

This week's Audio, Video, and Teaching Notes are posted here.

The Testimony – A Classic Cover (What Does the Bible Say About the Testimony; In the Tent of Meeting Outside the Veil; The Veil of the Testimony; The Tent of the Testimony; Make for Me a Holy Place; The Tabernacle of the Testimony – The Place Where God Will Meet You; Only Two Tablets are Placed in the Ark; A Description of the Two Tablets; The Ten Words – The Covenant; And He Added No More; The Tablets of the Covenant; Scripture is Clear About What's Written on The Two Tablets and What's Placed in the Ark – Don't Add to or Take Away)

May 18, 2019 – Ross Nichols
The Testimony – A Classic Cover

Audio/Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZEdZ7Ysyyw>

TEACHING NOTES

-Today's class is called, "The Testimony – A Classic Cover". This class that I am teaching on the testimony was originally taught by Dr. James Tabor over 20 years ago and since then I have taken this subject and made it my own. This is one of the most important points in the Torah. Today's version of the testimony will almost be exclusively from the Torah. I will define the Testimony for you by allowing the bible to tell us what is the testimony? There are many outside texts and ideas from other sources but I will not be covering these here. I only want to know what the Bible says about "the testimony." We have a tendency to make associations that are not supported by the text which sometimes lead us to make leaps of faith and assumptions.

-Exo 16: 34 As YHVH commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. 35 The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36 (An omer is the tenth part of an ephah.)

-Exodus 16 is an account of the manna, what is it. This is looking forward until they get all the way to the border of the land of Canaan.

-Exo 27: 20 "You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. 21 In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before YHVH. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.

-Here we are in the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony.

-Exo 30: 34 YHVH said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), 35 and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy. 36 You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. It shall be most holy for you.

-This composition is to be made and placed before the testimony in the tent.

-Lev 16: 13 and put the incense on the fire before YHVH, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die.

-The incense is to be placed on the fire which creates this smoke that will shield Aaron so that he doesn't die and it will cover the cover that is over the mercy seat that is over the testimony.

-Num 17: 4 Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. 10 And YHVH said to Moses, "Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumblings against me, lest they die." 11 Thus did Moses; as YHVH commanded him, so he did.

-Lev 24: 3 Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall arrange it from evening to morning before YHVH regularly. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

-Num 17: 7 And Moses deposited the staffs before YHVH in the tent of the testimony. 8 On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.

-Num 18: 2 And with you bring your brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may join you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony.

-Whatever the testimony is, it's a physical object, you can put things before it, and you can screen it with the veil of the testimony which is inside the tent of the testimony. The testimony is so important that the things that are around it are there for the purpose of the testimony.

-Exo 25: 8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. 9 Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

-What God is telling Moses is that he wants him to make for him a holy place because he wants to dwell in the midst of his people. He is going to make God a tabernacle according to the pattern shown him on the mount. The tabernacle is referred to as the tabernacle of the testimony.

-Exo 38: 21 These are the records of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were recorded at the commandment of Moses, the responsibility of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

-Num 1: 50 But appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it and shall camp around the tabernacle. 53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony."

-Num 10: 11 In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony,

-When the tabernacle was erected we get a little bit more information about the testimony.

-Exo 40: 17 In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. 18 Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. 19 And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as YHVH had commanded Moses. 20

He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as YHVH had commanded Moses.

-Exo 25: 16 And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you. 21 And 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.

-Whatever this testimony is, it's something that God is giving to Moses and he is going to put it in the ark of the testimony, which will be behind the veil of the testimony, which will be in the tabernacle of the testimony, surrounded by the tent of the testimony. In the order we are presenting this we still don't know what exactly is the testimony?

-Exo 25: 21 And 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. 22 There 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.

-YHVH is going to meet with Moses at the testimony, where this communication will take place. Where the ark could be known as just the box of the testimony. It's the box that you put the testimony in.

-Exo 26: 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.

-Exo 30: 6 And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you.

-Things can be placed before it, things can screen it, things can be over it, and things can be around it. It's the place where God will meet and communicate his intentions to Moses. It's placed in a tent which is then called the tent of the testimony, inside the tabernacle of the testimony, inside a box which is called the ark of the testimony. What exactly are we talking about that is inside the box? We know it's called the testimony but what is it and what is on it? This is where speculation comes in, a lot of people want to put a lot of things in the box and on the testimony. What does the bible say?

-1Kin 8: 8 And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 9 There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, where YHVH made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. (See also 2 Chr 5: 9-10)

-According to this the only thing in the ark are the two tablets that Moses put there. Now if this hold up this testimony that we are talking about is also known as the two tablets placed in there by Moses. Nothing else was in there.

-Heb 9: 3 Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, 4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. 5 Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

-However, the only thing that is found in the ark of the testimony according to 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 5 is the two tablets. We know that the testimony is also called the two tablets, but what is found on the two tablets? Do we know how big they are? We know that they are made of stone but what was written on them? What does the bible say is written on these tablets?

-Exo 31: 18 And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

-Here we have two stone tablets of the testimony, made of stone, written on by the finger of God, and they are to be stored in the ark. Biblically, at this point we don't know what the finger of God wrote, it's still a mystery.

-Exo 32: 15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. 16 The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

-Here it tells us the Moses held the two tablets of the testimony in his hand. We know they are stone, but what kind of stone? We are talking about the creator of the universe and that he wrote on the two tablets with his finger. Tablets that are written on both sides, on the front and on the back. It was written from within and without from this and from this. The tablets were the work of God and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. What does the bible say is written on the two tablets, the original testimony? To know what was written on this original first set of tablets we have to go to the Book of Deuteronomy. Nowhere in the Book of Deuteronomy does it talk about the testimony in reference to the two tablets. In the following two verses the word testimonies is not talking about the same thing as the two stone tablets.

-Deu 4: 45 These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the rules, which Moses spoke to the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt,

-Deu 6: 20 "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that YHVH our God has commanded you?'

-In the Book of Deuteronomy we don't have the phrase the tent of the testimony, the tabernacle of the testimony, or the ark of the testimony. In Deuteronomy we have Moses first person account where he is speaking and he is going to tell us what is written on those two tablets.

-Deu 4: 12 Then YHVH spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. 13 And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

-Moses said that YHVH declared his covenant to you which he commanded you to do. A covenant that was spoken from the fire and these are the things that you are to do, and it's called the Ten Words, these are ten things or matters, and it's called the covenant. The covenant is ten things. I want to know what YHVH wrote on those stones. He wrote these ten things which are also called the covenant, many English bibles call this the Ten Commandments but that's not what the Hebrew says. What does the Hebrew bible say was written on the tablets?

-Deu 5: 22 "These words YHVH spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

-Many bibles translate the Hebrew for “and he added no more” with “and was not heard again”. Here it implies that he spoke with a loud voice that was never heard again, but this is not what the Hebrew text says. He said these things and He added no more. He wrote these things on tablets of stone and He added no more. There is nothing else on the stones, he added no more.

-Deu 9: 9 When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that YHVH made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10 And YHVH gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that YHVH had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. 11 And at the end of forty days and forty nights YHVH gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

-When we follow it through and let the bible speak for itself we read that we have these two tablets and on the two tablets is the covenant which was the covenant that was spoken from the midst of the fire. It was written on two stone tablets with the finger of God within and without, on this side and on that side and it was given to Moses and placed in the ark. This document is the tablets of the covenant, the covenant that was spoken from the midst of the fire on the day of assembly. There are also other episodes where Moses gets others laws, and statutes, and judgments. What goes in the box? The testimony. What’s the testimony? The two tablets. We call it the ten words. Ten words go on these stone tablets and nothing else. It might be tempting to want to put other things on the tablets. This doesn’t do anything to take away from other things that were written on scrolls that later became part of the covenant.

-What is YHVH’s testimony? What did YHVH write with his finger? Scripture is clear. You just simply need to read. It’s tempting to put other things on the tablets. It’s also tempting to put other things in the box. (See Hebrews 9:4) Scripture is clear, within the Hebrew Scriptures we have a record of what was written with the finger of God on stone tablets within and without, placed in a box called the box of the covenant, placed in a tabernacle known as the tabernacle of the testimony, placed in a tent known as the tent of the testimony. Only put on the two tablets what YHVH wrote, don’t add to or take away and only put in the box what YHVH told Moses to put in the box.

Shabbat Shalom, Shavua Tov

THIS WEEK IN TORAH

MAY 18, 2019

This week’s Torah Portion Emor: “Speak” (Leviticus 21:1 – 24:23) Holiness and the Priests, Laws of a Kohen, Laws of a Kohen Gadol, Disqualifying blemishes, Safeguarding the offerings, Terumah, Blemished animals, Acceptable offerings, Desecration and sanctification of God’s name, Feasts of YHVH, Sabbath, Passover (Pesach), Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), Omer count, Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), Day of Atonement, Feast of Booths (Succos), Lamps (Menorah), Bread for the Tabernacle (Show-Bread), Punishment for blasphemy, An eye for an eye.

“This Week in Torah” FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/571648826269105/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

-UNCC Mt. Zion Archaeological Project, Dig Mt. Zion (2019):

<https://digmountzion.uncc.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/digmountzion/>

-Blossoming Rose Israel Tours (2019 – 2020):

<https://blossomingrose.org/israel-tours/>

-Tabor & Nichols Israel Tour 2020 – Walking the Ancient Paths: 2/28/2020 – 3/10/2020

<https://blossomingrose.org/israel-tours/tabor-nichols-walking-the-ancient-path-tour-2020/>

UNITED ISRAEL WORLD UNION (UIWU) WEBSITES

-UIWU Official Website: <https://unitedisrael.org/>

-UIWU YouTube Website:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq31WAlio9zC1eXDzrEVzlg/videos?view_as=public

-UIWU Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/unitedisraelworldunion/>

-UIWU Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/unitedisrael/>

-UIWU President, Tabor Blog, Religion Matters from the Bible to the Modern World:

<https://jamestabor.com/>

-UIWU Executive Vice-President, Ralph Buntyn, “Remembering David Horowitz”:

<https://unitedisrael.org/category/remembering-david-horowitz/>

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