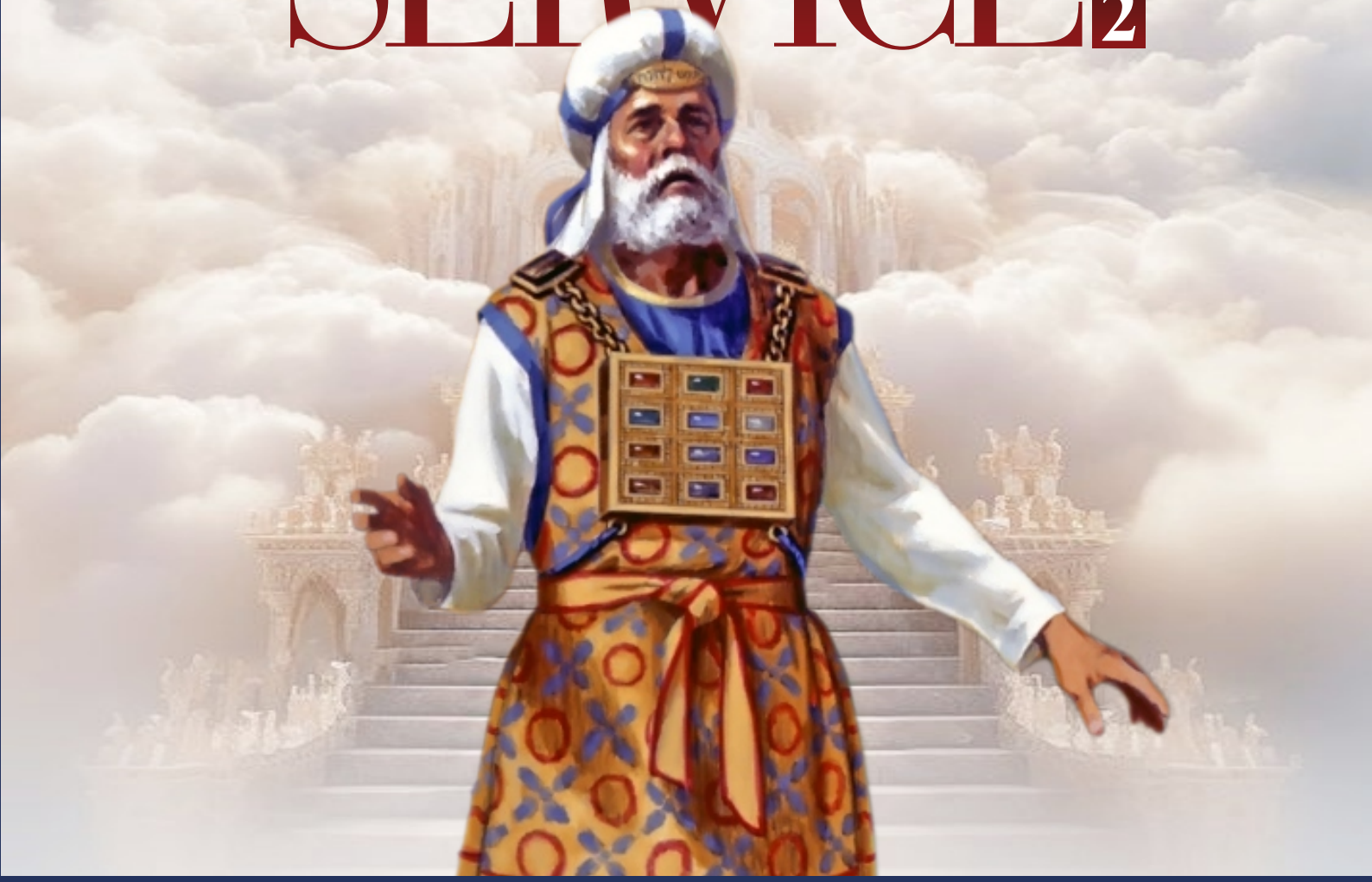
The Pilgrim's Guide Post

Volume 3 (Part 2)

Thy Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet, And A Light Unto My Path (Psalm 119:105)

FIT FOR THE KINGDOM SERVICE 2



VASHTI AS A SIGNPOST By Ruth Eze



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Thanks

Thanks to the disciples who laboured with me through the editing of this journal, to ensure, as best as possible, that what is written herein is presented clearly and, more importantly, that it is of the Spirit and is truth. Though you remain nameless, I really appreciate the grace of God at work in you. May God continue to find you fit for His use in Jesus' name. Amen.

Unless otherwise noted, all the scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Holy bible

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FROM THE EDITORIALS DESK

We sincerely thank the Lord our God and Saviour with all of our hearts, full of gratitude for His grace and for making it possible once again to send forth another edition of the Pilgrim's Guidepost. This is a case of the outpouring of His abundant grace and wisdom, as the Lord has been teaching us the nuggets of serving in His kingdom.

In this edition of the Pilgrim's Guidepost, the Lord is confronting us with the theme: **FIT FOR THE KINGDOM SERVICE.** The imperative of the availability of suitable vessels for the kingdom service cannot be overstated when it comes to achieving the purpose of God on earth. As we deal with this matter, the question is: who is fit for the kingdom service? The Lord began by showing us that it is anyone who is genuinely a captive of the Lord.

The Lord also confronted us with the implications of being the Lord's captive and the perils of not being His captive. We further explored the divine requirement for becoming the Lord's captive. This led us to discover that becoming the Lord's captive relates to God's dealings in one's life. These dealings create in a servant of God the required life for the kingdom service. It also became apparent to us that for one to be made fit for the kingdom service, God must first intervene in his life. We also saw that, as a matter of principle, God often interrupts a man He will grant access to His service. He interrupts his life ambitions, plans, careers, projects, and purposes in order to turn him away from his purposes and redirect him towards the pursuit of the kingdom service. These principles are clearly exemplified in the lives of God's servants. A close look at the lives of Paul, the woman of Samaria, Elisha the Tishbite, and Simon son of Jonah clearly shows the impact of the divine intervention and interruption.

It is also obvious that in the process of making a man fit for the kingdom service, the Lord normally and often **encounters** those He uses. One of the purposes of this encounter is to bring a person to his place of formation and commission. The encounter must continue from time to time, and this is what sustains God's servant in His task as a co-labourer with the Him.

In the matter of the Home Guide, the Lord also brought us to the story of Queen Vashti, the arrogant queen who lost her position. Her story came to us as a warning signpost.

These are transformative truths, and I pray you receive them whole-heartedly, as in buying the truth and selling it not. Allow these engraved words of truth to dwell richly in your heart, and may you manifest them greatly in your life to point people that watch your life to the Cross and heaven. May the doing of His words multiply His abundant grace and the true riches of God in your life, causing you to become a sweet-smelling savour of His life to your generation. May the blessedness of reading and doing His word abide with you in Jesus' name. Amen..



FIT FOR THE KINGDOM SERVICE

In part 1 of this volume, we looked at the pathway the early disciples followed that made them useable and useful in the purpose of God. As we were concluding that part, we looked at the pathway of divine interruption. We observed that all the men who became fit for the kingdom service were interrupted by God. We also examined two of such men who were interrupted by God. The last person we looked at was the woman of Samaria. We saw how divine interruption transformed her life and made her a valuable and useful instrument in the hands of God in drawing the people of Samaria to the Lord.

cont'd.

In this part 2, we are going to continue by looking further into this pathway of interruption: what is the place of divine interruption in making an individual fit for the kingdom service. We will go ahead and look at other men who, through divine interruption, became fit for the kingdom service.

The pursuit of a vessel fit for the kingdom service is God's utmost priority in His quest to accomplish His agenda among men on earth. This is because He has ordained man as His channel of service on the earth. Man was originally created by God to serve as a vehicle for His work on earth. Though He is God, He delights in working through man. Nevertheless, a man who is fit for His use must not be a stranger to the kingdom of God. He must be a man who has experienced divine intervention and interruption.



Elisha the Son of Shaphat

Looking at the life of Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah, you will see how divine interruption made him fit for the kingdom service and a vessel in the hands of God. We would not have heard anything about Elisha if not for the divine interruption that came on his life.

So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant 1Kings 19:19-21.

There is no doubt that Elisha became great instrument in the hands of God. He was used to affect nations for God. Several kings of the heathen nations acknowledged God through his ministry. The question is, how did he get to that point of effectiveness in the hands of God? It all began with this statement;

"So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth".

You will remember that in verse 15-17 God spoke to Elijah concerning Elisha. He was asked to go and anoint him to be a prophet in his room. From

that point, Elijah went in search of Elisha. The Bible says; **"...and found Elisha the son of Shaphat,"** There is no doubt Elijah was hoping to see a man who was idle sitting at a place like Jehu (2Kgs 9:5). On the contrary, when he found him, he was very busy. It is evident that Elisha was not engaged in a simple task; he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen. He was not merely preparing to plow; he was actively immersed in the labour of plowing. I can only imagine how Elijah felt when he observed Elisha dedicated and devoted to his agricultural work. Elisha was not just striving in his trade or striving to make a living. He was an accomplished farmer **"...who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him..."** When Elijah witnessed Elisha's industriousness, he understood that engaging him in God's plan would not be possible unless he was first interrupted and disengaged from his current occupation. This is because God does not engage a man He has not first disengaged. **"...and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him..."** Elijah did not merely approach him and anoint him with oil. I believe that is what most people would anticipate Elijah to do once he found him. However, if Elijah had done so, Elisha would have taken the anointing back to his farm and resumed his plowing. The anointing would have then been reduced to a tool for "efficient plowing for abundant harvest." It is risky to anoint a man who has not been interrupted. It is regrettable that there are numerous uninterrupted "anointed" individuals in our pulpits today: individuals who were "anointed" while plowing for money. Because they were not interrupted, they assumed that the anointing was a means to achieve their pursuits. This is why many of them charge for prayers. Some of these individuals have become too costly for the brethren to benefit from their ministry. It is also unfortunate that many of them have become lords over God's heritage. The misuse of the anointing is inevitable when it precedes divine interruption. Elijah was not willing to jeopardize God's anointing by anointing Elisha while he was still engrossed in plowing with his twelve yoke of oxen. Elijah knew what had to be done first; **"...and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him..."** Did you notice that Elijah did not speak to him? You cannot engage in a conversation with a man who is plowing because he will not give you his attention. You may wonder why Elijah passed by him instead of passing through the road. The reason is that he was seeking an opportunity to interrupt him. However, if he had merely passed by him, Elisha would have allowed him to pass as he was plowing. Therefore, Elijah needed to do more than just pass by him. He had to do something that would direct Elisha's attention to God's plan for his life. Paying attention to God's plan for a man is not inherent to man; it is always a result of God's work in a man's life. God must interrupt a man's life for that man to heed to what He wants him to pursue. What did Elijah do? **"...and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him..."** I wonder why Elijah did not simply place the mantle on him but cast it on him. I have come to realize that the matter was urgent. Elijah had to do something extraordinary to ensure that Elisha received the message. Elijah passed by him, and threw his mantle upon him. He had direct contact with him. At that moment, Elisha understood that Elijah was not merely passing by. This marked the commencement of the divine interruption in his life. Elisha was then compelled to give Elijah his attention. He was interrupted. Look at what occurred; **"...and Elijah passed by him, and threw his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah..."** The Bible states that he left the oxen. Consider the woman of Samaria; she also left her water pot. Every

divine interruption demands that a man should abandon what he is holding, pursuing, or doing in pursuit of God's purpose for his life. What is it that you must leave behind in order to become a usable vessel in the hands of God? **"...And he left the oxen...** Elisha left the oxen that occupied his time. We would not have known about Elisha if he had not left the oxen. Leaving the oxen led him to the place where he became a vessel in the hands of God. I may not know the "oxen" you need to abandon to embrace God's purpose for your life. However, one thing is certain: until you leave your "oxen," you will continue to toil outside of God's field. Elijah needed to remove Elisha from plowing into God's plan for his life. Observe the impact of that interruption; **"...and he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah..."** He became urgent about God's plan and purpose for his life. He pursued God. Every divine interruption that does not compel a man to pursue God is incomplete. This is the goal of every divine interruption. It is not merely to push a man to work for God but to drive him to seek God.

"And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you". Notice that his farm was no longer the central point? Divine interruption brought an end to the farm matter. He was not seeking permission to close down the farm properly, but to sever all ties that would lead him back to plowing. Every divine interruption compels a man to "kiss" his father and mother to pursue God. Elisha said; **"...and then I will follow you..."** this is a divine principle. There is no assurance that any following that was not a product of God's interruption will endure, no matter how dramatic. Divine interruption must precede genuine following of Jesus. Any effort to take an uninterrupted man along the path of God's will and purpose will end in futility. **"And he said unto him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"** Heaven always allows a man to respond to the demands of the divine interruption in his life. Elisha had to return, not to his farm, but to kiss his father and mother.

He had to do so to embark on the journey God had for him. One might think he should have followed Elijah immediately. No! He had to cut the ties first. Many in the pulpit need to go back. They did not kiss their "father" and "mother" before following. This is why they cannot follow consistently and correctly. Only a man who has kissed his "father and mother" to follow God can be suitable for kingdom service. Only a man who has completely detached from anything representing father and mother in his life can be suitable for kingdom service.

Elijah proceeded to ask him; "**... for what have I done to you?"** Elijah had not actually done anything to him; it was God who had done something to him. Before God will do anything enduring for and with a man, He must first do something in and to him. We often focus on what God will do for and with us; only few seek what God will do to them. The extent of what God has done to a man determines what He will do for and with him. The sustainability of what God has done for and with a man is based on what He has done in and to him. What has God done in and to you? I am not referring to what He has done for you. Perhaps you are solely concerned with what God will do for you and not what He will do in and to you. It is important to understand that what God does to and in you substantiate what He will do for and with you. Whatever God will do for and with a man lacks a foundation if God has not done something to and in him.

"What have I done to you?" Is God's question to any man aspiring to be a channel of Christ's life. Vessels of divine life do not showcase what God has done for them; they display what God has done in and to them. They testify to God's dealings in their lives, not just His

provisions. Their glory lies in what God has done in and to them, not what He has done for them. Remember that in the context of our study, what God has done to a man speaks of His dealings with the man's life. The pilgrims who journeyed with God prayed for His dealings in their lives, not just for His provisions. No one becomes anything in God's hands without undergoing His dealings. Beloved, God is asking you; "what have I done in and to you?" Can you respond to that question? You may be a leader, but God has not done anything in and to you. You preach and speak of what He has done for you and your congregation, but not what He has done in and to you.

Most Christians measure God's favour in their lives and ministry based on what He has done for them, not on what He has done in and to them. This is why they feel offended and unhappy when it seems that what God will do for them is delayed. Men of old who entered effective and impactful ministry sought God's dealings as a hidden treasure. The consistent and cumulative dealings of God in their lives were the mark of divine approval on their ministry. They confessed and sought forgiveness from God for their sins (even when they could not identify any) whenever God's dealings waned in their lives. No man can walk correctly and consistently with God unless he has undergone God's dealings. God's dealings in a man's life sustain whatever He will do for him. A man's usefulness in God's purpose is determined by the extent of God's dealings in his life. God does not entrust anything of eternal value to a man He has not dealt with. No matter what God has done for or plans for a man, he will remain a threat to God's kingdom and agenda until God has laboured upon him. Although Elisha understood that the mantle Elijah cast on him was a call to become a Prophet, Elijah seemed to remind him that nothing had been done to him. Elijah appeared to be telling him that what he was pursuing could not come to fruition until something had been done to him. Elisha also grasped that what Elijah told him was an eternal principle that could not be altered.

It is my prayer that the Lord will bring us to a point where what He does in and to us become the cry of our hearts. May God interrupt our lives until we are completely separated from anything hindering us from being fit for kingdom service and channels of divine life. **"... And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat." KJV** This was the outcome of the divine interruption in Elisha's life. Consider the phrase; **"... And he returned back from him..."** he turned back from Elijah. The term "returned" here implies that he left Elijah. The question is, where did he leave Elijah to? Certainly, not to plowing because he had already been interrupted. The interruption removed from his heart the desire for plowing. The reason many are still "plowing," even in the pulpit, is because they missed divine interruption. Elisha returned home to his parents. He returned to address what could prompt him to turn back after following for some time. Remember when he initially followed Elijah; he did not look back. Backsliding is often due to a lack of divine interruption. This is what hindered Gehazi from entering into God's plan for his life. He was never interrupted from plowing for money and material possessions, which deprived him of the opportunity to become fit for kingdom service. The same fate befell Judas Iscariot and Achan.

No man can truly serve God unless he is entirely interrupted from plowing (labouring) for money. Thankfully, Elisha was completely interrupted.

Imagine the scene in his farm that day; he halted his farming activities to converse with a stranger. The scene became more interesting as he took a yoke of oxen with the equipment and began walking back home. What was he planning to do with the oxen at home? He took them to be slaughtered. This puzzled everyone except Elijah. They wondered what had happened to Elisha. He could have purchased untrained oxen and slaughtered them for the people to consume. Why slaughter expensive, profitable, and trained oxen? This was the only way to signal to the people that he was done with the farming business. Divine interruption brought an end to his business of plowing for money. **"Then he arose, and followed Elijah, and became his servant."** He stood up, and no one inquired about his destination. The message had already been conveyed. He arose not to return to the farm but to follow Elijah.

Beloved, have you experienced God's interruption? Have you slaughtered your "yoke of oxen" in pursuit of God's plan for your life? May God interrupt your life and grant you the grace to respond like Elisha in Jesus' name. Amen.



SIMON
SON OF JONAS

There is no doubt Simon (Peter) was transformed into a usable and beneficial instrument in the hands of God. He also became a channel of Christ's life. He was one of the brethren mentioned by Paul as captives of the Lord in the book of 2 Cor 2:14-16; men who were prepared for service in the kingdom through God's intervention and interruption in their lives.

It is important to examine the interruption that led Simon to become an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, suitable for kingdom service.

As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee; he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, as they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."Immediately, they left their nets and followed him. Mark 1:16-18 NIV

The first observation from the scripture above is that Simon was not idle. As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake. All the individuals used by God were first interrupted. It is evident that he was occupied with casting a net. In Elisha's case, he was plowing. Undoubtedly, Simon had plans for the day when he left his home. He did not anticipate or pray for any interruption. It is evident that he was prepared to avoid any interruptions to achieve his daily goal. As a fisherman, he must have learned to steer clear of distractions and interruptions.

One striking aspect here is that Jesus

observed them casting their net into the sea. If I were Jesus, I may not have interrupted them; I might have waited for them to finish for the day, considering the importance of the matter He wanted them to respond to. However, if Jesus had done so, they would have missed this crucial interruption. There is no man in the history of men God used that He waited for him to complete "the business of the day" before being confronted with the eternal agenda. This is because no one steps into eternal service through dialogue. God does not wait for a person to retire from worldly business before involving him in eternal matters. Retiring from worldly engagements before responding to kingdom service is the "opportunity" many seek; unaware that it is a trap. Jesus was not going to wait for Simon to finish his daily tasks. He needed to be interrupted. God knew that those who wait to finish catching fish before responding to God's call to fish for men never find the time to respond. He did not allow Paul to reach Damascus. He did not allow the Samaritan woman to draw water, nor did He allow Elisha to retire from his daily work. All these individuals were interrupted. God does not engage a person He has not disengaged from worldly engagement and pursuits. Many desire to be engaged, but they are unwilling to be disengaged. All the individuals used by God were individuals He first disengaged from their fruitless pursuits. Every pursuit becomes fruitless when it is not focused on the kingdom and does not yield eternal results, be it a ministry, church, or fellowship. Are you involved in fruitless endeavours? It is unfortunate that sometimes these fruitless pursuits can be religious, as in the case of Paul who embarked on a fruitless journey with a letter from the high priest. My prayer is that the Lord will disengage you from every fruitless pursuit and engage you in kingdom work in Jesus' name.

And as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea... Mk 1:16

Simon would have remained a fisherman if not for the interruption. I must acknowledge that he was excelling in his fishing profession. He had a family to support through fishing. While he may have appeared successful as a fisherman to others, in God's eyes, he was engaged in a fruitless pursuit. Therefore, when Jesus saw him, He had compassion on him; why? He was occupied with vanity, engaged in emptiness, and working for perishable rewards. The divine interruption was God's intervention in his life to rescue him from the fruitless and empty toil he was engaged in. Hence, divine interruption is an act of God's mercy. God interrupts those He desires to show mercy to. Blessed is the one whom the Lord has interrupted.

Beloved, are you like Simon? Are you still engaged in the pursuit of "fishing fish" as a Christian, civil servant, businessman, or gospel preacher? It is perilous to have an uninterrupted individual as a leader, particularly in the church of Jesus Christ. Sadly, many such individuals already hold leadership positions in the body of Christ. There is no need to question the outcome of their leadership. Their involvement in church leadership is negatively impacting us daily. May God deliver the church from uninterrupted leaders in Jesus' name.

Jesus had compassion on Simon because he was engaged in what he was not created for. He was meant to be a fisher of men, not fish. Note that the crucial aspect here is not primarily what to do but who to be. It is not about being interrupted from fishing fish but from being a fisherman. It is primarily about whom you are and not just what you do. And Jesus said to them, **"Come after me, and I will**

make you to become fishers of men." Mark 1:17. Did you notice what Jesus said He would do? He was going to transform him into a fisher of men. This was the purpose and objective of that interruption. Any divine interruption that does not turn a fisherman into a fisher of men is incomplete. Thank God, Simon was interrupted and he became a fisher of men. Initially, it was not amusing. Just imagine the thoughts going through Simon's mind and the minds of others as Jesus spoke to him. Remember that Jesus found him casting his net. Certainly, Simon saw some fish he intended to catch when Jesus interrupted. Every divine interruption always occurs at such a moment. If you have ever experienced a divine interruption, you will attest that it always comes at such a juncture in your life. Those who try to orchestrate their divine interruption never truly experience it. Did you observe that Jesus did not even give him time to sell the fish he had caught? Nor did He allow him to properly lay up his fishing equipment. Divine interruption is urgent! He did not offer a choice; it was a command. When it concerns eternity, Heaven does not present choices to men. **"Follow me..."** was the divine command to Simon. To obey this command, he had to let go of many things. However, it was necessary to relinquish them to gain eternity. Whatever a person loses to gain eternity is not a true loss. A person who loses what he will inevitably lose to gain what he cannot lose is not foolish.

Beloved, have you heard the Lord say, "Follow me?" Have you begun to follow Him? Or are you like the rich young ruler who walked away sorrowful? Those who reject or disregard divine interruptions never achieve anything in God's plan. Every divine interruption is not meant to harm but to transform a person. Though initially, it may look harmful, on the contrary, it is not meant to harm but to remove what hinders a man from being suitable for kingdom service. Thank God Simon was interrupted: **And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.** Mark 1:18 KJV. That interruption was powerful. He abandoned his nets and followed Jesus. His response was immediate; **"And straightway..."** this is the type of response that signifies complete interruption. An interruption that does not lead a person to forsake his "net" is incomplete. Some only left their nets. God seeks an interruption that will cause you to forsake your net. We would not have known anything about Simon if not for this interruption that came his way. It was this interruption that transformed Simon into Peter. Who celebrated Simon at the riverbank that day? Those who witnessed him forsake his net and follow Jesus likely thought he had been hypnotized. Every divine interruption initially leaves a person appearing hypnotized or entranced in the eyes of others.

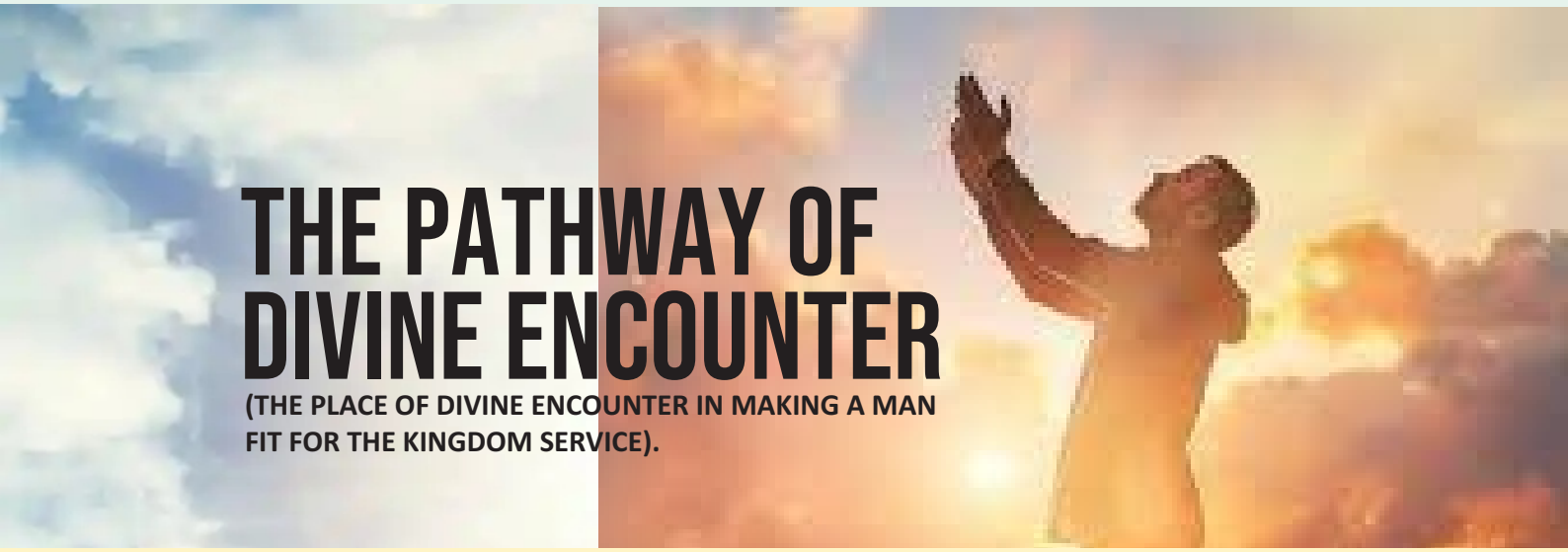
You will notice that even what Jesus said He would do for him **("...and I will make you to become fishers of men")** did not seem reasonable. Is there a river where men are caught like fish? What Jesus told him did not seem reasonable; yet, he followed. Every divine interruption comes with a power that suspends human reasoning and logic. Any interruption that allows a person to reason out the practicability of its objectives is incomplete and not divine. Simon could not have followed if he had been expected to reason out the possibility of what Jesus was telling him. He would have passed away without even a sense of missing out on God's purpose for his life. This is the fate of every person who has not experienced God's interruption. Everyone is destined to live and die celebrating their progress in vain pursuits unless God interrupts him. We appreciate God for the contribution of Peter (Simon)

to the body of Christ through His interruption in his life. Unless God interrupts our lives, we can never be of any assistance to the body of Christ.

Having explored this crucial experience that brings a person to a point where he are suitable for kingdom service, the question remains: have you been interrupted? Are you still pursuing what you were pursuing before encountering Jesus? What is hindering divine interruption in your life? Can you request the Lord to interrupt you?

May God interrupt our lives and meet us at the core of our pursuits until He becomes our pursuit. May He interrupt our lives until we lose the desire for this world and its possessions; until eternal values become the focus of our hearts. Like Simon Peter, may we also hear Him say; **"come after me and I will make you fishers of men."** Like Paul, **"arise go into the city and you shall be told what you must do."** And like the Samaritan woman, **"give me a drink."** The Lord can only draw from individuals He has interrupted. May He interrupt us until He can draw from us, until we are fit for kingdom service. May you receive the grace to seek His interruption in Jesus' name. Amen

Having addressed the matter of divine interruption, we will now examine another process (pathway) or experience that a person must undergo to be suitable for kingdom service.



THE PATHWAY OF DIVINE ENCOUNTER

(THE PLACE OF DIVINE ENCOUNTER IN MAKING A MAN FIT FOR THE KINGDOM SERVICE).

Whenever God sets His focus on an individual with the intention of intervening and interrupting his life to prepare him for service in the kingdom, the initial step He takes is to engage with him. This engagement is what is commonly known as a divine encounter. An encounter can be described as a direct collision. It signifies an unforeseen or unplanned meeting. It could also entail a direct face-to-face confrontation; a meeting; a clash either by chance, suddenly, or intentionally; particularly to meet in opposition or with hostile intentions; to engage in conflict.

Based on the abovementioned explanation, a divine encounter can be characterized as God's head-on collision with human beings. It is God meeting an individual unexpectedly. It could also denote God confronting an individual face-to-face. God intervenes and disrupts an individual in order to have an encounter with him. A divine encounter is a crucial prerequisite for becoming a valuable and effective instrument in the hands of God. As a fundamental principle, God

does not employ an individual He has not encountered for any task that holds eternal significance. The rationale behind the significance of this encounter is that it serves as a prerequisite for becoming the Lord's captive. God cannot take a person captive if He has not encountered him; therefore, a divine encounter is essential for God's transformation. He transforms individuals whom He has encountered.

The journey of an individual with God commences at the moment of his encounter with Him. Every successful journey of an individual with God is the product of a meaningful, progressive, and all-encompassing encounter with God. The extent, intensity, and scope of this divine encounter with an individual will determine the extent and scope to which God will go with him. The impact of an individual's life on his generation for God is dictated by the magnitude of the impact and the intensity of the divine encounter in his life. All the people God ever walked with were individuals whom He encountered. Anything that hinders an individual from being encountered by the Lord has deprived him of the opportunity and privilege of being suitable for service in the kingdom. Having established this fact, it is also crucial to note that a divine encounter in an individual's life must be current, consistent, cumulative, and all-encompassing if he is to be impactful and remain so.

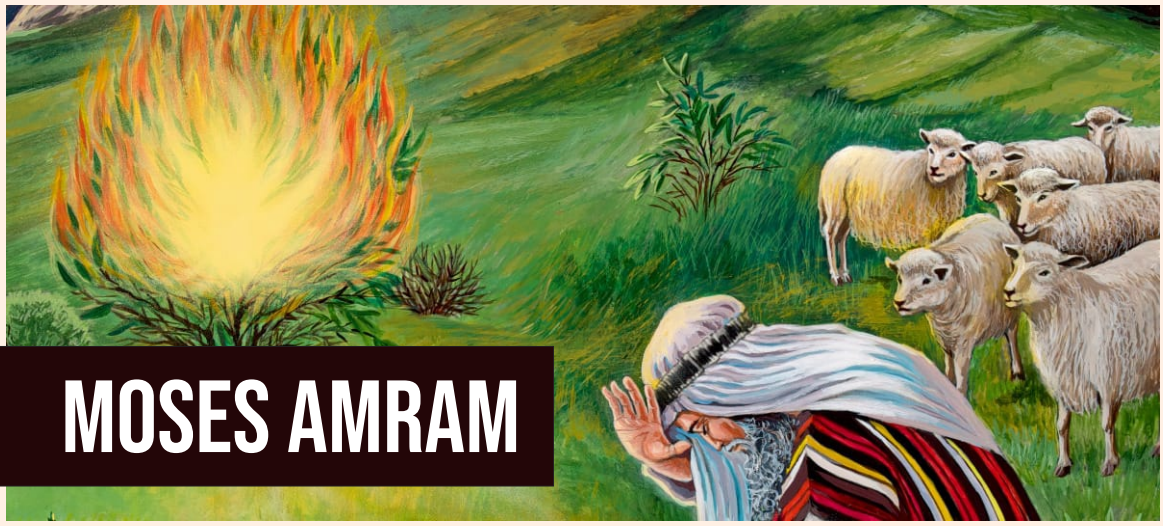
An individual is bound to dwell on past achievements regardless of the encounter he had with God if he fails to have a consistent encounter with Him. The absence of a consistent encounter with God is what renders an individual a historical object during his lifetime. The encounter with God that one had yesterday is insufficient for today. For an individual to experience the freshness of God daily, he must encounter Him daily. A man of God is bound to function with a stagnant anointing unless he maintains a consistent encounter with God. Regrettably, numerous men of God fall into this category; they have lost the current encounter with God and as a result, they have lost the vitality of the Spirit that makes an individual impactful. Many children of God are also guilty of this grave oversight that renders a person ineffective.

Despite the emphases the importance of a current and consistent encounter with God, it is disheartening to note that many have yet to experience their initial encounter with God. It is quite confusing that there are now "Christians" who have not encountered Christ. Similarly, there are numerous "men of God" in our era who have not encountered God. Some even claim to have encountered the Lord, yet there is no evidence of such an encounter in their lives. It is impossible to encounter the Lord and not have the evidence of it manifest in your life and daily activities. Have you encountered the Lord? One cannot encounter the Lord and still resist His will.

When a divine encounter in an individual's life is current and all-encompassing, the will of God will become the delight of his life. This is because the primary objective of the divine encounter in an individual's life is to eliminate barriers that prevent him from submitting to God and saying "let your will be done." Unless an individual can willingly and joyfully proclaim, "Lord, let your will be done," the divine encounter in his life is incomplete. Undoubtedly, God will never intend to carry out an incomplete encounter in any person's life. Whenever a divine encounter is not thorough in an individual's life, there is a reason for it; there was an obstacle. I believe that in such instances, the initial step is not to seek a new encounter, but to first identify what caused the previous encounter to be incomplete. The reason is that the factor that obstructed the prior encounter could also impede the fresh encounter, rendering it ineffective.

When this obstacle is addressed, you will be prepared for a complete fresh encounter. I must acknowledge that at times, this obstacle may be one that you cannot overcome on your own; in such case, you need to implore God for assistance in overcoming every barrier to a divine encounter. It becomes particularly challenging when the obstruction to a divine encounter is at the heart of an individual's interests. It is always a difficult task to detach or separate an individual from his interests or from what he is praying and fasting to obtain..

It is my desire that the Lord will encounter your life so that you will be inclined to submit to His will; an encounter that will leave no aspect of struggles and hardness of heart unaddressed in your life. We trust that God will elaborate on this further as we examine individuals who, through divine encounters, became suitable for service in the kingdom and subsequently stepped into God's purpose for their lives. As we commence with Moses, we will look into the series of encounters that he had with God, which made him suitable for service in the Kingdom and led him into the purpose of God for his life. This is because a divine encounter that propels an individual towards the fulfillment of God's purpose is not a one-time occurrence. The more frequently an individual allows God to encounter his life, the more effective he will become in the hands of God. The consistency of the divine encounter in an individual's life is what distinguishes him for eternal impact.



MOSES AMRAM

Moses Amram was a man who became fit for the kingdom service and effective in the hands of God in his generation as a result of his encounter with God. We trust that the Lord will guide us as we look at the series of encounters that made him usable and useful in the purpose of God. Looking at Moses and the impact God made through him, one may think it was a mere story. Therefore, we need to first establish the fact that Moses is a human being, a man subject to like passions as we are.

And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. [2] **So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child,* she hid him three months.** [3] **But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank.** Ex 2:1-3

It is essential for us to understand Moses' origin. The passage mentioned above has clarified that Moses was born to parents and not as an angel who descended from heaven. **"And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi."**

What can you point out about Moses' parents from this passage? Moses' parents were initially introduced in the book of Exodus 2:1-3. It is peculiar that their names were omitted in this initial introduction, implying that they have names. The Holy Spirit must have a definite reason for this omission. Although their names were not mentioned, it is crucial to recognize that the Holy Spirit excluded their names to make a point. The absence of their names signifies that a person's parentage and status do not determine their role in God's plan. The only identification of Moses' parents in this passage is their tribe; **"And there went a man of the house of Levi..."** This simple introduction speaks volumes about their background and character, surpassing the significance of their names. This introduction emphasizes the importance of one's origin over their name in the eyes of God. God values a person's source and heritage more than his name. The effectiveness of a servant of God is rooted in their source. The source of a person determines the nature and the measure of his resources in life. Your origin is the primary consideration in determining your role in God's kingdom. A person must be connected to God to be effective in God's service.

The absence of Moses' parent's names was not an oversight. The mention of Levi in the passage signifies a profound encounter. Levi was a son of Jacob, who had an encounter with God. Moses' father, Amram, was a man who lived in the presence of God, as reflected in his name. Moses' mother, Jochebed, also had a divine encounter, evident in her name, which means 'Jehovah is her glory.' Moses' parents had a personal encounter with God, but this experience was not transferable to Moses. Moses had to seek God for himself to fulfill his purpose. Personal encounters with God are fundamental to fulfilling God's purpose in one's life.

The passage in Exodus 2:1-10 describes the birth and early life of Moses, highlighting the significant role his parents played in his upbringing.

Having explored this crucial experience that brings a person to a point where he is suitable for kingdom service, the question remains: have you uncounted the Lord? What is hindering divine encounter in your life? Can you request the Lord to encounter your life?

Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." Ex 2:5-10 NKJV

What was the motive of Pharaoh's daughter in entrusting Moses to the care of this Nurse? She hopes to have him as her son. **"Take this child away and nurse him for me..."**

"And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son". Had it not been for God's intervention, interference, and encounter with Moses, this is the path Moses would have inevitably taken. Regardless of one's lineage and divine purpose, every individual would ultimately become "a Son of Pharaoh's daughter" without a divine encounter. Let's examine the series of divine encounters that Moses experienced, leading him to a place where he was deemed suitable for kingdom service and aligned with God's purpose for his life.

The Encounter That Introduced God to Moses

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. Heb 11:24-26.

Although the exact nature of Moses' encounter with God leading up to this point is not explicitly detailed in the Bible, it is evident from the mentioned scripture that he indeed had a significant encounter with God while in Egypt. Consider the introduction of that passage: **"By faith Moses..."** It is clear from this that Moses had developed a strong faith. One cannot reach this point without a profound encounter with God. There was a transformative encounter (though silent) that enlightened Moses to the God of Israel. This foundational encounter marks the beginning of a series of transformative encounters that prepare an individual for service in the kingdom and empower him to fulfill God's purpose for his life.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" There was a profound encounter that Moses had with God in Egypt that revealed to him the futility of identifying as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. No one could have such an encounter and still find solace in being labeled as such. It is an encounter that extinguishes one's desire for worldly pursuits and pleasures.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin," How could one make such a choice unless he had encountered God? Only through a divine encounter can such a decision be made. While sin may offer temporary pleasure, it is fleeting. Do you still yearn for such temporary pleasure? If so, it could be that this foundational encounter has not yet taken place in your life. This initial encounter is purposeful, designed to address issues of sin and worldly desires in an individual's life. God does not overlook or bypass this encounter in the life of someone He intends to use for His kingdom purposes.

Unless one's inclination towards sin and worldly pursuits is eradicated, he cannot effectively serve God. It is unfortunate that there are individuals who identify themselves as "Christians" yet still harbor a craving for sinful pleasures that have not been crucified. This encounter led Moses to renounce his desire for sinful pleasures. One cannot fully embrace God's plan for his life until the issue of sin has been resolved. Sin poses a significant barrier in the life of any individual and can only be addressed by God. An encounter with God is necessary to overcome this obstacle. One cannot be liberated from sin without divine intervention.

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he looked to the reward" This further illustrates Moses' encounter with God. His perspective on value was transformed. He regarded the reproach endured for Christ as more valuable than the treasures of Egypt. Only through an encounter with God can one reach such a realization. He was not comparing the glory of Christ to the treasures of Egypt, but rather the reproach of Christ. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ as more valuable than the wealth of Egypt. This signifies that he considered the suffering, ridicule, and persecution he would face for Christ's sake to be

more precious than the finest offerings of the world. Have you reached this point? Do you value the reproach of Christ more than the worldly treasures? It is disheartening to see many individuals in positions of religious authority who lack this perspective on value. The question is; how did they enter into service without undergoing this fundamental encounter with God? God does not initiate an encounter with a person just to reveal His plans for his life; rather, He does so to eliminate obstacles hindering him from fulfilling His purpose.

God's encounter with an individual serves as an introduction to Himself, not His work. This was the initial step taken in Moses' life. God's introduction forms the foundation upon which all subsequent interactions with Him rest. One cannot serve God without first knowing Him. When we speak of knowing God, we refer to experiential knowledge, not mere theoretical understanding. Many contemporary Christian leaders lack experiential knowledge of the Lord due to the absence of this foundational encounter in their lives. Experiential knowledge of the Lord transforms a person's life to align with the life of the Lord, which is in direct contrast to a life of sin and worldliness. This foundational encounter can be likened to a farmer clearing weeds from his field before planting. As a principle, God removes sin and worldly desires from an individual before sowing into his life. Until this transformation occurs, a person remains ill-suited for God's purposes, even if he is aware of His plans for his life. It is crucial to remember that this foundational encounter with God must precede His revelation of His work or plans to an individual. This encounter paves the way for the introduction of God's agenda for a person's life. Without this encounter, one is barred from divine service.

In concluding, as we reflect on the encounter that leads an individual to experiential knowledge of God, it is imperative to pray over the issues that God has highlighted. Pray for this foundational encounter. Pray that God will encounter your life at a junction where there is no diversion. Pray for a head on collision with God that eradicates your desire for sinful pleasures and worldly treasures, until you value the reproach of Christ more than the treasures of the world.

THE ENCOUNTER THAT INTRODUCED GOD'S AGENDA TO MOSES

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand
Acts 7:22-26.

At this juncture, Moses was already associating himself with the children of Israel as his brethren in accordance with verse 23. Even as a member of the royal family in Egypt, he did not hesitate to align himself with the slaves. The children of Israel resided in Goshen, a location akin to a slave quarter. What was a prince seeking in a slave quarter? Clearly, he was searching for his "slave" brethren. This initial encounter was perfect, all-encompassing, and impactful. As Moses progressed in this initial encounter, God led him to a subsequent encounter that unveiled His purpose for

his life. While still in Egypt, Moses gained insight into God's plan for his life. This stage is often elusive for many individuals. Many perish without comprehending their purpose, not because God is unwilling to reveal it to them, but because they fail to provide the opportunity for Him to do so.

This primary encounter is intended to allow God access to a person's life to guide him into His intended purpose. Unfortunately, many individuals, after experiencing the initial encounter, mistakenly believe there is nothing more to it. They often spend the remainder of their lives attempting to sustain that initial encounter, unaware that the only way to maintain it is by being receptive to subsequent encounters. Regardless of the encounter a person had with God; failing to experience additional encounters will diminish the impact of previous ones.

"And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian: For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understood ."

Moses had a silent encounter with God in Egypt that unveiled God's plan to him.

It is evident that upon reuniting with his people, Moses assumed they were already aware of his mission. This mission was crystal clear to him, indicating an encounter with God that unveiled it. His brethren failed to comprehend because they had not shared the same encounter. Such an encounter is central in every individual's life. Without understanding God's purpose for one's life, fulfilling it is unattainable. While being saved from sin is significant, that alone is insufficient to prevent spiritual bankruptcy.

The divine encounter that freed you from sin was intended to enable God to lead you into His purpose for your life. Often, the excitement of liberation from sin prevents individuals from pursuing further encounters with God to discern His plans for their lives. Moses was mindful of God's plans for his life right from his time in Egypt. Do you know the purpose for which God created you? Moses remained resolute in his understanding of God's mission for his life even while residing in Egypt. This understanding stemmed from his encounter with God. Without encountering Him, it is impossible for an individual to discern God's plan for his life Though Moses' encounter with God in Egypt is not explicitly detailed in the Bible, his actions reveal that such an encounter transpired. Firstly, he declined to be identified as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Secondly, he opted to endure affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy temporary sin-induced pleasures. This was a choice he made. Thirdly, he esteemed the reproach of Christ over the riches of Egypt. Lastly, he abandoned Egypt without fearing the king's wrath. These actions are indicative of a transformation resulting from Moses' encounter with God and his alignment with God's purpose for his life.

We would not have heard about Moses if he had not embraced God's plan for his life. However, it is important to note that he would not have aligned with that plan if he had not experienced a divine encounter. It is obvious from the passage above (Acts 7:23-25) that he had an encounter with God while in Egypt. It was through this encounter that he came to know that God would deliver the children of Israel through him. Though the nature and the timing of this encounter remain unknown, it is evident in his actions that he met God.

However, although he had an encounter that revealed to him the plans of God for his life, a lack of proper formation of life was going to rob him acc to it. We can see from that passage that he was almost going make a very costly

mistake due to a lack of maturity. He came from the palace to fight in Goshen; that was a mistake. Goshen was not actually his field of assignment. he was to confront Pharaoh in his palace and an Egyptian in Goshen. It is evident that when God finally sent him back to Egypt after his preparation, he did not go to Goshen again to fight; rather, he went to the palace to confront Pharaoh. That understanding of his place of assignment was a product of a maturity that came as a result of the formation of his life.

Despite Moses' understanding about God's plan for his life, he was not adequately prepared or equipped for it. He was operating on a statement of intention. It is essential to recognize that the call of God on an individual does not equate to immediate commission. Moses would not have achieved God's purpose for his life had his encounter with Him ended at the point of knowing it. In God's benevolence, He orchestrated an additional encounter to facilitate Moses' alignment with His agenda. Another encounter was imperative. Consider verse 24. **"And seeing one of them (an Israelite) suffers wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian."** Upon witnessing the mistreatment of an Israelite by an Egyptian, Moses felt a sense of duty and responsibility to intervene and protect the Israelite. He believed that by killing the Egyptian, he would secure the Israelite's freedom. However, he failed to realize that it was not just the death of the physical Egyptian but the death of the "Egyptian" (Adamic nature) within him that will guarantee their freedom. Regrettably, Moses was unaware to this revelation. After returning to the palace that day, he believed he had commenced his ministry, unaware that he was merely expressing intention. Look at what happened the next day. **And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?** Acts 7:26-28. KJV

Look at verse 26 again; **"And the next day he shewed himself unto them…"** Did you detect a difference? Initially, he visited his brethren, but this time he shewed himself. What does this signify? Perhaps his initial visit was unremarkable; while this time he deliberately drew attention to himself. His arrival was noticeable; he refused to go unnoticed. Two factors must have caused this behaviour: first, is his awareness of God's plans for his life, and secondly, his act of slaying an Egyptian the previous day. Moses believed that the Israelites now viewed him as a hero. Consequently, he felt the need to assert his prominence. If you discern a similar tendency in your life where recognition and acknowledgment become paramount, be vigilant. You could see a deficiency in the life of Moses that could have hindered him from stepping into the purpose of God for his life. The same deficiency is capable of hindering anyone from entering the purpose of God for his life, despite his revelation of God's plans for his life. Unless the desire for recognition and commendation is eliminated in a man's life, he will remain unfit for the kingdom service.

Consider the counsel of Jesus' brethren in the book of John; **His brothers therefore said unto him, Depart from here and go into Judaea, that your disciples also may see the works that you are doing. For no one does anything in secret, while he himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.** John 7:3-4. They advised Jesus to showcase Himself to the world. What prompted this counsel? They said, "**if you do these things…**" Individuals only struggle with self-promotion when they have achieved noteworthy deeds. Guard against pride when God

begins to work through you. Moses would have ended up killing the Egyptian and possibly being killed by Pharaoh if all that happened to him was the encounter that revealed God's purpose for his life. It is worth noting that God, in His mercy, arranged another encounter to bring him into his place of formation in order to enable him to become fit to step into what he saw.

THE ENCOUNTER THAT BROUGHT MOSES TO THE PLACE OF FORMATION

No man will be able to become fit for the kingdom service or accomplish the purpose of God for his life without experiencing this encounter, regardless of the experience that led him to the understanding of God or the encounter that unveiled God's plans for his life. A man will likely fail to reach God's destination for his life unless this specific encounter has occurred in his life. The excitement of encountering God and comprehending His agenda often prevents many from seeking and patiently waiting for the encounter that will guide them to their place of formation.

It is crucial to understand that the journey of every individual with God towards His purpose commences with the declaration of intention. God does not choose men because they are already qualified for His service; rather, He chooses them to qualify them for His intended plans. Therefore, between the calling and the sending, a period of preparation or formation is required. The temptation to bypass this process is ever-present. However, this is a step that no one should overlook if he wishes to fulfill God's purpose in his life. It is an eternal principle. I am yet to encounter an individual who avoided this principle and achieved the purpose God had for his life, regardless of how genuine and dramatic his calling may have been.

This is the predicament faced by many individuals today. While many have experienced encounters with God that introduced them to God's will and plan for their lives, they lack one critical element. It is this missing component that has prevented them from aligning with God's vision and plan for their lives. This missing component is the necessary formation or preparation for kingdom service. In the case of Moses, he encountered God and was informed of His plans, but he would have failed to fulfill them without this crucial encounter. Prior to this encounter that thrust him to a place of preparation, Moses attempted to fulfill the vision he had seen. However, due to the lack of the necessary formation and preparation, he missed the consignment of grace for the assignment and the strategy for achieving it. Moses went from the palace to fight in Goshen, which was an error. After his preparation, he went from Goshen to fight in the palace. Do you perceive the significance of this shift? The absence of an encounter that thrust an individual to their place of preparation is the reason why many have missed their consignment of grace for the assignments and the strategies to achieve them. God will only release the consignment of His grace to a man He has laboured upon in the place of formation.

And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Acts 7:26-27

The next day, Moses intervened in a quarrel between two men, but one pushed him away, questioning his authority. This incident served as an indirect divine encounter for Moses. He thrust him away with this question:"**who made you a ruler and a judge over us?"** Under normal circumstances, this man would not have had the audacity to confront Moses considering his status and position in Egypt. Yet, I discern God's hand at work through him. God operates in mysterious ways that surpass

human comprehension. Often, when we read this passage, we focus solely on this man; however, behind him lies God's hands thrusting Moses into his place of formation.

The question arises as to why God allowed Moses to be thrust away? The place of formation or preparation is not a location that anyone willingly chooses to enter. God often thrust individuals to their place of formation. He pushed Moses away from the luxurious palace of Pharaoh and the worldly allure of Egypt to the place where he would be molded for His use. This encounter of being thrust away does not always occur directly, but often through circumstances that guide an individual to their place of formation. For Moses, it was the rejection by the Israelites. To Joseph, it was his brothers. To Jephthah it was his family members. The means God uses are not the focus; what matters is that He successfully leads a person to his place of formation.

May the Lord reveal Himself to you through the chosen means that will guide you to your place of formation. Take a moment to pray over this matter. Pray for God to intervene in your life through the means He has selected until you reach the place where you can be molded. Moses was thrust away with this question, **"Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?"** This incident exemplifies the principle that God always thrust an individual to his place of formation before assigning him a task. Many individuals may believe they are already in their assigned roles, but they have not undergone the necessary formation. You may be engaged in what you perceive as your divine calling, but have you been adequately prepared for it? Many are busy with what they believe is God's calling, but they lack the necessary preparation, resulting in ineffective and unproductive service. The question posed to Moses was not about **what** made him, but **who** made him. Credentials alone are insufficient preparation for the kingdom service. If educational attainment were a requisite qualification for the kingdom service, Moses would not have needed to be thrust out to another place of formation because he should have been qualified already Acts 7:22.

God calls individuals not because they are qualified, but to qualify them. Divine preparation and formation of a correct life are essential for those who wish to be involved in God's work. It is essential to note that even after God has laboured on an individual and considered him fit for His service, he will continue to have a sense of inadequacy. Men who are fit for biblical ministry often perceive their inadequacies and limitations. Many individuals experienced this in their walk with God: Prior to their preparation and formation, they felt qualified, but after being shaped by God, they were filled with a sense of inadequacy. This awareness of inadequacy is what God seeks in individuals He intends to use for His work. This is one of the rationales and objectives of thrusting a man into the place of formation. "…**But he who did his neighbour wrong pushed him away…**" God will always thrust an individual away from His service and purpose unless they submit to the formation of their life that will make them fit for the kingdom service. Many individuals have been thrust away yet they are still engrossed in ministerial activities. The question before Moses was not about what made him. There is a distinction between who made you and what made you. If it was about what made him, he could have presented his credentials, considering his wisdom and eloquence. Before God, the question is who made you rather than what made you. Despite his vast wisdom, Moses could not respond to this question. It was a simple yet profound question. It was an indirect divine encounter.

This narrative illustrates that

being called by God or understanding one's calling does not exempt an individual from divine preparation. God does not select individuals off the streets for kingdom service; He molds them. If a man will not be thrust away from the purpose of God for his life, he must be molded. Many have been pushed away from effective and enduring service despite their ongoing ministerial roles. Are you in this category? Have you been molded? The formation of a life is non-negotiable for individuals God intends to use for His purpose on earth. Note that the question is not even whether Moses was made a ruler or judge; the question is who made him? It is possible that you are made, but the question is: who made you? One may be tempted to dismiss the question, but it holds great significance. Through this question, Moses had the revelation of the need for his formation. Thank God for this revelation that he experienced; without it, he would have continued killing Egyptians and hiding their bodies. He could have slain the young man questioning him if not for his recognition that God was speaking through him. Since this encounter is often indirect, we must implore God to help us discern when He is steering us towards preparation through human hands. The purpose of this prayer is to enable us to understand and recognize God's hands in redirecting us to our preparation. This understanding is essential to our yielding to God.

"Do you want to kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Do you perceive the perception of the people regarding Moses' ministry? In their eyes, Moses was viewed as a murderer. However, Moses perceived his ministry as that of a deliverer. **"...he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them ..."** He was poised to bring deliverance, but the people perceived him differently due to the lack of divine formation and commission. No one had been instructed to listen to him because he had not yet been molded. The absence of divine formation of a man's life often hinders his divine approval and commission. Many mistakenly assume that they are called into the ministry due to their qualifications, but the reverse is the case. Any sense of qualification for ministry actually disqualifies a person. God calls unqualified individuals to qualify them. Even when God has qualified an individual for ministry, he will still perceive his insufficiency. Men qualified for biblical ministry step into their role with an awareness of their insufficiency. An example of this can be seen in Moses. Before he was pushed into his place of formation, he was confident in his qualifications. Unfortunately, he ventured into his supposed ministry with that mindset, resulting in the consequences that occurred.

However, after his formation, he lost his sense of qualification. He became apprehensive and hesitant to step into his desired role due to his perceived inadequacy. It is this sense of insufficiency that God sought in him. This same inadequacy is what God seeks in individual He intends to use for His work. This is the key objective of thrusting a man to a place of formation. Missing this crucial encounter can result in a lack of qualification for kingdom service and subsequently prevent one from being prepared for the next encounter. I urge you to pause at this moment and pray concerning this matter. Pray that God will intersect your life through the chosen means until you arrive at the place of your formation. I pray that the Lord will encounter your life and redirect you to your "Midian" of preparation and formation, regardless of your performance in "Goshen" until you are fit for His use in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Encounter That Brings Divine COMMISSION

And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. Acts 7:30

The forty-year period mentioned in the above passage was spent in the place of formation. Moses concluded his preparation within the course of forty years. The subsequent encounter was deferred until after forty years elapsed. This is a matter of great significance. God will not overlook any of His encounters with men He intends to enlist in His service. Your forty-year experience in the household of "Jethro" must come to an end before you can experience a "Horeb" encounter. The Horeb encounter is a commissioning experience; thus, you must complete your preparation before being deemed suitable to undergo it. Every encounter has something to offer to shape your life and enable you to fulfill God's purpose for your life.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Ex 3:1-4. KJV

This interaction marked the beginning of a divine commission. Moses had reached the point of preparation required for the next stage of his journey in alignment with God's plan for his life. No individual can serve as an effective vessel in the hands of God without undergoing this commission experience. The effectiveness of Moses' ministry stemmed from this crucial moment. Every individual who has walked closely with God has experienced this same encounter. The degree of authority of a messenger is directly linked to the authority of the sender. The divine commission guarantees God's presence with the individual ensuring the success of their mission.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law…"

This narrative illustrates that Moses did not squander the forty years; the impact of that encounter was evident in his life. The use of the word "now" at the beginning of the passage signifies the present time. This indicates Moses' current situation. God has helped Moses to the extent that he could exercise patience with animals. Previously, he had not shown restraint and had killed an Egyptian without warning. Now, he could care for animals without harming them, despite their animalistic nature. It is evident that God has transformed him.

Furthermore, Moses did not only keep the animals but also led them. This encounter transformed a killer into a leader. While he was meant to lead men, he had to first lead animals. This crucial encounter served to eliminate the killer within him and foster the emergence of the deliverer. It is an encounter that requires self to die and ambition to be crucified. It is designed to extinguish the desire to perform God's work and give rise to a vessel willing to submit to God's work. Until a man reaches this point, he is not prepared for the subsequent encounter. As Moses fulfilled the purpose of this encounter, he became qualified for the next encounter that aligned him with God's agenda for his life. No one can be an effective

instrument in God's hands without this encounter. The divine commission is an indispensable experience for anyone seeking to disseminate divine life through God's work. The encounter that prepares a man for God's purpose is incomplete without the encounter that leads to divine commission. This encounter signifies the transition from preparation to active service.

The word commission is an authority to act on behalf of another. Without divine commission, a man lacks the authority to operate effectively in God's service. Divine commission is the driving force behind any mission. Mission without commission is akin to running with a mere statement of intention. The absence of divine commission results in ineffectiveness and may lead one astray from God's purpose. Lack of divine commission can render a Prophet ineffective.

I have not sent these prophets, yet they run around claiming to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they go on prophesying. If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have spoken my words, and they would have turned my people from their evil ways and deeds. Jer 23:21-22 NLT

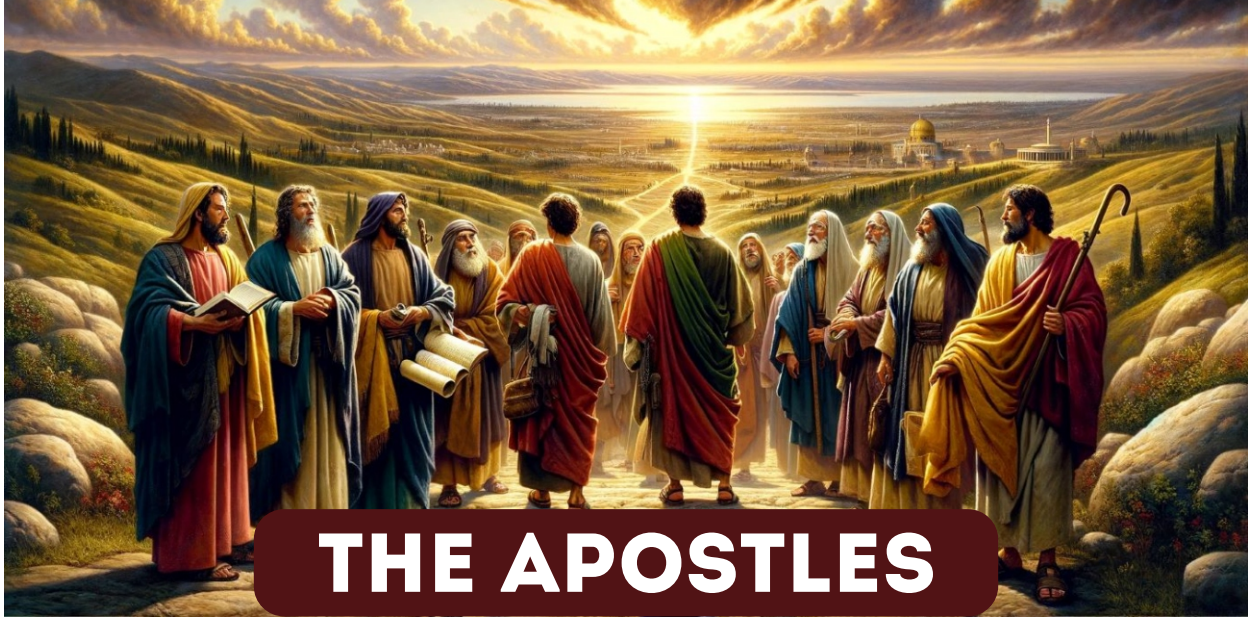
Every divine commission is accompanied by divine backing. Missing this encounter jeopardizes one's ability to fulfill God's purpose. The divine commission is essential for channeling divine life effectively. The encounter that precedes divine commission prepares individuals for God's work, but it is the commission that empowers them to fulfill His purpose. Preparation alone cannot substitute for divine commission. Many have been "prepared" by various means but lack divine commission, hindering their impact on others for God. No matter how prepared one is, effectiveness in the kingdom service is dependent upon divine commission. The authority of a messenger is derived from the authority of the sender. Those who are sent by God carry a greater authority and impact.

Time constraints prevent us from looking into the profound impact of Moses' ministry. One of the key aspects that characterized Moses' ministry was the constant presence of God. This is among the privileges of divine commission. A man who has been sent by God will always have His presence with him.

"And he who sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone..." Jn 8:29.

The impact of Jesus' ministry is undeniable. He was supported by the Father. Every divine commission comes with divine support. No individual can overlook the divine commission and expect to fulfill God's purpose for his life. No matter the time spent in the preparation or the depth of training undergone, one is likely to fade without divine commission. This encounter is similar to breathing life into a lifeless body. The preparation for God's work will lack the necessary divine impetus to align with God's agenda unless the individual has been commissioned. The pitfall for many individuals who have gone through preparation for the kingdom service is the misconception that preparation is a substitute for divine commission. As a result, they attempt to engage in God's work without being commissioned. It's crucial to recognize that many denominations have established their own methods for preparing and commissioning individuals for God's work. The peril of these established methods lies in the false sense of readiness and commission they instill, leading many to forgo the crucial divine encounter that truly commissions individuals into God's service. This may be the reason why many who were commissioned by the church into the work of God lack the required impact in the body of Christ.

Without divine commission, an individual will lack the requisite authority to operate effectively, regardless of his preparation, experience, or credentials.



THE APOSTLES

The impact of the ministry of the Apostles emanated from the divine commission:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20.

This passage is widely recognized as the great commission. At this point, the disciples were tasked with the responsibility to go and make disciples of all the nations. This significant event unfolded following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This commissioning encounter commenced with the phrase; **"And Jesus came and spoke to them…"** it is worth noting that this was not the initial time He appeared to them. In Mk 1:17, He appeared to Simon and Andrew. He encountered them while they were casting their net into the sea. This encounter was crucial in introducing the Lord to them and leading them to their place of formation. His directive at that time was; **"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"** as they progressed in their preparation, they grew capable of embarking on God's ordained plan for their lives. Even though they were prepared, they still needed to be commissioned before proceeding.

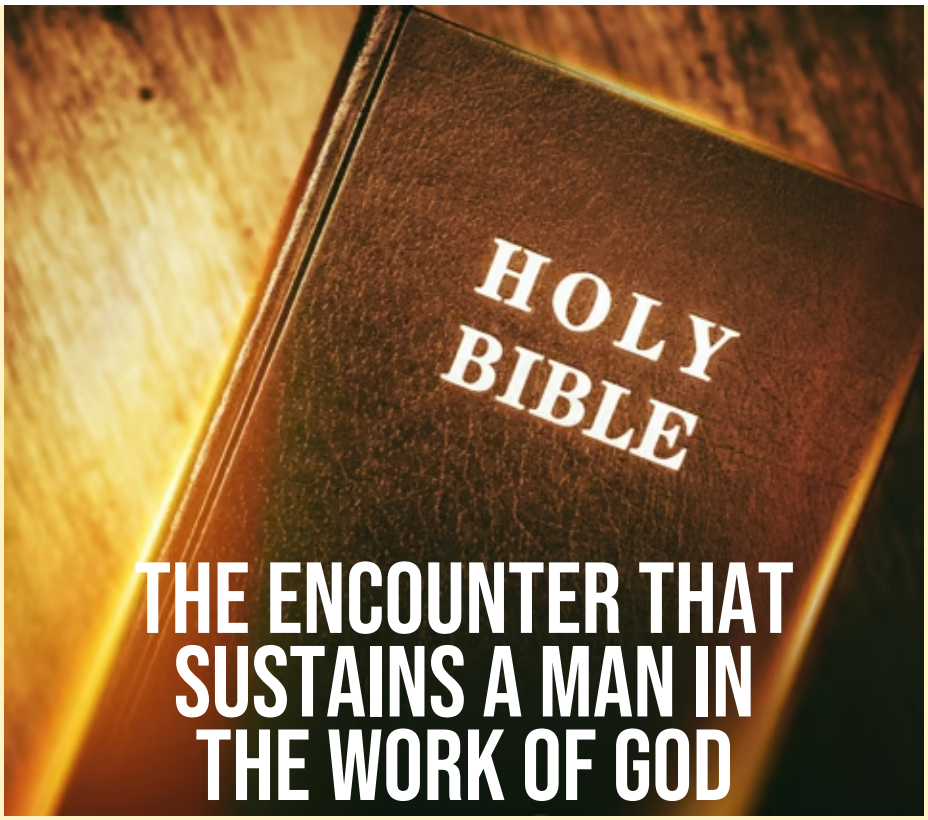
For this reason, Jesus had to approach them. **"And Jesus came and spoke to them…"** This time, He did not instruct them to follow Him; instead, He said; **"Go…"** This encounter bestowed upon them the divine commission. These two significant interactions (the invitation to follow and the instruction to go) are fundamental in the life of every individual aspiring to be suitable for kingdom service and a channel of divine life to others. It is also crucial to note that not everyone who followed was directed to go, yet, one must follow before being instructed to go. **"And Jesus came and spoke to them…"** He encountered those who had come, who had been shaped. Don't forget that divine preparation does not replace divine commission. Regardless of a person's readiness, he will be less effective without being commissioned. Embarking on a mission without being commissioned is similar to running with a mere declaration of intention. It is when a messenger is commissioned that his message transforms into a mission. It is regrettable that many are merely going about with statement of intention due to the absence of divine commission.

The pride of many servants of God lies in the fact that they were called by God. Despite its significance, this should not be our source of glory, (if we should glory at all). Our glory should be in being sent. It is more honourable to be sent then to be called. Those who are called are in the developmental stage while those who are sent are the

"finished products." God can call anyone, regardless of how unprepared and raw he may be, but He will not send someone whom He has not formed. He calls individuals with the intention of molding them into His image before sending them into His field. Many have been called by God but never been sent by Him. However, God selects those He sends from among those He has called. Therefore, we can ascertain that divine commission is non-negotiable for anyone striving to be suitable for the kingdom service or a significant channel of divine life. This is because God supports individuals whom He has commissioned. **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..."** This encounter was only to convey these two important words; **"...Go..."** the impact of the church on the earth today is a direct result of this commission. We are grateful to God for that encounter.

Beloved, have you been commissioned? I do not question whether you have been called of God. Your calling may have been dramatic or high, yet, you will not step into it without being commissioned by God. Remember, being called and being sent are distinct. The significance of divine commission cannot be overstated. Divine commission provides a sense of purpose and accountability.

May God grant you the grace never to miss the requisite encounter that will commission you into what you were created and called to do in Jesus' name. Amen.



THE ENCOUNTER THAT SUSTAINS A MAN IN THE WORK OF GOD

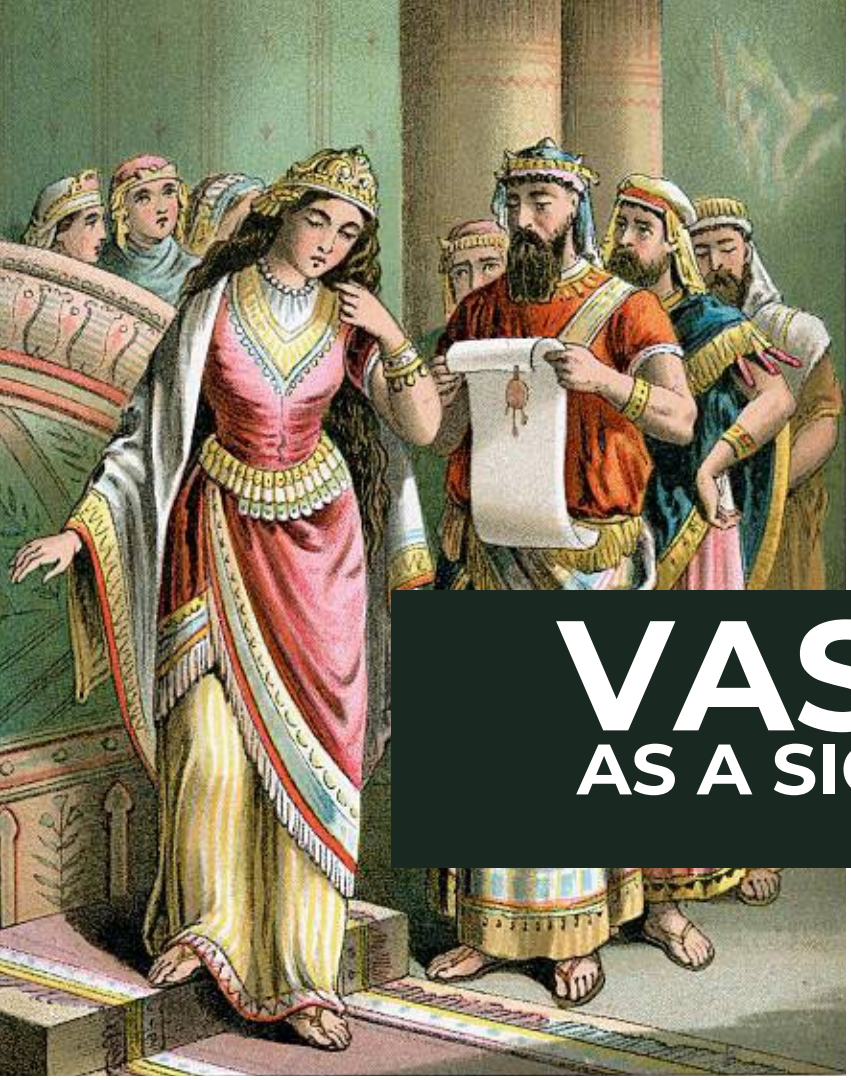
Being sustained in God and in His purpose is of utmost importance. It may not require much for a man to align with God's purpose, but it demands his complete dedication to be sustained in it. While the divine commission holds great significance, the sustenance in God's work surpasses it in importance. Not all individuals who were commissioned for the work of God were able to be sustained in it. Sustaining oneself in God's purpose is more challenging than initially stepping into it. Many who responded to the call, underwent preparation, and were even commissioned for God's work failed to be sustained in it.

There is a specific encounter that a person must have in order to remain sustained in God's purpose. Any prior encounters that

led a person to God's purpose will be futile if they are unable to be sustained in it. This particular encounter is crucial because it is initiated by the individual, unlike other encounters that are divinely initiated. When God aligns a man with His purpose, it then becomes the man's responsibility to sustain it. While God seeks out individuals to align with His purpose, once they are found and brought in, it is the man's duty to seek God for sustenance. These encounters are two-fold. God encounters a man to align him with His plan while the man encounters God to remain sustained it. Not everyone can last in God's purpose. Though God sustains a man in His purpose, He only sustains those who are actively seeking it.

Another aspect that makes this encounter critical is its ongoing nature. Unlike other encounters that may be singular events, this one requires consistent and cumulative interactions with God. To avoid the act of turning aside suddenly from God's purpose, a daily encounter with God is imperative. A man's daily contacts with God are what uphold and sustains him in God's service. Sustenance entails maintaining a connection with God. Without continuous and cumulative encounters with God, one cannot effectively channel God's life to others. To radiate the life of God's life daily, one must meet with God daily. Yesterday's encounter is insufficient for today's service. A man can only bless others if he is coming from a place of communion with God. It is essential to adopt the principle of not engaging with others until we have encountered God. This was the practice of the significant individuals from the past who impacted their generation with God. Just as Jesus Christ exemplified, rising early in the morning to pray before engaging with men (Mk 1:35). Meeting with God before engaging with men is essential to impactful service. While you may have been called and commissioned, the crucial question is: are you still connected with God? Do you radiate the freshness of God's life to others? Those who aspire to be effective in God's service must meet with Him daily. It is through these daily encounters that one remains anchored in God's purpose.

In conclusion, it is essential to reflect and pray over these matters. Pray that the Lord will help you apply what has been shared in this journal to your life. May God grant you the grace to seek Him daily. May God by His mercy make us fit for the kingdom service in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.



VASHTI AS A SIGNPOST

By: RUTH EZE

....continued from the previous volume

WHEN SHE TASTED MEANS (RESOURCES).

"Queen Vashti also made a feast..." It is evident that submission was severely challenged in Vashti's life, leading her to become a victim of this challenge. The separate gathering she arranged was a clear display of her lack of submission to her husband. It is imperative for us to delve into the underlying causes of this behaviour. As we examine this issue, the initial point to consider is that organizing a party is no easy task. The primary obstacle to submission is the availability of resources. It becomes exceedingly challenging to submit when resources are abundant. The root of many family problems arises when resources become accessible. The reality is that Vashti would not have hosted a separate party if she lacked the means to cover the expenses.

It is unsafe to possess resources without the ability to manage them effectively. Numerous women may appear submissive simply because they have not had access to resources. A significant number of women struggle to submit to their husbands once resources are within reach. This underscores the fact that untested submission will not be endorsed by God. Genuine submission can only be validated when it is demonstrated by an individual with access to resources. The submission of certain women towards their husbands is akin to a postponed rebellion, waiting for the opportunity to access resources. Some men have intentionally kept resources out of their wives' reach in order to maintain complete submission. However, this approach only serves to delay the inevitable rebellion. The moment these women gain access to resources, their rebellion will intensify. It is impossible to ascertain the obedience and submission of one's wife without granting them access to resources. Certain men have hindered their wives from pursuing further education out of fear that it may threaten their submission. Others have confined their wives to domestic roles to preserve their submission, unaware of the fact that it is untested and unreliable. Submission can only be authentic and dependable when exhibited by an individual with access to resources. When addressing the connection between resources and submission, it is

crucial to acknowledge that only a woman who has been transformed by the sacrificial love of Christ can remain submissive to her husband in the presence of resources.

Similar to Belshazzar, when he tasted wine (Dan 5:2), he lost his reverence for the Almighty God. Vashti also yielded to the temptation of resources and neglected her submission to her husband, resulting in dire consequences. Observing these individuals who faltered after gaining access to resources, it may seem impossible to maintain submission in such circumstances. However, I urge you to consider a biblical figure that possessed abundant resources yet remained submissive to her husband.

DEBORAH LAPIDOTH

And Deborah, a prophetess the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time Judges 4:4. Her title simply as 'Deborah' may seem ordinary but it reveals her humility and grace. Submission is a virtue often associated with humility, qualities exemplified by Deborah. As a prophetess, she was the divine messenger, a conduit between God and humanity. Her spiritual role was elevated, indicating her significant influence. In addition to her spiritual authority, Deborah also served as a Judge, a position of social prominence and respect. Despite her spiritual and social statues, Deborah remained obedient and submissive to her husband, Lapidoth. Her actions served as a touching example of humility and respect within marriage.

It is crucial to acknowledge Deborah's unwavering commitment to her marital relationship, even amidst her spiritual and social responsibilities. While Lapidoth may not have shared the same public recognition as his wife, his importance is underscored by Deborah's respect and submission to him. Deborah's ability to balance her multiple roles and maintain harmony within her marriage is commendable. Her actions remind us that access to resources should not diminish the respect and submission owed to one's spouse.

Reflecting on Deborah's admirable qualities, we are encouraged to examine our own behaviours and attitudes towards our partners. Material wealth or societal status should never erode the foundation of mutual respect and submission within a marriage. Let us draw inspiration from Deborah's example and strive to emulate her grace and humility. Similarly, may we avoid the pitfalls of pride and disobedience, as demonstrated by Vashti. Let Deborah's legacy guide us in our relationships and interactions with our spouses. "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time" whether you are a prophetess or a judge, remember to fulfill your role as a wife to your husband. Do not allow access to wealth or recourses to make you feel like you can take the place of your husband. Despite being a woman of influence both spiritually and socially, she still fulfilled her role as a wife to her husband. Are you like Deborah? Have you become arrogant due to the small amount of money you possess? If you were in Deborah's position, would you still be a wife to Lapidoth? Consider how your husband has become subservient to you due to the little wealth you have.

Have you noticed a change in the way you speak to your husband since you started acquiring little money? I wish that the money only entered your hands and not your head. The resources seem to have affected your respect, submission and honour towards your husband. My sister, what is hindering your submission to your husband? Is it your substantial salary or your affluent background? God did not grant you wealth as a means of disrupting the harmony in your marriage. On the contrary, He provided it to enhance your relationship with your spouse. Therefore, regardless of your wealth, do everything possible to strengthen your marriage. This is what Deborah did. May you learn from her example. This is the path Vashti should have followed in order to maintain her position as queen in the palace of the king of Media and Persia. May you never fall victim to the error of Vashti, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE KING'S DEMAND

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. Esther 1:10-11

As the feast progressed, King Ahasuerus' heart was gladdened by wine, prompting him to issue a directive. He instructed the seven chamberlains in his court to bring Vashti, the queen, adorned with the royal crown, to display her beauty to the people and the princes: for she was fair to look upon. Before delving into the rationale behind Vashti's invitation, it is essential that we consider its implications first. Upon examining this passage closely, one will observe that Vashti was summoned by the king to showcase her beauty to the people and the princes. Clearly, both the populace and the nobility had assembled. In light of this gathering, what could have prevented Vashti from appearing? What circumstances led to her absence when she was expected to be at her husband's side? It is known that one does not casually appear before the king, but this instance was exceptional. The people, the princes, and even the king's chamberlains were all present. Why was the queen missing at such a crucial moment? Why was queen Vashti, the wife of Ahasuerus, not by her husband's side? Moreover, she was not simply in another chamber where the king could call her easily. Evidently, bringing the queen to this occasion was a significant matter, requiring the convening of the national executive council to dispatch delegates to go and bring her.

My sister, do you resemble Vashti? Many women, despite residing in the same household with their husbands, are perpetually absent when it comes to their spouses' affairs. Although married, their husbands are essentially "alone."Countless men meet premature demises because their wives, who should support them, are missing from their lives. It is evident that there are more widows than widowers. What accounts for this disproportion? Man was not designed to be alone; this was divinely ordained. For a man to lead a prolonged life he

necessitates a companion; otherwise, he may perish prematurely.

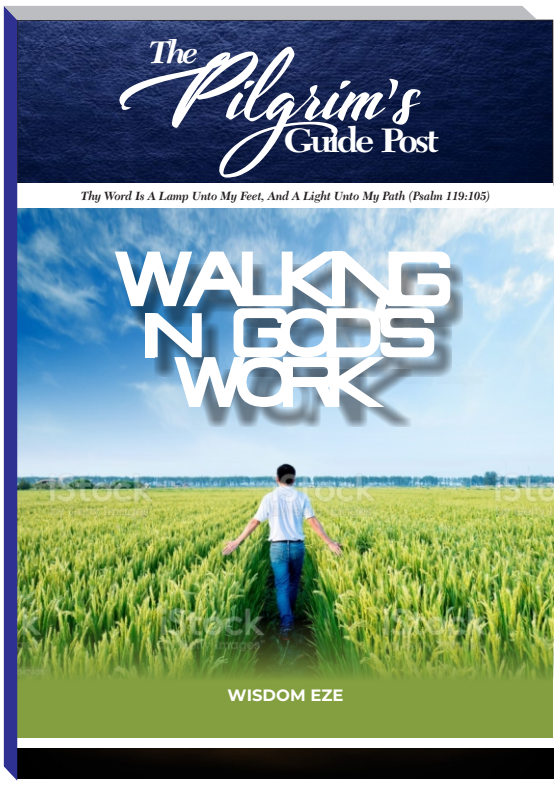
I have discerned that matrimony does not equate to having a helper. One can marry and still lack assistance. Many wives create more challenges than help. Numerous men regret the day they married because the support they sought for was absent. It would have been preferable for a man never to marry than to be devoid of a helpful wife. Regrettably, the prevailing attitude among many women today regarding marriage is misguided. Several women perceive marriage as a means to have a man who will resolve all their predicaments and cater for their needs. Yet, the wife should serve as a helpmeet to her husband, but many contemporary women are merely seeking men to bear their burdens. Some spinsters first assess whether a man possess the capacity to bear both them and their burdens before accepting their proposal. This explains why some husbands remain alone even after marriage.

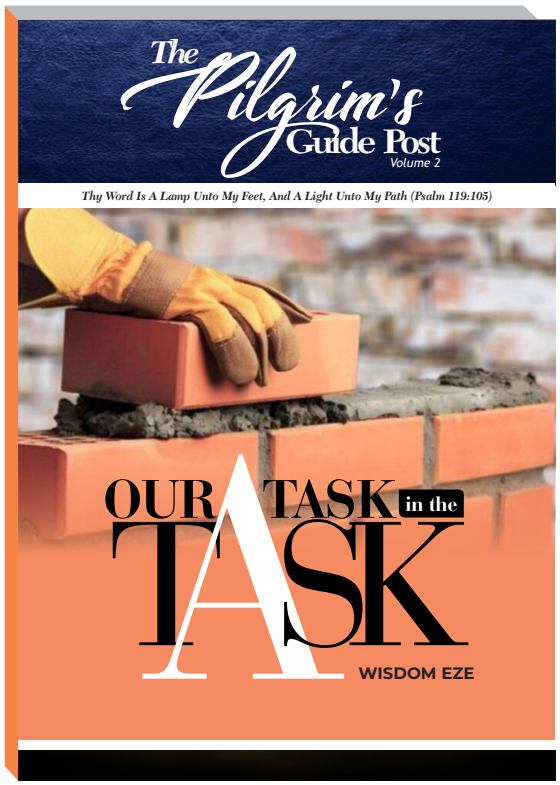
Unless a man marries an Help (Gen 2:18), he will inevitably live and die alone, despite cohabiting with a woman. Vashti had to be fetched by seven emissaries or delegates to partake in her husband's feast. Imagine the scale of the feast that the king undertook, yet his sole helpmeet was absent. My sister, you might be absent from your husband's project (God's agenda), despite residing together under the same roof. Your situation may differ slightly from Vashti's; perhaps you are not entirely absent, but you await the arrival of "delegates."

I cannot identify the "delegates" that your husband must continually dispatch to you before you support him as a helpmeet. These "delegates" could be money for your up keep (money for the reigning fashion, for unaffordable outing etc) a degree of pampering, or even relinquishing his authority as the family head to you. I am uncertain about these "delegates" you wait for. My sister, how distant is you from your husband? It is possible that you are far apart despite sharing the same residence and possibly the same bed. As a wife, it is vital to acknowledge that you were designed to support your husband. Anything that hinders you from fulfilling this role also deprives you of the essence of your existence. You do not require delegates to stand by your husband in God's plan for his life. Your purpose as a wife is to be a help to your husband. Your life's fulfillment as a wife hinges on your ability to fulfill this role throughout your days. Your primary focus should be on fulfilling your mission in your husband's life, which is to assist him. When God created you, He designed you as a companion to the man (Gen 2:18) and not for yourself or your relatives. God intentionally fashioned you as a wife for your husband. The degree to which you support your husband is the measure by which you have prospered in life. It might surprise you to learn that on the final day of your life as a wife, God will not inquire about the trophies and accolades you acquired from your various endeavors; what God will review is the level of assistance you provided to your husband. As a wife, your success in life is defined by your husband.

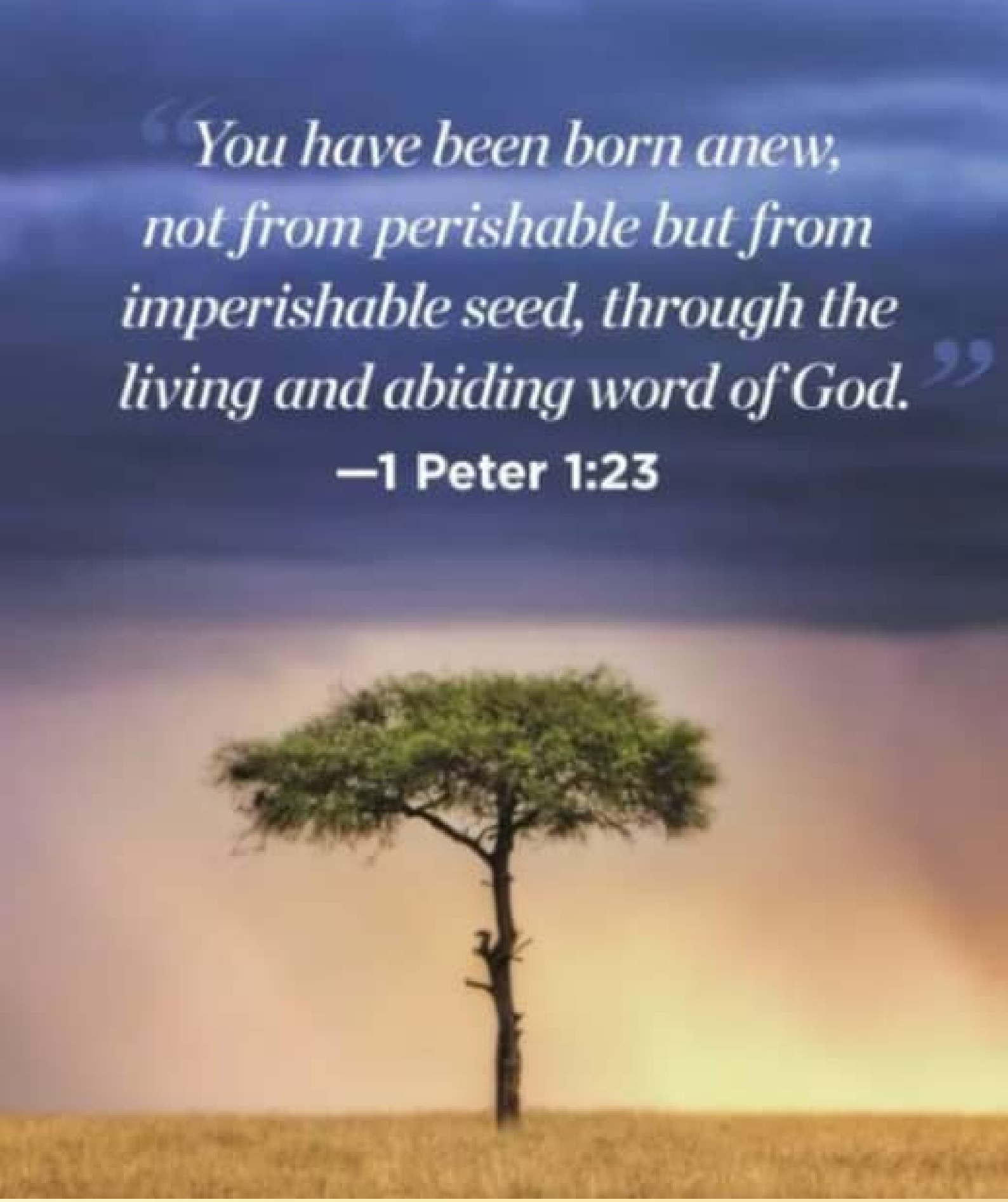
I believe Vashti was unaware of this. Vashti was a headstrong wife, and King Ahasuerus was well aware of it. He understood that she was not the type of wife you could simply summon through a

servant. The king dispatched seven envoys to fetch Vashti. You might assume it was to make her entrance more grand, but no. Vashti was a stubborn and haughty queen. It is my hope that, as a wife, you do not follow in Vashti's footsteps. May you never wait for "delegates" from your husband before responding to him. May the Lord bestow upon you the grace to assume your role as a helper in your husband's life in Jesus' name. Amen.


The Pilgrim's Guide Post
Thy Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet, And A Light Unto My Path (Psalm 119:105)
WALKING N GODS WORK
WISDOM EZE


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OUR TASK in the TASK
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