

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### **Parashah Points: Devarim – What True Leadership Looks Like**

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Devarim, and it goes from Deuteronomy 1:1 to Deuteronomy 3:22

In this Torah Portion, Moses recounts several events in Israel’s wilderness journey. It tells of Moses appointing elders and leaders, Israel’s refusal to enter the land because of the report of the ten spies that stirred up fear among the people, and the defeat of King Sihon and King Og.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to look at the qualifications for being a spiritual leader.

In Deuteronomy 1:9-18, Moses speaks about how God told him to appoint elders and judges to assist him in leading the people and helping to resolve their disputes. The Torah gives us the qualifications for those leaders:

#### **Deuteronomy 1:13**

Choose for your tribes **wise, understanding, and experienced men**, and I will appoint them as your heads.

#### **Deuteronomy 1:16-17a**

And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brothers, and **judge righteously** between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him. **You shall not be partial in judgment.** You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, **for the judgment is God’s.** And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

In summary, the leaders of the community must be wise, understanding, experienced, righteous, impartial judges. They must have a genuine care for the needs of all the people, hearing the “small” and “great” alike. They are not to take these leadership responsibilities lightly but recognize that they are

ultimately representing God and must therefore serve the community in reverence and humility. One of their primary purposes was to resolve conflict and disputes among the people, and thus bring peace.

It's likely that James, the brother of Yeshua, had these Torah principles in mind when he called out leaders in the early Messianic community. You'll notice the similarities.

Throughout chapter 3 of his epistle, James taught that many should not become teachers and leaders, that they will be judged with greater strictness because of their important role in the community, and that they have the potential to cause massive damage with their tongue—the things they speak and teach. Rather than resolve conflict and disputes, unqualified leaders create more!

Toward the end of chapter 3, James then explains that true leaders are “wise and understanding,” which is expressed through their good conduct. They are not to be motivated by bitter jealousy and selfish ambition but they are to recognize that they are serving God and the people. They judge righteously with wisdom from above, which is “pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.” Moreover, they strive to bring peace within the community, not chaos and disorder.

These principles of leadership are timeless. They are just as true for us as they were for Moses and James. Not everyone is called to be a teacher or leader within the community; in fact, some people should be outright discouraged from pursuing such a position of authority!

Teaching and leading is not something that is to be taken lightly. “We all stumble in many ways,” but when a leader stumbles, because of their influence, they could potentially take down an entire community with them. That's why they are judged with greater strictness.

When appointing leaders and teachers within our own communities, we need to consider whether they are wise and understanding. We will be able to tell by their good conduct, as James teaches. We need to make sure that they are truly in it for the glory of God and out of a genuine concern for the people. We need to see that they have a heart for creating peace, not chaos.

If someone is seeking a position merely out of selfish ambition—because they want to be some sort of “big shot”—then they do not have the heart of a true leader. They will abuse such a position in pursuit of some selfish gain, which will inevitably lead to destruction.

Real lives are at stake. And if a person doesn't acknowledge the weighty call of leadership, they must not be a leader.

### **James 3:1**

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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