

# Servant Leadership

## Chapter 1

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### The Need for Servant Leadership

*But know this, that in the last days  
perilous times will come:  
For men will be lovers of themselves,  
lovers of money, boasters, proud,  
blasphemers, disobedient to parents,  
unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving,  
slanderers, without self-control, brutal,  
despisers of good, traitors, headstrong,  
haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than  
lovers of God, having a form of godliness  
but denying its power. 2 Timothy 3:1-5*

**P**erilous times are here. We now live in the last days where even the church is not exempt from the influences of this spiritual environment. Churchgoers will have a 'form' of godliness, but in reality, when all the pomp and circumstance is taken away, their lifestyle is in opposition to God.

As the Lord positions His leaders for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the time for playing' church is over. In fact, there has never been such a time. Leaders need to be keenly aware of the immediacy of these perilous times and have the courage to conform to God's pattern of servant leadership. The church is being called to account with greater urgency, and God has begun the process with His leaders. He is shaping a new breed and is turning the hearts of these 'spiritual fathers' towards their 'children.'

Change in God's kingdom starts at the 'top.' The new generation of leader will lead God's people into His purposes for these end times. As the pace of life accelerates, these leaders' adaptability and sensitivity to changing circumstances will carry them further than their predecessors. The new breed is captivated with a vision of the glorious church spurring them to pursue Christ likeness as never before.

Their newfound zeal is directed firstly towards changing self. They are not prepared to hypocritically demand change in their followers without first being submitted to the Lord's dealings in their own lives. A keener sense of the calling to serve is being breathed into the church as leaders respond the Holy Spirit's purity. The high calling of the end time 'eunuch' leader is underlined in this section.

*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles  
lord it over them, and those who are great*

*exercise authority over them.*

*Yet it shall not be so among you;*

*but whoever desires to be become great*

*among you, let him be your servant....*

*just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve... **Matthew 20: 25-28***

## Chapter 2

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# The Servant (Eunuch) Leader

### Esther's Story Is Told

**T**he story of how Esther became queen provides interesting insight to the kind of leadership God is developing in these days.

The Persian King Ahaseurus had called for his Queen Vashti to appear before him and his guests at a banquet he was holding. She refused to come at the king's command, having organized her own feast. His position as supreme ruler in the realm was thereby dramatically challenged. Her refusal to appear before him was more than just petulance. This rebellion had to be answered and so she was refused entrance to the king, and an order given to search for a new queen.

Beautiful young virgins were sought out and gathered together to be prepared by the king's eunuch or custodian for selection as the new queen of the empire. Esther was also chosen and found herself in the care of Hegai the King's eunuch. He supervised the preparation of the virgins.

The yearlong beauty preparation for the selected virgins was divided into two parts: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with beautifying perfumes.

When Esther's turn came to go before the king, she requested only that which the eunuch advised. Being close to the King, he knew exactly what would please him. So, when she went in before the king, she quickly gained his favor and was made queen in Vashti's place. Her destiny as a child of God, an identity not yet revealed to the king, was soon to be fulfilled.

Queen Esther was later to risk her life by standing in the gap for her Jewish kinsfolk. The wicked Haman had conspired against the Jews in the realm who were in danger of being annihilated from the kingdom.

### Spiritual Comparisons

Some interesting spiritual comparisons with the church and its leadership may be gleaned from the story.

The church is described in the Word as a woman. The false or counterfeit church is also described as a woman in the book of Revelations. In our account Queen Vashti stands for the false and rebellious 'church', whilst Esther stands for the humble and dependent true church. Hegai, the king's eunuch represents the ministry of the Holy Spirit whilst the king himself is the Lord.

The Lord's invitation has gone out to the church to attend the king's 'feast.' Like Queen Vashti, the false church continues to pursue its own agenda. It is as if this church is caught in a religious treadmill of programs and empty activity. Content to have its own 'party', the false church will also be dethroned.

In contrast, the faithful who have heard the call to attend the Lord's banquet in obedience and simplicity will enjoy His abiding presence and favor. They are the ones who will be productive in their ministry as they cooperate with the Lord. They have learnt to serve the Lord on His terms and are not prepared to labor on their own in vain. They are leaders to the Lord's pattern and program.

*Unless the Lord builds the house,  
They labor in vain who build it; Psalm 127:1*

In the royal court of Ahaseurus the eunuch knew exactly what the king was looking for in the woman to be queen and set about preparing the virgins accordingly. Many were called but only a few chosen. Those that responded to the call and were prepared to submit to the preparation procedures were chosen for presentation.

The call of the gospel has been extended to all mankind. Yet only those that respond and confess the Lordship of Jesus and submit to His discipline are chosen as disciples.

For six months oil of myrrh was used to cleanse and firm up the skin, thus enhancing its inherent beauty. (This oil extract made from a bitter gum-like resin acted as an astringent and antiseptic.) The perfuming and beauty preparations that followed took another six months and complemented the natural beauty of the virgins.

In spiritual terms there is natural beauty and uniqueness in each believer that has been born again by the power of God. This comes from the righteousness that is imputed to every believer at the new birth. (2 Corinthians 5:17) However, this 'seed' of righteousness has to be watered and grow into what may be called practical holiness. The man who is humble enough to receive this deposit is further beautified as he submits to the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

The church has been undergoing a beautification treatment for the final and full joining with Jesus as the bridegroom. This occurs at both the individual and corporate level in the church. This ongoing process of sanctification is reaching new heights, as the return of the Lord grows nearer.

### **Outer and Inner Beauty**

A woman's outer beauty may be attractive and fade with time, yet her inner beauty has an enduring eternal quality. The contrast between Esther (representing the true church) and Vashti (representing the false church) illustrates this. Both women were beautiful to behold-externally. Yet Vashti's independent and rebellious heart set her apart from Esther whose submission, trust and obedience made her beauty more than skin deep.

Turning to the book of Revelation, we see a woman whose adornment describes her as a harlot. Although her garments are royally colored, she is nevertheless morally and religiously corrupt.

*The woman was arrayed in purple and  
scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a  
golden cup full of abominations and filthiness  
of her fornication. Revelation 17:4*

The hand represents that which she does. She may appear outwardly beautiful and regal, but what she does betrays her lack of inner beauty. Her external beauty may be likened to the pomp and ceremony of much church activity. The image of her ministry may be impressive, but the substance is sorely lacking. The empty ritual of much of Christendom neither impresses nor pleases the Lord. He is never fooled by hype whether it is ancient or electronic.

In contrast, Esther's beauty had 'depth' to it. Her external, natural charm and beauty would eventually fade, but as a woman who feared the Lord she was to be praised. Her deeds of

submission revealed her pure character and devotion. Her beauty began in the heart and radiated out through the rest of her being.

*Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,  
But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Proverbs 31:30*

Turning again to the true church we see 'her' described in gentle terms as:

...a chaste virgin... **2 Corinthians 11:2**

A virgin is someone who has kept herself pure from defiling relationships before marriage. The true church may be seen as a woman who is seeking to keep herself pure before the Lord, avoiding defiling contact with unclean worldly pursuits and relationships. This does not mean isolation from the real world; rather it is a separation of heart. The virgin is devoted to remaining pure and refuses to be drawn aside by anything that displeases her 'lover- King.'

Paul's insightful instruction to Timothy about women in the churches under his care encourages a focus on good works and not on good looks and grooming.

*...the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*

**1 Timothy 2: 9-10**

Peter highlights what is precious in the sight of God:

*...the hidden person of the heart...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit...* **1 Peter 3:4**

The natural tendency is to look on the outward appearance, but it takes discernment to see beyond the immediate and external.

*...for man looks at the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7*

God is looking for leadership that has His perspective. They are not caught up in trying to make an impression but rather in making a fruitful impact through meeting the needs of the people. There is substance to their ministry. They are not content to put on a show for those who showed up. They are only satisfied when the Master shows up to put His stamp of approval on what is going on.

The Lord is going to receive to Himself a church that is free from the spots and wrinkles of sin and selfishness. The cleansing work of the work Holy Spirit will have been completed through anointed leaders called to serve the church in purity. They will wash and cleanse the church with the anointed word and prepare it for presentation to the Lord.

*...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,  
that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:26*

The servant leader is to be 'clothed' with humility (1 Peter 5:5) and wear wise instruction from the word as an 'ornament of grace' on his head (Proverbs 1:9). In addition, the life of Christ diffusing through the leader consecrated to do God's will is described as a fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:14). These spiritual qualities beautify and prepare us for the Lord and His service.

### Israel's History

In the history of Israel, we have colorful description of how the Lord 'clothed or adorned' Jerusalem and how His pure intentions towards them were corrupted with false worship by them towards Him:

*"I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

*"I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.*

*"And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.*

*"Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty.*

*"Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.*

*"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it.*

*"You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be.*

*"You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. **Ezekiel 16: 10-17***

The passage has a dual meaning. God prospered Jerusalem, yet this was soon spoilt as they committed spiritual adultery. They substituted the true worship of God for images of their own making. Judgment then followed.

In another passage the daughters of Zion are described as having become haughty with a proud bearing, walking with 'mincing' steps. Their finery would be taken away and the sweet smell of their perfume replaced by a stench (Isaiah 3:16-26). This lengthy passage is well worth turning to in your Bible as it describes the consequences of pride. All the impressive adornment is stripped away leaving only devastation behind.

This speaks of the danger of not fulfilling a calling. The nation was called as a witness and vehicle of God's goodness and mercy. When it became corrupted and caught up in its own pursuits, the door was opened to the enemy's destructive forces.

The sometimes-catastrophic history of Israel-God's chosen people-in both Old and New Testament times, is shockingly described in the Isaiah passage. The most recent atrocities of the 'Holocaust' may be a hauntingly accurate prophecy of Jews in the concentration camps being literally stripped of their finery, jewelry and shaved bald in final humiliation.

God's covenant protection is accessed through obedience to His commands. The enemy takes advantage of anyone who does abide under the 'shadow of God's wings' as the Psalmist puts it (Psalm 91).

If the church is to avoid the ravages of the destroyer in these end times, it must be sure to walk carefully in holiness and obedience. The church that has its sight darkened by idolatry will

not see the enemy coming and be taken by surprise. The blind will lead the blind into a satanic ditch with increasing regularity in these perilous times. The importance of an enlightened leadership cannot be underscored enough. As the world gets darker, the church must get brighter. Leadership is the key in this process of equipping and enlightenment.

### **The Eunuch in the King's Court**

Let us now look more closely at the eunuch or custodian of the king's court. In the days of the Persian Kings, the chief eunuch and his helpers were men that had been emasculated. They would therefore have no improper designs on the women they were working with. They were skilled and trained men acutely aware of what the King liked and disliked and loyal only to His command.

A comparison may be made with the eunuch and the selfless ministry of the Holy Spirit. In the Godhead the Holy Spirit does not attract attention to Himself. Rather His ministry is to honor the Father and the Son. Jesus Himself testifies to the Holy Spirit glorifying Him.

*He will glorify Me...* **John 16:14**

Leaders who are filled with the Holy Spirit will thus exemplify the same desire as the Holy Spirit Himself. They will not attract attention to themselves but remain faithful and devoted to their purpose: that of preparing the bride for the King. They will point the bride to the King and not themselves. Jesus will be the focus of attention.

*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.* **Colossians 1:16-18**

The nature of leadership is such that followers tend to idolize successful leaders. People love heroes. When a minister leads the people of God into victories, he soon becomes a 'Christian hero.' If the leader is not careful pride can set in. Pride is a subtle condition that must be resisted. Nothing of lasting value can be built without the Lord. We can build our own kingdoms and attract the applause of men. Yet, it is only through the Holy Spirit's anointing that we amount to anything in the first place. Only those leaders that have learnt to walk humbly before the Lord will be able to withstand the subtleties of pride.

The eunuch leader, who stays close to the king, will he be able to effectively prepare the bride for the king. This type of leader has the king's heartbeat as his consuming passion. He will not allow his own desires to cloud his service. He will die to self, and only be interested in furthering the cause of the one he serves.

## Chapter 3

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# Paul's Example

*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions... 2 Timothy 3:10-11a*

### Paul's Early Religious Life

**P**aul had not always lived an exemplary life before God and man. Before he became known as a 'super apostle', many things had to change. His life had been characterized by extremes. He zealously pursued his religious ambition in Judaism before his dramatic Damascus Road conversion. He then switched allegiance and went full out for Jesus.

At first his zeal for God was misdirected. But when his true purpose in life was divinely revealed, he threw himself spirit soul and body into fulfilling his high calling. His life of selfless service made an impact on the church of his day. Through the centuries we still feel what he felt, see what he saw. We have his doctrine laid out for us in his letters and also have the example of his manner of life.

His was a life dedicated to someone else's purposes. His unselfish devotion to the Lord has inspired leaders worldwide to follow in the way of this 'eunuch-leader.'

He received a revelation of the church as a bride being prepared for final and everlasting communion with her King. This led him to lay down everything in sacrificial service. Through persecution, affliction, perils, he pressed on towards the mark of the upward call. His prize would come later as he remained focused on seeking the kingdom first (Philippians 3:13-14).

### Preparation for Ministry

His preparation for ministry was almost severe. From being a rising star in Judaism-the religious establishment of his day, he was forced into obscurity. Later, he was released into apostolic ministry from his home church in Antioch. The process of preparation took many years. He learnt to serve the Lord for who He was only and not for public acclaim. His earlier ministry in the deserts of Arabia provided an ideal training ground far removed from the hustle and bustle of the church in Jerusalem.

Paul's sacrificial ministry to the gentiles sprung from his deep experiential knowledge of the Lord. He was not concerned about his reputation or image. He had lost it when he turned to Christ and identified with the cross of shame. He was lost to the 'establishment' he had served so well in Judaism. He was no longer a rising star in religious circles.

### Financial Integrity

He set an example of financial integrity and service. In his letters to the Corinthians, we see Paul making a point of not taking but rather of giving. He did not trade on his ministerial right for provision but chose not to merchandize his anointing. He refused to take advantage of saints



eager to support the ministry. This responsible stewardship of finances qualified him to take care of the greater things of the kingdom: the lives and destinies of precious people. His relationship with God as his all-sufficient provider, kept him from having impure and questionable motives in the financial realm. He was free from covetousness.

Paul was also prepared to jeopardize his popularity with the saints when he addressed moral impurity head on. His concern was born out of a revelation of Satan's tactics of subtle corruption from within the church. Paul was able to make this bold attack on moral impurity because he had been delivered from the fear of man. The fear of the Lord kept him from compromising for the sake of staying 'sweet with the congregation.' He was servant of God and could therefore serve his fellow man with purity.

### **Focused on the Needs of Others**

His ministry focus was not centered on his calling and needs but on the needs and calling of those he served. He was filled with the 'divine eunuch'- the Holy Spirit Himself. Paul sought to do all he could to present the church to the King as a chaste and undefiled virgin. The key was this: in helping to equip the churches fulfill their calling, Paul fulfilled his own. It was in his giving to the churches that he received from them.

Paul sought to sanctify and cleanse the body with the washing of the word. Like Christ, he also sought to nourish and cherish the church through prayer and service. When he saw that the saints in Corinth had been attracted to his and Appollos' anointing, he redirected their misplaced allegiance back to Christ. He did not suffer from the problem of co-dependency that many leaders have with their followings today. He was keen to point out that such immaturity was unacceptable.

*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*

*I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*

*For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

*Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?*

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.*

*So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*

**1 Corinthians 3:1-7**

He jealously watched over his charges, being inspired by the jealous God he served (Exodus 34:14). His care was sincere. He saw believers as being betrothed in marriage to the Lord as a chaste virgin. They were to be kept pure from defiling and illegitimate relationships. Their devotion to Christ was to be simple and untainted.

*Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly-- and indeed you do bear with me.*

*For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

**2 Corinthians 11:1-3**

The intensity of Paul's love for the church was inspired by the devotion of the Holy Spirit. He warns Timothy about the dangers facing him in ministry.

*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:*

*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching.*

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

*But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. **2 Timothy 4:1-5***

He was aware that the enemy of the soul would seduce God's people with enticing sweet meats or teachings that, although they may give a 'sugar high' for the moment, would not be wholesome and healthy in the long run.

Carnal Christians tend to camp around teachers who serve up fare that appeals to their appetite for tasty spiritual morsels. They are not interested in solid wholesome food that calls them to self-denial, sacrifice and selfless service. Timothy is warned that he is going to be under pressure not to preach such a word.

The spiritual taste buds of the body will have to change so that there is no longer a desire for spiritual 'junk food.' Paul went on to encourage Titus to preach wholesome or sound doctrine that impacted the daily family life of the congregation, and not merely to preach a word that titillated the intellect. He knew that such doctrine would practically prepare the hearers for service. The test of sound doctrine is its applicability.

*But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*

*the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

*Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ... **Titus 2:1-7***

Paul's servant leadership and ministry were characteristically sober-minded. He was intoxicated with the 'new wine' of the Holy Spirit and not the heady and empty counterfeits of his age. He refused to be intoxicated with the typical pursuits of society: wealth, fame and status. He taught that the church is to pursue the Lord and keep to the agenda of reaching the lost. Sadly, much of the church today is busy with its own 'thing.' Like Queen Vashti in the book of Esther, it is busy having its own feast and stands to be rejected unless it repents.

Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-37 further illustrates the responsibility he felt towards the church there. His farewell contained no smooth words of false comfort. Rather he exhorted them to stand firm and be watchful for the flock against corruption from within and without.

Paul addresses both the doctrine he taught in their midst, and his lifestyle. Like the master he served, he came to serve and not to be served. He did not seek to build his ministry, but rather to build theirs. His suffering proved that. His life was open to examination and his ministry transparent and accountable. He reminded Timothy of the time when they were together and Timothy "...carefully followed..." everything he taught and experienced. Nothing was hidden behind an ecclesiastical smokescreen. His testimony was uncompromised by secret sin and failure. It was genuine and trustworthy. As the eunuch leader he had nothing to hide.

He found his sufficiency in Christ, not his following. When the insecure ego of a leader is fed, pride, arrogance and a fall are sure to follow. Paul avoided the prestige, power and pennies that invariably accompany anointed ministry. He chose to defer to the one he worshipped. He did not form any binding 'soul ties' with his congregations. They were free to fulfill their own priesthood to the Lord. He refused to lord it over them by keeping them ignorant of who they were in Christ.

Paul had a clear understanding of the day when he would be called to account and rewarded for his deeds done in the body. Only those deeds that were of the Lord, through the Lord and to the Lord, (Romans 11:36), would stand the fire of testing.

The selfish ambition of his youthful career in Judaism gave way to the Godkind of ambition where he sought to impart Christ likeness to his followers. He was determined only to be remembered for having 'preached Christ and Him crucified', and not for his personal charisma or eloquence. He built no monuments to himself.

*And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.*

*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.*

*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

### **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

Paul did not trade on his presentation and the manner in which he packaged the message, but on the presence and power of God. He chose to avoid hype and left behind him a legacy of respect for God and His word. He chose substance and sacrifice over style and success. In being prepared to lose he won. In laying down his own life, he learnt to take it up in Christ. The example he set, remains a valuable reminder to a church in need of leaders who will serve the Lord and not their own ends.

## Chapter 4

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# The Challenge

**G**od is issuing a fresh challenge for His leaders to conform to His standards in leadership. He is commanding them to take up the towel and serve. It requires humility and change. The body of Christ will not rise above its leadership and the call is stronger than ever for leaders to conform to a level of servant hood that will see the church fulfill her glorious calling.

The lifestyle of humility and repentance will keep the door open to spiritual growth.

He overcame disappointment by developing a trust in the integrity of God's word despite the immediate circumstances. He knew that God would come through and watch over His covenant word. As the word works in our own lives, we will be able to share God's faithfulness with conviction and authority.

The servant-leader will recognize that the closer we get to the Lord's return, the more ministries will begin to overlap, cross-pollinate and flow together, bringing their own resources together like tributaries to the mainstream. There is a level of corporate unity that the Lord wants to establish in His body. To establish this, leaders will have to be prepared to 'let go' of the control they exercise in 'their' territories. In order for the Holy Spirit to lead the body to glory, the spirit of control has to be broken off leadership first.

Unity will be founded on love. Perfected love casts out fear. Love will see things from God's perspective, for He is love. Fellowship centered on truth, honesty and genuine faith will not be characterized by defensiveness. So many ministries are 'owned' by leaders fearful of losing the identity they worked so hard to attain. The thought of losing one's identity in the body has caused different denominations to miss out on what God has been trying to restore to His body as a whole.

The end-time church will be led by servant-leaders consumed with a passion for the Lord and His pure purposes. Led by and in submission to the Spirit it will not tolerate ritual and meaningless religious activity that draws it away from a simple devotion to Christ. Like Queen Esther it will be received into the presence of the King to rule with Him and fulfill its destiny.