

# Artisan



## A Ministry of the Spirit

The Life of the Artisan is about Relationship

### Exodus 35

<sup>30</sup> **SEE, THE LORD HAS CALLED BY NAME BEZALEL THE SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH;** <sup>31</sup> **AND HE HAS FILLED HIM WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD, IN WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING, IN KNOWLEDGE AND ALL MANNER OF WORKMANSHIP,**

<sup>32</sup> *To design artistic works, . . . .*

<sup>34</sup> **And He has put in his heart the ability to teach**

### Exodus 28:2-3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, *for glory and for beauty.*

<sup>3</sup> So you shall speak to all *who are gifted artisans*, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.

### Exodus 35:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> *All who are gifted artisans* among you shall come and make all that the Lord has commanded:

### Exodus 35:30-35 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;

<sup>31</sup> and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship,

<sup>32</sup> to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze,

<sup>33</sup> in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

<sup>34</sup> And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

<sup>35</sup> He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine linen, and of the weaver--those who do every work and *those who design artistic works*.

Years ago I met together with some leaders in the Body of Christ. They asked me,

"What do you believe your ministry is?"

I replied, "To communicate Beauty and Truth."

It was a difficult time in my life and ministry. I wasn't sure what I was to do next. But I remembered Psalm 27

### **Psalms 27:1-6 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>2</sup> When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

<sup>3</sup> Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.

<sup>4</sup> One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

<sup>5</sup> For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

<sup>6</sup> And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

God is creator. His wisdom, truth and beauty can never be fully captured in this realm. He is the ideal and dwells in the Heaven of heavens. In Exodus 35 he tells Bezalel of the tribe of Judah to create a Tabernacle built after the pattern of heaven in this realm Exodus 25.9 Hebrews 8.5

### **Hebrews 8:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "*See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*"

He gives Bezalel skill, anointing and understanding to design artistic works. Together with Aholiab from the tribe of Dan they begin working and training others to build this Tabernacle. Skilled craftsmen create works of metal and wood. Seamstresses create needlework design after the pattern given.

These skilled craftsmen bring the hidden things of heaven into a visible representation in the wilderness on the way to Canaan. What they have produced through the guidance of the Spirit of God becomes the place where God is worshipped. This Tabernacle becomes the center of worship for the people of God.

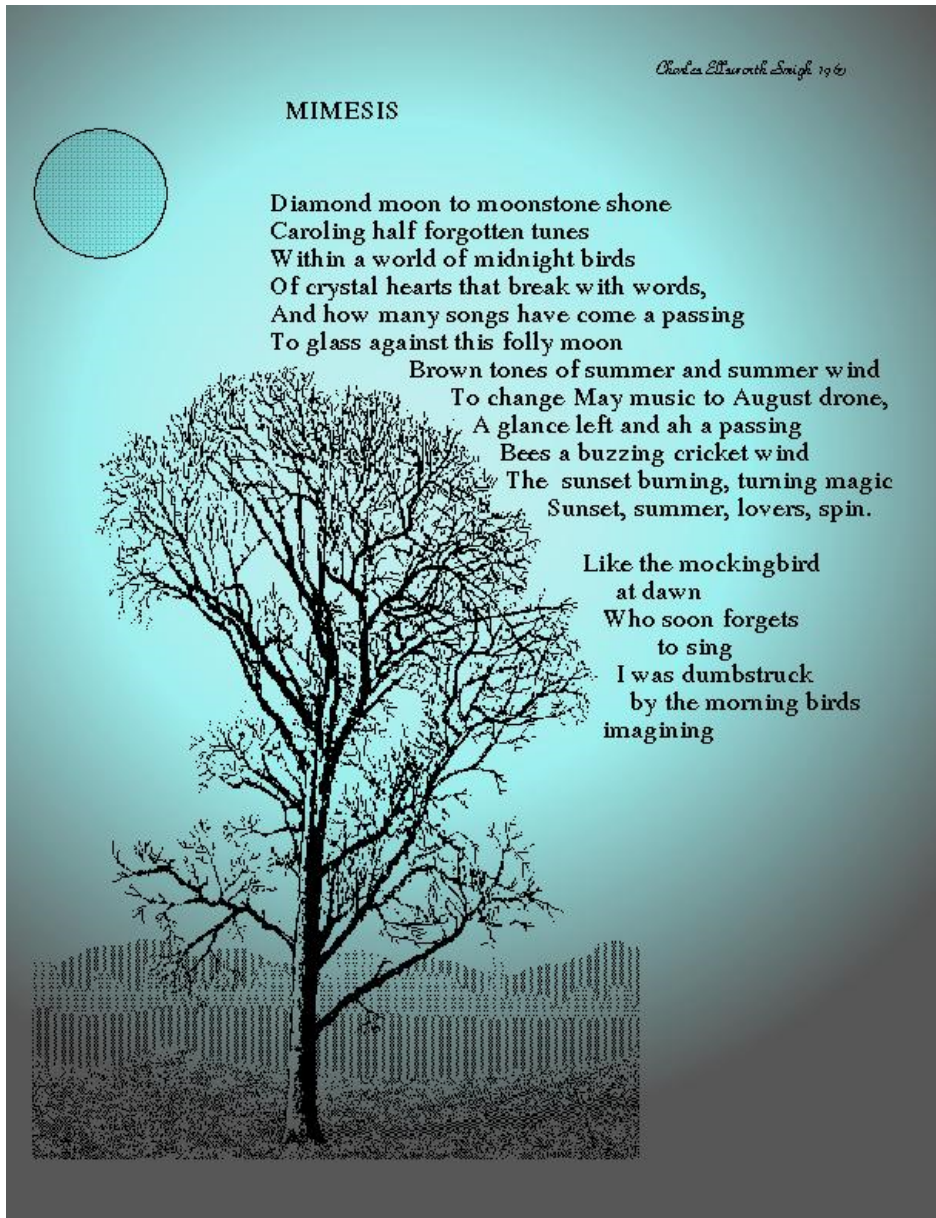
It is important to note that this is not a bland piece of architecture. It is filled with the most intricate and beautiful design yet it is portable. It shows us that God, as in a sunset, is deeply concerned to communicate beauty however fleeting it may be.

Thus the Tabernacle (Tent) is a representation of the heavenly place of worship.

All this is accomplished through the ministry of gifted artisans equipped by the Holy Spirit to imitate the things God has shown them.

When I was young I wrote a poem called Mimesis.

<http://www.soundwater.net/POETRY/WhentheTreewasGreenPart2.pdf>



## Mimesis – a definition

(Ancient Greek: μίμησις from μιμεῖσθαι) is a critical and philosophical term that carries a wide range of meanings, which include: imitation, representation and mimicry

## The Ancient Greeks Viewpoint

Plato tells of Socrates' metaphor of the three beds: one bed exists as an idea made by God (the Platonic ideal); one is made by the carpenter, in imitation of God's idea; one is made by the artist in imitation of the carpenter's. The artist can only try to imitate the ideal but can never attain it as he is too far removed from the source.

Aristotle defined mimesis as the perfection and imitation of nature. Art is not only imitation but also the use of mathematical ideas and symmetry in the search for the perfect, the timeless, and contrasting being with becoming. Nature is full of change, decay, and cycles, but art can also search for what is everlasting and the first causes of natural phenomena.

Aristotle wrote about the idea of four causes in nature. The first formal cause is like a blueprint, or an *immortal idea*. The second cause is the material, or what a thing is made out of. The third cause is the process and the agent, in which the artist or creator makes the thing. The fourth cause is the good, or the purpose and end of a thing, known as telos.]

Theologically telos hinges on the idea that the world gives evidence of being designed, and concludes that a divine designer must be posited to account for the orderly world we encounter. *Gatheed from various sources*

Though the Greeks had not yet perceived the One True God they understood there was order and symmetry in creation. For Socrates art could only be a poor imitation of the ideal but for Aristotle art is a way to explore and perhaps reveal the ideal in the material world through a particular media like painting or music.

## Art – a modern definition

1. Human effort to imitate, supplement, alter, or counteract the work of nature.
2.
  - a. The conscious production or arrangement of sounds, colors, forms, movements, or other elements in a manner that affects the sense of beauty, specifically the production of the beautiful in a graphic or plastic medium.
  - b. The study of these activities.
  - c. The product of these activities; human works of beauty considered as a group.
3. High quality of conception or execution, as found in works of beauty; aesthetic value.

4. A field or category of art, such as music, ballet, or literature.
5. A nonscientific branch of learning; one of the liberal arts.

The modern definition makes no attempt to deal with the ideal as a foundation for thought. Nature is the sole reference point. One can imitate, alter or stand against the laws of nature by means of artistic endeavor. So called art can become an instrument to reveal mans perversities and celebrate his fallen state. By this standard excrement can be glued on canvas and exhibited as well as pornographic imagery in celebration of liscence. In some places if it is new it is art.

## A Biblical perspective

### 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> But as it is written: "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*" <sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

<sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

<sup>15</sup> But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> For "*who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?*" But we have the mind of Christ.

Art is a process originated by God, revealed in the creation and imitated by man. At home I have a representaional painting of the Tabernacle. Beacue the Tabernacle Bezalel and Aholiab conctrected is no longer with us this painting attempts to imitate what it looked like. Through the artists effort I have a picture of the ideal which God transmitted to Bezalel.

Because there is a war for the souls of men, the arts can be and often are corrupted to reflect the sinful aspects of our earthly experience. The concern for the ideal is mocked and darkness is exalted. The true believer has the mind of Christ . By grace he can look at life from a heavenly perspective.

The Christian Artisan can and should be in communion with the Spirit of God and guided by a desire to reflect and reveal the ideal. As this is done it is equally important that the artist should be free to express the struggle to attain the ideal as David did in the Psalms.

As thunder precedes lightning and night the day, joy is made up of tears and laughter. Art should help explain the journey.

We are created to follow. We are to endeavor to imitate the ideal. The concept of imitation is found in the New Testament.

### **1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

### **Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

### **3 John 1:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

### **1 Corinthians 14:33-34 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Mimesis, imitation is inevitable. It is in our nature to imitate. But what do we imitate evil or good? Do we understand that there is a pattern and we are to find it? Some artists today believe in chaos as a force and attempt to mime it. Images are used to bombard the mind of the beholder until he accepts an altered reality and begins to prefer it above the ideal revealed in creation. A Christian artist is not called to confusion but to peace. God is a God of order as creation tells us. Creationism sees God as the author of divine design. The ultimate revelation of this divine is Christ himself. He is the pattern son and the one to be imitated.

The true follower is to imitate the Messiah even as the earthly tabernacle imitates the heavenly. God also gives us examples to follow such as the life of Paul or those who through faith and patience inherit the promise.

A necessary part of this journey, to follow and imitate the Master, is the ministry of the Artisan.

*The arts and the sciences do have a place in the Christian life -- they are not peripheral. For a Christian, redeemed by the work of Christ and living within the norms of Scripture and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Lordship of Christ should include an interest in the arts. A Christian should use these arts to the glory of God -- not just as tracts, but as things of beauty to the praise of God. And art work can be a doxology in itself. Francis Schaeffer – Art and the Bible*

## Psalm 45

**MY HEART IS OVERFLOWING WITH A GOOD THEME;**

**I RECITE MY COMPOSITION CONCERNING THE KING;**

**My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.**

The name Psalms is derived from the Septuagint title for the book, *Psalmoi*. *Psalmoi* meaning “poems sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments.”



The Psalms express a wide variety of human emotion from a number of authors. They are penned with ink and played on musical instruments, to be heard and remembered. This work of the artisan causes the words to go into our hearts and is more easily remembered by the mind in song form. David is a model of *the poet musician* who the Spirit of God uses to enlighten and prophesy to us thousands of years later. He developed his skill as he tended sheep as a young man. His God given ability was so great that he could bring peace and clarity to a demon possessed King Saul.

The Psalms are first and foremost written to God. And that is the key. The artisan's purpose is to minister to the Lord. It was said of David that he had a heart after God. How did he get this kind of heart? Imagine night after night playing your lyre under the stars with sheep all around you and the song ascending to the heavens. What a beautiful preparation for all that was to follow in David's life.

*So the man who really loves God, who is working under the Lordship of Christ, could write his poetry, compose his music, construct his musical instruments, fashion his statue, paint his pictures, even if no man ever saw them. He knows God looks upon them.*  
Francis Schaeffer – *Art and the Bible*

The life of the artisan is about relationship. His skillful endeavor comes from the presence of the Lord in his life. Without deep calling to deep art can become shallow and self absorbed and leave the observer feeling empty.

It is important to note that all sixtysix books of the Bible were penned at various times by numerous people who needed to have a deep relationship with the Master in order to pass His truths on to us. The life of a believer in any age is the ongoing work of the Spirit of God in cooperation with the Creator of all things, the ultimate Artisan.

## Ephesians 5

**UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS .**

**Be filled with the Spirit,**

<sup>19</sup> Speaking to one another in

*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,*

*Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

<sup>20</sup> Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Here is one way the Body of Christ is to function. We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak to one another through poetry set to music, through the scriptures set to music. In our inward man we are to sing and make melody in our hearts being filled with thanksgiving to God. Compare this to being over absorbed with the world and grumpy and irritable within.

The gifted songwriter can find his or her place in the body. This artisan is to encourage this process of thanksgiving by doing it first unto the Lord. And this artisan is to teach others to do the same so that those that have not yet experienced this freedom will enter into it themselves.

How is this teaching accomplished? In the art schools of old a person learned to work by being accepted as an apprentice to the master. One would work in the studio for the master until the master entrusted an aspect of the work to the apprentice. After a period of time if the apprentice was truly gifted he would become a craftsman and perhaps start his own studio. At first he imitated the master until he developed his own form and style.

As Christian artisans we must first be taught by the Master above and then by skilled artisans on earth. There are many ways to accomplish this but all is to be done for the Glory of God.

### **Ephesians 1:15-18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> (I) do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

### **Ephesians 3:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.



## Colossians 3

**16 LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM,**

**Teaching and admonishing one another**

**In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,**

**Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord**

Sometimes what we teach is more caught than taught. Imitation is a way of learning. As you find yourself in the presence of the Holy Spirit he leads you into the beauty of holiness and your heart absorbs in seconds what it might take years to learn otherwise. These gifts are given and formed in and through His grace.

In the early days of the Jesus Awakening many scripture songs were written. Year's later people tell me they remember scriptures because of the singing of them. When you sing these songs or any anointed music in the midst of the assembly something amazing happens as all these voices join in unison in song. God is glorified and we experience His presence together. This is beauty this is truth.

There are many forms the artist uses not mentioned here. The writer, the essayist, the sculptor, the architect and so on. For a more comprehensive study of these things from a Christian perspective I refer you to Francis Schaeffer's *How Then Shall we Live*.

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Mary and I attempted to develop these sites so that the Lord's beauty and truth may be revealed.

To quote Francis Schaeffer again

*"Do we understand the freedom we have under the Lordship of Christ and the norms of Scripture? Is the creative part of our life committed to Christ? Christ is the Lord of our whole life and the Christian life should produce not only truth-flaming truth- but also beauty." Francis Schaeffer*

Charles Ellsworth Smith  
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