

Authority

I am a part of a fellowship where no one stands in a recognized position of leadership. We have been this way since we came together over six years ago. Usually one of the first things someone new inquires about us is; who is your leader (pastor, Rabbi, Elder, Apostle etc.)? When we tell them our leader is Messiah Yahshua they respond, "Oh yes, I know that, but who is your leader?" They are more than willing to give lip service to the clear biblical revelation that Yahshua is our leader and authority, but quickly move on from that to what is really important, who among you is the leader. Our answer to their asking again is the same, "Yahshua is our leader" (Pastor, Rabbi, Head, Authority). When this sinks in most give a condescending smile and warn us of our precarious situation. They believe we are sitting ducks for error and destruction because we refuse to call anyone our leader. Watch out! For a wolf may come in among you and destroy the flock because you don't have a mature recognized leader to ward him off. To this we smile and say, but we do have a mature and recognized leader functioning as a doorkeeper, Yahshua the Messiah. How can there be direction and covering in your situation they ask? Direction comes by revelation through the spirit and Yahshua is our covering. We do have a human head, leader, covering, teacher, Rabbi, authority and mediator between man and God; The Man Yahshua the Messiah. He is not a figurehead, he is a functioning head.

Now we want to ask a question. Why do men aspire to a position of authority and preeminence? Yahshua said among the gentiles (secular nations) "Men lord it over those under them, but it is not like that with you. The greatest are the servants of all." Men love authority. It is like 200 proof alcohol. It doesn't take much to intoxicate. That is why all authority in heaven and earth has been given to MESSIAH. He is the only one who can handle it. That means that no one else can handle it. All who try end up intoxicated and lording it over others to one degree or another. In the body of Messiah there is one head. From the head comes a supply of what is necessary for the body to function, whether it be ministry, leadership or authority. These are not delegated on a permanent basis to men but flow by the spirit in the moment. Whatever is needed is supplied to the body through the various giftings and functions that operate under the unction of the Head. We don't need an appointed positional mediator from the congregation for this to properly happen. We have a mediator sitting as the right hand of Yahweh that is as involved with us as we want him to be. The truth is most of those in "authority" don't want him to be involved much. They say they do, but just let someone do or say something they don't agree with and watch what happens. Depending on how threatened the "leader or leaders" feel will dictate their response. A small threat brings condescension and explanations that this can't be right because none of the leaders or rulers believe it. Since they are closer to God and have been given the "responsibility" to guard the flock they must immediately put this "error" aside. The person or persons who have brought this word or either too "young in the Lord" or just ignorant of what the word really says. If on the other hand they feel very threatened then the main charge is

leveled. You are Rebellious! Most so called leaders spend most of their time putting out fires of discontent and challenges to "their authority". Authority means control. Control of direction, decision making, money and peoples lives. Why not surrender that control and rest in the ability of the Messiah to bring to pass all that he has been given to do. He is The King and we are the sheep of his pasture. He said he would punish all the rams who push the flock and dirty the waters by trampling upon the places Yahweh has intended for his flock to water. Why do men seek to be lifted up in the congregation when even a shallow reading of God's word teaches us that anything exalted will be humbled. To stand head and shoulders above everyone else may make you the peoples king, but it also makes you a target for the burning jealousy of God.

There is a popular book that has now been made into a movie that has a great truth to tell on this point. The Lord of the Rings, by Tolkien, describes a world where forces of light oppose the growing darkness from an evil ruler that seeks to dominate the world. Once before in another age this dark ruler sought to rule by deceiving the others with promises of power and prominence. He forged rings of power and gave them to the various lords of the lands of middle earth. What they didn't know was he forged one great ring of power that ruled all the other rings. That ring he kept for himself. He knew the corrupting power of authority and his plan was to use the great ring to rule over all the so called authorities who wore the other rings. His plan was delayed because the ring was cut off his hand in a great battle and was lost. The story resumes with the finding of the ring and the renewed pursuit of it by the dark lord. This time many of the ones that remembered what had happened before understood that they could not wear the ring because they would be brought under the control of evil through it. They chose the least among them to bear the ring to the Mountain of Doom the only place it could be destroyed. There was an inscription written on the ring that serves as wisdom for us.

*"One ring to rule them all, One ring to find them
One ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them."*

Many noble ones seek authority because they believe by it they can work good in the world, but they end up under the power of it and end up doing great harm to the world. As we look back in history we see many wonderful moves of God among men. In those moves men and women are used by the Lord to facilitate the moving of his spirit. After a time they are installed as "leaders" and immediately the move begins to harden into a lifeless form. The form looks remarkably the same when the hardening is done. This is because the same major error happens in every move. Men seek authority and are destroyed by it. The spirit if the Lord will not stay where He is not Lord.

I was reading an article the other day about women in leadership. As I read the same tired arguments both for and against, I could not help feeling that this was another classic example of what Messiah called, "straining at a gnat while

swallowing a camel". The surface issues can never be resolved until the foundational truths concerning authority and leadership are addressed.

Yahshua had much to say about authority and leadership in his kingdom. The Kingdom of Messiah is a reality whose fundamentals were announced in plain language. Here are some examples:

Matt. 23:8-11 - "But you are not to let yourselves be called Rabbi; because you have one Rabbi, and you are all each other's brothers. And do not call anyone on earth Father because you have one Father, and He is in Heaven. Nor are you to let yourselves be called leaders because you have one leader, and he is the Messiah! The greatest among you must be your servant, for whoever promotes himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be promoted."

Matt. 25:25-27 - " But Yahshua called them and said 'You know that among the nations, those who are supposed to rule them become tyrants, and their superiors become dictators. Among you, it must not be like that. On the contrary, whoever among you wants to be leader must become your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave."

Matt. 28:18-20 - "Yahshua came and talked to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make people from all nations into disciples, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember I will be with you always, yes, even to the end of the age."

These verses are so straightforward that it is amazing they have been so ignored by Yahshua's disciples. The Messiah warns about calling men by titles and placing them in positions of authority. In the Kingdom of God there is a King with all authority! In the Kingdom there are functions and actions not delegated offices. We are not to be like all the nations in our governmental structure. In the Messiah's body, Yahshua rules and we serve. The Kingdom is not a constitutional monarchy where the king is given a place of honor, but the rule is through a congress or council of men. All authority resides in the "Head over all things", and flows from the Head to the members of the body. It manifests as needed, moment by moment, through whom the head chooses. Authority is like electricity; If it can't get home it won't leave. This means authority leaves the source, flows along established lines to the destination where it manifests in whatever is plugged into it. The current must then return to the source to complete the cycle. If the current cannot return because of a problem in the flow(a short, circuit break or a malfunction in the device being used) the current will remain or return to where it starts.

There are two kinds of authority described in the Bible. Secular and Spiritual Authority. Secular authority is delegated to those who are charged with

punishing the ones who disobey the law. If they properly exercise this authority we will lead quiet and peaceable lives. We are told to obey them for they must give an account. Spiritual authority on the other hand is not about rule but example. We are to remember those who lead and speak the word of God to us, whose faith follow considering the outcome of their conduct.

Finally, there is no doubt that the word leader or leaders is used many times in the scriptures. Leadership is manifested in various ways through various members. Leadership means to stand before as an example. If we see someone standing forth before, as an example of flowing in the will of God, we want to follow. What we are saying is leadership is not to harden into a position with a title. Just like all things that are spiritual they are like the wind. We don't know where they are from and where they are going. It is a flow. If Yahshua is speaking something to you; "Whatever he says to you do it." How will it all fit together, what about the order. We have too much human order and not enough heavenly order. What if someone misses the spirit? All members should be sensitive to the spirit and we are all accountable to each other. The greatest protection to error is not one man judging if it is the spirit or not, but the whole body strong in and accountable to the Head, Yahshua our Lord.

The story in John the seventh chapter illustrates how dangerous it is to be a ruler. Yahshua has given his stunning message on the last day of the feast of tabernacles saying in verse 38, "He who believes or trusts in me as the scripture has said out of his belly shall flow living water." The officers who were sent by "the authorities" to arrest him return empty handed with the testimony, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" The authorities responded, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers believed or trusted in Him?" That is the question, if you consider yourself a ruler, leader or authority in the temple, can you really trust in Him?

