

## **Building The Sanctuary** **That God Designed**

lesson on Parashah 19, Terumah  
by Oriyan/Kevin Phipps

For some of you, today's teaching is going to be familiar. It is a retelling of “Designed by God, Built by Man”, a teaching from two years ago. However, it is one of my favorites, and one I have put much more study into. Don't worry though, if you've heard it before, I've tweaked it a bit. Besides, repetition helps us to learn, and learning helps us to become better spiritual giants, better able to defeat the patriots of evil in this dark world.

“They are to make me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them.” **(Shemot/Exo.25:8)**

We are told in Timothy that all Scripture is God breathed and profitable for our physical and spiritual lives. This week we are told, through Israel, to build a sanctuary for God to dwell in. Then we find detailed instructions on the construction of the Tabernacle and its various utensils. So should we start clearing some land, gathering everything we can find that is blue, purple, and scarlet, and start melting everything gold in our house? Not exactly. Is this just an instruction for Israel in the wilderness, and sort of some interesting history, and a few allusions to Messiah, which has no real application to our lives? Not at all. We need these commands to help us care for and honor God's Tabernacle as it exists today.

“...or don't you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you...” **(1Corinthians 6:19)**

When you look in the mirror what do you see? When you look at others what kinds of things go through your mind? I think we tend to think of ourselves and others in two ways. Either we focus on imperfections, whether they be real or designed by our culture, or we turn to idolatry by unknowingly worshipping favorable attributes that we see.

“For I am telling every single one of you, through the grace that has been given to me, not to have exaggerated ideas about your own importance. Instead, develop a sober estimate of yourself based on the standard which God has given to each of you, namely, trust.”  
**(Romans 12:3)**

There is a middle ground between idolatry and loathing. It is the road of truth. Even humility is not hating oneself, but seeing oneself correctly as God sees. God created each of us, male and female, in His image. He knew us before we were born and destined each of us for greatness, if not here, at least in His Kingdom. He created each of us to be His tabernacle, His dwelling place. He doesn't just dwell in our midst, but His Spirit dwells within each of us. This is a high calling, so we better pay closer attention to our parashah. Put out your hand. Take a look, not at the hand itself, but the skin covering it. You are now looking at part of God's tabernacle.

“You clothed me with skin and flesh, you knit me together (fenced me in) with bones and sinews.” **(Iyov/Job 10:11)**

The fence for the courtyard protected the Tabernacle, and separated it from the rest of the camp of Israel. In the same way, our skin encloses our internal organs and protect them from bacteria and external injury. The area within the fence was holy, indicated by the lack of footwear by the Priests serving within. In the same way, our skin encloses a body, made by God and designed solely for His work, which is holy.

The altar was a place for sacrifice and offering. It was where people offered “korban”, which means “to draw near” to God. The life of a substitutionary animal was given through the shedding of its life-blood so that the offerer could live in union with God.

“I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer yourselves as a living sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please Him; it is the logical “temple worship” for you. In other words, do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the “olam hazeh” (this world). Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.”

**(Romans 12:1-2)**

The physical act performed at the altar was ugly and gruesome, but the purpose for it was something awesome and beautiful. This part of it was spiritual, and could not be seen with human eyes. Our brain is not real pretty, in fact outside the body it is just a pile of greyish jellylike mush. However, our mind is what has the capacity to behold great wonder and beauty. It is the part of us that is us. Hebrews call this aspect of our being “nephesh”. It encapsulates our spirit, soul, mind, heart, intellect, emotions, will, and many other aspects of our being. It is essentially life itself.

We are called to live in communion with God, but we cannot do this without a renewing of our nephesh. This requires sacrifice. God's Son provided the ultimate sacrifice for us by dying on a vertical altar as our perfect korban (sacrifice). Now we must in turn live as a living sacrifice upon the altar of our own mind where the battle for our spirit takes place every day. I see we have quite a few strong guys here today. Muscles and the ability to use them have been a trademark of masculinity since Man first beat on drums and beat his chest around a bonfire. However, those big muscles are useless without something that women have just as well as men. Bones. Remove an arm bone and the biggest bodybuilder cannot lift a feather. Our bones are amazing living organisms which provide the frame of our body and support our muscles and the rest of our weight and stress. They go through much abuse, even breaking at times, only to heal stronger than they were before. Did you know that one of the Hebrew words for bone, “qaneh”, is the same word for “branch”, which is used to describe the branches of the menorah? Well, now you do.

“I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who stay united with me, and I with them, are the ones who bear much fruit; because apart from me you can't do a thing.”

**(Yochanan/John 15:5)**

Yeshua is the middle branch, the “shammash” or servant candle. However, we are His branches spreading His light to the world. If you think that's cool, there's more to this. When you feel stressed where do you feel it the most? If someone begins to massage you here, you won't want them to stop. It is your neck. Well, guess what. The Hebrew root word for menorah comes from the root word “menowr”, which is a farming term. It is not what you may think from how it sounds though, it is a yoke. Where does a yoke rest on an ox? The neck.

“Do not let grace and truth leave you – bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and esteem in the sight of God and of people.

**(Mishlei/Proverbs 3:3-4)**

The menorah was the only furnishing in the temple to be solid gold. It was beaten into shape from a single piece of gold. Yeshua was also wounded and bruised for our sins. We too end up being beaten up by the world, but all the adversity we go through is meant to shape us into a vessel that God can use to put the oil of His Spirit into and shine His light into the darkest places of our world. The next time you get a pain in the neck from a stressful day, let it be a reminder that you along with Yeshua are the menorah of God's sanctuary.

When we look at someone's face, we see something which identifies them. God sees a table with bread on it. Smile. Now you have a pleasant countenance. In Hebrew I could say I like your “paneh”. This word means countenance, favor, presence, and face. It is also used to describe the table of shewbread, or “shulchan panim”. In Scripture tables were often used by kings to have fellowship with their loyal subject, which they favored. It was a great honor to sit at the table of a king for a meal. What greater honor is it to sit at the table of the King of Kings and dwell in His presence. It is said that the bread on the table was always fresh, changed out once a week, but still warm at the end of the week as it was when it was first put there. As we meet with God every day, and sit at His table, living in His presence, this ought to produce peace and joy in our heart that makes a warm, fresh countenance upon our face. In doing so, we reflect the joy and peace of Yeshua, the Bread of Life.

There are two furnishings in the tabernacle, not mentioned in this week's parashah. These would be the laver and the altar of incense. They are mentioned later in the context of the office of the Priests. This leads me to believe that these furnishings refer more to our actions as Priests serving God in His tabernacle, than to parts of the body. As the laver is used to cleanse the hands and feet, I think this shows us the importance of consecrating the work of our hands and feet to the service of God. The altar of incense was used for the morning and evening prayers, thus teaches us the importance of daily communion with our heavenly Father.

This brings us to a part of our tabernacle which may be more difficult for some of you to accept. Let's start with a verse.

“For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says Adonai (YHVH): “I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts...”  
**(Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 31:32)**

The Hebrew word which is translated “heart” here is “lev”, but it's location is previously described with the word, “qerev”, which means, “inner parts”. Rather than just referring to the heart, “inner parts” actually also refers to the bowels, which includes the womb and the loins. In the innermost part of the tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, which contained the ark of the covenant, which itself contained the tablets which contained the covenant God made with Israel through Moshe. This was the most important part of Israel. The covenant was so important it was what made Israel the people of God. It was also so important it had a sign, which was given to every male of Israel, upon their central innermost part. Why would it be in such a strange, hidden part of the body?

Just before giving the New Covenant, God declares Himself to be the husband of Israel. Even in the Brit Hadashah (New Covenant), the body of Believers in Yeshua is called the Bride. In a marriage covenant, a husband puts his “seed” in the “inner part” of His wife where it grows within her womb into new life, a child. The Hebrew word for seed is “zera”, which can also mean child or fruit.

“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self control. Nothing in Torah stands against such things.” **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

Torah goes in, love comes out. Incidentally, the Hebrew word for womb is “racham”, which is considered the center of love and compassion, rather than the heart. Given this imagery to describe God's covenant and the Holy of Holies, is it no wonder why HaSatan has perverted human sexuality as much as he has? The picture is meant to be beautiful, but treated with utmost respect.

We are truly a tabernacle for the living God. Our body and those of others ought not to be worshipped, but only the God who dwells within. At the same time, the tabernacle has been heralded as the most spectacular mobile structure ever made. With the gold, silver, white linen, blue, purple, and scarlet which adorned this house of God...it would have been quite the sight to see in its glory and beauty. We too possess the same glory and beauty as we learn to be a sanctuary for our God as well as a Priest serving God in that sanctuary. God made our body as a tabernacle in this life, and it will be a temple in the life to come with an eternal resurrected body even more spectacular than this one. Our job is to make the tabernacle God has given us into a sanctuary for Him. We do this by not desecrating it with poisons, and not using it for sinful activities, or our own desires. This takes living by the Torah planted within us, and serving our Great High Priest, Yeshua, who is with us at all times.