

Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat June 2, 2007 / Sivan 16, 5767

Parashah #36: *B'ha'Alotkha* (When you set up), *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 8:1-12:16

Haftarah: *Z'kharyah* (Zechariah) 2:14(10)-4:7

Suggested Messianic Writings reading: 1 Corinthians 15:51-55

Shalom,

In this Parashah we have the instructions for the golden *menorah* (candlestick) and the two silver trumpets. The previous Parashah ended with the listing of the leaders of each individual tribe bringing great gifts for the dedication of the Tabernacle. Ancient Jewish writings say that *Aharon* (Aaron) was dismayed because the leader of every tribe brought gifts, with the exception of himself for the *Levi'im* (Levites). It is said that HaShem comforted him by stating that his service was greater because he was the one who would prepare and light the menorah each day while serving in the Tabernacle. Their gifts were impressive, but temporary; his contribution would be eternal. And so the menorah stands as a symbol of Israel and the Jewish people yet today, and many who stand with Israel also light a menorah, at least during the Hanukkah season.¹

Continuing on in the Parashah, the Levi'im were then "placed into office," taking the place of the firstborn of each of Israel's families. *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 4:3 states that the Levi'im were to work from ages 30 to 50, while our verse here (8:24) says from 25 to 50. The commentators offer that there was a five-year apprenticeship for a young man to "learn the ropes" of service. And we know that the tribe of Levi was the only tribe whose census was counted from infancy. This was because children of Levi'im were brought up with Tabernacle/Temple service being a way of life. It's the concept of "everything I know I learned in kindergarten." We know also that the young Samuel was brought up learning Temple service. The other tribes of Israel were to bring their tithes and offerings to the Tabernacle, later the Temple, so that the Levites could perform their duties and serve HaShem without concern of outside employment for income.

"Ah-seh l'kha sh'tey khahts-ohts-roht keseph (Make for yourself two trumpets of silver.)" According to the ArtScroll commentary, these trumpets were for *Moshe's* (Moses') personal use, and were hidden just before his death. If that is the case, then they were copied for later use in the two Temples, for in 1 Chronicles 13, we are told that when King David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, trumpets (*khahts-ohts-roht*) were blown. The same is true of the return from the Babylonian exile, under Ezra and Nehemiah; trumpets were blown at the dedication of the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem.

The *shofar* (ram's horn) had been introduced in *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 19, when HaShem called the people of Israel to the foot of Mt Sinai. It seems that the trumpet and the shofar were intermingled in their use, for David wrote in Psalm 98 to celebrate with trumpets and shofar sound the coming of the righteous Judge. The last usage of the silver trumpets apparently ended with the destruction of the second Temple by Rome in 70 CE. Aharon's original menorah had probably been destroyed or stolen centuries before, but copies had also been made of that. The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the articles stolen from the Temple, including the menorah and the silver trumpets. The picture can be found very easily in a Google search.

Today you see various types of *shofarot* (shofars) – the small curved ram's horn and the longer Yemenite horn. The longer yemenite shofar seems to have taken the place of the silver trumpets following the destruction of the Temple and the theft of the silver trumpets. Some believe that it stands as a distinct possibility that the menorah and the trumpets are yet today hidden somewhere deep in the catacombs of Rome.

When a long blast (*tekiah*) was sounded from one trumpet, the leaders of the tribes were to assemble; a *tekiah* on both trumpets meant the nation was to assemble. A series of short blasts (*teruah*) was sounded to begin travel. *Teruah* was also to be sounded when the nation went to war. The trumpets are to be blown for the festivals, and HaShem will "remember" His people. The prophet *Yo'el* (Joel) says to "Blow (*tekiah* [*teek-oo*]) the shofar... sound an alarm.. for the Day of Adonai is coming... *Tekiah* [*teek-oo*] the shofar in Tziyon, proclaim a holy fast, call for a solemn assembly...."

We are definitely in spiritual warfare today, and pity those who deny or allegorize such – the enemy, hasatan, is out to do all he can in his attempt to stop Yeshua from returning. Yeshua said that this enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy. This enemy has the power to control people – witness all the sworn enemies of Israel throughout the centuries, from Amalek to Babylon to Rome to the Crusaders to Hitler to defiant Islam and Ahmadinejad, and all others in-between, including Luther and others operating under the guise of Christianity. This enemy is indeed a messenger and an accuser, but he has a power also that is to be respected, but not worshipped or feared. Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. Our weaponry comes in the form of prayer, praise and worship, per such Scriptures as *Tehillim* (Psalms) 149. And of course we await the day when the final shofar will be blown when Yeshua returns. The prophets of the Tanakh predicted the blowing of the shofar when Messiah comes – see *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) 27:13 and *Z'kharyah* (Zechariah) 9:14 for examples.

Jewish legend says that every time a shofar blows, it scares the [spiritual] enemy, for they do not know if it is HaShem blowing it or not. The shofar was blown when Torah was given at the birth of the nation of Israel; the shofar will be blown when Messiah returns to set up His millennial kingdom in Jerusalem. If we are in a spiritual war, played out in the physical, maybe we need to sound the shofar a little more to get the enemy to running. *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!* (Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!)

¹ The Temple menorah has seven lights, with a center light and six branches, per the command of HaShem in *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 25:31-40. The Hanukkah menorah, often called a Hanukkiah, has nine lights – eight lights celebrate the eight-day miracle of the oil, and the center light is called a Shamash, a servant, to light the other lights.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah (Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc) & Yisraela Carmela (Teresa)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you
into heaven, will come back to you in just the
same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1:11 CJB)