

Crafted for Purpose: The Anointing of Bezaleel

The story of Bezaleel finds its foundation in Exodus 31:1-5: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass." This scripture not only highlights Bezaleel's divine calling but also emphasizes the elevation of human skill when it is infused with divine purpose. As we explore his background, the significance of his appointment, and the lessons we can draw from his life, let us weave in parallels from the world of art and music, illustrating the lasting legacy of dedication and excellence.

Bezaleel: In the Shadow of God

Bezaleel's name means "in the shadow of God," embodying his connection to divine protection and guidance. From the tribe of Judah, his heritage signifies roles of both leadership and loyalty, making him uniquely positioned for the extraordinary call upon his life. His lineage not only connects him to kingship through Judah but also to spiritual commitment through his ancestor Hur. His identity underlines a crucial lesson that we can draw upon: God often selects individuals with a specific background and purpose, enhancing their natural abilities for His work. Each of us, shaped by our experiences and education, has a role to play in God's grand narrative.

The Anointing and Appointment of Bezaleel

In Exodus 31, God directly calls Bezaleel, stating, "I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." This divine empowerment transforms Bezaleel from a skilled craftsman into a gifted artist, setting the stage for him to create something of eternal significance. This dynamic reminds us of the life of the renowned painter Michelangelo. His early years were spent honing his craft, but it was his spiritual fervor and dedication to his art that elevated his works to heights that still inspire today. Michelangelo once declared, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark." Like Bezaleel, Michelangelo was driven by a

sense of purpose beyond mere skill; he sought to glorify God through every stroke of the chisel or brush. His masterpieces, including the Sistine Chapel ceiling, serve as timeless examples of how art can reflect divine beauty and inspire generations.

The Honor of Building the Ark

Bezaleel's appointed task of constructing the Ark of the Covenant signifies the utmost honor. The Ark represented the physical manifestation of God's presence among His people, housing the tablets of the Law and standing central to worship and covenant. The sacredness of the Ark's construction highlights Bezaleel's role as not just a craftsman, but as a servant deeply committed to creating a point of holy communion between God and His people. In parallel, consider the commitment of Johann Sebastian Bach, an iconic figure in classical music. Known for his profound ability to blend spirituality with musical artistry, Bach referred to his compositions as "the fruit of the Spirit." Each note, each melody, was crafted with intention—reflecting his belief that music is a divine language. His sacred compositions, such as the Mass in B minor and the St. Matthew Passion, were designed not merely to showcase talent but to lead listeners into deeper worship of God. Bach's works serve as a harmonious illustration of how art and music can be authentically dedicated to the glory of God when infused with purpose.

The Skill of Craftsman and the Value of Work

Bezaleel's craftsmanship, involving gold, silver, and brass—the most precious of materials—symbolizes the excellence God desires in our work. His efforts exemplify the beauty and significance of dedicating our skills to divine purposes. In doing so, he set a standard for us today, urging us to serve with diligence in all we undertake. The world of art provides another example through the story of Vincent van Gogh. Despite his struggles and lack of recognition during his lifetime, van Gogh poured his soul into his work, creating pieces that embodied deep emotion and profound beauty. His painting, "Starry Night," resonates with many for its expression of hope and spirituality amidst turmoil. Van Gogh's commitment to his art, despite societal challenges, reflects a devotion to a purpose greater than himself. He illustrates how genuine expression can be viewed as an act of worship, inviting viewers to encounter the divine through creativity.

When we examine Bezaleel's and these artists' fervent dedication, we can legitimately ask ourselves, "Are we dedicating our talents to endeavors that produce eternal significance?" In this age, distracted by fleeting trends and empty pursuits, it's vital to ground ourselves in the truth that our efforts, when aligned with God's will, can create lasting impact.

The Comparison with Idols and Temples

As we turn our focus to the contrast between sacred and secular pursuits, we cannot overlook the crafted idols of ancient times—artistry dedicated to false gods, as described in Isaiah 44:13-17. Much like the artisans of antiquity, those who built temples and created idols expended effort to glorify what would ultimately prove futile. They may have crafted beautiful statues but wasted their lives on symbols that bore no eternal weight. In reflecting upon my travels in Egypt, I was struck by the grandeur of monuments honoring pharaohs—like the colossal statues of Ramses and the exquisite treasures of Tutankhamun. These artifacts are undoubtedly remarkable, revealing a high degree of skill and artistry, yet they serve as poignant reminders of human ambition grounded in self-glory. The time devoted to producing such marvels failed to reflect the divine nature they might have represented and left a heavy sense of regret regarding the misplaced priorities of so many lives.

Bach and Michelangelo, on the other hand, channeled their talents into creations that transcend time, continually invoking wonderment and worship. Their artistry is not merely about the human spirit's potential; it is a reflection of divine inspiration and purpose, inviting a deeper relationship with God.

An Eternal Perspective

Bezaleel's life calls us to evaluate our own contributions in light of eternity. How do we utilize our skills? Are we dedicated to projects that resonate with God's purposes or merely to daily tasks that hold little significance? The enduring works of artists like Michelangelo and Bach remind us of the call to pursue excellence that honors God. In 1 Corinthians 3:12-14, Paul presents a prophecy of assessment; he illustrates how our works will be revealed and tested. When the day comes, will our efforts stand the test,

made of materials that withstand the fire—gold, silver, precious stones? Are we investing in the eternal with our talents?

Just as Bezaleel was called to build something that would represent God's presence, we are invited to explore how our arts, crafts, and daily work can reflect the character of Christ. Whether in our careers, in serving our communities, or within our families, our skills should mirror the beauty of God and contribute to His mission on earth.

The Challenge to Our Lives Today

Standing under the inspiration of Bezaleel, combined with the legacies of Michelangelo and Bach, raises the question of our commitment. Are we, like these masters, diligently engaged in the work God has set before us? Or are we caught up in the trifles of modern life, neglecting the potential of our divine calling? We can draw practical steps from their examples by actively seeking ways to align our passions with God's mission. Commit to excellence in whatever you are called to do, whether it be in your profession as a teacher, artist, engineer, or homemaker. As we innovate and create, let us remember that our forms of expression—be they through color, sound, or word—can be pathways to glorifying God.

Engage in communities that nurture your skills; join mentorships or workshops where you can grow. Reflect on your life goals: do they reflect a desire to leave a legacy that points toward eternity? Let this be a time for recalibration; meditate on how your life can bear witness to God's glorious purpose.

Conclusion

Bezaleel's life is an inspiring testament to how an individual filled with the Spirit of God can craft with excellence for His glory. It compels us to reflect on our dedication and the weight of our life's work. As we participate in the world of artistry and service, we must ask ourselves if we are pursuing the divine calling evident in our skills and talents. May we strive to embody the spirit of Bezaleel, harnessing our gifts to construct something that echoes God's beauty and purpose. Let us aspire to be modern-day Bezaleels, whether we wield the brush like Michelangelo, the quill like Bach, or the resources of our daily lives. In all our efforts, we are called to resonate with Colossians 3:23: "And

whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” By placing our focus on divine intent and eternal significance, we can create masterpieces of our own, firmly establishing ourselves in the legacy of those who have gone before, celebrating a journey of purpose that ultimately glorifies our Creator.