

**Vayakhel/Pekudei      And He Assembled/Accountings of      Heavenly Pictures****Torah:** Ex. 35:1-38:20; 38:21-40:38

(1) **35:34, 35:** *“He also gave him the gift of teaching, as well as to Oholiab, son of Ahisamac, of the tribe of Dan. He filled them with intelligence to execute all the works of sculpture and of art, to design and to embroider in blue and purple and crimson and to do every kind of work and design.*

“There was, and is, room for a considerable degree of creativity in how we do things, as long as we exercise both divine proportions and make everything fit into the overriding theme of the presence (redemption and holiness) which the ark was to represent.

(2) **36:19:** *“He made for the tent a covering of ram’s skins died red and an outer covering of tachash skins.”* The tent had four coverings for all kinds of weather and the tough outer covering was made of the skin of a kind of antelope animal (tachash), about which we are told nothing. It was not rainbow coloured and the making of the outer covering did not render it extinct. Linen, goat, ram and tachash – coverings one and three well died in colours of the sky, the other two were there to protect the tent from all kinds of weather. Is the presence of G-d in your heart and life weather proof or can you only seek Him when the weather is fair (or when it is foul)?

(3) **39:43:** *“Moses examined all the work and, behold, they had done the work just as the L-rd had commanded et Moses blessed them.”* Moses was the keeper of the blueprints (the symbolic proportions which represented the themes) and he was happy with their work. We are not given enough detail about how the work was performed to get a precise idea of what the tabernacle looked like, but we are told that it provided both beauty for the people to enjoy as they came to call upon the L-rd and enough ritual distance so that the presence would not cause anyone harm as He dwelt in their midst. Does your devotion (our devotion) contain enough beauty in the way we call upon the L-rd? Do we exercise enough respect, which is the enduring realization of who it is we are dealing with – El Shaddai (YHVH tse v’ot)

(4) **40:17:** *“The first day of the first month of the second year, the tabernacle was set up.”* (and it was the last time the people saw the tabernacle). G-d takes His time with us until we are ready and everything is set in place. He wants us to know that as long as He is kept at the centre of our lives in our wandering, then everything is fine in the long run. We need to live festival driven lives – celebrating the goodness of G-d and learning to rest in His presence (even if it is just on the porch or as a door keeper).

**Haftarah:** I Ki. 7:51-8:21

(5) **8:2:** *“All the men of Israel gathered together unto King Solomon in the month of Ethanim (Tishrei), during the festival (of Sukkoth).”* During the festival of Sukkoth where the Jewish people were to celebrate that they no longer wandered, they dedicated the permanent place for the tabernacle, on a hill at the centre of the old Garden – they were finally home (for good). We may be wandering through many generations in many locations, encountering an endless series of issues, but as long as we are journeying towards our Father’s Home in glory (which the tabernacle and the temple symbolized), we are not lost and we are right on schedule. How about you?

(6) **8:9:** *“In the Ark there were only the two tablets of stone which Moses placed in there on Horeb when the L-rd made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.”* His Word will always be our greatest treasure. The price of all the materials for the construction of the temple would roughly equal Canada’s annual GNP/GDP and yet the most important treasure in the temple was and will always be His Word, which never withers, but endures forever.

**Brit Chadashah:** Heb. 8:1-12

(7) **8:1,2:** *“The main point in that which has just been said is that we have such a High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the divine majesty in the heavens as a minister of the sanctuary and the real tabernacle which was set up by the L-rd and not by man.”* Symbols are important reminders of truth, but they are not the truth. The wonder of the tabernacle and the temple and of the rituals and sacrifices and songs – the sights and sounds and smells of worship, were always only packaging for the reality which our Messiah accomplished and which He is still accomplishing as His ministry in the true sanctuary/tabernacle continues until the day of His return.

**Shabbat Chodesh:** Ex. 12:1-20 (the blood, the judgment against the Egyptian gods, festival of unleavened bread so you both get out of Egypt and out of Egyptian control); Ezek. 45:16-46:18 (The prince shall be the priest – our Messiah is the Priest Prince)

**Psalm 61/45**

**Jewish Hero: Betsaleel and Oholiab**

**Chazak, Chazak, v’Nitchazek**

In this week’s Torah portion we see the people are finally ready to leave the mountain and head for the Promised Land because they will be accompanied on their journey by the presence of the L-rd and have agreed to walk according to the Word of the L-rd. They are going to be encountering any number of challenges along the way – some from the outside and some from the inside, but as long as the L-rd is at the centre and His Word remains their code of conduct/guide, they will make it intact and victorious.

This week, I want to talk a little about their journey and about ours, because we have the same destination, the same Word and the same Presence, even if we are separated by a few thousand years and more than a few thousand miles. Basically G-d delivered His people by defeating the religious oppression they were under and then He spent nearly two years teaching them how to be delivered from both the Egyptian system they had just left and the Canaanite system they were about to encounter. Finally, He wanted them to adopt His ways and His Word as their habitual, gut level response.

Let me take each of these and discuss them with you briefly this morning. Redemption, Deliverance and Maturity could be likened to the three parts of a journey. First you need to know where you are, next where you are going and finally how you are going to get there. Redemption tells you where you are in Him, deliverance tells you where you are going and maturity tells you how you are going to get there.

Redemption is the act whereby we become the property of G-d, lock, stock and barrel. It involves all the activity of G-d which results in our coming to faith – the long battle between the L-rd and the gods of this world until we respond to His call and apply the blood onto the doorposts of our hearts and lives. It is often a rude awakening and a shock when we personally understand who He is and what He has done and who we are and what we have done. It is the single most important paradigm shift we will ever make.

I can remember how exciting and scary it was to come to faith and it does not seem so long ago, but it was the most radical shift I ever made in a life full of radical shifts. I started attending several services every week and I can remember my father driving me to one, trying the whole time to talk me out of taking this thing so seriously, but I had a thirst and a drive to know G-d which has never left me or diminished during the forty odd years I have walked with the L-rd – and my spiritual birthday is coming up this month – I accepted the L-rd just before midnight on March the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1972.

When I think how lost and troubled I was because I could not make enough sense out of my life to answer all the questions in my heart, but I did not come to the L-rd because I was a weak person, unable to handle life, I came to the L-rd to find the ultimate purpose of life and I would settle for nothing less. Redemption helps us to see that it is not all about us, or about our dreams or fears (Jer. 9:23, 24 – wise, rich or strong versus goodness, righteousness and justice) and it lifts us above the turmoil and the challenges of life and helps us to see it for what it is – a pilgrimage from conception through the grave to our final resting place in His House.

We are roughly rousted out of Egypt and set on a journey that needs to remain our primary focus in all the passages (valleys, mountains, wildernesses and joys and sorrows) of a life that has been forever altered – or that has forever altered course.

In the beginning it is frequently chaotic as we take what we can and leave a lot behind and as we begin the process of sorting things out so that we know what kind of journey it is we are on and what kind of destination we are headed for – and what expectations we should have on the journey from point A, where we encountered the L-rd to Point B where we shall forever be with Him. This process or triage or sorting things out, I have called deliverance, mainly because we are changing cultures, changing attitudes and building newer habits as the echoes of Egypt dwindle and the sound of the Kingdom grows stronger.

In many ways it would be nice if this process of change were neat and not messy. I would have loved to have followed behind the children of Israel on their journey to the Holy Mountain to see what they threw away and what they kept. There was basically one guiding principle in this reorganization and I will call it Kingdom utility. We need to learn to ask ourselves how does all that we retain and all that we jettison serve to better our journey to our Father's House in glory.

This will not always be clear or cut and dried and there will be set backs and side tracks in a learning curve that will either turn us into dedicated pilgrims or cause us to walk away from pilgrimage (and become golden calf entrepreneurs forever trying to shipwreck, stall or infect our pilgrimage by violating the agenda).