

January 18, 2025

Teacher, Teacher – Part 2

Last Shabbat I had shared with you the premise behind a woman teaching in general and specifically teaching men. This was a result of Jeri, successfully completing her requirements and receiving her ordination as a Messianic Teacher.

I had shared with you the aspect of what Sha'ul was conveying when a woman should not teach a man and that wasn't simply about teaching but related more toward disciplining, a more involved aspect of teaching.

Further, I had shared with you about the likes of Lydia, referenced in Acts 16; Priscilla, referenced in Acts 18 and Phoebe referenced in Romans 16. These examples go well beyond that of the most commonly expressed example supporting a woman's role in teaching, Deborah.

This was the first part of what I had intended to do last week, followed by another aspect I wanted to address that is often questions, yet, I found that I had brought in quite a bit of material and to focus on this next section would have required much more time, so I had decided to break them up into two messages.

Matthew 23:8 - 9

Mat 23:8 "But you are not to let yourselves be called 'Rabbi'; because you have one Rabbi, and you are all each other's brothers.

Mat 23:9 And do not call anyone on earth 'Father.' because you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

In Yeshua's rebuking of the religious leaders, specifically the Pharisees and the Torah teachers, he criticizes their self imposed haughtiness, showing contempt and an aura of superiority towards others. This mindset or attitude was not appropriate considering their position as leaders and teachers of a people.

This is what Yeshua said prior to verses 8 and 9:

Mat 23:2 "The Torah-teachers and the P'rushim," he said, "sit in the seat of Moshe.

Mat 23:3 So whatever they tell you, take care to do it. But don't do what they do, because they talk but don't act!

First, sitting in the seat of Moshe...

The seat (Greek *kathedra*) **of Moshe**. The Midrash Rabbah says:

"They made for him [Moses] a *katedra* (a seat) like that of the advocates, in which one sits and yet seems to be standing." (Exodus Rabbah 43:4)

Pesikta diRav Kahana 1:7 mentions the seat of Moses, and the editors of the English edition comment:

"The particular place in the synagogue where the leaders used to sit was known metaphorically as the seat of Moses or as the throne of Torah, symbolizing the succession of teachers of Torah down through the ages." (William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein, *Pesikta diRav Kahana*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975, p. 17)

The Torah-teachers and the P'rushim... sit in the seat of Moshe, exercising the power of "the *cohen* or judge in office at that time" ([Deu 17:8-13](#))

Deu 17:8 "If a case comes before you at your city gate which is too difficult for you to judge, concerning bloodshed, civil suit, personal injury or any other controversial issue; you are to get up, go to the place which Adonai your God will choose,

[Deu 17:9](#) and appear before the *cohanim*, who are L'vi'im, and the judge in office at the time. Seek their opinion, and they will render a verdict for you.

[Deu 17:10](#) You will then act according to what they have told you there in that place which Adonai will choose; you are to take care to act according to all their instructions.

[Deu 17:11](#) In accordance with the Torah they teach you, you are to carry out the judgment they render, not turning aside to the right or the left from the verdict they declare to you.

[Deu 17:12](#) Anyone presumptuous enough not to pay attention to the *cohen* appointed there to serve Adonai your God or to the judge—that person must die. Thus you will exterminate such wickedness from Isra'el—

[Deu 17:13](#) all the people will hear about it and be afraid to continue acting presumptuously.

Officially interpreting the *Torah*.

They have taken on the role of Moshe, yet they are found to be unlike Moshe. In this role, it was perceived that Moshe was prideful and arrogant in the position. Even his siblings thought so...

Num 12:1 Miryam and Aharon began criticizing Moshe on account of the Ethiopian woman he had married, for he had in fact married an Ethiopian woman.

Num 12:2 They said, "Is it true that Adonai has spoken only with Moshe? Hasn't he spoken with us too?" Adonai heard them.

There was this sense of jealousy being experienced between Miryam and Aharon, looking at the position Moshe was in, all that he was doing and the comment transpired. Yet this comment didn't go unnoticed either. Adonai responded...

Num 12:3 Now this man Moshe was very humble, more so than anyone on earth.

Adonai continued...

Num 12:6 He said, "Listen to what I say: when there is a prophet among you, I, Adonai, make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream.

Num 12:7 But it isn't that way with my servant Moshe. He is the only one who is faithful in my entire household.

Num 12:8 With him I speak face to face and clearly, not in riddles; he sees the image of Adonai. So why weren't you afraid to criticize my servant Moshe?"

Num 12:9 The anger of Adonai flared up against them, and he left.

The attitudes of the P'rushim and Torah teachers was more like that of Miryam and Aharon than that of the one they were supposed to emulate – Moshe.

They did not do as Moshe did...

Mat 23:4 They tie heavy loads onto people's shoulders but won't lift a finger to help carry them.

Mat 23:5 Everything they do is done to be seen by others; for they make their t'fillin broad and their tzitziyot long,

Mat 23:6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues,

I have shared with you many times how Moshe would intercede on behalf of the nation, The Golden Calf, Manna, entering the land. Many times this man, humbled himself before Adonai on behalf of the people. Yet, those that sit in his seat, performing his duties did anything but.

Yet, here is the crux, beginning in verse 7 and how it is understood today...

Mat 23:7 and they love being greeted deferentially in the marketplaces and being called 'Rabbi.'

On the surface Yeshua talks about them being called Rabbi and their love of the recognition because of the title. On the surface, based on the translation, we are not to be called Rabbi. A term that simply means teacher, yet here Yeshua isn't

referring to a teacher who sits in the seat of Moshe, but something far greater. The Greek word used at the end of verse 7 is...

ῥαββι

rhabbi

hrab-bee'

Of Hebrew origin [H7227] with pronominal suffix; *my master*, that is, *Rabbi*, as an official title of honor: - Master, Rabbi.

It doesn't simply mean teacher but Master. More specifically conveyed as "My Master"

If we were not to call anyone Rabbi, meaning teacher then would it not contradict that of Sha'ul's statement in Ephesians 4 and what is identified as the five fold ministry?

Eph 4:11 Furthermore, he gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers.

Eph 4:12 Their task is to equip God's people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah,

Eph 4:13 until we all arrive at the unity implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, at full manhood, at the standard of maturity set by the Messiah's perfection.

The Greek word used in verse 11 for teachers is...

διδάσκαλος

didaskalos

did-as'-kal-os

From G1321; an *instructor* (generally or specifically): - doctor, master, teacher.

The two words are different and thus the function of the Rabbi, teacher, is seen here in the ministry callings. A Rabbi, like Moshe was both pastor, that is shepherd and teacher. So, we are to sit in the seat of Moshe and be like Moshe, humbling ourselves in this role, this calling, this responsibility. We are not to seek any type of gain in that we are servants first.

In taking this position, it helps us to understand verses 8 and 9 better.

Mat 23:8 "But you are not to let yourselves be called 'Rabbi'; because you have one Rabbi, and you are all each other's brothers.

Mat 23:9 And do not call anyone on earth 'Father.' because you have one Father, and he is in heaven

Some have continued to take the literal position based on the translation and not the context of the word being translated.

But you are not to let yourselves be called "Rabbi"... "Father"... "leaders." The Hebrew Christian scholar Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum holds that this passage prohibits Messianic Jewish congregations from calling their leaders "rabbis" ("The Quest for a Messianic Theology: Statement," in *Mishkan* #2 (Winter 1985), pp. 1-19; with "Response" by myself in the same issue, pp. 20-23; and "A Comment" by him in *Mishkan* #3, pp. 67-68).

Calling no one father, would that not negate and thus contradict one of the commandments?

Exo 20:12 י "Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land which Adonai your God is giving you.

The Hebrew word here for father is...

אב

'âb

awb

A primitive word; *father* in a literal and immediate, or figurative and remote application: - chief, (fore-) father ([-less]), X patrimony, principal. Compare names in "Abi-"

Total KJV occurrences: 1214

How can you truly honor your father if you can't recognize him as your father. What Yeshua is referring to is the aspect of calling anyone else, in a position of authority "father" that is one who is over you, a Master.

The Greek word used that is translated in CJB as "Father" and KJV as "Master" is...

καθηγητής

kathēgētēs

kath-ayg-ay-tace'

From a compound of G2596 and G2233; a *guide*, that is, (figuratively) a *teacher*: - master.

Total KJV occurrences: 3

Where in Ephesians 6 where the commandment to honor your father and mother is reiterated...

Eph 6:1 Children, what you should do in union with the Lord is obey your parents, for this is right.

Eph 6:2 "Honor your father and mother"—this is the first commandment that embodies a promise—

Eph 6:3 "so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the Land."

Eph 6:4 Fathers, don't irritate your children and make them resentful; instead, raise them with the Lord's kind of discipline and guidance.

Father is translated from the Greek word...

πατήρ

patēr

pat-ayr'

Apparently a primary word; a "father" (literally or figuratively, near or more remote): - father, parent.

So, the term Rabbi is kosher to be called, yet we must remain humble and not take on a position of pride and expectation based on how we are identified.

Further, I make a distinction myself for the simple reason that the term Rabbi has a very specific representation to it. Within the Jewish community a Rabbi is one who is learned in the foundational writings of Judaism, namely Talmud and to a lesser extent, Torah.

I am by no means learned in Talmud, yet I am in Torah. Our writings are not based on Talmud but are the New Covenant writings for which MY RABBI, MY MASTER is the one who's feet I sit at.

Thus, I make a distinction, not calling myself Rabbi, but identifying myself as a Messianic Rabbi. I am Yeshua's student, his talmidot and it is He who teaches and guides.

Yeshua here is prohibiting believers from accepting unearned honors, rather than

outlawing three titles. A leader is to be humble, a servant. Yeshua conveyed this prior to his excoriation of the P'rushim and Torah teachers, setting the standard.

[Mat 20:25](#) But Yeshua called them and said, "You know that among the Goyim, those who are supposed to rule them become tyrants, and their superiors become dictators.

[Mat 20:26](#) Among you, it must not be like that. On the contrary, whoever among you wants to be a leader must become your servant,

[Mat 20:27](#) and whoever wants to be first must be your slave!

[Mat 20:28](#) For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve—and to give his life as a ransom for many."

If he is given any title at all, he is not to become puffed up.

What should a "Messianic rabbi" be? A pastor under another name? I think the term "rabbi" sets up Jewish expectations which ought to be fulfilled. Hence, A Messianic Jewish congregational leader who accepts the title "rabbi" without having training adequate to qualify him as a rabbi in a non-Messianic Jewish setting is accepting honor which he has not earned and to which he is not entitled; and this *does* violate Yeshua's injunction.

Should a Messianic rabbi have *s'mikhah*.

Yeshua was asked this very question...

[Mat 21:23](#) He went into the Temple area; and as he was teaching, the head cohanim and the elders of the people approached him and demanded, "What *s'mikhah* do you have that authorizes you to do these things? And who gave you this *s'mikhah*?"

Hebrew ***s'mikhah***, rendering Greek *exousia* ("authority"), means "leaning" or "laying" on of hands in the ordination ceremony for a judge, elder or rabbi. Laying on of hands is, in the *Tanakh*, a symbolic act that confers or transfers an office, along with its duties and privileges, by dramatizing God's bestowal of the blessings and giftings needed for the work. In Judaism the practice is traced back to Moses' ordination of Joshua and of the seventy elders ([Num 11:16-17](#), [Num 11:24-25](#); [Num 27:18-23](#); [Deu 34:9](#); see also [Act 8:17](#), [Act 9:17](#), [Act 13:3](#), [Act 19:6](#), [Act 28:8](#); [1Ti 4:4](#), [1Ti 5:22](#); [2Ti 1:6](#)).

We see this most prominently with Moshe and Joshua...

[Deu 34:9](#) Y'hoshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moshe had laid his hands on him, and the people of Isra'el heeded him and did what Adonai had ordered Moshe.

There are many other references to the practice of *s'mikhah*.

A rabbinic ordinand was granted the right to judge and to decide points of *halakhah* (see [Mat 16:19](#) [Mat 18:18-20](#)) by a board of three elders, at least one of whom had also received *s'mikah*. The **cohanim** ([Mat 2:4](#)) **and elders**, who are also *P'rushim* ([Mat 21:45](#), [Mat 3:7](#)), are asking: "What kind of ordination did you receive that entitles you to teach as authoritatively as you do ([Mat 7:28-29](#)), to decide points of *halakhah* as you do ([Mat 12:1-15](#)), and to disturb the peace in the Temple courts ([Mat 21:12-17](#) above)? And who dared give you such an ordination (so that we can interrogate him too)?" Yeshua does not answer their question (although see [Joh 5:27](#), [Mar 1:22-27](#)) but instead puts them on the defensive (Mat. 21:29-Mat. 22:46).

What I can and will tell you is that both Jeri and I, went through interviews, Yeshiva and have had hands placed upon us.

We take a page out of our Master's book...

Psa 78:1 [*A maskil of Asaf:*] Listen, my people, to my teaching; turn your ears to the words from my mouth.

Psa 78:2 I will speak to you in parables and explain mysteries from days of old.

Psa 78:3 The things which we have heard and known, and which our fathers told us

Psa 78:4 we will not hide from their descendants; we will tell the generation to come the praises of Adonai and his strength, the wonders that he has performed.

Psa 78:5 He raised up a testimony in Ya`akov and established a Torah in Isra'el. He commanded our ancestors to make this known to their children,

Psa 78:6 so that the next generation would know it, the children not yet born, who would themselves arise and tell their own children,

Psa 78:7 who could then put their confidence in God, not forgetting God's deeds, but obeying his mitzvot.