

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 298

Exodus 25, Part 3

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### Episode Summary

Exodus 25 is about more than the Ark of the Covenant, the subject of the previous two episodes. Exodus 25:23-40 provides God's instructions to Moses about two other sacred objects: the Bread of the Presence (the so-called "Shewbread") and the Golden Lampstand (Menorah). In this episode of the podcast, we examine those two objects as to their nature and meaning in Israelite worship and thought.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 298: Exodus 25, Part 3. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike. How are you doing?

**MH:** Pretty good. The move to Jacksonville is getting *realer* all the time. [laughs]

**TS:** Alright. Did you all find a place?

**MH:** Yeah, we did. We've sold ours. That has officially closed. So at the moment, we are no longer owners of the house we're living in, at least for the duration. We're going to move right after the year turns (January 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, something like that). And we did get a place in Jacksonville, so we have to go through the closing process there yet. But when you do those things, it's just kind of, "Yeah, we're actually moving." We've talked about this for I don't know how many months. But yeah, it's going to happen. It's getting real.

**TS:** That's awesome.

**MH:** The pugs are excited.

**TS:** I bet. Do you'll have a yard up there? Do they get to run around outside, in an area?

**MH:** Yeah, we do. But we have to watch Norman. There's a farm right behind our house here. He's little enough that the plant life at the end of our property keeps him out of the farmer's field. But he tries to push the envelope there from time to time. But other than that, we could let them out and let them loose—just watch that they don't go in the street in the front. But there's no traffic there, just the border. And then the back is the farm. But this place has a fenced-in backyard, which has been the thing that I wanted. So I'm happy with it.

**TS:** Well, you're trading a farm for alligators, so you have to make sure...

**MH:** Right. [laughs] It's an *alligator* farm now. No, we're not going to be near any of those because we're not near water. But who knows? You get a hurricane or something and it might blow one into your yard, I guess. [laughs] I'm not expecting that.

**TS:** Well, what's more exciting to me is that long trip that y'all are going to be taking, driving to Jacksonville. You're going to take, what, two weeks?

**MH:** I'm looking forward to that.

**TS:** That's a great excuse to do that. That's awesome. I like that.

**MH:** Yeah. I'm expecting it'll take 10-12 days at least. It might take two weeks.

**TS:** Are y'all going to see anything special?

**MH:** Oh, yeah. My daughter and her husband are going with us. (They're moving with us.) They want to see the Grand Canyon, so we're going to take the southern route. It's during the winter so the heat won't be overbearing. So we'll stop at the Grand Canyon. They want to stop in Roswell because we have friends in Roswell. Plus, Amy's husband has never seen it. So we'll stop at the UFO museum and do Roswell stuff. It'll be interesting to see what the town's like when the festival isn't going on. My expectation is that it's going to be kind of dead. So we'll do that. They've mentioned New Orleans. They want to stop there. I've been there two or three times. The food's good. If we stay there a day, I would go to Stephen Ambrose's World War II museum. So I'm putting that away in the back of my head to spend a day there. It's just that kind of stuff. We actually just started working on the itinerary.

**TS:** That's fun. That's awesome. That'll be more fun than anything.

**MH:** Yeah, I like road trips. I'm sure the pugs will be up for it. It'll be... We have some logistic hurdles to plan for, obviously, but I think it'll be fun. I'm looking forward to it. We'll have to do video along the way.

**TS:** Seriously. Yeah, you need to be posting...

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**MH:** We'll have to do video.

**TS:** That'll be cool.

**MH:** So I'll leave that to the kids and Drenna.

**TS:** There you go. Well, Mike, we have some news to announce about the ETS and SBL conference. We're not going to be covering it. We're going to take this year off, although you'll be there for a few days. But we're not going to be doing our full shebang. Therefore, no live meet-up for our 300<sup>th</sup> episode. Teardrop. I'm sad about that, because 300 is such a big one, Mike. It's been almost five years. Basically, five years—300 episodes. So that's a good run.

5:00

**MH:** That's kind of crazy. It really is, when you think about it.

**TS:** When we got to 100, we said, "We're going to do something for 200." And then on 200, "We've got to do something for 300." We haven't yet, Mike. We have got—at some point—to do something for one of these major milestones. Throw a big party or something. Because we deserve it.

**MH:** Yeah, I'm a party kind of guy. [laughter]

**TS:** I know! That's part of the problem!

**MH:** [Laughs] I'll just be filled with ideas!

**TS:** That's part of the problem! I'm going to have to force you or something. I don't know. But we're going to *have* to celebrate at one point or another.

**MH:** Let's go to Tokyo for it, because I want to see a pug café. How's that? That's my only reason to go to Tokyo.

**TS:** I'll go anywhere. You just have to tell me where you're willing to go. Because when I mention stuff, you're like, "Nah, nah." So...

**MH:** That's the only idea I have.

**TS:** I'll go to Tokyo. Yeah. Let's do it.

**MH:** [laughs] I'm sure you would.

**TS:** Don't push me, because I'll book it today. I mean it. We need to celebrate. So having said that, again, unfortunately we will not be having a meet-up in San Diego during the conference. And Mike, you're only going to be there for a few

days. So I can only imagine, you're already tied up and limited. You're not going to be... Are you going to be speaking anywhere?

**MH:** No, I'm not speaking anywhere, which is nice. It'll be a break. I feel like I need a break. So I won't be doing that. But we'll do a summary report at some point for the podcast while we're there.

**TS:** Yeah, we're going to do a podcast with just me and Mike, having a summary of what he's seen and done. But we won't have any live interviews, and you're going to be in and out. So maybe next year. We'll pick it back up next year.

**MH:** Next year is in Boston. Heads up. Let's celebrate at Fenway Park.

**TS:** Yeah, I need to figure out what our episodes land on there, because... Since we haven't celebrated...

**MH:** Let's do 100.

**TS:** We haven't celebrated any other milestone, really. So I don't care. Whatever it is, if it's episode 319, we're going to celebrate it at Fenway. We're going to do something. We've got to.

**MH:** Yeah. I'd be up for Fenway Park.

**TS:** I'll put my thinking cap on, and we'll figure something out, Mike. I'm going to force you. If anything... Let me have this. If you don't... I want to party. So let me have this. It's a lot of work we've been doing. I want some applause [Trey applauds]. Give it up for me and you. [MH laughs] It's a lot of work, Mike! I'm not going to lie. You know this.

**MH:** I know.

**TS:** We've put a lot of work into this.

**MH:** I know. It's a lot of hours. My idea of a reward is a nap. [laughs]

**TS:** I hear you. I hear that, trust me. Alright, last part—Part 3 of Exodus 25. We're getting close to the end of... Well, not really. But we're inching our way toward the end of Exodus. But at least...

**MH:** Yeah, 25 is... There's just stuff in here, that we had to chop the chapter up. Obviously, it's not going to be that way in most of the other chapters. We did get a little bit stuck here. But you know, I think it's going to be worthwhile. I think it has been worthwhile. People like to park on certain things, and certain things are definitely worth parking on. So that's where we've been. So this will be Part 3.

We'll be done with Exodus 25 today. Trey, if you want to clap, you can clap for that. [laughs] We're out of Exodus 25. This is going to be verses 23-40.

So what we've been doing... The previous two episodes of Exodus 25 were about the Ark of the Covenant. What it is, myths about the Ark... So the rest of the chapter... We have two other objects in this chapter that are associated with the tabernacle. So that's where we're going to spend our time for the rest of this episode, on these two other objects. They are the bread of the Presence (the table of the bread, otherwise known as the shewbread—that King James English) and the golden lampstand (or the menorah). So both of these objects are mentioned in this chapter and that's what we want to cover. So I'm going to start, in order, with the bread of the Presence. This is Exodus 25:23-30. I'll just read what the text has here. God tells Moses,

**<sup>23</sup> “You shall make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. <sup>24</sup> You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it. <sup>25</sup> And you shall make a rim around it a handbreadth wide, and a molding of gold around the rim. <sup>26</sup> And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. <sup>27</sup> Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. <sup>28</sup> You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. <sup>29</sup> And you shall make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. <sup>30</sup> And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly.**

10:00

So that's the description of the table for the bread and the bread of the presence. The bread of the presence is going to be mentioned elsewhere in Leviticus. We'll get to that in a moment, because we're going to need to make some comments about what the whole point was. But I want to start off here by referring to John Currid's commentary. We've used his book *Egypt and the Old Testament* and we've also referenced his Exodus commentary. So in that commentary, he writes this:

After having dealt with the only piece of sanctuary furniture in the Holy of Holies [MH: (i.e., the Ark)], God now describes the nature of the furniture in the Holy Place, the next most sacred area of the tabernacle. As the priest entered the Holy Place, the table of shewbread stood on his right-hand side. [Martin] Luther translated the Hebrew term for the bread of Presence as *Schaubrot*, from which William Tyndale derived the word 'shewbread'. That terminology is still quite common today... God's directives for the construction of the table of shewbread are very similar to those given for the building of the ark: both are to be made out of acacia wood (cf. 25:10), totally overlaid with pure gold (cf. 25:11), and have a

gold border around them (cf. 25:11)... The table of shewbread is, like the ark of the covenant, to be carried by poles. Obviously, the purpose of these is similar as well—so that no human hand should touch the sacred furniture and thereby profane it. That purpose is highlighted by the fact that the directive for constructing the rings and poles for the table is cast in almost exactly the same terms as the command to make the ark (25:12–15). Yet there is one major difference: the poles of the table are not permanently set in the rings, as was the case for the ark. The table of shewbread is clearly holy, but it does not possess the same level of holiness as the ark, which is most holy.

Now that's fairly self-evident. I just wanted to highlight a few of the things about the relationship to the Ark here. It's kind of obvious, in the design and the carrying and whatnot. So Currid summarizes that nicely. But I want to get into what the point of the bread was. Because that's sort of what this table is known for. What's the big deal? What's the purpose and function of this? The Ark had several functions that we talked about in the previous two episodes. But what about the bread? Bread just kind of sits there. So does it have a function? What's going on here?

For this, I think a good source—a really interesting source, anyway—is Roy Gane's article, entitled "The Bread of the Presence and Creator in Residence." This is a *Vetus Testamentum* scholarly journal article from 1992. And Gane might be familiar to some in our audience. Roy Gane is a Seventh Day Adventist Old Testament scholar. I've heard him at ETS. The Adventist Theological Society meets the same week at the same place. They glom all these societies together the week before Thanksgiving. I've heard Gane present before. And usually it's something... His specialty is Levitical stuff, food laws, ritual... Because the Adventists are really into this because of the dietary rules for their religion. The Adventists are also known for eschatology. Many of us would think that some of their eschatology is kind of strange. We'll grant that, but they tend to be biblical literalists as well—seven 24-hour day creationists, that sort of thing. So the Adventists are known for these things. And they make contributions along these lines that evangelicals will dip into, depending on what your position is as an evangelical on some of these things. So Gane has some really good, interesting content when it comes to ritual. So this article I found useful. I want to quote from it for the sake of this episode about the bread of the Presence. Gane writes this, to start off:

Analysis of the Israelite "bread of the presence" and its ritual demonstrates the theological importance of ritual detail.

Now catch this:

15:00

Seemingly minor differences to non-Israelite [MH: (i.e., pagan)] cultic bread-laying combine to convey a fundamentally different theological statement.

So Gane is going to compare and contrast ritual things and procedures. And he's going to draw attention to some specific differences in the way these things are described that make a theological point. So back to Gane. He says:

The aspects of the "bread of the presence" and its ritual which are unique within the Israelite cult [MH: again, "cult" is just a ritual system, a liturgy system] reveal the special significance of this bread. Uniqueness is found in the designations (*hap*)*pānim*, "of the presence," and *berit olam*, "eternal covenant", and the arrangement of the bread *tamid*, "regularly," once a week on the Sabbath. While (*hap*)*pānîm*, *berit olam* and *tamid* emphasize that the deity resides continually with his people [MH: So Yahweh is with his people.], the limitations inherent in the ritual, by contrast with non-Israelite cultic bread-laying, mitigate the anthropomorphism of the theological statement.

Now that's academese for this. Let me interpret this. What Gane is going to argue is that if you look at other ancient Near Eastern bread rituals, they are *filled* with anthropomorphic language. And what he's targeting there is the idea of the deities eating and feasting and drinking these offerings. And what Gane is going to suggest (and what others have suggested—this is nothing original to Gane) is that this creates the impression (and in pagan cultures, in some cases, the belief) that the deity is sustained (or placated or something) by these offerings. And that idea is conveyed by their presence (their anthropomorphized descriptions) eating and feasting, along with these rituals. And his point is that when you get to the Israelite system, you don't have that. Yeah, God is pleased with the offering. He smells the smoke and all that stuff. But there are differences that very carefully convey the notion that Yahweh isn't coming to feast and drink and be sustained. Yahweh needs no sustenance from people. So he's going to zero in on a few of these details. So Gane, along the way, cites Umberto Cassuto's Exodus commentary at this point, because he finds it useful in regard to the uniqueness of Israelite bread rituals. So I'm going to quote Cassuto. I'm not going to use Gane here, but I'm going to go right to Cassuto. Because I think his description is worth noting here. So Cassuto writes:

Also in regard to the Table [MH: of the Presence], the religion of Israel made fundamental innovations, and introduced important changes in the usage current in the ancient East. Among the neighbouring peoples the table, which was used for serving the offerings to the gods, played an important role in the worship... In Mesopotamia they would arrange on the table (*paššûru*) the foods that had been prepared as a meal for the gods, such as boiled or roasted flesh, placed in dishes or plates, loaves of bread, jars of wine, milk and honey, and various kinds of fruit, recalling the tables set before kings. The Egyptians practised similar customs in the worship of their gods, and the other peoples of the countries of the East did likewise... The practice was based on the belief that the gods, who, like human

beings, also needed food, actually ate and drank, in some traditional manner, the foods and the drinks that were put before them, like a king who eats and drinks of the repast that his servants have set before him on his table.

The ritual use of the table continued also among the Israelites, but not without innovations and changes consonant with the character of Israel's faith. In the Israelite view it was not only inconceivable to associate concepts of eating and drinking in their material sense with the conception of Divinity...

**I would say there is one exception to that. It's Genesis 18. But that's not ritual. Nevertheless, Cassuto writes, though they consider this inconceivable...**

...but it is related even of a human being like Moses that when he drew near to the Divine sphere 'he neither ate bread nor drank water' (Exod. 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 18). Hence, the function of the table in the Israelite sanctuary is not like that of the table in the idolatrous shrines.

**Just pay attention to this listing that Cassuto has. It's very interesting.**

20:00

The parts of the sacrifices that were set aside for God were not prepared by boiling or roasting, and were not placed in dishes or plates upon the table, but were burned on the altar, in the sanctuary courtyard, as though the only way to bring them near to the Deity [MH: to Yahweh] was to turn them into vapours and odour, exceedingly fine matter and without substance, which are dispersed in the air and ascend heavenward. The dishes on the table, mentioned in v. 29, remain empty, just as God's throne on the *kappōreth* [MH: the lid of the Ark], stands empty. The same applies to the libations. The priests of the heathen nations, when they offered libations, would pour out the liquid from a large jar into a smaller vessel, like a slave filling his master's cup, or they would pour it on the ground. But among the Israelites, the wine was poured on the flesh that was being burned on the altar, and thus the wine, too, was vaporized in the heat of the fire, and its fumes and fragrance would ascend heavenward. The vessels for libation standing on the table, which are also mentioned in v. 29, likewise remained empty. The same applied also to the bread; the portion of the cereal oblations intended for the Lord was also consumed on the altar. The 'bread of the Presence' referred to in v. 30 was given to the priests to eat (Lev. 24:5-9), and was kept on the table for a complete week in order that the priests who ministered to God should have the privilege of eating from God's table. Thus the table and the empty vessels upon it were only a symbol.

**That's really quite interesting how the Israelites would intentionally not do certain things to create a contrary impression of Yahweh as opposed to the other gods. And it's equally interesting that the ones who eat from God's table aren't God. God doesn't need to be sustained, it's the priests. And that has all sorts of**



implications for the trajectory. This is part of the theological trajectory about the royal priesthood, which we are. Believers in Jesus (who is the ultimate high priest)... We are one with him, united to the body of Christ. We are the body of Christ. We are a holy priesthood, as Peter tells us. We eat from the Lord's Table, too. We celebrate the Lord's Table until he comes. These thought trajectories are not accidental. They are intentional. They're designed to convey certain theological messaging.

Now the connection between the bread of the Presence and the Sabbath is another item. It's interesting. This is actually described in Leviticus 24:5-9. I'll read it:

**<sup>5</sup>“You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. <sup>6</sup>And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. <sup>7</sup>And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the LORD regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. <sup>9</sup>And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD's food offerings, a perpetual due.”**

Now Gane notes that passage when he's quoting Cassuto. Then he adds this footnote:

Furthermore, there is in the "bread of the presence" ritual, a positive redefinition of bread-laying by linking the bread to the Sabbath, and thus to creation. It is suggested, therefore, that the bread represents the concept that YHWH is Israel's resident Creator-Provider who, unlike other ancient Near-Eastern deities, acknowledges no dependence upon human food.

Gane proceeds therefore to make some specific observations through the rest of the article. I'll just summarize these for the sake of time.

a) He notes that there's no paired libation offering in Leviticus 24. Bread is the only food. This is quite different than non-Israelite rituals.

b) He also notes and drills down on the word *panim* (presence). It signifies a personal presence, the presence of God. You don't have the over-anthropomorphizing here like you do with ancient Near Eastern rituals, whether feasting or drinking. The gods are feasting and drinking.

c) Numbers 4:7 is a parallel of the bread of the presence phrase. It says this: “And over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a

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cloth of blue and put on it the plates, the dishes for the incense, the bowls,” and so on and so forth. So you have “table of the bread of the presence” or “table of the presence.” Now Gane writes this:

This suggests that the term has to do with location rather than with a physical characteristic of the loaves, such as their appearance.

So the location is an issue because it’s in a whole new place. It’s directly... It’s right there, where God is thought to reside.

d) He has another thought here. He says the totality of the furniture assemblage means, in his thinking, that the bread cannot be understood as an isolated element in the ritual of the tabernacle. The table on which it is placed, the lampstand, and the incense burner must be taken together collectively as the furniture of the dwelling of God. After all, the purpose of the sanctuary is to provide a place for YHWH to dwell among his people. And then he proceeds to get into what do all these observations mean. So he writes as follows:

[The Bread of the Presence phrase] emphasizes an anthropomorphic aspect of the cult [MH: at least one of them]: The tabernacle as the dwelling-place of YHWH. [MH: So God has a house. Something of an anthropomorphism.] This anthropomorphism is strengthened by the fact that there are libation vessels as well as bread on the table, which appears fully set for a meal. We expect Lev. xxiv 5-9 to inform us that the vessels are to be used once per week for a libation accompanying the "bread of the presence" offering. That this is not the case appears to be in harmony with the tendency to avoid gross anthropomorphism [MH: this idea of the gods feasting and drinking] implicit in Exod. xxx 9, [MH: where God says, “You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it or a burnt offering or a grain offering; you shall not pour a drink offering on it”] prohibiting libations on the inner altar...

In other words, God tells them not to do certain things that the ancient Near Eastern rituals—the feeding of the gods, the bringing libations to the gods... They include all these things. But the Israelite way of doing this not only excludes certain of these things, but God forbids it.

The changing of the bread on the Sabbath is crucial for the meaning of the bread, not only because the weekly rather than daily performance of the ritual shows a distancing from anthropomorphism...

The gods... in ancient Near Eastern thought, the gods need to be sustained every day. Every day they would do this. Not so in Israelite thought. They not

only forbid getting carried away, this over-anthropomorphizing of what's going on here. They eliminate certain parts of it. But they don't even do it every day. And Gane says this is significant, because this is...

... a positive link with the Sabbath, which carries theological freight of its own—especially the idea of creation.

Because the Sabbath was connected to creation. And from this point, Gane notes the work of Wienfeld, between creation and Sabbath in Genesis and the tabernacle and the temple. I'm going to give you just a quick list from Wienfeld because these are kind of interesting.

Wienfeld has further developed the link between creation and the tabernacle/temple. His main points are as follows:

(a) God's dwelling in his sanctuary is considered as "rest"...

Obviously, Sabbath rest. Psalm 132:8 says, "Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might." So this is a place of rest.

(Ps. cxxxii 8, 14), parallel to the concept of the sanctuary in the ancient Near East, and to the seventh day's rest in Genesis (Gen. ii 2-3).

So Psalm 132 thinks of the holy place—the Holy of Holies—as a place of rest. And Wienfeld's point is, because it's described as a place of rest, it links the Tabernacle and the later Temple back to creation week—God resting on the seventh day. If you've read Walton's book on the Lost World of Genesis 1, where creation is really about God building and preparing his own temple come to earth, you're tracking on this right away.

(b) The completion of the tabernacle parallels [MH: Exodus 31:12-17] ... just as it comes at the end of the creation week (Gen. ii 2-3).

30:00 So he's noting the parallel. "Oh, isn't it interesting that we get the Sabbath mentioned at the end of God's work in creation, and we get the Sabbath mentioned at the end of the building of the tabernacle? Might that be intentional?" And Wienfeld says, "Yeah, it is." And Gane, of course, agrees, and to me this is quite coherent.

(c) The seventh day as the day of completion appears both in the tabernacle accounts (Exod. xxiv 15ff.) and in the creation stories,

(c) In the ancient Near East, creation and temple building are associated with the notion of enthronement.

Just recall for a moment (if that sounds a little odd) that Sinai, the Tabernacle, and the Temple are God's home. In God's home is where he rules. It's a throne room, as well. It's not just a living room or a man-cave for the deity, it's a throne room. It's all these things--the Cosmic Mountain (if you've read *Unseen Realm*). It's God's home and the place from which he governs. So this idea with creation and resting and then the same kind of language used of the Tabernacle and Sinai and the Temple... again, this is intentional.

(e) Creation and the enthronement of God are tied together in the Old Testament... [MH: You get this in Psalm 93, Psalm 29:3, and Psalm 29:10.] (Ps. xciii, xxix 3, 10)... The fact that bread, i.e. basic food, is placed upon the golden table inside the sanctuary suggests a more intrinsic connection with creation: YHWH as the Creator continues to provide for and sustain his creatures (cf. Ps. civ 14-15), cxlv 15-16; Job xii 10; Dan. v 23). However, as the Creator, YHWH admits no dependence upon human beings: "Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for Mine is the world and all it holds. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of he-goats?" (Psalm 1:12-13, New Jewish Publication Society translation). Accordingly, while the bread is continually placed on his table to show that the covenant and his creative power are ongoing, YHWH consumes none of it, but assigns it to those who carry out ministry on behalf of his people, who provided the offering in the first place. Because of the covenant with YHWH, Israel is privileged to have the Creator-Provider residing among them.

So something as seemingly ordinary as a few loaves of bread in the Holy Place turn out to be very pregnant with meaning. There's a distinction and a distancing of Yahweh (the God of Israel) from other ancient Near Eastern gods by virtue of what is done and not done with the bread and with the table and with the vessels and utensils and so forth—with these objects. It conveys the notion that Yahweh is self-sustaining and he continues as the Creator and the original provider. He continues to provide sustenance of the creation and for his people—independent of them. There is no dependence. So all of it is designed to make a theological statement. It's theological messaging. This is what we need to have our eye on when it comes to ritual text, just generally. But here, it's a good example.

Let's move to the menorah (or the golden lampstand). This is Exodus 25:31-40. And let's just briefly read some of that. This is very detailed here, but I'll read part of it.

**<sup>31</sup>“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. <sup>32</sup>And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; <sup>33</sup>three cups made like almond blossoms,**

**each with calyx and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.**

The rest is descriptive of the decorations and the branches. You get down to verse 37.

**<sup>37</sup>You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it. <sup>38</sup>Its tongs and their trays shall be of pure gold. <sup>39</sup>It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent of pure gold. <sup>40</sup>And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.**

35:00 So I want to start with Sarna here. Sarna has a few initial observations and some things that are worth pointing out that will set up what I want to do in a moment here. Sarna, in his Exodus commentary, writes this:

No lampstand that incorporates all or even most of the features of the Tabernacle menorah has yet been uncovered in the Near East.

Let me just stop there. That's going to be significant, because you're going to have various scholarly attempts to say that the lampstand of Israel was patterned after something else—the tree of life in Mesopotamia or something else. So Sarna's first statement here, I think, is noteworthy, that as of contemporary times, there's been no archeological artifact discovered in any of these civilizations that accounts for most of (or of course all) of the features of the tabernacle menorah. It's different, is the point.

The famous menorah relief on the Arch of Titus cannot be used to reconstruct that of the Tabernacle. [MH: Why?] It deviates in important details from the prescriptions given here in Exodus, from the rabbinic sources, and from the account of Josephus, who was himself a priest and very likely actually saw the menorah in Herod's Temple. The Roman artist may have changed some details for his own aesthetic purposes, or he may have used a model other than that of the Temple. Moreover, it is likely that Herod's menorah, dating from at least one thousand years after the one in the Tabernacle, was itself the product of change and development.

The menorah prescribed here [in Exodus] is not an idealized retrojection from the furniture in Solomon's Temple.

Let me just stop there. Because a lot of scholars will say that. "Ah, there wasn't really an exodus. There wasn't really a tabernacle or an Ark or any of this stuff. Later on—hundreds of years later in the time of Solomon—then you get this stuff.

Then the writers of Solomon's day sort of make up a fable or a story way back in earlier times, inventing the story about Moses, and then they retroject. They take all these objects and put them back in earlier history and it's all just a fairy tale." Sarna is specifically denying that. And he has a good reason for it, too. He says, The menorah prescribed here [in Exodus] is not an idealized retrojection from the furniture in Solomon's Temple.

The narrative in Kings that depicts the construction of the Temple does not mention such a cultic object;

**Did you catch that? There is no menorah. There is no golden lampstand in the Temple. So it can't be a retrojection.**

...rather, it tells of ten lampstands fashioned for that edifice. They are not clearly described [MH: unlike this section of Exodus, which is very detailed], and there is no evidence that they were of the branched type. Also, they were manufactured of "solid gold" (Heb. *zahav sagur*), whereas the Tabernacle one was made of "pure gold" (Heb. *zahav tahor*). The difference in technical terminology is significant. The former term is of Akkadian origin and indicates a northern source for the gold. The latter term is much closer to Egyptian metallurgic nomenclature, suggesting a more local, southern provenance.

**And again, an Egyptian flavoring to this. If you were retrojecting—if you were making up the story of deliverance from Egypt—would you really think of details like that? That's Sarna's suggestion.**

Other affinities with Egypt are also discernible. The term for the shaft (Heb. *kaneh*) (v. 31) really means "a reed" or "cane plant." It usually appears in the Bible in Egyptian contexts, for the reed flourishes in the Egyptian marshlands. The word here translated "cups" (Heb. *gavi'a*; גָּבִיעַ) is probably of Egyptian origin, and other Pentateuchal usages also have an Egyptian context. Above all, it is the extraordinary cluster of botanical terms and motifs that provides the strongest evidence of the world of ancient Egypt, where art and architecture are distinguished by renditions of plant life. Typical are the treelike columns with their floral decorations on the capitals.

It's very clear that Sarna thinks that, not just the lampstand, but other things (because we quoted from him when we were talking about the Ark of the Covenant)—that it all has an Egyptian flavoring. And it's hard to resist that notion. There are scholars who are not retrojecting skeptics, though, who don't actually think that the lampstand is Egyptian in orientation. We're going to get to one of those in a moment. You could argue that the Tabernacle's description of the menorah's gold makeup and the way it's decorated attaches that narrative—that description—to Egypt. You *could* argue that. After all, the Ark of the Covenant

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being modeled on certain aspects of the Egyptian palanquins (like we talked about in the last episode)... Okay, it would make sense to have any Egyptian context, especially if you have artisans who learned their craft in Egypt and were doing stuff for the Egyptians. They would know how to do this. It would feel normal.

However, there's going to be one notable example: Rachel Hachlili's work. She's a skeptic of all of this. And she has done the most exhaustive work on the Temple menorah (the golden lampstand) to date. So we'll get to her in a moment. But I'm just telling you that it sounds like... And I'm not saying you can't. It sounds like you can make a good argument here for an Egyptian orientation again. You could. But there are other things that Hachlili will point out that make her, at least (and she's not alone), a bit skeptical of how much we want to press this point. But that's probably a fair way of saying it. But for now, let's just track a little bit on the Egyptian idea. Let's just go down that road and see how it could be coherent in a different respect, with the theological messaging.

So the Egyptian elements, if they're there (if they're legitimate) are important. Internet researchers and village atheists love to say that the Menorah is a copy of the Mesopotamian tree of life. They do this... They want to argue that because that lets them (they think in their heads) connect the Menorah to the Asherah poles and Ishtar and other Mesopotamian goddesses and all this kind of stuff. So at the very least, know that no, the Mesopotamian angle doesn't really work because you have all this Egyptian stuff. So that's one thing to point out, for the internet people and the village atheists that do their research on the internet. All of that Mesopotamian arguing back to a representation of the goddess in the tabernacle—that's where they want to go. All of that is completely unnecessary and it's incoherent. In general terms, while the Menorah deserves to be connected to the Genesis Tree of Life... You could make that argument. It's at least some kind of tree shape. The Egyptian elements are sufficient for that connection. You don't need Mesopotamia at all. If you understand what Egyptian temples were trying to convey—their theology—you don't need Mesopotamia at all.

I'm going to reference an article here by Baines on Egyptian temple symbolism. I'm just going to read a paragraph from it. If you were looking at a... It's hard to visualize this, maybe, but at the entrance to an Egyptian temple, they would have these pylons—these really tall doorway structures. And you would go in. There would be this long hallway. Archeologists refer to it as the hypostyle hallway. You have these huge columns on either side. And you would keep going down this, maybe pass through another set of doors (or a couple of sets) until you get to the inner sanctuary (the Holy of Holies, as it were). And inside that sanctuary, behind the doors, you would have the gold figure of the deity (an idol). What you don't realize is that when you were walking, you would actually be going up. With Egyptian temples, there was always a slight incline on the way to the deity, and that's because the statue of the deity would either be placed on a

mound of dirt or in a little ship on a mound. Because what an Egyptian temple commemorated was the rise of the earth from the original creation sea (the watery abyss). When the original mound (the primeval mound) surfaces from the water and creates the earth, and the deity is there with it and on it, it's trying to take your mind as an Egyptian back to the creation moment—the primeval mound. And this is why the hypostyle hallway (the columns there) would be decorated with (you guessed it) marsh vegetation—flowers, lotus flowers, papyrus reeds, all this stuff. Because you were journeying through the waters of the marsh to the primeval mound where the creation moment and the deity [inaudible]. Baines here:

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The hypostyle hall exhibits the greatest condensation of symbolism. Apart from cosmographic features on its walls and ceilings, the capitals of the columns locate it within the horizontally ordered cosmographic scheme. The commonest designs for capitals are papyrus umbels and lotus flowers. So that by implication, the columns themselves are the stems of aquatic plants. The shape of the column may mimic a plant in several ways. Apart from allusions to the origin of stone architecture in flimsier materials, this means that the hall is a symbolic primeval swamp out of which the mound of the sanctuary emerges.

That's from Baines' article on Egyptian temple symbolism. So it could be that the decoration of the plant (the tree—the golden lampstand) that has... You could make a good argument that the decorations are very Egyptian in orientation—that what's being commemorated by the presence of the lamp is (guess what?) the presence of the Creator. You don't need Mesopotamian Ishtar worship to align the tabernacle symbolism with something in the ancient Near East that makes sense given the Exodus story. That would be Egypt. So this other trajectory is quite a bit contrived. We'll return to this point a little bit later, because Hachlili is going to argue for more uniqueness than somebody like Sarna or somebody who favors an Egyptian view would give the Temple lampstand or the Tabernacle lampstand. And she has some very specific disconnects with the Mesopotamian stuff.

So that's the Egyptian perspective. And it's coherent. You could see how it would work. But let's go to the Mesopotamian idea and its problems and just spend a little more time on that. Now there are two major studies on the menorah. Carol L. Meyers has a book on it called *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. This is Gorgias Press. That's actually a 2003 reprint. It's 272 pages. Anything Gorgias publishes is going to be expensive. I'm just telling you so you get prepared for sticker shock, if you ever go look this up. The other one is Rachel Hachlili, entitled *The Menorah, the Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form, Significance*. This is a Brill title, and Brill books are also very expensive. This is three times the length of Meyers'. This is the most exhaustive study of the golden lampstand menorah throughout its history and time that there is in print. Actually, it's out of print now, but you could



probably find it used somewhere. Now my copy of Hachlili is packed, because my library is packed. I can't quote Meyers directly, but Hachlili does some of that for me. So I'm going to stick with notes that I have from Hachlili's book and just go with that. So she writes the following. This is pages 35-38:

[Meyers] contends that the description of the Tabernacle menorah has a connection and cultural affinities with Egypt; [MH: so Meyers is in the Egypt camp] she also alludes to this in her interpretation of *qaneh* (=reed) as the plant growing in the swamps of the Nile. Note, however, that Egyptian decoration consists mainly of lotus and papyrus plants rather than the 'flowered capital' featured on the menorah.

She's going to say, "Well, yeah, okay, there are plant decorations, just like the Egyptians would do. But they aren't the precise Egyptian decorations. They're different." So Hachlili goes on in her work, and she's skeptical that the Tabernacle menorah is strictly modeled after anything in Egypt. She's also skeptical that it's an ancient Near Eastern stylized tree, drawing from Mesopotamia. So she writes the following (just to summarize her thoughts):

The origin and original meaning of the menorah have been discussed extensively. Basing his argument on the clay lamps with seven wicks, Albright (1932:161) maintained erroneously that the seven-branched menorah can be traced back to the Land of Israel in the Iron Age. Some scholars argue that the menorah's form originally represented and has close morphological connections with the stylized tree motif, the 'Tree of Life' in ancient art...

**Specifically from the early periods of Syria and Mesopotamia. Especially Sumerian representations.**

The sacred tree held an important place in nearly every sanctuary throughout the land and frequently determined the character of the site, with sites being named after trees (Wensinck 1921:33). [MH: All that is true, she says.] Goodenough (1954, IV:73-74) maintained that 'the menorah was originally a tree... reflected the older representation of the tree... In the menorah, the tree, as a symbol of life, was made a bearer of lights'. [She's quoting Goodenough there.] Some argue that Ancient Near Eastern monuments and seals of the Late Bronze Age 'can thus be seen as a symbolic expression of the existence of sustaining plant life'...

**All this is part of a Mesopotamian trajectory. Hachlili continues:**

The concept of the tree of life or a sacred tree appears in various myths in antiquity and is represented in ancient art, especially in the Near East, as a religious and mythological symbol. It probably lost its significance in the later Hellenistic-Roman world. Yarden contends that this stylized divine tree and the

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fruit of life eventually became a burning tree, a tree of light and a cosmic tree: a symbol of life and immortality...

**She goes through a whole bunch of these and she says, “Well here’s why I don’t buy it.” [laughs] She says:**

The following reasons undermine the theory of comparing the menorah to a stylized [ancient Near Eastern] tree:

- 1) The menorah arms, according to the Exodus description, were formed with reeds (hollow pipes), and not branches, thereby precluding any plant or arboreal themes.
- 2) Comparable material for the decorative elements can be discerned in examples from the Land of Israel and Syria. Accordingly, the influence and origin should be sought in these regions rather than in Egypt [MH: or Mesopotamia].
- 3) The prototype of tree motif in the Ancient Near East usually contains a triple motif of a tree flanked by antithetical animals and sometimes celestial symbols...

**She has various illustrations of this. You’ve probably seen a number of these, where there’s this ancient Sumerian or Mesopotamian tree, and you have two ibexes or something on either side, and they’re climbing up that, or they’re doing something, and you have lions and whatever. This is typical—to have a tree with animals on either side. Sometimes you’ll have astronomical/astrological/celestial symbols on either side or above the tree. So she’s saying this is what you’re typically looking at.**

...C.L. Meyers (1976:119-121) asserts that these motifs are very different in shape, form, and theme from the seven-armed menorah described in literature and in artistic examples [MH: which is why Meyers opts for the Egyptian model]. The tree is a simple stylized plant, often with more or less than seven branches; it appears in various cultic scenes with no comparable scenes in ancient Israelite art.

**And basically, her point is that we don’t have the animals either. So we not only... What’s built in Israel just doesn’t match. You would think if they were trying to strike something with Mesopotamia, it would have at least been decorated with animals or something. But it’s not.**

- 4) The menorah also contains elements symbolic of light; the [Mesopotamian stylized] tree has no such qualities.

5) The seven-armed menorah is a unique form, though based on Near Eastern traditional decorative elements of candelabra and cult vessels in the Iron age.

So her point there is that you don't need to look for trees. This is just a bigger version of something that you can find in ancient Syria and Israel. You don't need to go to Egypt or Mesopotamia. So her conclusion is this:

Thus, the quite common suggestion that the menorah in earliest times may have reflected the shape of a plant or a tree seems to have evolved owing to the association of the menorah with the mistranslation of the Hebrew word *qaneh* (= reed) as 'branch'. [MH: She's saying this is all due to a mistranslation, of translating *qaneh* as branch, which makes people think of trees.] Its form has become too stylized to allow for ancient associations to have survived. The menorah as a unique form with its inherent symbolism of light, is not expressing vegetal [MH: vegetation] or plant life.

Or she would add, the primeval mound, or any of that. She says (this is going to sound a little goofy) the golden lampstand is there to convey the notion of light—God as light, or “Let there be light.” That's it. She's saying we don't need to look for trees. We don't need to look for primeval mounds. There are disconnections with both Egypt and Mesopotamia. “Why are we doing this? This is just a bigger version of candelabra you will find elsewhere in Syria and in ancient Israel. You will find these things. And the whole notion is light.” Which, when you think about it, maybe that's kind of self-evident. So she is on the other side of this. So Meyers is representative (and Sarna) of the “let's get an Egyptian orientation of this thing.” And Hachlili's like, “No, we don't need any of that.”

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So a few mop-up notes here. Hachlili's extensive work includes detailed study of the vocabulary of the lampstand description. And she compares it to later sources. She doesn't believe, for instance, that lampstand in the tabernacle had seven arms. She says, “The narrative says six, so that's what it has.” She doesn't count the central shaft as an arm but acknowledges that other scholars do. And then there's the reference in Zechariah 4:2.

**<sup>2</sup>And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.**

So she's saying, “Look, what's being described in Zechariah is not the same as what was in the Tabernacle back in Exodus. That one had six branches. Whatever's going on in Zechariah had seven, and later menorah will copy what's going on in Zechariah.” She agrees, as well, with Josephus. He has this

comment that the menorah (or the lampstand) in Herod's temple had 70 parts or elements—like if you took it apart, there were 70 distinct elements to it. And Hachlili agrees with that. And in her book, she actually goes through the Exodus narrative and shows how you can get the number 70 for its constituent elements, which is kind of interesting—70, completion, wholeness, taking it back to creation and the Sabbath. There you go. You often don't see that, but Josephus made the comment, and she says, "He was right." Hachlili also disagrees with scholars like Sarna who say that Solomon's temple didn't have the Tabernacle lampstand, but instead had ten menorahs. Remember we read that from Sarna. Here's her counter-argument to that. She writes:

C. L. Meyers contends that the menorah envisioned by Zechariah cannot be identified with the Tabernacle menorah, and so she concludes that the Second Temple menorah bore a closer resemblance to the Tabernacle menorah than to the menorah in Solomon's Temple (1979:57). [MH: So she takes the Zechariah thing a little bit differently than Hachlili would.] It is difficult to accept C.L. Meyers's thesis. The Bible states that all the Tabernacle cult vessels of the Tent of Meeting were transferred to Solomon's Temple at its inauguration (1 Kgs. 8:4)...

**<sup>4</sup>And they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up.**

So basically, Hachlili is saying, "Look, okay, we don't get the golden lampstand mentioned in the Temple. We get these ten going on. But we have 1 Kings 8:4 that says that all the stuff in the tent was brought into the temple." So she doesn't buy that particular sort of argument on Sarna's part.

Anyway, just a few other things that she's tracking on or positions that she has. Her bone to pick in this verse admittedly really lands on, "Is the lampstand to be considered a vessel?" You could quibble about that. But 1 Kings 8:4 nevertheless does say that everything in the tent (the tent is the Tabernacle) was brought into the Temple. So it seems like she has a good argument there, or at least a defensible one.

So after all of that, what does Hachlili (if she's done the most exhaustive research here) think the whole thing means? What does she think the menorah means? Well, I've already hinted at that. Light is a big deal. So just summarizing, we have to recognize that a lot of the tradition that you get in Judaism, both in terms of the Second Temple period and later (the rabbinic era and on into more modern times), does not go back to the original Tabernacle menorah, but it goes to the Second Temple menorah and stuff that Josephus talks about, like Herod's temple, and even later.

[There are] specimens of three-, five-, nine- and eleven-armed menoroth [that] have been found in the Land of Israel, in the Diaspora, and on clay lamps (Table 111.1); most of those found in the Land of Israel have five arms.

So even back to the Second Temple period, they didn't have a strict template for depicting this, which is her point. Now she writes the following here:

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The Bible relates in detail the function of the menorah in the rituals of the Tabernacle and of Solomon's Temple. In the Tabernacle the priest Aaron was charged with the duty of tending the menorah. Tradition seems to relate that the menorah was kept lit only at night: 'And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps in the evening, he shall burn it' (Ex. 27: 20-21; 30, 7-8; Lev. 24:1-4; Num. 8: 1-4).

In the Temple the menorah was lit by the priests as an important ceremonial element during the daily ritual, regularly in the evening and in the morning, according to the biblical text. In the morning the menorah was cleaned, the wicks were trimmed, and fresh oil was added. The menorah lamps were apparently lit at dusk by the high priest and burned during the night (2 Chron 13:11).

**<sup>11</sup> They offer to the Lord every morning and every evening burnt offerings and incense of sweet spices, set out the showbread on the table of pure gold, and care for the golden lampstand that its lamps may burn every evening. For we keep the charge of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken him.**

So her take on that verse and marrying it to the earlier verse from Exodus is that the lampstand was not kept burning 24/7/365. It was lit every night. In the Second Temple period, though, things were a little bit different. There are second century B.C. sources (Hecataeus is one that she quotes) that likewise relate that the lampstand at Jerusalem had a lamp "which is never extinguished by night or day." There are sources like that. Josephus notes that three lamps were left burning by day. So in the Second Temple period, it was sort of a 24/7/365 thing, but in the Old Testament period it wasn't. So does this discrepancy mean anything? Why the discrepancy between the biblical record and the Second Temple sources? Is there a difference in the ritual? Hachlili says we can't really know for sure, but there was apparently some difference. She says the ritual apparently changed during the Second Temple and the priests lit it during the day. They just kept it burning. So the question is, "Why would they do that?" Who knows? Maybe it had something to do with coming out of the Exile—that we're going to keep the lampstand burning because that's a symbol of our hope that the Lord will be with us every moment of every day from here on out, because we

sinned and we went into exile, and the Lord brought us back. So on and so forth. Maybe that's it. Maybe there's something theologically or religiously or psychologically going on there. But at the end of the day, we don't completely know.

So to wrap up our episode, as to meaning, this is some of Hachlili's concluding thoughts.

As noted previously, scholars differ as to the significance and interpretation of the menorah. In ancient sources it is considered the symbol of God on the basis of sources such as Josephus, Philo, and the rabbinic literature. These maintain that the menorah was a religious sign, the symbol of God himself, by virtue of its lights... [MH: Like God is light, or something.]

Philo (Mos. ii 102, 105) argues that the menorah symbolizes heaven, meaning specifically the planetary system (7 planets)...

The six arms and the center base. Philo goes off on a wild trajectory. But it may not be as wild as you think, because if the Tabernacle is a microcosm of the macrocosm... The creation and earth is the Lord's footstool or his residence. And that's the culminating moment of creation, when everything was created. There were Jews who would argue that the Tabernacle and Temple were a microcosm of the universe that Yahweh had created. So this talk about the planets... You could see how that would make sense to Jews who were thinking in these terms and at that time.

Other sources argue that the menorah is equated with God leading Israel as a pillar of fire; the light symbolizes the Shekhinah [MH: often pronounced sheh-KINE-uh today, but is really shekh-ee-NAH]... The menorah was a reflection of the heavenly menorah indicating the light of the Law... [MH: that's another view] 'The menorah was significant for Jewish piety in a great variety of senses but essentially as a mystic symbol of light and life- God present and manifest in the world-through which the Jew hopes for immortality'.

She's just summarizing different views. Personally... And I'm going to agree with where she lands. Because it's the simplest... It's Ockham's Razor here. I think that the creation context of the Bread of the Presence actually helps us here—at least helps by analogy and prevents us from over-reaching the few data we have in regard to what the meaning of the lampstand was. In 1 Samuel 3:3 calls the menorah 'the lamp (or the light) of God'. By analogy the bread is the life sustenance brought forth by the Creator, so it would stand to reason that the menorah hearkens back to God calling light out of darkness. In other words, if the bread hearkens back to... Because it's linked to the Sabbath. Remember that. If the bread hearkens back to the Creator providing physical sustenance for his creation and maintaining that, then it would stand to reason that the light of the

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menorah hearkens back to God calling light out of darkness. In other words, as the bread takes us back to creation, so does the menorah. To me, that seems sensible to me. And this is where Hachlili lands. God is the source of both. Light is essential for life... Think of the sun—the main light-bearer. You have to have light for life. And so the presence of the light is as important as the bread to reinforce creation imagery, which is important for making the Holy Place this microcosm of the created universe, which is God’s domain. The Creator has come to abide with his people.

Thinking back to God’s original plan, what was Eden? God wants a human family. He creates embodied humans. That means they can’t come to him. He has to come to them. For them to live (they’re not spiritual beings), they need a physical place to live. They need it to be habitable, capable of sustaining life. This is what Genesis is about. Genesis isn’t answering our questions. It’s telegraphing important theological ideas, like who God is, what his intention is, what does creation mean, why did he bother? All these big-picture things. And when you start linking language in Genesis to the Tabernacle and to its furnishings, that tells you something. It tells you... Maybe it’s a little overstated to say that the Tabernacle or the Temple was a microcosm of the universe. Maybe that’s a little overstated. But it’s not overstated to say that the Temple and the Tabernacle were supposed to be analogies to the Creator living with his people—living with humans—at creation, which was his original desire and plan and design. These two things connected are supposed to make you think of God’s purpose—what God wants. And the creation—the fact that God acted the way he did... creating us, giving us a habitable world, and being ever-present to sustain it. At the very least, that’s what the tabernacle is supposed to make you think of. And when you get into the bread imagery and even the light imagery... You have the priesthood involved. We’re believer-priests. We partake of these things. God is there to sustain *us*. He’s not there to have us sustain *him*. These are big picture theological items that you can get legitimately... You don’t have to make this stuff up. You just observe, “Hey, there are connections between the tabernacle stuff and the creation week.” That’s intentional. It means something. It’s not contrived, because the vocabulary is the same. And you have really things that you can’t miss, like Sabbath and light, that connect the two things.

So I think, at the end of the day, that’s what these objects are really here for, to remind us of those truths. And it looks kind of ordinary. You need a source of light. You have some bread there. Big deal. Well, theologically, in terms of the messaging, for Israel, in their context, it said a lot. It was a pretty big deal.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. Well, what can we expect from Exodus 26?

**MH:** The short answer is, “I don’t know.” [laughter] Well, the whole chapter is about the Tabernacle. So I think at the very least, I may want to talk a little bit about something I brought up in *Unseen Realm*. The views of the Tabernacle construction, maybe, and (this is the big issue) whether the tent would have fit

into the Temple itself. For those who have read *Unseen Realm*, there's a little bit that I put in there on that. There are some verses in the Old Testament that suggest that the tent was literally moved in between the cherubim, right there at the throne, so that the Ark would be God's footstool and he would be seated above the greater cherubim. That was his seat now and the Ark was his footstool and the whole thing was moved inside. Depending on the way you think you interpret the construction instructions, you can match the dimensions. You *can* do that. But it's controversial. So I'll probably say a little bit about that. But other than that, I'm not sure where I'm going to land as far as chapter 26, or even if we'll just run on into chapter 27. I don't know yet. We might do 26 and 27 together. We'll find out.

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**TS:** Alright. We'll be looking forward to that. That'll probably be about three episodes from now, because next week, we're going to check in live with Mike at the conferences to see how things are going. And then on our 300<sup>th</sup> episode, we're going to do a Q&A for that one. Nothing special. But we will be doing a Q&A, and after that, we'll get back into Exodus. So we'll be looking forward to your update on the conferences. Have a safe trip. Don't forget, we're not going to be there, so don't be looking for us. Unless you see Mike ducking in and out.

**MH:** There you go. If you see me, say hi. [laughs]

**TS:** Alright, Mike. With that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.