

# VAYAKHEL { וַיִּקְהַל } (And He Assembled)

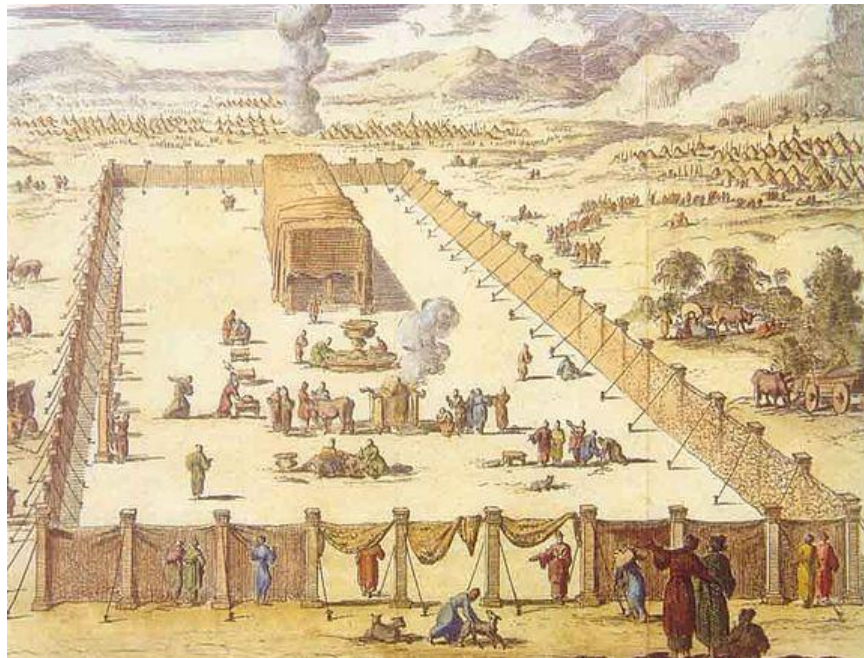
Exodus 35:1-38:20, 1Kings 7:13-26, 40-50, Hebrews 9:1-11

A Messianic Jewish Commentary by  
Hannah Neshet [www.voiceforisrael.net](http://www.voiceforisrael.net)

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“And Moses assembled (Vayakhel Moshe - וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה) all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said unto them: 'These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that you should do them.'” (Exodus 35:1)

This week's parashah opens with Moses calling for a public assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. The Hebrew word used here is derived from the root, קהל, k-h-l, meaning “to gather or assemble”. A Messianic congregation in Israel is called a ‘kehilla’, קהילה, which can also mean a ‘community’.



Less than a week earlier, this same community which had come out of Egypt assembled themselves in order to worship a golden calf; however this time, Moshe assembled the people to instruct them in the ways of Adonai.

Moses told the people not to just *hear* God's commandments but to **DO** them. We also are not just to be ‘hearers of the Word of God’ but also to *do* what He has commanded us. **“But be a doer of the Word and not only a hearer, and do not deceive yourselves.”** (James 1:22)

If we think that we know the Word just because we have read it or heard it preached (or highlighted it in several colors in our Bibles), then we deceive ourselves. We know the Word when we are *doing it* by walking in obedience to God's commands. Yeshua said, **“If you love me, keep My commandments.”** (John 14:15)

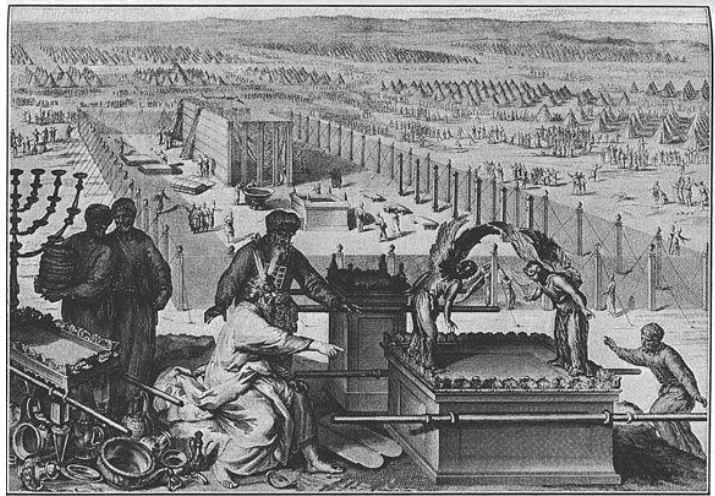
## Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

The first instruction that Moses gave the people dealt with keeping the Sabbath a holy day of rest. The word ‘*holy*’ (**kadosh** in Hebrew), means ‘*sanctified*’ or ‘*set apart for a sacred purpose*’. Keeping Shabbat a holy day of rest was not just an optional suggestion – it was (and still is) a divine command that God expects His people to keep! God reminded them that the penalty for breaking the Sabbath would be death!

**“Six days work shall be done, but on the SEVENTH day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of solemn rest to the Lord; whosoever does any work therein shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.”** (Exodus 35:2-3)

The people stood ready and prepared to begin the construction of the tabernacle; but even as important as this work was, God still again reminded the people that they must not work on the Sabbath.

The holiness of the Sabbath could not be violated even for the sacred purpose of building the tabernacle.



The Erection of the Tabernacle and the Sacred Vessels (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

No matter how important our work (except for life-saving employment), we are still required to rest on the Sabbath. Note that God’s Word states the Sabbath as the seventh day - not the first (Christians), or the sixth (Muslims) or any other day of the week. Nothing in the Bible commands a change of the Sabbath day. We do not have the authority to change God’s holy days; doing so constitutes acting in the spirit of the anti-Messiah, who will seek to change the times and the laws.

**“He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”** (Daniel 7:25)

How then did the ‘Sabbath day’ become changed in the Christian church to Sunday? The Catholic Church openly admits to changing the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Hannah’s book: ‘A Messianic Jewish View of the Sabbath’ [www.voiceforisrael.net](http://www.voiceforisrael.net)

The prohibition against lighting a fire on the Sabbath has raised some controversial issues. One religious Jewish Believer came to our home on one of the children's birthdays and became offended when we lit the birthday candles on the cake.

Israel works six days (usually long ones). Our week begins on Sunday as a regular work and school day; therefore Saturday (Shabbat) is the only day in which people can get together to celebrate these special occasions. I will be the first to admit that this can be a dilemma – what if families want to go to the beach on a beautiful, warm sunny day and enjoy some special time together? Many choose not to; but rather to stay home and rest – no matter how tempting the alternative.



*Avi with sparklers on his 8<sup>th</sup> bday cake*

What about using electricity? Many Orthodox Jewish people will not turn on a light switch on Shabbat. What about lighting a gas stove? Can you heat up food on Shabbat in the microwave? What about the fire of internal combustion of an engine – can we drive on Shabbat? My only answer is that in these ‘grey areas’, we must be led by Spirit and Truth – by the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit’s specific guidance.

When Yeshua’s disciples, walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath, picked grain to eat because they were hungry, the Pharisees accused them of breaking Shabbat, “**Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!**” Yeshua rebuked their legalism, proclaimed himself, the Son of Man, as Lord even of the Sabbath, and affirmed that it is always lawful to do good on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:1-12)

Shabbat was never meant to be an exercise in legalism, a precise list of do’s and don’ts. Orthodox Rabbinical Judaism has taken this to an extreme, and has regulated exactly what one may and may not do on the Sabbath, even down to a prohibition against tearing the perforated toilet paper or drinking from the water fountains in the synagogue on Shabbat.

According to the Shulcan Aruch, (A Prepared Table) the compilation and codification of instructions regarding Jewish ritual observances, written by Joseph Karo (with the help of his ‘spirit guide’) here are some of the rules:

*“You should not climb trees on the Sabbath. Nor should you swing from a tree limb. You could spit, provided you did not rub the spit into the ground with your toe- but you could step on the spit as long as you kept your foot still...”* (p. 16)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Chamberlin’s publication, Petach Tikvah (Door of Hope) contains an excellent article in its Jan-March 2001 issue by Randolph Parrish, The Mother of All Books 165 Rochester Road, Rochester NY 14623

Are you starting to get the picture? No wonder so many Jewish people become disillusioned with Orthodox Rabbinical Judaism, which is for most the only way they know of to live obedient to God, not understanding that many of their ‘*laws*’ are simply man-made rules that God in no way commanded us to keep.

I remember so clearly years ago, when I took my children to the park one Shabbat in Israel and they began to dig in the sand. A little religious boy looked at us in horror and said, “*Asoor!*”, which means, in Hebrew, ‘*It is forbidden!*’

I asked, “*Where in the Tanach is it written that we cannot dig in the sand on Shabbat?*”



Avi digging in sand at park in Israel

Of course the little boy did not know the answer because there isn’t one; but the children are taught the rules of men as if they are the doctrines of God. This is what Yeshua had issues with in dealing with the religious Jews of his own day. The scribes and Pharisees accused Yeshua’s disciples of transgressing the tradition of the elders when they did not wash their hands when eating bread. Yeshua’s answer is brilliant:

**“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”**  
(Matthew 15:1-3)

Which is worse? To break a family tradition or to break one of God’s commandments? Rabbinic Orthodox Judaism, then and now, lives by *a man-made religion based on the ‘traditions of the elders’*, (halachah), rather than the Word of God, considering the Talmud (oral tradition), rather than the Torah (Word of God) as the ultimate authority.

It truly grieves my heart to see some Messianic Believers turning to Orthodox Rabbinic Judaism as a way of life, when Yeshua has shown us the way, the truth and the Life which is through Him to the Father.

Yeshua rightly quoted Isaiah to these religious people, saying, **“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”**<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 15:8, Isaiah 29:13

I think it is not so different than today, when they still teach such rules like we cannot speak after speaking the blessing over n'tilat yadayim (washing of the hands) until the blessing over the bread (challah) is recited and the first bite eaten. What nonsense! But even some Believers are being sucked into such 'shtuyot'<sup>4</sup>, as we would say in Hebrew.

I wrote about this issue several years ago in the article, Falling Away<sup>5</sup>. We need to pray fervently for fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord Yeshua that we see going down this dangerous and slippery path into deception and darkness - that they would see the truth in time to get back onto the narrow path that leads to life.

Perhaps it is because I grew up with this kind of religious legalism in my own family that I feel so strongly about this issue. Members of my own family would not re-light the pilot light on the furnace when it went out one cold, winter day in Canada. And so they sat inside wearing winter coats all Shabbat, the baby's lips turning blue, rather than call in a service man to light the fire in the furnace on Shabbat.

We need to use some common sense. I don't believe that this is in the spirit of Shabbat. God does love women, however, as well as men, and wants us to have a day off also from cooking and endless laundry chores. We can cook enough food on Friday to last us for Shabbat day too and eat cold leftovers without having to cook or light a fire. And the laundry can wait! ☺

Personally, we even go so far as to eat on paper plates on Shabbat so that we are not left with a big stack of dishes Saturday night. To each their own. Some people don't mind washing dishes! Every family can find ways to keep Shabbat a day of rest for each one in the family, without it disintegrating into a joyless, legalistic, heavy burden that it was never meant to be.

Keep in mind that if working on the seventh day Shabbat carried the death penalty, and is one of the Ten Commandments, it must be a highly significant command in God's sight. We need to treat it this way, not as a frivolous suggestion. Yeshua clearly stated that He did not come to abolish the Torah but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17-19)

This is not just a "*Jewish issue*" but one that all followers of Yeshua of every race, tongue and tribe, must come to terms with. We need to study the word of God in order to sort out what is of God and what is of man. Every culture has its own '*tradition of the elders*'; some of which may be perfectly acceptable and in no way transgresses the commandments of God – as long as we remember that they are only traditions and not 'laws'.

Other traditions, however, do contradict the word of God or are completely unnecessary to our walk with the Lord and need to be re-evaluated. It is this kind of 'hypocrisy' in religion that I believe turns our children off and turns them away from God. But if we

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<sup>4</sup> Shtuyot - nonsense

<sup>5</sup> [www.voiceforisrael.net/articles](http://www.voiceforisrael.net/articles)

will walk in sincerity and truth, even in attempting to keep the Sabbath day holy, this will be a witness and example to our children.

They should never have to wonder if it is Shabbat or not; they should know, by the holiness of the day, by our worship and meetings and Bible study, and by refraining from work and financial matters, that Shabbat is God's special holy day.

How is the first commandment regarding the Sabbath related to the construction of the Sanctuary? It merges holy time with holy space. The construction could not begin until the people had rested on the Sabbath. So too do our works, even those we do 'for the Kingdom', need to come out of a place of peace and rest, not striving and stress.

As the children of Israel distanced themselves from the physical Mt. Sinai, where they received the revelation of the Torah, a mysterious cloud by day and fire by night appeared as a sign from God to reassure the people of His continual presence.

When construction of His home was completed, God 'moved in' and took up residence: "God's glory filled the Tabernacle".



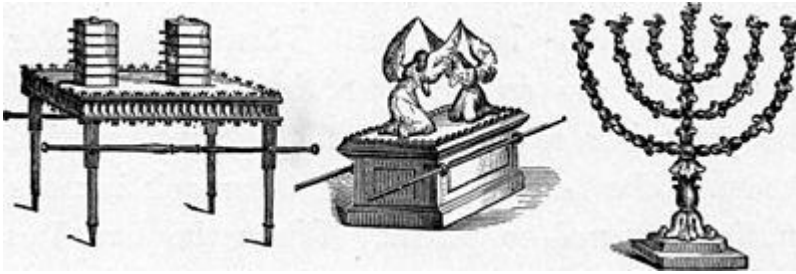
Christian artistic depiction: "The Shekinah Glory Enters the Tabernacle"; illustration from *The Bible and Its Story Taught by One Thousand Picture Lessons*; Charles F. Horne and Julius A. Bewer (Ed.), 1908

**“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”** (Exodus 40:34)

The book of Exodus (Shmot) began with the Israelites enslaved in Egypt; but ends with a visible demonstration of the Shechinah glory of Elohim!

**“And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.”** (Psalm 72:19)

## Bringing our Offerings for the Work of the Lord



Things that Were Made To Go into the Tabernacle (illustration from the 1897 *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us* by Charles Foster)

Regarding the building of the tabernacle, God stirred up the hearts of the people to bring their offerings for the work of the Lord. An offering is called in Hebrew a **Trumah**.<sup>6</sup>

Some craftspeople prepared the holy garments (which, by the way, were for beauty and glory – contradicting the assumption that we, who are all now ministers of the Lord, must dress in drab, plain clothing).

Some prepared the anointing oil; others contributed from their material resources. We see that all worked together. It was not just Moses' private, little 'pet project' - it was a communal affair. Each one contributed what they could for the Lord's work – 'those whose hearts were stirred to give'.

Similarly, none of us can do the work of the Lord alone. Building the body of the Messiah must be a communal work, with each one whose hearts are stirred by the Lord giving what they are able, some with hands on talents and some of their material resources. The people did not give grudgingly, but with joy to the work of the Lord.

Nine times, the Torah uses the verb **'heveinu'** (they brought), in reference to the generous outpouring of gifts – precious jewels, costly silver and gold bracelets and earrings.

**“And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought nose-rings, and ear-rings, and signet-rings, and girdles, all jewels of gold; even every man that brought an offering of gold unto the LORD.”** (Exodus 35:22)

Some rabbis suggest that their generous giving may have been motivated by a lingering guilt over the 'golden calf' incident: (*“With earrings the Israelites sinned and with earrings they were redeemed.”*)

Other rabbis, such as Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban) and Isaac Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup> century Jewish scholar) give an opposing opinion: they believe that the Israelites gave so generously simply for the joy of giving to God.

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<sup>6</sup> See Parashah study Trumah for a further discussion of offerings

## God Loves a Cheerful Giver

God loves a cheerful giver and multiplies the seed sown. **“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”** (2Cor. 9:7-8)

In fact, the people gave so generously, that they actually had to be restrained from giving more! (Exodus 36:6-7)

**“For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.”**  
(Exodus 36:7)

Can you picture this – as the offering plate is being passed around the pews, the pastor runs up to the podium and shouts, *“STOP!!, Don’t give anymore; we already have more than enough for the work of the Lord!”* ☺ If every one whose heart was stirred by the Lord gave what they should, there would be more than enough to meet every need.

There are a couple of profound keys here around the issue of giving that I want to bring out. The first is that God stirred their hearts to give; they did not work up the desire in and of themselves. The Spirit of God will stir up a desire in us to specifically give to something or someone. The question is: Will we be obedient and respond rightly to that stirring in our hearts or will we deny that gentle nudging of the Spirit?

I’m sure you have all experienced that stirring in your hearts to give something specific to someone and doesn’t it just feel so good when we do it? I like to carry money around just for this purpose – in case I run into someone in need and God tells me to give it to them. I like looking around my house to see if there’s anything I can give to someone.

Fear can stop us from giving if we think, *‘But if I give, then I won’t have enough for myself and my own family.* I’m not suggesting we ‘give away the farm’ (unless God tells us to); but we can’t out-give God. He promises to pay us back what we have given, especially to the poor. **“He who gives to the poor lends to the Lord and He will pay back what has been given.”**  
(Proverbs 19:17)





The flesh is also lazy, selfish and greedy; it does not like to give. But the Spirit is filled with joy in giving. In the Bible it is written, **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”**<sup>7</sup> ; but it takes maturity to comprehend this principle.

I will never forget how one of my children, when he was a baby, used to stretch out his chubby arms, opening and clenching his little fists, while crying out with ever increasing intensity, *“I want! I need! I want!!! I Need!!! WANT!!!! NEED!!!!”*



As immature believers we can have this attitude as well; we are so needy. It is all about me and who will do what for me and give to me what I WANT and what I NEED! But when we grow and mature in the Lord, we become more and more concerned with giving and being a blessing to others. Those who refresh others will also be refreshed themselves.

### Pain in the Offering

Secondly, it is not the amount of the offering but the amount of sacrificial love with which it is given that counts to the Lord. In chapter 21 of the gospel of Luke, Yeshua saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and then He saw also a poor widow putting in two mites.

Mites were at that time, the smallest denomination of Roman coins – like pennies today, they would hardly be considered worth the effort of stooping to pick one up off the street.



A bronze *mite*, also known as a *Lepton* (meaning *small*), minted by [Alexander Jannaeus](#), King of [Judaea](#), 103 - 76 B.C. obverse: the blooming lotus scepter of ancient Egypt in circle, reverse: star of eight rays.

In Israel it would be like an ‘agorah’ or two agorot. Now, two mites were hardly going to make an appreciable difference to the upkeep of the temple, but Yeshua took special notice of this tiny offering and gave this widow a great honor. What looks like an insignificant offering has been recorded and is still read about two thousand years later!

Yeshua actually said that this poor widow’s offering was worth more than all the others’, **“for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”**<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 20:35

<sup>8</sup> Luke 21:3,4

Yeshua never mentioned the large offerings that the wealthy people gave towards the Temple treasury; because it is the sacrificial giving of the widow that really counted with Him. It is not the amount of our offerings that matter, but a willingness to give, even sacrificially, that catches God's attention.

This widow, in giving all she had, revealed her devotion to God and her confidence in Him to provide for her needs. There may have been pain in her offering, but by it she was making a radical statement – that she was going to trust God even with all her heart, mind, and soul. When we pour out our lives as a sacrificial offering to the Lord, He will see to it that our own needs are met in a way that we could never do ourselves.

### When in Need Plant a Seed

This leads me to my third point about giving: I believe that this widow knew something that few have discovered – a secret of the Kingdom- and that is, “**Give and it will be given you.**”<sup>9</sup>

This widow knew that when she was in need, the first thing she needed to do was to plant a seed. Elijah was sent to a poor widow in such desperate need that she was going to cook her last bread for herself and her son and then just wait to die.

If anyone had a right to say, “*Need! Want!*” it was this poor woman (mizkenah). But what did Elijah do? Did he give to her? No, he asked her to give first.<sup>10</sup>

Like the widow's two mites, she gave all that she had left. And because of her sacrificial faith-filled giving, God met her needs and not only saved them from sure starvation, but also met Elijah's needs too.

Elijah was not being selfish or callous towards a poor widow; he wanted to help her. He knew and used this Kingdom principle of ‘*give and it shall be given you*’ in order to help this widow in her desperate material need.

I will admit it is easier to give when we have an overflow of which to give. When I came to Israel with a bit of a storehouse it was quite easy to give generously. But when that storehouse was depleted, it took a lot more faith to give. We have to be intentional and give intentionally, knowing that this is the will of our Father in Heaven; and He promises to meet our needs and bless us when we do this.

We want to receive so much – love, grace, mercy, financial prosperity – and we think we will be happy once we finally ‘receive’ them; but the secret of the Kingdom is that we must give first and then we will receive.

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 6:38

<sup>10</sup> 1 Kings 17:8-14

We must begin by giving that which we want to receive. This does not only apply to finances, but in all things. If we want to receive love, kindness, mercy, grace, and encouragement, we need to give these qualities to others.

For with the same measure that we give, we will receive. If we forgive we will be forgiven; if we are merciful, we will receive mercy when we need it. But the opposite is equally true – if we give judgment, condemnation, and criticism, then we need not be surprised when we receive these negative experiences from others in return.

How does it give glory to the Lord when we, His children, are poor and pitiful; weeping and worrying over our finances, having arguments with our spouse over the debt; when our car looks like a falling-apart piece of garbage; and when our children have holes in their clothes and shoes but we can't afford to buy them new ones?

Surely God has more for us than this, but we need to do our part according to His word: give! **“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”** (2 Corinthians 9:6)

I am not teaching this so you will all take out your cheque books and send me a generous offering. (well, okay, I won't stop you if God is stirring your heart...☺) But seriously, I truly want to see people blessed to get out of the 'land of financial lack' and into the place where God is providing all our needs according to His riches in glory;<sup>11</sup> and we may sing with hearts filled with thanksgiving, that the Lord has truly dealt bountifully with me.

**“I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”** (Psalms 13:6)

## Giving of our Talents

It is not just financial offerings that the people gave to the work of building the Tabernacle; they also gave of their **gifts and talents**. In some individuals, such as Bezalel, whom we discussed in last week's parashah (Ki Tisah), God placed His Spirit of wisdom and understanding for a specific artistic gifting to complete a certain aspect of the building of the temple.

God gives each one gifts that are to be used for His glory.

**“Therefore...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”**  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)



Bezalel (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

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<sup>11</sup> Philippians 4:19

A story is written in a devotional, Our Daily Bread<sup>12</sup> about Christopher Parkening, a man whom a major U.S. newspaper called, “*the leading guitar virtuoso of our day, combining profound musical insight with complete technical mastery of his instrument.*”

However, at the height of his career as a classical guitarist, he gave up playing the guitar professionally, bought a ranch and spent his days fly fishing. I guess he said to himself something like the Hebrew expression we sometimes use here in Israel, “*magiyah li*” (I deserve it).

And yet, he still felt dissatisfied. Whenever we are not using our gifting and talents we feel a sense of divine discontent. Our gifts and talents were never meant to be buried in the dirt, as did the lazy servant in Yeshua’s parable<sup>13</sup>, but to be invested by sharing them with others to bless them.

This guitar virtuoso eventually heard a clear presentation of the gospel, realized that he had lived a selfish, self-centered life, and asked Yeshua Hamashiach ( Jesus the Messiah) to be his Lord and Savior. From that moment on, he committed his life, along with his God-given gifts and talents to the Lord, to be used for His glory. He has taken up the guitar again, but now his motivation is to glorify God.

It seems to me that two people can do the very same things, but the inner motives of the heart may be worlds apart. When we display our gifting to bring glory or recognition to ourselves, when we do what we do to receive the praise and accolades of man, when we need to hear the applause and receive the pats on the back in order to feel significant or worthy as a person, then we need to ask the Lord to change our heart and renew a right spirit within us.

We are already worthy; we are truly significant as children of the Most High God. He has not given us gifts in order that we can ‘show off’, and *boast ‘I’m a better singer or dancer or artist or musician or athlete... than you’*, but in order that we can bring glory to God and be a great blessing to His people.

I have encountered people doing great things for God, but I sense that their motivation is to build up their low sense of self worth. Perhaps we all do this to some extent, I’m not sure. But there have been others who have so blessed me with their amazing gifting, especially in the area of music, that I leave incredibly thankful that they would share their gift with me, even for just a brief time; and I sense that they have shared their gift out of a deep humility and with a true motive to give all the glory to God and not themselves.

Whenever we are trying to use the gifting God has blessed us with to ‘build a name for ourselves’, it ends up being a Tower of Babel (Bavel) that God must eventually tear down. Bavel means in Hebrew ‘confusion’; and unless our motive is to build the Kingdom of God, then all our self-glorifying efforts will result in confusion be in vain.

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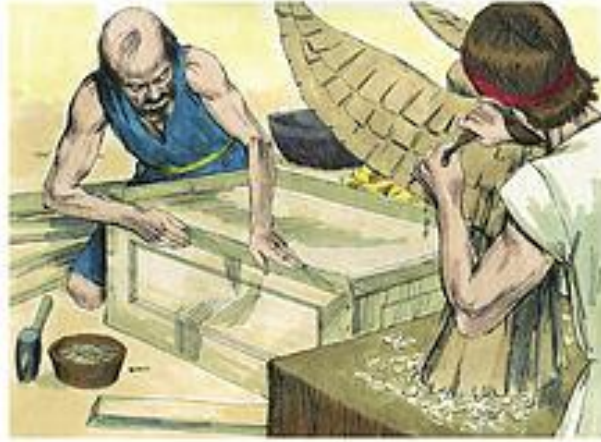
<sup>12</sup> Our Daily Bread (March 2, 2011)

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 25:14-30

**“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain.”** But if we use our gifts for the glory of the Lord, we will receive our reward from Him.

Some people are predestined for a divine, artistic ‘mission’. God also put in some hearts the ability to teach. But the Hebrew word used is not ‘teach’, but rather ‘show’. Those who God has given this gift are to inspire others to see what is already there. A light which cannot kindle other lights is a feeble flame.

The greatest artist, however, according to traditional Jewish teaching, is not one who masters artistic self-expression, but He who masters self-control; for he is fashioning his own self into a tabernacle for the indwelling of the Spirit of God.



Bezalel made the Ark (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing)

I don’t know about you, but this may be a ‘word from the Holy Spirit’ for me today.  
**“Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.”** (Proverbs 16:32)

The Holy Spirit cannot dwell within temples full of bitterness, anger, and malice. It is this lack of self control, the failure to *‘rule over our own spirit’* that causes so much damage, even to the physical body.

It is a paradox; also, that it was *within the wise-hearted that God put His Spirit of wisdom to complete their tasks*. Why would God give wisdom to those who are already wise-hearted? Wouldn’t it be better to give wisdom to those who truly need it? To those who are foolish?

But “Wisdom is too high or lofty for a fool”. (Proverbs 24:7) We can tell who is a fool – he or she hates to be corrected. Only the wise-hearted know how important it is to seek after wisdom. (Proverbs 8:11) **“A wise man will hear and increase in learning. And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel...”** (Proverbs 1:5)

Just as God gave explicitly detailed instructions for the building of the tabernacle, and not just a general outline, we may also seek the Lord for specific instructions on what He wants us to do for Him.

## Haftarah - Solomon Built the Temple

In the haftarah this week we read about Solomon's building of the Temple. Although the Sanctuary had been destroyed, Israel retained their love for the House of Holiness.

King Solomon prayed that when people repented and prayed towards the temple (even in a distant land, and even if a foreigner to Israel) that God would hear our prayers and forgive our sins; teach us the good way to walk, bless us, and give us victory over the enemy when we go out to battle. (1Kings 8:41-45)



Photo: Solomon offered sacrifices on the altar that Bezalel built. (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing)

The Kotel (Wailing Wall) is the last remaining relic of this temple and God's shechinah (glory) is still present there. We know that we can pray anywhere, anytime, and God will hear us and answer, but there is certainly something special about praying at the Kotel in the Old City of Jerusalem.

I can still remember, as a young, secular Jewish woman on my first tour to Israel, feeling deeply moved by the Spirit of God which hovers there. Even as a non-Believer, I felt so drawn to that ancient wall...compelled to touch it.. When I finally reached an open space in the wall, I felt such a holy presence come over me; I didn't even know what (or Who) it was, but I knew I just had to get closer. I lay my face against those ancient, pale golden stones and wept. It was like laying my head against my Father's breast and feeling His loving embrace. The prodigal daughter had come home.

**“How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of Hosts!” My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord;”** (Psalm 84:1-2)

May you each have the blessed opportunity to come and pray at the Kotel – next year in Jerusalem.



Closing Prayer: Adonai, thank you for Your word, that instructs us in the ways of Life. Thank you for your love and faithfulness in our lives. We praise You for stirring our hearts to give generously towards Your work as You direct us by Your Holy Spirit.

Help us to overcome any fear of giving, especially when we are in times of need ourselves. We know that You will repay us as generously as we have given.

We praise You for the wonderful gifts and talents that You have given each of us; and we want to use them for Your glory and to build Your Kingdom. Help us, Abba, to overcome any insecurities or the timidity that holds us back from expressing these and blessing others with the gifts You have given us.

Fill us with the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding to do the works You have called us to. And most of all, we just ask for Your Presence, that we may dwell with You and You with us. We know that it is better to have even just one day in Your courts than thousands elsewhere. Where You are, Lord, is where we want to be!

We love You and just want to lay our head on your breast, hear Your heartbeat, and rest in Your loving embrace. Help us to stop all our striving and find true rest in You, and that resting on the seventh day would become our delight. In Yeshua's name, Amen.

### Vayakhel Study Questions

1. Do you belong to a 'kehilla' (community) of other believers in Yeshua or are you trying to do the work of the Lord on your own? How can we create a greater sense of community( kahal)?
2. Is there any area where you notice you are only 'hearing' the Word and not 'doing it'? What changes could you make toward greater obedience to the Word of God?
3. How do you (& your family if applicable) keep Shabbat a holy day of rest? What about the 'grey areas'? Discuss.
4. What are some of the traditions that you keep from your culture or family? Do any of these contradict the Word of God? Is it clear that these are only traditions and not laws?
5. Are you a cheerful and generous giver? Do you give your tithe to the work of the Lord? Give testimony of how you received generously when you gave generously.
6. Do you feel that you are giving fully of your talents, gifts and abilities or is there any area where you would like to express them more fully for the glory of Adonai? What holds you back? What could you do about that?
7. Have you ever been to pray at the Kotel (Western Wall)? If so, share your experience there. If not, would you like to? Would you like to pray and ask the Lord about it?

About the Author:

Hannah Neshar grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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