

I. Historical Retrospect

A. Leadership History – Events at Horeb (1:6–18) – Yahweh Commands Moses to Appoint Qualified Leaders (1:9–18)

1. The Burden (vv. 9-12) “I am not able to bear (נָשָׂא, *nasá*) the burden of you alone” – “to lift,” “to carry,” It’s too heavy. It’s too much. I’m not that strong.

a) The call to leadership (v. 9) – The example of Moses.

(1) God equips some men for leadership

(a) Moses was spared – protection at birth (Ex 2:1-10)

(b) Moses was trained – knowledge, experience,

(i) The palace for 40 years (Acts 7:22-23) – educated in the ways of governing, leading, etc.

(ii) The wilderness for 40 years (Ex 7:7) – educated in shepherding, humility, etc.

(c) Moses was humbled – character (Num 12:3)

(i) Hebrew (אָנָוּ, *anav*) – humble, meek, lowly

(ii) Greek LXX (prau<j) – gentle, meek, mild

(2) God calls some men to leadership

(a) God’s calling – Moses’ example

(i) Somewhat ordinary situations (Ex 3:1-4)

(ii) Extraordinary implications (Ex 3:5-10)

(b) Levels of leadership – differing roles (Moses, Aaron, “officers of the tribes” over 1000s, 100s, 50s, 10s, Deut 1:15)

b) The burden of leadership (vv. 10-12)

(1) Numbers (vv. 10-11) – as numbers grow, the burden becomes greater (it’s simple math) (cf. Ex 18:13-23)

(2) “Load” (v. 12a) – (טָרַחַ, *torakh*) cumbrance, trouble, burden – Consider the words of Isaiah the prophet speaking for Yahweh against Judah and Jerusalem (Isa 1:10, 14).

(3) “Burden” (v. 12b) – (מַשָּׂא, *massá*, a derivative of the verb form, נָשָׂא, *nasá*) load,

(4) “Strife” (v. 12c) – (רִיב, *reeb*) quarrel, dispute, contention, oppose – a legal plea or lawsuit (depending on the context, in a sense of suing or as a plea in defense) (Isa 1:23)

c) Plurality of leadership vs. being alone in leadership (v. 9 and v. 12) – “alone” (בַּד, *băd*), separated as a part, by oneself (Gen 2:18; 21:28)

2. The Choosing (vv. 13-14) – Qualifications

- a) Men (אִישׁ, *ish*) – males, husbands (although no marriage requirement here) The term can be used in a general sense (mankind) in contrast to God; however, it is here contextually consistent with men (males, אִישׁ, *ish*) as opposed to women (females, אִשָּׁה, *isha*).
- b) Wise (חָכָם, *hakam*) – 67 times in the O.T.; 5 times in Deuteronomy (in this adjectival form) – Wisdom was to be part of the testimony of the Israelites to the surrounding nations.
 - (1) Being wise = Keeping (obeying) the statutes and judgments of Yahweh as given in the Law (Deut 4:5-6).
 - (2) Being wise = Being discerning with insight and understanding (Deut 32:28-29) according to the Word of God, the Law (Deut 32:45-46).
 - (3) Joshua was described as a man “filled with the spirit of wisdom” (Deut 34:9) and he was an effective leader as the people (in general) obeyed what “Yahweh had commanded Moses.”
- c) Understanding (בִּינָה, *biyn*) – to hear and apprehend information with discernment; In the Bible understanding often goes hand in hand with “wisdom” or “being wise” because it involves an application of wisdom (Deut 4:5-6; 32:28-29). Those who are filled with “wisdom and understanding” often of skilled craftsmen (Ex 31:3; 35:31; 1 Kings 7:14). These are men who understand that all they do is for the glory of God. Job declares that wisdom and understanding comes from Yahweh (Job 12:13; 28:12 ff.; 28:28). Proverbs speaks of wisdom and understanding together fourteen times (e.g., Prov 3:13).
- d) Experienced (יָדָע, *yadá*) to know (intimately, Gen 4:1), to learn to know, to perceive and see, to find out and discern, to discriminate and distinguish, to know by experience – These are men who have gained knowledge and understanding through experience (“elders”). They were knowledgeable.
- e) Qualifications of leadership (v. 15) – These men would be assumed to be able to judge and discern in day-to-day situations involving people, and hence they would be able to communicate the truth that they have learned. They would need to be able to apply their wisdom and understanding in everyday situations, and they would need to be able to explain their judgments. Moreover, there is a burden and weight to leadership and decision-making that can become overwhelming at times. God, through the Holy Spirit, gifts and enables some men for this task. This is not to diminish the gifts and abilities and even leadership of other men (and women within certain contexts).
 - (1) Leaders (שָׂר, *sar*) – chief, ruler, captain, prince
 - (2) Officers (שׁוֹטֵר, *shōter*) – officials, ones with identified authority, ones who organize – We have an example from Numbers 11:16-17 where immediately after departing from Mt. Sinai, the people of Israel began to complain about

the food/manna, so Yahweh judged them with fire (Num 11:1-9). This then caused Moses to complain to Yahweh about the people (Num 11:10-15).

(3) Summary statement from Exodus 18:21

- (a) Excellent (לָהֵיטִיב, *khahyil*) – able, valiant, men of strength (these men are leaders)
 - (b) Those who fear God (obedience)
 - (c) Men of truth (honest and faithful)
 - (d) Hate greedy (dishonest) gain – a result of fearing God and being honest
 - (e) Leaders – they live out these characteristics before all the people and are gifted by God to lead
- f) From your tribes (v. 15) – Training and choosing leaders from within is always best when it's possible. It adds to stability and prolonged obedience and faithfulness in ministry.
- (1) A known quantity – You know what you're getting, your leaders are from you, you know them (positives and struggles).
 - (a) Known character
 - (b) Known strengths and weaknesses
 - (c) Known experiences
 - (d) Less risk (not “no risk”)
 - (2) Continual training of leaders for all levels of ministry is essential
3. The Appointing (v. 15) – (נָתַן, *natan*) to give, to put *in place*, to set *in place*.
- a) Just as God appointed Moses (Ex 3:10), Moses appointed (with the direction of the Holy Spirit) other leaders of the people (Num 11:16-17).
 - b) This is akin to appointing of elders in the New Testament (Titus 1:5).
 - (1) The Septuagint (LXX) Greek term for *natan* (נָתַן) is from the verb *kathistemi* (kaqi,sthmi).
 - (2) Biblical uses of the term all have to do with authoritatively appointed authority with associated responsibility (in all 20 uses of the term – Matt 24:45, 47; 25:21, 23; Luke 12:14, 42, 44; Acts 6:3; 7:10, 27, 35; 17:15; Rom 5:19; Titus 1:5; Heb 5:1; 7:28; 8:3; James 3:6; 4:4; 2 Pet 1:8).
 - c) Ordination and the laying on of hands by the council of elders (presbute, rion, 1 Tim 4:14) are procedures of this appointment.
4. The Commands (vv. 16-18) – The rule of law
- a) Judge righteously (v. 16a) – according to God's standards (application: be Christlike)

- (1) Remember the biblical spheres of God-given authority: Civil government, Church, Home
- (2) What is the church's role in civil matters involving members of the church?
 - (a) Exhort those involved in civil "" to be "equally yoked" (2 Cor 6:14-15) – most common examples are marriage and business partners.
 - (b) If both profess to be believers in Jesus Christ, exhort both parties to godliness and humility in their treatment of one another (1 John 4:20-21) and to resolve their issue in a God-honoring manner (1 Cor 6:1-8).
 - (i) As, believers, we aren't to sue one another (believers) before a civil magistrate ("the unrighteous" 1 Cor 6:1).
 - (ii) Contention between brothers in Christ should be reconciled biblically with the help of wise biblical counsel rather than brother taking brother to court. (This is different than "church court." This is biblical reconciliation which involves repentance and forgiveness. Matt 18:15-35)
 - (iii) Remember, if someone is ultimately unrepentant, then they are to be treated as an unbeliever.
 - (c) Just as marriage is a social union recognized and authorized by civil authority as the means by which a man and woman are to be joined together, and therefore divorce must go through a "civil magistrate," business partnerships are also incorporations (unions) recognized by civil authority; and therefore, they must also at times be settled with legal help (legal counsel) or even the help of the "civil magistrate." That doesn't mean that the believer can still not be generous, forgiving (perhaps suffering wrong and being defrauded as a testimony of Christlikeness, 1 Cor 6:7). This is part of being a sojourner in this world (a citizen of heaven), yet not being of the world.
 - (d) Some who hold to Christian Nationalism, a postmillennial view of ushering in the kingdom of God, may differ because they believe that there is to be a relationship between church and government that will ultimately usher in the kingdom, but that is not my view.
- b) Treat people with impartial equality (vv. 16b-17a) – We should do the same in the church. (Deut 16:19; Prov 24:23; 28:21)
- c) Fear God and not man (v. 17b) – How would that impact a judge's decision?
- d) It's okay to get help for the hard cases (v. 17c) – Moses was, in a sense, the "Supreme Court" for Israel as he could bring it to God (the best kind of Supreme Court).
- e) You've been told (v. 18)!