

Opening Illustration:

Had the Grandkids over this past Friday/Saturday, and while playing a Dice Game the topic of “Life is Not Fair” came up as our Grandson was winning and the Granddaughter was losing, and upset because of it, at which time he explained to his sister that “Life is Not Fair”.

I asked my Grandson who told him this, that “Life is Not Fair”, and he explained his mom and dad, going in greater detail that recently he had come home with a Toy from school one day, and his sister did not, at which there was a melt-down, at which point it was explained to the two kids that sometimes you just have to accept that “Life is Not Fair”.

Understanding the context of the comment, I proceeded to explain that with God, this very common statement “IS NOT TRUE. I proceeded by sharing with them a couple of Bible references, from God’s Word, that explained that God is a Just God:

Psalm 9:8

And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with **equity** (the quality of being fair and impartial).

Ezekiel 33:20

"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

1 Peter 4:17

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Jeremiah 17:10

"I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Matthew 5:45

For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

James 1:2-4

²Count it all joy, my brothers,^[a] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

John 16:33

³³I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Ecclesiastes 7:14-18

¹⁴In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him . . . ¹⁸It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.

Romans 8:28

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

Deuteronomy 28

Blessings for Obedience

“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ²And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God . . .

Curses for Disobedience

¹⁵“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

Psalm 73:24-27

²⁴You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. ²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength^[a] of my heart and my portion forever.

Immediately both Grandkids began to cry, not a response I was expecting from them. I asked them why they were crying, and they told me that they could not believe me because that was what their parents had told them. I proceeded to explain the above passages and they began to change their narrative about “Life Not Being Fair”. They began to realize that once they put God back into the equation of “LIFE” that God truly was Fair, but that it took them looking at things differently. Instead of “Wants” based, they began to look at “Needs” based, and like the Israelites, regardless of their continual grumbling and complaining, God daily met their shelter needs, food needs, water needs, and clothing needs.

Matthew 6:25-34

Do Not Be Anxious

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?^[a] ²⁸And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious,

saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

With that, I left them with this one final concept, what do they have to do to earn the roof over their head, the food at their table, the bed they sleep in, the clothes they wear, at which they said nothing. I then explained to them that is how God takes care of His people if they choose to keep them in the equation of their life, which changes our worldly view from “Life is Not Fair” to “God is Good all of the Time”.

Week 19 - TERUMAH (Offering)
Exodus 25:1–27:19; 1 Kings 5:26–6:13; Hebrews 9:1–28

God has genuine concern for justice and the well-being of the individual.

FOLLOWING IS A REVIEW OF ONE OF THE KEY COMMANDS IN LAST WEEKS READING:

Exodus 23:13-17

¹³“Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips. ¹⁴“Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. ¹⁵ You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. ¹⁶ You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. ¹⁷ **Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God.**

Remember the Appointed Times

As well, the three pilgrimage festivals are mentioned as a time when all are to appear before the Lord: Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles).

(Messianic Bible - Bibles For Israel)

Let's Remember what God told the People to do before they Exited Egypt, which we are reminded to do prior to Christ's 2nd Coming:

I Will Provide the Way Out and All the Way Into the Promise Land

Exodus 11:2 - **Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”**

Know the Times

Exodus 12:1-2 - The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, **“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.**

It is here that we must recognize, just like we did at the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, that the next Appointed Time that God asked His people to write down, before they were to leave Egypt, in addition to the Passover, was the “Feast of Weeks”, or as you may know it, “Pentecost”, fifty days following “Passover”, and more specifically “The Feast of First Fruits”, would not only be the Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (one of the soul purposes of the Exodus), but on that same day nearly 1,500 years later, in fulfillment of God’s Appointed Time, when God would reveal another step in the Redemption of Mankind, Jesus pours out the Promised “Holy Spirit” to equip and empower all Followers of God to walk out this Life as God has intended us, that all man might see God, that none should Perish. It would be with this second fulfillment of God’s Appointed Times, that sets up God’s Final Appointed Time, in a two-tear fulfillment, and the Third and Final step in the Redemption of Mankind, The Return of the Messiah, His Millennial Reign on Earth, and Final Judgement.

Week 19 - TERUMAH (Offering)
Exodus 25:1–27:19; 1 Kings 5:26–6:13; Hebrews 9:1–28

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering [terumah]. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.’” Exodus 25:1–2

Last week in Reading “Laws” (Mishpatim), God gave to the Israelites about 53 mitzvot (laws) out of the 613 commandments. These laws included the treatment of parents, slaves, and foreigners, as well as other people’s property.

The title of this week’s Torah reading, **Terumah (תְּרוּמָה)**, is taken from a Hebrew word meaning “offering, gift, or contribution”. **In this Reading, the Lord commands Moses to take up a free will offering from the people of Israel in order to build a sanctuary in the wilderness.**

This sanctuary, called the **Mishkan (Tabernacle)**, was meant to be a visible reminder for the people of God’s holy Presence that dwelt among them.

The offerings that the people were asked to bring included precious metals and stones, fine linens, animal skins, wood, oil for the lamps, and fragrant spices for the incense.

The Lord instructed Moses to take an offering only from those who gave “willingly and from their heart.”

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

Because of our sinful nature, we tend to be selfish and seek for what we can receive; but the Bible tells us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

The truth of the matter is that when we give, especially toward the work of the Lord, we receive back so much more than what we have given.

(Messianic Bible | Bibles For Israel)

Exodus 25:1-27:19

Exodus 25:1-3

Contributions for the Sanctuary

25 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. ³And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze,

Gold: Gold (25:3)

The world was not considered worthy to make use of gold. So why was it created? For the Mishkan (the Tabernacle).

(Midrash Rabbah)

Exodus 25:4-7

⁴blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, ⁵tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, ⁶oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breast piece.

materials: Gold, silver, and copper... (25:3-7)

The materials donated for the Mishkan correspond to the components of the human being.

"Gold" is the soul; "silver," the body; "copper," the voice; "blue," the veins; "purple," the flesh; "red," the blood; "flax," the intestines; "goat hair," the hair; "ram skins dyed red," the skin of the face; "tachash skins," the scalp; "shittim wood," the bones; "oil for lighting," the eyes; "spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense," the nose, mouth and palate; "shoham stones and gemstones for setting," the kidneys and the heart.

Rabbi Shmuel said: The materials donated for the Mishkan correspond to the heavens.

"Gold" is the sun; "silver," the moon; "copper," the western horizon at sunset; "blue," the sky; "purple," the clouds; "red," the rainbow; "flax," the seraphim; "goat," the constellation of capricorn; "ram skins dyed red," thunder; "tachash skins," lightening; "shittim wood," shooting stars; "oil for lighting," the seven planets; "spices for the anointing oil and for the incense," dew and rain; "shoham stones and gemstones for setting"--hail and snow. Said G-d: "My dwelling is in the heavens; if you make Me a Sanctuary on earth, I shall dwell in it."

(Midrash HaGadol)

Exodus 25:8

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

dwelling: They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amidst them (25:8)

This is what man is all about; this is the purpose of his creation and of the creation of all the worlds, higher and lower--that there be made for G-d a dwelling in the lower realms.

(Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

them: They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amidst them (25:8)

The verse does not say, "and I will dwell within it," but "and I will dwell within them"--within each and every one of them.

(Shelah)

Acts 17:23-25

²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

I shall give: They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amidst them (25:8)

There was once a king who had an only daughter, and one of the kings came and married her. When her husband wished to return to his country, her father said to him: "My daughter, whose hand I have given you, is my only child; I cannot part with her. Neither can I say to you, 'Do not take her,' for she is your wife. This one favor, however, I ask of you: wherever you go to live, prepare a chamber for me that I may dwell with you, for I cannot leave my daughter."

In the same way, G-d said to Israel: "I have given you the Torah. I cannot part with her, and I also cannot tell you not to take her. But this I request of you: wherever you go, make for Me a house wherein I may dwell."

(Midrash Rabbah)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

¹⁶ Do you not know that **you are God's temple** and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ *If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him (good suicide passage to discourage it). For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

Idolatry is Self-Serving. (our body's are created to be self-serving – ex. “**surviving**”) the first thing that God lays out is that He wants us to know is that the tabernacle is not meant to just be a way to figure out how to worship that gives you satisfaction, but for God, to satisfy God.

Exodus 25:9

⁹ Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

Building the Sanctuary

“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” (Exodus 25:8–9)

The Israelites were to make a Sanctuary for God's Presence, as well as all of its furnishings. They were not to be made according to any design they imagined, but only according to God's specific blueprint, which God showed Moses on the mountain.

“And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.” **Exodus 25:40**

This wilderness Sanctuary was a copy of the actual Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven. **Revelation 15:5**

(Messianic Bible / Bibles For Israel)

Exodus 25:10

The Ark of the Covenant

¹⁰ “They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits^[b] and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height.

2.5 cubits: They shall make the Ark... two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height (25:10)

The measurements of the Ark were all in fractions, indicating that to become a vessel for Torah, a person must first "break" his ego.

(Rabbi Natan Adler)

The measurements of the Ark were all in halves, indicating that no matter how much one studies Torah, one never masters its whole; "Longer than the land is its measure, and broader than the sea" (Job 11:9).

(Pardes Yosef)

Exodus 25:11

¹¹ You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside shall you overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it.

within and without: And you shall overlay [the Ark] with pure gold, inside and outside (25:11)

Any Torah scholar whose interior is not like his exterior is no Torah scholar.

(Talmud, Yoma 72b)

Exodus 25:12-16

¹² You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ¹³ You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. ¹⁵ The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. ¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

not be removed: The poles shall be in the rings of the Ark; they shall not be removed (25:15)

This particular law applies only to the Ark, and not to any of the other vessels of the Mishkan.

The Ark, which served as the depository of the Torah, was the most secluded of the Mishkan's vessels, expressing the ideal that the Torah scholar (who serves as an "Ark" for the Torah) must remove himself from all worldly endeavors. At the same time, however, he must be in a constant state of "portability"--even more so than the other "vessels."

If there is a soul thirsting for the word of G-d in the ends of earth, the Torah scholar must be prepared to leave his inner sanctum to transport the Torah to that place. So even when he sits in his "Holy of Holies," he must have his "carrying poles" inserted in his "rings"--always at the ready to venture out at a moment's notice, constantly aware of his responsibilities toward the world outside.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Exodus 25:17-22

¹⁷“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ¹⁸And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. ²⁰The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. ²¹And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ²²There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

The Golden Cherubim Over the Mercy Seat

Upon the Ark's cover and over the mercy seat were placed two golden cherubim. **From above the cover and between these two cherubim God spoke with Moses.**

Other Scriptures speak of this as God's throne. (*2 Samuel 6:2; Isaiah 37:16*)

When King Hezekiah prayed, he addressed YHVH as the One enthroned above the cherubim (referring to the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant):

“O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.” **Isaiah 37:16**

We may notice that the “law” formed the foundation of the Ark, but communication with God came forth from the mercy seat.

Our relationship with God is always filtered through His mercy.

But what exactly is the mercy seat? In Hebrew it is called the **kapporet** (כַּפֹּרֶת), from the word **kapparah**, which means “**atonement**”. The root of this term is **kaphar**, meaning to cover.

The mercy seat was a golden cover to the Ark of the Covenant, but it represented our atonement that God gives us through His mercy.

What are **cherubim** (כְּרֻבִים)?

Although popular modern folklore represents cherubim as chubby naked babies who have small wings with which to fly, **the Bible describes them differently.**

They first appear in Genesis as mighty angelic beings with flaming swords. They guarded the entrance of the Garden of Eden and the way to the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve had been banished. (*Genesis 3:24*)

Cherubim are winged angelic beings who attend to God. The prophet Ezekiel described the images of cherubim that he saw in his visions (Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10) as having four faces, four wings, and the hands of a man. He described the sound of their wings as being like the sound of the Almighty when He speaks.

(Messianic Bible | Bibles For Israel)

The Next time we See the Ark of the Covenant is at Jesus’ Return, during the Feast of Atonement, as read in:

Revelation 11:19

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the **ark of his covenant** was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings,^[a] peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Exodus 25:23-24

The Table for Bread

²³“You shall make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ²⁴You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it.

crown: Make for it a rim of gold round about (25:24)

There were three crowns: that of the Altar, that of the Ark, and that of the Table. The one of the **Altar** (representing the priesthood), Aaron deserved and he received it. The one of the **Table** (representing the wealth of royalty), David deserved and received. The one of the **Ark** (representing the Torah) is still available, and whosoever wants to take it, may come and take it.

(Talmud, Yoma 72b)

Exodus 25:25-30

²⁵And you shall make a rim around it a handbreadth^[d] wide, and a molding of gold around the rim. ²⁶And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ²⁷Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ²⁸You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. ²⁹And you shall

make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to **pour drink offerings**; you shall make them of pure gold.³⁰ And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly.

The Sacrificial Offering System

Two offerings restored communion with God.

- Sin – for offenses against God through ignorance (There is no offering for sins committed intentionally (willful wrongdoing). This type of sin requires repentance and a change of the attitudes that made it possible for the transgressor to flout God’s will - Hebrews 10:26. Jesus our high priest made the only permanent sin offering for mankind.
- Trespass – for offenses against others. Restitution has to be made.

Five offerings were taken in communion with God.

- Burnt – This is the sacrifice of devotion or service and was performed twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening.
- Peace – This is the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise and the offering could be brought anytime.
- Meat – Although this offering is called the meat offering it is actually a grain offering and consists of partaking of bread, usually unleavened. It was brought in conjunction with burnt and peace offerings.
- **Drink** – It concerns the pouring out of wine as an offering. It was brought in conjunction with burnt and peace offerings.
- Incense – This is the sacrifice of prayer and was performed twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Exodus 25:31-33

The Golden Lampstand

³¹“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. ³²And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; ³³three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ³⁴And on the lampstand itself there shall be four cups made like almond blossoms, with their calyxes and flowers.

Three decorated goblets in each branch (25:33)

Another interesting feature of Maimonides' illustration (see previous citation) is that the "goblets" or "cups" that were part of the Menorah's design are shown upside down. Apparently, Maimonides was the recipient of a tradition, or was privy to a nowadays unknown Midrash, that this was how the goblets were formed in the Menorah.

The significance of the Menorah's upside-down goblets can be understood in light of another "inverted" feature of the Sanctuary, when it attained its permanent form as the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. "When a person builds a house," says the Midrash, "he makes the windows narrow on the outside and wider on the inside, so that the light from the outside should illuminate the interior. But when King Solomon built the Holy Temple he made the windows narrow within and wide without (as per I Kings 6:4), so that its light should emanate to the outside and illuminate the world." **As the Holy Temple was not a recipient of light but a disseminator of light, its windows were turned inside out.**

By the same token, a goblet can serve as a receptacle of drink or as a dispenser of drink. The Sanctuary being the source of blessing and nurture for the entire world, the goblets depicted within it were shown in a dispensing, rather than receiving, mode.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Likkutei Sichot vol. 21)

God gave Moses specific instructions on how to make the seven-branched golden lampstand. The lampstand with its seven lamps burning is called “**Eternal Light**”. The original lampstand was probably five feet tall by three and one half feet wide and represented a **tree that was on fire but not consumed** (A lighted Christmas tree is of pagan origin but carries the same idea. It is a man-made tradition, was never ordered by God and serves as a **counterfeit** designed to keep people from the truth.). Do you remember Moses’ encounter with God at the burning bush (tree).

*The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” **Exodus 3:2-5***

As with Moses’ burning bush, the seven-branched golden lampstand serves as an indication of God’s presence.

From the Scriptures we know that the seven-branched golden lampstand is the representation of an **almond** tree with its calyx, bud and flowers. And when an almond tree is in bloom with its white and pink blossoms it has the appearance of being on fire.

There are several other allusions that can be drawn from an almond tree that tie into the Scriptures. It is the **first** tree to bloom in Israel. The almond itself has the appearance of an eye and is used this way in Jeremiah 1:11-12. “And the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘What do you see, Jeremiah?’ And I said, ‘I see a **rod of an almond tree**.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for **I AM watching** over My word to perform it.’”

The almond tree is also known as the **watching** tree in Israel because the Hebrew word for almond is shaqad, meaning to be alert. And since the seven-branched golden lampstand in the Temple is an almond tree on fire you might say it is lighted to help God see. *And from the throne proceed flashes of*

lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Revelation 4:5) The seven lights are the seven spirits of God and when they are taken together as a whole represent the Holy Spirit. The number seven is the number of God and simply represents His fullness or completeness. So you might say that the Holy Spirit helps God see what is going on.

This ability to see is born out in another passage of Scripture in the book of Revelation. *And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.* (Revelation 5:6) Here the Holy Spirit is equated to having seven eyes.

Exodus 25:35-37

³⁵ and a calyx of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches going out from the lampstand. ³⁶ Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it a single piece of hammered work of pure gold. ³⁷ You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it.

The book of Revelation also brings the concepts of fire and eyes together when it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. *And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems.*” (Revelation 19:11-12)

So it is the Holy Spirit that gives God the ability to see and **judge**. And when we, as Christians, stand before the judgment seat of Christ our works will be judged through the Holy Spirit as well. For it is written: *Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.* (1 Corinthians 3:13)

Most people think the Holy Spirit is in heaven but from the book of Revelation it is clearly shown that the Holy Spirit revealed through the seven burning lamps rests upon the seven-branched golden lampstand. And that lampstand is the Church.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” Revelation 1:12-20

Although there are seven churches listed (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.) and each appears distinct from one another, together they represent the Church as a whole. This is born out by the fact that despite its seven branches, **God commanded the entire lampstand to be made out of one piece** of beaten gold. And being made of gold, the symbol for faith (*So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (1 Peter 1:7)), the Church exists because of its faith.

Exodus 26:1-6

³⁸ Its tongs and their trays shall be of pure gold. ³⁹ It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent of pure gold.

⁴⁰ **And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.**

The Tabernacle

26 “Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns; you shall make them with cherubim skillfully worked into them. ² The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits,^[1] and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains shall be the same size. ³ Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. ⁴ And you shall make loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set. Likewise you shall make loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. ⁵ Fifty loops you shall make on the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is in the second set; the loops shall be opposite one another. ⁶ And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to the other with the clasps, so that the tabernacle may be a single whole.

two "groupings": Make the Mishkan [covering] ten tapestries... and you shall make fifty clasps of gold (26:1-9)

The ten multi-colored tapestries, in two groups of five each, represent the Ten Commandments (engraved on two tablets) . . . The fifty clasps represent the fifty days from the Exodus to the Giving of the Torah.

(Midrash HaGadol)

Exodus 26:7-35

⁷ “You shall also make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make. ⁸ The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains shall be the same size. ⁹ You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain you shall double over at the front of the tent. ¹⁰ You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in the second set.

¹¹ “You shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be a single whole. ¹² And the part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. ¹³ And the extra that remains in the length of the curtains, the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, shall hang

over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that side, to cover it. ¹⁴ And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins^[a] and a covering of goatskins on top.

¹⁵ “You shall make upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ¹⁶ Ten cubits shall be the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. ¹⁷ There shall be two tenons in each frame, for fitting together. So shall you do for all the frames of the tabernacle. ¹⁸ You shall make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side; ¹⁹ and forty bases of silver you shall make under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under the next frame for its two tenons; ²⁰ and for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side twenty frames, ²¹ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame, and two bases under the next frame. ²² And for the rear of the tabernacle westward you shall make six frames. ²³ And you shall make two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear; ²⁴ they shall be separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring. Thus shall it be with both of them; they shall form the two corners. ²⁵ And there shall be eight frames, with their bases of silver, sixteen bases; two bases under one frame, and two bases under another frame.

²⁶ “You shall make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, ²⁷ and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ²⁸ The middle bar, halfway up the frames, shall run from end to end. ²⁹ You shall overlay the frames with gold and shall make their rings of gold for holders for the bars, and you shall overlay the bars with gold. ³⁰ Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain.

³¹ “And you shall make a **veil (ex. the change / transition from mind to heart)** of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. ³² And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. ³³ And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. ³⁴ You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. ³⁵ And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side.

The Holy of Holies

“The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.” **Exodus 26:33**

Images of the cherubim also make an appearance in the Holy of Holies, which was to be separated from the rest of the Sanctuary by a thick, heavy veil or drape.

The Holy of Holies was the most sacred and innermost portion of the Sanctuary built by Moses, as well as the ancient Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Only the High Priest could enter into this most Holy place, and even then he could only enter once a year on **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement).

*“Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance.” **Hebrews 9:6–7***

Before entering the Most Holy Place, the Cohen HaGadol would have to wash himself thoroughly and put on special clean clothing, designated and cleaned for this one event.

Once inside, he would burn incense so that the smoke would cover his eyes and form a barrier to seeing God directly.

Then he would sprinkle the blood of a sacrificial animal on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the sins of his people as well as his own personal sins.

Why was there a veil and such elaborate precautions undertaken by the High Priest before entering the Holy of Holies? **It is because God's eyes are too pure to look upon sin. (Habakkuk 1:13)**

Habakkuk 1:13

*You who are of purer eyes than to see evil
and cannot look at wrong,*

This emphasizes that we cannot take God's holiness lightly, nor carelessly enter into His Presence.

It is highly significant, therefore, that when the Messiah died on the Roman execution stake, the veil tore in two.

“When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom” **Matthew 27:50–51.**

No man tore this veil in two; it was torn as a result of a supernatural act of God—a reflection of a Jewish mourning custom. When a person grieves for a loved one who has died, the garment of the mourner would be torn from top to bottom.

It is in this way that our Heavenly Father publicly displayed His deep grief over the death of Jesus.

This amazing occurrence signified our free access to the very presence of God through Jesus' atoning sacrifice.

Because of Jesus' death on the execution stake, man is no longer forced to be separated from God but can come boldly to the Throne of Grace at any time to receive God's grace, help, and mercy through Jesus.

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.” **Hebrews 4:16**

(Messianic Bible | Bibles For Israel)

Exodus 26:36-27:1-2

³⁶“You shall make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. ³⁷And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold. Their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them.

The Bronze Altar

27 “You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits^[b] long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ²And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze.

copper: And you shall make an Altar... and you shall overlay it with copper (27:1-2)

Why copper? Just like copper tarnishes and then can be scrubbed clean, so the people of Israel, although they sin, they repent and are forgiven.

(Midrash HaGadol)

Exodus 27:3-19

³You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze. ⁴You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. ⁵And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar. ⁶And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. ⁷And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. ⁸You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

The Court of the Tabernacle

⁹“You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court shall have hangings of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side. ¹⁰Its twenty pillars and their twenty bases shall be of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹¹And likewise for its length on the north side there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, its pillars twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹²And for the breadth of the court on the west side there shall be hangings for fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases. ¹³The breadth of the court on the front to the east shall be fifty cubits. ¹⁴The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. ¹⁵On the other side the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. ¹⁶For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. It shall have four pillars and with them four bases. ¹⁷All the pillars around the court shall be filleted with silver. Their hooks shall be of silver, and their bases of bronze. ¹⁸The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height five cubits, with hangings of fine twined linen and bases of bronze. ¹⁹All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use, and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.

pegs: All [the Mishkan's] pegs, and all the pegs of the enclosure, shall be of copper (27:19)

These "pegs" served to hold down the coverings of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) and the walls of the Enclosure so that they should not lift in the wind. I am not sure if they were stakes driven into the ground, or if they were just weights tied to and hung upon the fabrics to hold them down.

The deeper significance of Rashi's uncertainty is as follows: If the stakes were driven into the ground, then the earthen floor of the Mishkan formed an integral part of its structure.

(The Chassidic Masters)

Why Are We Here?

This, the mother of all questions, is addressed in turn by the various streams of Torah thought, each after its own style.

“I was created to serve my Creator.”

“the purpose of life as the refinement of one's character traits.”

“in order that His creations should know Him.”

“G-d is the essence of good, and the nature of good is to bestow goodness. But goodness cannot be bestowed when there is no one to receive it. To this end, G-d created our world -- so that there should be recipients of His goodness.”

... these reasons ... are but the various faces of a singular divine desire for creation, and thus, that we *“Make a home for G-d in the material world.”*

A Home For G-d

What does it mean to make our world a home for G-d?

A basic tenet of our faith is that *“the entire world is filled with His presence”* and *“there is no place void of Him.”* So it's not that we have to bring G-d into the material world -- He is already there. But G-d can be in the world without being at home in it.

Being “at home” means being in a place that is receptive to your presence, a place devoted to serving your needs and desires. It means being in a place where you are your true, private self, as opposed to the public self you assume in other environments . . .

The only thing wrong with all this selfishness is that it blurs the truth of what lies behind it: the truth that creation is not an end in itself, but a product of and vehicle for its Creator. And this selfishness is not an incidental or secondary characteristic of our world, but its most basic feature. So to make our world a “home” for G-d we must transform its very nature. We must recast the very foundations of its identity from a self-oriented entity into something that exists for a purpose that is greater than itself.

Every time we take a material object or resource and enlist it in the service of G-d, we are effecting such a transformation. When . . . we take a dollar bill and give it to charity, when we employ our minds to study a chapter of Torah -- we are effecting such a transformation. In its initial state, . . . a dollar in pocket says, “Greed is good”; in the charity box it says, “The purpose of life is not to receive, but to give.” The human brain says, “Enrich thyself”; the brain studying Torah says, “Know thy G-d.”

The Frontier of Self

There are two basic steps to the endeavor of making our world a home for G-d. The first step involves priming the material resource as a “vessel for G-dliness”: . . . donating the money to charity, scheduling time for Torah study. The second step is the actual employment of these “vessels” to serve the divine will: . . . using the donated money to feed the hungry, studying Torah, etc.

At first glance, it would seem that the second step is the more significant one, while the first step is merely an enabler of the second, a means to its end. But the Torah’s account of the first home for G-d built in our world places the greater emphasis on the construction of the “home,” rather than its actual employment as a divine dwelling.

A sizable portion of the book of Exodus is devoted to the construction of the Sanctuary built by the children of Israel in the desert. The Torah, which is usually so sparing with words that many of its laws are contained within a single word or letter, is uncharacteristically elaborate. The fifteen materials used in the Sanctuary’s construction are listed no less than three times; the components and furnishings of the Sanctuary are listed eight times; and every minute detail of the Sanctuary’s construction, down to the dimensions of every wall-panel and pillar and the colors in every tapestry, is spelled out not once, but twice -- in the account of G-d’s instructions to Moses, and again in the account of the Sanctuary’s construction.

All in all, thirteen chapters are devoted to describing how certain physical materials were fashioned into an edifice dedicated to the service of G-d and the training of the *Kohanim* (priests) who were to officiate there. (In contrast, the Torah devotes one chapter to its account of the creation of the universe, three chapters to its description of the revelation at Mount Sinai, and eleven chapters to the story of the Exodus).

The Sanctuary is the model and prototype for all subsequent homes for G-d constructed on physical earth. So the overwhelming emphasis on its “construction” stage (as opposed to the “implementation” stage) implies that in our lives, too, there is something very special about forging our personal resources into things that have the potential to serve G-d. Making ourselves “vessels” for G-dliness is, in a certain sense, a greater feat than actually bringing G-dliness into our lives.

For this is where the true point of transformation lies -- the transformation from a self-oriented object to a thing committed to something greater than itself. If G-d had merely desired a hospitable environment, He need not have bothered with a material world; a spiritual world could just as easily have been enlisted to serve Him . . . This transformation and redefinition occurs in the first stage, when something material is forged into an instrument of the divine. The second stage is only a matter of actualizing an already established potential, of putting a thing to its now natural use.

Making Vessels

You meet a person who has yet to invite G-d into his or her life. A person whose endeavors and accomplishments -- no matter how successful and laudable -- have yet to transcend the self and self-oriented goals.

You wish to expand her horizons -- to show him a life beyond the strictures of self. You wish to put on *tefillin* with him, to share with her the divine wisdom of Torah.

But he’s not ready yet. You know that the concept of serving G-d is still alien to a life trained and conditioned to view everything through the lens of self. You know that before you can introduce her to the world of Torah and mitzvot, you must first make her receptive to G-dliness, receptive to a life of intimacy with the divine.

So when you meet him on the street, you simply smile and say, “Good morning!” You invite her to your home for a cup of coffee or a Shabbat dinner. You make small talk. You don’t, at this point, suggest any changes in his lifestyle. You just want her to become open to you and what you represent. Ostensibly, you haven’t “done” anything. But in essence, a most profound and radical transformation has taken place. The person has become a vessel for G-dliness.

Of course, the purpose of a vessel is that it be filled with content; the purpose of a home is that it be inhabited. The Sanctuary was built to house the presence of G-d. **But it is the making of vessels for G-dliness that is life’s greatest challenge and its most revolutionary achievement.**

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com

The Vessels God is Calling Each One of Us To MAKE:

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁹ Go therefore and **MAKE DISCIPLES** of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Luke 12:33

³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. **Provide PURSES for yourselves that will not wear out** (purses = DISCIPLES), a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

Luke 12:33

⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Second Temple

Matthew 24:1-2

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ² But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Mark 15:38

And the curtain of the **temple** was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Matthew 12:6

I tell you, something greater than the **temple** is here.

We Are the Temple

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

The Temple of the Living God

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial?¹⁶ Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God** . . .

⁷ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body^[a] and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Revelation 3:11-13

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Romans 12:1

A Living Sacrifice

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Mark 9:49

For everyone will be salted with fire.

Future Temple

2 Thessalonians 2:3-5

Future Temple

³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness^[a] is revealed, the son of destruction,^[b] ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Revelation 11

The Two Witnesses

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit^[a] will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically^[b] is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God . . .

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings,^[a] peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Zechariah 14:1-21

The Coming Day of the Lord

14 Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ³Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. ⁴On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. ⁵And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.^[a]

⁶On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost.^[b] ⁷And there shall be a unique^[c] day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

⁸On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea^[d] and half of them to the western sea.^[e] It shall continue in summer as in winter.

⁹And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

¹⁰The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹¹And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction.^[f] Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

¹²And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

¹³And on that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. ¹⁴Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem.^[g] And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. ¹⁵And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

¹⁶Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. ¹⁷And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them.¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain;^[h] there shall be the plague with which the Lord afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths. ¹⁹This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

²⁰And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to the Lord.” **And the pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar.**²¹ **And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader^[i] in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.**

Revelation 21:22

And I saw no **temple** in the city, for its **temple** is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

Next Week's Reading:

Week 20: TETZAVEH (You shall Command)
Exodus 27:20–30:10; Ezekiel 43:10–27; 1 Peter 2:1–25

Monday, March 9, 2020 to Tuesday, March 10th, is the Holiday PURIM.
Like Esther, are you called FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

“For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.” Isaiah 62:1

One of the most joyous of all Jewish celebrations, **Purim** (Festival of Lots), **begins at sundown tonight**. This fun and inspirational holiday celebrates **the exemplary leadership and bravery of Hadassah, a Jewish girl who rose to become ancient Persia's Queen Esther**. **As the queen, Esther risked death to uncover and overturn a plot to murder the Jewish People in Persia**. In struggling with the decision to seek the king's mercy, she modeled courage, wisdom, and perseverance, while rallying her people to fast and pray for their lives. The story of Esther can be our story. We may or may not reach the status of a queen, but each of us are placed in positions of influence where we can access God's wisdom to overturn schemes and expose evil plots against God's people and plans. Let's next week take a closer look at how Esther did just that and what followers of Yeshua haMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) can learn from her.