” (Exodus 29:39-46).

When the Sages looked to the Tanakh for a complimentary passage to this week’s *parashah* (Exodus 27:20-30:10), invoking similar thoughts and images of God’s glory in the midst His people, the Prophet Ezekiel’s visions of a future Temple indwelt by the Holy One of Israel were chosen. In Ezekiel 43:10-27, he described the anticipated Temple that will extend the holiness of the glory of God (Ezekiel 43:12) to the entire mountaintop. Chosen Zadokites will minister unto Him (Ezekiel 43:19).¹⁶ While the details of the future Temple expand upon the original instructions given to Moses regarding the Holy Place, and are not exactly the same, it is hard to avoid the connections present between the two passages. Both include a consecration requiring seven days of sacrifices to the Lord:

“Thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you shall ordain them through seven days. Each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. For seven

¹⁶ The priests from the line of Zadok are noted because they are the priests that aligned themselves with King David and his chosen heir King Solomon, rather than Absalom or Adonijah when the succession struggles occurred (2 Samuel 15:24-29, 35, 17:15, 19:12, 1 Kings 1:8, 32).

days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it; then the altar shall be most holy, *and* whatever touches the altar shall be holy. Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and there *shall be* one-tenth of an *ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with one lamb. The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering and the same drink offering as in the morning, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there” (Exodus 29:35-42).

“You shall give to the Levitical priests who are from the offspring of Zadok, who draw near to Me to minister to Me,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘a young bull for a sin offering. You shall take some of its blood and put it on its four horns and on the four corners of the ledge and on the border round about; thus you shall cleanse it and make atonement for it. You shall also take the bull for the sin offering, and it *shall be* burned in the appointed place of the house, outside the sanctuary. On the second day you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a sin offering, and they shall cleanse the altar as they cleansed *it* with the bull. When you have finished cleansing *it*, you shall present a young bull without blemish and a ram without blemish from the flock. You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall throw salt on them, and they shall offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD. For seven days you shall prepare daily a goat for a sin offering; also a young bull and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be prepared. For seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it; so shall they consecrate it. When they have completed the days, it shall be that on the eighth day and onward, the priests shall offer your burnt offerings on the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you,’ declares the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 43:19-27).

In the Ezekiel passage, in addition to the sacrifice of cattle and sheep, there is also the sacrifice of goats. Perceiving this as an “alteration” of commandments originally given to Moses, there was some consternation among the Sages to the point of almost disregarding the Book of Ezekiel from the Tanakh.¹⁷ However after much debate, the Sages eventually concluded that Ezekiel’s Temple was actually going to be a third Temple built after the restoration of all Israel in the Messianic Age.

As we contemplate *Tetzaveh* this week, in conjunction with Ezekiel 43:10-27, the elements of consecrating the altar at the Holy Place where God’s glory resides, with a continually burning light and sacrifice being offered, is a motivating image. Imagining the procedures conducted in the courtyard of the Tabernacle during the wilderness sojourn, on the Temple Mount in either the First or Second Temples, or in the future Temple prophesied by Ezekiel, allows us to fathom God’s eternal

¹⁷ Cf. Sarna, “Haftarah for T’zavveh,” in *Etz Hayim*, 522.

holiness. Meditating upon these actions also reveals what He requires for His followers to properly appreciate their relationship with Him. God requires us to consider blood sacrifices which remind us that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). The continual sacrifices of animals over and over again shows us that **it is only the single sacrifice of Yeshua** to which we can turn for a permanent covering of our sins:

“For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself” (Hebrews 7:26-27).

How thankful are those of us who live today must be—recognizing the blood sacrifice of the Messiah Yeshua which accomplished atonement for our sin **once and for all** (Galatians 3:13)! Once again, we can picture this sacrifice—yet beyond this merciful act, we can also imagine the blessed resurrection that followed (Acts 1:22). We can even envision the Messiah seated at the right hand of the Father (Romans 8:34), interceding for us in Heaven.

While Yeshua the Messiah has accomplished a permanent atonement for human sin, during His Millennial reign as seen in Ezekiel, there will be some kind of animal sacrifices. In all likelihood, these animal sacrifices will serve as a memorial of His final sacrifice for us, being a reminder to those who will be born during this time of relative peace of what the Messiah endured for us. If you are confused, do note how *He will be there to explain these sacrifices*. Of course, when the New Heavens and New Earth finally do manifest (Revelation 21:1), there will be no future need for any kind of sacrifices. *A new form of existence will be present.*

What can the offering of animal sacrifices teach us? The Apostle Paul said some things about what someone can do, beyond simply imagining or picturing various sacrifices. He exhorted the Romans to present themselves to God as a living sacrifice. Individuals of high quality—just like animals offered before God—were to compose a “sacrifice” of service to God. Here, the concept of continually being a light to the world and offering one’s body as an acceptable sacrifice was encouraged:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).

In order to be a good sacrifice, we need to guard ourselves against the evil world system, and instead be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This can take place through prayer, worship, and a diligent and consistent study of the Scriptures—which will allow the good and acceptable will of our Father to be accomplished. If you are able to do this, then the glory of God will be evident in your life. Your sensitivity to His will for your life will be sought and followed. When you get to the

point of sifting your thoughts through His Word and His thoughts, then you will be far more apt to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as opposed to your flesh. This is a wonderful place in which to find yourself, because your actions will allow the Holy One to accomplish all the things He has created to be done through you!

God's glory will be evident, and in the end your life will be a pleasing sacrificial aroma to Him. **What a wonderful result to contemplate for choices made and actions taken!**

Haftarah Ki Tisa "Confronting Idolatry"

1 Kings 18:1-39 (A); 18:20-39 (S)

The dramatic incident of the golden calf in the wilderness dominates this week's Torah teaching (Exodus 30:11-34:35). Contemplating the great contrast between Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, personally inscribed upon two stone tablets by the finger of God, with the worship of an idol made with human hands, **is a vivid reminder of man's tendency to wander away from the path of righteousness.** Aaron's lack of patience provoked him to fashion an idol from the gold worn by the teeming mob, as they pressured him with a demand for something visible to worship.¹⁸ Rereading the incident in light of current events, one might wonder where *the silent majority against this* was to be found. Since the severe judgment enacted for the Israelites' sin only resulted in the death of three thousand,¹⁹ we should surely wonder what was happening with all of the other people in the camp.

Did they simply cower to the boisterous few? Did they become nominal participants, or simply observers of the revelry, somewhat like an obsequious horde relegated to stadium bleachers? Naturally, when the Sages pondered these events, the heroic episode of the Prophet Elijah confronting the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel was chosen for further reflection. After all, what set of circumstances in the history of Israel could better describe the repetitious pattern of a rebellious people, chronically succumbing to the desires of the flesh, in lieu of following the (obvious) commanded ways of the Holy One?

There is little doubt that the recalcitrant behavior of the Israelites around Mount Sinai, as Moses was receiving God's commandments, was clearly known by those who lived during the time of Elijah when King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled the Northern Kingdom. Clearly by this time in the history of Ancient Israel—no longer

¹⁸ Exodus 32:1-10.

¹⁹ Exodus 32:11-35.