



**Calling, Anointing and Ordination: Under Whose Authority Do You Lead?
& How Do You Recognize One with YHWH's Authority?**

A Position Paper in Development

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Over the past few years, I have tried on several occasions to discuss the topic of their calling, anointing or ordination with various leaders within the Messianic movement. I have tried to explain that this is a topic of interest because of the confusion I see, and have experienced myself, rather than any kind of challenge to the person. More often than not, there has been defensiveness, suspicion, and even hostility about even **asking** a question. In two instances, the leader has responded candidly with grace, and indicated it **WOULD** be a good thing to talk about, and in fact, needs to be an open topic. Having become familiar with the online Christian Forum ¹ I ventured hosting a discussion thread there on the topic. I found this arena to have some of the same "pitfalls" and struggles as that group, too, has experienced controversy over who has such a recognized authority.

Some leadership people within the Messianic Movement have received seminary training at a Christian denomination of one kind or another. Some have received training at one or another recognized Yeshiva. In both cases, they have moved beyond or outside their training as they have come to the place of honoring both Messiah Yeshua AND the Written Torah. Some people have been called from various walks of life into deeper study of the Word or fellowship with Him, and have developed an expertise in their passion to serve our Messiah. Some have experienced a formal ordination ceremony. Some have experienced a personal calling and anointing which may or may not have been confirmed in a congregation of some sort. Some

¹ www.christianforms.com Scroll down to Messianic Judaism sub forum, then scroll through pages to find Calling, Anointing, Ordination thread if you'd like to follow the discussion that happened there. This article is a follow up to the closing summary I attempted there.

have been personally anointed by another leader who themselves has been ordained by a particular body of Believers.

There seems to be an insecurity here about Who or who has given anyone authority to serve our YHWH Elohim that I have come to suspect is unavoidable given this season of time. Some forum participants seemed to think that the subject would only be of interest to those who had themselves experienced some kind of calling, and that perhaps only such people could even begin to understand or comprehend all that is involved. Though this may be true, it does not lessen my concern that in an age that we have been warned would be filled with loud voices, each one declaring their own truth, and with many false “messiah’s” or anointed ones rising up, that people have an idea of what is happening and what kinds of discernment they may need in order to determine which of these voices are in fact, speaking with genuine YHWH ordained authority and which ones are promoting some personal or organizational agenda.

I also suspect that many individuals may be hearing from the Ruach in some form of calling which they do not fully understand how to receive and walk in.

Here is an attempt to summarize the main points I have understood, along with a brief analysis of how I and our SAM community understand it to be in this day. Please consider this an open discussion rather than a final conclusion as I am certain there remains much to learn. Comments are always welcome to further the conversation.

In order to discuss the topic, there must be some agreeable definition of the three aspects of coming into leadership.

Calling: an experience one has that is understood as a direct communication from our YHWH asking or directing that one to take up a task of some kind.

Anointing: a confirmation of a calling, whether it is a private, personal experience with the Ruach haKodesh/Holy Spirit, or a more public ceremony in which one who is called is physically anointed with oil and prayer, and often with laying on of hands of an already confirmed leader, or by a congregation/community.

Ordination: a formal process of confirming a calling and equipping through some form of specialized training through a ceremony which may also include anointing with oil, prayer and laying on of hands, by a specific group of believers, according to the agreed upon standards of their group.

Calling and anointing have happened from the beginning I think, as we see in the Scriptural pictures of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Joseph, Paul, and so many others. These examples seem to be both personal and public but include some form of an experience with the Living God.

Broadly speaking, ordination, as a ceremony didn't happen until there was a body of believers. Hopefully it is a God directed activity rather than one in which human beings have determined to do something about confirming a leader of their own choice. Many comments have been made about the necessity for training and equipping that some see can only happen in a formal institutional setting and others view as quite possibly happening at a personal or congregational level.

Anytime there is an established body of believers, they will have to set down some guidelines for how they "do things" including affirmation or ordination of leaders.

During times of peace, such criteria are probably under careful scrutiny as there is quiet and a lack of pressing matters that would lend itself to consideration of such important but *deeper* topics—*deeper* for lack of a better word to describe it. During times of war or transition, the guidelines seem to fall due to expediency and the urgency of simply coping, living or survival.

One Scriptural example of such a time of tribulation is that of the time period of the Judges. The joint leadership of Moshe and Aharon during the wilderness journey yielded to Yehoshua and Elazar as they entered in and took possession of their inheritance. After the initial routing of the largest centers of power, the central authority of Yehoshua was dispersed out to each tribe's elders.

Though they had been warned, what followed is probably almost as painful to read as it was to live. As they "fell apart" and failed to fully possess their inheritance, every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Eventually even the Levitical lines were corrupted.

In this environment, our Abba had mercy and raised up judges, unique individual callings and anointings.

This went on, in cycle after cycle of repentance, deliverance, peace, and falling away back to repentance until the transition in Shemuel, who was a Kohathite, yet who functioned as both prophet and judge.

Out of the chaos, the demand went up for a king.

In Sha'ul, they were given a King who looked the part but had no heart. We see a thematic parallel here to the demand for meat and YHWH's response: You want quail? I'll give you quail until it is coming out of your nostrils. There is no doubt that YHWH declared through Shemuel that their desire for a human king was evil, yet He extended mercy IF both King and people would honor and obey Him.

One might say He provided for them a false king or an 'anti-king' clearly warning them of the things that such a king would do, but allowing them to walk through the desires of their hearts and the certain consequences of it.

After that, arose the True King, David. He was and is a picture of Messiah: the picture of our final redemption in His Kingdom.

As history continued, and our Elohim continued to tell His story, we see that even the golden years of the United Kingdom came to an end. As it was not the end of the story, again in our human condition and cycle, he was followed by those who were generally less than faithful.

A Thematic Parallel Today

I believe we are in a period of such transition now. I believe He will act in similar patterns to His actions before.

[Isa 1:26](#) I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."

There is a thematic parallel to the time of the Flood when men's thoughts were only evil continually which led to judgment, and the time of judgment coming when our Yeshua said we are to let the righteous be more righteous and the filthy more filthy; and the set apart more set apart. (Rev. 22:11) In such times, individuals rise up and do what seems right in their own eyes.

The insecurity and lack of clarity of what it means to be called, anointed or ordained in our day may well have to do with the insecurity of the times and the transitions taking place as we are moving toward the time of that final "anti-king/messiah" and awaiting the triumphant return of the True King of Yisrael, Messiah Yeshua! How many people do you yourself know who have experienced some kind of harm in their faith communities? Chances are it is a large number. Betrayals of trust abound and the news media makes them clear around the world. Many are feeling betrayed and afraid to trust another and so isolate themselves. Yet many are also looking for someone to tell them exactly what to do so they don't have to study for themselves.

We are between the proverbial rock and hard place. Who has authority to establish or approve those in leadership?

Judaism has a long history and set of traditions, and thankfully, has kept Torah despite much attention to Talmudic interpretations. Yet, those who honor/participate/serve in Judaism today follow the line of those who did not recognize Messiah Yeshua.

Christianity has a long history and a set of traditions, and thankfully, has kept Jesus/Yeshua in view, despite misunderstandings of Him in His true identity, but those who honor/participate/serve in Christianity follow the line of those who do not recognize Torah as

valid for Messiah's followers.

Both John/Yochanan and Jesus/Yeshua ministered outside the "church system" of their day...as many of our Messianic fellowships are "outside" of a particular "system."

Yeshua and Yochanan ministered at a time when the "official church system" was ripening to full corruption, even having a political appointee as high priest.

The argument between those who received Messiah Yeshua and those who did not, led to division. Is it not still this same division evident today? Consider the ongoing strife over the place gentiles have in Messianic groups as well as over the question of what it means for all Israel to be re-gathered. Witness the recent brouhaha over Eddie Long and Ralph Messer, crowning Long "the King", while wrapped in a Torah scroll.² This was followed by a torrent of complaints that Messer isn't a "real" Rabbi. (*Please note: I am NOT supporting what was done and found it very offensive. My point here though was in regard to the question of what qualifications are seen as "real" and acceptable.*) There is a great deal of competition and disease between the Messianic groups founded by those of the House of Judah and those founded by those of the House of Israel. One sad example of this in my knowledge was the cancellation of a major Messianic worship leader at a "two house" conference because he was warned by one of the major Messianic Judaism groups that his work would be boycotted if he chose to perform there. There are varying degrees of cooperation between *any* Hebrew oriented fellowship and traditional Christian church group, which is in itself a massive understatement.

Within Christian groups there is evidence of great struggle as well. I have seen a survey of clergy indicating their personal lack of faith and struggle to carry on or determine to leave.³ Two years ago a woman in Canada told me of a video she saw on television with various pastors, hiding their identity, speaking of their lack of faith and how they cope. She was unable to give me the identifying information and I have been unable to locate it. It is no secret though that organized Christian churches/denominations are struggling, losing members and generally not proving able to inspire and equip their people as fully mature and yielded to God

² <http://www.empowernetwork.com/bellyoffire/blog/ralph-messer-crowns-eddie-long-king-with-torah-scroll/> This site has the original videos of the event with some commentary. It is provided here so that you can see the original events, not necessarily in agreement with all comments. March 3, 2012

³ http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/daniel_c_dennett/2010/03/skeptical_clergy_a_silent_majority.html Editorial on various research projects and writers on the topic. March 3, 2012

<http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/Non-Believing-Clergy.pdf> **Preachers who are not Believers**; Daniel C. Dennett and Linda LaScola; Center for Cognitive Studies*;Tufts University, Medford MA 02155; March 15, 2010

http://www.religiondispatches.org/dispatches/danielschultz/2690/atheists_in_the_pulpit Another commentary, including reference to the Tufts University study.

disciples. We have many in countries around the world who may have a cultural expression of their faith but lack the true heart. George Barna's book, entitled, Revolution⁴ is one extensive study that documents the issues in America.

Judaism, and its various sects today, continues to deal with concerns and fears about losing their Jewish identity as so many members want to identify with the larger culture in which they find themselves; a perennial problem, really. In the Messianic Movement, I think we are seeing a return to the same unresolved struggles of the First century; the Judah/Joseph battle.

Both faith groups, traditional Christianity and Judaism, in all their various expressions are generally experiencing a falling away. Though many may stay involved in a faith group at one level or another, this is not always a clear indication of the state of their personal faith. Many of us understand that Christians and Jews are both "the People of the Book" and whatever our differences, can see greater similarity here than among all the other competing faith groups in the world, yet even this fragile unity is easily disrupted.

In such a difficult environment, is it really any wonder that both shepherds and sheep are uncomfortable? So who is it that YHWH has given the authority to speak in His Name? How does He make that clear to both individuals and faith-based groups of all varieties?

Primary Question:

Despite the sure and certain knowledge that He always preserves a remnant even during times of great apostasy,

If neither body of Believers is walking in the fullness of Messiah and His Word, have they not both fallen from the position of being able to faithfully designate/ordain leaders?

In the ongoing dispute over who has "real" credentials and spiritual authority, whether a Jewish training or a Christian training is acceptable enough, isn't it only to be expected that there will be a multitude of individuals who will rise up, every man doing that which is right in his own eyes?

Is it possible that it is time once again for YHWH to raise up Judges?

Unique and individual callings and anointings to serve His purpose in His plan for His people.

⁴ http://www.barna.org/store?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=3&category_id=1

Who among us really wants to endure life under a false king? Yet how many among us are more concerned that we “fit in” and can keep our acceptable lifestyle and standing in our communities? How many are willing to press in and be good Bereans, studying His Word for deeper understanding and insight and His discernment?

As we approach the time of Messiah's return, we do also know that the multitude of those claiming to be "messiah" will grow again as it did in the first century. Many individuals will be clamoring to be recognized as a "messiah" to lead the people, just when we know that among them will be that first false king; the anti-king; the *Maschiach tachat*.

When so many people are basically Biblically illiterate, we approach the time when such knowledge and discernment will be crucial to their spiritual and at times, physical safety.

Clearly, there will be YHWH honoring judges, shepherds, teachers and leaders and just as clearly there will be false ones. The roles that calling, anointing and ordination play in the process will probably not grow more clear until as in the days of Samuel, when it was clear from Bathsheba to Dan that He was a prophet of YHWH, He does so once again.

May we have His ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

If you would like to enter into a discussion with others who are interested to pursue this topic, please email us at info@set-apart-ministries.org to express your interest and we will contact you with possible meeting times.