Spirit-filled Songs of Praise in Luke's Gospel

(Luke 1-2) 5783 B"H, updated 2/20/23

Last week, I focused on <u>Dr.Luke</u>, <u>Gospel-writer</u>. His purpose in writing was so that the beloved ones would "know for sure the <u>Truth."</u> We will see today that Luke was also very interested in recording examples of <u>Spirit-filled praise</u>.

As we continue to look at <u>Luke</u>'s writings, I'd like to point out his early focus on praise hymns. Before the <u>first chapter</u> of the <u>Gospel of Luke</u> ends, he has already shared with us the song of praise (often called the <u>"Magnificat"</u>) of Mary (Miriam), the mother of Jesus (Yeshua).

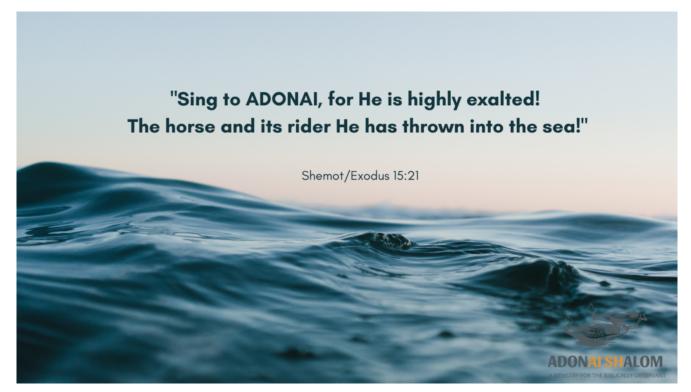
This indicates to me that Luke was a worshipper. It seems to me that Dr.Luke had a heart filled with praise which inspired Him to write and share the Good News with us.

Miriam the Prophetess & Miriam, Mother of Messiah

When we hear the name "Miriam" related to Scripture, it is not uncommon to immediately think of Miriam the Prophetess, Moshe's (Moses') brave sister (Shemot/Exodus 15:20).

Both <u>Moshe (Moses)</u> and <u>Miriam sang praises to ADONAI</u> for leading them to safety through the parted waters of the Red Sea <u>(Shemot/Exodus 15)</u>. With tambourine in hand, Miriam led dancing and singing:

"Sing to ADONAI, for He is highly exalted! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" Exodus 15:21



The praises sang in the Sinai desert set a precedent for the way praise would be offered throughout the Scriptures. Even today, we ought use these patterns for our praise — unashamedly rejoicing before the LORD in song and celebration.

Every bit of the Bible is compelling, but I find it very fascinating that Miriam the Prophetess is not the only Miriam in Scripture.

The mother of Yeshua (Jesus) was also a Miriam. "Mary" is anglicized. Back in ancient Bethlehem, it wasn't "Mary and Joseph:" it was "Yosef and Miriam" blessed with their beautiful Son, Yeshua.

<u>Luke's Gospel account</u> records that when Miriam visited Elizabeth, the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh) filled Elizabeth "completely" (<u>Luke 1:41</u>, TLV).

In response to that Spirit-driven experience, Prophetess Miriam praised the LORD using the types of phrasing typical of Hebrew poetry. It is likely that Miriam, mother of Jesus (Yeshua) was inspired by the praise song sung by the other Miriam, sister of Moses:

"Then Miriam said.

'My soul magnifies ADONAI,

and my spirit greatly rejoices in God, my Savior.

For He has looked with care upon the humble state of His maidservant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One has done a great thing for me,

and holy is His name.

And His mercy is from generation to generation

to the ones who fear Him.

He has displayed power with His arm

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down rulers from thrones

and exalted humble ones.

He has filled the hungry with good things

and sent away the rich empty-handed.

He has helped His servant Israel,

remembering His mercy,

just as He spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his seed forever.'" Luke 1:46-55

Zechariah the Priest (Kohen)

Luke, being the very detail-oriented doctor that he was, made sure to record the song sung by Priest Zechariah because of its prophetic Truth.

Zechariah, too, was filled with the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh) and Luke makes sure to point that out.

Notice the parallels between the songs of the Miriams and Zechariah. They begin by magnifying the LORD, blessing His Holy Name. The Bible says that Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore prophesied about his son Yochanan (John [the Baptist/Immerser]) as well as Messiah Yeshua our Savior Jesus:

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"Blessed be ADONAI.
    God of Israel,
for He has looked after His people
   and brought them redemption.
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David,
just as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ages
past,
salvation from our enemies
   and from the hand of all who hate us!
So He shows mercy to our fathers
   and remembers His holy covenant,
the vow which He swore to Abraham
    our father, to grant us-
rescued fearlessly from the hand of
   our enemies—to serve Him,
in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
And you, child, will be called a prophet of Elyon.
For you will go before ADONAI to prepare His ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to His people
through removal of their sins.
Through our God's heart of mercy,
the Sunrise from on high will come upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
   and in the shadow of death,
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to guide our feet in the way of shalom." Luke 1:67-79



The Army of Heaven

Are you familiar with Chris Tomlin's song, Whom Shall I Fear?
<a href="(The God of Angel Armies)?

I particularly love the line, <u>"The One who reigns forever, He</u> is a Friend of mine!"

Think about that! Let it sink in! The God of the Heavenly Armies, the All-Victorious, Almighty One, who reigns forever — is also your Friend. A Friend of mine!? Then yes, whom shall I fear? The Commander-In-Chief, the Eternal Protector, just so happens to be the One I can call upon at any moment and He will send heavenly host reinforcements. Immediately. He's that Powerful. He's that Loving. He's that good of a Friend. ADONAI-Tzva'ot!

"A multitude of heavenly armies" proclaimed the birth of our Messiah:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth shalom to men of good will." Luke 2:13-14

Luke recorded these songs of praise to inspire us to do the same.

Praise the LORD today!

Does your soul magnify ADONAI?

Do you sing praises to the LORD Most High?

Have you, like those who have gone before us, recognized the Sovereignty of God in your life?

Do you rejoice in God your Savior?

Have you been rescued and delivered by His Mighty hand of power?

Are you filled with the glorious Holy Spirit?

Praise the LORD for all He has done!

"For the Mighty One has done a great thing for me, and holy is His Name." Luke 1:49

Asbury Awakening

We appear to be witnessing a revival, or what is often more historically termed, an "awakening," at Asbury University. As I wrote on our Adonai Shalom Facebook page,

"Let's pray for the students of Asbury University. May this be a true revival/spiritual awakening that our nation and world so desperately needs. I have been cautiously optimistic that what is going on there may become the Azusa Street of our day. This generation has been raised on coffee and donuts in the church and is hungry for real spiritual nourishment. I pray this generation learns true worship and experiences the authentic power of the Eternal One! I also pray for the administration because the logistics of what is going on at

the university must be quite a challenge to navigate. But may the LORD have His way and may hearts turn to Messiah Yeshua (Jesus)!"

This is such an exciting event to witness! We are in the last days, and there will again be Spirit-filled songs of praise lifted to our Most High God who is worthy of all honor and glory forever and ever. With all the modern technology, people have found out about the revival and are traveling from all over the world, hungry to experience the LORD. The Spirit of God is not limited to that place, but there will be people who, like the wise men, need to go there to see what it is the LORD has done and they will go and spread that news elsewhere. We should pray that this wonderful spirit of repentance and revival will continue and truly have a global impact.

Keep your eyes fixed on our Savior Yeshua (Jesus) — because He will come back for His own!



May you be most especially blessed today!

The Waters of Creation, the Great Flood, & Babel's attempt at Post-Flood Disaster Recovery

Parashat Noach (Genesis 6:9-11) 5783 B"H

The Holy Spirit hovered over the Waters at Creation

In studying <u>Parashat B'reishit</u>, I emphasized how <u>Genesis 1:2</u> can help you share the Gospel. You may recall that I shared how this particular verse can be especially powerful when interacting with members of the Jehovah's Witness organization. (Here is that <u>post</u> in case you missed it).

Today we move further into Genesis and we will see the consequences of what happens when people choose not to walk in the way of the LORD, but choose their own ways and their own misguided understandings at Babel.

B'reishit/Genesis 1:2 tells us:

"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2, NKJV



The Spirit of God (Ruach Elohim) was present at creation. Not some limited "active force." Not something nebulous, unknown, or impersonal. We are talking about the Spirit of God here!

The very *Spirit* of the Most High God. The Holy Spirit. The Glorious, Marvelous, Wonderful, Precious Holy Spirt. So very near, so very known to those who seek Him, and so very personal that He indwells those who receive Him. Today, many do not focus on the Holy Spirit's power and His ongoing work to empower believers. Yet, right away in verse 2 of the entire Bible is the Spirit of God made mention.

The Holy Spirit was hovering over the face of the waters.

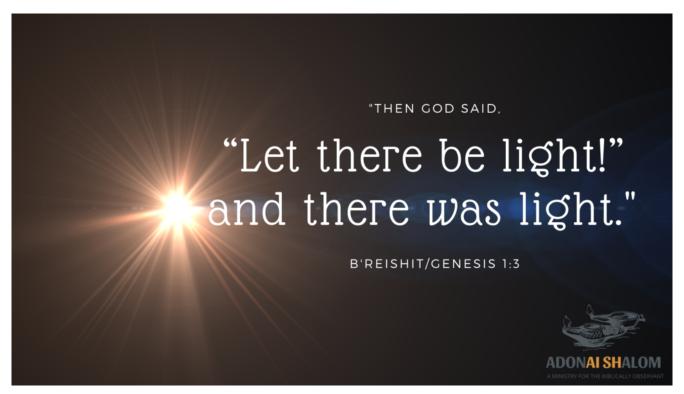
In a sense, the earth was flooded — the waters at creation were parted on Day 3 so there could be dry land. The Spirit of God hovered because this implies a closeness, a nearness.

Not quite touching — not yet — but ever so near.

Not yet touching because there was yet *darkness* on the surface. But:

"Then God said, "Let there be light!" and there was light."

Genesis 1:3

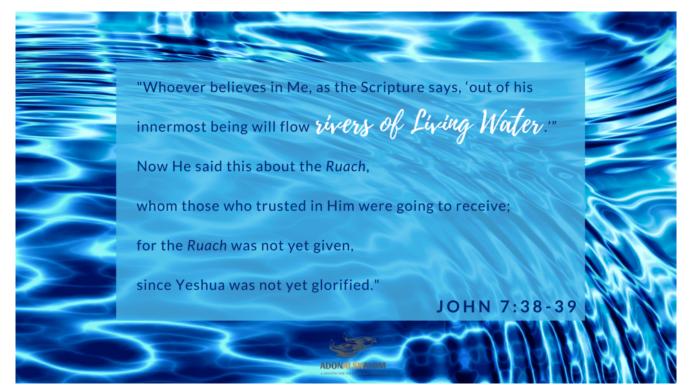


I imagine this was such a powerful, explosive moment!

The creative power of the Holy Spirit poured forth to bring form to the earth and fill that which Scripture calls a void. All-inspiring, awesome power. And LIGHT.

We so desperately need the Holy Spirit of the LORD and the Light of His Truth!

As we just celebrated during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), He is the <u>Living Water</u>!



"Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Now He said this about the *Ruach*, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the *Ruach* was not yet given, since *Yeshua* was not yet glorified." John 7:38-39

Sinful humanity preferred the darkness rather than the Light

The LORD provided a beautiful world for us, but sin entered in. Yochanan (John) so eloquently wrote of this in his Gospel account:

"Now this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and men loved the darkness instead of the light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:19, emphasis added

It took ten generations from the time of Adam, but divine patience had run out. People repeatedly chose immorality and corruption over righteous living. The earth would be flooded.

Noach and his family survived the Great Flood

Noach □□□□ (Noah) chose to walk in the Light.

Genesis 6:9 documents for us that Noach "walked with God!"

Surely Noach knew the priceless value of having the Spirit of the LORD guiding him in life.

When God told him to build the ark, Noach recognized God's voice and followed the instructions given to him.

He believed God at His Word.

If age should teach us anything, it is that God's Word always stands the test of time. Noach was 600 years old when the floodwaters came (Genesis 7:6). He knew God is reliable, and he chose to do as he was commanded.

<u>Genesis 6:8</u> reveals that Noach found favor in the sight of the LORD.

Why? Because he dared to believe. He dared to trust God!

Noach's boldness to believe spared him and his family.

After the Great Flood, it didn't take long for humanity to once again make poor decisions.

Babel's connection to the Flood

The Hebrew root word for flood, "mabbul" $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$, is actually related to the term "Babel" $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$.

You can hear the relatedness in the endings of the words: "ma-bul". "Ba-bel."

The Shared Memories of the Babel Community

The Flood was a part of the collective, or shared, memory of the Babel community.

As a group, the people living in that region of Shinar — known today as Babel — knew that they were descendants of flood survivors.

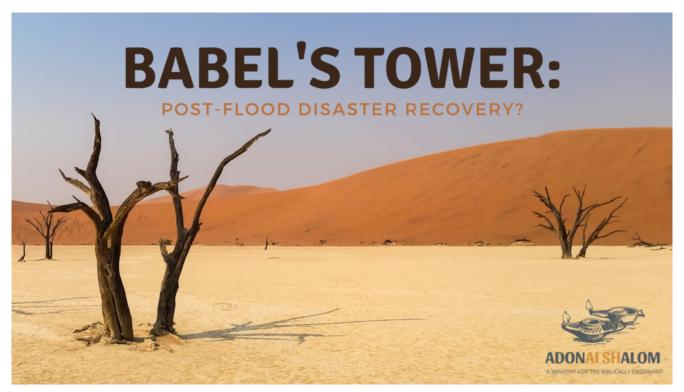
They had grown up hearing stories about great Grandpa Noach!

They knew the Flood had been real.

There was probably evidence in the vegetation and foliage around them. Perhaps downed trees or short shrubs growing back following the aftermath of the Flood.

People grew up in disaster recovery/survivor mode knowing their parents had either seen the days after the Flood firsthand or knew someone who had.

Post-Flood Disaster Recovery: Was the idea of building a tower so bad?



If your closest relatives had survived a major flood, wouldn't you be interested in building on higher ground?

Wouldn't you consider building "up" in hopes of avoiding a future deluge?

A watchtower could be incredibly useful. Someone could be assigned the job to check for rising water levels from afar!

Even if a future flood wasn't the concern, a watchtower to provide **advance warning** of enemy advances could surely prove useful.

Building a tower wasn't such a bad idea in and of itself.

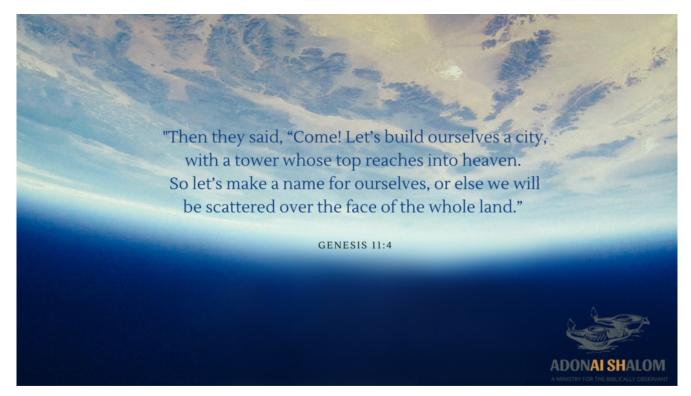
And perhaps what happened in that place serves as a reminder to us to not rush quickly to judgment when considering the motives of others. Nonetheless, the Scriptures do indicate that the people did have selfish motives.

The problem was their rebelliousness:

The People Wanted MORE than a Tower

The generations after Noach who lived in Babel did not learn from previous generations' mistakes. The disaster of the Flood wasn't enough for them — they brought disaster upon themselves once again:

"Then they said, "Come! Let's build ourselves a city, with a tower whose top reaches into heaven. So let's make a name for ourselves, or else we will be scattered over the face of the whole land." Genesis 11:4, emphasis added



The people wanted to make a name for themselves.

They wanted to establish a city and make themselves great.

They make no mention of building a city to honor the God who had rescued their families from the Flood.

They feared being scattered, so they united to build a tower whose top was to reach into heaven.

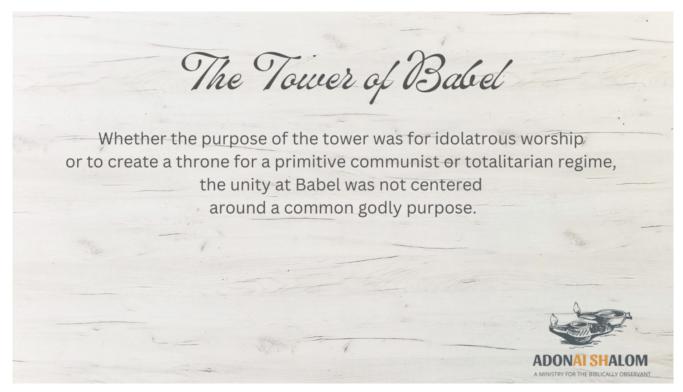
The people at Babel didn't want to reach the edge of the sky or the edge of heaven, they wanted to reach *into* heaven: to go

beyond the natural, God-ordained boundaries.

Their ambition got the best of them.

At Babel, the people demonstrated that unity *can* be productive. These people worked together — motivated by fear — to build a high place. They all spoke the same language and were able to communicate with ease.

Whether the purpose of the tower was for idolatrous worship or to create a throne for a primitive communist or totalitarian regime, the unity at Babel was not centered around a common godly purpose.



The city construction project and its tower had to be stopped. Sadly, the people unwittingly predicted their own demise: they certainly would be scattered over the face of the whole land:

"Then ADONAI came down to see the city and the tower that the sons of man had built." Genesis 11:5

Notice: the LORD came down.

The tower may have been tall according to human standards, but it was short enough to God that He chose to come down to get a

Confusion of Languages

Do you enjoy foreign language study? Learning another language wasn't necessary before that tower was built so if you find foreign languages hard, **blame the Babel-onians**.

"Come! Let Us go down and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand each other's language. So ADONAI scattered them from there over the face of the entire land, and they stopped building the city. This is why it is named Babel, because ADONAI confused the languages of the entire world there, and from there ADONAI scattered them over the face of the entire world." Genesis 11:7-9

The word "babel" is also closely related to "balal" [[[[[[[]]]]]]], a verb that Strong's Concordance describes as meaning not only "to confuse" or "to confound," but also "to mix," "to mingle," and intriguingly, "to anoint."

I have studied many languages and I actually enjoy it. What really intrigues me is when there are linguistic similarities between languages on complete opposite sides of the globe. There is so much evidence that what the Bible tells us occurred at Babel truly, historically, did happen. The world's languages are mixed and mingled and they all came from one source.

So the LORD caused language to become mixed and the people's communication confounded. But what about the possibility to translate this term "babel" with the kingly concept of "anointing?"

I think of it like this: the tower was anointed for its burial! There is speculation that the <u>ruins of the Tower of Babel are being uncovered in Iraq</u>, so there may be part of the tower still standing to this day, but all of these years . . .

it has been dead and buried.

The true King of all kings, the True Anointed One, was showing these people who was still in charge.

The reversal of Babel at Pentecost (Shavu'ot)

Babel caused a lot of issues even for us today:

How much time and money goes into translation projects!

How difficult it can be to share the Good News that Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) has come with those who do not speak our language!

But thankfully, the LORD God reversed what happened at the Tower of Babel when He sent His Ruach haKodesh, His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Shavu'ot):

"They were all filled with the Ruach ha-Kodesh and began to speak in other tongues as the Ruach enabled them to speak out. Now Jewish people were staying in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound came, the crowd gathered. They were bewildered, because each was hearing them speaking in his own language." Acts 2:4-6, emphasis added



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Acts 2:4-6



I have witnessed <u>miracles</u> in which people who do not speak the same language have been able to understand each other thanks to the gift of tongues. I have heard testimonies of the <u>Gospel</u> preached in a foreign tongue the speaker does not know, but the congregation does. The power of God is real, and there is restoration and freedom from every curse when we place our trust in Him, and Him alone.

The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, just as He came upon the waters at the time of creation. Seek the LORD and you will surely receive the blessings He has for you.

Rising Above the Waters

The LORD will never flood the whole earth again, but natural disasters will still affect certain places at times. Floods have become so very frequent, and many have suffered great losses due to these catastrophic events.

Have **you** ever lost your home to a flood?

Have you ever worked or volunteered on a disaster response team and seen firsthand such widespread destruction?

Has a recent hurricane affected you or your loved ones?

Know this: God is a God of restoration. He will help you to rise above the waters. Just as Yeshua (Jesus) rose from the dead, He can resurrect what has been lost — whether in this life or the life to come. He had mercy on us when He sent His Son and His Spirit to give us a future and a hope after the Flood and after the Tower incident. He is a forgiving and loving Father, and He wants to care for you.

Will you be like Noach and walk with Him today?

Differentiate yourself from those who would take matters into their own hands. Instead, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit when you make decisions and in this way, He will help you get through any situation!

We would love to hear from you. Comment below and share this post with your friends! Also, please subscribe to our monthly newsletter so you can stay updated on our ministry!

Order & Anointing: How Numbers 1-3 prove these go hand-in-hand

Parashat B'midbar (<u>B'midbar/Numbers 1-4:20</u>) 5782 B"H

<u>Numbers chapter 1</u> begins in the wilderness of Sinai. We are given the very *specific* date when the LORD spoke to Moses regarding a census.

It is a very orderly book, with very specific details and instructions. Truly, all of God's Word and, especially the

Torah, is well-ordered, and I hope you will be able to see how the divinely-established orderliness goes hand-in-hand with the anointing upon the Israelites.

There was to be a census of those men who could fight for Israel.

Simply, every Israelite son aged 20+ would have to serve in the Israelite army (<u>Numbers 1:3</u>).

It had been 2 years after the Exodus from Egypt. Specifically, the first day of the second month, 2 years later.

The encampment at Mount Sinai would have been taking shape as a full-fledged community meaning Israelite families and their assets would require protection as the community grew.

Men were looked to as protectors. They were numbered so that they could be assigned to their military divisions.

I am aware of feminist interpretations of this passage suggesting that God is somehow "unfair." Feminists make the mistaken claim that the LORD "ignored" all the women because Numbers 1 only talks about men. Well, I grew up under feminist theology, so let me tell you plainly: it's a bunch of nonsense. If God didn't value women, He wouldn't have gathered up the men to do the protecting: women would've been left to fend for themselves.

Men are naturally stronger. This doesn't make women inferior, just different. We have different roles, that's all. We do well to live in the order YHVH has established. We will experience the anointing of the LORD on our households when we live as He has prescribed.

The Bible says there were 603,550 men able to go out with the army of Israel (Numbers 1:46).

Certainly, that would suggest a large number of women and children! What a blessing that so many men would be able to protect them.

Numbers 2 defines the expected order for each of the military groups.

I love how the Scriptures are very orderly.

The fact that the Scriptures are so orderly reflects the orderliness of our Heavenly Father.

He has everything well thought out, organized, and He cares about how each facet of how His creation functions.

Sometimes passages like these from Numbers seem tedious or irrelevant, but if you will slow down and look at the wider context, you will discover many treasures even in these words. Likewise, for what to do when the Scriptures make you squirm, check out this recent post on "The Value of Human Life".

<u>Numbers 3</u> gives greater depth to a theme introduced in <u>Leviticus 1:47-51a</u> regarding the roles of the Levites. Here is that passage:

The Levites, however, were not counted by the tribe of their ancestors, for ADONAI told Moses saying, "Definitely you are not to number the tribe of Levi, nor take the sum of them among Bnei-Yisrael. Instead, you are to appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its implements and all pertaining to it. They are to carry the Tabernacle and all its utensils, tend to it and camp around it. Whenever the Tabernacle sets out, the Levites are to dismantle it, and whenever the Tabernacle is pitched, the Levites are to set it up. Leviticus 1:47-51a

<u>Numbers 3</u> addresses the duties assigned to the Levites (and their families). See, the women weren't neglected or ignored!

The tragic death of Aaron's two oldest sons

Before the specifics of the Levitical assignments are addressed, we find out in <u>Numbers 3:2</u> about the tragic death of Aaron's two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu.

<u>Numbers 1 and 2</u> had us thinking about the military, but these two young men didn't die in battle.

They were Levites, so they weren't fighting in the army.

Instead, Nadab and Abihu offered "unauthorized fire" before the LORD. (Numbers 3:4)

The New Living Translation (NLT) simplifies this to the <u>"wrong</u> kind of fire." (Num.3:4)

Nadab and Abihu died before the presence of the LORD that day due to carelessness. They didn't do their assigned task in the orderly manner required.

How often are we guilty of something similar?

The LORD had given specific instructions, but Nadab and Abihu somehow made a mistake that cost them their lives.

I am thankful for the LORD's grace today! I am also thankful that ADONAI is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33). Order has to do with understanding and lack of confusion. He has redeemed us so we do not have to live confused, disordered, disoriented lives.

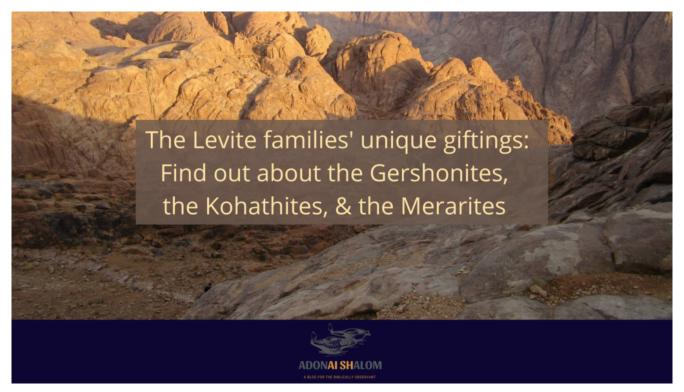


We must also be careful that we honor the Holy Spirit. When we worship, we must seek to be filled with the Holy Fire that comes from heaven alone and reverence His glorious presence.

Because Nadab and Abihu died, Aaron's younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, served as priests under Aaron, their father (Numbers 3:4b).

Nadab and Abihu were *replaced* because the community still needed priestly leaders. May we learn from this tragedy to be faithful in all of our ways and to seek God's guidance in every action we take. If we allow our lives to be ordered by the LORD, we will make right decisions and live in *shalom*.

The Levite families' unique giftings



Each Levite family was assigned different duties that ranged from caring for the implements of the sanctuary (such as the menorah, the Ark of the Covenant, and the altars) to the Tent of Meeting and its coverings to the care of the sanctuary itself.

Each family seems to have been anointed with a particular gifting, because as you read, you can observe that they were responsible for **specific areas**.

The Gershonites

If we analyze it plainly, the **Gershonites** were responsible for the fabrics. They were responsible for the curtains and the ropes used around the Tabernacle and altar (Num.3:25-26). They had an anointing for working with textiles.

The Kohathites

The **Kohathites** were responsible for "caring for the sanctuary." (Numbers 3:28). They were assigned to care for the implements including the menorah, the Ark of the Covenant, and the altars. Perhaps they were anointed in metalworking, able

to polish and repair any utensil as needed.

The Merarites

The **Merarites** held the responsibility to care for the structure of the Tabernacle. Their anointing was in engineering! They were to care for the posts and frames and crossbars, bases, pegs, and ropes.

Each clan had to follow the orderly instructions given by the LORD. If they didn't, a job would go undone. A mistake could be made.

And we know from Nadab and Abihu that mistakes can prove instantly fatal.

If a non-Levite approached the Tabernacle area, the consequence was also death.

"You are to appoint Aaron and his sons to maintain the priesthood; any commoner who approaches must be executed."

Numbers 3:10

That's another one of those verses that makes me say, "WHAT?"

But we must understand. The Tabernacle was set-up to teach us about the holiness of God. He is unapproachable without our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

"For there is one God and there is one Mediator between God and men - a human, Messiah Yeshua, who gave Himself as a ransom for all —the testimony at the proper time." 1 Timothy 2:5-6

Had our Messiah never come, we would still bear the consequence of death. But praise be to our LORD who has sent His Son, *Messiah Yeshua*, (Jesus Christ) to save us from sin and death!

Anointing and giftings today

Throughout the Bible, we find all sorts of examples of people having received special anointing and giftings. The purpose of the anointing was so that a person would be <u>divinely empowered</u> or inspired to carry out a task that would be of blessing. The Spirit of the LORD rested on people for a time, and today, the Spirit of the LORD infills believers to accomplish the Great Commission!

God remains a God of order.

If we seek the blessings of the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh), we must do so in an orderly manner, with a spirit of gentleness. He will fill us with His supernatural giftings if we seek to use those gifts to bless the Kingdom of God.

Perhaps there is no census of believers taken on tablets of stone or sheets of papyrus, and we haven't all had to enlist for military service. But we are (as believers) members of the royal priesthood, and even the hair on our head has been numbered (Luke 12:7).

Today, I encourage you to seek to order your life, your every step, on the Biblical pattern God has established for a full and abundant life!

And I believe if you submit to His vital instructions and guidance, He will surely anoint you with His Holy Spirit to serve Him with success and joy!

Thanks so much for reading today! Please leave a comment below and subscribe to our monthly newsletter!