

The Tabernacle's skilled artisans

[*Parashat V'yekhel \(Shemot/Exodus 35-38:20\)*](#)

Skill + Dedication + Divine Inspiration

Exodus 35-38 describes the preparations needed for the realization of the Tabernacle's construction. It answers these types of questions:

What materials? How much would people need to contribute? Who would gather the measurements? What other objects would be made? Who were the Tabernacle's skilled artisans?

Along with the Tabernacle would be the tent, pillars, bases, the Ark of the Covenant, a menorah, table, incense altar, and holy anointing oil. It was quite an undertaking!



Exodus 35:14

It would require skill.

Dedication.

And, some divine inspiration.



Exodus 35:10 says "Let every wise-hearted man among you come and make everything that ADONAI has commanded . . ." (emphasis added)

The High Value of Artisanship

Some translations read “gifted artisans” here. Every gifted artisan was to come help with the project. At that time, to be an artisan wasn’t some undervalued, underfunded craft. **The Tabernacle budget wasn’t cutting out art!** Quite the contrary! Artisanship was so important that the very Spirit of the LORD filled selected individuals with the gifts needed for intricate, beautiful art. God **invested** in the Tabernacle’s skilled artisans!

And lest you think this was a select club for men only, worry not!

Exodus 35:25 “Also all the women who were wise-hearted spun with their hands, and brought what they had woven—the blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen.” *(emphasis added)*

God invested in artisans!

Artisanship was so important that the very Spirit of the LORD filled selected individuals with the gifts needed for intricate, beautiful art.

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Chakam-lev חָכָם לֵב

The term found in Scripture here is *chakam-lev*. It refers to the skilled, to those who literally are **wise of heart**. Most English language Bible translations translate this term as “gifted or skilled artisan.” The TLV (Tree of Life Version) Bible translation chooses the literal translation of “wise of heart.” Thus, the TLV is expressing more literally this Hebrew term. Nevertheless, the NKJV and NIV’s translations using “skilled craftsman” or “gifted artisan” help us more wholly understand the term.

So to be a “gifted artisan” is to be “wise of heart.”

Now isn’t **that** interesting?



The Hebrew term "chakam-lev" refers to the skilled: to those who literally are "wise-of-heart."

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"Chakam-lev" literally means "wise of heart"

It is rare to use the word "wise" to describe artists in our society. Most do not receive well-deserved compensation for their efforts, and they live in the shadows, somewhat outcast due to lack of funding and perceived instability.

Indeed, artists are often misunderstood. They have to defend their work because most of us don't quite "get" their level of creativity. Just the other day, I had an email conversation with the author/illustrator of the [Word for Word Bible Comic](#) I [reviewed](#) for him. I wasn't grasping why he had chosen to use a specific image for a page in his forthcoming Gospel of Luke graphic novel. I imagine he finds himself explaining many different illustrations to people who might have different perspectives.

Being an artist isn't easy!

**Yet talented artists have a gift
that most of us do not possess.**

And that gift comes from God! God who Himself is an Artist:
the Potter who molds us and the Painter who created the
beautiful canvas of the universe.



Isaiah 64:7

**The LORD chose two men, Betzelel
and Oholiab, for the artisan work
needed for the Tabernacle.**

Again, notice Scripture describes the Tabernacle's skilled

artisans as “wise-hearted” and “filled with wisdom of heart.”

Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying, “See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make ingenious designs, to forge with gold, silver and bronze, as well as cutting stones for setting and carving wood, to work in all manner of craftsmanship. Also look, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Within the hearts of all who are **wise-hearted** I have placed skill, so that they may make everything that I have commanded you.” Exodus 31:1-6 (emphasis added)

“Then Moses said to Bnei-Yisrael, “See, Adonai has called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He has filled him with the Ruach of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge, in all manner of craftsmanship, to make ingenious designs, to work in gold, silver and bronze, as well as cutting gemstones for setting, wood carving, to make all kinds of skillful craftsmanship. He has also placed in his heart the ability to teach—both he and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. **He has filled them with wisdom of heart** to forge all the works of an engraver, an artisan, and an embroiderer in blue, purple, scarlet and in fine linen, as well as weaving—they can perform every craft and ingenious designs.” Exodus 35:30-35 (emphasis added)

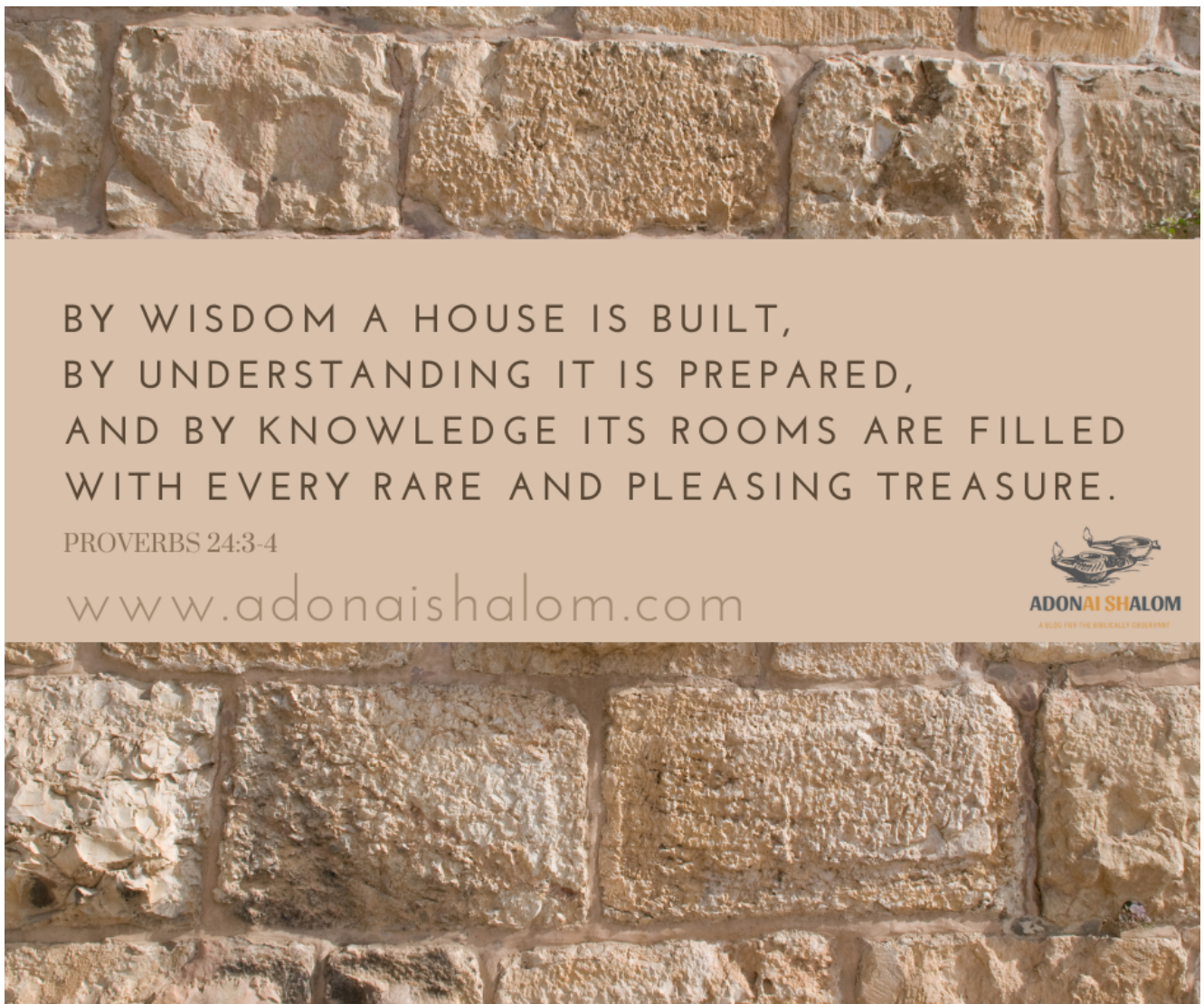
The Tabernacle was literally built with Wisdom!

By wisdom a house is built,
by understanding it is prepared,
and by knowledge its rooms are filled

with every rare and pleasing treasure.

Proverbs 24:3-4

Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) is Wisdom Incarnate. (The Proverbs express Wisdom as personified). Thus, He was ever-present in the Tabernacle! From start to finish, Wisdom inspired the craftsmen. He chose to dwell among us and prepare a meeting place.



Now, are you ready for this?

Betzalel's name in Hebrew means **“under the protection of God!”**

And Oholiab (also spelled Aholiab) means **“the Father's tent”!**

Oholiab was working on the Tent of Meeting! It was to be the Father's tent!

And when you are in the Father's tent, surely you are under the protection of the Almighty One!

Our Heavenly Father wanted His Presence to be near us, despite the separation that was occurring due to the curse of sin and death. The Father's tent was the place where heaven could meet earth, even if only temporary. He made a temporary way, a temporary dwelling place, but the veil was still separating us. The Holy of Holies was restricted to the high priests and the yearly days of atonement. But He sent His Son! God's selfless Son, Messiah Jesus, came to restore what had been lost. He was the Word Incarnate and came to dwell among us. Now, His Spirit dwells within **us**!

See how every aspect of Scripture points to the Good News?!

Isn't that absolutely stunning?

It leaves me speechless (which, if you know me, that's incredibly hard to do!).



The Tent of Meeting

Truly, the Tent of Meeting was the Father's tent.

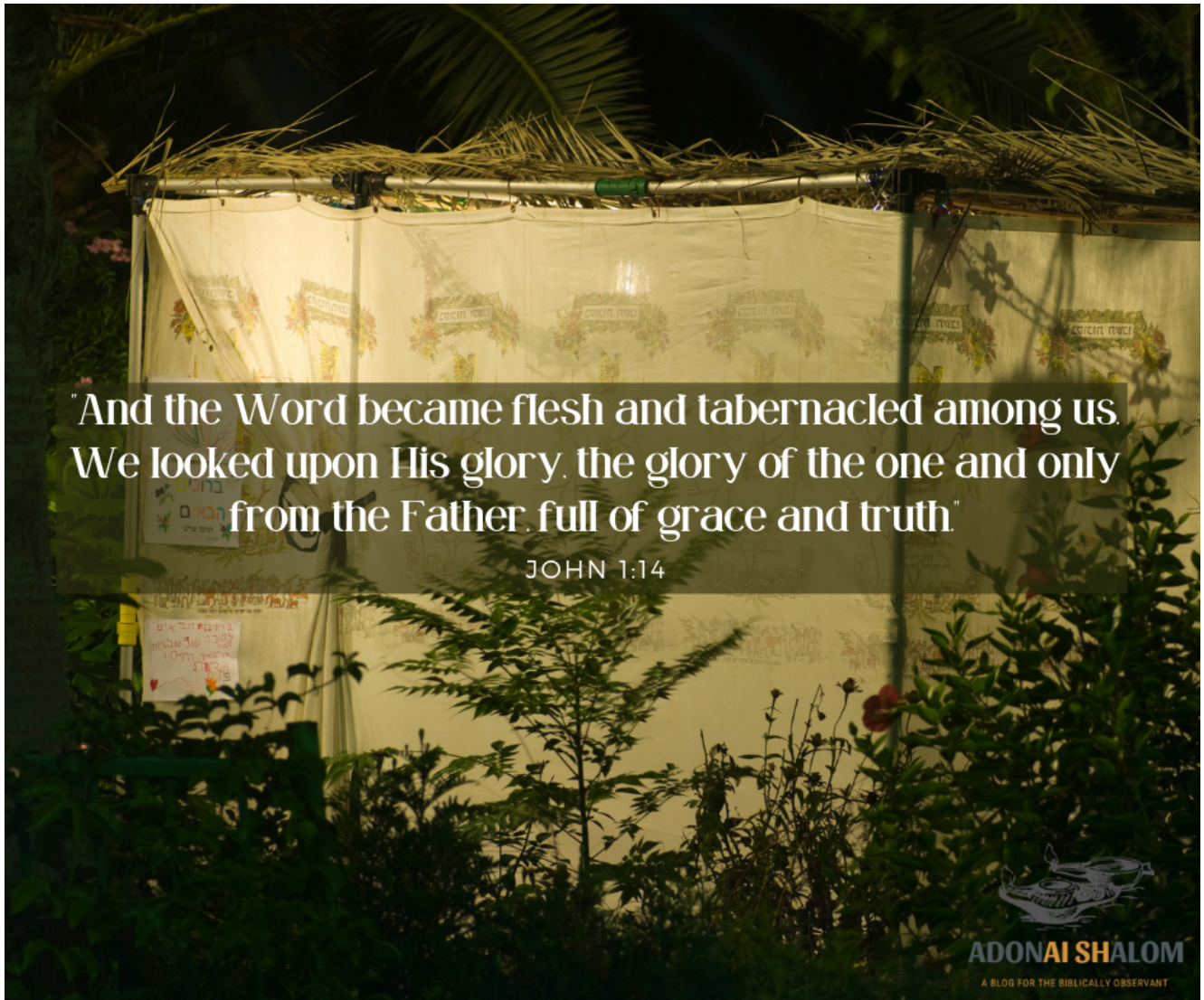
Tents are so important to God there is even a Biblical [feast](#) featuring them!

Every year, during the [Feast of Tabernacles](#) (aka *Sukkot*), all of Israel is to build temporary structures (tents!) to live in for the duration of the feast. Many English Bibles translate these tents as "booths" or "tabernacles." The Hebrew term for these temporary dwellings is "sukkah."

Nearly every Christian believer is familiar with [John 1:14a](#): "[The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.](#)"

But most people do not realize that the term “dwelt” there literally means “tabernacled.” The TLV translates it this way:

“And the Word became flesh and **tabernacled** among us.” (John 1:14a, emphasis added)



John 1:14

I hope you are able to see how the sukkah represents so much Biblical revelation! He came to dwell among us, to tabernacle with us – to celebrate the goodness of Life and to show us the Way of His Salvation.



More than enough

[Exodus 36](#) describes how Betzalel and Oholiab led the work and many other wise-hearted men joined in the effort.

The people worked wholeheartedly and selflessly. So much so, the Tabernacle's skilled artisans noticed. They said to Moses, ["The people are bringing much more than enough for the work of this construction that ADONAI has commanded to be done."](#)
[Exodus 36:5](#)

What an example for our congregations today!

They actually had to **stop** making so many preparations!

Moses gave an order to restrain people from bringing anything

more.

["For the work material they had was sufficient for all the work, with much left over." Ex.36:7](#)

When we do our work in alignment with the will of our Father, there will always be abundance. There will always be enough and more than enough. There may be setbacks and times when we don't sense any bit of abundance, but if we persist in faith, it will come.

Final thoughts for today

Finally, if there is just one thing I would want my readers to take away from this is that every tiny detail in Scripture always points back to revelation of God. Even the clasps of gold for the curtains were to be coupled together by the Tabernacle's skilled artisans ["so that the Tabernacle was One."](#) (Ex.36:13). This immediately brings to mind the [Shema](#), that the Lord is One. When you read the Bible, look for these small details! They may seem insignificant, but I assure you, they aren't.

So, I hope you have enjoyed delving a bit into Exodus today and learning a bit more about the Tabernacle's skilled artisans! I would love to hear your insights. What is it you have found in the Scriptures today? How is this passage of encouragement to you? Do you know any artists or architects who have felt under-appreciated? Is there someone you can encourage today with the Word of God? Please leave a comment and share on social media! Let's increase Biblical literacy among believers so we can be a light for unbelievers!