

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 304

Exodus 26-27, Part 2

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Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

In Part 1 of our discussion of Exodus 26-27, we talked about the theological messaging of the Tabernacle. Now our attention turns to some historical considerations prompted by some unexpected wording in verses found elsewhere in the Old Testament that appear to mention the Tabernacle when, it would seem, the ancient tent structure of Israel shouldn't be around. Was the Tabernacle still part of Israel's worship after the Temple was built? That's the question we'll tackle in this episode.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 304, Exodus 26 and 27, Part 2. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you?

MH: Pretty good. Busy. We're just about I'd say 75-80% packed. Kind of sitting around, looking at boxes, wondering why we're still here. [laughs] That's pretty much where we're at.

TS: That's the worst. But the trip will be fun.

MH: Oh, yeah.

TS: Well, we're wrapping up Exodus 26 and 27 this week.

MH: Yep, we are. Last time, we talked about these two chapters. It was really about the theological messaging of the instructions and the construction of the Tabernacle. This time, though, I want to dip into something that is historical in orientation but also a controversy. I alluded to this a bit in *Unseen Realm* in the chapter about the Tabernacle and the Temple and sacred space and whatnot. Today, to refresh people's memories of that, we're going to get into the whole question of "Was the Tabernacle (the tent structure) moved inside the Temple once the latter was built?" So a "What happened to the Tabernacle?" kind of episode. And this is actually controversial. And I mentioned in *Unseen Realm* that a particular scholar, Richard Elliot Friedman, has articulated this idea in several publications. And it creates sort of a neat imagery, where the big

cherubim can be the throne of the Lord and the Lord's feet, as it were, metaphorically would rest on the Ark, if this was the case (if it's moved inside).

So Friedman is the scholar who put this forward, really, back in 1980. So this has been around for a while. And he published a book later. This is part of it. It actually works its way into his *Who Wrote the Bible?* book, which was a big best-seller back in the day, which popularized the JEDP theory—the approach to the Pentateuch. It's popped up in other... In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, which was published in 1992, he has the entry on Tabernacle.

So this has been out in a number of sources for a while. And many scholars consider it possible but haven't really glommed onto the idea, largely because... This is going to sound weird. One of the major objections that scholars have is that if it's real—if it's true—then the Tabernacle would have to be historical. [laughs] In the world of critical scholarship, scholars tend to believe that there was no Tabernacle, just like there was no exodus. "There's no Tabernacle, this is a mythical story that people who were living during the era of the Temple take the Temple and they retroject it back into Israel's earlier history. And they make up this predecessor." People are so married to that because of either how they date the presumed sources of the Pentateuch or just how they operate with this evolutionary perspective of Israelite religion. Since they're married to this kind of thinking, they don't really like Friedman's proposal. Because if he's right, then there was a Tabernacle and it gets moved into the Temple, so on and so forth.

Now one particular scholar really hates the idea. And we're going to get to him as well. But in this episode, I want to summarize what Friedman is arguing for, and really what prompted it. And then we'll get into the guy who just hates it the most (Avigdor Hurowitz) and see what criticisms he levels at it. So in this episode, we're going to be talking about what happened to the Tabernacle. Was it still around when the Temple was here? And why would we even think that? Why would we even presume that? Because you would think, "Oh, well, they have the Temple now. They would just get rid of the Tabernacle. Who cares? We've been there, done that, and now we're on to this new thing." There are certain things that prompted Friedman to wonder about that.

5:00

So what I've done is (if you're a subscriber to the MIQLAT newsletter, you get access to the protected folder) I've uploaded one of Friedman's publications, "The Tabernacle in the Temple." This is from *Biblical Archeologist*, way back in 1980. And then when we get to Hurowitz' response, I've also uploaded his article so you can get both sides of this. So Friedman's proposal... Let's just jump in there. His *Biblical Archeologist* article begins this way. He says:

In the September, 1947, issue 77 of *Biblical Archaeologist* appeared Frank M Cross' study (pp 45-68), "The Priestly Tabernacle, in which Cross challenged the prevailing, Wellhausenian view [MH: when you hear Wellhausen, think of the

evolution of Israelite religion from polytheism to monotheism] of the biblical Tabernacle. In the Wellhausenian scheme, the portrayal of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31, 35-40), which is the central place of worship for the Israelites in the wilderness, is fiction [MH: that's Wellhausen's view], the product of the imagination of post-Exilic Priestly writers. Cross suggested, rather, that the Priestly Tabernacle account reflects a historical structure, the Tent of David. The purpose of the present study is to pursue further the actual and portrayed history of the Tabernacle, looking especially into the years subsequent to David, when Solomon's Temple succeeded David's Tent. It is argued here that the Priestly Tabernacle description does indeed reflect a historical pre-Solomonic structure which was placed in the Temple and was located there until the destruction by the Babylonians.

When Friedman is defending the historicity of the Tabernacle, to him the “original Tabernacle” was a tent that David made. So let's keep that in mind. Now I'm going to reference the original Tabernacle as being something different—something that was actually real back in the days of the Exodus. So original Tabernacle might mean something different when I say it as opposed to what Cross and Friedman are arguing for. But the point is that most scholars just don't believe there was a tent structure at all. So they find Friedman's thesis either questionable, uncertain, or they just plain hate on it. So let's go back to Friedman and the rest of his abstract.

If a Tabernacle shrine existed and was popularly and royally venerated until the construction and dedication of the Temple, then one might well expect some textual indication of the fate of that shrine after the Temple rose. The biblical histories do report explicitly that the Tent of Meeting was brought up to the Temple of Solomon on the day of the Temple dedication, together with the ark and the sanctified vessels...

And he references 1 Kings 8:4, which I'll read:

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.

Now that looks like it does reference the tent of meeting, but you have to realize that there's a whole argument in scholarship about the tent of meeting being different than the Tabernacle and the tent of meeting being the tent that David built, not Moses, because “we don't even know if Moses was real, and there was no exodus.” So there are going to be certain verses that to your ear sound like they say one thing, but critical scholars (those who don't feel the need to have a high view of Scripture)... They don't have high view of Scripture and therefore don't see the need to affirm lots of things as being genuine. That's where the bulk of the world of biblical scholarship is. They're going to be thinking something

different when they run into these verses. So back to Friedman's abstract. You have this verse, 1 Kings 8:4, about what was brought up to the Temple, and he says:

...this verse has, since Wellhausen, been regarded as a gloss [MH: like something just added later] because of the infrequent references to the Tabernacle in the history of the land prior to this report...

So in other words, once Israel gets into the land in the biblical story, he's saying, since the Tabernacle's really not referred to much, when it is, scholars tend to just say, "Oh, they're making that up. They're throwing that in to retroject the Temple back into earlier biblical history." That's just how they look at it. So that's the end of Friedman's abstract.

10:00

Now just that bit, even though Friedman is obviously not in anything we would call the Evangelical world, or the world of scholars who do assign historicity to an exodus and the Tabernacle in the days of Moses... Friedman's not there. But his sentiments run quite contrary to accepted dogma, especially Wellhausen, whose research provided a religious rationale for JEDP in its classical formulation. JEDP is the idea that Pentateuch was totally not written by Moses. Typically, they would say, "There was no real Moses. If there was, he didn't write anything," but rather that the Pentateuch (the Torah) was written much later and is a composite of source documents named J, E, D, and P (the Documentary Hypothesis). So Friedman is a documentarian. He's just disagreeing with this part of the general consensus. And he does assign historicity to the Tabernacle, at least the tent in the time of David. So we want to know who Friedman is. He's a critical scholar, but he's running against the grain here. Now from this point, Friedman gets right into his thesis and its trajectory. So I'm going to read what he says, just lay it out for you. Here's his argument:

Scholars generally have thought the dimensions to comprise a reduced scale imitation of the Jerusalem Temple, but these dimensions are by no reckoning proportionate to those of either the First or the Second Temple. In the standard estimates the Tabernacle, as described in the Book of Exodus, is 30 cubits in length, 10 in width, and 10 in height (In my own calculation, the Tabernacle is 20 cubits in length, [MH: so there's a difference there] 8 in width, and 10 in height).

And he illustrates this in his article with pictures, how he gets to his dimensions. Now this is important, because for it to fit inside the Temple, it has to be 20 in length and 8 in width and 10 in height, not 30, 10, and 10. So he's going to argue how this can be done based on the description of the Tabernacle in the book of Exodus, and he has his own way of laying out the language there so that the dimensions turn out this way. He says:

The First Temple, as described in 1 Kings 6, is 60 cubits in length, 20 in width, and 30 in height. It is thus three times the height of the Tabernacle but twice its length and width. Suggestions of correspondence of the dimensions of the Tabernacle with the Second Temple are groundless, as the dimensions of the Second Temple are not reported anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. According to Ezra 6:3, Cyrus had directed that the Second Temple be constructed 60 cubits in breadth. There is no report concerning whether this direction was followed, and, again, the Tabernacle dimensions do not correspond.

The measurements of the Tabernacle correspond rather to those of the space inside the Holy of Holies in the First Temple, beneath the wings of the cherubim. According to the description of the Temple construction (1 Kings 6, 2 Chronicles 3) the Holy of Holies (or *dēbîr*) is 20 cubits in length and 20 cubits in width (1 Kgs 6:20, 2 Chr 3:8). Within are the two cherubim, each 10 cubits high. Their wings are spread... and the wingspread of each is 10 cubits, so that the tips of the wings of each touch the walls of the room on each side and touch each other in the center of the room (1 Kgs 6:23-27, 2 Chr 3:10-13). [MH: I actually have a little picture of how he describes this in *Unseen Realm*.] Thus the space between the cherubim is 10 cubits in height, 20 cubits in length, and less than 10 cubits in width (as the bodies of the cherubim take up a portion of the center space).

The measurements of the Tabernacle, as pictured in Exodus 26 and 36, are just this 10 cubits in height, 20 cubits in length, and 8 cubits in width. Scholars until now have reckoned the Tabernacle dimensions differently owing to the manner in which the Tabernacle construction is portrayed in the Book of Exodus. The exact measurements are never stated outright. One must rather derive them from the description of the materials and structure.

15:00 So what he's going to say is, "Look, we get these instructions but we're never really told precisely what the size is once it's constructed. So he's going to take that plus this space within the later Temple and he's going to argue that he can align them (match them) so that the tent structure will fit inside the Temple. Now there's a reason why he's doing this. There's a reason why he feels that this is important. As far as the construction, what it would look like, and how he puts things together, you can reference the article and look at the pictures. We have to ask, "Why does he care?" [laughs] "Is he just fixated with measurements? Is this guy an engineer or a carpenter in his other life?" No, he appeals to certain passages in the Old Testament to justify the idea—basically to justify the whole question and the whole endeavor. What he's really trying to do is make certain statements in certain passages make sense. For example, there's a controversy naturally over whether the actual Old Testament Tabernacle was still around in David's time or whether David made a new tent for the Ark. I've mentioned that division before. A lot of scholars don't believe that either of those is historical. But for those that *would* think the Tabernacle's historical, most of them are going to

land with this tent that David makes. Because there are references to David making a tent to house the Ark of the Covenant. Now 1 Chronicles 16:1-6, 37-38 seem to suggest that there might be two tents. Now to understand those verses, we have to look at some other ones first, earlier than the Chronicles reference. So let's look at 2 Samuel 6:8-11. We're just going to read a few passages and just notice some things in them. So 2 Samuel 6:8-11 says this. I'm reading ESV. This is the incident when he reaches out his hand to steady the Ark so it doesn't fall off the cart and God strikes Uzzah dead for touching the ark. So David's upset.

⁸ And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. ⁹ And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" ¹⁰ So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹ And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

Later in the same chapter, in 2 Samuel 6:16-17, we have the short account of the ark being brought to Jerusalem. We read this:

¹⁶ As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷ And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

Now the question is, how could the Ark... Apparently, the Ark in 2 Samuel 6:8-11 didn't have a home. It's outside the Tabernacle, and so David's going to take it to Jerusalem, but then the Uzzah thing happens, so they leave it at the house of Obed-edom. He puts it somewhere for three months. And then David goes and gets it out and he puts it in the tent that he had pitched for it. So there is evidence that David has made a tent for the Ark. Now let's go back to 1 Chronicles 16:1-6 and read that. This is the similar, Chronicles version of what's going on here.

And they brought in the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. ² And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD ³ and distributed to all Israel, both men and women, to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins.

⁴Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁵Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. ⁷Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brothers.

So that's the first six verses. You go down to verses 37 and 38. We read this:

³⁷So David left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister regularly before the ark as each day required, ³⁸and also Obed-edom and his sixty-eight brothers, while Obed-edom, the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah were to be gatekeepers.

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Now you look at that. They're ministering before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord to minister regularly before the Ark, as each day required. Friedman is going to seize on that and say, "There were required elements of service before the Ark that are described in earlier portions of the Hebrew Bible where it seems like the Tabernacle structure itself is required—like the structure itself has some sort of role to play in some of the rituals. So he's like, "Okay, if they're doing this... If we take this seriously that they're ministering regularly before the Ark as each day required, then it seems like the "original Tabernacle" is there. Or maybe this is how we should read this wording, that David builds the tent, and then that sort of becomes what other Scripture calls the Tabernacle. Or you've got two tents." So there's something going on here. There's a tent that David builds. Is it the same as the one that the Bible elsewhere calls the Tabernacle?

Now those who think the Mosaic Tabernacle was real and historical would say, "Well, maybe David did build a tent. Maybe there was a temporary structure somewhere in Jerusalem for the Ark. But if you're going to do this ministry, that implies that the Tabernacle has to be used. And maybe this tent that David built is just David commanding that the original Tabernacle be set up, whereas earlier it wasn't." So you have this controversy. I don't want to get too lost in the tent during the time of David, but it's part of this discussion. Because all Friedman is arguing is that, look, there was something going on here that was real, that was historical. Whether David is setting up the Mosaic Tabernacle and that's what the language means about the tent that David had pitched for it, or whether that never really happened, but David himself did actually build a tent in which the Ark was kept—either way, what Friedman is arguing is that whatever that was and

whoever built it, it is going to get inserted into the Temple. And so we need to figure out what's going on here.

Now there are some verses that suggest a tent is associated with the Temple. And this is what sets Friedman off on this run. So there's this notion that after the Temple was built, there's still tent language associated with Solomon's Temple. And Friedman's like, "Look, the only way that that can make sense is if this tent structure, whether it was David that built it or whether he just re-set up the original Mosaic Tabernacle, he's going to say, "We don't know that. But whatever it was, that thing gets moved into the Temple complex. Because there are certain verses that just associate the Temple of Solomon with a tent, which doesn't make a whole lot of sense unless this other thing is real. So let's take a look at some of these passages that set Friedman off, and this will explain why he cares. So let's go to 2 Samuel 7:1-6. Now listen to this carefully. This is the Davidic Covenant, when David has the idea to build a temple, and then God's going to make a covenant with him.

[MH: Now catch this next verse.]

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."

Now this isn't the word *mishkan* here. So we need to be thinking about vocabulary. *Mishkan* is the biblical Hebrew word for tabernacle. So hold on to that. This isn't that word in particular. It's a different word. But let me just look it up here and I'll get it to you. "The ark of God dwells in a tent." The wording here is not *mishkan*, it's actually sort of a verb for tent dwelling. You have a verb here, *yashav*, "to sit or to dwell" and then you have *within*, and then you have a word for a tent structure that isn't *mishkan*. So you've got an idiomatic phrase here. "The ark of God dwells in a tent." And this bothers David. Like, "Why should I have this nice house? And look at where the ark is."

³And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵"Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.

This word here is *ohel*. That's the Hebrew word for tent. It's not *mishkan*, which is the term used for the structure of the Tabernacle. God says, "I've been moving about in a tent for my dwelling." Now how do we take that? It raises a number of questions. Because in Exodus 26:7,

**You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, for a tent over the Tabernacle.
Eleven curtains you shall make.**

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We do get the word *ohel* for the curtain that was draped over the *mishkan* (over the Tabernacle structure). So we have to realize that the tent itself is not the Tabernacle. That might sound a little odd, but it's not. When we say the word "tabernacle," we visualize a tent structure. But they're actually different terms here. The structure, the frame, of what is the Tabernacle is what's called *mishkan*. And it's draped over with a tent (the *ohel*). So there's actually two parts that make up the whole. So that's important. It makes it coherent that you could have, when the word *ohel* is used, a reference to the Tabernacle structure, because the *ohel* is the word used for the cloth that draped over the *mishkan* in the time of Moses—in the books of Moses, in the book of Exodus. So it's the tent component of the overall structure. So when God says, "I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day..." In other words, "I've never had a house, but I have been moving about in a tent," even though the word is *ohel*, this can still reference the Tabernacle because the *ohel* is the cloth draped over the structure known as the Tabernacle.

So this verse could be understood to say, "You know what, Nathan? I've come to you in a dream. I heard the other day that David has a desire to build me a house. And I'm still living in the Tabernacle here. And it's been fine." If you look at the verse that way, that implies that the Tabernacle is still standing. It's still used. It's still around. And this is 2 Samuel—this is the time of David. So you could take this passage (that line—what God says to Nathan in the dream) and say, well, if that's the case, then maybe the tent that David pitches for the Ark is actually the real Tabernacle that was just disassembled or it was somewhere else and then it has to be taken apart and then David erects it again for the Ark so that it's nearby. It could be the same thing and not just some other tent that David makes, implying that the Tabernacle is "history". Like they don't use it anymore or it got destroyed or it just wore out or whatever. And then David said, "Well, we need a tent to cover the thing, so let's do that." It could actually be the Mosaic structure. So with that... We'll keep that in mind. This is the time of David now where we have a very possible reference to The Tabernacle. So another passage that kind of leads us to wonder or presume that the original Tabernacle is still around is 1 Chronicles 17:5. (This is the Chronicles version of the 2 Samuel 7 passage.)

⁴Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: It is not you who will build me a house to dwell in. ⁵For I have not lived in a house since the day I brought

up Israel to this day, but I have gone from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling.

And the word *dwelling* there is *mishkan* (tabernacle) and the tent in “tent to tent” is *ohel*. Now we actually have a textual difficulty here. Because if you look at that in English, it seems like, “Well, the original tent of Moses, that probably wore out and they had to make another one.” “I’ve gone from tent to tent.” Upgrade, remodel, whatever it is. “And from tabernacle to tabernacle.” That’s technically [laughs]... Let me just approach it this way. The Septuagint does not have that. There’s a textual issue here. The Septuagint actually says, “I have gone from being in the tent and in the tabernacle.” In other words, God says, “I haven’t lived in a house since I brought Israel up. But I have been around, have gone about in the tent and in the tabernacle.” So if you take it that way, you don’t have upgrades. You don’t have the original Tabernacle wearing out. You don’t have any of that. So which text is the right one? You get scholars who disagree with this. “How do we take this?” And of course, Friedman is like, “Look, I’m going to go with the Septuagint. Whatever this is, whether it’s just a retrojection in David’s day or some reference to something older, it proves... The passage is consistent with 2 Samuel 7, that there is a tent structure still around or being used for the Ark.” And that’s important to Friedman, because now we’re going to go to passages that associate the Temple itself with some kind of tent, which is really odd to our ear. 1 Chronicles 9:17-19... Now this whole passage is a list of people returning from exile (so this is way removed from David). But the issue in the passage for us is how the lost past Temple... Now the Temple has been destroyed. The lost past Temple gets referred to... So situate yourself mentally. This is after the exile. The Temple has been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. People are coming back. And then we get this list of people. And it turns out, in this list, there’s actual Temple personnel—families historically whose families had been servants in the Temple. We read this:

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¹⁷ The gatekeepers were Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their kinsmen (Shallum was the chief); ¹⁸ until then they were in the king's gate on the east side as the gatekeepers of the camps of the Levites. ¹⁹ Shallum the son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, and his kinsmen of his fathers' house, the Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent, as their fathers had been in charge of the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance.

Catch this. These were temple servants and here’s how they’re described. This family had been “keepers of the thresholds of the tent.” Like, what’s that? And then you go down to verse 21. “Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” Now this was post-exilic. And this is a list of families who had been temple servants. But they’re described as “keepers of the thresholds of the tent.” And working at the “entrance of the *tent* of

meeting.” Like what’s going on with that? It’s the Temple, right? Why are we making it sound like a tent? Another one, 2 Chronicles 29:3-7. This is a reference to the time of Hezekiah, which is after Solomon.

³In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. ⁴He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east ⁵and said to them, “Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place.

So he opens the doors of the house of the Lord. Sounds very Temple-ish. And he says, “Now consecrate yourselves and consecrate the *house of the Lord*. Let’s clean it up. Carry out the filth from the Holy Place.”

⁶For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD and turned their backs.

From the *mishkan* (“the habitation” is what the ESV says). It’s interesting that the ESV translator won’t use the English word “tabernacle” here. Because the Tabernacle’s not supposed to be around anymore. This is the Temple. But the same word used of Tabernacle over and over and over again in the Torah is right there. “They have turned away their faces from the *mishkan* of the Lord and turned their backs.”

⁷They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel.

You can see when you read that, it sounds like there is a tent inside the Temple. So passages like this are what Friedman’s noticing. Like “What is that? Why do we get this language?” Friedman also goes to several Psalms that appear to reference the Temple and Tabernacle together. So this one, I’m going to read from the... I can just use the ESV for this.

⁸Oh Lord, I love the habitation of your house.

This is Psalm 26:8. The word habitation there is not *mishkan*, it’s *meon*. “Oh Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where you glory dwells.” Now the Jewish Publication Society has, “Oh Lord, I love your Temple,” (there’s the “house”) —“your Temple abode.” The ESV has “the habitation of your house.” But here’s the second line in the JPS Tanakh: “And the dwelling place,” (the *mishkan*) “of your glory.” That’s actually literally what the Hebrew has. So “I love

your Temple.” And then the Temple is renamed in parallelism as “the *mishkan* of your glory,” (the Tabernacle of your glory). It just sounds like referring to two things that are overlapping here. You get other references like this. In Psalm 43:3, Psalm 46:4, Psalm 132:7. I’ll read that one. Psalm 132:7:

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Let us go to his (the Lord’s) dwelling place. Let us go to his *mishkan* (to his Tabernacle). Let us worship at his footstool.

That’s a reference to the Ark, right? But now wait a minute. This is Psalm 132. This is one of the songs of ascent. Songs of ascent are songs that you would sing returning from exile, going up Mount Zion. You’re going back home. What in the world is this? Not only don’t we have a Temple in the post-exilic period, but when they’re thinking about the place, they use *mishkan* and the Ark (the footstool). Like what’s going on here? So I’m hoping you see that these are the kind of passages that Friedman has come across in his study as an Old Testament scholar. And he’s like, “Boy, that sounds a little odd. Could it be that they actually... Whatever the tent structure was, whether it was something David made (so I don’t have to affirm that Moses was real)...” Or (me speaking) could it be that the original Tabernacle was just reconstructed by David or something like that, but either way, that this thing (whatever it is) is moved inside the Temple? And that’s why you get this language. Some of these verses are really kind of suggestive of that. So in *Unseen Realm*, I actually kind of like this idea. I think it does make sense of this. But ultimately, it’s going to come down to one or two things.

So let’s just transition here. You might ask, “How in the world can anybody deny this?” The verses look kind of clear—*mishkan* used in these late verses. And this is clearly the word in Exodus 26 and 27 for the structure of the Tabernacle. And *ohel* is also used in some of these passages, and that would be the tent that’s draped over the structure. It seems like the language is pretty clear. How can you object to this? Well, let me start with a few general objections and then I’ll get to Hurowitz, who really hates the idea.

1) People will argue that Psalm references to the *mishkan* aren’t the Tabernacle. They’ll say, “The word is just being used to talk about God’s dwelling place in general. It’s generic. Okay, it’s *mishkan*. It’s the same word. But that can’t be really the Tabernacle here. It just refers to a dwelling place, wherever that is and whatever that is.”

2) They’d oppose Friedman on the textual issue in 1 Chronicles 17:5 (“tent to tent, tabernacle to tabernacle”), and they would say, “Look. This alone says that the original Tabernacle wasn’t around. They’re just building whatever they can, making tents or whatever so this ark had someplace to sit. It’s not the real thing.” Okay. I guess it’s at least fair to go with one version of the text in 1 Chronicles 17:5 and to just say that the *mishkan* references are metaphorical or generic.

Okay. That's all well and good. You could sort of do that. But the reality is that that doesn't address the idea that the Israelite priesthood used a tent structure for the Ark and effectively maybe a rebuilt Tabernacle or something... They moved some kind of tent into the Temple. That's really what Friedman is after. So you can say that some of this is generic or metaphorical or whatever. But you still have other verses, like the one where they open the doors, and then there are references there to the tent and whatnot. Why even use the language? Why even use that kind of language? It would seem like the writer should have known that that would just create confusion with the old Tabernacle. Why even use it?

So we seem to be at a standstill, or at least that's the way generally Friedman's argument is opposed. And this is why a lot of scholars say, "Well, okay, we'll think about it. We're not really persuaded, but yeah, let's think about it. What's the harm?"

Well, to Hurowitz... He just hates the idea. This has been a thing that gives him... The way he writes, it's like, "Now I have a reason to get up in the morning, so I can go attack Friedman's view." The main voice who has no time at all for it is Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, and he wrote an article called "The Form and Fate of the Tabernacle: Reflections on a Recent Proposal." It's from *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (1995). So this is 15 years after Friedman. His original article is a few years after the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* article. I'm going to read you part of this, and you're going to see why I characterize Hurowitz the way I do. He writes this:

40:00

Richard Elliott Friedman has argued that the Mosaic Tabernacle, described by the pentateuchal Priestly source, stood in the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple. In order for the Tabernacle, usually figured to be ten cubits wide and thirty cubits long, to fit into a space twenty cubits square, Friedman has proposed a radical rearrangement of the Tabernacle's components, thereby shrinking its measurements in comparison to standard reconstructions. Friedman's suggestions have met with a modicum of acceptance in scholarly literature, although the details of his argument have never been evaluated. The present article rejects absolutely every aspect of Friedman's proposal. A review of Exodus 25-40 reconfirms standard Tabernacle reconstructions with some minor alterations. Detailed scrutiny of Friedman's argumentation shows that his innovative plan is based on numerous incorrect and impossible interpretations of crucial passages in the biblical text. The Tabernacle proposed by Friedman is, consequently, completely without textual support. There is also no biblical evidence whatsoever that a Tabernacle of any size or shape ever stood in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. Postbiblical literature occasionally speculates on the whereabouts of the Mosaic Tabernacle, and these speculations represent a topic worthy of future scholarly discussion. But these late musings are products of exegetical questions raised by the extant form of the Bible and contribute nothing

to the historical question of how the Tabernacle was disposed of when the Temple was built.

Now if you think that's snarky [laughs], he later says this:

Friedman's reconstruction of the Tabernacle is wrong in every detail, has not a shred of evidence in its support, does serious harm to an understanding of the structure and the texts describing it, and reflects a total disregard for the most fundamental pillars of sound exegesis, and, in particular, concern for the Hebrew language.

[Laughs] I mean, that is brutal. And it's really unusually brutal. It's the kind of language that I have only seen in peer-reviewed literature in reviews of pseudo-archeology books, like the stuff I would do on Paleobabble or FringePop, where a scholar actually takes the time to read some book... (Like Ahmed Osman, Moses was... I can't remember his view. It's part of the Afrocentric kind of thinking about the Exodus and whatnot.) When scholars get ahold of that stuff... And some of Graham Hancock's books have been reviewed. They are just brutal. But I've never seen anybody be that brutal to someone who... Friedman has a degree from Harvard and he's well-known and well-published. This is really unusually brutal. So this is really pushing Hurowitz' buttons. He just hates it. So I'm going to at least summarize the criticisms so you kind of know what he's so exorcised about.

1) He doesn't like the way Friedman understands the construction description of the Tabernacle. He doesn't like the way Friedman interprets the construction language. And you know, it does run contrary to the consensus. But Hurowitz just sort of flips out over it.

2) He feels there is no textual evidence to support the idea of a tent inside the Temple structure. He's going to take all of these passages... And I only read you a handful that generate the question for Friedman. He's going to take all of them as metaphorical, just out of the gate. Another paragraph from Hurowitz, though, gives us a better feel, I think, for what's going on inside Hurowitz' head here. He writes:

Friedman's revisions are not merely a barren academic exercise [MH laughs: there he goes again] in what he jokingly calls "cubit counting." Rather, they have weighty consequences in the realm of cultic history and source criticism. The reduction in size of the Tabernacle enabled Friedman to make an even more surprising suggestion, namely, that the Tabernacle stood in the Holy of Holies of the First Temple under the extended wings of the Cherubim, a space only twenty cubits deep and less than ten cubits wide. This suggestion permitted him to propose an even further reaching hypothesis. In his opinion, certain biblical references to the Temple as if it were a tent or tabernacle are not to be taken as

45:00

metaphorical language [MH: Dunh dunh dunh dunnn... Like “How dare Friedman suggest that the *mishkan*, even if it’s something David built, was actually real?”], but actually refer to the real, historical Tabernacle [MH: “This is what Friedman’s saying. Can you believe it?!” This hysterical crescendo. “He’s actually saying that these references refer to the real, historical Tabernacle...”] which stood in the Holy of Holies from the days of Solomon until Jerusalem’s destruction by the Babylonians. Only in this way, according to Friedman, would it be possible to carry out the Priestly demand that sacrifice be performed at the entry of the Tabernacle. [MH: There’s that reference there to serving before the tent as each day required.] Since the Priestly source refers to and predicates its cultic regulations on a structure which existed in the time of the First Temple but no longer existed in the post-Exilic age, P [MH: This is what he’s really mad at.] must accordingly be a pre-Exilic composition.

Well, so? You have to realize... J-E-D-P. The P is last. That is the classic formulation of the documentary hypothesis. “P must be exilic or post-exilic. How dare Friedman move the date of P to before the exile? How dare he do that? And we’re forced to do that if he’s right here.” So this is what flips him out. And this might seem really, really arcane. And yeah, it kind of is. But this seems to suggest what really is pushing his buttons. It may sound trivial, but you have to realize that certain beliefs about the evolutionary progression of Israelite religion are tied to the presumed lateness of P. There’s a reason why it’s J, E, D, and P. There’s stuff in the alleged P-source that surely must be later. Well, why must it be later, Mr. Scholar? “Well, it has to be later because of what’s going on theologically in P. Because that’s the kind of stuff that only an enlightened religious person would say or think. We can’t have this early in Israel’s history because Israel’s religion evolved from primitive polytheism to this crescendo moment of monotheism, so P starts to sound like it fits there. And it has these lofty religious ideas that surely the primitives wouldn’t have come up with. And so P *must* be late. It must be last in the sources.”

Now again, Friedman is a documentarian. But he’s not married to the Wellhausen trajectory of the evolution of Israelite religion, and so he has committed the cardinal sin among source critics by moving P before the exile. That messes the whole picture up. This is why, incidentally, I did a paper at Regional SBL once on anthropomorphic language in P. I’ve actually put this out on Amazon as a Kindle file. They don’t want to hear that. [laughs] They just don’t want to hear that. There is anthropomorphic language in P. “Well, anthropomorphism... Making deities... Putting them as human figures. That’s what primitives do. That’s how primitive people think about their gods, like as animals and partly-humans or humans. Later on, we become more enlightened and we become like deists. We have these loftier concepts of God and his transcendence and his distance and his wonder and his blah blah blah.” Like “you put God on the earth standing next to Abraham or somebody... Well, that’s the kind of thing that animists and polytheists would do, because they interact

with their gods, but the more enlightened of us know God is distant and superior and transcendent.” Like these ideas aren’t compatible. Like this has to be an evolutionary arc in religious thinking.

You know, honestly, this is really imposing modern enlightenment conceptions on the Hebrew Bible. That’s what Wellhausenism is. It really is. Defining plurality of *elohim*... “That must be polytheism. References to Divine Council must be polytheism.” Yeah, you only think that way because you’re modern. Even the terms polytheism and monotheism are modern terms. So you’re retrojecting your own thought processes, your own worldview, your own way of thinking about things, onto the Hebrew Bible. And then you’re tearing it apart in its sources and then putting it together according to an evolution of religion. That’s what the JEDP theory in its classical form actually does. And you all know me in this audience. I’m not a traditional Mosaic authorship guy. I’m what used to be called a supplementarian. Friedman is committed to a documentary view of source criticism, but he’s not buying the Wellhausen thing at this point at least. And Hurowitz wants to beat him over the head with it. He’s daring to tamper with this wonderful, evolutionary trajectory. So this is really what’s driving the bus for him. I want to find one other quote here. Hurowitz actually says this in one paragraph:

50:00

It seems clear that Friedman's desire to prove the relative antiquity of P led him to defend the historicity and continued existence of the Tabernacle...

So again, he’s like, “This is what Friedman’s really doing. He wants so desperately to mess with the Wellhausen reconstruction that he’s looking for any way he can to take P and move it before the exile.” Well, you know, Friedman can just turn that sentence around and say this against Hurowitz: “It seems clear that Professor Hurowitz’ desire to prove the relative recency of P led him to deny the historicity and continued existence of the Tabernacle.” This is just tit-for-tat. This is what Hurowitz has here. He has tit-for-tat. But it shows what’s really pushing his buttons. And for our purposes here, the real issue is, are these references to the *mishkan* linked in these Temple passages? Especially if they’re exilic or post-exilic, like Psalms of ascent. Are they real or is this metaphorical language? That’s really the issue. And rather than point out the obvious that Hurowitz has an ax to grind here, that’s actually the more honest question that he and others raise: Do we have metaphorical language here? Toward proving Friedman wrong in this regard, when he finally gets to, instead of beating up Friedman and calling him a hack and calling him (God forbid) a defender of the antiquity of P (the cardinal sin here among source critics)... When he gets past that and starts talking about whether this is metaphorical or not, Hurowitz objects to the way Friedman handles the text. He doesn’t like some of the text-critical decisions he makes. He doesn’t like some of the way he translates certain words. Friedman’s translations are all within the semantic domain of a given word, but they’re not the translations that Hurowitz prefers, because naturally Friedman’s arguing his case and he translates the passage in a certain way to have it work

with his thesis (basically showing that it *can* work), and Hurowitz just doesn't want to put up with that. So we get a little of this tit-for-tat or "you say potato; I say potahto" language. But when he actually gets to the *mishkan* references, here's what Hurowitz writes. And this is kind of remarkable. He says:

Much of Friedman's evidence for the Tabernacle in the Temple thesis comes from the Book of Chronicles. [MH: And he mentions the Psalms later, too.] It is curious that not a shred of evidence comes from the older Book of Kings. [MH: So he's assuming Kings is older than Chronicles. Well, that's fair.] Since the Chronicler clearly identifies the Temple with the Tabernacle in ways too numerous to detail here, there is no reason to assume that when he refers to the Temple as a *mishkan* he is doing anything else. In general, any independent statement of the Chronicler must be assumed suspect unless proven otherwise.

Did you catch that? "Since the Chronicler clearly identifies the Temple with the Tabernacle." He actually admits this. The Chronicler does do this. Like, Friedman's examples, "Yeah, that does happen. But we have to view what the Chronicler does with suspicion." [laughs] What's remarkable, from that point, and from that point forward in Hurwitz's article is that he discusses *none* of the verses that I actually quoted in the episode that Friedman references in his article. Hurowitz doesn't address *any* of them. He doesn't specifically go into any of them. He only references one particular verse that I didn't include here, or that Friedman doesn't really do much with. Psalm 27:5. Friedman cited it, but he doesn't do anything with it. But this is the one that Hurowitz picks out.

⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter...

The word there is *sukkah*, as in Sukkot, the feast of Booths. So it's a little structure.

**⁵ For he will hide me in his [*sukkah*]
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.**

The lemma there for tent is *ohel*. So Hurowitz... There's not a whole lot in there. Like I said, Friedman at least includes this as a reference in his article but doesn't really develop it. But Hurowitz says:

55:00

This verse proves, at most, just the opposite of what Friedman wants to demonstrate! It is obvious that the entire Temple, and probably the courtyards, are referred to here.

Well, I just read the verse. That really isn't obvious.

Does Friedman imagine that a person would take refuge in the Holy of Holies, which is where he claims the Tabernacle stood?

Now that's actually a good question.

The remaining verses adduced by Friedman are likewise misinterpreted and no more convincing.

So what Hurowitz does is he pulls this one out. And he actually asks a good question. "Does the Psalmist really think that he can go into sacred space like this for protection?" That sounds pretty compelling, but there's actually a problem with it. True, no ordinary person, unless you were a Levite, sanctified to do this... No ordinary person would think of hiding in the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies if they weren't allowed to. But here's the question. Would they even think the thought of a tent structure if there was no tent structure there in the first place? In other words, how does it even occur to the Psalmist to use that language if there's no tent to be seen anyway? I mean, you could argue that the Psalmist is just saying this to... It's like heightened rhetoric. He wants to be near God or something like that, because God's his protector. You could take the whole verse (Psalm 27:5) metaphorically, the way Hurowitz wants you to take everything else. But the real question is, why would you get the wording if there was no tent there anyway? Hmm. So it seems like you could actually use Psalm 27:5 to argue Friedman's point. They wouldn't think of that unless that's what they're looking at. That's what they know is in there, or they see.

So where does this leave us? Well, for my part, as we wrap up here, I need a better refutation of the passages that basically generate the whole discussion. The references that seem to refer to the Temple as a tent or being accompanied by a tent seem like that's what they say. If we have a real tent referred to in those passages, if they can be taken at face value, then Friedman's alternate readings and the way he translates things and the way he constructs the Tabernacle, that might be a good way to explain those verses. Friedman might be on the right path, because Friedman does take them seriously. It's like, "Well, to account for that, we have to take another look at Exodus 26 and 27 and see how the thing was constructed. Can it be constructed in such a way that it would fit in there to make sense of this?" If these later references that mesh Temple and tent can be taken at face value, then what Friedman's trying to do is worth trying to do. That's where I am.

So before I abandon Friedman's proposal (this is why I included it in *Unseen Realm*), I'd like to have more certainty that there really is no actual tent in view at all. And I don't think Hurowitz supplies that. Yes, he brings up some things that, sure, you could read it in a way different than Friedman does, and then that undermines Friedman's thesis. Sure. Absolutely. Yeah, you can do that. But the question is, "Must you?" The question is, "Can Friedman's thesis work?" And the bigger question is, "Do we need it or something like it to account for these references in later material when we have a Temple for sure (or we did) and you still get this tent language? Should we take those at face value?" If we're going to do that, then we need something like what Friedman is talking about—either what he's saying (take it as workable) or something that works better. And I just don't think Hurowitz, for me anyway, has met that bar.

TS: Alright, Mike. We appreciate it. That wraps up 26 and 27.

MH: Yep, sure does. [laughter]

TS: And next week, we're going to have a good interview with Adurk Smith of the Eastern European Mission. So be looking forward to that. That'll be good.

MH: Yep.

TS: And also, Mike, the next show, it's going to be 2020. So this is the last show of 2019. And I want to wish everybody...

MH: Everybody a Happy New Year.

TS: Yeah. I hope everybody had a good Christmas and I hope everybody has a good 2020. Was 2019 good for you, Mike? You got a new job...

1:00:00

MH: Yeah, it was. I mean, it was really productive. I think we saw growth in the podcast. We saw certainly the growth of the influence of *Unseen Realm* and *Supernatural*. So I expect in 2020 that to continue and the knives to come out. [laughs] I'm still a little bit cynical here, that there's going to be enough people who are irritated by the notion that we need to recover the supernatural worldview of the Bible, somebody's going to come out of the woodwork and start hammering at me. So I have that to look forward to, Trey, just... It'll be wonderful. [laughs] We can kiss 2019 goodbye and look forward to more years as well. So five is a good number, nice and round. At least, counting in fives anyway. So yeah, it's been a good time. And so I've enjoyed it. I know people have enjoyed it, been impacted by it. So let's just keep at it.

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