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By What Authority?

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a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

"And when Yeshua entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to Him as he was teaching, and said, **'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?'** Matthew 21:23

"...He said to the disciples, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called **benefactors**. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves... I am among you as the one who serves. Luke 22:24-27



There is much controversy in the Body of Yeshua today over what constitutes "leadership" within the assembly. Just how do we discern What Authority people professing to be spiritual leaders among us are operating under? After all, the religious leaders of Yeshua's day professed a love for God, were often charismatic, taught large followings with great influence and were wizened in the scriptures. Yet, Yeshua did not send the disciples to learn of their methods. In fact, following the rest of the discourse from [Matthew 21](#) above (**click on highlighted words to view content**), they were unable to answer by whose authority they were directed to engage in such activities. The harshest words Yeshua ever had for anyone, He reserved for men in positions of religious "leadership" calling them vipers, snakes not worthy to enter [the Kingdom of YaHoVeH](#) primarily because, through their teaching, they shut up the Kingdom not only to themselves - but from those who followed them as well ([Matthew 23:33](#), referencing [Psalm 140:3](#)). Conversely, Yeshua taught the disciples by living a Life in front of them - a Life they could handle and see, without hypocrisy and without guile. He did not exercise authority over them, but invited them to sit with Him in the overseeing of the Authority of the Father. Having found them trustworthy, He empowered them with the same authority He had been given ([Luke 9:1-2](#)). It is interesting to note that the Greek word, [euergetes](#), translated as the English **benefactors** highlighted in the passage above is only used once in the entire Messianic Writings (NT) meaning "a title of honor conferred by men" and in the first two letters, *eu*, is used to describe how such a person benefits from that authority - a "[prospering](#)". This is a person whose motivation is dictated, as seen in the passage from Luke above, by what personal advantages are at stake in the outcome of any decision of their subjects.

"Now, before the feast of the Passover... when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent (Greek 'apostolos') greater than he who sent him.'" John 13:1, 12-16

In contrast to *euergetes*, the Greek word, [apostolos](#) translated as the English word "apostle" appears 83 times in scripture but is also only translated once as the word "sent". The single place it appears (and the only time in the entire book of John that "*apostolos*" appears in any form), is at the Passover Seder just before Yeshua's death as He demonstrated that washing their feet is the example by which one who is "sent", or an apostle, is to behave - as one who serves, not the world, but his brother. ([John 13:16](#)). This word, "sent" has been misappropriated to mean "sent out as a missionary" or "leader" when, in the context of how it is used, is more

accurately portrayed along the lines of "**sent to be as He is**". Everything about Who Yeshua personifies is as a gift to us. This is why those listed in **Ephesians 4:8-16** are called "GIFTS" - not ministries, not offices, not positions, not callings, not occupations, not titles - but *gifts* to the Body of Yeshua (not **the Church**). They are called "gifts" because it is *IN* them that He is called into this realm whereby *THROUGH* them He might be made manifest as examples to and for the benefit of the saints so that the saints might then be equipped to do **the work of the ministry** in like fashion. Most Christian leaders would consider whatever they do as "the ministry of the word." You would think that the Greek word *diakonia* (translated "ministry") would hold the key to it's meaning. However, in pursuing the root of the word, *diakonos*, we find where we get our English word "deacon" in Strong's definition. But, the clear bias of the Strong's definitions (which reflect current cultural norms) presents a problem when comparing them to the plain usage of the words of scripture. For instance, the word "minister" is NEVER used in scripture for a "position" proper in the Body. It is a designation reserved for the Body Itself, in other words, each member of the Body are called to be the ministers to the Body, to each other. (**Mark 10:42-45**). According to Acts, the apostles *did not* take on the task of preacher, evangelist, teacher or overseer (deacon). They took on the example of Yeshua given in John 13 above, the business of waiting on others - *of servitude*. They took the lowly jobs, not the positions behind the pulpit or up on the stage - but, rather, doing their job "*according to the word*". So, what does that *really* mean?



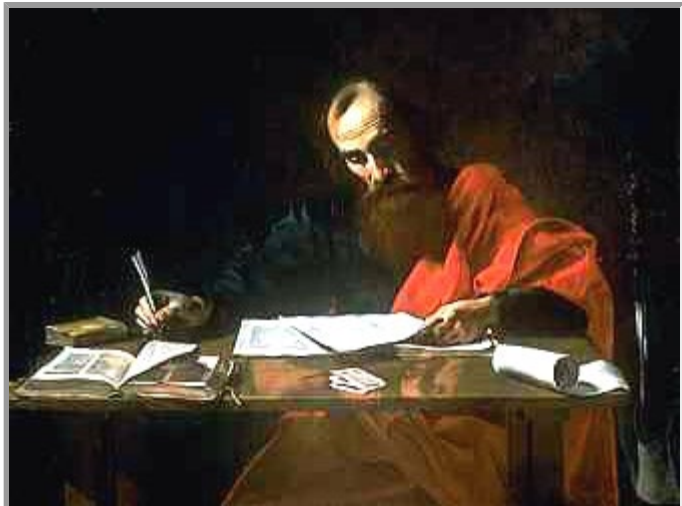
Words mean things. Some translations gloss the text as "study of the word," as though the apostles spent their time praying and pouring over the *Tanakh* (OT - remember, there is no NT at this time) - but that is as misleading as "ministry." While that thinking would certainly fit into a second century rabbinic *yeshiva* picture; just as *diakonia* is about *action*, not just cognition - so is "*according to the word*". We have many examples in the book of Acts where the apostles are out among the people doing what they were supposed to do. They are not cloistered away in some room studying the *Tanakh*. This misrepresentation of the scriptures *does not* give us exegetical justification for the kind of hierarchy we find today in most religious environments. Just because it is popular does not mean it is Truth. In fact, if "leaders" wished to emulate the apostles, they should be **servants of prayer** - and that serving is not from the position of status or power or pontification. The example of serving is given in the life of Yeshua. Servitude means taking out the garbage, cleaning the toilets, sweeping up after the group meets, serving the tables at the meal and generally adopting the foot washing position of their Master.

Perfunctory displays of "down on bended knee" make no difference at all if they are done to challenge *others* to perform. Serving from the heart means to be grateful to be called worthy of suffering for **His Name**. In biblical terms, leaders are found in the basement, not the penthouse or the ivory tower. Today "ministry" of the word would normally be interpreted to mean "preaching," but this simply cannot be the case when looking at the life lived by Yeshua and the apostles (**2Corinthians 11:16-33**). Today's preachers are center stage, "lights, camera, action" displays of a priestly class never intended in the *qehelah* (the assembly of apostolic times). Architecture and hierarchy found in religious forms today are both inherited from paganism. To recognize the difference between a "benefactor" and a "gift" brings us to the exercise of discernment.

There are those today who would confuse individual responsibility with the greater accountability meted out to those assuming positions of responsibility over others - there is a difference. There is a difference between criticizing an individual for his individual shortcomings and failings when it affects only him and those he is immediately related to; and holding up to the Light of Truth one who assumes a mantle of authority and, thus, responsibility within the Body of Yeshua. This is why we are admonished to not many of us become teachers (**James 3:1**) because those who do fall under a heavier weight of judgment since their words and deeds affect the Kingdom lives of so many (**Romans 2:21-23**). There are many who say that we are not to judge - that by doing so, we only "shoot our wounded." I see this as nothing more than a tactic to remove all discernment from the Body. Yeshua applauded the assembly at Ephesus for *testing* those who call themselves apostles. He applauded them for exercising judgment and being cautious (**Revelation 2:2**). By failing to test all things we open ourselves up to deceiving and lying spirits. Men seeking their own glory in His Name are just the exposed edges of a rotten flooring - indicators that these spirits are eating away at the entire foundation of His Body. If left untreated, they will continue to spread like insatiable termites eating the good timber of a house. Ignoring

them, hoping they will do no damage, or just "trying to get along" with them is naive and is an option not given to us in scripture. It is in **2Corinthians 6:3-10**, that we have a portrait of how these "gifts" of Ephesians 4 operate. This template is given so we can hold it up alongside and recognize those who manifest these gifts among us. This is the model by which we are to discern true leadership - dying to themselves that others may live, giving of themselves that others may receive, laying everything in their lives down for the King Who came to preach the gospel to the poor in spirit for these have been chosen to be rich in faith. There is no earthly glory in this Way. This is the example of the King who, not of this world, was crucified and rejected by this world's system. As He is, so are we in this world **1John 4:16-17**. Scripture says it is by their fruit we shall know them - this is their fruit (**Luke 6:43-45**). It is our job to recognize the difference between a benefactor and one who truly seeks to **BE** a gift. There is a famine in the land being perpetrated by these "benefactors" among us - a famine of the individual saint being able to "HEAR the words of YaHoVeH" (**Amos 8:11-12**, see **Arrows of Famine**). Foolish virgins are noted by one trait - they go to other virgins to seek their oil (**Matthew 25:1-12**, see **Children of the Bridechamber**). The vast majority of the folks comprising the audiences at these meetings, rallies, conventions and 'revivals' are those who promote themselves as "believers". However, those who have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the assemblies do not have to run to and fro and wander from sea to sea and from the north to the east to get a "word from God". The reason the "benefactors" continue to propagate this structure is because, by denouncing it, they would undercut their source of income. If you teach people how to dig their own well, they won't find a need to come to your house to buy water.

The Book of Acts and his letters make it clear that the apostle Paul did not consider himself a "benefactor", working instead to support himself and those who were with him. The nature of his work is clearly stated as tent making when he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla (**Acts 18:3**). Given Paul's rabbinical background there is nothing extraordinary about this. Hebraic sources indicate that rabbis were expected to work and not to profit from their study and interpretation of the Torah. This appears to have been the case with Paul and several references to "working hands." In his address to the elders of Ephesus the apostle reminds them of this, saying *'these very hands have served my needs'* (**Acts 20:34**); also when he says *"we labor, working with our hands"*



(**1Corinthians 4:12**); or *"nor did we eat food received free from anyone; on the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you"* (**2Thessalonians 3:8**). These remarks also answer the questions about financial sources of the apostle's journeys. In spite of the gifts he seems to have received from the communities for which he expresses his gratitude, most of the time he relied on his own resources - a fact which is often hinted at in his letters and clearly expressed in the one addressed to the Philippians. *"I find myself, to be self-sufficient...still, it was kind of you to share in my distress"* (**Philippians 4:11&16**). Like Yeshua - Paul gave of himself, he did not take. Neither Yeshua nor Paul charged admission to hear them speak and did not take up offerings once their audience was seated - they gave freely.

"Surely YaHoVeH will do nothing, but he first reveals His secret unto his **servants**, the prophets." Amos 3:7

Put another way, YaHoVeH does not do anything until He reveals His plans to His servants - some of whom just happen to be prophets. Today, as it was in the days of old, there are many prophets, even schools of prophets - but there are only a few who first have become servants. Yeshua said that *"...he who is greatest among you must first become your servant."* Matthew 23:11. This same exhortation also applies to the evangelist, pastor and teacher - all of whom have their root meanings in servitude. In **1Corinthians 3**, the apostle Paul likened carnality (envy, strife and divisions), not to overt sinfulness, but to immaturity in the Body. The division we see in the Body today is not really the problem. It is only a symptom. The real problem is immaturity. Leadership fosters immaturity on the Body when they become more concerned with building structures after their own image (or agenda) for people to see and admire than with spending their energies, resources and talents on the equipping of the saints - which they are charged to do. They do so to build a following after themselves and they do so at the expense of the rest of the Body of Yeshua. As stated earlier, the Body is built upon those ministries described in **Ephesians 4:11-14**, with the primary emphasis given to the apostles and prophets within whom a foundation is laid for the express purpose of equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry (**Ephesians 2:19-20**). Now, when admiring an exquisite building, one does not remark, *"What an extraordinary foundation!"* In fact one rarely, if ever, even sees the foundation supporting the

structure above - it is hidden. The foundation of your body is the skeleton. If the skeleton is functioning properly, you don't see it - it is hidden. The only time you can see the skeleton is when it is broken. If you can see bone, you can be pretty certain your body is broken. If the skeleton is weak or broken, the body cannot



stand erect and will not operate properly. Just as the skeleton is the foundation of the body in the natural, so it is in Spirit. The saints are dependent on the skeletal, foundational ministries for support and sustenance; otherwise the rest of the body withers and dies. It is interesting to note that in the passage from 1Corinthians 3, Paul did not address those in whom these gifts were placed, but, rather, the members of the Body who allowed themselves to be attached to one or the other of those mentioned. Again, in the beginning of [1Corinthians 11:29-32](#), Paul says that he hears there are divisions among them and states that many of those in the Body are sick and dying because THEY DO NOT DISCERN THE BODY CORRECTLY. He was placing the responsibility of the sickness upon those within the Body of Yeshua who were enabling division by calling themselves of this one or of that one - not understanding that it is not the visible mechanics of a gifting that elevates a man, but the invisible

lowliness of spirit he embraces. In washing the feet of the disciples, Yeshua was painting a picture to them of how we are to be toward one another - as a servant. We are to be a servant after His example - the One who made Himself of no reputation ([Philippians 2:6-8](#)). True authority is not taken. In the same manner Yeshua gave authority to his early disciples, authority is still granted to those who have demonstrated trustworthiness. Those comprising the Body of Yeshua have the responsibility to allow those in whom these gifts have been entrusted to operate through the demonstration of the character of their spirit and not the flamboyance of their persona. It is time we recognized that the foundation upon which the Body is built is on the foundation demonstrated by Yeshua, the first apostle ([Hebrews 3:1](#)) - and to not settle for anything short of His Excellence. Genuine leadership is not a job. It is not based on position or structure, but on relationship - however, there is structure. The Body of Yeshua must have structure, just as the human body, in order to function. To reject all structure is to reduce the Body to an invertebrate. The modern "Church" seems to be expressed most often in one of these two extremes - rigid and controlling or loose and invertebrate. The reality in Spirit is not somewhere between these two, but **something different all together**.

[Matthew 11:12](#) tells us that the kingdom of heaven, which is within or among us ([Luke 17:20-21](#)) can be taken by force. There are those who by sheer force of will and determination "storm the citadel" to obtain the Power to use it, perhaps even with good intention - and, for a while, might actually succeed. But, since He has set the barriers to this force, His Power, to be crossed only in Purity, eventually the impurity of their hearts rises to the surface and they are consumed by the fire of His burning ([Isaiah 10:16](#)). There is a more excellent way ([1Corinthians 12:31](#)). That more excellent way is described in [chapter 13](#) (see what is **the Judgment**). There is an accounting that is coming upon the Globe right now. It is of no coincidence that the foundation of greed being manifested in the collapse of the world economic system is in direct parallel with the shaking we are seeing within the Body of Yeshua - for judgment begins with the house of YaHoVeH ([1Peter 4:17](#)). Make no mistake - YaHoVeH is after the floorboards. This accounting is not coming in the manner in which many have thought it would - it is being unleashed with a fury and it's name is deception. [2Thessalonians 2](#) makes clear that of those who will not receive the love of the Truth will be given a lie to believe that they might be cursed - because they take pleasure in unrighteousness. The love of money that all these "benefactors" share in their paid ministries should be enough warning for anyone that understands what scripture says about such activity - that the deceitfulness of riches blinds those who have and lust after them ([Luke 16:13-18](#)). After having lived with that demon of deception for many years, I can attest that when someone is captivated by it - he does not know it. In fact, he will go to great lengths to defend it. The only way darkness is exposed is to bring it into the Light. That Light resides in the individual members of the Body of Yeshua ([1John 1:5](#)). The judgment Yeshua

speaks of in [John 3:18-21](#) that is come into the world is that men loved darkness more than they loved to bring their deeds into the Light for reproof, to see if they be wrought in YaHoVeH - or not. Having men who are deceived only being accountable to other men who are deceived by the idol mammon (in Hebrew mammon = finances) they continue to worship is not the accountability spoken of in scripture but is the accountability of the world (see [Deception](#)). If you are to be a Gift to the Body, it will be as a servant - all the rest, the "benefactors", are merely imposters. This is not a position of glory - but it is. This is not a place of wealth - but you lack not. This is not a place of prominence - but you are seated with the most Prominent. It is not necessarily visible because is operates from a spirit of transparency among other members of the Body. The only accolades that accompany it are those from the Father. This is the Life He lived and because He lived it, is Worthy to beckon us to reach for the same standard He set with His life. He is looking for willing vessels relinquished to Him, purified by Him and set apart for Him that through them He might call into existence those things which are not into this world because they have first been called into existence into the lives of those purified vessels. (see what it means to be a [Gatekeeper](#)).



*"But the wisdom that is from above is **first pure**, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." James 3:17-18*

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By What Authority?, a discussion



???Questions???

Please feel free to email me at harold@hethathasaneer.com. While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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