
WEEK 7 SCRIPTURE READING

5779 / 2018-19

A person wearing a white, textured robe is shown from the chest down, holding a terracotta jug. The jug is tilted, and a stream of water is pouring from its spout. The jug has a light-colored string tied around its middle. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

by Roly Buys

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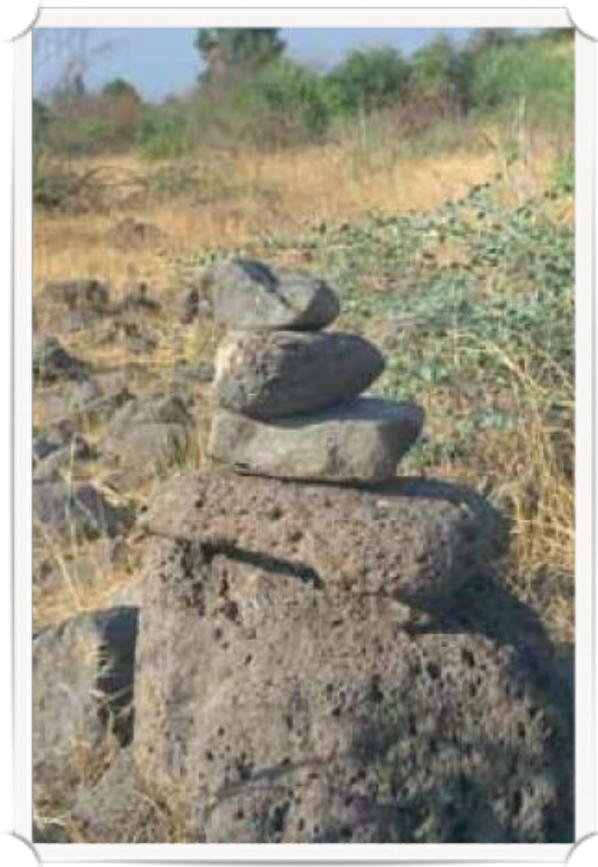
Parashah Vayetzei | “and he went out” | יהוא יצא

Week 7

He set up a Standing Stone

The verse that stands out for me this week is:

Genesis 28:20-22 “ Ya‘akov took this vow: “If God will be with me and will guard me on this road that I am traveling, giving me bread to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return to my father’s house in peace, then ADONAI will be my God; and this stone, which I have set up as a **standing-stone**, will be God’s house.”



Consider This ...

- ◆ What is the difference between a standing stone and an Altar?
- ◆ Is there a difference?
- ◆ And we will see, **there** is a huge difference!
- ◆ Stones are man-made things.
- ◆ Altars are space and places and time that connect man to YHVH.

1. Altars

(a) Moses will build an altar

Exodus 24:2-4 “while Moshe alone approaches ADONAI - the others are not to approach, and the people are not to go up with him.” Moshe came and told the people everything ADONAI had said, including all the rulings. The people answered with one voice: “We will obey every Word ADONAI has spoken.” Moshe wrote down all the Words of ADONAI. He rose early in the morning, **built an altar at the base of the mountain** and set upright twelve large stones to represent the twelve tribes of Isra’el.”

(b) The children of Israel, on entering the Land will build an altar at Mount Ebal

Deuteronomy 27:4 “When you have crossed the Yarden, **you are to set up these stones**, as I am ordering you today, **on Mount ‘Eival**; and put plaster on them.”

Joshua 8:30 “Then Y’hoshua **built an altar** to ADONAI, the God of Isra’el, on Mount ‘Eival,

(c) Abraham will build altars

Genesis 12:8 “He left that place, went to the hill east of Beit-El and pitched his tent. With Beit-El to the west and ‘Ai to the east, **he built an altar there** and called on the Name of ADONAI.”

Genesis 22:9 “They came to the place God had told him about; and **Avraham built the altar there**, set the wood in order, bound Yitz’chak his son and laid him on the altar, on the wood.”

(d) Noah will build an altar

Genesis 8:20 “**Noach built an altar** to Adonai. Then he took from every clean animal and every clean bird, and he offered burnt offerings on the altar.”

So what is the definition of an altar?

Hebrew meaning of Strong’s H 4196 “*miz-ba’-akh*”

Strong’s H 4196:
miz-ba’-akh

- An altar that connects renewed man to YHVH
- An altar requires a circumcised heart

2. Standing stones

(a) Jacob will set up a standing stone

Genesis 28:20-22 “Ya’akov took this vow: “If God will be with me and will guard me on this road that I am traveling, giving me bread to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return to my father’s house in peace, then ADONAI will be my God; **and this stone, which I have set up as a standing-stone**, will be God’s house; and of everything you give me, I will faithfully return one-tenth to you.”

(b) Joshua will build a standing stone on passing through the Jordan

Joshua 4:2-7 “Take for yourselves from the people twelve men, a man from every tribe; and give them this order: **‘Take twelve stones** from the middle of the Yarden riverbed, where the cohanim are standing, carry them over with you and set them down in the place where you will camp tonight.” Y’hoshua called the twelve men whom he had chosen from the people of Isra’el, a man from every tribe, and said to them, “Go on ahead of the ark of ADONAI your God into the riverbed of the Yarden. Then, each of you take a stone on his shoulder, corresponding to the number of tribes of the people of Isra’el. This will be a sign for you. In the future, when your children ask, ‘What do you mean by these stones?’ you will answer them, ‘It’s because the water in the Yarden was cut off before the Ark for the Covenant of ADONAI; when it crossed the Yarden, the water in the Yarden was cut off; and these stones are to be a reminder for the people of Isra’el forever.”

Joshua 4:8-9 “The people of Isra’el did just as Y’hoshua had ordered. They took twelve stones out of the Yarden riverbed, as ADONAI had said to Y’hoshua, corresponding to the number of the tribes of the people of Isra’el, carried them over with them to the place where they were camping, and set them down there. **Y’hoshua also set up twelve stones** in the Yarden River itself, in the place where the feet of the cohanim carrying the Ark for the Covenant had stood. They are there to this day.”



(c) The people who construct the tower of Babel will do so with man-made stones

Genesis 11:3-5 “They said to one another, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them in the fire.” So they had bricks for building-stone and clay for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let’s **build ourselves a city with a tower** that has its top reaching up into heaven, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth.” ADONAI came down to see the city and the tower the people were building.”

(d) People use stones to kill those who sin

Numbers 15:36 “So the whole community brought him outside the camp and **threw stones at him until he died**, as ADONAI had ordered Moshe.”

So what is the definition of a standing stone?

Hebrew meaning of Strong’s H 0068 “*eh’ven*”

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Strong’s H 0068: eh’ven | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To build with stone• Hailstones• Headstone as in cemetery• Sling-stone as in war |
|-----------------------------------|---|

If we consider all of these meanings then we realize that there is very little connection with YHVH or His Glory.

This is all the more evident, when we take note of the fact that this same word is used in the man-made efforts of the tower of Babel.

Let us return to Jacob’s standing stone ...

- i) We have seen that there is a big difference between an Altar and a standing stone
- ii) The altar is a direct link to YHVH
- iii) In all cases, individual man must stand before YHVH at the altar and do so with pure heart
- iv) The stone is a memorial
- v) It reflects an event that has happened ... in other words, something that occurred in the PAST
- vi) As man, we want to remember that event
- vii) For that reason mankind has erected memorials all over the world ... the most common one would be those dedicated to the fallen in a particular war

We however, serve a living God - the YHVH of the past, present and the FUTURE!

- i) Stones have no place in the future
- ii) Instead we need altars
- iii) Peter tells us that we are Living Stones ... as we blend together with other Living Stones, we form an altar
- iv) And it is at that altar that we can make a spiritual sacrifice - offering up a life that is dedicated to serving YHVH, bringing first-fruit offerings of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, impacting the community with works of loving kindness, and so on.

Jacob, when he has the dream of the ladder, and understands that YHVH is real and committed to walk with him, is still an UNREDEEMED MAN.

He does **not have a living relationship with YHVH**, that will only come later.

At this stage, he thinks that he will build a “house” for YHVH, but **he fails to understand** that His House is a spiritual one!

- ◆ He has had a wonderful experience, but has yet to make the commitment to be a true son of Abraham.
- ◆ We will see that he goes to a foreign land, serves Laban, endures all sorts of trials, but it's only on his way back, on the banks of a river, just before he must face Esau, that he truly becomes a renewed man.
- ◆ Only after this will Jacob **build an altar**.

Genesis 35:1-7 *“God said to Ya’akov, “Get up, go up to Beit-El and live there, and make there an altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled ‘Esav your brother.” Then Ya’akov said to his household and all the others with him, “Get rid of the foreign gods that you have with you, purify yourselves, and put on fresh clothes. We’re going to move on and go up to Beit-El. **There I will build an altar to God**, who answered me when I was in such distress and stayed with me wherever I went.” They gave Ya’akov all the foreign gods in their possession and the earrings they were wearing, and Ya’akov buried them under the pistachio tree near Sh’khem. While they were traveling, a terror from God fell upon the cities around them, so that none of them pursued the sons of Ya’akov. Ya’akov and all the people with him arrived at Luz (that is, Beit-El) in the land of Kena’an. **He built there an altar** and called the place El-Beit-El (God of Beit-El), because it was there that God was revealed to him, at the time when he was fleeing from his brother.*

WHAT SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT THIS WEEK?

1. What are you building with man-made stones of ego and pride, or the act of loving obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit?
2. Standing stones may remind others of you, but will your character legacy live on in the next generation of your family?

A FINAL THOUGHT

- ❖ Jacob had the potential to be renewed in his thinking from an early age ... yet he spent years doing things **his way**.
- ❖ Many of his children would have seen a role model of a self-made man ... of the **own ego**, and would have missed out on the experience of seeing YHVH's given values being revealed.
 - a. Is that the reason why there are so many family issues that they go through?
 - b. Would Reuben, Simon and Levi has grown up with no anger issues?

The list goes on ...

There's a '**what if**' list in each of our lives.

Can we break down those standing stones and build an altar of prayer?



BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-27

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.

May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.

May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.

May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

In this way they are to put **My Name** on the people of Israel, so that I will BLESS them.

