

Hierarchy and Order in the Assemblies

Introduction

In this week's portion, we begin a new book of the Torah, i.e., Numbers or Bamidbar in Hebrew.

It is one of the books many don't cherish to read as it is full of genealogical information and counting of the families.

It is not as easy as many of the other books to gather information that deals with our walk with The Almighty on a daily basis.

There are some like the Aaronic/Priestly Blessing, Pesach Sheni, and blessings or curses that come as a result of our obedience, or lack thereof, to The Almighty.

However, if we look deep enough, we can find life lessons, even in today's portion, if we look enough.

And we don't even have to twist and squeeze the text to find it.

Main Discussion

I. HIERARCHY AND ORDER IN THE TABERNACLE/TEMPLE

- A. In chapter 3:14ff¹ of our portion, we read about the census of the tribe of Levi
- B. They were counted separately from the other tribes.
- C. They were to camp surrounding and closest to the Tabernacle.
- D. They were commissioned with a duty to protect the holy from the profane.
- E. Not everyone was allowed to enter into the holy space of the Tabernacle
- F. Those not of Levi brought their sacrifice to the door of the Tabernacle
- G. Only the descendants of Aharon were allowed to bring the sacrifices and place them on the altar and go into the Holy Place.
- H. Only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Holy of Holies, and then only after he had filled the room up with smoke.
- I. This system was set up by The Almighty to maintain order in the Tabernacle/Temple

II. HIERARCHY IN THE KINGDOMS ISRAEL

- A. The soldiers and tribal leaders formed an outer circle around the King to protect him from the common folk.

¹ All Scriptures taken from: New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). The Lockman Foundation.

- B. Then you would find the princes and military officers, usually sons and relatives of the king
 - 1. Their duty was to protect the king.
- C. Then you would have the king's personal bodyguards and advisors.
 - 1. Their duty was to prevent people others from disturbing or harming the king
 - 2. They also had the duty of announcing the wishes of the king to the people
- D. This system prevented chaos and turmoil in the kingdom

III. HIERARCHY AND ORDER IN OUR ASSEMBLIES

- A. The Apostles of Messiah established the assemblies after the pattern used in the synagogues of their day
- B. The basic government of a synagogue was
 - 1. President
 - 2. Board
 - 3. Workers
- C. They set up each congregation to be self-sustaining and self-governing by using this pattern
- D. The names in the Greek are different, but the function was the same
 - 1. Presbyters/Elders
 - 2. Diakenos/Deacons
- E. The duties of the Elders
 - 1. Protect the congregation from false doctrines from the outside.
 - a. Acts 20:28–31 (NASB95): Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.
 - 2. Lead the congregation
 - a. 1 Tim 5:17- The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.
 - b. Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1, 2
 - 3. Proclaim The Almighty's word to the congregation
 - a. 1 Tim. 3:2-An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (The full context is vs. 1-7)
 - b. 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:13-17; Titus 1:9
 - 4. Visit the sick and pray for/with them
 - a. James 5:14, 15-Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the

Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

5. Judge Doctrinal issues

- a. Acts 15 and the Council of Jerusalem overseen by James, the brother of Yehoshua

F. Deacons in the Congregation

1. We first read of those selected as servants to the congregation in Acts 6:1-6-Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.
2. We see from this and other passages that their duties were to serve the congregation in the day to day tasks as needed.
3. There are two striking differences between the qualifications of an elder and a deacon.
 - a. An elder must be able to teach, not a requirement for a deacon
 - b. An elder must not be a new convert, not a requirement for a deacon.
4. When we have these to “offices” in the congregation functioning properly, there is growth individually and as a congregation.

Conclusion

The Almighty has established a hierarchy within his assemblies that brings about their success.

When we follow this hierarchy, it will lead to the success of the congregation.

Following this hierarchy will dispell chaos and confusion