

Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah / פרשת וזאת חב'רחה

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How has God gifted you?

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Numbers Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

Haftarah: Joshua 1:1-18

B'rit HaChadashah: Revelation 22:1-5

In Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah by making a basic analysis of the parsha's structure with respect to the order of the blessing we can discover an interesting truth concerning the gifts God has given us. By reading through this parsha we find two main topics, (i) a blessing Moshe gives to the various tribes of Yisrael, and (ii) the death of Moshe. I would like to analyze and discuss the blessing of God which reveals each of us is uniquely gifted by God.

A nice way to begin this analysis is to organize a list in tabular format derived from the blessing Moshe gave to Yisrael. I chose to make the list according to the order of the tribes of Yisrael which is shown in Table 1. Careful study of this list reveals some interesting facts. Reviewing Table 1, the order of the tribes with respect to the matriarch and the relative position according to birth order appear to be a good starting place. Reading the parsha we get the impression the tribes are randomly listed, however, looking at the list, in Table 1, according to the matriarchs the tribes do not look completely random.

Table 1. The Order of the Tribes in Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah

Blessing order	Tribe (Shevet)	Mother(Matriarch)	Birth order
1	Reuven	Leah	1
2	Yehuda	Leah	4
3	Levi	Leah	3
4	Binyamin	Rachel	12
5	Yosef	Rachel	11
		(Ephraim & Manasseh)	
6	Zevulun	Leah	6
7	Yissachar	Leah	5
8	Gad	Zilpa	9
9	Dan	Bilha	7
10	Naftali	Bilha	8
11	Asher	Zilpa	10

Note: The tribe Shimon is not mentioned.

There appear to be some kind of sorting based upon the matriarch while we find the children of Bilha and Zipla are grouped at the end and the children of Rachel is squeezed in between

Leah's older and younger children. Note, the tribe Shimon is missing from the blessing. Reuven may be placed first because he is the oldest of the sons of Yaakov, but why does Moshe jump to Yehudah? Also, why does Binyamin precede his older brother Yosef? Why do the children of Rachel interrupt Moshe's blessing upon the children of Leah? Furthermore, why does Zevulun precede Yissachar, why does Gad precede Dan, and why do the children of Bilha get placed in the middle of the children of Zilpa? For a comparison Table 2 lists the children of Yaakov (tribes of Yisrael) in order of birth.

At first reading the tribes appear to be in random order however organizing the tribes in tabular form reveals the list isn't altogether random but appears to follow some logical pattern. In order to understand the reasoning behind the order of the blessing let us next look at the purpose of the blessings upon the tribes. Throughout the Torah we find different places where the tribes of Yisrael are listed, for example in Parashat Bamidbar the tribes are listed in various orders as they are prepared to take position around the Mishkhan (tabernacle). Another example is when Yaakov blessed his children before his death in Parashat Va'yichi. The blessing Yaakov gave to his children is in "age order." Yaakov gave each son a blessing according to their individual potential exhibited through each son's respective life. The blessings related to the personal destiny of each son. (Think about your personal destiny as a child of God and the gift God has given you)

Table 2. The Tribes of Yisrael in birth order according to Sefer Bereshit (Book of Genesis)

Blessing order	Tribe (Shevet)	Mother(Matriarch)	Birth order
1	Reuven	Leah	1
2	Shimon	Leah	2
3	Levi	Leah	3
4	Yehuda	Rachel	4
5	Dan	Rachel	5
6	Naphtali	Leah	6
7	Gad	Leah	7
8	Asher	Zilpa	8
9	Yissachar	Bilha	9
10	Zevulun	Bilha	10
11	Yoseph	Bilha	11
			(Ephraim & Manasseh)
12	Binyamin	Zilpa	12

The blessing Moshe gives to the tribes of Yisrael also relates to the personal destiny of each tribe in their conquest of the land, their leadership potential, and the type of territory they are going to inherit. Within the blessing we find God revealing to his people their destiny, their calling, and his plan for their lives. There is a reason these things are written for us here in the Torah. I believe the reason is ... God is revealing to us that He has gifted each of us uniquely for the purpose of bringing glory to His holy name.

God has gifted each of us uniquely for his Glory!

As believers, we have to first have faith that God exists as stated in Hebrews chapter 11. It is only afterwards God reveals to us the gifts that he has endowed us with which we can use to be a blessing to others in this world for His glory. For example: has God (i) gifted you with a desire to preach? (ii) Equipped you with the gift for ministry? Or (iii) given you a love for His Word and feel called to teach?

Hebrews 11:1-6

11:1 Now emunah is the bittachon of things for which we have tikvah. Emunah is the conviction of things not seen. 11:2 For by emunah have our Zekenim been given approval. 11:3 By emunah we understand Shomayim v'ha'Aretz found their "barah" from the Dvar Hashem, so that not from anything visible has what we see come into being. 11:4 By emunah Hevel offered to Hashem a korban that was a mincha tovah than that of Kayin. Through this he was given approval that he was a tzaddik, Hashem bearing solemn edut (testimony) to his matanot; and by his emunah, Hevel, though niftar, still speaks. THE RAPTURE OF CHANUCH (ENOC) WAS BY EMUNAH 11:5 By emunah Chanoch was taken up, was translated, not to see mavet, V'EINENNU KI LAKACH OTO ELOHIM ("and he was not, because G-d took him [up]" Bereshis 5:24). Before Chanoch was raptured in his aliyah l'Shomayim, he received solemn edut (testimony) that he have been pleasing to Hashem [cf. Bereshis 5:24] 11:6 And without emunah it is impossible to please Hashem. For it is necessary for the one approaching Hashem to have emunah in the yikum (existence) of Elohim, and that Elohim gives sachar (reward) to those who seek him with zerizut (diligence). (OJB)

In conclusion, I want to say that at least once a week I get into a discussion over the existence of God. I believe this fits quite well with this week's parsha because it has to do with faith that God exists, and knowing our calling to His service (how God has gifted us). Arguments for the existence of God do not prove beyond all questioning on the existence of the God of the Bible. What we have to remember is that man's mind, the process of thinking and reasoning has been affected by sin. This indicates that the revelation of God in nature, in his creation has its limitations due to sin. While asking the question on whether God exists the problem is not with the revelation of God but in the receiver of the revelation. A great example of this (God revealing the truth to men/women) is found in Sefer Yochanan (book of John) chapter 9 in the healing of a blind man and his interrogation.

In the interrogation of the blind man who was healed we find an interesting progression of revelation versus hardening heart in *John 9:1-41*. The Pharisees became increasingly hardened in their blindness of who the messiah was, while the blind man sight grew into a deepening understanding of who Yeshua was. The Pharisees began with a mixed opinion about Yeshua. They began by not accepting the miracle that had happened to the blind man hence the reason for the interrogation. The Pharisees finally asked the blind man's parents questioning them about his healing (*John 9:18-23*). By verse 24 their judgment was clear when they said "we know this man is a sinner." Their blindness reached its height when they insulted Yeshua's parentage and kicked out the blind man from the synagogue (see *John 9:29, 34*). In contrast the blind man moved from a vague understanding of "a man called Yeshua" (*John 9:11*) to the realization that Yeshua is "a prophet" (*John 9:17, 25*), then to a man who is "from God" (*John 9:31-33*). The blind man ended with the not only eyes that were healed and could see but he had spiritual eyes which led the man to say "Then the man said, Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him" (*John*

9:38). Here we find Yeshua who is the “light of the world” (*John 9:5*) doing what light does best, he brought full sight to the blind man both physically and spiritually. In this instance it is God working in the heart of the blind man who was healed to know who Yeshua is as the Messiah of Yisrael.

In this parsha we find the revelation of God through his blessing to the tribes of Yisrael. We find (i) God reveals each person’s gifts according to their individual potential which is exhibited in their life and (ii) that God has gifted each person with unique gifts which are to be used in the service of God to do His will. The more we lean upon God, and his Messiah Yeshua knowing who He is, what He has done in our lives, the more wonderful He becomes to us. Our spiritual insight increases by not dwelling in unbelief or by questioning God’s work in the lives of others (i.e. in the lives of the men and women in the bible). By spending time in the word of God our hearts become more and more open for God to reveal to us his glorious presence in our lives. God as creator has declared to his creation, making known by a large body of knowledge in (1) his creation and (2) the Word of God. God has revealed his nature, character, attributes and activities, the purpose of His desires to have a personal, intimate relationship with us who he has sanctified as Holy through faith.

So, think about your personal destiny as a child of God, the gifts God has given you, and how you can serve God when you read the following questions.

Questions to contemplate upon

- How has God gifted you?
- Are you using your gifts for the Lord’s service?
- Are you responding to God’s calling on your life?

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Please work in my life to be a man/woman of God so I can be a blessing to others and reach out to the lost. Help me to know what gifts you have given me and provide opportunities for me to exercise my gifts. Help me to respond to your calling on my life and not be afraid of what others might think about my faith.

I pray all these things in Yeshua’s name, Amen.

Be Blessed in Yeshua the Messiah

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah for ever and ever