



Shabbat Tetzaveh

February 27, 2010

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News

A Celebration of Purim

Purim is coming very soon, It will be on Sunday February 28. It is not a holy feast given by G-d to Moses but a feast instituted by the Jewish people to remember the story of Esther especially the salvation of the Jewish people from Haman. However, G-d approved this celebration by the fact that the *Ruach Hakodesh*—Holy Spirit—inspired the Jewish people to include the scroll of Esther in the Bible. How to make this celebration an event for your Jewish neighbors?

It is a little late if you have not yet prepared your celebration. Let's remember that Purim is a great party, it is a time of joy and carnival for the children and adults (Yes, the carnival of Rio in Brazil and in many others countries in February/March have a Jewish origin, but there it became completely pagan). Jewish child like to be clothed like Esther (girls) and Mordecai (boys). However, you have certainly noticed that all kind of costumes are allowed for Purim, even some "super-heros" like Superman or Spiderman. This because everyone is allowed to be what he is not, everything goes "topsy-turvy", the strong become weak, winners become losers, and everyone becomes someone else. Why? Just because reading the Scroll of Esther we discover that Esther did not want to reveal to the king Achashverosh that she was Jewish, thus she clothed herself like a non-Jewish girl. Because some Jews (Esther was not alone) decided to hide their Jewish identity, G-d decided to hide himself —G-d is absent in the Scroll of Esther— Even the miracle of Purim is hidden, it seems to be natural, it appears like the natural consequence of Esther behavior,

as if G-d was not there. However, everyone understood that G-d intervenes to save his people from a certain holocaust or Shoa scheduled by Haman, the Hitler of that time.

Thus what to do?

Print some leaflets and distribute them to every Jew in the neighborhood of your congregation.

Invite them for a reading of the *Megilat Esther*—Scroll of Esther— A scroll of Esther can be bought at any Jewish book shop. As this scroll is read, don't forget to make as much noise as possible every time Haman's name is mentioned.

Invite them to share a meal, called *se'udah* with your community and don't forget the small cookies shaped as ear (long and pointy) which are called *Oznei Haman* (Haman's ears).

Scholars in Israel

Several groups of pastors and scholars are in Israel at this moment. A group of 100 pastors from the North England Conference is visiting. I visited them upon arriving and I had the privilege to present to them a devotional about Israel.

A second group is in Israel, about 200 people from the various countries of the Inter-America Division. Lectures are given by scholars of the IAD universities, by leaders of General Conference Departments and the Biblical Research Institute. Exceptionally the five directors and assistant directors are in Israel with this group. I will have the privilege to present a paper on Friday morning, a report on Israel Shabbat morning and the vesper on *Motse-Shabbat* (end of Shabbat), this Sabbath evening will be a very special one, since it is the starting time of Purim.

Overview



Tetzaveh

Exodus 27:20-30:10

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the menorah in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the bigdei kehuna (priestly garments): A breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate, and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the Mishkan. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

Shabbat Zachor

This week is a special one for the Jewish people because they remember the death of Moses. According to the Jewish tradition, Moshe did on the 7th of Adar, which occurs on this week. It is Shabbat Zachor, Sabbath of remembrance. One of the attributes that made Moshe so special was his love for Israel. When the children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe said to G-d, **“Now, if you will just forgive their sin! But if you won’t, then, I beg you, blot me out of your book which you have written!”** (Ex 32:32). G-d forgave the people of Israel, but also listened to Moshe’s request. So while Moshe’s name appears in every other Parasha from the beginning of the Book of Exodus until the Book of Deuteronomy, it does not appear in this week’s Parasha, Tetzaveh. By Divine Providence, Parashat Tetzaveh is usually read in the week of the 7th of Adar—Yartzeit of Moshe Rabeinu. By not mentioning his name in Tetzaveh, the Torah alludes to his passing.

Spiritual Light to the World

Parashat Tetzaveh begins with the mitzvah of lighting the menorah each day in the Holy Temple. The purpose for lighting the menorah in the Temple was to bring spiritual light to the world.

In the Jewish home, it is a mitzvah to light candles each Friday night to usher in the holy day of Shabbat. The purpose of the Shabbat lights is to bring “Shalom Bayit”—“peace within the home.”

Yeshua said **“I am the Light of the World”** (John 8:12); In the words, **“I am the light of the world,”** Yeshua declared Himself the Messiah. The aged Simeon, in the temple where Yeshua was now teaching, had spoken of Him as **“a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”** (Luke 2:32). In these words he was applying to Him a prophecy familiar to all Israel. By the prophet Isaiah, the Ruach Hakodesh had declared, **“It is not enough that you are merely my servant to raise up the tribes of Ya’akov and restore the offspring of Israel. I will also make you a light to the nations, so my salvation can spread to the ends of the earth.”** (Isaiah 49:6). This prophecy was generally understood as spoken of the Messiah, and when Yeshua said, “I am the light of the world,” the people could not fail to recognize His claim to be the Promised One. (DA 465)

Yeshua said, **“You are the light of the world.”** (Mat. 5:14). G-d people has always received the vocation to be the light of the world. What is it to be the light of the world?

“It is to have G-d for your guide, to have the companionship of holy angels, and to reflect to others the light that shines upon you from above; but if you fail to exercise Christian courtesy, forbearance, and love in your families, G-d and holy angels are grieved away, and instead of being the light of the world, you are bodies of darkness.” (AUCR, Nov. 1, 1904, 8). That’s why Yeshua said also, **“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”** (Mat. 5:16).

Allusion to the Two Temples

In the first verse of the Parasha we find a hint to the two Temples. The numerical value of the words **“beaten”** (Katit), which the Torah uses to describe

the process of producing the oil for the Menorah, is 830 (20+400+10+400=830).

This alludes to the First Temple which stood 410 years and the Second Temple which lasted 420 years (totaling 830 years). The words, “the light burn continuously (Ner Tamid),” relates to Mashiach who is symbolized by the Menorah which burned continuously.

High Priest Breastpiece

This week’s Torah portion, Tetzaveh, describes the commandments regarding the types of clothing and “uniforms” that the kohanim (priests) and the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) would wear for their service in the Tabernacle. In addition to the “glory and splendor” (Exodus 28:2) of these beautiful vestments, the Talmud (Zevachim 88b) reveals that the High Priest’s wearing of his special clothes would somehow evoke God’s mercy.

The High Priest represented G-d’s people through his service in the Tabernacle. He wore 12 precious jewels on his breastplate, each symbolizing one of the 12 tribes (Exodus 28:21). One might describe the High Priest as a living embodiment of G-d’s people. And this living embodiment was constantly serving in the holy Tabernacle, which was God’s dwelling amidst the nation. The High Priest was the holiest and closest person to G-d and he was serving in the location most dear to God.

We have to understand that the High Priest of the Beth Hamikdash was a type of the eternal High Priest which is Yeshua. The books written by Rabbi Shaul for Jews called Letters to the Hebrews says “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 6:19-20) and also “but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Heb 7:24-25). Of the high priest of Israel we read, “And Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the L-RD continually. (Ex. 28:29). What a beautiful and expressive figure this is of the unchanging love

of Mashiach for His people! Our great High Priest, of whom Aaron was a type, bears His people upon His heart. . . . Mashiach as the great high priest, making a perfect atonement for sin, stands alone in divine majesty and glory. Other high priests were only types, and when He appeared, the need of their services vanished.

Bells on the bottom of High Priest’s Garments

The Torah states: “And it (the me’il, a robe worn by the High Priest) shall be on Aharon for officiating; and its sound (from bells along the bottom) shall be heard when he goes into the sanctuary before the Lord, and when he comes out, that he will not die” (Exodus 28:35).

The me’il was one of the eight garments of the High Priest. Whenever the High Priest would enter the Bait Hamikdash (the Temple in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount), his presence would be announced by the jingling of the bells on his garment. Rabbi Yochanan learned from this the practice of always knocking on the door of his house before entering. Rabbi Akiva advised his son, Rabbi Yehoshua, “Don’t enter your own house suddenly (that is, without knocking); all the more so, the house of your neighbor” (Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 112a). However these bells were asked by G-d because nobody would know what happens in the Holy of Holy place of the sanctuary where nobody except the High Priest could enter. Let’s remember what happened in the sanctuary.

Only once a year could the high priest enter into the most holy place, after the most careful and solemn preparation. No mortal eye but that of the High priest could look upon the sacred grandeur of that apartment, because it was the especial dwelling place of G-d’s visible glory. The high priest always entered it with trembling, while the people waited his return with solemn silence. Their earnest desires were to G-d for His blessing. Before the mercy seat G-d conversed with the high priest. If he remained an unusual time in the most holy, the people were often terrified, fearing that because of their sins or some sin of the priest, the glory of the Lord had slain him. But when the sound of the tinkling of the bells upon his garments was heard, they were greatly relieved. He then came forth and blessed the people. (SR 155).

MAKING PEACE

The Talmudic sage, Rabbi Meir, would lecture in the synagogue for the public each Friday night. There was one woman who always attended his lecture. One Friday night he spoke at great length. When she returned home it was late and the candles in her home had already gone out.

“Where were you all this time?” her husband demanded angrily when she returned home.

“I stayed to hear Rabbi Meir’s lecture.”

Her husband was furious; “You cannot come into the house until you spit in Rabbi Meir’s face!”

Naturally, she wouldn’t dream of doing something like this to the great sage Rabbi Meir. As a result, she stayed out that night and many nights thereafter. When her neighbors saw the predicament she was in, they had pity on her. “Let’s go to Rabbi Meir and tell him the story,” they suggested. She agreed.

In his Divine intuition, Rabbi Meir knew about the woman’s trouble. When they came to him he pretended that he had a problem with his eye. He asked the woman, “Do you know how to cure an eye ailment?”

“No, I don’t know how!” she replied.

“It’s simple. Just spit seven times in my eye and it will be cured!”

The woman did as Rabbi Meir suggested, thinking that she was doing this for Rabbi Meir’s benefit. Rabbi Meir then said to her, “Now go home and tell your husband: You told me to spit once and I spit seven times!”

When the woman and her friends left, Rabbi Meir’s disciples said to him, “How did you allow the honor of your great knowledge of Torah to be so degraded, by letting her spit at you? If you would have told us, we would have flogged her husband until he would take her back into the house!”

Rabbi Meir replied, “It is worth putting the Torah and my honor to shame for the sake of achieving “Shalom Bayit”—making peace between husband and wife!” “Bringing peace between husband and wife,” say our sages, “is in the category of mitzvot of which a person enjoys the

fruits in this world and the principal reward stays for the World-to-Come.”

SHABBAT REMINDER OF EDEN

A wealthy man bought very expensive material at the fair and gave it to a tailor to make a suit and coat for his son. When the tailor finished the pants, he brought it to the father who proudly gave it to his son. The boy tried on the new pants, then went out to play. Before long the boy came home crying. He wasn’t careful and, as a result, he dirtied and tore his pants. The same thing happened when the tailor brought the vest and jacket.

When the tailor finally brought the coat, the father called his son and said, “With the other garments you were negligent and damaged them. Please guard this garment for this coat is all that remains from the expensive cloth which I originally bought!”

The same is with Shabbat. When G-d created the world, everything was perfect. The Torah tells us that when He examined His creation on each of the six days, “G-d saw that it was good.” Adam and Eve who were created on the sixth day, were also perfect and they resided in Gan Eden—Paradise.

However, Adam and Eve sinned. Like the story with the boy, their action had such great negative impact that it tarnished the six days and everything created during those days. The Jewish tradition says that only the Shabbat was not affected by their sin.

Just like in the story where the father pleads with his son to “guard” the coat, so too, G-d tells us, “Guard the Shabbat for it is holy”. For Shabbat is the only day of the week which stayed in its pure original form and a reminder of Eden in our world.

EDITOR

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Haftara

Ezekiel 43:10 - 27

HAFTARAH: Because the parasha describes the sanctuary and its service, the text chosen for the Haftara is also about the sanctuary: "Now you, O mortal, describe the Temple to the House of Israel, and let them measure its design. But let them be ashamed of their iniquities: ." (Ezekiel 43:10).

The iniquities of this text refer to what Ezkiel has already said at the beginning of his book and specially the iniquities of Israel and their leaders in the chapter 8 of this book He continues saying. "When they are ashamed of all they have done, make known to them the plan of the Temple and its layout, its exits and entrances — its entire plan, and all the laws and instructions pertaining to its entire plan. Write it down before their eyes, that they may faithfully follow its entire plan and all its laws." (Ezekiel 43:11). Then he gives some instructions for the altar.

I quote here Dr Knight who has written a book about Ezekiel and published by the Pacific Press Publishing House in 1997, he affirms in pages 221, 222 that:

The glory of the L-rd is now present in His house. Now that he is there, it is more than appropriate to worship Him by means of sacrifices, which brings Ezekiel to his description of the altar and its dedication.

The altar is built in three stages on a wide base. It is ten cubits high (43:13,14). In modern measurements, this is about seventeen feet, or five meters, high. Its top stage called the hearth in the text because it is where the fires were to be lighted, was twelve cubits square (about twenty-and-a-half feet or just over six meters). This impressive structure was built to essentially the same dimensions as the altar of the temple built by Solomon (2 Chron. 4:1) As it is so high it was reached by means of steps on its east side (Ezekiel 43:17). As the priest mounted the steps, he would be facing the doors of the temple within which was the glory of God.

Besorat Yeshua

Mark 15:16-27

PARASHA: Moses continues to install the sanctuary and the priesthood of Aaron. "Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests. Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor. Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. (Exodus 28:1-3)

Every element of the sanctuary has to be applied to the Messiah, according the Bible, the Messiah is king as "Son of David" (Mat.1:1) but he is also priest, not according to the Leviticus and Aaronic order but according to Melchizedek "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4)

BESORAH: Yeshua is going to the Golgotha in the hands of the Roman solders, . They don't understand who is this man. Laughing at him they mocked him "They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him." (Mark 15:17-20).

BESORAH: "And they crucified him." (Mark 15:24). It is important to notice that it is not the Jewish people who crucified Yeshua, but the Romans, the crucifixion has never been a Jewish way to put to death murders. "They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left." (Mark 15:27) it is exactly what the prophecy says when Isaiah wrote: He was assigned a grave with the wicked... and was numbered with the transgressors. (Is. 53:9, 12)

