

**Shayla:** Why don't you wear phylacteries?

**Meforshim:**

Phylacteries were never specifically described and commanded. They were developed in an attempt to fulfill Yahweh's demand that His mitzvot be bound to the people's hands and be a symbol on their foreheads. However, this mitzvah was given within the context of remembering the delivery of our people from Egypt and the bringing of the nation to the Promised Land.<sup>1</sup> These were known as *tefillin* (or aka later as phylacteries from the Greek term). These box-like containers, like those on the forearms, held the same scraps of the Torah. It was the hypocritical practice of wearing these without heartfelt sincerity that caused Jesus to speak scathingly about them.<sup>2</sup>

Notice in Matthew 23:2-7 that Jesus doesn't condemn the practice of wearing either tefillin or the tassels. What He condemns is enlarging or lengthening them in an attempt to look hyper-spiritual. I guess our modern version would be to walk around carrying a family-sized Bible, wearing a cross and a cap that says WWJD, with a fish on our bumper.

God used other physical means to help His people remember His past services or the commandments that He gave them. Here we see that He commanded them to wear tassels on the corners of their garments to remind them to keep His mitzvot.

- **Numbers 15:38-39 HCSB** "Speak to the Israelites and tell them that throughout their generations they are to make tassels for the corners of their garments, and put a blue cord on the tassel at *each* corner. (39) These will serve as tassels for you to look at, so that you may remember all the LORD's commands and obey them and not become unfaithful by following your own heart and your own eyes.

Because of the context within which the wearing of tefillin was commanded, they became uniquely associated with the Passover.<sup>3</sup> They were also associated with the Shema, a ritualistic prayer designed to remind Israel of Who their God was and what He expected of them.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the goal of the tefillin was to teach our children in perpetuity and to remind them of their duty to God.<sup>5</sup>

However, one must consider that even in the Old Covenant the tefillin were to be worn at the Passover, as part of the ritual designed to remind the children not only of what God had done for Israel but what responsibilities came with that deliverance – namely to obey His mitzvot.

However, when the Messiah came, He came bearing gifts. The supreme gift was the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of what the Lord Jesus said, and to continuously testify as to the Lord God's will on any given matter.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Spirit will give us specific words and arguments to use during the great persecution that will mark the latter days.<sup>8</sup>

The prophet Ezekiel predicted this time saying:

- **Ezekiel 11:19-20 HCSB** And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove their heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh, (20) so they may follow My statutes, keep My ordinances, and practice them. Then they will be My people, and I will be their God.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 11:18-21

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 23:2-7

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 13:6-10; 13:14-16

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-18

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 13:8, 14; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:6-7; 11:19

<sup>6</sup> Luke 3:16; 11:13; John 7:38-39

<sup>7</sup> John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-14

<sup>8</sup> Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15

- [Ezekiel 36:26-27 HCSB](#) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.

Jeremiah predicted that Yahweh would write His Law within us, on our very hearts. The result would be that we would no longer need reminding "Know the Lord".

- [Jeremiah 31:31-34 HCSB](#) "Look, the days are coming"--*this is* the LORD's declaration--"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. (32) *This one will* not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt--a covenant they broke even though I had married them"--the LORD's declaration. (33) "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"--the LORD's declaration. "I will place My law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. (34) No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying: Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them"--the LORD's declaration. "For I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin."

Since the purpose of the tefillin and the tassels were to remind us to obey God's mitzvot and since the Ruach' ha Kodesh now fulfills that purpose, we no longer feel that we must wear them.

If in an effort to...

- build in reminders of God's goodness
- build structures designed to perpetuate the knowledge of God's deliverance and expectations
- create opportunities for God's people to fellowship while remaining focused on biblical truths rather than Lowlander culture

...we decide to observe the Passover and in the process show our children what tefillin and/or tzitzit look like and use them as an opportunity to speak on why we no longer need them, let no one condemn us for:

- [Romans 14:4-6 HCSB](#) Who are you to criticize another's household slave? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And stand he will! For the Lord is able to make him stand. (5) One person considers one day to be above another day. Someone else considers every day to be the same. Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind. (6) Whoever observes the day, observes it to the Lord. Whoever eats, eats to the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is to the Lord that he does not eat, yet he thanks God.
- [Colossians 2:16 HCSB](#) Therefore don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day.