

Kings: Seeing Christ in David

BIBLE BASICS

Typology: Recognizing the Blueprint

Throughout Scripture, God reveals Himself not only through direct words and commandments but also through the lives of His people. The stories of the Old Testament are more than ancient records of faith and failure; they are the unfolding revelation of God in Christ. Within the Old Testament, we discover shadows and symbols, figures whose experiences and roles anticipate something far greater than themselves.

This way of reading the Bible is known as **typology**. In typology, an Old Testament person, office, or event is a **type**: a prophetic image that foreshadows a deeper spiritual truth. The fulfillment of that image in the New Testament is called the **antitype**, found perfectly in Jesus Christ. Typology is not imaginative storytelling imposed on the text; it is a reverent recognition that the same God who acted in Israel's history also brought salvation to completion in the Incarnate Word. Thus, the gospel is not a new idea appearing suddenly in the New Testament, but the promised fulfillment of what God had been speaking "from the very beginning."

Among all Old Testament figures, few reflect the person and mission of Christ as vividly as King David. Anointed as shepherd and king, David stands at the intersection of humanity's weakness and God's redemptive power. His courage before Goliath, his deep repentance after sin, his anointing by the Spirit, and his role as a ruler who brings unity and peace, all these moments echo in the life and ministry of Christ, who embodies them in their fullness.

By contemplating the parallels between David's story and the life of Jesus, we gain a richer and more complete understanding of the gospel: Christ is the true King, the true Shepherd, the true Champion, and the true Forgiver is revealed in the Old Covenant in shadow, and in the New Covenant in truth.

The Royal Lineage: Son of David

In ancient times, genealogy played a crucial role in establishing a person's lineage and religious importance. For this reason, the Holy Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke preserve two genealogies of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though the genealogies are not identical in every detail, their theological purpose is clear: they proclaim that Jesus is truly of the house of David, fulfilling the necessary lineage for the Messiah.

The Gospel of Matthew opens by calling Jesus Christ the "Son of David, the Son of Abraham". The genealogy highlights David as "David the king". This emphasis is because the Messiah was prophesied to come as a king from a king, specifically from the house of David.

The repeated emphasis on “**the king**” is not incidental. The Messiah was prophesied to come as a king from a king, specifically from the lineage of David. This royal expectation is voiced in the Scriptures:

- “And has raised up a horn of salvation for us, In the house of His servant David” – Luke 1:69
- “There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.” – Psalm 132:17

This expectation was also alive among the people during Jesus’ earthly ministry. They saw His works, and they searched the Scriptures with their hearts, asking whether the promised King had come:

- The blind men cried out to Him, saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” (Matthew 9:27).
- The multitudes, amazed by His works, questioned, “Could this be the Son of David?” (Matthew 12:23).
- As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds proclaimed, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Matthew 21:9).

However, Jesus revealed a deeper truth about His identity to the Pharisees. When they answered that the Christ is “the Son of David,” Jesus confronted them with David’s own Spirit-inspired confession:

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’ ’? [Psalm 110] If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore, (Matthew 22:41-45).

This paradoxical question exposed the Pharisees’ limited understanding, challenging them to recognize that Jesus was not merely a descendant of David but also possessed a higher, divine status. In this moment, the Lord opens the door into the mystery: the Messiah is David’s Son according to the flesh, yet David calls Him “Lord” by the Spirit. In other words, Christ is not merely descended from David, He is greater than David, the eternal King whom David serves and prefigures.

This deepens the beauty of the cry of the blind men proclaiming “Son of David”. This confession from the lips of the needy, especially the blind, those who cannot rely on outward sight, and their petition, “have mercy on us,” is therefore both theological and liturgical: they identify the King by His divine mercy. This is consistent with God’s character as revealed throughout Scripture: His power is never divorced from compassion, and His kingship is not expressed as domination, but as healing, restoration, and deliverance.

The Suffering King Foretold

Typology does not only point to Christ’s kingship; it also points to the scandal and glory of His suffering. The Old Testament prepares the Church to recognize the crucified Messiah, not as an unexpected tragedy, but as the promised path of redemption. The Servant’s rejection in Isaiah and the

righteous sufferer's agony in the Psalms form a prophetic horizon in which the Cross is revealed as God's wisdom.

"And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men" – Isaiah 53:2-3

Psalm 22 likewise bears witness with a startling vividness:

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" "A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" "I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint" "They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." (Psalm 22)

These are not accidental parallels. Rather, we confess that the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures also prepared the people of God to recognize Christ, especially when His glory is veiled beneath suffering.

The Anointing and the Coming of the Spirit

The moment David transitions from shepherd to king is a powerful type of Christ's initiation into His ministry: **the anointing**. In Israel, anointing is not merely a human appointment, it is the sign of divine selection, divine mission, and divine empowerment. The king receives oil outwardly and the Spirit inwardly.

Divine Selection in Bethlehem

God commands Samuel:

"Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you." So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice." – 1 Samuel 16:1-5

Samuel's mission is clear. He comes to Bethlehem with oil, yet he does not know who the chosen king is. This, too, bears a typological weight: the prophets spoke truly, yet they did not grasp the full horizon of what they proclaimed.

"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us

they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” – 1 Peter 1:10-12

The Rejected Shepherd Chosen

David is not presented as a naturally obvious candidate. He is the youngest, overlooked even by his own household:

And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.”- 1 Samuel 16:11

Here the pattern of God’s election appears: the Lord often chooses what is hidden, small, and despised in order to reveal His power and overturn human pride. David’s initial status as a young, rejected shepherd mirrors the prophetic portrait of Christ’s rejection:

“There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men” – Isaiah 53:2-3

The Anointing at the Sacrifice

Kingship in Scripture is inseparable from consecration. A king is not simply a strong figure who rises above others; he is one set apart by God, appointed for God’s purposes, and empowered by God’s Spirit. David’s transition from shepherd to king is therefore presented not as a career advancement but as an anointing.

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.” – 1 Samuel 16:13

This is why the Church reads the anointing of David as a luminous type of Christ’s own public inauguration, and also as a pattern that echoes into the sacramental life of believers.

This pairing, anointing and Spirit, is central to the typology. The anointing happens at the sacrifice (verses 2-3), just as Christ was enthroned on the Cross at the ultimate sacrifice. The Cross is not a defeat forced upon Christ; it is the royal enthronement of the true King, who reigns by self-offering love. And at Christ’s Baptism, the Holy Spirit descends, revealing that His ministry is the Spirit-bearing, Spirit-filled work of salvation.

When Christ is Baptized, the Holy Spirit also comes down just as the Spirit enters David when he is anointed. Similarly, the Holy Spirit comes upon believers when they are baptized and anointed with myron. In this way, David’s anointing does not merely point to an ancient political transition; it points forward to the mystery of Christ’s consecration and to our own sacramental incorporation into His life.

The Contrast in Kingship: Saul vs. David

The relationship between King Saul and David sets up a powerful typology regarding the temporal versus the eternal kingdom. In the Old Testament, Saul is not merely “a bad king” in a moralistic sense;

he becomes a sign of a kingdom grounded in insecurity, self-preservation, and disobedience. David, for all his human weakness, becomes the standard by which the kings are measured, because his kingship is rooted in God's choosing and God's Spirit.

Characteristic	Saul (Type of AntiChrist)	David (Type of Christ)
Status	Rejected and becomes a sign of evil. Temporary.	Becomes the standard by which all OT kings are compared. The King of Kings.
The Spirit	When a distressing spirit was upon Saul, David would play the harp, and Saul would become refreshed and the spirit would depart.	After Christ's baptism, He casts out demons, overcomes temptations, and heals the people.
Recognition	The anointing was known only to the Prophet, not the King (Saul).	Christ the King was known to the people of God, not King Herod or the nobles.
Destiny	Will be replaced.	Christ will come again and replace all earthly kings.

Furthermore, the attempts by Saul to kill David parallel the attempts to seize Jesus. When Saul sent messengers to capture David, the Spirit of God fell upon them, and they prophesied (praised God) instead. When Saul went himself, he was similarly overcome by the Spirit and prophesied, thus failing to kill David. Similarly, officers sent to take Jesus were unable to, reporting: "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (John 7:44-49).

The Good Shepherd and the King

David's role as a shepherd is not a mere biographical detail; it is part of God's theological preparation of the king. In the Scriptures, shepherding is a royal vocation: the true ruler is one who guards, feeds, gathers, and is willing to suffer for the flock. Thus David's shepherdhood becomes a living prophecy of the Messiah, who will rule not by domination but by sacrificial care.

David's Stewardship

God chose David from the sheepfolds, taking him from following the ewes, "To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance." David's kingship is therefore shaped first by hidden faithfulness. Before he stands before armies and courts, he stands before beasts and loneliness, learning courage, vigilance, patience, and self-offering love.

"He also chose David His servant, And took him from the sheepfolds; From following the ewes that had young He brought him, To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." – Psalm 78:70-72

David was protective, risking his life to deliver lambs from the mouth of a lion or a bear. His care is not sentimental; it is costly, active, and courageous.

“But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear;’” – 1 Samuel 17:34-36

This shepherding reveals the interior logic of David’s later leadership: the king is not above the people, he is for the people, accountable to God for their protection and peace.

Prophetic Role

The prophets do not speak of shepherding just as an image, they speak of it as the form of God’s source of salvation. Ezekiel prophesied that the Lord would establish “one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, My servant David”.

“I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.” – Ezekiel 34:23-24

Through this prophecy, even after David’s historical life, “David” becomes a **messianic title**, a shorthand for the coming Shepherd-King. The Old Testament prepares us to expect a ruler whose authority is expressed as pastoral care.

Christ, the Fulfillment

Just like David, Christ comes as a Shepherd and a King for Israel. Yet Christ fulfills the shepherd-image in a manner beyond David’s reach: He does not merely risk His life; He freely gives it. He does not merely save sheep from beasts; He saves humanity from sin and death.

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep... and I lay down My life for the sheep” (John 10:14-16).

David laid down his life for his sheep by fighting the lion and bear; Christ laid His life on the cross to save us from our sins. In Orthodox life, this is not only a doctrine to be admired but a pattern to be received: every true servant-leader is called to shepherd with “integrity of heart” and to accept the cost of love.

The Champion: David and Goliath

The confrontation with Goliath is not just a lesson about courage. Israel is afraid, paralyzed, and unable to deliver itself. Salvation comes through a chosen champion who fights on behalf of the people of God.

Goliath as the Champion

Goliath was identified as a “champion” (Hebrew: one man to represent all the people). He defied the armies of the living God.

“And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.” 1 Samuel 17:4

David, approaching the conflict as a shepherd and not a warrior, came against Goliath with a staff, a sling, and five smooth stones (1 Samuel 17:40). He comes seeking to deliver his people yet is rejected:

“Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s anger was aroused against David, and he said, ‘Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.’” – 1 Samuel 17:28

Rejected by his brothers, mocked by his opponent (1 Samuel 17:43), David’s reply is one of the clearest confessions of faith in Scripture:

“Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.’” – 1 Samuel 17:45

David declared that he came in the “name of the Lord of hosts”. The victory that follows is decisive and unmistakably God’s.

“So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.” – 1 Samuel 17:50-51

Christ as the Champion

David’s victory is not an end in itself; it points forward to Christ, the true Champion, who stands in place of all humanity.

Christ is our champion, who represents and saves us all from our enemies:

“in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight” – Colossians 1:22

Like David, Christ approaches His decisive conflict not as a worldly warrior, but as a shepherd. He enters Jerusalem meekly. He confronts death armed not with steel, but with obedience, humility, and love. The Cross itself becomes the paradoxical weapon. Christ also defeats the devil with a *stick in His arms*: the Cross.

The ridicule Christ receives mirrors David’s rejection and mocking:

"For even His brothers did not believe in Him." – John 7:5

"And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him." - Mark 15:20

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" - 1 Corinthians 1:18

And yet, St. Paul proclaims:

"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;" – Hebrews 1:2

Christ is not only a descendant of David or a heroic champion within history, but the eternal Son of God Himself. David's victory over Goliath was real, yet temporary and limited; Christ's victory is universal and everlasting. The One who stands before His enemies as a humble Shepherd is the same One through whom God created all things and to whom all things belong. When Christ goes to the Cross, He does so not as a powerless victim, but as the rightful Heir of all creation, freely entering human weakness in order to redeem it. In this way, the story of David prepares us to recognize that the true Champion is not merely chosen by God, but is God's own Son, through whom salvation is finally and fully accomplished.

The Rewards of Victory

The rewards promised to the man who killed Goliath were immense: great riches, the king's daughter, and exemption from taxes. In fulfillment, after the Cross, Christ espouses us, the church, as His bride, and He grants us forgiveness of sins (exemption from taxes). Christ defeats the devil using the Cross, symbolically described as a "stick in his arms". His victory becomes our peace; His righteousness becomes our covering; His life becomes our life.

As St. Jerome reflects on Christ's drawing power after the Cross: "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together." – Matthew 24:28

"We are taught about the sacrament of Christ by the use of a natural example taken from daily life... how much more ought we and the whole multitude of believers hasten to him whose splendor comes from the east and shines as far as the west!" – St. Jerome

St. Jerome's reflection helps us understand that the Cross, though it appears as weakness and death, becomes the place of irresistible attraction. Just as eagles are drawn instinctively to what sustains them, so the faithful are drawn to Christ crucified, recognizing in Him the true source of life. The Lord's sacrifice is not hidden or powerless; it shines forth, calling people from every place and nation to gather around Him. In this way, the Cross becomes the center of unity for the Church, drawing together all who hunger for salvation and revealing that what the world sees as defeat is, in truth, the triumph of divine love.

The Two-Tone Victory

David's victory involved two distinct actions: killing Goliath with the stone/sling, and then using the enemy's sword to finish the task. This foreshadows Christ's "2 tone victory":

1. First Victory: Christ defeated Satan once on the Cross.
2. Final Victory: He will come again for the final victory at the Second Coming, wielding a sharp sword out of His mouth to strike the nations (Revelation 19:15).

"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." – Revelation 19:15

The Church therefore lives between Cross and Kingdom—redeemed, yet awaiting the full manifestation of victory.

Acceptance and Forgiveness: From Rejection to Rest

David experienced profound rejection by the establishment (Saul) and even by his elder brother, Eliab. When fleeing Saul, David escaped to the cave of Adullam, where everyone who was in distress, in debt, or discontented gathered to him.

After David flees, being rejected by his own people, and goes among the Gentiles, he eventually gathers a community of the broken:

"Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him." – 1 Samuel 22:1-2

Similarly, Christ invites the heavy laden to Himself, promising rest: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Christ, like David, is rejected by the leaders, feared by the authorities, and yet irresistibly followed by the people:

"No man ever spoke like this Man!" – John 7:46

Even Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies the scope of Christ's salvation, "that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad." – John 11:51-52

Forgiveness as the Final Mark of the King

Throughout David's life, victory and mercy are repeatedly held together. Though anointed king, David refuses to seize the throne by violence. Again and again, he spares Saul, even when Saul relentlessly seeks his life. David's restraint is not weakness, nor political calculation; it is reverence for God and trust in God's judgment. He will not establish his kingdom through bloodshed or personal vengeance, but through obedience and humility before the Lord.

Like David, Christ is rejected by those in power, pursued unjustly, and surrounded by hostility. Yet He does not answer violence with violence, nor hatred with hatred. Instead, at the very moment when injustice reaches its peak, Christ reveals the deepest truth about the Kingdom He brings:

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” – Luke 23:34

Here the typology reaches its summit. The true King is revealed not merely in victory, but in mercy. Christ forgives those who crucified Him, revealing the heart of the Kingdom of God.



Review Questions

1. What is Typology? [Doctrine or theory concerning the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament.]
2. Why is genealogy important? [To emphasize that the Lord Jesus was a son of King David, which was the necessary lineage for the Messiah.]
3. How old was King David when he began to reign and how old was Jesus when He began His ministry? [They were both 30 years old.]
4. How is King David compared to King Saul? [King David = Christ, King Saul = Antichrist]
5. What is the correlation of David & Goliath and Jesus Christ? [David saved the Jews from the Philistines. Jesus saved us from our enemies. Christ approaches crucifixion as a shepherd and not a warrior. Christ also defeats the devil with a stick in his arms – the Cross]
6. What was David’s action toward Saul knowing that he wanted to kill him? [David forgave him and spared his life.]
7. What did Jesus say when he was on the cross? [“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Luke 23:34]
8. How is David a type of Christ? [David leader for the Jews the way Christ also came as a leader and savior]
9. How did David receive the spirit versus Christ? [When Christ is Baptized, the Holy Spirit also comes down just as the Spirit enters David when he is anointed.]
10. What kind of sign does David and Saul represent? [David becomes a sign of good whereas Saul is rejected and becomes a sign of evil.]

Kings: Josiah leads Israel to Serve

BIBLE BASICS

Josiah's Place in History

After the reign of King Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms in 931 BC. The northern kingdom, known as Israel, consisted of ten tribes, while the southern kingdom, called Judah, comprised two tribes. Each kingdom had its own capital city with Samaria serving as the capital of Israel and Jerusalem as the capital of Judah.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel was characterized by a series of wicked kings who led the people away from the worship of the true God and into idolatry. This resulted in moral decay, social injustice, and political instability. In 722 BC, after 209 years of existence, the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the powerful Assyrian Empire under King Sargon II. The Assyrians deported many of the Israelites, leading to the dispersion of the ten lost tribes.

In contrast, the Southern Kingdom of Judah experienced a mix of good and evil kings. While there were periods of faithfulness and prosperity, there were also times of idolatry and wickedness. Despite these challenges, Judah survived longer than Israel, enduring for 345 years until it was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

King Josiah was a significant figure in Judah's history. Though Josiah's father, King Amon did evil in the sight of the Lord, King Josiah was a good king of Judah who reigned for 31 years, from 641-609 BC. We read in 2 Chronicles 34 that he was only eight years old when he became King "and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Chronicles 34:2).

A Dark Heritage

Josiah's ascension to the throne occurred during one of the darkest periods in the history of the kingdom. His grandfather, Manasseh, had begun his reign at the tender age of 11 and ruled for 55 long, tumultuous years. Despite being the son of the righteous King Hezekiah, Manasseh abandoned the worship of God in the temple, permitting the construction and worship of idols throughout the land.

Manasseh's reign was a stark contrast to the wisdom and devotion of his father. The kingdom suffered under his leadership as he led the people astray. It was only in the final years of his life, after being captured and punished by the Babylonians, that Manasseh repented and returned to God. This period of repentance, however, was brief, overshadowed by the decades of wickedness that had preceded it.

Following Manasseh's death, his son Amon assumed the throne. Amon, having grown up in an environment devoid of godliness, continued his father's wicked ways. The sins of the father had poisoned the son, perpetuating a cycle of evil. This downward spiral mirrored the deterioration of humanity that had led to the great flood, where unchecked wickedness had corrupted the hearts of men.

Amon's reign was short-lived, lasting only two years. During this time, he intensified the idolatrous practices of his father, leading the people further away from God. His actions provoked his own servants to conspire against him, resulting in his assassination within his own palace.

The reigns of Manasseh and Amon marked a 60-year period of spiritual darkness in the kingdom. Three generations had grown up without experiencing the true worship of God. The consequences of this spiritual drought were far-reaching, leaving a legacy of idolatry and wickedness that Josiah would have to confront.

The people lived through 60 years without God. Literally. The only contemporary prophets were Micah who passed in the early years of Manasseh and Isaiah who was, according to Tradition, sawn in half by Manasseh. No prophets in the South. No mention of a high priest. The ark of Covenant was no longer where it was supposed to be. The Israelites did not seek it, and the high priest was corrupt. Everything was terrible for 60 years. No glimmer of hope. Darkness.

A new king!

While Manasseh repented, a short repentance at end of his life, giving a bleak of hope, it was only to be demolished again, with worse coming upon the nation. Amon reigns but for 2 years and was murdered because they disliked his leadership for various reasons. Imagine now, the 75 year old Israelites, who had seen God's glory. They lived in the days of Hezekiah. And they pray. Finally, an opportunity – an opportunity to find good. 'Save our nation Lord; Restore our glory'. But then an 8 year old...Really? An 8 year old? Have you not learned from Manasseh at 11, immature? From Solomon THE WISE, who declares:

Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child,
And your princes feast in the morning!
17 Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles,
And your princes feast at the proper time—
For strength and not for drunkenness!
Eccl 10:16-17

Everything pointed towards disaster. By all accounts he was supposed to be a corrupt king. But here is what the bible says of Josiah: "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord ..." (2 Chronicles 34:1-2) This unexpected turn of events highlights a fundamental truth: God's ways are not our ways. Human judgment often relies on outward appearances and conventional qualifications. When Saul was chosen as king, the people looked for strength, strategy, and intelligence. In the face of Goliath, they sought a champion with experience in warfare and physical prowess. But God's perspective transcends human limitations. He sees the heart, the potential, and the unwavering faith that may lie dormant within an individual. God sees things differently. Always.

Josiah was, in essence, a divine gift bestowed upon a nation in desperate need of redemption. Despite his young age and lack of experience, he embarked on his reign with a singular objective: to seek the God of his father David: “For in the eight year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek God of His father David.” (2 Chronicles 34:3). This yearning for spiritual connection and restoration set him apart from his predecessors and ignited a flame of hope in the hearts of the Israelites.

Josiah's story of restoration serves as a powerful reminder of our own spiritual journey. Like the young king, we are called to seek God and restore our fallen image to that of Christ. This restoration is not a one-time event but a continuous process of aligning our thoughts, actions, and desires with the teachings of Jesus. Accordingly, we will go through 5 steps Josiah took that entirely changed and restored the nation.

Step 1: Seek the Lord Diligently

“For in their 8th year of his reign, he began to seek the God of His father David”

Despite having no godly example before him, when Josiah was 16 years old (the eighth year of his reign) he began to seek the God of his father David. This gives us hope as servants for those we serve that truly seeking God is transformative no matter one's age, circumstances, or experiences.

Realize, no matter how bad the situation is, seek God. Josiah's pursuit of God, even in the face of adversity, serves as a beacon of hope for all believers. It underscores the transformative power of seeking God, regardless of one's age, circumstances, or past experiences. Josiah's initiative proves that it's never too early or too late to begin a relationship with God. We can strategize, and plan, but without God it is destruction.

The profound impact of Josiah's reign is evident in Jeremiah's lament upon the king's death. Scholars suggest that Lamentations 3:27-28 refers to Josiah, highlighting the burden of sin he bore—both from his predecessors and his nation. This “yoke in his youth” speaks to the weight of responsibility Josiah carried as a young king. It underscores the importance of seeking God early in life, as it equips individuals to navigate the challenges and responsibilities that come with leadership and service.

Step 2: Purge all Evil from Surrounding

“The twelfth year, broke down altars in his presence and cut down all idols, ...” (2 Chronicles 3-7)

In the 12th year of his reign, age 20, **he began to purge all of Judah** of idols (2 Chronicles 34:3-7). The more Josiah sought the Lord, the more he wanted to remove all evil distractions from himself and from God's presence. Not only was Josiah being transformed, but he was transforming those around him, indeed his entire kingdom, despite his age and undoubtedly criticism from elders of the kingdom. The prophet Jeremiah, his contemporary, lamented Josiah's death saying, “it is good for a man to bear the yoke of his youth” (Lamentations 3).

Was their resistance? Ofcourse! Josiah's actions were not met with unanimous support. It is natural to expect resistance when attempting to overhaul a way of life that had been entrenched for over 60 years. The reforms Josiah implemented undoubtedly disrupted the status quo and challenged the comfort of those who were accustomed to the old ways.

The Bible provides other examples where God commanded the Israelites to purge evil and cleanse themselves from corrupting influences. One such example is the story of King Saul and the Amalekites. God instructed Saul to wage war against the Amalekites and to leave no survivors, including women, children, livestock and keep nothing. While this may seem harsh to modern sensibilities, it underscores the necessity of completely eradicating evil influences to prevent them from taking root and spreading.

Similarly, when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, God commanded them to drive out the inhabitants and destroy their idols. These nations had a history of wickedness and idolatry, and their presence posed a constant threat to the spiritual well-being of the Israelites. The Israelites' repeated failures to fully drive out these nations led to intermingling and the adoption of their idolatrous practices, causing great spiritual harm.

These examples highlight a recurring theme: the dangers of mingling with the world and compromising with sin. Everytime they let the nations dwell and commune with them, they slowly influenced them, and got them to practice what they practice. Just as Josiah purged Judah of idols, and Saul was commanded to destroy the Amalekites, we too must cleanse ourselves from harmful habits and negative influences. This involves not only purging evil from our surroundings but also from within ourselves.

Purge and cleanse evil from inside yourselves.

Step 3: Repairing the House of God

“In the 18th year of his reign, rebuilt and repair the altar of God.” (2 Chron 34: 8-10)

In the 18th year of his reign (age 26), he sent people **to repair the house of the Lord his God** (2 Chronicles 34:8). Repentance is incomplete if I change my ways and stop there. After we purge our hearts from evil, we must welcome the presence of God and ensure a place of worship. This transformation takes time and effort, it took Josiah 10 years, so too we must be diligent in building and developing our relationship with God.

Josiah's actions demonstrate that repentance isn't merely about ceasing harmful actions. It's also about actively creating an environment where God's presence can flourish. This involves restoring and maintaining our spiritual connection with Him. Our relationship with God is nurtured through prayer, but obstacles can hinder this vital connection. Lingering guilt and unaddressed sin can create a barrier to effective prayer. Similarly, spiritual laziness, neglecting to seek God's guidance, can also impede our communication with Him.

Josiah's story reminds us that the journey of spiritual restoration is often gradual. It requires perseverance and a refusal to give up even when progress seems slow. Over time, with consistent effort, we can rebuild and restore our relationship with God to its full potential, overcoming one obstacle at a time. One battle at a time.

Step 4: Embrace your brothers and sisters in Christ

"They gave it to the ..." - 2 Chronicles 34: 9,10,11,12

When King Josiah sought to repair the house of God, he didn't embark on this task alone. He recognized the value of community and collaboration, enlisting the help of skilled individuals with diverse talents. The money collected was given to the foremen overseeing the house of the Lord, who then gave it to the workmen to repair and restore the house. The money was used to buy materials to repair the houses that the kings of Judah had destroyed. The Levites oversaw the work, with some supervising, some skilled with musical instruments overseeing the burden bearers and all the workers, and some serving as scribes, officers, and gatekeepers. (2 Chronicles 34:8-13) This collective effort mirrored the interconnectedness of God's people, working together to restore a sacred space.

Similarly, our individual journeys toward repentance and salvation are not meant to be solitary endeavors. We are not isolated islands but rather integral parts of the Church, the body of Christ. As Paul eloquently states in 1 Corinthians 12:12, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." This verse emphasizes the unity and interdependence of believers, each with unique gifts and roles to play in the greater community.

The Church serves as a support system, a spiritual family where we can find encouragement, guidance, and accountability. Through fellowship with other Christians, we can experience the transformative power of God's love and grace. In times of struggle and doubt, we can lean on our brothers and sisters in Christ, who can offer prayer, counsel, and a listening ear.

Embracing our brothers and sisters in Christ means recognizing their value and contributions, even when they differ from our own. It means fostering a spirit of unity and cooperation, putting aside personal differences for the sake of the Gospel. It means celebrating each other's successes and mourning each other's losses, walking alongside one another through the ups and downs of life. Embracing our brothers and sisters in Christ is an essential step in our spiritual growth. It reflects the heart of God, who desires for His children to live in harmony and love. As we embrace one another, we become a living testimony to the power of Christ's redemption and the beauty of His Church.

Step 5: Be Ready to Hear and Answer

"I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." 2 Chron 34:14-21

Suddenly they found the word of God. While repairing the house of the Lord they found the Book of the Law given to Moses. They read it to King Josiah who tore his clothes because Israel and Judah had not kept the word of the Lord and asked what he should do (2 Chronicles 34:14-21).

The rediscovery of the Book of the Law in the temple serves as a powerful metaphor for spiritual renewal. It reminds us that when we neglect God's word, we lose our way and invite spiritual darkness into our lives. When we seek God, repent, and purify our hearts, then we are ready to hear God's word and respond to His calling. There is a transformative power to repentance and obedience to God's commandments. While the word of God existed, but the Israelites had no clue where it was. It was lost in the house of God. It certainly was not referred by the people as a source of life. Evidently, they were unknowingly spiritually dry.

The king's act of tearing his clothes upon hearing the words of the Law signifies a profound recognition of his and the nation's deficiency and disobedience. This act of repentance reminds us that true

repentance leads to a renewed commitment to following God's will, clinging to the word of God. He saw the message: those who follow God, live; those who do not, die and are destroyed. Oh the fear that reigned in his heart. He needed to know, what about them now? *"Behold I bring calamity...they provoked me...therefore I will pour my wrath on this land...but as for the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the lord...thus I say to you....because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words ... I also have heard you"* (2 Chron 34:23-28) Josiah had a beautiful heart, a tender heart. One that loved God, was inclined to Him and was touched by His Word. Just like King David, who with 'a broken a contrite heart' God did not despise (Psalm 51). A true repentant heart, God never turns away.

The timeless relevance of God's word is another crucial aspect highlighted in this story. The rediscovery of the Book of the Law demonstrates that God's message transcends time and remains eternally powerful. In our Orthodox tradition, the Scriptures are revered as a living word that continues to guide and inspire believers today. Ultimately, the spiritual message of this narrative calls us to actively seek God's word, allowing it to convict and transform us. Through repentance and obedience, we experience spiritual renewal and become beacons of light in the world, reflecting the love and truth of Christ.

Step 6: Witnessing to All

"The king went up to the house of the Lord, ... And he read" 2 Chronicles 34:30

King Josiah then read the Book of the Covenant to all the people and made a covenant *"to follow the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book"* (2 Chronicles 34:31-32). Josiah made a commitment to God before all the people.

Yet, he called all his followers to the same commitment. He expected all his surrounding to embark on the same journey: *"he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand."* (2 Chron 34:32). As the leader of Judah, he called the nation to serve the Lord with him. As leaders in the service, we too are called to be an example to those we serve and to call them to a higher purpose.

Step 7: Leading others to the Mysteries

"There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept" - 2 Chronicles 35:18

Six decade passed with no mention of Passover. King Josiah reinstated the Passover in Jerusalem and no king in Israel kept the Passover as Josiah kept it since the days of Samuel the prophet (2 Chronicles 35:18). The Passover celebration he reinstated wasn't merely a return to tradition; it was a heartfelt reconnection with God, surpassing even the observances led by the prophet Samuel. This revival wasn't driven by obligation or ritual, but by a genuine yearning for God's presence. They truly celebrated out of their hearts, out of joy; not because of fasting, not because of habit or tradition but by true need. This depth of understanding and commitment is essential for experiencing the joy of true communion with God. If this understanding is lacking in our expressions of worship, it is crucial to persistently seek it through prayer and inquiry. This pursuit is not only personally fulfilling but brings delight to the Lord.

Josiah's leadership demonstrates the transformative power of one individual's commitment to God. Not only did Josiah reunite himself with God but through his leadership, he brought an entire nation back to God and to a greater state than those who came before him. His example serves as a reminder to never underestimate the impact of personal repentance and spiritual renewal, as it can extend far beyond oneself, even to the extent of revitalizing an entire nation. It took one individual to sanctify an entire nation. Do not underestimate your influence, and the power of your repentance. Josiah's reign was marked by a significant spiritual revival.

Josiah: A young man's pursuit of God impacts nations

Josiah's story is beautiful for two reasons: the character himself and the story itself. King Josiah's leadership teaches us that we are not defined by those who come before us nor by our youth or limitations. When we diligently seek God with repentance and a pure heart, He will respond to us and lead us in His ways. And by His grace, we become servant-leaders for those around us, leading by example and bringing others to God through our service.

The story of restoration shows the step-by-step process of repentance and how to change our hearts for a better life. When reading the Bible, we may question its practicality, but this story shows how God details processes, like repentance. This is a story and process of restoration, not just for an individual, but for an entire nation:

1. Seek the Lord Diligently
2. Purge all Evil from Surrounding
3. Repairing the House of God
4. Do Not Do it Alone
5. Be Ready to Hear and Answer
6. Witnessing to All
7. Reuniting all with God



Review Questions

1. How old was Josiah when he became king? [8 years old]
2. How long did Josiah seek God before he found the Law of Moses? [10 years]
3. Josiah was the king of what nation? [Judah. This was after Israel was divided into two kingdoms]
4. What did Josiah do when he found the Law of Moses? [He read it to the nation and made a covenant to follow God's laws with the nation as witnesses]
5. Why is it important to purge distractions around us? [It allows us to welcome God with a pure heart]
6. How do we know King Josiah was a successful leader? [He cared not just for his own salvation but for the salvation of the entire nation]

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7. Did Josiah single-handedly bring the nation back to God? [No, he used the talents of those around him (as we do with church members)]
 8. Which prophet was a contemporary of King Josiah? [Jeremiah]
 9. Which Feast did Josiah keep better than all the other kings? [Passover]
 10. List the 7 lessons from King Josiah [Seek the lord diligently, purge evil surrounding you, repair God's house, don't do it alone, be ready to hear and answer, witness to all, reunite all with God]

Leadership of Nehemiah

BIBLE BASICS

The Story of the Old Testament

The narrative of the Old Testament begins with the creation and the fall of Adam. Following the death of Noah, scripture presents the story of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. From there the story of the twelve tribes unfolds with Joseph being sold into Egypt. Though Joseph grew in prosperity in the kingdom, the Israelites were found in bondage and were delivered through Moses and the ten plagues. During that period Moses wrote the Torah.

Joshua, Moses' successor, leads the Israelites into the Promised Land, conquering cities and allocating territories to each tribe. After Joshua's death, the period of the Judges ensues, a time characterized by cycles of disobedience, oppression, and deliverance. The narrative progresses with the Israelites' desire for a king to lead them, mirroring the practices of surrounding nations. Samuel, the last judge, anoints Saul as the first king of Israel. However, Saul's disobedience to God's commands leads to his rejection, and Samuel anoints David, a shepherd boy, as the next king. David, a man after God's own heart, establishes a powerful and prosperous kingdom.

Solomon, David's son, succeeds him as king. Known for his wisdom and wealth, Solomon builds the first Temple in Jerusalem, a magnificent structure dedicated to the worship of God. After Solomon's death, the kingdom divides into two: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The Old Testament concludes with the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon. Prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel provide spiritual guidance and hope during this period of exile. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah play crucial roles in the restoration of the Temple and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Zerubbabel (Planted in Babel) & Ezra

Zerubbabel and Ezra played pivotal roles in the history of the Israelites after the Babylonian exile. Their leadership and dedication were instrumental in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jewish community. In 538 BC, the first year of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, a decree was issued allowing the exiled Israelites to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David, was appointed governor of Judah and led a group of about 40,000 people back to their homeland.

Despite facing numerous challenges, Zerubbabel and his followers were determined to rebuild the altar and the Temple. They laid the foundation of the Second Temple in 536 BC, but the construction was interrupted due to opposition from neighboring nations.

Around 80 years later, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia, Ezra, a priest and scribe, led another group of Israelites back to Jerusalem. Ezra was a knowledgeable scholar and was commissioned by the king to teach the laws and commandments of God to the people. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Ezra discovered that many of the Israelites had intermarried with the neighboring nations and adopted their customs. He initiated a series of reforms, urging the people to return to their ancestral faith and traditions. He also played a crucial role in the compilation and editing of the Hebrew Bible, ensuring the preservation of the sacred texts for future generations. (Ezra 7)

Nehemiah: A Great Leader and Hero

Nehemiah was a great leader and hero, who reformed Jerusalem. He had a strong personality and put his trust in God, despite the many difficulties he faced along the way. He is a good symbol of prosperity, success and leadership. Born in exile from a Jewish family, he became the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes in the Persian Empire. In this high position he was responsible for protecting the King and gained the King's trust. As cupbearer, Nehemiah was entrusted with the King's safety, ensuring that the King's drink was not poisoned. This intimate role allowed Nehemiah to gain the King's confidence and favor, which would later prove crucial in his mission to rebuild Jerusalem.

In the 12th year of the king, Nehemiah knew about the situation of the people in Jerusalem. The words of Nehemiah describe this situation:

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."
Nehemiah 1:1-3

Overwhelmed with grief, Nehemiah wept for days. In response, he engaged in fasting and prayer. With unwavering determination, he approached King Artaxerxes, requesting permission to return to Jerusalem and lead the effort to rebuild the city's wall. Recognizing the sincerity and concern of Nehemiah's, King Artaxerxes granted his request. Equipped with the king's support, Nehemiah embarked on his mission, arriving in Jerusalem to begin the daunting task of restoring the city's fortifications.

With God's grace and the collaboration of his fellow Israelites, Nehemiah led an incredible feat. In a remarkable display of efficiency and unity, the wall of Jerusalem was completed in just 52 days. This achievement stands as a testament to Nehemiah's exceptional leadership skills, his ability to inspire and motivate others, and his unwavering faith in God.

The book of Nehemiah serves as both a historical record of Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem and a theological exploration of the re-establishment of God's people, encompassing both physical and spiritual restoration. Nehemiah himself is a great example for any modern successful leader. Through careful examination and meditation, we can glean eight key principles that exemplify effective Christian leadership.

These principles encompass a range of leadership qualities, including prayerfulness, vision, strategic thinking, courage, perseverance, team building, humility, and dependence on God. Nehemiah's ability to envision a rebuilt Jerusalem, his consistent prayer for guidance and protection, his courage in the face of opposition, his perseverance through numerous challenges, his strategic planning and organization, his skill in mobilizing and empowering others, his humility before God and others, and his unwavering reliance on God's provision and strength all serve as a model for Christian leaders today. The principles gleaned from Nehemiah's example can be applied in a variety of contexts, including church leadership and even secular workplaces. Ultimately, the book of Nehemiah provides a rich source of wisdom and inspiration for anyone seeking to lead with integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to God's purposes.

1. Prayerfulness: Recognize the Issue & Present it to God

In the ancient city of Jerusalem, which symbolized the soul, Nehemiah's heart was deeply troubled. He yearned for news of his brethren, the Jews who had escaped captivity and returned to their homeland. With great concern, he inquired of Hanani and other men from Judah about the state of the city and its people: "That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem." Nehemiah 1:2

Upon learning of the desolate condition of Jerusalem, Nehemiah's soul was filled with grief. It was as if the ruin of his own soul weighed heavily upon him. He could not dismiss the plight of the people, claiming it was not his problem or that he had no personal connection to the city. Instead, Nehemiah recognized the distress of the people and felt a profound sense of care for the city of his ancestors and the temple of God. Jerusalem, he realized, represented the very essence of the soul. Its ruin caused him immeasurable sadness.

With tears streaming down his face, Nehemiah mourned the loss of his beloved city and its people. He refused to turn a blind eye to their suffering, declaring that he could not ignore their plight simply because he did not reside in Jerusalem or had not been born there. Nehemiah's empathy for the people of Jerusalem was palpable. He felt their pain as if it were his own. His tears were genuine, his fasting and prayers fervent. Through his actions, he demonstrated his unwavering commitment to his people and his unwavering faith in God.

In his time of sorrow, Nehemiah turned to God, pouring out his heart in praise and supplication. He reminded God of His promises and sought His divine intervention. "When I heard these words," Nehemiah proclaimed, "I sat down and wept and mourned for days and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven."

Nehemiah's prayer, recorded in Nehemiah 1:5-11, reveals the depth of his faith, his understanding of God's promises, and his unwavering commitment to seek God's guidance and favor. His prayer began with an acknowledgment of God's greatness and majesty. He addressed God as the "Lord God of heaven," emphasizing His sovereignty and authority over all creation. Nehemiah also recognized God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant and mercy with those who love Him and obey His

commandments. This understanding of God's character and faithfulness set the stage for Nehemiah's heartfelt supplication.

“And I said: “I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who Keep Your Covenant and mercy with those who love you and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’ Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”” Nehemiah 1:5-11

With humility and a deep sense of responsibility, Nehemiah confessed the sins of the children of Israel, including his own father's house. He acknowledged that they had acted corruptly and had failed to keep God's commandments, statutes, and ordinances. Nehemiah's willingness to take ownership of the sins of his people demonstrated his genuine repentance and his desire for forgiveness and restoration.

Nehemiah then reminded God of His promise to Moses. He recalled God's words, "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name." This promise provided hope and assurance to Nehemiah, knowing that God was willing to forgive and restore His people if they turned back to Him.

Nehemiah pleaded with God to hear his prayer and the prayers of those who desired to fear God's name. He asked for God's ear to be attentive and His eyes to be open to their supplications. Nehemiah understood that true success and prosperity for himself and his people depended on God's favor and blessing. He sought God's mercy and guidance to enable him to carry out the task of rebuilding Jerusalem and leading the people of Israel in righteousness and obedience.

Nehemiah's prayer exemplifies the power of humble, sincere, and faith-filled intercession. His deep knowledge of scripture, his understanding of God's character, and his unwavering trust in His promises empowered him to pray with boldness and confidence. Nehemiah's prayer serves as a model for all believers who desire to see God's will accomplished in their lives and in the world.

2. Vision and Plan

Nehemiah was a man with a vision and a plan. He saw the need for the wall to be rebuilt, and he knew that he was the one to do it. He had a clear picture in his mind of what the finished wall would look like, and he was determined to make it a reality. But Nehemiah didn't just have a vision; he also had a plan. He knew that he couldn't do it alone, so he sought the permission of the King to build Jerusalem. He also requested a letter for the timber and wood from the Keeper of the King's Forest. He showed the King how he put God first, others second, and himself last.

The King was impressed by Nehemiah's vision and plan, and he granted all of his requests. He even appointed Nehemiah as a Governor and gave him horses and guards to escort him on his journey from Persia to Jerusalem. Nehemiah knew that God was with him, and he prayed to God for guidance and strength. He also planned his actions carefully. He spent about a month thinking and planning what he might need to be able to build the wall. He set priorities and made a list of what was needed. He also followed the rules and respected authority.

When it was time to take action, Nehemiah set out his priorities. He knew that the most important thing was to build the wall, so he focused all of his efforts on that. He also knew that he needed to keep the people motivated, so he held regular meetings and encouraged them to keep working. Nehemiah's vision and plan were successful. The wall was rebuilt in just 52 days, and the people of Jerusalem were overjoyed. Nehemiah had shown them that anything is possible if you have a vision, a plan, and the determination to see it through.

As a leader, you should always plan for what you need before you start the action. Have a clear list of what is needed and also follow the rules and respect authority.

3. Unite, inspire and encourage the people

Nehemiah's first step was to carefully inspect the wall of Jerusalem, assessing its condition and identifying the extent of the work required. This thorough assessment allowed him to develop a clear and achievable goal for the project. "Then I said to them, 'You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come let us rebuild the wall of reproach.' I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, 'Let us arise and build.' So they put their hands to the good work." Nehemiah 2: 17-18

Once Nehemiah had a clear plan in mind, he shared his vision with the people. He spoke passionately about the importance of rebuilding the wall, emphasizing the benefits it would bring to the community. He shared his personal experiences, including the favor of God and the support of the king, to instill confidence and trust.

Crucially, Nehemiah sought to align the goals of the people with his own. He encouraged them to understand the reasons behind the work, emphasizing how it would benefit their lives and the future of Jerusalem. By creating a shared sense of purpose, Nehemiah was able to unite the people and inspire them to work together towards a common goal.

Nehemiah's leadership strategy offers valuable insights for leaders today. Effective leaders should take the time to study the situation and inspect the condition before initiating any project. They should set clear and achievable goals, ensuring that everyone involved has a shared understanding of what needs to be accomplished. Furthermore, leaders should actively encourage and inspire their teams. They should communicate the reasons behind the work and help people understand how it aligns with their personal and organizational goals. By creating a shared sense of purpose and inspiring a vision of a better future, leaders can unite people and unlock their potential to accomplish great things.

4. Perseverance: Focus & don't get distracted

In the midst of adversity and opposition, Nehemiah's unwavering focus and determination serve as a testament to the power of staying on track. When faced with the ridicule and contempt of his enemies, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, Nehemiah refused to be swayed from his purpose. Drawing strength from his faith in God, he boldly proclaimed that the God of heaven Himself would prosper their endeavors, and that they, as His servants, would arise and build.

“But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said “What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the King?”

So I answered them and said to them “ The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.” Nehemiah 2:19-20

Despite the enemies' mockery and attempts to undermine their work, Nehemiah remained steadfast in his resolve. He recognized that the task before them was not without challenges, but he believed in the power of unity and collaboration. Assigning different gates to different groups, he enabled the people to work in parallel, thereby accelerating the construction of the wall. The mockery however did not cease:

“Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble, even the burned ones?” Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him and he said, “Even what they are building - if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!” Nehemiah 4: 1-3

Yet, Nehemiah persevered and united all once more to prayer: “Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.” (Nehemiah 4:9) Nehemiah understood the importance of protecting the morale and well-being of his people. To this end, he prayed to God for divine intervention, seeking His defense and guidance. Recognizing that the enemies' mockery could potentially demoralize the workers, he took proactive steps to ensure that they did not feel discouraged or defeated.

Nehemiah's exemplary leadership qualities shine through in his ability to stay focused on the work at hand, his unwavering faith in God, his commitment to protecting his people, and his willingness to adapt and innovate in the face of obstacles.

5. Humility: Reevaluate & update the plan

Nehemiah demonstrated strong leadership by taking decisive action to protect the city and its inhabitants (Chapter 4:13-23). This process involved:

1. **Assessment of Risks:** Nehemiah carefully analyzed the threats posed by his enemies and identified areas of vulnerability in his plan. He recognized that the builders were exposed to attacks while working on the walls.
2. **Division of Labor:** To mitigate these risks, Nehemiah divided the people into two groups: one group responsible for building the walls and the other for guarding the city. This strategic division of labor allowed for both construction to continue and security to be maintained.
3. **Preparation for Defense:** Nehemiah instructed the builders to keep their weapons ready at all times. He also implemented a communication system using trumpets to signal an attack, ensuring that everyone could respond quickly and effectively.

Recognizing the persistent threat, he strategically assigned multiple groups to guard different gates, ensuring comprehensive coverage and minimizing vulnerabilities. He divided responsibilities effectively, designating specific individuals for building and others for guarding, optimizing productivity and security.

Emphasizing preparedness, Nehemiah instructed the builders to keep their weapons readily accessible, enabling them to respond swiftly to any potential attack. Implementing a clear communication system, he utilized a trumpet to signal alerts and coordinate defense efforts in case of an emergency.

Proactively managing risks, Nehemiah continuously reevaluated his plan and made necessary adjustments to address evolving circumstances. He identified potential dangers and provided guidance on how to mitigate them, equipping the people with the knowledge and strategies to navigate challenges effectively. Transparent and inclusive in his leadership, he openly shared the risks with the community, fostering trust and encouraging collective responsibility for their safety and well-being.

6. Deal with the surprises

Nehemiah confronted unexpected challenges that threatened the success of his mission to rebuild Jerusalem. In the face of these surprises, he demonstrated remarkable resilience and wisdom. In the book of Nehemiah, we encounter a passage where he addresses the exploitation of his fellow Israelites by their own leaders, who were exacting usury from them.

““And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.” So I called a great assembly against them. 8 And I said to them, “According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us? 9 Then I said, “What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?” Nehemiah 5:6-9

Nehemiah recognized the injustice of this situation and the potential for it to bring reproach upon the Israelites from their gentile enemies. With righteous anger, he called a great assembly and confronted the nobles and rulers, demanding that they cease their oppressive practices. Their respond was immediate: *“But through Nehemiah’s strength of leadership the people followed him. “So they said, “We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say.” Nehemiah 5:12*

Nehemiah's leadership shines through in his ability to address internal issues promptly and firmly. He understood that as a leader, he had a responsibility to ensure justice and maintain the integrity of the community. This is no easy feat. By addressing the problem of usury head-on, he demonstrated his commitment to the well-being of his people.

However, Nehemiah's challenges did not end there. He also encountered a conspiracy to kill him, orchestrated by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, who sought to discourage and disrupt the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:1-9). Nehemiah faced these threats with unwavering determination, seeking strength from God and refusing to be intimidated by his enemies: *“For they all wanted to frighten us. Thinking they will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done. But now O God, strengthen my hands.” Nehemiah 6:9*

Despite the relentless opposition, Nehemiah remained focused on his mission. He recognized that the true enemy was not those who plotted against him but Satan, the adversary who sought to hinder the work of God. Nehemiah chose to keep his focus on the task at hand, knowing that the Lord was his refuge and strength.

As a leader, Nehemiah teaches us how to face unexpected surprises. He emphasizes the importance of addressing internal issues promptly and firmly, starting with self-reflection and leading by example. He also reminds us of the need to be vigilant against external threats and to seek strength from God in times of adversity.

7. Organization & Setting Rules

1. Gathering and Registration:

After the wall was built and the doors hung, Nehemiah appointed gatekeepers, singers and Levites, the faithful people in charge of Jerusalem. Nehemiah recognized the need to gather and register the nobles, rulers, and people: *And my God put into my heart to gather the nobles, and the rulers and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy...” Nehemiah 7:5* This act of organizing and

documenting the community ensured order and accountability. It allowed for a clear understanding of who was responsible for what and provided a solid foundation for future tasks.

2. Assignment of Responsibilities:

Nehemiah instructed them when to open the city doors and appointed guards at the doors and in front of the houses. He appointed gatekeepers, singers, and Levites to take care of the city's daily operations. He entrusted these faithful people with specific responsibilities, ensuring that the city would function smoothly and securely. This delegation of authority demonstrated his trust in his people and his commitment to empowering them.

3. Humility and Gratitude:

Nehemiah's actions after completing the wall reveal his humility and gratitude. He did not seek to glorify himself or remain in power but instead gave credit to God for the work's success. This attitude reminds leaders to recognize that their achievements are a result of divine guidance and that they should always remain humble and grateful.

4. Celebration and Dedication:

Nehemiah organized a grand celebration and dedication ceremony to mark the completion of the wall. "Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'" Nehemiah 8:10 This event brought the community together, fostering unity and a sense of accomplishment. It also served as a reminder of the importance of dedicating their work to God and seeking His blessings.

Nehemiah's example teaches us several essential lessons for leaders:

- Establish clear organizational structures and responsibilities to ensure accountability and efficiency.
- Celebrate successes and acknowledge the contributions of others, fostering a positive and motivating work environment.
- Delegate tasks and empower team members, trusting them to take ownership and make meaningful contributions.
- Remain humble, recognizing that true success comes from divine guidance and support.
- Take time to celebrate milestones and achievements, bringing the team together and reinforcing a sense of purpose.

8. Follow up on the achievement

After successfully rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and restoring order to the city, Nehemiah realized the importance of following up on his accomplishments and ensuring their sustainability. However, several problems arose that threatened the progress that had been made. One issue was the presence of Tobiah, an Ammonite official who had previously opposed Nehemiah's efforts. Tobiah had been granted a room within the temple complex, which was a violation of Jewish law. This act not only compromised the sanctity of the temple but also provided Tobiah with a foothold within the city.

Another problem was the neglect of the house of God. The Levites and singers, who were responsible for leading worship and maintaining the temple, had abandoned their duties and returned to their fields. This resulted in a lack of religious observance and a decline in spiritual fervor among the people. Additionally, the Sabbath was being desecrated as people engaged in work and trade on this holy day. Moreover, some Jews were marrying foreign women, which was forbidden by Jewish law. These actions threatened the distinctiveness and unity of the Jewish community.

Recognizing the gravity of these issues, Nehemiah decided to return to Jerusalem after some time in Babylon where he had resumed his position. He sought permission from King Artaxerxes to return and address the problems that had arisen. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah was deeply grieved when he learned about the extent of the evil that had been done by Eliashib, the high priest. Eliashib had not only allowed Tobiah to occupy a room in the temple but had also prepared a lavish space for him. This room had been used to store grain offerings, frankincense, religious articles, tithes, and offerings for the Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and priests.

Nehemiah took decisive action to correct these issues. He ordered Tobiah to be expelled from the temple, and the rooms were thoroughly cleaned and restored to their original purpose. He then summoned the Levites and singers and urged them to return to their duties. He also ensured that the city gates were not opened on the Sabbath, preventing people from engaging in work and trade on that day.

Furthermore, Nehemiah addressed the issue of intermarriage by confronting the people who had married foreign women. He firmly reminded them of God's law and the importance of preserving the purity and distinctiveness of the Jewish community. He urged them to take an oath not to marry outside the Jewish faith.

An Exemplary Leader

The book of Nehemiah is not only a historical account of Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem but also about re-establishing God's people both physically and spiritually. His relationship with God is what guides him to be a successful leader. We learn key precepts of leadership by examining Nehemiah's plans and acts.

We can learn a lot from the Book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah himself is a great example for any modern successful leader. He shows the importance of accountability and confidence. He illustrates the importance of having a clear vision and strategic planning. He showed courage in the face of danger and he had courage to bear the responsibility of leadership. He focused on his plans and influenced the people around him through excellent communication skills. He had humility and integrity and showed positivity and resiliency when doubters emerged. He was able to adapt to changes, cooperate with others and delegate duties. In the end he successfully followed up the achievement.



Review Questions

1. What is Nehemiah a good symbol of? [A. He is a good symbol of prosperity, success and leadership]
2. What made his heart break? [A. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire]
3. Did Nehemiah consider the sins of the Jews to be his own? Why was this important? [A. Yes. Nehemiah was so humble to consider the sins of the Jews as his sins.]
4. How did the King react to Nehemiah? [A. The King gave him letters to pass between cities and he appointed him as a Governor and gave him horses and guards to escort him on his journey from Persia to Jerusalem]
5. What is the purpose of having a vision and a plan? [A. It provides inspiration and motivation to keep going. People are likely to work harder when they have targets to meet.]
6. What was the strength of Nehemiah's plan? [A. Nehemiah remained focused on his work and prayed to God to defend the work.]
7. What did Nehemiah do to protect the wall and the people? [A. He assigned different gates to different groups to build the wall in parallel to speed up the building.]
8. What important lessons do we learn from Nehemiah about leadership? [A. He shows the importance of accountability and confidence. He illustrates the importance of having a clear vision and strategic planning. He showed courage in the face of danger and he had courage to bear the responsibility of leadership. He focused on his plans and influenced the people around him through excellent communication skills. He had humility and integrity and showed positivity and resiliency when doubters emerged. He was able to adapt to changes, cooperate with others and delegate duties.]

Service in the life of Mordecai

BIBLE BASICS

Introduction: Leadership When God Appears Silent

The Book of Esther presents one of the best biblical examples of God's hidden work in history. Unlike many other books of Scripture, God's name is never explicitly mentioned. Yet His presence governs every event. This silence is intentional. It teaches us that when God appears quiet, He is often working most powerfully behind the scenes.

At the heart of this story stands Mordecai, a man with no throne, no title, and no public authority, yet whose faithfulness became the means through which God preserved His people. Mordecai's life reveals how God forms leaders not through power, but through obedience, humility, and steadfast faith.

Who is Mordecai?

Mordecai is introduced by carefully listing his lineage, reminding us that identity matters deeply in God's economy. Mordecai is not an isolated individual; he belongs to a covenant people with a shared history of suffering, promise, and hope.

Before examining Mordecai's actions, we must first understand who he is and where he comes from:

- Son of Jair, Son of Shimei, Son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin
- 4th generation of the Jews who were taken captive by the Babylonians
- Captivity was about 48–70 years long, until Persia overtook Babylon under King Cyrus and let the Jews free
- Mordecai's family decided not to go back to Jerusalem and stayed instead in the land of Persia and Media

These details are not incidental. Mordecai belongs to a generation that had grown up in exile. Although the opportunity to return to Jerusalem existed, his family remained behind. This decision caused many Jews who returned to look down upon those who stayed, often viewing them as spiritually inferior or compromised. In this sense, Mordecai lived as a **rejected Jew**, dwelling among foreign people, carrying both the pain of exile and the misunderstanding of his own community.

Service begins before the Spotlight

Scripture then draws our attention to Mordecai's personal life, revealing that his leadership began not in public action, but in private faithfulness:

"And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter." (Esther 2:7)

This verse reveals the heart of Mordecai. He did not simply care for Esther temporarily; he took her as his own daughter, assuming lifelong responsibility for her spiritual and emotional growth. Long before Esther would stand before a king, she was shaped by the faithfulness of a servant. He brought her up in the fear of the Lord.

Mordecai later convinced Esther to enter the king's "beauty pageant." This decision was not motivated by ambition or desire for status, but by spiritual discernment. Although neither Mordecai nor Esther could yet see God's full plan, they acted faithfully with what they had been given.

God often prepares deliverance quietly, long before crisis arrives.

Faithfulness Without Immediate Reward

Mordecai's service extended beyond his household into the public life of the kingdom:

"In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king." (Esther 2:21-23)

Through attentiveness and integrity, Mordecai uncovered a plot to assassinate the king. He immediately reported it through Esther, thereby saving the king's life. The conspirators were executed, and the event was recorded in the royal chronicles.

Yet Mordecai received no reward.

This moment is critical. God allows Mordecai's faithfulness to remain unrewarded for a time, teaching us that obedience is not always followed by immediate recognition. Heaven records what earth forgets.

Faithfulness Under Pressure

The crisis deepens when Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman:

"When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews

who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.” (Esther 3:5–6)

At this point in history, the rise of new political powers often included the rise of new gods. Bowing was not merely political obedience; it was an act of worship. Mordecai’s refusal mirrors the faithfulness of the three youths in Babylon and Daniel in the lions’ den.

This temptation did not end in ancient times. Today, we are also pressured to bow:

- to work
- to school
- to stress
- to pressure
- to admiration from others
- to certain vices

Mordecai teaches us that faithfulness may come at great cost, but compromise always costs more.

Faithfulness Expressed in Action

Mordecai’s service unfolds through a series of faithful choices:

- He took care of his orphaned cousin
- He protected the king without requesting a reward or glory
- He refused to bow down to anybody but God
- He pleaded on behalf of the Jewish people to Esther

Each of these actions appears small on its own. Together, they reveal a life completely surrendered to God. Mordecai does not act impulsively or arrogantly; he responds to crisis with prayer, fasting, and trust in God’s providence.

True leadership is often exercised quietly, consistently, and without applause.

Sweating the Small Stuff

Unlike many other books of Scripture, Esther does not explicitly mention God’s name. This section of the story teaches us to pay attention to what may seem insignificant or coincidental. What appears small, delayed, or forgotten in human eyes is often central in God’s plan.

The sequence unfolds carefully and deliberately:

- Haman’s pride is injured because Mordecai wouldn’t bow
- A decree is written to destroy all the Jews
- Mordecai can’t sleep
- The king can’t sleep
- The history books are read
- They find the record of Mordecai’s faithfulness

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- The king cannot rest until Mordecai is rewarded

Each step builds upon the previous one. Haman's wounded pride escalates into genocidal hatred. Mordecai's faithfulness, which once seemed to bring only danger, now becomes the very reason God intervenes. The king's sleeplessness, an event that appears trivial, becomes a turning point of the Israelites.

There is an irony that the king's conscience is awakened not by divine vision, but by a simple reading of forgotten records. What humans forgot, God preserved. What was unrewarded, God refused to leave unresolved.

Remember who this king truly was:

- He partied for 180 days
- He removed his queen in anger
- He lived for pleasure and pride

This contrast is stark. If even such a king, who is morally unstable, self-indulgent, and impulsive, cannot rest until justice is done for a faithful servant, how much more will God remember His faithful servants?

God Has a Sense of Humor: Esther 6

In Esther 6, God's justice is revealed through irony rather than force. At this point in the story, the plans of heaven and the plans of evil collide:

- Haman plans Mordecai's execution
- The king plans Mordecai's honor
- Haman designs the honor thinking it is for himself
- The king commands him to give it to Mordecai

The irony is complete.

Pride Exposed, Faithfulness Vindicated

Driven by pride, Haman cannot imagine honor being granted to anyone but himself. When the king asks:

“What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?”
(*Esther 6:6, NKJV*)

Haman's heart answers before his lips ever do.

“Now Haman thought in his heart, ‘Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?’”
(*Esther 6:6, NKJV*)

What follows is the full exposure of Haman's inner world. He does not suggest an act of service, charity, or humility. Instead, he describes **royal imitation**, such as robes, crown, horse, public proclamation, everything that mirrors kingship itself:

“For the man whom the king delights to honor, let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden... Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!’”

(Esther 6:7-9, NKJV)

Haman's proposal reveals his deepest desire. Not to serve the king, but to **be seen as equal to the king**. Pride always reaches for glory it has not been given.

Divine Reversal

Then comes the turning point—the sentence that collapses Haman's world:

“Then the king said to Haman, ‘Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew... Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.’”

(Esther 6:10, NKJV)

The persecutor becomes the herald.

The schemer becomes the servant.

The proud man must publicly exalt the one he intended to destroy.

“So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him...”

(Esther 6:11, NKJV)

God does not merely stop injustice—**He inverts it**.

This moment reveals something essential about God's dealings with His faithful servants. God's care for Mordecai reaches a point where it must **overflow into public vindication**. Justice delayed is not justice denied; it is **justice perfected in God's timing**.

The honor intended—by pride—for the persecutor is given instead to the faithful servant.

What unfolds silently in Esther 6 is later spoken plainly by Christ Himself:

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

(Luke 14:11, NKJV)

And again:

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”
(*Matthew 23:12, NKJV*)

Mordecai never asked for honor.
He never demanded recognition.
He simply remained faithful.

Haman grasped at glory—and lost everything.

The Kingdom of Persia

The Book of Esther unfolds entirely within the Kingdom of Persia. Persia represents a worldly kingdom driven by pleasure, power, image, and pride. By observing the king and his officials, we gain insight into the character of the ruler shaping the culture beneath him.

Haman emerges as the embodiment of this kingdom:

- hungry for wealth
- desperate for recognition
- demanding submission

Haman’s obsession with honor and control reflects the values of the world he inhabits. He cannot tolerate refusal, humility, or resistance but is always seeking glory that does not belong to him.

In contrast, Mordecai stands as a quiet witness to righteousness:

- refusing compromise
- resisting temptation
- remaining faithful despite danger

This reveals two opposing kingdoms: one built on pride and domination, the other on faithfulness and obedience. The same contrast exists today. We still live in worldly systems that demand our allegiance, our compromise, and our worship.

The question remains timeless: Who will we bow to?

Mordecai as a Symbol of Christ

The Rejected Savior

Through the book of Esther, Mordecai becomes a powerful foreshadowing of Christ Himself, revealing how God saves through rejection rather than acceptance, humility rather than power.

Mordecai reflects this pattern clearly:

- rejected by his people
- persecuted by evil
- humbled in sackcloth
- honored through suffering
- victorious through the instrument meant to destroy him

Mordecai's humiliation precedes his exaltation, just as Christ's suffering precedes His glory. Mordecai is raised up through the very gallows prepared for his death. Likewise, Christ defeats the devil through the Cross raised to destroy Him.

This pattern is central to God's redemptive work: what evil intends for destruction, God transforms into victory.

The Rejected Stone Becomes the Chief Cornerstone

God often chooses what the world rejects in order to accomplish salvation.

God uses:

- **David**, overlooked and too young
- **Joseph**, betrayed and imprisoned
- **Moses**, hidden and exiled
- **the fishermen**, uneducated and dismissed
- **Mordecai**, rejected and overlooked

Through these servants, God demonstrates that true worth is not defined by human approval. Mordecai receives royal honor not because he sought it, but because he was faithful without it.

In the same way, God bestows royalty upon us—not because we deserve it, but because He adopts us as His children. As heirs of the King, we are called to live with faithfulness, humility, and courage.

One day, God will honor His faithful servants before all heaven. Until then, Mordecai's life teaches us to remain steadfast, trusting that God sees, God remembers, and God rewards.



Review Questions

1. How did Modechai relate to Esther? Her cousin
2. How did Mordecai know of the plot against the king? He was checking on Esther when she moved to the palace.
3. How did the king reward Mordecai at first? The kprince no forgot to reward Mordecai at first.
4. What did Esther ask Mordecai to do until she meet the king? She asked him to fast and pray on her behalf for three days.
5. How did the king remember to reward Mordecai for saving him? One night the king

couldn't go to sleep so he asked to read the king's history book for him. him.