

# Shepherd to King

## Introduction

The Jews failed to recognise their Messiah when he came because they were expecting the wrong thing. They had failed to read the clear prophecies describing his advent or understand the basis of example after example of godly leaders in their own history.

The Jews believed that the coming Deliverer would arrive, as it were, on a white charger, with all the retinue of a great king and would smite their hated enemy and oppressor, the Roman Empire. The Messiah, they thought, would be an all-conquering hero, grinding under his feet all Israel's enemies. Instead, he came as a shepherd to lead the sheep (the chosen people in Israel) and to die for them as a suffering saviour prophesied by Isaiah.

What they failed to realise was that, in God's wisdom, Jesus would come quietly as a shepherd before he came violently as a reigning king (at the Second Coming). God's pattern is: shepherd first, king afterwards. This pattern runs throughout Scripture.

Also they failed to realise that judgment begins with the household of God (1 Pt 4:17). Jesus, as Deliverer, first had to deliver his people from their sin before he came with his kingdom to deliver his people from their enemies.

So, Jesus' role in the world as it stands now, was as a shepherd – and he sets the pattern for divine stewardship until the end of this world. Thus God expects (demands) all leaders (whether of nations or churches) to act like a shepherd. This is because they are delegated authorities under God, the Great Shepherd, and because they are called to shepherd the people who are God's property.

## Jesus as shepherd

We need not develop the fact that Jesus' role as God's steward in the incarnation was as a shepherd. He plainly stated this many times and it was prophesied in the OT. For example:

Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot *at him* and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty *God* of Jacob (from there *is* the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel). Gen 49:22-24

The LORD *is* my shepherd. Ps 23:1

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth! Ps 80:1

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Jn 10:11

I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. Jn 10:14

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well. Heb 13:20-21

The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. Rev 7:17

The whole of Jesus' life is a testimony to the fact that he shepherded God's sheep; he lived to serve other people ('I am among you as the One who serves,' Lk 22:27). In this he is the lasting precedent and example of how church leaders are to minister – they serve the church as shepherds not as kings or lords.

## Ruling is serving

In this world, the order of God is that ruling is serving. The divine principle of leadership (in any situation) is that leaders serve. This is especially true in the church. This service, in Scripture, is particularly likened to shepherding sheep. Thus kings are spoken of as shepherds of the nation.

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, 'Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, "You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 2 Sam 5:1-2

Whom I [God] commanded to shepherd My people Israel. 2 Sam 7:7

Who says of Cyrus, '*He is* My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid.'" Isa 44:28

God himself sets the precedent for this;

The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. Ps 23:1-2

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth! Ps 80:1

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong *hand*, and His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward *is* with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry *them* in His bosom, *and* gently lead those who are with young. Isa 40:10-11

If God rules his people as a shepherd, then it should be no surprise that he expects that his delegated servants do the same. What are the basic principles of shepherding? They are:

- *Protecting and safeguarding the sheep.* This means putting your own life at risk for someone else's property.
- *Leading the sheep to water.* They can't find water for themselves but have to be led. If near a river, the sheep had to be led down a safe path to the water. If it was a well then the water had to be brought up and troughs filled.
- *Feeding the sheep.* This means finding appropriate food for the sheep. There is a danger that sheep will eat toxic plants that look appetising; shepherds must actually feed sheep and prevent this.
- *Gathering the sheep.* Sheep can be scattered; the shepherd must gather them and secure them as a unit. This means that any escaped sheep must be found and brought back.
- *Herd the sheep into sheepfolds.* At home, the sheep must be driven into the owner's sheepfold at night for protection. In the wild, it meant that the shepherd had to make a rough sheepfold of thorn bushes and himself sleep in the gap so that no sheep would wander out while he was asleep. He was literally the door of the sheepfold.
- *Washing the sheep.* Periodically sheep need to be cleansed of all the muck that they have accrued or their health is threatened.

- *Shearing the sheep.* Sheep can overheat in the summer if their fleece is too thick. Shearing not only helps the sheep but also provides valuable material for the use of the owner.

I will leave the spiritual lessons that can be learned from these tasks to others; though they are easily ascertained.

All this is hard work. In God's order, ruling is not a life of ease getting others to do the work for you (as with kings), but is a constant life of hard work, looking out for others. In the material world, kings get served; in God's world, leaders serve as shepherds.

### **Leaders will be judged as shepherds**

Both leaders in the world and in the church will be judged to see just how pastoral their governance was. This is exemplified in how well they looked after the poor, weak, needy, sick, disabled, elderly and vulnerable. This is why God repeatedly in his word commands leaders to look after the poor and weak, over and over again – this is what shepherds are supposed to do. We just offer a few examples:

If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. Deut 15:7-8

For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.' Deut 15:11

The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for a moment? ... *Yet* he will perish forever like his own refuse ... For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor. Job 20:5-7, 19

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. Ezek 16:49

Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by *being* righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor. Dan 4:27

Thus all leaders will be judged by God on the basis of how much good they did to the poor and needy. If they failed to do good to the poor, or worse, if they actually harmed the poor, they will suffer God's eternal condemnation.

Jesus made an unusual statement, that is often ignored by everybody, he said:

'Many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.' Matt 19:30

'The last will be first, and the first last.' Matt 20:16

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.' Mk 9:35

'Many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.' Mk 10:31

'Indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.' Lk 13:30

Notice how many times this is recorded in Scripture. Anything that is repeated in the NT is very important and requires study; this is no exception. What does this mean?

It is very simple. It means exactly what it says: that is, those who are first in this world will be last in God's world. Those who hold the prime positions in this world will be servants in the next one. The only way to avoid this demotion is to rule in this world as a servant, then you will be promoted in the next world. Those who rule like kings in this world will live as servants in the next one.

**'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.'** ... **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.** Jm 4:6, 10

All those church leaders who ruled the church in the manner of men, in the manner of the world (which is, in fact, the manner of the devil); that is, those who ruled like kings – will all be demoted at the Day of Judgment and be committed to serve everybody in the new world. The church leaders who make much of their authority and power now, who expect men to look up to them, who act as Lords, who expect to be treated as an 'apostle' or a 'prophet', will find themselves in heaven (if they get there at all, many won't) sweeping the floors of little old ladies who prayed faithfully for many years.

Peter warned specifically against the modern method of ruling the church,  
**Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.** 1 Pt 5:2-4

Nothing could be clearer. Church leaders (elders) must lead as shepherds and not as lords. Yet everywhere around the world we see churches adopting patterns of leadership, often based upon a hierarchy, leading to a senior figure who is a lord under different names (apostle, prophet, senior pastor, minister, vicar, moderator, pope, archbishop etc.). Almost every church in the world is disobeying, not only Peter's command, but the voiced command of Christ on the earth; a command he appears to have repeated many times.<sup>1</sup>

### **A good British example of a shepherding king**

We have made the point that all rulership on earth today is to be based upon shepherding, both in the church and in the world. All rulers will be judged on this basis. Here is an example of a king who was also a shepherd in his governance.

Good kings have always been beloved by the people and, despite the long trajectory of time, have remained famous. One example of this is Alfred the Great [848-900], father of England.

Alfred's reign was indeed like that of a shepherd. His first task was onerous in having to defeat the Danes and establish his own kingdom in Wessex - the first task of a shepherd is to protect the sheep. At this time Viking raids had resulted in most of England capitulating to Norse rule and the Norsemen began to settle down (their normal practice) and put down roots. As they settled in the north, they also expanded south.

At first Alfred was on the run with only a handful of men, eking out a meagre living in the Somerset marches. It was at this time that he burned bread ('the cakes') in the hut of a poor old woman. However, in time he sustained defeats on the Danes<sup>2</sup>, notably at Edington, in Wiltshire, and established southern boundaries to Viking rule (The Danelaw,

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<sup>1</sup> I am aware that quotes from the synoptics often refer to statements made on the same occasion; However, read the context of the verses above and see that Jesus made this statement more than once.

<sup>2</sup> At that time, 'Danes', 'Norsemen' and 'Vikings' were synonymous.

above this line was Viking territory). In victory he was also magnanimous and managed to convert his enemy Guthrum, who was baptised as a Christian.

After further necessary battles, by which he secured London and enhanced Wessex into southern England, Alfred improved English security by building ships to patrol the coast, and thus was the 'father of the English navy'.

But Alfred continued to shepherd his people in other ways. He established law and order to ensure peace and set up the basis of a parliamentary system. He built churches to promote Christianity and built schools to educate the people. He decreed that children should learn to read English and he himself translated several books from Latin. He began a history of England, called the '*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*', one of the first English history books. He also assisted in the translation of parts of the Bible into English.

Probably more than any British king before or since, and despite living a short life, Alfred's reign was truly that of a shepherd. He is justifiably remembered as 'Great'.

### **The point**

Leadership is service and rulers should lead their people as shepherds. This is especially true in the local church.

In the light of all this, it is no surprise that we see in Scriptural history that God gave gifts of good shepherds to his people to lead them at vital points in their history. They were good rulers because they had a pedigree of being experienced shepherds.

## **Key leaders of Israel who were shepherds first**

### **Abram**

God called Abram out of the hustle and bustle of a large, opulent and very prosperous city in Mesopotamia. He went into the unknown lands of Canaan herding sheep and goats. In fact, as well as flocks, Abram had 'oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels' (Gen 12:16).

Though never a formal king, in one sense Abraham is the world's greatest king after Christ. God promised this to him,

**I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Gen 12:2-3**

If a man is the head of a great nation then he is, de facto, a king. Though becoming a prosperous livestock owner and the owner of some land, the full effect of the promise to Abram is in the resurrection (Gen 11:10).

### **Jacob**

Though Jacob was never a formal king, he ascended to become the tribal leader of what would become Israel, named after him. As such he was virtually a king at the end of his life and held in deep respect by Pharaoh, then the world's greatest monarch. In fact, Jacob blessed Pharaoh and the person giving the blessing is greater than the person receiving the blessing. At that point Jacob was the most important man on the earth.

But before Jacob had any fortune or even a family, he was a shepherd (Gen 46:31-34). He first served his father and then served Laban for many years herding sheep and goats,

gaining large flocks of his own in that time (Gen 30:43). The man who was later a ‘Prince with God’ was originally a mere shepherd.

### **Joseph**

We are introduced to the life of Joseph in Genesis in this manner, ‘This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock’ (Gen 37:2). Joseph, with his brothers, was a shepherd of his father’s flocks.

We are familiar with all the exciting details of Joseph’s life, worthy of a Hollywood movie. After being betrayed by his jealous brothers, thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, slandered and falsely imprisoned, he finally rises to prominence by wisely interpreting pharaoh’s dream. Seeing the wisdom in the youth, Joseph is promoted to be the grand vizier of Egypt; the number two position in the greatest empire in the world at that time. To all effects and purposes, this is kingship (under an emperor).

Joseph follows the divine pattern by first serving as a shepherd before gaining authority as a king.

### **Moses**

Moses was not officially a king either but he served God in shepherding the 2 million strong children of Israel as much as any foreign king. Moses is the only man of God in the OT who came typically close to fully symbolising the Lord Jesus, being a prophet, from a priestly family and also a virtual king. Other were prophets, kings or priests; a very few were both a king and a prophet (e.g. David); but Moses had the essence of all three offices. This is why he was the most important character in Judaism.

Yet Moses too began his life as a shepherd, keeping flocks for forty years. Moses tended the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, in the desert (Exod 3:1). He learned a great deal about shepherding people in those years, which is why God sent him there for so long.

### **David**

He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes that had young He brought him, To shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands. Ps 78:70-72

David is the archetypal king of Israel; the man close to God’s heart and loved by God. We do not need to establish his kingly credentials. But David was originally a shepherd. When Samuel goes to meet David, he is keeping the flocks (1 Sam 16:11). When Saul first sent messengers to his father Jesse, David was with the sheep (1 Sam 16:20).

### **Conclusion**

So, without further examination of Biblical history, we can safely say that many (most?) of the key men that God provided to lead his people were first trained as shepherds, herding animals. Having learned many principles in this employment, they were better able to lead God’s people when called to it.

## **Bad kings who were not shepherds first**

In a similar manner, we can evaluate the bad kings of Israel and note that these had no training as shepherds.

### **Judges – no shepherds or kings**

It is very interesting that in the worst period of Israel's history, where every man did what was right in his own eyes (i.e. rebellion, anarchy); when there was no king and constant apostasy; when even the judges that God raised up to deliver Israel from her enemies all fell into this or that sin, some flagrantly (like Samson); in this period we have no mention of shepherds. In fact there is only one mention of flocks and sheepfolds, and that is in a song not a historical narrative (Jud 5:16). There is no mention of goats or oxen and only one mention of sheep; but this is an indication of the lack of them due to judgment (Jud 6:4).

This is fascinating; it shows the connection of shepherding and kingship by revealing a lack of both. Where there are lots of references to shepherding and flocks, there is God's rule in the men of God chosen by him (e.g. Genesis). Where there is no mention of shepherding, there is anarchy, judgment and invasion but no mention of divine rule in godly men.

Shepherding and kingly rule go together in God's eyes.

### **Saul**

Though made the shepherd of Israel by his anointing to the monarchy, Saul had no idea how to shepherd his people. He becomes the first example of a bad, unrighteous, ungodly king. His early life is not described, but he was no shepherd. He appears to have been a country boy reared in a wealthy family (they had servants). Part of his father's money was tied up in rearing donkeys, which is where we first find Saul (seeking lost she-donkeys with his servant).

### **Ahab**

Ahab was one of Israel's worst kings, the son of Omri, who himself was the worst king up to that time. Ahab took evil even further than his father, 'Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him,' (1 Kg 16:30). Ahab was responsible for bringing in idolatry facilitated through his Sidonian wife Jezebel. There is no mention of his ever being a shepherd because he was raised in affluence as a king's son.

Most of the kings that followed, all bad in Israel's Northern Kingdom, were raised in royal families and had no experience as a shepherd.

## **Jesus' kingship is revealed at the Second Coming**

Jesus fulfilled his role as a shepherd during his ministry on earth and continues to shepherd his people in his reign from heaven. However, the next time that the Lord Jesus returns to earth in the flesh, it will be in terrible glory to bring divine wrath against sinners and all enemies of God. That will be kingly rule. Those who never knew Jesus as their shepherd on earth will be forced to bow before Jesus the King as enemies under his feet on the Day of Judgment.

The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Ps 110:1

He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 1 Cor 15:25

He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things*. Eph 1:22

Jesus returns to wipe out his enemies and all who resisted him, beginning with the devil and all his works.

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. 2 Thess 1:7-9

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 2 Thess 2:8

There are many leaders in the radical Charismatic movement who are trying to act like this now, as if they were a king like Jesus (actually they claim this for themselves). Thus such men try to call down fire from heaven on their critics (who are often godly men). They talk about killing their opponents, or wanting to. One even wished he had a '*Holy Ghost machine gun*' to kill his critics.<sup>3</sup> [This alone, by the way, is sufficient evidence that this man is a charlatan and a false prophet. The power he exhibits in knocking people down with a wave of his hand is, therefore, occult and not of God.]

This sort of behaviour is proof that these people are trying to act like kings now, with the power of life and death over men. The very best they can hope for is to be last in the kingdom; but many will find themselves outside the doors of it, weeping.

He [Jesus] will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. Lk 13:27-28

None who act in this manner will be used by God because they are not shepherds. They do not want to be shepherds; they would rather be kings now with wealth and great riches (something else that God condemns in this world<sup>4</sup>).

Kingship for believers is restricted to the age to come and not now. For instance, on the Day of Judgment we will judge angels; that is the portion of a king.<sup>5</sup> Many of these gifts and offices given to the church are only potential now and come to consummation after the Second Coming. Great damage comes to the church when men try to apprehend gifts today that are part of the new world later (the whole Restoration movement in the UK was based on this misapprehension as is the current Charismatic, global revival, triumphal, postmillennial, Dominionism).

The future dispensation for believers includes a materialistic manifestation of what is currently spiritual. Thus, for instance, they have new, resurrection bodies that are glorious whereas our body today is a body of death. The kingdom of Christ is then material, occupying the world and the universe, but today Christ's kingdom is spiritual on earth.<sup>6</sup> Thus kingship in Christ is manifested in the new world and not now; in this world today we are persecuted, oppressed and afflicted.

This mistake of pretending that we can experience what is only for the future dispensation is a very serious mistake, and one on which the Charismatic Movement is largely based.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Don't attack God's servants ... you stink... I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun – I blow your head off.' Benny Hinn; TBN's *Praise The Lord Show*, 9.11.90.

<sup>4</sup> Matt 19:23-24; Lk 1:53, 6:24, 18:24-25; 1 Tim 6:9; Jm 1:11, 5:1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 6:3.

<sup>6</sup> Jn 18:36, 'Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here".'



Kingship is not for now, not for this world.

## Practical effect: The need of church leaders to be shepherds not kings

One of the chief problems in the church today is that it is filled with men who act like they are kings over the Lord's people. Indeed, some even dare to teach that this is how all Christians should behave, acting as if they are lord's on the earth, commanding anything they want (especially in Word Faith circles). This is closer to occult magic rather than godliness.<sup>7</sup>

In church leadership they take to themselves titles of authority, such as apostle, prophet, or senior pastor, something Jesus specifically told us not to do.<sup>8</sup> They act as sole authority in the church when there is no teaching at all to do this. The clear principle, following the Jewish synagogue (the early model of the local church) is a team of equal elders over a small number of people in the community.

The way they lead and teach the people is not by example, support, nourishing, cherishing, and encouraging, but by pretending to hear categorical strategies from God (which no one else hears) and then pass that down (often through tiers of leaders) to the people as a divine dictat (even if it differs from what the people want). This is no different from being like a pope. In fact, it utterly denies the crucial doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Something many godly Englishmen died to preserve.

Jesus established the model for church leaders, and that was servant-hood like a shepherd. He not only modelled it, he gave repeated instruction on it and demanded it. Any autocratic church leader is a blasphemer. We will take just one example:

And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.' Lk 22:25-27

There is nothing difficult to understand in these verses; there is no complicated doctrine or difficult words to translate; it is simple. Yet no one obeys it.

The command is not to act like kings in the church. Leaders must serve and it is hard work that takes all your time.

Now is not the time to live like kings; now is the time to be shepherds.

Towards the end of his ministry, Paul warned the church about this very matter, prophesying that church leaders would arise who would draw people after themselves instead of being shepherds under God, the owner of the sheep.

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<sup>7</sup> Magic is using supposedly 'spiritual' methods to change your environment or circumstances; such as casting spells to inflict damage on an enemy. One Charismatic equivalent is visualising a desired bicycle, in every detail, until it magically appears (as taught by Yonggi Cho).

<sup>8</sup> Matt 23:6-12, 'They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.' 'Rabbi' was the word used for an authoritative religious teacher, and thus implies any title of religious authority. Note that Jesus emphasises, 'you are all brothers'.

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. Acts 20:28-31

Shepherds serve the people and draw them after Christ; kingly leaders draw people after themselves. Paul issued this warning to avoid kingly leaders who make servants of God's people and speak perverse things.<sup>9</sup> Very few in church history have heeded this warning.

## The reason why shepherding leadership (in all spheres) is vital today

Something in modern living is becoming apparent to sane observers, and especially psychologists. It is something that has been observed for decades by the wise but rarely commented upon. However, recent journals have now highlighted this feature of society and brought it into the open.<sup>10</sup>

There are two aspects to this observation. The first is that capitalistic, western society is not ruled by rationalism but by a form of madness (Christians would say, 'sin'). The second is that those who rise to the top positions of authority in this world are mostly psychopaths. Selfless, altruistic, benefactors are rarely found at the heads of government or commerce.

Now 'psychopath' does not mean 'serial killer'. The following is a psychological assessment of the first section of testing for psychopathy:

*Factor 1: Interpersonal/Affective*<sup>11</sup>

- Glibness/superficial charm.
- Grandiose sense of self-worth.
- Pathological lying.
- Cunning/manipulative.
- Lack of remorse or guilt.
- Shallow affect (genuine emotion is short-lived and egocentric).
- Callousness; lack of empathy.
- Failure to accept responsibility for his or her own actions.

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<sup>9</sup> 'For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there'. Jm 3:16

<sup>10</sup> Such as Jon Ronson's new book, *The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry*, Picador (2012). Amazon Book Description: 'What if society wasn't fundamentally rational, but was motivated by insanity? This thought sets Jon Ronson on an utterly compelling adventure into the world of madness. Along the way, Jon meets psychopaths, those whose lives have been touched by madness and those whose job it is to diagnose it, including the influential psychologist who developed the Psychopath Test, from whom Jon learns the art of psychopath-spotting. A skill which seemingly reveals that madness could indeed be at the heart of everything . . . Combining Jon's trademark humour, charm and investigative incision, *The Psychopath Test* is both entertaining and honest, unearthing dangerous truths and asking serious questions about how we define normality in a world where we are increasingly judged by our maddest edges.'

<sup>11</sup> Hare Psychopathy Checklist.

Now those of us who have moved in reasonably high levels of corporate business circles will find this very familiar. The features above not only summarise many senior managers and executives, but also the careerist, junior, go-getters with ambitious aspirations.

None of this should be surprising to the believer since the world is ruled (through sin, not legal authority) by Satan. The devil controls men through their sin and through the promotion of sinful pursuits. The good that God desires for the world is not done but the evil that helps the devil control men is done. This is madness.

It also partially explains why many political decisions are made that appear to be sheer madness to ordinary people. Top government leaders are dominated by their insecurities and take positions that strengthen their own position rather than do the country good. Personal political betterment or survival is placed before the national good. Thus policies are decided that line the pockets of their supporters or tick the boxes of their constituency voters. In the worst case scenarios, politicians are simply putting in place strategies that form key parts of the devil's plans for the future. This is surely madness.

However, I would also venture to say that these character traits are also commonly found amongst senior church leaders. They are certainly evidenced in the ethos surrounding American televangelists and Word Faith prophets; but I have seen them in many lesser places.

The more that church leaders adopt worldly tactics, methods and hierarchies for running the church, the more they will be tainted by the psychopathy that rules the world. The more you adapt a mad system; the madder you become.

The only way to avoid this is to become the very opposite of these character traits – give your life sacrificially to serve other people, put yourself last as a servant to help others, seek the good of others in all that you do. In other words, be a shepherd.

The model of leadership adopted by Jesus and commanded by Jesus is the opposite of the model seen in the world. The greatest leaders in the world are psychopaths ruling a world of madness. The church, however, must be the opposite; a place of altruism led by shepherds where everybody seeks the good of their neighbour more than themselves.

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## Appendix

### References to Christians as kings

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. 1 Peter 2:9

And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:6

And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.' Rev 5:9-10

Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Rev 20:6

Some may question: 'Surely Scripture tells us that we are kings and therefore living like kings in the world now is entirely proper?'

Certainly not; this is misreading Scripture.

Firstly, church leaders and national leaders must not rule like kings but like shepherds because God's word tells them so in very clear terms. There is no confusion in this command.

Secondly, we have explained that most of the features of the kingdom and the inheritance in Christ are for the future age, not now. Kingship is not for now. We are called to kingship, but this is only manifested materially in the new world.<sup>12</sup>

The inheritance of Christ is ministered spiritually in this age not materially. Our 'royal priesthood' is currently manifested in worship to God. In the new world it will also include physical acts of rule.

It is accepted that the early church in the apostolic age understood their spiritual privileges better than any subsequent age and did great things. If the early Christians had understood that they were kings in the material sense, they would have overcome the Roman Empire to stop persecution of churches. They did not, but willingly suffered martyrdom.

Revelation 1:6 affirms that Christ has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. Note that, we are kings and priests to God, not kings and priests to other men.

Revelation 5:9-10 adds that Christ has made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.' The reigning on earth as kings is in the future and not the present.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on this see my forthcoming (DV) paper, 'When did the kingdom come?'

<sup>13</sup> For the pedantic, Rev 5:10 – 'made' (epoimsas) is a first aorist active indicative of poieo, a prophetic use anticipating the final result. 'Reign' (basileuousin) is a present active indicative, futuristic use, though some ancient mss have a simple future (basileusousin, 'shall reign').

Revelation 20:6 says that we shall reign with Him a thousand years. This is the Gospel period from the incarnation of Christ to the Second Coming of Christ. Thus there is a sense in which we are reigning now. But we have seen that this is not a materialistic reign in the world now but a spiritual reign in Christ to God. Paul explains this further:

If we endure, We shall also reign with *Him*. 1 Tim 2:12

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rm 8:16-18

The life that we live now on this earth is a life of probation. We are being tested to see how faithful we are to God's word. Those who serve God faithfully will be given rewards;<sup>14</sup> those who disobey him, but are true believers, will get to heaven by the skin of their teeth, losing everything.<sup>15</sup> Those who disobey him in the church but are not really believers will go to hell. Only our probationary ministry reveals who is who. Our fruit determines what we really are.<sup>16</sup>

Those who endure in this probation and remain faithful will (future tense) reign with Christ materially. If we suffer with Christ on earth now, we will later be glorified with him (reign). This present time is a time of sufferings; only the later time (the new world) is a time of glory for us.

Kingship is not for now in material terms in the world; it is only for the new world. Any reigning now is only spiritual, e.g. over sin, ruling ourselves or resisting Satan.

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<sup>14</sup> Lk 6:35, 'But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil'.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor 3:15, 'If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire'.

<sup>16</sup> Jn 8:31, 13:35, 15:8; 1 Jn 2:5, 10-11, 3:10.