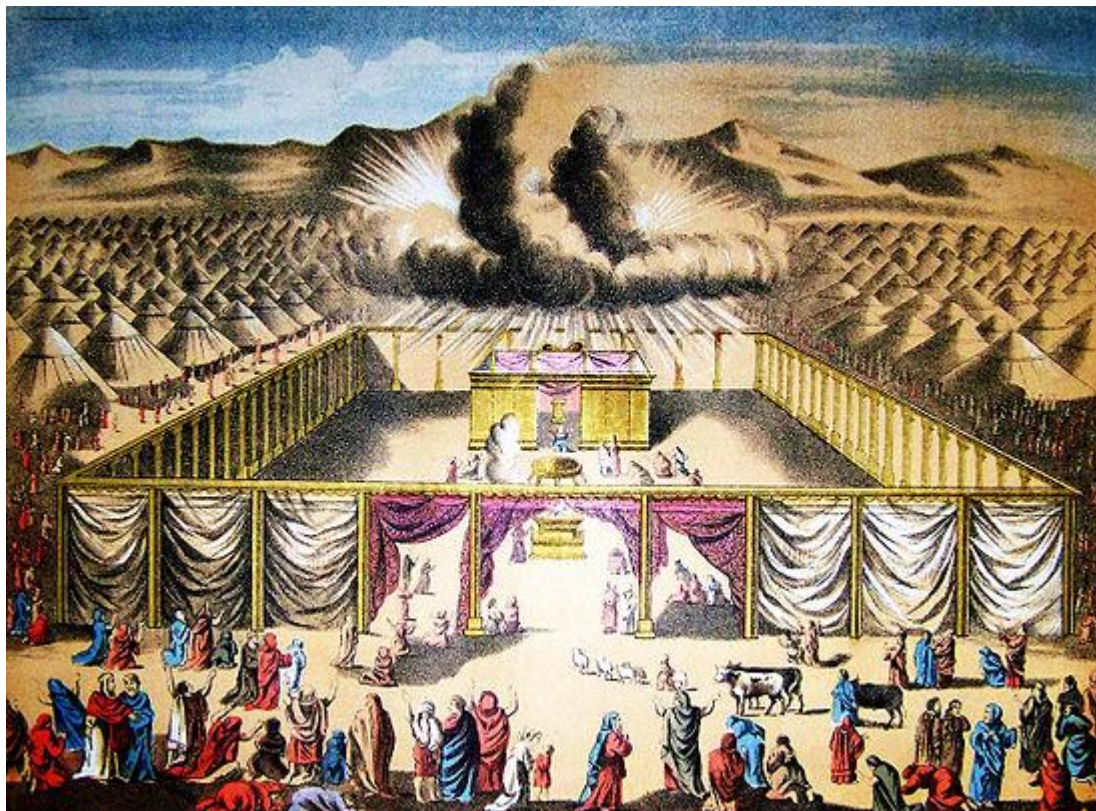


PIKUDEI { פְּקוּדֵי } (Accountings Of)

Exodus 38:21-40:38, 1 Kings 7:51-8:21, Hebrews 8:1-12



The Tabernacle in the Wilderness (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

Shalom and welcome to our Torah study from Parashat P'kudei, which is often combined with the previous parashah, Vayekhel, to accommodate the required number of weekly readings. It opens with the concluding stages of the construction of the sanctuary. This Scripture portion also concludes the book of Exodus (Shmot/Names). In addition, the Haftarah (Prophetic portion) describes the completion of King Solomon's work in building the House of the Lord.

The theme of this week's study, therefore, is about bringing our work to completion, and dealing with one of the primary obstacles to finishing what we start – that is - procrastination.

As the Lord Commands

Finally the work of constructing the Tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was finished exactly as God had commanded Moses: **“Thus was finished all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting; and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they.”** (Exodus 39:32)

Over and over again, we read that they completed the work ‘*as the Lord had commanded*’. They were not off doing their own thing but only acted as God directed them.

Have you ever had the experience when you needed something specific done, so you asked someone (like maybe your kids or spouse) to help out; but they did it the way *they* wanted to do it, not the way *you* wanted it done? This can be rather frustrating; no matter how much we appreciate their efforts. And the ones doing it wrong can feel badly too because they worked hard on something and it took a lot of time and effort – it was just not what was required – therefore it was all in vain.

We need to make sure that our ‘works’ are what our Father is asking us to do, the way He is asking us to do it, and not just ‘*doing our own thing*’. I love the line I recently read in a devotional someone gave me, *Come Away My Beloved*, by Frances J. Roberts, “Yes, you may do many things, but only that which I direct you to do can have My blessing.”¹

Yeshua said that He could do nothing of Himself but could only do that which His Father commanded Him. “...**the son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, for whatever He does, the son also does in like manner.**” (John 5:19) Moses also built only according to the Heavenly pattern that was shown to him on the mountain, not according to his own blueprint.

I will admit, it would be a whole lot easier if we could just pick up the ‘*Heavenly-hot-line*’ and get a direct, audible message. Sometimes we don’t get any clear or specific instructions. There are times when we have to just ‘*step out to find out*’; but it is so wonderful to know when we have heard from God – to know that it is HE who is commanding us to do something specific; and that what we are doing is not in vain – not just another one of our ‘*bright ideas*’ that will lead to yet another dead end.

So how can we tell the difference? It seems to me that we can have a pretty good idea that we’ve fallen into ‘*works of the flesh*’ (dead works - other than what God has commanded or desired) when what we are doing bears no fruit – it is accomplished but with no real joy or peace; but only frustration, confusion, and strife.

Ishmael was a ‘work of the flesh’, born out of Sarah’s ‘bright idea’²; and the result was a man whose descendants would always be in strife and conflict – and we still suffer from this conflict in the Middle East today thousands of years later! But Isaac was conceived and born to Abraham and Sarah as prophesied in God’s perfect will and timing. Isaac’s Hebrew name, Yitzchak, **יצחק** means ‘laughter’, from the word **לצחק** ‘litzchok – to laugh’. Works done in God’s will and timing may still require ‘labor’ but the result will be JOY! Halleluyah!



A depiction of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert by François-Joseph Navez

¹ Come Away My Beloved, by Frances J. Roberts p. 13

² Genesis chapter 16

Hearing from God and receiving His Divine guidance comes out of a close, intimate relationship with Him and comes by no other way. And a relationship with God, like any other relationship, requires time and meaningful communication.

Yeshua said, **“I can of myself do nothing. As I hear I judge, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the Will of the Father who sent Me.”** (John 5:30)

Are we truly seeking to do the Father’s will, as in **“My Father who are in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”**³

In the end, our works will be judged and the fire will test each one’s work.⁴ Only those in one accord with the Father will be able to endure and will receive a reward. Everything we build must be laid upon the foundation of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) who is the cornerstone.

And on this foundation, we can build with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw. I know that it is your heart’s desire, as it is mine, to build on that sure foundation with non-flammable materials!

Finishing our Course

Moses did not pronounce his blessing at the beginning of the work, but at its completion. **“And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it. And Moses blessed them.”** (Exodus 39:43)

It is as if Moses looked at all that had been accomplished and said to the people, *“Well done, good and faithful servants.”* (Matthew 5:21) How we long to hear these words from our Heavenly Father when we stand before Him.

Beginnings are easy. Fired up by enthusiasm and zeal, anyone can undertake almost anything; but completions are both difficult and rare. And yet it is when we complete the work that we receive the blessing.

Some of us (me quite possibly being the chief sinner) struggle at times with procrastination. We know we need to finish something but we just keep putting it off, singing our little hearts out like sweet Annie, *“Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love ya, tomorrow, you’re only a day away...”*⁵

I began writing commentaries to these parashot (plural for parashah) so many years ago, I’ve lost count now. I would start and then quit when life got too busy or I just lost interest. But something in me now feels a sense of urgency about this project – that God really wants me to persevere to completion - and then the blessing will come.

³ Matthew 6:9-13

⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:13

⁵ From the movie Annie (1982)

Praise Adonai all the Torah commentaries have finally been written and now only need some final touches. My hope is to one day publish them all into a book of Parashah and Haftarah Messianic Jewish commentaries. Lofty goal, eh? It has taken years of perseverance, patience and endurance but I can finally see the finish line ahead. Halleluyah! ⁶

I don't know if procrastination is a problem for you, but it certainly has been for me at times. We seem to treat some of the important things in life like the pop-ups that appear on our computer screens. You know, those annoying messages that say things like, "Your _____ anti-virus program has now expired. Your computer is no longer protected."

And then you get the options: "Renew now" or "Remind me later". And if we are busy, we often just click the 'remind me later' button rather than go through the hassle of dealing with whatever we have to deal with.

Am I right? I love this message I got the other day that had as one of the options to click, "Don't bug me!" Guess which one I clicked? Ya, right. ☺

There is even one pop-up that has the option of postponing the required task until a time which we have pre-selected to be reminded again. It says "Remind me in ___ days". But when that delay is used up and the reminder comes, we again delay for another day, or week or month, or year, orshould there be a button that says 'indefinitely'?

It can be this way with our lives too. Are there important things that we always intend to do but keep putting off – perhaps forever? There may be things that we really should be dealing with, but we are busy or preoccupied so we just keep clicking the 'remind me later' or 'postpone' or even the 'don't bug me' buttons.

We are so overloaded with information these days through e-mail forwards and face book messages and video clips too cute not to comment on, and You tube and twitter and basically the whole the electronic internet thing going on, that it can be tough to sort out what to give our attention to, and what is just distracting us from we really, *really* should be doing.



Facebook headquarters entrance sign at 1 Hacker Way, [Menlo Park, California](#)

I came up with what I thought would be a solution to this problem and that was to create a folder in my e-mail inbox called 'Later'. It is here that I moved: all those interesting e-mails ("I really should read up on this guaranteed cure for _____"), those 'cutesy' forwards ("Those puppies are so sweet!"), and all the 'must see' video clips ("These kids are just so talented!") that are all simply too good to hit 'delete'.

The problem with this solution is that I have never once even opened this folder. So really, it should not be named 'later' but perhaps more honestly renamed the 'never' folder.

⁶ If you are reading this in a published book then it means that my work has been brought to completion. Praise Yah!

Maybe we have some things in our lives that we just can't bear to get rid of, so we're hanging onto them, but really if we were honest with ourselves, we know we will never actually deal with it and should just let it go. Other things, however, are important to finish. We need wisdom to know when to let go of something and when to tenaciously hold on and persevere to completion.

The other day, Courtney came over with some of her photos to do a mother-daughter session of scrapbooking with me. The idea to do this was born out of the fond memories we both have of when Courtney was in her teens and we used to sit together in the Humpty's restaurant in Red Deer, Alberta, with all our photos, albums, glue sticks, papers, stickers, and cut outs and we'd '*crop till we drop*'.

There were times we would do this until well after midnight, enjoying the mother-daughter time, the nachos and pop; and looking at the photos which capture the memories of so many good times together.

Of course, the situation is a little different now, with pre-schoolers running around grabbing photos and scattering them all over the floor (and now with another baby added to the mix) but it was still fun.



A Scrapbooking album

We pulled out all the albums and I was dismayed to see my son, Timothy's Bar Mitzvah album, still incomplete, seemingly on indefinite hold. How many years had it been? For those who don't know, a Bar Mitzvah is the coming of age ceremony for a Jewish boy when he transitions from a boy to a man – usually at the age of thirteen. At that time of this writing, Timothy was almost eighteen years old. Oye! ⁷

I could say that I '*wish*' I would finish this album for him before he leaves home, but as the saying goes, "*We don't need more 'wishbone', we need more backbone.*" Amen. We need to take a good look at our priorities and perhaps re-evaluate where and how we're spending our time.

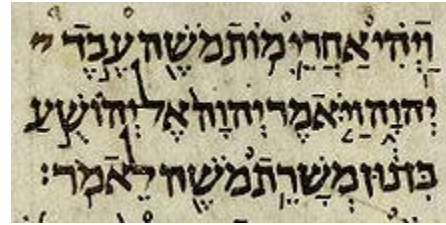
Usually it's not that we don't *want* to complete these things; it's not that we don't care about them – it's just what has been called '*the tyranny of the urgent*'. All those things that holler, "*Do this! Call them! Be there!*" so loudly in our ears that we can't hear the still, small but important voices that whisper, "*I need your attention.*" Pressures, demands, expectations, and tasks push in from all sides until we run out of energy and time, while the truly important is all too often left lying in the dust. In the Spring 2008 issue of D'var Emet (Word of Truth), Redeeming the Time, I wrote, "*Procrastination is so deceptive. Because we plan to do something 'someday', we think we are being obedient when in actuality we are not.*" ⁸

⁷ I finally finished an album for Timothy and presented it to him for his 18th birthday shortly before he left home. It is now one of his greatest treasures. ☺

⁸ Redeeming the Time, Spring 2008 Update, published by D'var Emet (Word of Truth), p. 19

Ordering our Priorities

There is an example in the Bible of a people who suffered because of their procrastination in doing God's will. In 538 B.C., King Cyrus decreed that the Jews could return to their beloved city of Jerusalem and begin the work of rebuilding the Holy Temple, which the Babylonian armies had destroyed.



Excerpt from the Book of Haggai

But all too soon, they forgot their purpose and lost sight of their priorities. Opposition and apathy brought this important work to a standstill. (Ezra 4:4-5) And then they heard the voice of the prophet, Haggai, a voice that even twenty-five centuries ago, called people to right priorities.

“Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” (Haggai 1:4).

The people suffered because they were more concerned with their own personal needs than with doing God's will.

“Now this is what the Lord Almighty says,” “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” (Haggai 1:5-6)

Have you ever felt this way? That your purse must have holes in it? That the harder you work, the farther behind you seem to fall? That there is just never enough, no matter how hard you try? That nothing ever seems to work out? You just never feel satisfied? This is not a blessed life.

I think that God may have ‘a word’ for some of us here. The harder the people worked, the less they had and the less satisfied they were with what little they did have, because they were ignoring the will of God – to complete the work He had given them.

God withheld His blessing on their lives because they had concentrated on building and beautifying their own homes while God's house lay in ruins. They no longer put God in first place and His blessing would not return to their lives until they repented and turned back to their first love and finished doing the work as the Lord had commanded them.

We must remember that it is when the work is completed that the blessing comes and the glory appears.

Returning to the Circle of Blessing

The Lord said, **“You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?...because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.”** (1:9)

Is God blowing away what little we bring home? Have we become so busy with our own house that we have neglected the work of the Lord? Shortly after returning to Israel, I became consumed with trying to meet all the physical needs of the family – a house needed to be rented and furnished, kids needed to get established in school.

There were school uniforms to buy and classes they needed to join. The garden was a mess and I needed to clear a huge area of land of weeds where snakes or dangerous insects could be hiding. I also needed to find a way of meeting the financial needs of the family. It all felt overwhelming. And little by little, my joy and peace seemed to slip away; I became dissatisfied even though my dream had come true – to return to the Land of my Fathers – Zion and Jerusalem at last.

One Shabbat, I decided to attend a small Messianic congregation meeting at Yad Hashmona, a Messianic Moshav near Jerusalem. That day, a guest speaker shared a message called, Returning to the Circle of Blessing.

He spoke on exactly this issue from the book of Haggai and I felt my heart pierced with conviction from the Holy Spirit through the anointed Word of God. That day I went home and determined to put God's work and His will first in my life.

I still wasn't sure exactly what that looked like, and to be honest, I'm still not sure if I have a clear vision of my place and work here in the Land, but that day I repented for putting my own needs and even those of my family first, and asked God for the strength and wisdom and courage to complete the work He has called me to here.

This may also be a word for someone as it has been for me,

“And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago, but now you also must complete the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.”
(2 Corinthians 8:10-11)

Ah, blessed completion....There are some things that will just never be completed – like housework, cooking, clearing the inboxes....once we get it done, we have to start all over again. Once we get the laundry washed, dried, folded and put away, there's a whole new load to wash.

I will never forget when my 'little brother' (now a middle aged man), came over to visit when I had my first apartment on my own. He watched me work for hours, cleaning the apartment and then exclaimed, *“But you're going to have to do this all over again next week!”* Aha, a moment of male revelation! ☺

It seems we just get the house all cleaned for Shabbat then the grandchildren come over and it's back to wiping juice off the stairs and cleaning up spilled cheerios (not that we ever mind anything our precious grandchildren do, right?) ☺ But thankfully, there are some things that can be brought to completion – doing the will of our Father.

It is Finished

Yeshua said, **“I have glorified You on the earth; I have finished the work which You have given me to do.”** (John 17:4)

What amazes me is that when Yeshua said that he had finished the work God had given him to do, there remained so much that still needed to be done!

Many people remained who were not saved, who were not healed from their afflictions or delivered from their demonic bondages; and yet he still cried out from the cross just before he died, **“Nishlam!”** **נִשְׁלַם (It is finished).**

This is such an interesting word in Hebrew which contains such rich meaning. It comes from the root, Shalem, **שָׁלֵם** which is related to shalom **שָׁלוֹם**— peace. Shalem means whole, complete or perfect.



Descent from the Cross, depicted by Rubens

Malchi-Tzedek is written to be King of Shalem. L'shalem **לְשָׁלֵם** also means ‘to pay’ in Hebrew. Therefore when Yeshua called out Nishlam on the cross, not only was he saying that ‘it was finished’, but also that the ransom had been paid in full through His blood, and that through His perfect sacrifice, we have been made whole and complete. Wow!

Bringing the Glory

Completing our work doesn't mean that all the loose ends have been tied up or that there is nothing left to do; it just means that we have done what God specifically commissioned us to do. After declaring that he had completed his work, Yeshua then went on to speak about the glory. **“And now O Father glorify me together with Yourself...”**⁹

Once the work is finished, not only does the blessing come, but also the glory! **“So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the meeting and the glory of God filled the tabernacle...”** (Exodus 40:33-34)



The Cloud Led the Israelites (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett,

courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing)

The glory of God so completely filled the tabernacle with such a weighty presence, that Moses was not even able to enter. How we long to experience the presence of God like this!

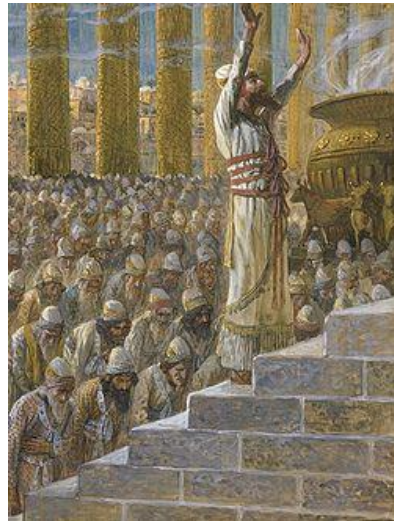
⁹ John 17:5

Glory in Hebrew is the word kavod, כבוד from the root, kvd, כבד which means ‘heavy’ or ‘weighty’. When we ascribe glory or honor to someone we give them ‘weight’ or value. God is glorified when we bring to completion whatever He has called us to do, even if much work still seems to be left incomplete.

In the Haftarah (Prophetic) portion for this week, we see a similar experience.

“Thus all the work that King Solomon wrought in the house of the Lord was finished¹⁰ ... for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.” (1 Kings 8:11)

The glory or kavod of Adonai was so real, so weighty, that the cohanim (Jewish priests) could not even stand to minister. This was the shechinah glory of God showing up when the people of God finished the work.



King Solomon dedicates the Temple at Jerusalem (painting by James Tissot or follower, c. 1896–1902)

Passing the Torch to the Next Generation

It may be that we might not accomplish everything that is in our heart to do – even for the Lord. King David longed to build a house for the Lord, but God said no – this was the work for his son to complete. (1 Kings 8:17-19) I have said this many times but I will repeat it once more – I believe that we have dreams and longings in our heart that we may never see the realization of, but that our children and children’s children will complete this work instead. Future generations will go further in their relationship with God than we ever dreamed possible, and will go on to do great and mighty exploits in the name of the Lord.

FINISHING THE RACE

Though there may still be some unrealized aspirations when we come to the end of our lives on this earth, in the end may we be able to declare, like the apostle Paul, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”** (2 Timothy 4:7)

Much work remained to be done in spreading the Gospel, and yet as Paul neared the end of his life on earth, he could confidently say that he had been faithful to his calling, and I believe he knew he would receive his reward.

We may, at times, feel so woefully inadequate to complete the work God has given us to do, but God’s word promises, **“I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me.”**¹¹

¹⁰ 1 Kings 7:51

¹¹ Philippians 4:13

We may feel weak, but God says that His grace is sufficient for us, and that His strength is made perfect in our weakness.¹² There are times when we become discouraged or downhearted but if we will turn away from the darkness and remain faithful to our calling, the light will return and we will finish our course with joy.

We will reap a harvest from all our God-given labor if we will just refuse to give up!¹³

There is one promise that we can count on - that God will finish the good work He has started in us:



“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Messiah Yeshua returns.” (Philippians 1:6)

God is changing us little by little from glory to glory. Because what God starts, He finishes, and He finishes well! On the sixth day, God looked over all He had created and it was very good (Genesis 1:31). **“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.”** (Genesis 2:1)

Yeshua is not only the author, but also the FINISHER of our faith! (Hebrews 12:2)
He is the aleph א and the tav ת - the beginning and the end. Halleluyah!!

May God establish the work of our hands, that we may not only start the race, but also press on to completion and finish our course with joy!

Love (Ahava) in Yeshua Hamashiach (The Messiah)

Hannah Neshet & family

Y'VARECH'CHA ADONAI V'YISHM'RECHA
YA'ER ADONAI PANA V A LECHA VICHUNECHA
YISA ADONAI PANA V ALECHA
V'YASEM L'CHA SHALOM

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU
MAY THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU
MAY THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU
AND GIVE YOU PEACE

¹² 2 Corinthians 12:9

¹³ Galatians 6:9

P'kudei Study Questions

1. Do you feel that the work you are doing is something God has called you to do? Is there anything you are doing that you suspect may be a 'work of the flesh'? Why?
2. Do you ever struggle with procrastination? Is there something you keep putting off? What is it and why do you think you procrastinate on getting this done?
3. Do you feel that your priorities are in line with the Lord's or do you think there is some re-ordering of priorities required in order to 'return to the circle of blessing'?
4. Is there something you have labored on and persevered to bring to completion? How did that feel? Did it bring a blessing? Discuss.
5. Do you treat others with kavod (honor)? How could you help the people in your life to feel more 'valued'?
6. Can you accept the reality that there may be aspirations or desires in your heart that you will not, for various reasons, be able to accomplish? Can you see your children carrying on where you have left off?
7. How do you encourage yourself to continue 'running the race' when you feel weak, tired or discouraged? Is there someone else you need to encourage?
8. Do you believe that God will complete the work He has started in you? Do you see evidence that He is changing you from glory to glory?

About the Author:

Hannah Neshar grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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