

Prophets of Presumption Never Prosper

There are times when we are reading a very familiar text in the Bible, we find something in the text that, for some reason, we never saw before. Sometimes when this happens it's because those particular words or phrases are dealing with a topic or subject that you have been studying or thinking about. In the same way, when you buy a new (or new to you) car, suddenly it seems as if the road is full of that make and model.

Other times, it is because G-D, through His Spirit, is trying to draw your attention to that particular passage because it is spiritually significant to you, or those you have some influence with at that moment in time. When this happens, it is almost as if the words on the page change into a bold font or jump off the page at you. This recently happened to me as I was reading in the book of Numbers and the words hit me powerfully that I felt they were words the entire Body of Believers needed to see and hear.

The passages I was reading was in Number 27:16-18:

"May Adonai, God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community to go out and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them out so that the people of Adonai will not be like sheep without a shepherd." Adonai said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the Ruach, and lay your hand on him.

To add context, these verses come just after Numbers 27:12-13:

Then Adonai said to Moses, "Go up this mountain of the Abarim range and look at the land that I have given to Bnei-Yisrael. When you have seen it, you will be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother was gathered.

Notice that G-D is telling Moses that the end of his life is nearing and that he should climb up a mountain and look at the land of Israel before he is gathered to his people. It isn't G-D's notification to Moses that caught my attention, but rather Moses' response to being told he was about to die.

Moses, like a good shepherd of a flock, pleads with G-D to provide a shepherd over Israel to care for them once he is gone. Now, I know that these words might not have the same powerful impact upon you as they did when you first read them. But, I hope they will when we add just a little more context to this moment in time.

Moses has been the leader of the Children of Israel for nearly 40 years and, for most of those forty years, Joshua has been serving right alongside him. Joshua was a man of faith, after all, he was one of the two spies who trusted that G-D could give Israel the land. Joshua was a spiritual leader who served faithfully at the Tent of Meeting. Anyone who read the Torah up until Numbers 27 would have fully assumed that Joshua was Moses' protege who was chosen to step into the leadership role after Moses.

However, while you and I and maybe all of Israel might conclude that Joshua was G-D's choice to follow Moses as the leader of Israel, Moses, a prophet who spoke face to face with G-D, did not make that presumption. Rather than acting upon supposition, Moses went to G-D without a preconceived notion and asked G-D not to leave his people without a shepherd, and if we read only what the text says, Moses didn't even ask G-D to tell him who that leader would be. Moses' concern wasn't who the leader would be; his only concern was for the people.

Moses never assumed that because Joshua was a faithful servant of both (to Moses and G-D) that Joshua was called to be anything else.

Just take a moment to think of how many horrible situations

and abuses have taken place within the body of Believers that would not have happened if leaders today would not have acted upon presumption when raising up leaders to either assist them or replace them as shepherd of their flocks. Many leaders are more concerned with their legacy than they are for their flock's protection.

Unfortunately, too often, instead of being Prophets of G-D, we have leaders that are prophets of presumption and instead of flocks being led into the Promised Land, they are led back into Egypt.

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