

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Naso:*** **Numbers 7:1-89**
 Haftarah: **Judges 13:24-25**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Acts 21:26**

He heard the Voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim.
[Numbers 7:89]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 147:1-3;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #6, *B'racha* [The Petition for Blessing]

Vayehi beyom kalot Moshe l'hakim et-ha-Mishkan – On the day that Moshe finished setting up the Mish'kan ... *vayim'shach oto vayekadesh oto* – he anointed it, and he set it apart as holy **Numbers 7:1a.**

All eyes are on the center of the camp. Something curious is happening. A parade of sorts is underway. There is pounding rhythm that sounds like the hoofbeats of great beasts. There is a sound of wheels churning through sand. Could that be oxen pulling wagons? Yes, that is exactly what we are hearing! Princes and dignitaries from each of B'nei Yisrael's twelve tribes are entering the 'Way' in grand procession, accompanied by retinue and regalia. One at a time, the princes are bringing *terumot* – i.e. special dedicatory gifts wrought by the hands of their skilled tribesmen under the inspiration of the *Ruach HaKodesh* – to Aharon and his sons.

But why? Ox-drawn wagons are not needed for anything we are doing at Sinai. Such devices are only useful if people are about to go into ... *transportation mode!* They are for TRAVEL. They carry heavy objects from a point of departure to a point of destination.

Do the princes of the tribes know something that we don't? Is it possible that our sweet season of inspiration, revelation, and instruction under the flaming *chuppah* of our Creator is nearing an end? Is Sinai about to become for us a port of departure as well as a port of arrival? Is this all just pomp and circumstance – or soon will Aharon and his sons be packing the precious furnishings, draperies, vessels, implements, and supplies of the *Mish'kan* on those wagons, hitching the oxen to them, and leading us across the ominous desert sand? In the Holy One's eyes have we perhaps camped just about long enough in the shadow of this mountain?

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Flight Attendants, Prepare for Departure

The princes of the tribes have tapped into a prophetic flow. They know – even though it has not been announced - that our departure from Sinai is imminent. They know that something our extended time of ‘just us’ at the ultimate remote getaway destination is about to give way to a time of critical interaction with the peoples, places, and cultures of the world. This Season of Kingdom Priority and Lifestyle Download has been the stuff dreams are made of - but now the appointed hour of our departure is approaching. As we look out at the vast open wilderness to our East – toward the land of the Patriarchs – we have no clue how many miles we have to go before we can rest in the land of Promise. We are as ignorant as babes about how many seemingly impossible challenges await us in the desert. We have no idea what challenges we will have to face – and what toxic moods and emotions we will have to find a way to deal with - along the way. If we knew half of what we will have to deal with, we would probably dig in our heels right here at Sinai, and refuse to go. But we do not know. In youthful passion and blissful ignorance, we actually think we are ready – and committed – to follow our King wherever He leads us. So, very soon, eastward we will go. Trumpets will blow – and millions of sandals, of all sizes, will hit the sand. We will soon have to “do or die” in the desert.

It is going to be in the heat of the desert, you see, that all the visions, revelations, impartations, and life-instructions the Holy One has given us at Sinai are going to be tested in the crucible of real life. In the desert there will be no ivory towers. In the desert personal opinions, principles, doctrines, creeds, and sacraments will be useless. In the world of intense heat and haboobs, serpents and sand fleas, all that will matter will be how well we heed the Voice of, and how well we follow the lead and the instructions of, the Great Shepherd Who goes before us. In the desert there will be no time to impress each other with our grasp of theological principles. In the desert there will be no making up halakah to suit our personalities. In the desert there will be no more labeling and assigning value to either concepts, ethnic groups, or individual people. In the desert there will be no time for intellectualizing, moralizing, spiritualizing, or allegorizing. In the desert we will not have time for such fruit-of-the-tree-of-the-knowledge-of-good-and-evil inspired folly. In the desert we are going to bypass all that and find out if all we have been learning about the great Kingdom will turn out to be something we can live out in real time, in the context of real heat, real enemies, real flesh challenges, and real trials – or is just high-sounding talk.

Life is about to get very, very real. Do you know WHO YOU ARE, and WHAT PART YOU ARE CALLED TO PLAY in this great undertaking? Have you worked out your trust issues with the Bridegroom-King? Have you worked out

your fear of man issues? How about your fear of death issues? Will you be a good marching partner - OR will you be a pain and a hindrance? It boils down to this: Have you while sitting in the shade of the Bridegroom and receiving His Love outpoured truly learned WHAT LOVE IS and LOOKS LIKE in REAL TIME?

The clock is ticking. The cry of the Bridegroom's Heart is '*Get Ready – the Cloud of My Presence is about to Move!*'

The Preparation Process – An Overview

What has the Holy One done to prepare us for what lies ahead? He has basically *recreated us from the inside out*. He has used *the overwhelming intensity of His unflinching love* to awaken us to our destiny. He has used *the sheer power of His creative, prophetic Words* to empower us. He has *put our camp in proper order*. He has *focused our attention on the Promised Land that we are to inherit*. He has put “the solitary in families”, and designated a “marching order”. He has turned our rag-tag mob of refugees into an *army majestic with banners*. He has appointed and commissioned a *transportation committee* [the *Levi'im* (Levites)] for the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle], its furnishings, and its implements. He has totally *redefined our perspective on life*. He has made us forget the suffering, the problems, and the crises we endured during our recent captivity to our *Divine purpose and destiny* as children of the covenant He made long ago with Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov.

Recently, our Shepherd-King has warned us specifically on *the three things which pose the most clear and present spiritual danger to the reconstituted camp*. He has also outlined procedures for protecting the camp against these three things – thus enabling us to keep the camp pure, healthy, and blessed. He has also drawn for us a Hebraic picture – in the form of the *Nazir* – of the kind of dedication and consecration that would enable us not only to survive – but to prosper - in the desert. He has authorized and empowered Aharon, the *Kohen Gadol*, to pronounce a blessing over us - a six-fold empowerment that releases us from every restriction and limitation, empowers, enables and propels us toward our Divine destiny, establishes us in *shalom*, and eternally connects us with the His Presence and Emanating goodness.

A Look Back – To the Day the Mish'kan was Dedicated

Everything we have been reading thus far in *Sefer B'midbar* has occurred in the 2nd month of the year following the Exodus. Today's aliyah takes a step *backward in time*. The events of today's aliyah occurred approximately 30 days earlier - on the new moon of the first month. On *Rosh Chodesh* Nisan in the year after the Exodus Torah tells us:

V'yehi b'yom Ka lot Moshe lehakim et ha-Mishkan

On the day that Moshe finished erecting the Tabernacle,

V'yimshach oto v'yekadesh oto v'et-kol-kelav

he anointed it and sanctified it along with all its furniture.

v'et ha-mizbe'ach v'et-kol-kelav v'yimshachem

He [also] anointed the altar and all its utensils

vayekadesh otam

and thus sanctified them.

[Numbers 7:1]

Heretofore we have already examined the events of *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*, 11 1/2 months after the death of the firstborn, from two different perspectives. In Exodus 40 [parsha *Pekudei*] we studied that day *from Moshe's perspective* – learning that *1 Nisan was the day the Radiant Cloud Surrounding the Presence of the Holy One* filled the *Mish'kan*, and even Moshe could not enter². Then in Leviticus 8 [Parsha *Sh'mini*] we studied the same day *from Aharon's perspective*. From that perspective we were able to view that day as the first day of the 8-day ceremony by which Aharon and his sons commissioned to serve as *kohanim* [kingdom ambassadors/diplomats]. Today we will study the same day from a third perspective. This time we will not be looking at the events of that momentous day from the perspective of how it affected Moshe. Nor will we this time look at the events of that day from the perspective of how it affected Aharon. We will instead be looking at the events of that day from the perspective of *how it affected the camp as a whole*. But look yonder - the princes are approaching *en masse*. Moshe did not call for this. So what on earth do they have in mind?

***Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses,
who were the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, approached***

***They approached with six covered carts and twelve oxen,
a cart for every two of the leaders, and for each one an ox;
and they presented them before the Mish'kan.***

[Numbers 7:2-3]

Six carts or wagons? Twelve oxen? Smiles all around? What meaneth this?

Hineh Mah Tov ... [Behold How Good ...]

For the multitude of the people of the camp 1 Nisan in the year of the Exodus will be remembered with tenderness for a different reason than what happened on that day involving Moshe or Aharon. For the tribes and clans that make up the camp, this day will be remembered as *the day on which they were awakened to both tribal identity and national unity*. It is the day we realized that no matter what differences there may be between us, or what we disagree on, the things we *share in common* –

² See Exodus 40:1, 17, 33-35.

i.e. the Holy One, His Covenant, His Torah, and the Promise of Communion with Him that the Tabernacle embodies – are far more important than anything that might divide us. We are the Covenant People of the Holy One, and we have the honor of being chosen to co-labor with Him in His glorious plan of redemption and restoration; we just don't have time for sectarianism. Nisan 1 in the year after the Exodus will therefore be remembered as the prototype for the famous verse in Psalm 133 which says: ***Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brothers to dwell together.*** On that day, a full month before the majority of the people in the camp knew – or cared – from which tribe they were descended, those who *did know* produced, through joint labor and contribution with another tribe, carts and oxen with which the framework, the curtains, and the implements³ of the *Mish'kan* would be transported from Sinai through the desert - to the Land.

In today's aliyah, you see, a massive twelve-day celebration begins on *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*. The Holy One did not specifically decree it. Moshe did not order it. No board or committee planned it. No cadre of elites promoted it. No human organization, government, political party, ideology, ethnicity, institution, or grassroots movement could either *claim credit for it* or *make money from it*. It will be totally orchestrated *by the Holy One*. Only He will receive the glory. Let that sink in for a few moments. It is powerful in its implications.

How Did This Happen?

Our English texts set the stage for this phenomenal event by telling us:

On the day that Moshe finished erecting the Mish'kan [Tabernacle] he anointed it and sanctified it, along with all its furniture. He [also] anointed the altar and all its utensils and thus sanctified them.
[Numbers 7:1]

The passage we read today then goes on to describe a 12-day long procession, wherein the redeemed community comes to the *Mish'kan*, one tribe at a time, bringing an identical series of gifts:

[a] Phase I of the great outpouring: wagons with oxen for use by the Levi'im in transporting the *Mish'kan*'s curtains and implements once we depart from Sinai;

[b] Phase II of the great outpouring: *korbanot sh'lamim* [peace/fellowship offerings]⁴ for their tribes; and

[c] Phase III of the great outpouring: silver plates, bowls and dishes filled with pure grain for *korbanot minchot*⁵.

³ This does not include the ark and other major furnishings, which were carried by hand.

⁴ For an explanation of the *korban shlamim* [peace/fellowship offering], please refer back to *Wednesday's Study from parsha Vayikra* [our study on Leviticus 3].

⁵ For an explanation of the *korban minchah* [grain/meal offering], please refer back to *Tuesday's Study from parsha Vayikra* [our study on Leviticus 2].

Our text as we read it in English would seem to indicate that all this occurred “*on the day Moshe fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof ...*” Numbers 7:1. But this is an impossible rendering. *A 12-day celebration cannot take place on one day.* Moreover, vessels and materials brought forth by the tribes over those 12 days could not have been anointed and consecrated by Moshe on that one day. Why the confusion? The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “day” is *yom*⁶. This word usually does mean “day”, but can also mean ‘year’, or ‘period of time’, or, in fact, *any interval in time*. In this context, the proper rendering would probably be ‘year’, or ‘season’, instead of ‘day’. The point is that the events we read about today transpired prior to the census described in Numbers 1, and prior to the re-arrangement of the camp. What happened was that, in preparation for the reuniting of tribes, clans, and families that was to happen on the next Rosh Chodesh, individuals within the various tribes received, and responded to, a sovereign call from the Holy One for each tribe to make a unique contribution to the *Mish’kan*. A celebration of heritage, and lineage and individuality was encouraged – as well as an acknowledgement of the place of each tribe in the overall Community. Not only was a man to consider himself as part of his father’s family, his great-grandfather’s clan, and his ancestor’s tribe, you see – *he was also to acknowledge that he was a part of the greater community of reconstituted “Israel”*.

This tribal and community identification included, of course, the “mixed multitude” of foreigners who had journeyed forth with the natural descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov when the “plagues” on Egypt destroyed Egypt’s economy. [See Exodus 12:38 for the description of the “mixed multitude”]. This process of inclusion, patterned after the lifestyle of Avraham, who counted foreigners like Elazar and Hagar as part of their families instead of as mere servants in their household, could well be considered a prelude to the ‘grafting in’ of foreigners into Israel in the days of Messiah.

Each Tribe Has its Own Day to Appear Front and Center

Originally every tribe brought its contribution on the 1st of Nissan. As our text tells us in Numbers 7:10:

V’yakrivu ha-nesi'im et chanukat ha-mizbe'ach
The tribal leaders drew near when the altar was dedicated;

B'yom himashach oto
On the day it was anointed,

V’yakrivu ha-nesi'im et-korbanam l'fnei ha-mizbe'ach
and the tribal leaders placed their approach surrogates in front of the altar.

⁶ Yom is *yod, vav, mem sofit*. Strong’s Hebrew word #3117, it is transliterated as *yom*, and pronounced *yome* [with a long ‘o’ sound].

But the Holy One did not accept the contributions in this manner. In light of what He was planning on doing in the camp – rearranging it along tribal lines in order to turn the focus of the Redeemed Community to the inheritance each tribe and clan would receive in *Eretz Yisrael* – the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven instructed that each of the emerging tribes should be given a *separate day* to celebrate its individual tribal re-creation. This is how the Holy One set the stage for the great prophetic numbering and re-arrangement of the camp of which we have been reading.

V’yomer Adonai el-Moshe nasi echad l’yom nasi echad

The Holy One said to Moshe, one prince each day

L’yom yak’rivu et-korbanam l’chanukat ha-mizbe’ach

'Let them present their approach surrogates for the altar's dedication'

[Numbers 7:10-11]

Starting with the tribe of *Y’hudah* and concluding with the tribe of *Naftali*, each tribe then sent forth its contribution through one of its princes on a separate day.

V’yehi ha-makriv b’yom ha-rishon et-korbano

The one to draw near with his approach surrogate on the first day

Nachshon ben-Aminadav l’mateh Y’hudah

was Nachshon son of Aminadav of the tribe of Y’hudah.

[Numbers 7:12]

Every new day brought forth a new prince, a new tribal celebration, and an identical contribution for the *mish’kan*: Here is the order in which they came:

| <u>Day:</u> | <u>Tribe</u> | <u>Representative</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Y’hudah [Judah] | Nachson son of Aminadav |
| 2 | Yissachar [Issachar] | Netanel son of Tzuar |
| 3 | Z’vulun [Zebulun] | Eliav son of Chelon |
| 4 | Reuven [Reuben] | Elitzur, son of Shedei-ur |
| 5 | Sh’mon [Simeon] | Sh’lumiel, son of Tzuri-shaddai |
| 6 | Gad | Elyasaf son of Deuel |
| 7 | Efrayim | Elishama son of Amihud |
| 8 | Menashe [Manasseh] | Gamli’el son of Padah-tzur |
| 9 | Binyamin [Benjamin] | Avidan son of Gidoni |
| 10 | Dan | Achi’ezer son of Ami-shaddai |
| 11 | Asher | Pagi’el son of Okhran |
| 12 | Naftali | Achira son of Eynan |

In the politically correct world we live in today the events of these twelve days would be promoted as an exercise in DIVERSITY⁷, with each tribe doing its “own

⁷ The 21st Century culture in which we live is deathly ill from its over-emphasis on “diversity” – especially the militant, hostile, kind that masquerades under the banner of ‘pride’. If we are to survive, we

thing”. But that is not at all what happened. Though the tribes were diverse what they celebrated was not their *diversity* but their *UNITY* - and their place in the larger community of the Redeemed.

E Pluribus Unum – Of Many, One

Amazingly each of the 12 reconstituted tribes demonstrated its equal relationship to and ability to hear from the Holy One (and its unity with the other tribes) by bringing forth, on its appointed day, through its appointed leader, an identical “offering” of gold and silver instruments, livestock, grain, flour, and oil. The Holy One sent out *one call* as to what was needed for the ceremonies of the *Mish'kan*. *All tribes heard Him perfectly - and all responded with equal yet individual perfection*. What resulted was stunning - twelve *identical* silver platters, twelve *identical* silver bowls, and twelve *identical* gold sprinkling spoons, for instance, were brought forth on twelve consecutive days, each by a different tribe. Each tribe brought three identical animals - a bullock, a ram, and a lamb - for its own *korban olah*⁸. Each tribe brought a male goat for a *korban chattat*⁹. Each tribe also brought an identical number of oxen, rams, goats, and lambs for the *korban sh'lamim*. *One mind. One heart. One will. One voice. E pluribus unum – out of many, one.*

The celebration at the presentation of the *korban sh'lomim* thus set the stage for and laid the groundwork for *the process of tribal realignment* – the return to the identical Hebrew roots – to the way of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov.

Working Together, Despite the Diversity

Note that even as each tribe independently was celebrating its private, personal recreation, the members of the Redeemed Community simultaneously did something that at the same time acknowledged and celebrated their *connectedness* and *interdependence*. Each tribe *teamed up with one other tribe* on a project - to make, by joint effort, a “covered cart” for transportation of the *Mish'kan*'s curtains, framework, and vessels (the furnishings, of course, were not to be transported by cart, but were to be personally carried on the shoulders of *K'hatim* from the clan of the Levites).

V'yavi'u et-korbanam l'nei Adonai

The surrogates with which they drew near to the Holy One

shesh-eglot tzav ush'nei asar bakar agalah

consisted of six covered wagons and twelve oxen.

must beware those who preach “diversity” [which means everyone doing their “own thing”] as the ultimate good. While loving acceptance of persons who look or act different from us is Godly, it must have its limits. We must adhere to Torah – whether it is politically correct or promotes “diversity” or not.

⁸ For a discussion of the *korban olah* [burnt offering], see *Monday's Shiur* from parsha *Vayikra*.

⁹ For a discussion of the *korban chata't* [sin offering], see *Thursday's Shiur* from parsha *Vayikra*

al-sh'nei ha-nesi'im v'shor l'echad

There was one wagon for each two princes, and one ox for each one.

V'yakrivu otam l'fnei ha-Mishkan

They presented them in front of the Tabernacle.

[Numbers 7:3]

There were *six carts* – not twelve. Each one was built by a coordinated effort by tradesmen from two different tribes. There is a great lesson, for all generations, in this cooperative effort! Behold, how good and pleasant it is, Beloved.

The Final Full Parsha Before Our Departure from Sinai Concludes In Grand Prophetic Style

As Parsha *Naso* concludes Moshe finally enters the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle], and actually hears the voice of the Holy One speak to him “*from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant*”.

And when Moshe would come into the Ohel mo'ed [Tent of Meeting]
to speak to Him, he would hear the Holy One's voice
speak to him from above the kaporet [mercy seat]
above the aron [ark] ***between the two cheruvim*** [cherubim],
and then He would speak to him.

[Numbers 7:89]

This concluding verse completes the cycle that began in Exodus 25. When the Holy One introduced the *Mish'kan* He told Moshe that, when the *Mish'kan* was complete:

Then put the Edut [tablets of testimony] ***in the aron*** [ark]... ***and I will meet you there***
and speak to you from above the kaporet [mercy seat]
between the two cheruvim [cherubim]
that are on the aron ha-edut [ark of the Testimony]..."

[Exodus 25:21-21]

The Holy One's withdrawal of His overshadowing Cloud of Presence from the camp, which followed the *chet ha-egel* [the sin of the golden calf], is now almost over. He left, and kept His manifestation at Moshe's “tent of meeting” outside the camp, because the camp itself had been so defiled that it could not endure the holiness of His Presence without disintegrating. Now the community has made *teshuvah*, has renewed its vows of betrothal, and has built a parlor in its midst, patterned after the Holy One's Bridal Chamber in Heaven, for betrothal-period interactions. And now, there has been a reconciliation of brothers that foreshadows the ultimate reconciliation prophesied in Zechariah 12:10 – 13:6.

At long last the Holy One is *returning to His Rest* - in the midst of His Covenant People. And for that reason, a celebration is in order! *Mazel Tov* – and *Shabbat Shalom* – Beloved ones!

A Few Questions For Further Study

1. With today's concluding aliyah of parsha *Naso* the moveable "city of God" is now in place and functioning, in perfect harmony - and is almost¹⁰ ready to leave Sinai! We have come a long way since Egypt, Beloved. But we still have a long way to go! The broad desert looms before us. So before we venture out, let's look back at what we studied today, and see if we learned the lessons the Holy One is trying to teach us.

[A] What three things did Moshe do (in verse 1) with regard to the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle]?

[B] Look up each operative verb from verse 1 in Strong's and Gesenius, and write the Hebrew word describing what Moshe did as well as a conceptual definition of each such Hebrew word.

[C] What were the first two kinds of "offerings"¹¹ brought to the *Mish'kan* by the leaders of the tribes?

[D] How many carts were offered?

[E] Why do you think there were not 12 carts (one for each tribe)?

[F] How did Moshe distribute the carts and oxen?

[G] What were the carts and oxen to be used for?

[H] Why did the *K'hatim* not receive any carts or oxen?

[I] Verses 12-83 contain a tribe-by-tribe recitation of identical offerings - each tribe brought exactly the same things! Why do you think the Holy One had Moshe document each tribe's contribution separately, instead of merely listing the offerings once and noting that all the tribes gave the same things?

[J] List all the things that were included in the presentation/procession of the tribal leaders (one listing is sufficient for purposes of this study).

[K] What was the total weight of gold presented?

[L] What was the total weight of silver presented?

[M] What was the total number of animals presented?

[N] Torah says that Moshe entered the *Mish'kan* after the events of today's aliyah. Go back and read Exodus 40:34-35. At that time Moshe could not enter the *Mish'kan*. What has happened in the intervening days that makes it possible for Moshe to enter the *Mish'kan* now?

[O] In what three ways does Moshe describe (in verse 89) the location from which he heard the Holy One's voice?

¹⁰ We have a few matters yet left to attend to, which we will discuss next week as we study chapters 8-10.

¹¹For an explanation why the English words "offerings" and "sacrifices" are inappropriate translations, see *Monday's Shiur* from parsha *Vayikra*, where the mindset of the Hebrew bringing a surrogate through which to approach the Holy One in love is contrasted to the mindset of the Greco-Roman, European pagan who brought "offerings" and made "sacrifices" to appease "gods" for whom he felt only contempt and fear.

2. In today's Haftarah aliyah the promised deliverer/judge, Shimshon (Samson), is finally born to a Danite family living in the tribal allotment of Efrayim, as the Angel of the Holy One, the one whose name was *Pil'iy* ("Wonderful"), had promised.

The woman bore a son, and named him Shimshon [Samson]:
and the child grew, and the Holy One blessed him.
The Spirit of the Holy One began to move him in Machane-Dan,
between Tzor`ah and Eshta'ol.
[Judges 13:24-25]

[A] What do you think it means that as the boy grew, "the Holy One *blessed* him"?

[B] What do you think it means that "the Spirit of the Holy One began to *move*"¹² [KJV] (the NIV renders it "*stir*")? [Hint: the Hebrew word is *pa'am* (pronounced *paw-awm'*), and is also found as the operative verb in Psalm 77:4].

3. In today's B'rit Chadasha aliyah Shaul of Tarsus [the apostle Paul] affirms his love for and his abiding commitment to the Torah, by personally following (for himself and others) the Torah's instructions regarding *Nazir'im* [Nazarites who have taken a vow as prescribed by Torah (**Numbers 6:1-21**)]. The elders of the believing community in *Y'rushalayim* [Jerusalem] had heard that Shaul had turned against Torah, and was teaching gentile believers not to observe the Torah. Today, Shaul was given the direct opportunity, if he so believed, to declare that all this "Torah stuff" (like the Nazirite ceremony in question) was part of the "Old Covenant", and had passed away. Here is his opportunity to start a new religion. You will note that he most certainly does not do any such thing. More importantly consider this: if Shaul believed that following the Torah, despite the coming, death, and resurrection of Messiah, brought "death" [which is the interpretation some Christian theologians have given to Shaul's comments in the letter to the Galatians], then would not for him to *sponsor young men in the performance Nazirite (Torah prescribed) ceremonies* cause those young men to enter into death? So, what will Shaul do? Will Shaul lead others into death just to save his own life? Shaul's actions proclaim for all time the message that the Torah is alive and well, and is still and forever to be the lifestyle of the redeemed! Under the inspiration of the *Ruach HaQodesh* Lucas [Luke] described how Shaul responded to this opportunity to declare Torah "obsolete", and start a new religion:

¹² The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as "move" and "stir" is *peh, ayim, mem sofit*, Strong's Hebrew word #06470, transliterated as *pa'am*, and pronounced *paw-am'*. Strong's assigns to this Hebrew verb the following interpretations: to thrust, impel, push, beat persistently. The first Biblical usage of this verb is found in Genesis 41, to describe what happened in Pharaoh's spirit when he dreamed the prophetic dreams Yosef eventually interpreted as the Holy One's warnings of coming famine. "*And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof...*" **Genesis 41:8**. See also **Daniel 2:1 and 3**, where the same occurred with Nebuchadnezzar.

*Then Sha'ul took the men, and the next day, purified himself
and he went with them into the Temple,
declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification,
until the offering was offered for every one of them.*

[Acts 21:26]

It is not the Torah that has passed away. It is unjustified reliance - which the Holy One never intended anyway - upon mechanical following of the religious system established by men as a fence around the Torah - *as the means to relationship with the Holy One*.

Torah-observance is not the foundation stone of relationship with the Holy One - the foundation stone is, and has always been, encounter with the Holy One. Out of encounter comes the trust, the desire, and the empowerment to *sh'ma* all the Words the Beautiful One we have encountered has spoken. It was thus for our father Avraham, even before the covenant of circumcision was given. This process of drawing inspiration flowing from Divine Encounter is called "faith" in the English translations of the Bible.

Torah-observance *is*, however, *the natural result and outgrowth of the sh'ma-ing "faith"* without which Ya'akov¹³ declares faith is "dead" - unable to reproduce itself. See **James 2:14-26**. In other words, *a Torah-centered life is the first fruit of faith* - that which will naturally come forth from faith if the seed has in fact germinated. One does not, and cannot, observe Torah in order to be "saved", or be justified before the Holy One - for that, one needs to see Messiah. However, if one is truly "saved" by trusting in Mashiach's [Messiah's] finished work, the natural outgrowth of that salvation, and re-creation, will be to live the life Mashiach lives - a Torah-centered lifestyle modeling for the world the Holy One's goodness, holiness, faithfulness, and peace.

[A] If Shaul held the position that the Torah (i.e. the life instructions the Holy One gave to Moshe for us, as recorded in Genesis through Deuteronomy) was "law", and had been superseded and done away with by "grace", do you think he would have done what today's verse says he did - sponsor young messianic believers in Torah observance?

[B] Why had Shaul wanted to come to Y'rushalayim for *Shavuot* [Pentecost]?

[C] If the Holy One's instructions concerning the *Moed'im* [festivals] had been done away with by Messiah's death and resurrection, can you think of any reason Shaul would have been so insistent on making the pilgrimage at that time of year?

¹³ Why Ya'akov got renamed "James" by the writers of the KJV is a mystery. But there was never anyone named 'James' with whom Yeshua. Moreover, if the King James translators had wanted to transliterate Ya'akov into a common English name, it would have been Jacob, not James.

[D] Were the young men Shaul sponsored (and joined) in the Nazirite vow and ceremony already “new creations” in Yeshua? If so, what purpose could the Nazirite vow and ceremony – part of Torah - serve in their lives?

*May His People hear His voice
from between the two cherubim, above the atonement cover.
Shabbat Shalom!*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 147:1-3

***Praise the Holy One,
For it is good to sing praises to our God;
For it is pleasant and fitting to praise him.
The Holy One builds up Y'rushalayim.
He gathers together the outcasts of Yisra'el.
He heals the broken in heart,
and binds up their wounds.***