

Torah Portion: Vayak'hel/Pekudei (Exodus 35:1-40:38)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding the community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to, as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/>]

This portion is a 'double portion.' There are 54 parsha divisions and some years there are 12 months on the Hebrew calendar, while some years have 13 months. In the longer years, this is one of the portions split between two weeks, however, this year it is a combined portion.

There are some very long portion notes coming up once we are into the 'relationship' passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as well as the 'example' passages in Numbers. But, alas, within our narrow scope of study, this double portion again has a limited amount of material without being repetitive or unnecessarily waxing eloquent to hide the reduced volume of material directly related to headship, patriarchy and marriage. Unnecessarily stretching passages or explanations to fill pages is not helpful or honest exegesis.

On several occasions we have pointed out that the commandments and generally the addresses of Moses are to the *sons* of Israel and then it is the responsibility of the sons to implement those commands in their respective households. Another such nice example occurs here in our portion as the text is very specific in how it is worded. Notice,

Exodus 35 Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, "These are the things that the LORD has commanded *you* to do:

²"For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day*, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day."

⁴ Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, ⁵ 'Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze, ⁶ and blue, purple and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goats' *hair*, ⁷ and rams' skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood, ⁸ and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, ⁹ and onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

The address is to the congregation of the sons. The sons are to then relay this information to their wives and children, then, 'whoever is of a willing heart' may bring. The text is then very specific in what happened,

Exodus 35:²⁰ Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel departed from Moses' presence. ²¹ Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came *and* brought the LORD's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. ²² Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came *and* brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so *did* every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD. ²³ Every man, who had in his possession blue and purple and scarlet *material* and fine linen and goats' *hair* and rams' skins dyed red and porpoise skins, brought them. ²⁴ Everyone who could make a contribution of silver and bronze brought the LORD's contribution; and every man who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. ²⁵ All the skilled women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, *in* blue and purple *and* scarlet *material* and *in* fine linen. ²⁶ All the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' *hair*. ²⁷ The rulers brought the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastpiece; ²⁸ and the spice and the oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹ The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring *material* for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD.

There are some who chafe at the idea that the men received the command and relayed it to their household. This has been discussed before as we understand that Adam had a responsibility in

his house. He was to give Eve a command and then insure that it was properly carried out. He failed. One of the steps toward the restoration of kol Israel is the restoration of proper order and a Biblical authority structure.

Israel, in the wilderness, was huge. Some estimate as many as 2.4 million people. We know, from Numbers 1, that there were 600,000 fighting men between 20 and 60 years of age. If all of them were assembled, it is highly unlikely that Moses could give a command have it heard from the back of the crowd. So, what *really* happened?

Patriarchal structure means that likely the leaders of 1000s (Exodus 18:17-27) met with Moses, that would be about 600 men, then they would each meet with the heads of households under their authority, leaders of hundreds, who would then relay the information to the leaders of fifty and tens. This is a very well organized structure that is quite ‘military’ in the way that it functions. It is extremely efficient and effective.

As we have pointed out before, there are a number of occasions where Israel heard and obeyed exactly what they were instructed to do. When they did so, they were blessed. They heard the command from their head, made clarification if necessary, then carried it out to the ‘T.’ The following verses are a beautiful testimony,

Exodus 39:⁴² So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses. ⁴³ And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them.

This is further evidenced at the end of chapter 40 with Yehovah’s reaction to their obedience!!

Exodus 40:³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; ³⁷ but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. ³⁸ For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

God desires and blesses His people with His presence when they walk in obedience. The Tabernacle, constructed properly and in obedience to His design, becomes a place for Him to dwell. How much more so when His people, a Temple not made with hands (1 Peter 2), walk according to His ways and walk in obedience to His statutes, ordinances and commands. Biblical

headship and patriarchal structure is one part of that key that opens the door for His blessing and presence in a palpable way. We can experience that blessing when we walk in obedience instead of trying to recreate what He already designed perfectly!

Shabbat Shalom!