

God's Everlasting Covenant
presents
**Shadows of the Messiah (Part 4):
Betzalel**

Betzalel appears for the first time in the *Torah* in the portion named *Vayakhel*, which means, “He gathered.” This is the story of how the tabernacle instruments for God’s holy dwelling place were made. After the people were commanded to gather together all their gold, silver and beautiful fabrics as an offering to the LORD, Moses announces that a man named *Betzalel* has been appointed to lead the work as the chief craftsman of the sanctuary. That *Betzalel* appears in this aptly named portion is nothing short of amazing and it is also very prophetic, as we shall see!

Moses said to the children of Israel, “See, the LORD has proclaimed by name, *Betzalel*, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He filled him with Godly spirit, with wisdom, insight and knowledge, and with every craft...” (Exodus 35:30-31)

This closely matches another passage in the Scriptures where a similar description exists is speaking of the branch or shoot that will spring forth out of the stump of Jesse, which is referring to the Messiah in the Prophet Isaiah:

And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (Isaiah 11:2)

There is something else of which we should take note in Exodus 35. It says “He filled him with Godly spirit, with wisdom, insight and knowledge, and with every *craft*...” The word for “craft” is *melachah*, which means “workmanship.” This is the same word used to describe God (*Elohim*) when He ceased from His “work” of creating on the seventh day or *Shabbat*.

Betzalel is also from the tribe of Judah – as is Messiah.

The similarities are unmistakable. It would seem that our friend *Betzalel* is clearly a type and shadow of our Messiah, *Yeshua*.

The name *Betzalel* has a couple of meanings. Putting “El” at the end of a name means “of God.” The most common translation of *Betzalel* is “in the shadow of God” or “in the shelter of God.” This presents us with a beautiful picture. *Betzalel*, who is chosen to be the chief artisan for all the instruments of the Temple is the one who is “in the shadow” or “in the shelter” of God.

There is another meaning for this name: **בצל** *batzal* also means “onion” in Hebrew. It is as if God is saying there are truths here that need to be peeled back layer by layer, like one would peel an onion!

One of the most remarkable discoveries I have made about this name comes from the very first chapter in the Torah in Genesis or *Breishet*, in Hebrew. There are many things we could go into here, but for our purposes, we'll keep it simple and just talk about a few insights.

Gematria is an interesting methodology for studying the Hebrew Scriptures and there are amazing truths that can be uncovered. Very simply, Gematria is the study of the numerical values of letters and words in the Bible. In the Hebrew alphabet, every letter has a numerical value. There are four basic methods of counting the letters. The simplest and most straightforward is the “absolute” method. The letter א *aleph* is the number 1, the letter ב *bet* is the number 2, ג *gimel* is the number 3, and so on. Below is a chart:

	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
absolute	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ordinal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ
absolute	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
ordinal	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

	ק	ר	ש	ת	ך	ם	ז	ף	ץ
absolute	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900
ordinal	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

* also equals one thousand (the meaning of the letter "alef")

Using our chart above then, the absolute gematria of Betzalel is 153.

בצלאל

ב = 2

$$\aleph = 90$$

$$\beth = 30$$

$$\aleph = 1$$

$$\beth = 30$$

$$2 + 90 + 30 + 1 + 30 = 153$$

What is the significance of this?

Amazingly enough, the letter *aleph* may be able to provide part of the answer for us. In Judaism, the rabbis and Torah scholars have long believed that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet have great spiritual truths to teach us. Grant Luton in his book *In His Own Words* writes:

...and *aleph* (א), in its exalted position at the head of the alphabet is considered to be the repository of all the alphabet's wisdom. *Aleph* (א) is much more than just the equivalent of the letter "A" – merely the first in a series of letters. It is considered by Jewish theologians to actually be made in the image of God, and is thus the lord and master of all the letters – a father with twenty-one children. (Rabbi Michael Munk, *The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet*.) In fact, the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet -- *aleph* and *beit* – together spell אב (av) "father", thus teaching that all things begin with God, the *Father* of all. (*In His Own Words*, pg. 3)

In order to really gain an appreciation of Gematria, we need to delve a little deeper into the letter *aleph*. It is said that the aleph is actually made up of three parts. And those three parts are actually themselves three separate and individual letters: two *yuds* ך and a backwards slanting *vav* ך.



The rabbis have taught for centuries that the *vav* is a ladder between heaven and earth, and the two *yuds* are connected by the ladder. It is interesting to note that the word *yud* also means “hand.” The “hand” above belongs to God, and the “hand” below belongs to man. Within the *aleph*, we have this ladder, connecting God’s hand to man’s hand! When we realize also that the *vav* is a picture of a nail in the paleo or ancient Hebrew, we have a clear depiction of the story of the gospel within the construction of the *aleph*. In my opinion, it is not a stretch to say that the *vav* represents *Yeshua*, the God-man. Just as the ladder connects heaven and earth, so the *vav* connects God to man! One last insight to note is that since the *aleph* consists of three letters or parts, we could say that the *aleph* is three-in-one. It has three parts, but has a numeric value of one, just like God the Father, the Son and the Spirit are three-in-one.

Now, if we return to our Gematria chart, we find that the numeric value of the three parts of the *aleph* is 26.

$$yud \text{ י } = 10$$

$$vav \text{ ו } = 6$$

$$yud \text{ י } = 10$$

$$10 + 6 + 10 = 26$$

This is the same numeric value for the letters of God’s personal name *Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey* יהוה, which is sometimes pronounced in Christian circles as *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*.

$$yud \text{ י } = 10$$

$$hey \text{ ה } = 5$$

$$vav \text{ ו } = 6$$

$$\text{hey } \text{ה} = 5$$

$$10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26$$

This is not a coincidence, as we shall see in our next insight. Let's read from Luton's *In His Own Words* once again:

The very structure of the Bible's opening verses affirms in an amazing way the connection between aleph (א) and God's various names and titles. As mentioned above יהוה has a numeric value of twenty-six...as do the component parts of the letter aleph (א). Interestingly, if we start with the first letter of the Bible (Genesis 1:1) and count twenty-six letters, we arrive at an aleph (א). (pg. 8)

Not only is this true for God's personal name, יהוה but the same is true for the name *Elohim*, *El*, *Yah* (the shortened version of *Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey*) and *Av* (Father). *Elohim* (אלהים) has a numerical value of eighty-six, and the eighty-sixth letter of Genesis 1:1 is an *aleph*. *El* (אל) has a numerical value of thirty-one, and the thirty-first letter of Genesis is an *aleph*. *Yah* (יה) contains a numerical value of fifteen, and can you guess what the fifteenth letter of Genesis is? That's right...an *aleph*! And just to prove this is no coincidence, the word for Father, (*av*) has a value of 3. And the third letter of Genesis is an *aleph*.

It is clear to me, and I hope to you, that the designer of the Hebrew language, who I believe to be God, was linking the *aleph* to Himself. Not only that, it is like His personal signature is all over the Scriptures. Whenever we uncover these hidden mysteries, we uncover more of Him. When we get into the spiritual truths taught in the letters and words of Scripture themselves, we discover deeper and richer meanings than what is on the surface! The result is a treasure trove of gems leading us toward a more wonderful and intimate relationship with our Creator and King, touching and moving us in the depth of our souls to bow down in worship and adoration, which He so richly deserves!

I encourage you to get a Hebrew Bible so you can verify these truths for yourself. It's one thing for someone to tell you about this, and it is something else entirely for you to see it for yourself.

So, you may be asking at this point, what does all this have to do with *Betzalel*? Amazingly, *aleph* just so happens to be the 153rd letter of the Torah. If you begin counting from the very first letter in Genesis, which is a *beit* (ב), you will arrive at an *aleph* as the 153rd letter!

Where else in the Bible does the number 153 specifically appear? There is only one place and it is in the gospel of John in the story about the miraculous catch that took place after Peter and some of the other disciples had been up all night without catching a single fish. They returned to the shore exhausted and frustrated. *Yeshua* came to them, but they didn't

recognize Him. It was after He had risen. He told them to put the net in again on the right side of the boat and miraculously, they caught 153 fish, yet their nets did not break.

So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. (John 21:11)

Why would the gospel writer be so specific about the number of fish that were caught early that morning? I believe this is one of those hidden secrets that our awesome God wants us to understand. It is there because the ancient rabbis before us who diligently studied the Scriptures would eventually find these hidden secrets and recognize the importance of the number 153. We have a trail of these kinds of mysteries that have been unlocked for us already. *Betzalel* is a person in the Torah who reveals to us something about the nature of who our Messiah would be. Just as the Father filled *Betzalel* with Godly wisdom, knowledge and understanding, so did He fill *Yeshua* with Godly wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Why? Because in Him dwells the *aleph*. He said so: "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14:11) The works He did, including the catch of the 153 fish, were to help us understand that these works were like the signature of the *aleph*, in the Torah. The *aleph* was in *Betzalel's* work for the earthly tabernacle, just as the *aleph* was in *Yeshua's* works to build a spiritual temple, made up of living stones. The personal signature of the Father was in everything *Yeshua* was and did!