

Teaching *from* Zion

Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry, Jerusalem, Israel

"...for out of Zion shall come forth Torah
and the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem." – Isaiah 2:3

BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

*"Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end..." Isaiah 9:7*



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About Netivyah

Netivyah in Hebrew means "the Way of the Lord." "The Way" was one of the names by which the early community of believers was known in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). Paul says, "I worship the God of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14 CJB). As followers of "the Way," we believe in the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We try to be faithful to God's law (the Torah) and to the rest of Scripture—the Prophets and the Writings. We believe that the Messiah promised in God's word is Yeshua (Jesus), the one who "saves His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

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One Man

By Elhanan ben Avraham. 4

Biblical Rulers, Modern Day Influencers

By Scott Fingerson. 6

Kings, leaders, and rulers

By Joseph Shulam 12

Nehemiah

By Gary Webster 18

The search of a Servant - Leader!

By Joseph Shulam 22

News from Netivyah

Dear friends,

We are excited to send you our newest Teaching from Zion, that's all about Biblical leadership, an especially relevant subject at such a time as this.

Israel has been enduring this Hamas-war for so many months already. It's an ongoing and trying war where so many dear soldiers serve at several frontlines (some already served for a second round, while others might be called up at any given time). We continue to intercede for our captives who are still at the hands of merciless terrorists. Meanwhile, antisemitism grows at an unprecedented rate worldwide. It's needless to say that many Israeli families are worried, while others struggle as their main provider has been called to the flag. This affects our entire nation, including numerous Messianic families. Please continue to lift up the Nation of Israel (including the ones in the diaspora) in prayer. May His light grow stronger through our faith and deeds, despite everything.

Due to the Gaza war, this year's spring celebrations were busy, blessed and remembered in a way that hasn't been revered since the Holocaust.

Spring has passed and with it our celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

We were especially blessed by a visit from volunteers from Edgewater Christian Fellowship who dedicated most of their visit in Israel toward helping the needy, visiting soldiers and celebrating their first Passover.

We remembered the Holocaust Memorial Day, as well as Israel's Memorial Day.

This year the memorial days were even more solemn than usual, as nearly 2000 extra fallen were added in just a few months. The October 7th-massacre brought back all kinds of memories for many past generations. This made Israel's Independence Day somewhat somber, but it also served as an important reminder:

We are here in His Promised Land.

We are here thanks so the ones who serve to defend us, and even sacrifice for us.

And we are here to stay.

These scorching hot summer days remind us to look forward to His faithfulness, like the rain that will fall again after the High holy Days.

We want to take this time to thank you for all of your support and many prayers we have received from you. Thank you for standing with Israel and with Netivyah during this very difficult time.

We pray that this magazine finds you well, and that you are blessed in all you do for Him.

In Him,

The Netivyah Staff

ONE MAN

By Elhanan ben-Avraham

*You are only one man- not a king
You think you can change the world?*

*I sought for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land,
so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one- Ezekiel 22:30*

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then said I, Here am I; send me- Isaiah 6:8

*If one inspired is so, then two in agreement
is already a movement. When God wishes
to make a great change in the world he
does so through one man, be it Noah,
Moses, or be it Yeshua/Jesus.*

History is moved not only by a king, but around by a small fist of highly dedicated people with a vision, not by the wide population as a whole, who are pulled along behind the vision. And it is often just one man in the center of that fist who births the idea into the world, for good or for evil, whether it be one Abraham or Moses or David or one Paul, or one Marx or one Einstein or a Luther, a Darwin, a Nietzsche, a Hitler or a Muhammad.

If one inspired is so, then two in

agreement is already a movement. When God wishes to make a great change in the world he does so through one man, be it Noah, Moses, or be it Yeshua/Jesus. By the life and crucifixion of that one Jew, and a few disciples, without aid of camera, printing press, e-mail or TV, he has ushered the world into new age of understanding that has affected much of the consciousness and history of the planet. His words and deeds have sewn into the fabric of human consciousness a new paradigm. Through the short life of that one man, a crucified King, was

despair replaced with hope, vengeance with forgiveness and love, immorality with immortality for many, both the great and the small.

Can only one man make a difference? If I as one man had lived in the 7th century AD Middle East and happened upon one young Arab man in his search for spiritual truth, and was given the opportunity to clarify for him the good news of the Messiah, might that have changed the history of the world for the better? Perhaps, especially if that

young man was Muhammad, the bad news of Islam might never have been spawned into the world. It is Back to the Future* all over again.

One king in Israel- King David- brought both victory and defeat upon his nation. As a great warrior and poet, he raised Israel to heights of renown, but by one foolish decision of numbering Israel he brought the disaster of a deadly plague that killed thousands in divine

judgment. His son too- King Solomon- by disobedience brought a civil war that divided Israel for generations. Yes, each and every individual from the greatest to the least is responsible by his/her decisions for the flow of history.

And the same truth applies today. Each encounter in this life leaves a potential opportunity to change the future- for the better, or for the worse.

A simple word of encouragement or a smile may spread beyond its one recipient to alter the day for the world, and for its future. One man writes a book, and it goes out to be read sometimes by millions for generations in many language translations. We must believe in what we are doing, as a small seed can sprout into a great tree, and a harvest of sweet fruit in the end. Don't miss an opportunity, wherever you may be.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elhanan ben-Avraham, born in 1945, is a professional artist, poet, writer, father of two, and grandfather of four, and he has been living in Israel since 1979. He has served in the IDF, taught the Bible internationally, published five illustrated books of poetry, painted two large Biblical murals in public buildings in Jerusalem, and most recently produced THE JERUSALEM ILLUSTRATED BIBLE, among many other works. He and his wife live in a quiet village in the Mountains of Judah.

BIBLICAL RULERS *MODERN DAY* INFLUENCERS

By Scott Fingerson



The bible is full of narratives and characters, a broad survey of stories of historical events and colorful people, each one significant in their time, each one used by Adonai to accomplish His perfect will, both in personal lives, and across epochs and humanity.

As we explore the idea of biblical rulers, we find several archetypes throughout the text. Perhaps a broad-glanced survey

would be helpful. From the beginning, we see the story of Adam, Havah, and Noach, three unique characters, each having a special role in the creation and re-creation timelines in early human history. Following these, we have the era of the Patriarchs: Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov. Their role was to establish the line of the people of Israel, people to whom Adonai would reveal His plan of redemption and restoration. The leaders of the 12 tribes could also be

referenced, parenthetically, at this point. Their place in history, as the founders of the 12 tribes, is significant. But their role in the plan of Adonai is somewhat limited when compared with some of the others on this list. Following the era of the patriarchs, we have Yosef, Moshe, and Yehoshua. Notice that these three are different in role and function than the patriarchs. They functioned more as a kind of proto-Messiah, a kind of pre-Messiah function and role. Yosef was

the Mashiach (Messiah) to the known world through the provision of bread from the earth, Moshe was the Mashiach to the people of Israel as he shepherded the deliverance of Israel through the plagues and the exodus, and finally, Yehoshua, who led the people into the land in triumph over the enemies of Adonai. Each of these three functioned as a kind of Mashiach in their time.

Moshe was the Mashiach to the people of Israel as he shepherded the deliverance of Israel through the plagues and the exodus.

Following this period, we enter into the period characterized by the Prophets, Priests, and Judges. The Prophets, beginning with Samuel, the Judges, exemplified by Deborah, Samson, Gideon, and many others, and the Priests, such as Eli, Joshua, and others were all very active for a period.

The Judges functioned in an era when the people of Israel established the nation in the land previously occupied by the Cana'ani and other peoples. You could discuss the place of the Judges as ending when the people of Israel asked for a King. This was satisfied by Samuel the Prophet with his initial anointing of

Shaul and following anointing of David. At this point the most influential position in the narratives of Israel changes focus, and becomes more about the kings. From this point, after the anointing of Shaul and David, we find that the entire biblical narrative is focused in a chosen man who is given great power, opportunity, and responsibility. This one is called Mashiach, or Anointed One, the Chosen One, the King of Israel. We see numerous places where the people are revived and restored to blessings from Adonai based on the actions of the King. And likewise, we see numerous examples where a King would bring a people down into sin and idolatry. The role and function of the King is one of great influence, both in the natural realm and in the heavenly realm.

The era of the kings lasted until the final conquest of the people of Israel through Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian ruler. Following exile, Israel is never able to put together a sustainable healthy self-rule, and they are ruled over by various foreign authorities, including the Greeks, the Seleucids, the Romans, and others.

The Priests actually lasted the longest in the biblical narratives. They were established at Horev, the mountain of Adonai, where Moshe received the tablets and the people built the Mishkan (tabernacle) and they lasted until the destruction of the temple in CE70 and the brutal response to the Bar Kokhba Revolt, in CE133.

By the time of Yeshua, there is a kind of unsteady or tenuous equilibrium that has been reached between the Jews and the Romans. Rome was a brutal oppressor, but Israel was allowed its temple and worship, and many Jews rose to great prominence, wealth, privilege, and influence in Roman culture and government. In spite of this environment for semi-stability, many people were

With the destruction of the temple in CE70 and the loss of Jerusalem and the land in CE133, the Jews needed to find a new way of existence that would allow their survival in foreign lands and nations.

not comfortable under the Roman oppression, and there were constant conflicts which Rome would respond to with heavy handed violence. Into this volatile pressure cooker, Yeshua came and established a new paradigm, a new kind of cultural community. This group was called The Way as indicated in Acts 9 and Christians in Acts 11.

Interestingly, Yeshua was crucified wearing a crown of thorns, offered as a mockery by the Roman legion. However,

this mockery is for us, an indication of the ultimate honor. Yeshua, who should have been crowned in splendor and glory, was rather crowned in humility and dishonor. The greatest honor is reserved for those who are the humblest. Yeshua consented to this indignity, and by that He won our unceasing devotion. By His sacrifice, He has won the ultimate position of absolute authority. As He said, "...all authority under heaven and on earth has been given to

What was derived was a kind of soft assimilation allowing people to flourish in civil society but still keeping some of their religious and spiritual identity. The rule and leadership of this new paradigm for the Jews was the Rabbis and teachers. This is a parallel to what was developed in the people of the Way or the Christians. With the followers of Yeshua, there was another layer of leadership and rule. It began with Yeshua, during his time on earth. After His ascension, the leadership

Jews". When He returns, He will return as conquering King, but it won't be just as King of the Kingdom, it will be King of Israel, King of the Jew and the Gentile together.

The Apostles continued as leaders of the community, but that was shortly to change yet again. Shaul was a rabbi who begins as a self-appointed persecutor general of followers of Yeshua, when he had his incredible experience at the hand

In our modern societal landscape, we find that there is much that influences us, social media, news and commentary, personal heroes, and other people of prominence and inspiration.

me." This is the final iteration of a King in Israel. And this is the final iteration of leadership and rule in Israel. Following the "anointing" of Yeshua by the very blood of His own wounded head, we come to a new version of leadership.

Yeshua introduced a completely new paradigm of co-existence with Rome. Indeed, this new idea of co-existence could find a place in any society or nation-state. It functioned like an internal community, complete with laws and principles that were above and beyond those of many host nations. The principles of honesty and goodness and submission to existing ruling authorities allowed this new group to function within any society. This was developed along the same time as the Jews began to form a new kind of identity. With the destruction of the temple in CE70 and the loss of Jerusalem and the land in CE133, the Jews needed to find a new way of existence that would allow their survival in foreign lands and nations.

of this new community was by those Talmidim who were with Yeshua during His ministry on the earth. A new term was coined from the Greek, ἀπόστολος Apostolos, or what is rendered Apostle in many modern languages. The Apostle was responsible for the leading and care of this new community. The new community first existed among the Jews in the Synagogues, but later became more populated by Gentiles, and ultimately became completely untethered and disconnected from the Jews. This was the beginning of a nearly 2000-year schism that has been perpetrated upon the people of Adonai. This schism has divided the people of Yeshua from the Jews, and has largely relegated the Jews to a pre-Yeshua understanding of the restoration and salvation plan of Adonai. This was never the original intention. Yeshua accepted the crown of thorns and the proclamation "King of the Jews" over his head when He was crucified. We who know Yeshua should still see him as the proper "King of the

of Adonai on the road to Damascus. His name was changed to Paul and he was appointed to be an emissary of Yeshua, serving as an Apostle, even though he was not in ministry with Yeshua during his time on the earth. Paul became a pivotal figure in the leadership of the new community, in that he was a transition between the apostolic leadership model to the local elder and deacon leadership models.

If you fast-forward some 2000 years, you find that this has evolved into what is commonly referred to as Pastor or Messianic Rabbi in our modern experience. The Messianic Rabbi or Pastor serves as leader within the overall community, ruling on minor affairs. However, the modern experience defers many judgments and rulings to each person's personal beliefs and convictions. There are some expressions of community where people gather together under a common set of principles or practices. Worshipping on

Paul became a pivotal figure in the leadership of the new community, in that he was a transition between the apostolic leadership model to the local elder and deacon leadership models.



Shabbat, Saturday in the United States would be one example of this. You may have a community who wants to keep the Shabbat convocation and holy worship, but there remain vast areas of personal observance that are left up to the individual. This seems to be an expression of our modern times.

Throughout the span of documented biblical and extra-biblical history, we have this trajectory of leadership. Leadership is often defined as vision and influence, being able to see a path or purpose, and then being able to inspire that purpose in others. There are varying degrees of control, participation, investment, etc. But what seems to remain as a basic description of leadership is these two characteristics: vision and influence. In our modern societal landscape, we find that there is much that influences us, social media, news and commentary, personal heroes, and other people of prominence and inspiration. But I would suggest that

there is such a humanistic thread of individuality, that the overall culture is essentially leaderless. Historically, there have been inspiring leaders, tyrannical leaders, oppressive leaders, and many other types and examples. While we do have inspiring characters in our modern narrative, we seldom see them installed as leaders, with a position of responsibility and purpose. It is reminiscent of the last words of Mishpatim (Judges) 21: "Everyone did what was right in his own mind."

While this characteristic is accurate of most of our society, there is one area where you see true leadership. That is in the Kingdom of Adonai. Leadership in the Kingdom is sacrifice and influence, with love being the primary motivation and inspiration. I am blessed to serve a community as a Rabbi, and all of those in our community are very loving to me and my family. But the more crucial question, do they know that I love them? It is my love for them that forms the

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Like Shimshon, we are examples of our own folly, but even in the death of self, we can be used by Adonai.

basis of any authority or responsibility that I might have in their lives.

I am a Rabbi to those who need a Rabbi. In our tradition a Rabbi is expected to be a teacher, mentor, facilitator of worship, and general authority on all things biblical. You could substitute with the term Pastor if that’s a title that you are more familiar with. There are a few distinctions, but the general job description is similar. The other aspect of my position is people want me as a friend. This was the unexpected surprise. I expected the sacrifice of the position, and I was aware of the authority of the position, but I was not anticipating that people would want to be friends. Yeshua

said “I have called you friends...”. He demonstrated leadership by His love and sacrifice, but not just as a King over them, but also as a friend among them.

This is the effect of my position, the titled role of Rabbi. It would likely be similar for those who are called Pastor or Elder. However, there is another dynamic that needs to be understood. Every person in the Kingdom has knowledge and wisdom, from the word of Adonai and from His Ruach. This knowledge and vision is a treasure that you have been given, in part, to give to others in your life. Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, these are all people whom Adonai will bless through you. That

blessing, is, in part, in the form of vision and influence.

It is easy to point to soft and hard forms of persecution, or forms of rejection and refusal to our message and blessings that we want to pass along. We need to remember that Adonai is using us as salt and light. We are His salt and His light, used to be a blessing to the world. All of us have simple interactions, shopping, working, interacting with teachers, government, neighbors, and each of these daily, to a level of influence that is truly stunning. If you are the light of the world, how many people daily does your light touch. If you are truly the salt of the earth, how many people does your

All of us are leaders, such is the role Adonai has called us to. Perhaps we will have a prominent position or titular role, but even this is secondary to our largest influence, that we will be an influence to every single person we will meet in this life.

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salt come into contact with. This is a reminder to us, that the characteristics of rulership and leadership are not based on titles and positions, but rather based on those with whom we have interactions and relationships. You will, by your knowledge of the Torah of Adonai, by your understanding of the salvation of Yeshua, and by the resurrection power of the Spirit of Yeshua who dwells within you, by all these you will absolutely have an impact on your world.

We had a repairman in to our home to look at our clothes washer last week. He gave us some bad news, an unexpended expense for an item that was just past warrantee. In my disappointment it was easy to lose sight of the impact that was occurring even as we discussed repairs and next steps. I was absolutely having an impact on this young man’s life. He was in the presence of an emissary of Yeshua, the King of the Jews, the King of the World. It would be like me having a short conversation with an advisor to the King of England.

This is the final paradigm, or the final iteration, if you will, of leadership, of rulership. It is less focused on authority, but more focused on sacrifice, influence and love. In our survey of biblical leaders and rulers, we see clear examples of our role in humanity. Like Adam, we are to demonstrate the labor of bringing forth sustenance from the earth, like Noach, we build an ark of salvation to show to the world that there is a salvation from present distress and from coming calamities. Like Shimshon (Samson), we are examples of our own folly, but even

in the death of self, we can be used by Adonai. Like David, we are poets and kings, who write and sing of the love of Adonai, with a heart for Adonai above all things. Like Ezra, we rebuild our temple of worship, like Nechemyah (Nehemiah) we rebuild the walls that have been neglected and destroyed in the world. Like Shaul (Paul) we are emissaries of His gospel message of atonement and restoration. All of us are leaders, such is the role Adonai has called us to. Perhaps we will have a prominent position or titular role, but even this is secondary to our largest influence, that we will be an influence to every single person we will meet in this life.

This role of being an influence in the world is absolute and unavoidable. It is recognizable in persecution and hatred that many of us will experience in our lifetime, in varying magnitude. If we experience persecution, then we know that we are having an effect of some kind, else we would not provoke a reaction. If I am like a cork, bobbing on the waves of the sea of history, I may avoid all persecution, but I also miss out on all impact, all influence. This is what it means to be a blessing. We are a blessing to the world because of who we are. We are a peculiar people. We are also a blessing to the world because of what we know. We have a treasure in the earthen vessel of our lives. This treasure is knowledge and hope in Adonai. This hope is the only true hope the world will ever know. May Adonai allow the world to see the Light of Mashiach in us, and may we lead them out of darkness and into His light of glory.



KINGS LEADERS RULERS &

LEADERSHIP & RULERS IN ISAIAH

By Joseph Shulam

Introduction

As this essay is being written 29 November just passed. For the student of modern history, this date in 1947 is a watershed date. Following almost 30 years of governing what was then called Palestine, the British wanted out. They had had enough strife, trouble, and violence between Moslems and the Jewish people. Therefore, they took the matter to the United Nations in New York. The world's leaders decided to vote on 29 November 1947 on whether or not to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

While this drama was unfolding in New York, another drama was transpiring in Palestine, although few would at the time recognized its significance. It was on 29 November 1947 that through the agency of Professor Elazar Sukenik of

Hebrew University arrangements were made and agreed upon to purchase the first of the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls for the would-be State of Israel. Among the first scrolls to be purchased was the only complete scroll of a biblical book discovered thus far — the complete scroll of the Book of Isaiah.

The discovery of a two-thousand-year-old complete copy of Isaiah was no accident. God was providing a birthday present to the young State of Israel. He was speaking a direct biblical message to this newly revived nation. For, more than any other prophet, Isaiah speaks of three things that modern Israel needs to hear:

- Return to the Covenant.
- God's Covenant Calling for Israel still remains.
- Only The Servant Messiah enables

Israel to live both the Covenant and their Covenant Calling.

The first of these, “Return to the Covenant,” is a message to modern Israel about how they are to live and function in daily life. Their lives are to be characterized by faithfulness to the teaching of Moshe. in every way. This is true for everyone — even the foreigners among us. For our purposes in this essay, it is especially true for the leaders of this nation. Thus, we would like to summarize what Isaiah has to say to the modern leaders of this revived nation.

I. The Priorities of Leadership 1:16–23

The first chapter of Isaiah serves as an introduction to his book. Here, he discusses most of the major themes about which he will write. Much of the

The role and behavior of the women in the leaders' lives are critical to proper leadership. The saying is true that behind every great leader is a great spouse!

chapter takes us into a divine courtroom where ancient Israel was on trial before the Holy Judge. One of the charges leveled against Israel was the fact that their leadership had failed the people. Rather than focusing on the severity of their failure, we can glean from these charges what the proper priorities are for godly leadership — whether those leaders are civil servants or leaders of congregations.

Listen to God!

The leaders of Jerusalem were so deplorable that Isaiah mockingly referred to them as leaders of Sodom

and Gomorrah in 1:10. In doing so, Isaiah informs us of the top priority of leaders — to listen to God's Word. When Isaiah tells them to “hear” God's Word, he uses a common verb that is sometimes translated as “obey.” Yet in biblical Hebrew there is no word that we can directly render “obey.” It is almost always expressed by telling people to “listen” or “hear” God. God directs leaders to carry out His will for the people. If leaders do not listen to Him, it always spells disaster to the people.

Take Care of the Vulnerable!

Next, we learn from Isaiah in 1:23 that leaders are most responsible to take care of the vulnerable people under their care. To be sure, civil leaders have other responsibilities such as providing infrastructure, collecting taxes, and generally managing their charge. Yet, according to Isaiah God has other priorities for His leaders. We see this because these are the things for which Isaiah rebukes the leaders. He reminds them that they are guilty because “your rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them” (1:23).

The word translated by the NASB as “rebels” (sorerim, ohrrux) could just as well be rendered as “stubborn.” They stubbornly refused to listen to God's Word. As a result, they took bribes and made decisions based on their own financial priorities and selfish gain. However, Isaiah reminds the leaders that God will discipline the leaders (“elders and princes”) because they plundered the poor in their houses and crushed the poor (3:14–15). Elsewhere Isaiah will add

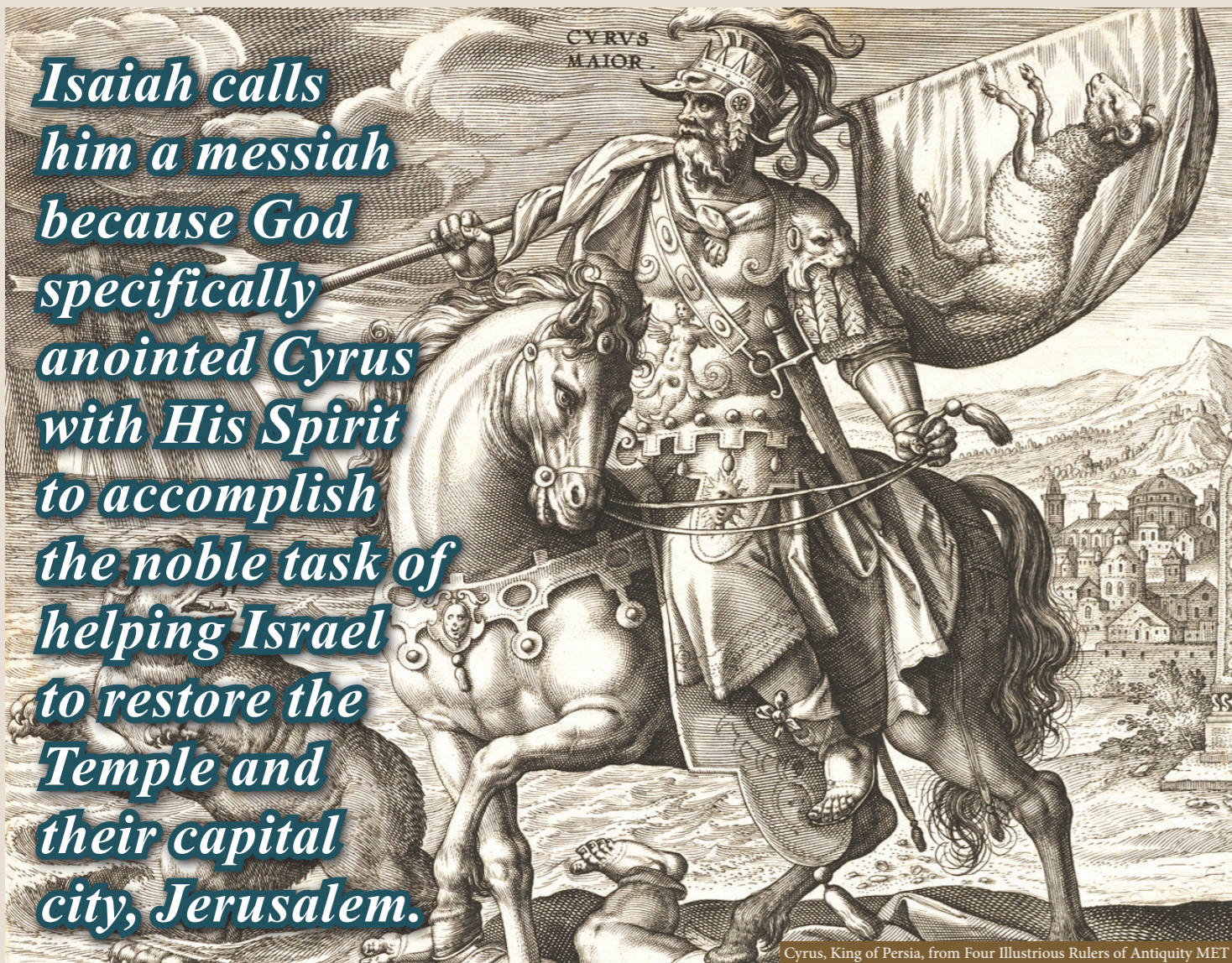


Leaders are most responsible to take care of the vulnerable people under their care.

taking care of foreigners among them.

These groups are specifically singled out by the Torah as especially vulnerable in Israel's society. Hence, while Isaiah says almost nothing about their management skills, he does rebuke the leaders for

[1] Yes, that is correct. The Palestine was divided into a Jewish State and an Arab State. They carried out a “two-state” solution. However, while Israel reluctantly agreed to the plan and a few short months declared the first independent Jewish state in about 2000 years, the Araba did not agree to it and made war on Israel. The point being is that a two-state” solution was offered in 1947–1948 yet rejected by the Arabs.



failing to protect and provide for the vulnerable in their society.

Wives, you are Important, also!

As Isaiah was rebuking the leaders of Jerusalem, it is interesting that he devotes a section to rebuking the leaders' wives. Here in 3:16–4:1, Isaiah reminds the wives (and/or daughters) of the leaders that people look to them as examples for their behavior. Isaiah criticizes them, not necessarily for wearing beautiful things (though it sounds like that!), but for focusing only on their outward beauty. Isaiah rebukes them for their pride (3:16) and their seductiveness (3:16). In the next several verses Isaiah describes what they looked like, mentioning their

expensive clothes, perfumes, hairdos, and jewelry. It is not that these things are wrong. Let us not misunderstand what Isaiah is saying. He is merely telling them as long as they are emphasizing these outward accouterments and failing to help to take care of the vulnerable in the society, then they can expect strong and severe discipline from the Holy One. Thus, the role and behavior of the women in the leaders' lives are critical to proper leadership. The saying is true that behind every great leader is a great spouse!

III. Leadership Examples

Isaiah provides some helpful examples for leadership — both healthy and unhealthy examples. Let us examine some of these.

For the Sake of Israel: King Cyrus of Persia

We shall begin with a very unlikely example. We begin with a totally secular leader — King Cyrus of Persia. Isaiah mentions him in 44:28 and the beginning of chapter 45. Although he lived about 150 years after Isaiah died, the prophet foresaw his role in helping an exiled Israel. He would be the secular leader who would defeat Babylon and help Israel to return to the Land and rebuild both God's house and their capital, Jerusalem.

Isaiah refers to Cyrus as both a shepherd (44:28) and messiah (45:1). To be sure, he was a secular leader and a monarch. We have little evidence, if any, that Cyrus

was a believer in the God of Israel. However, he acted like a shepherd to Israel by helping to herd them back to their homeland. In addition, Isaiah calls him a messiah because God specifically anointed Cyrus with His Spirit to accomplish the noble task of helping Israel to restore the Temple and their capital city, Jerusalem. Hence, although many might not think of this powerful king in such a favorable light, yet God honored him for how he went out of his way to aid Israel. World leaders would do well to remember this! He who blessed the people of Abraham would also be blessed.

Bringing in the Wolf to the Sheep: King Ahaz of Judah

One of the main sections of Isaiah's book is what is referred to as "The Book of Immanuel," chapters 7–12. We will not focus on Immanuel, for that is not the purpose of this essay. Rather let us look at King Ahaz of Judah. Without a doubt, he is certainly one of the most ungodly and dangerous kings to sit on David's throne (See 2 Kings 16.). When these chapters open, we find Judah in trouble because of a strong military threat consisting of an alliance between Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Aram (modern Syria).

Ahaz is on the throne in Judah. How does this leader react? God was gracious to the people by sending Isaiah to speak directly to Ahaz. Yet, Ahaz flatly refused to listen. Isaiah even offered signs to him to confirm that the message was from God. Ahaz refused to heed. Moreover, Ahaz even pretended to sound spiritual when he deceptively claimed that he would not test God (7:12). Leaders sometimes try to sound spiritual to deceive the people.

God told Ahaz to do nothing, but to trust Him. However, behind the



scenes Ahaz devised his own plan for defense. According to 2 Kings 16:7ff, Ahaz sought the aid of the most powerful secular ruler of his day, King Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. Ahaz asked him to come to Judah's defense. Of course, they gladly acquiesced! Eventually the Assyrians would conquer all of the Northern Kingdom and most of Judah. Because of he rejected God's Word, Ahaz lacked discernment. Ahaz was truly instrumental in helping to bring in the wolf (Assyria) to help protect the sheep (Israel)!

"Adonai Strengthens"

The final example we mention from Isaiah is that of Ahaz's own son, King Hezekiah. What a contrast! Hezekiah had to face the brunt of the trouble that Ahaz brought onto Judah. After taking 46 fortified cities of Judah King Sennacherib of Assyria laid siege to Jerusalem. We read this story in three places in the Tanakh, which speaks of its importance. We shall look at Isaiah chapters 36–39 to see how Hezekiah handled the trouble brought on by his ungodly father. When we explore the leadership of Hezekiah, we will truly see that he was as his names implies, "The one whom Adonai strengthens"! As we travel through the text, we find that Hezekiah:

1. Made Spiritual Preparations. 36:7

Upon seeing the trouble facing his nation, the first thing Isaiah records is that Hezekiah led a revival among the people, leading them to abandon idolatry and the immorality associated with it focusing again on living the Torah. Note the definition of revival: abandon idolatry and the immorality associated with it, at the same time focusing on living The Covenant of Torah. See especially 2 Chronicles 30–31 for more details.

2. He Made Strategic Preparations 2 Chronicles 32

Isaiah did not record this, but according to 2 Chronicles 32, when Hezekiah learned of the approach of the Assyrians, he took other proper leadership action. He did all he could to prepare the city strategically to both resist the invasion and to help the people to survive an anticipated siege. Hezekiah showed great responsibility and foresight.

3. He Resisted Temptation. 36:8

When the Assyrians arrived at Jerusalem, they tried immediately to tempt Hezekiah to compromise his ethical and moral standards by offering



Hezekiah led a revival among the people, leading them to abandon idolatry and the immorality associated with it, focusing again on living the Torah.

him money and other benefits if only he would give in to them. Hezekiah fortunately refused — as a good leader must.

4. He Did Not Act Childish. 36:13–32

The Assyrians slandered him, spoke gross untruths about him, and tried to make him look bad to his people. Yet, Hezekiah stood his ground. He did not resort to calling them silly names, which is always unproductive and immature, often practiced by immature leaders. According to 37:1, the king humbled himself and went before the Lord to seek Him about the entire matter.

5. He Prayed Fervently. 37:14–20

Hezekiah was in an impossible situation. The Assyrians were not backing down. They kept up the pressure, especially in front of the people. Undoubtedly Hezekiah felt the pressure from his staff and the citizens of Jerusalem. Yet, we see him before the Lord, praising Him, and

seeking His guidance.

6. He Listened to the Word of the Lord. 37:5–7

When his father was faced with a similar situation, Isaiah delivered God’s simple message which was that he should trust God for deliverance. The prophet told Hezekiah exactly the same thing. This time the prophet’s words were heeded. Hezekiah listened to the Word of the Lord. Furthermore, in 37:21–35, after Hezekiah spent time in prayer, Isaiah again encouraged him and gave him God’s message for the situation.

7. Hezekiah Was Not Perfect. Chapter 39

After the trouble was over and God sent the Assyrians home (at least what was left of them!) Hezekiah became deathly ill. God delivered him again. After that, a visitor came from Babylon bringing greetings and congratulations from the Babylonian king. Perhaps because of his pride (though we are not told

Undoubtedly Hezekiah felt the pressure from his staff and the citizens of Jerusalem. Yet, we see him before the Lord, praising Him, and seeking His guidance.

specifically) Hezekiah made the fatal mistake of showing this royal visitor all of the treasures of the Judean kingdom (39:2).

Perhaps the visitor would carry the message back home and tell others of the vast wealth to be taken from Jerusalem. For, Isaiah rebuked him for this act (39:3–4). The prophet informed Hezekiah why such a rebuke was necessary. He said that all of these treasures would eventually be carried away to Babylon.

This reveals the reality that Hezekiah

who was arguable one of Judah’s greatest kings, did not have the foresight to protect Judah and its treasures from potential enemies. Was it pride? Was it naivety? The text does not say. Whatever it was, it certainly was a big mistake. Though Hezekiah would not see the fruit of such misbehavior in his lifetime, the tragedy would strike less about 100 years later and Jerusalem would be destroyed, and those treasures would be taken away to Babylon.

IV. True Leadership — Immanuel

One of Isaiah’s themes in his magnificent writing is that only one person is totally qualified to sit on David’s Throne and be the ruler of God’s People, Israel. His name is Immanuel, meaning “God with us.” Nothing short of God’s very presence is what it takes to rule His people. God intended a theocracy with Him on the throne.

Isaiah informs us that there will be “no end to the increase of His government or of peace; on The Throne of David and over His Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness” (Isaiah 9:7). Perfect justice and righteousness Our leadership won’t be perfect but every effort to lead in justice and righteousness as defined by God Himself within His Written Word.

In Immanuel, we have the perfect blend of understanding, strength, knowledge, and the respect of God (11:2). Until He comes, leadership is to aim at this blend of understanding, strength, knowledge, and the respect of God. Moreover, He

“will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear” (11:3). In addition, He will protect and take care of the vulnerable in society (11:4). Best of all, when He speaks, He will speak the Word of God, God’s Torah (2:3) and this Word will cause people to put down their weapons to live in peace and safety with one another (2:4). His leadership will be the combination of humble servanthood and strong justice. Leadership until He comes is to be humble servanthood and strong justice. Not only will Immanuel rule over Israel, but over the nations as well (2:4). Isaiah says much more!

Of course, what we have described is none other than the rule of Messiah Yeshua Himself. Ultimately the world must wait until He returns to experience such leadership — but not entirely! The Scriptures teach us that anyone who trusts in Yeshua has Yeshua living inside of them. Paul asserts that as believers we live daily by yielding our lives to Him who is inside of us (Romans 6:16).

Imagine what would happen if such a leader presented his/her mouth, hands, mind, etc. to Yeshua living inside of them? What would this leadership look like? Seldom has the world seen it or experienced it. Yet, it is possible. It will not be a perfect leadership because anyone placed in a leadership position is also in their life journey of learning what it is to reflect Yeshua in all that they do. Until Immanuel returns, any leader can trust in Yeshua and yield their members to Yeshua in them. That is biblical leadership.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Shulam was born in Sofia, Bulgaria on March 24, 1946 to a Sephardic Jewish Family. In 1948, his family immigrated to Israel just before the establishment of the State. While in high school, he was introduced to the New Testament and immediately identified with the person of Yeshua. In 1981, Joseph and the small fellowship that was started in his house established one of the first official non-profit organizations of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua in Israel – Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry. Joseph has lectured extensively and has assisted in encouraging disciples around the world. He and his wife Marcia have two children and two grandchildren.

NEHEMIAH

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

By Gary Webster

There is a phrase from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night:

"Some men are born great; some men achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Nehemiah had greatness thrust upon him. He was not looking for fame or power. He was in the right place at the right time.

Nehemiah, whose name means God comforts, was born in Babylon. He was selected for an important position in King Darius' court. He was cup bearer to the king. He would taste the wine before giving it to the king. The cup bearer was the first line of defense against poisoning of the king. If there was poison in the cup Nehemiah would feel its effects first. As long as he stayed alive, Nehemiah had access to the king and important officials in the king's court. How did a cup bearer for King Darius go on to become governor in Judea?

He kept himself informed about what

was going on in the world, especially Judea. Nehemiah was a Jew. His family and fellow exiles were from Judea. The official word was that things were bad back home. Especially in Jerusalem, the former capitol of Judea. He was moved to tears when he heard all the horrible things that had happened. What was he going to do?

Firstly, he fasted and prayed. Nehemiah is ranked among the great leaders of the Bible. Why? He was dependent upon God. All the great leaders of the Bible sought God before they made important decisions. (Fasting is usually involved.) Prayer is not an afterthought for him. It is a spiritual discipline he has cultivated. It is like breathing air. A leader who earnestly prays is lacking pride. He or she recognizes that they can do nothing without God's help and wisdom.

Secondly, he prepared a plan. It was a well thought out plan. He would need to be released from being the cup bearer

A godly leader serves out of fear of God and love for the people. Nehemiah was such a leader. He did not wear fancy clothes.

in order to go to Judah. The king would need to know why he wanted to leave. The king would need to know how long he would be gone. Nehemiah would



Nehemiah had all the traits of a good godly leader. He was dependent upon God and others. He was a visionary but also a planner. He was compassionate and generous. He was dedicated and devoted to the task. He dealt with opposition wisely and lovingly.

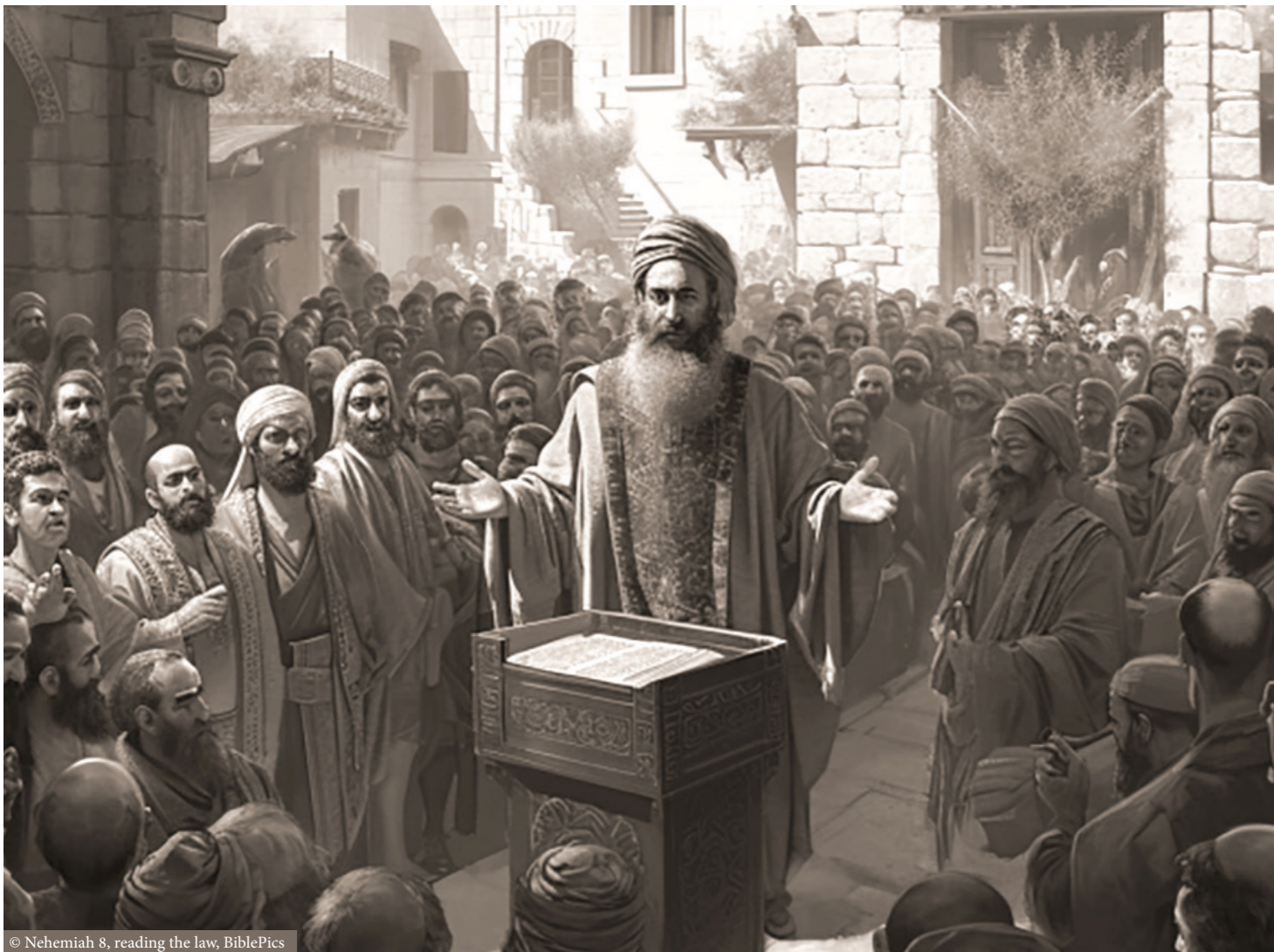
need authorization from the king to get the supplies he would need to rebuild Jerusalem. There is a cliché. "He who fails to plan, plans to fail." Good leaders always have a plan! King Darius gave

him permission to go and supplied him with the letters of authorization.

Upon arriving in Judea, Nehemiah had to assess the situation for himself. After

several days he shared the vision God had given him for rebuilding Jerusalem with the elders and nobles.

Did everyone embrace the vision? No!



© Nehemiah 8, reading the law, BiblePics

There was opposition and questioning of Nehemiah’s motives. Every leader will encounter opposition. Everyone will not be on board with your ideas or plans. Especially if you are young. Opposition can take the form of disagreement all the way to physical intimidation. Why is there opposition? Difference of opinions, fear of change-the status quo is good, jealousy of the one bringing about the change. Opposition can even take the form of hatred and contempt. A good leader must learn to respond to opposition. Nehemiah verbally rebuked Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, his main antagonists. However, when they threatened him and the people of Jerusalem with violence, he armed his people and set up sentries. In spite of the opposition, the wall was rebuilt in record

time, fifty-two days.

That is not the end of the story. Nehemiah stayed on as governor of Judea (the Tirshata) for more than twelve years. During that time, he dealt with disputes in a timely and fair manner. Cf Nehemiah chapter 5. He lived simply. The text states:

“14 Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. 15 But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels[a] of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their

A leader who earnestly prays is lacking pride. He or she recognizes that they can do nothing without God’s help and wisdom.



Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem

assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. 16 Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we[b] did not acquire any land.

17 Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. 18 Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people.

19 Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.” (Nehemiah 5)

A godly leader serves out of fear of God and love for the people. Nehemiah was such a leader. He did not wear fancy clothes. He did not drive fancy cars (horses?) He did not have a fancy home.

Nehemiah had all the traits of a good godly leader. He was dependent upon God and others. He was a visionary but also a planner. He was compassionate and generous. He was dedicated and devoted to the task. He dealt with opposition wisely and lovingly. Finally, he was assertive when he needed to

Nehemiah is ranked among the great leaders of the Bible. Why? He was dependent upon God. All the great leaders of the Bible sought God before they made important decisions.

be. In the final chapter of Nehemiah a situation arose around Shabbat. The people of Jerusalem were being lax in the commandment “to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.” They were buying and selling goods on Shabbat. Nehemiah took steps to reverse the situation. He gave verbal warnings to the vendors. “Do not come to Jerusalem to sell on Shabbat.” Then he took action by closing the gates to the city before Shabbat began. Finally, the people got the message and Shabbat was a day of rest and worship once more. Is God calling you into a leadership position? Embrace the call but prepare yourself to deal with all that will come your way, like Nehemiah.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary is a husband, father and grandfather. He is happily married to his wife of thirty eight years, Melanie. He is a retired middle school teacher of Science. His hobbies include reading and gardening. His passions include the study of the land of Israel and the Bible, God’s word. He and his wife currently reside in Israel.

THE SEARCH OF A SERVANT LEADER

By Joseph Shulam

The Title is misleading. This meditation is based on the following verse in Psalms 8:5

מִה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכָּרְנוּ וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֶנּוּ:

“What is man that You have been mindful of him, mortal man that You have taken note of him?”

The first thing that I would like you to notice is the number of words in Hebrew and the number of words in the translation. The Hebrew text from Psalms 8:5, has seven (7) words in all. The English text from the NKJV version has 16 words. Why is this important for our understanding of this very important and very existential and very philosophical and practical question. The reason is this that just in the 20th Century the pre-occupation of mankind with himself is much more self-centered. Leadership, especially religious and spiritual leadership is not only not an exception, but saying it more diplomatically leadership in most cases of the big time famous spiritual leaders in all religious groups have become self-serving and not servants

and leaders of the community. Many of the traditional evangelical Christian leaders, whom I know personally have lost even their own “world” by having ideas and dreams of grandeurs and may be even megalomania. Many of the Now, Modern man (and woman) in leadership of big and “successful” ministries are so in love with themselves that they are lonely even if they in the middle of dozens of friends. I realize that I am critical, but I can say it with full confidence that I love my friends who are in leadership of major and successful ministries, but at the same time I pray for them and their ministries to refocus and return to the model of leadership that our Lord Yeshua left us and commanded us to practice.

“Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:4 NKJV)

“Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Our ABBA, the Father of all and the creator of the Universe doesn’t need us to serve Him, He needs us to serve each other.

Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

(1 Peter 5:5-7 NKJV)

There are many more passages of scriptures who speak about the humility of leaders. Moses was considered by God a very humble person and a humble leader. Some of the great prophets in the Bible were considered simple and humble and were able to bear the rejection and reproach of their friends and even at times their own family for choosing to follow the Creator, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The context of the first time that the word ‘search’ appears in the New Testament is very interesting:

“Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from

them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”” (Matthew 2:7-8 NKJV)

You see dear reader, that already in the very beginning of the Gospels we are informed that there are two or more kinds of searches available to our human soul; a search for good, and a search for evil. There are men and women who actually can and do chose to search for doing evil and harm and damage, doing Hamas, in Biblical Hebrew. There are, however, also many who are seeking and wishing and wanting to do good and be a blessing and being servants of God and Man, for good and for blessing and for joy in the Lord God of Israel.

Here is a story with interesting difference in the motives for searching:

“Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you when have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.” (Matthew 2:7-12 NKJV)

Here, in the above text from Matthew chapter 2, there are two types of people who search; one searches to do evil, and the others search the same to do good and to bring gifts to fulfill God’s promises to Israel by the mouths and pens of the prophets.

You see dear brothers and sisters, being SERVANTS - LEADERS, is not a shining fancy mission. It is not a job with high glory and honor where people appreciate you publicly. A servant can’t be selfish and can’t be ambitious with his own needs. A servant has to be about his master’s business. We must learn from our own Lord and Savior who, at almost 13 years old, answered his earthly father, “And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49 NKJV). Think about these words of Yeshua for a minute. He is about 13 years old. His earthly father, the father who raised him from birth, is asking him for some help. Yeshua the child turns around and says to Joseph the wood or stone smith in paraphrase: “Why are you asking me to help you? You ought to know that I am busy with my “Real Father’s business.” In more paraphrase form: “Joseph you should know that your carpenter business is not my business. I have other obligations to do what my true and real father, sent me to do!” If I would have said this to my earthly father there is serious doubt if I would be alive today to be writing this article. This means that Joseph knew who Yeshua’s real father is, and He, Joseph the Carpenter, accepted and received and nourished the young boy Yeshua and stood by him and supported his mission as the Messiah Son of David.

The question that we all must ask ourselves in a sober moment in our lives is who we are here on this blessed and cursed planet called Earth? The story of creation tells us immediately that we

Leadership, especially religious and spiritual leadership is not only not an exception, but saying it more diplomatically leadership in most cases of the big time famous spiritual leaders in all religious groups have become self-serving and not servants and leaders of the community.

have been planted here on this planet for the following reason: “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15 NKJV)

What is the meaning of the garden and why did God have to create a man and a woman to become gardeners and tend and serve and keep this garden that God created with the breath of his mouth? It is interesting that from the very beginning God never asked us to serve or worship Him. If we, the humans, were created to serve the garden and to take care of it and protect it, why then did God create us in His own image and nature? The question that comes up, who is the objective of our service? Is it the green grass of heaven, or feed the fish in the river Piston, or trim the rose bushes? For doing gardening and being in nature seems to be a waste of creative power; to become gardeners and plant potatoes and pick oranges. Therefore, there must be a much deeper and more important and special tasks for which we were given the nature of God, imagination, and creativity, and speech and music.

to be able to serve God and bring Him his coffee on a silver platter with a white linen napkin and some orange marmalade on the side? Are we ready now? Are we not in the fullness of time? Are we not seeing God’s prophetic promises to Israel being fulfilled daily and seen by millions and billions of people seating in their living rooms and watching God act on their televisions? Is this the fulfilment of the time when God was just beginning to create the Sun and the Moon and the Stars, and the shape of the elephant and the hippopotamus? When God’s solitude in the vast expanse of Nova’s and Black holes in space had an idea of creating a blue ball floating in space to make a living man, a portrait of Himself, so that we, His new creations would see “His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth! “John (The Baptist) bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.” (John 1.14-15 New King James Version)

The meaning of being “Servants of

Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood, every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, “For we are also His offspring.” (Acts 17:24-28 NKJV)

Our ABBA, the Father of all and the creator of the Universe doesn’t need us to serve Him, He needs us to serve each other. “As much as you have done this to the least of these you have done it unto Me...” These are the words of Yeshua in the scene of judgement in the Gospel of Matthew. He said this to those who worshipped him and cast out demons in His name, and ignored their fellow man and the needs of the orphans and widows and the poor...

Many of the traditional evangelical Christian leaders, whom I know personally have lost even their own “world” by having ideas and dreams of grandeurs and may be even megalomania.

Who then are we here to serve? We are the objective of our service according to the whole and complete Bible! In most religious circles the leadership are denoted as SERVANTS of GOD! What a big title it is to be a servant of God! What a lofty profession to be the butler of the Master of the Universe! What is the uniform that one has to wear in order

God” is not for us to be here in this life serving God. We must remember the text of Paul on the hill of judgment in Athens, Greece.

Here is a part of Paul’s words: “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

This very question has profound implications for us as creatures created in God’s own image and in His nature and with His characteristics, imagination, ability to create, and a indestructible soul that came from Him and will live forever. God from the very beginning had the human being created to serve and tend this His Kingdom. This is the

Modern man (and woman) in leadership of big and “successful” ministries are so in love with themselves that they are lonely even if they in the middle of dozens of friends.



reason that we have a divine eternal soul and the ability to think and invent and create new things that were invented from our imagination; that is a divine ability to imagine and make things that didn’t exist, come into existence.

The birth of Yeshua and His ministry on this earth for such a short period changed the level of relationship and intimacy between humanity and OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. We are no longer just intelligent animals. Now we have seen and are able to see the glory of God in His unapproachable light, Yeshua our Messiah. No longer is the portrait of a servant in sketchy, abstract language. The Word and the glory are both present in the flesh of One who chose to walk with us.

In John’s gospel, we are kept in touch with Jesus’ agenda, “My will is to do the will of Him who sent Me.” Since our

Lord is sent by the Father to serve us, and to sacrifice Himself for us, to share with us God’s love, to show us God’s Glory, now God’s glory is no longer theoretical and abstract. God’s glory is He, Yeshua the servant. Yeshua’s number one agenda item is to serve the people. It has never been to build fancy rich expensive buildings; temples of marble like the Romans and the Greeks did for their Gods. He is available to people. He is sensitive to people. He is helpful to people. He feeds the hungry, heals the sick, comforts the grieving! He sees each person as unique, different from the last one. He does not force His way into our hearts. He does not blitz us with words. The Servant Leader serves and has no expectation for his disciples to serve Him. And in His service, He “reveals His glory” (John 2:11 NIV).

While “many other signs are not written in this book,” one event gathers all of

Jesus’ ministry together in a graphic picture. It is a vignette where “the Word,” the glory and the dream of God, can be seen and attained by anyone and hopefully everyone who reads this article on leadership. On purpose I say here LEADERSHIP as our Lord Yeshua demonstrated and commanded is only true leadership; only if the leader is also a SERVANT of the people, and by serving the people, the simple everyday people, and in this capacity, HE IS TRULY SERVING GOD THE FATHER!

In John 13, Jesus gathers His twelve apostles whom he loved, to give them the ultimate portrait of a true servant. It was a lesson of the true meaning, in high drama, of what it means to be a servant leader, a good shepherd. It was on the evening of the Passover, one of the most important Biblical Feasts. It was a Feast of liberation, a feast of transition from slavery to freedom, a



feast of redemption. In this occasion the so to speak “Supreme Leader” – “The master teacher” — “The Son of God” — “God in the Flesh” — all these mega titles of Yeshua as a leader are boiled down to doing the work of a servant; a household slave washing the feet of his underlings. It was not an accident; it was a well-planned event. It was done in order to fulfill a word of prophecy from the Torah. As the last act of the Master to his disciples it is almost totally missed and totally misunderstood by the majority of Christianity, and so-called Christian leaders. Especially churches who practice foot washing on some occasion, most often miss and twist the real meaning of this important event in the passion of the Messiah.

He is on His way to the cross. “He knew the time had come for Him to leave this world” (v. 1).

He is conscious of His glory: “He had come from God and was going to God” (v. 3).

The portrait of a servant becomes larger, clearer than one person at one place in one time. We, too, are included in the picture. The portrait shows the purpose of His coming, and the point of His call. Yeshua came to serve and to save us, the humans, the homo sapiens; those made from clay and with God’s Spirit in their nostrils. The prophecy that Yeshua fulfilled in this great act of service was taken from the book of Genesis on the occasion of the birth of twin boys that already in the womb of Rebecca their mother, were fighting with each other and competing for dominion. Genesis 25:23, a literal translation from the Hebrew: “And the Lord said to her: Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall diverge from within you; one people shall be mightier than

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the other, and the Rabbi shall serve the (younger) Disciple.” This is the basis of this event on the Passover Eve in the upper room in Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Yeshua was demonstrating to his disciples what it really means to be a Leader called (sent) by God.

A spiritual leader in Judaism or in Christianity has to understand that he is not a privileged person that everyone has to kiss his toe like the Pope in Rome. The leadership of a “God called servant” is based on God’s grace and not on a despotic person who exudes pride and pomp and makes his followers feel obligated to him to the degree that they seek ways to serve him.

Yeshua our Lord and Messiah, our Savior, the Son of God and the King of the Jews, was also super humble and lived as a servant of people. For Himself Yeshua said this: “And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”” (Luke 9:58 NKJV). One thing for sure is that Yeshua didn’t have a private jet all for himself. In fact, He did not need one. A band of angels carried him to heaven and when Yeshua returns to Jerusalem and lands on the Mount of Olives his entourage will be millions of angels. Yeshua will be returning to Jerusalem as the King of the Jews and not as a British Lord in a golden carriage. Let us all stay ready to receive our SUPREME Servant and Leader Yeshua the Son of God and the Savior of the World. The most important thing that we need to receive and learn from Yeshua is His instructions and examples of what it means to be a GOOD SHEPHERD a true leader of God’s people.

The Bible provides guidance on the characteristics of a good leader through the examples and teachings of various individuals. While the qualities of a good

leader are not explicitly enumerated in a single passage, one can glean insights from different parts of the Bible. Here are some of the characteristics of a good leader as reflected in the Bible:

Here is a short list of the characteristics of the good and faithful leaders in our Bible!

1. Integrity and Honesty: A good leader in the Bible is characterized by integrity, honesty, and moral uprightness. Proverbs 11:3 states, “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.”

2. Wisdom: The ability to make sound decisions and exercise wisdom is a quality that is praised throughout the Bible. Proverbs 4:7 says, “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”

3. Humility: Good leaders in the Bible demonstrate humility and a willingness

to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

5. Courage and Confidence in God: Good leaders exhibit courage and confidence, but their strength comes from their faith in God. Joshua 1:9 states, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

6. Servant Leadership: Jesus exemplified servant leadership, teaching that true greatness comes from serving others. In Mark 10:45, Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

7. Vision and Purpose: A good leader in the Bible possesses a clear vision and a sense of purpose, as seen in the examples of leaders like Moses and Nehemiah, who had a specific mission and worked toward its fulfillment.

A servant can’t be selfish and can’t be ambitious with his own needs. A servant has to be about his master’s business.

to serve others. In Philippians 2:3-4, it says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

4. Compassion and Mercy: The Bible emphasizes the importance of compassion and mercy in leadership. Micah 6:8 says, “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and

8. Patience and Perseverance: Leaders in the Bible often endured trials and setbacks with patience and perseverance. James 1:2-4 encourages perseverance, stating, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

9. Sound Judgment and Discernment:

A spiritual leader in Judaism or in Christianity has to understand that he is not a privileged person that everyone has to kiss his toe like the Pope in Rome.

A good leader is able to exercise sound judgment and discernment, seeking the counsel of others and relying on God’s guidance. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

10. Love and Sacrificial Leadership: The Bible teaches that love is central to leadership. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 describes the qualities of love, which are applicable to leadership: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

These are just a few of the characteristics of a good leader that can be derived from the Bible. The examples and teachings found in the Scriptures provide valuable insights into the qualities that make for effective and honorable leadership.

The Apostle Paul states a principle from his letter to (Philippians 2:5-8 NIV)

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:5-8 NIV).

The Apostle John depicts these principles very clearly:

“He got up from the meal” - as He had left His throne in heaven’s glory (v. 4).

“He took off His outer clothing” - as He had divested Himself of Godlikeness.

“He wrapped a towel around His waist” - as He had wrapped Himself in our humanity.

“He poured water in a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet”! This act just before they sat down inclined in front of a low three-sided [4] table to eat the Passover, the last Passover that Yeshua ate with his disciples. It was also the first Passover where He, Yeshua, was the Passover Lamb himself. This act was symbolic and very rabbinical based on the promises of God to Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau. God gave Rebecca and all of Israel and the world, the vision that the “The oldest (Greatest) will serve the youngest the lesser one.” The act of washing His own disciples’ feet was a reversal of the natural order. Normally

the disciples washed their Rabbi’s feet before the Passover meal.

“Drying them with a towel” - even His humanity was put at our disposal.

“He put on His clothes and resumed His seat” - as He has taken His place again in glory at the right hand of God.

As the Hebrew writer says, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being; sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Hebrews 1:3 NIV).

This divinely provided visual aid, contemplates the majestic sweep of this perspective, and should leave us filled with wonder and with praise. His lofty claims and lowly conduct are compelling evidence for His unique deity.

The Point of His Call

The scene also depicts the point of His call. His disciples had lost the point. They were pushing for places of prominence. Consumed with self, we, too, can behave as if the whole scheme of redemption was for us alone: to make us feel important and to get things going our way.

He reminded them again that He was not only Savior, but “Teacher and Lord” (v. 13). In other words, “I am God. I live in glory unapproachable. I spoke the universe into existence. My footprints are in the Milky Way. But I am a servant. Now, if you are to be gilded with My glory - you will serve like Me.”

The Pastors in Protestant Churches and the Orthodox Jewish Rabbis could expect their student/ disciples to carry their belongings, maybe even pay some of their bills, but wash their feet? Never!



I spoke the universe into existence. My footprints are in the Milky Way. But I am a servant.

Foot-washing is the work of a slave. All of history stoops to ponder the picture of God Almighty, whose Glory no man can look upon and live, on His knees, with a towel in His hands, doing slave labor. God’s glory is here. His “servant” is here. His law is here. His prophets, His word. All focus in on this scene. God is a servant, not in abstract remoteness, but He is here in our world walking with us and feeling the heat of the sun and the ice-cold wind blowing in Jerusalem.

Jesus said, “Such is the glory of God.”

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-’ (Matthew 20:25-

27 NIV).This is the portrait of a servant. In this, no Christian today is at liberty to disagree or to disobey the Lord. And if we would reflect His glory, this is what He calls us to do, i.e. to follow Him as He commanded us to do.

There are some, across history, who have side- stepped the force of this call by an unimaginative copy of a heartless literalism. Here are some examples. I am doing this to encourage you to serve God’s people from your heart and not for the show! Doing service for the wrong reason will only bring more judgment on those who practice anything for the wrong reasons.

In 1530 Cardinal Wolsey (not ordinarily noted for his humility) washed, wiped, and kissed the feet of 59 poor men at Peterborough, England.

At the Holy Sepulchre, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church annually washes the right foot of 12 “senior clergy,” representing the apostles. Roman Popes do a similar thing on some special occasions! Today in my opinion it is all for the show.

All of this may be touching - but it misses the point. This is not the way to carry out the call of Christ today. The portrait of a servant is not a first century “church rite” or an annual Medieval tradition. Rather, the Glory of God specifically asks us to be, above all things, genuine people first and only than servants of every day! Not for show!

Have we been wondering how we can recapture the attention of an over-communicated world - how we can again find our lost credibility as Servant Leaders? In our own day and in our

The church must not be planning only for numerical growth and its own future grandeur. It must exhaust itself in service and put its members to serve those who need the service the most.

own ministries - we need good men and women of God who were called to ministry by God. Until the world does not see the ministers of the Gospel as humble Servants of God and Man, and not some executives of a private business even under their private names; the ministry of Reverend! The ministry of miss plastic surgery of five cents; cheap psychology and one cent of Bible. Already, the world does not see preachers as servants, but as celebrities! It would take either a miracle

or a total breakdown of the Evangelical ministries before there will be a sincere change. Of course, individual preachers and evangelists could read this article and decide that they want to change and become Servant Leaders according to the Lord’s own example and also the Apostolic examples of men like Paul and John and of others like Barnabas and Dorcas....

Can we talk of “being a servant” while we are standing in the spotlight, with 10,000 eyes on us, holding microphones, dressed like executives of some big corporation? No! We must listen long enough for our communities and walk in the dark alleys in our cities and give a hand to those who live there in the street. May be ask them to have lunch with us and get them a hamburger with chips and hear their story and welcome these people to come and visit our church and when they come welcome them in public and encourage the public to welcome these and get to know them. Maybe we as men of God ought to ask help from God and the Holy Spirit to give us the sincerity and ability and humility to put in action that servant attitude and join the turkeys in order to help them see the Lord; handing them a hand to pull them out of their turkey days and back into life now and eternally. Then we must meet those needs and serve our way back toward credibility. This will cut through cynicism and over- communication like words never could. It will put teeth in our preaching!

I know that I am dreaming a wild dream, and I know that some might think that I have fallen and hit my head. But I just know that I too need to return to my early days as a young man alone in Jerusalem unwelcome to my home because I believe

in Yeshua and because I was baptized. I was under the impression that I was the only Jew in Jerusalem that is a disciple of Yeshua. But I knew instinctively that I must do something for God and the only way that I could do something for God was to do something for people.

I believe that the church must not be planning only for numerical growth and its own future grandeur. It must exhaust itself in service and put its members to serve those who need the service the most. This is not something expensive and not much money is needed; just a good and sensitive heart and a few sweet and encouraging words of friendship and blessing. Yeshua (Jesus) would be today a public relations expert man’s nightmare! We ought to do what He commanded His disciples to do. Rather than pompously affirming our own importance. We might become busy washing feet, getting the Lord to forgive sinners.

The question that I ask and ought to continue asking my self is “Am I in the portrait of a Servant leaders?”

As a preacher and an evangelist, I can witness that the mental switch from modern church growth mentality to a Christ like service oriented true growth of people who are dedicated to Yeshua and not people seeking prosperity and the “good – rich – and prosperous life” – you as a leader will realize and see the difference of men and women becoming disciples of the Messiah. You will be leading people to Christ – to the Messiah – to the willingness to give life for service

God has painted His portrait in human servants. He still has the brush in his hand, and He can make you too a Servant / Leader!

I want to make it clear that what I have written above does not mean that you ignore the rich and the powerful and the cream of society but inspire them to help and to follow and to learn to enjoy when they see people get up and out of the hardship life and into the servant’s life like Christ (our Messiah) commanded us! I can grasp. More important, it is something I can do! To be a portrait of His glory doesn’t take something high and mighty. It doesn’t take scholarship. It doesn’t take gifted preaching. It doesn’t take looks, super smart genius brains, or other special talents. It takes willingness to help those who need help. It also does not even need much money!

God has painted His portrait in human servants. He still has the brush in his hand, and He can make you too a Servant / Leader!

The term “leader” is applied in God’s Word to different individuals in different

contexts. There are many people who are called Leaders. Here are a few of these leaders mentioned in the Bible and each can choose any one of these leaders as a model to learn about servant leadership.

1. Moses: Moses is one of the servant-leaders in the Bible. The story of Moses is a story that has some of the elements of Yeshua’s example. He leaves the fancy palaces of Pharaoh and becomes a shepherd of the flocks of a Midianite Priest. From being a shepherd of flocks of sheep Moses becomes the Shepherd of Israel leading them 40 years through the wilderness of Sinai into God’s promised Land of Canaan!

2. Joshua who was a slave in Egypt, follows Moses and leads the children of Israel to take and settle the Land promised by God to Israel.

3. Gideon: Gideon was a farmer full of fear from the Midianite Enemy and God called him to lead Israel and be a judge and a leader to deliver Israel from the Midianite enemy.

4.David was also a shepherd who became a one of the most important Kings of Israel. In the beginning of his Kingship David was too a Servant Shepherd of people and a King.

5. Deborah: Deborah was a prophetess and judge a major female leader and a wise woman. God used her to deliver Israel and secure the Galilee for the northern tribes of Israel.

6. Nehemiah was an immigrant leader who came from Babylon where he had

a high position with the king of Babylon. Left his high office in Babylon and directed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

7. Cyrus the Great: Although not an Israelite, Cyrus is in the Bible mentioned as a pagan King who was the leader who sent the Israelites to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and temple.

There are many more examples of great men and women who were servant leaders of God’s people in History. There is room for more such leaders in the 21st Century around the whole world.

An end note: What I did in this article is squeezed the lemon as much as possible to get all the juice out of it. I could have just used individual examples of great leaders in the Bible. The reason that I didn’t take the rout of examples is because in order to get the core material of what it is and what it ought to be for leaders in the Bible and also in today’s faith community worldwide. If you are interested in the great examples of leadership in the Bible, you will find out that there is not a single great leader that has not made serious mistakes both in the way that he related to the public, or in the way that he related to the God of Israel. There are no perfect leaders in the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation. This is the reason that I took the “Squeeze the Lemon” approach.

If you are a leader, remember please that you are A SERVANT first of all. If you are a SERVENT remember you need not only to serve but also to lead and be an example.

[1] The short list above is not an exhaustive list of books with the words “In search.” All of the above books I found on Amazon! There are probably much more books written both as novels and academic publications.
[2] In Search for a Priceless Possession” the Chicago Tribune, 10-17-99, cited by Greg Assimakopoulos.
[3] The event of the three wise men that came from the East to welcome and recognize the baby Messiah in Bethlehem did this act because of the prophecy in the Torah: Numbers 24:17, “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.”
[4] Triclinium

There's a lot more to Netivyah than meets the eye; the Teaching From Zion magazine is only one of our outreach and humanitarian ministries. We invite you to connect with the other branches of our ministry.

Publications

Publishing is one of Netivyah's top priorities, as we see education as being central to our existence. Visit our website for previous issues of Teaching from Zion, as well as a selection of our books.



Congregation

Roeh Israel, "Shepherd of Israel," is a Messianic Jewish Congregation in Jerusalem. The Congregation is made up of followers of Yeshua, both Jews and non-Jews, who worship together in a traditional synagogue environment.



Humanitarian Aid

There are many families in Israel, even entire sections of the population, who fall between the cracks. Hamotzi Food Distribution Center is a place that literally brings forth food for local needy families in Jerusalem. Without charities and organizations like Netivyah, they would not be able to put food on the table.



Video Teachings

The world is watching videos online, so we are producing high quality teaching videos in English and Hebrew and publishing them on the internet to continue to present the Good News to the world in its original Jewish and Hebrew culture.

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