

WEEK 40 SCRIPTURE READING

5778 / 2017-18



SHEMA שמע
(shem-ah)

A Hebrew word for “To listen intently with willing anticipation and readiness to do what is heard.”

Shema O Israel

by Roly Buys

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Parashah Balak | בלק | “devastator”

Week 40

This week we read from the following Scriptures:

Numbers 22:2-25:9, Micah 5:6-6:8. 2 Peter 2:1-22 Jude 11 and Revelation 2:14-15.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

This series intends to look at the concept of Godly¹ leadership to identify the good, wise and wonderful attributes that we would do well to emulate.

I will “repeat” the description of what I believe Godly leadership ... “servant-leader” is all about, I that way you can benchmark the attributes of the character that I have selected to analyze for this week.

I submit that our actions, if they are restricted to only Bible study, or spirit worship, will not please the FATHER.

YHVH wants us to reveal His Kingdom to the world and make an impact ... our failure to be obedient to this task, means that YHVH's Glory is limited and the opportunity to present a meaningful alternative to the world model is lost.

OUR GOAL

1 Peter 4:10-11 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of GOD’s varied Grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of GOD; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that GOD supplies—in order that in everything GOD may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This fact, therefore, implies that fathers will ROLE-MODEL the various behaviours / attitudes / values that are acceptable over an extended period of time.

When the child is very small, these examples must be presented as simply as possible.

Over time the same lesson will take on far more complicated scenarios and interplay with others.

Taking this forward in Biblical time means that the basic lessons must be in place, for all possible events, by the age of 13, when other peer groups will begin to implant THEIR VIEWS OF LIFE. When this happens, we need to have the Biblical BENCHMARK set firmly into our character.

¹ We use the Name YHVH instead of GOD, except where it appears in Scriptures.

Y'SHUA as Role Model

The prophet Isaiah speaks quite often about the coming Messiah - in many verses we find the reference to: "*My Servant ...*"

I will take those verses and inject them into each one of the attributes that are listed below

Firstly, that verse will validate the specific attribute.

Secondly that verse will give us the understanding that the behaviour defined, is in fact a extremely reachable target

(a) A father's role-model of Justice / healing

One of the fundamental building blocks of any human-being value system, is a sound understanding of the concept of *justice*.

Justice is not only the action to be fair in time of dispute, **but rather the principle never to do anything (business / sport / politics) that would give you an unfair advantage over others.**

This includes concepts such as:

- ◆ Paying a fair wage
- ◆ Opposing slavery
- ◆ Opposing abuse

Since many people have suffered abuse at the hands of others, and now carry wounds and hurts that preclude them from a normal healthily life, one of the leadership roles is to identify those hurt, **and to facilitate a process of healing.**



Once people have been made whole ... the servant-leader should go about the process of **identifying their YHVH-given gifts / talents.**

He should take steps to train people in their specific gifts, empower them to cover the weaknesses of those gifts and then ...

Release them into the appropriate position within the Body of Messiah where they can grow / flourish AND make a difference in other people's lives.

We will know that we cannot do things on our own. Even more surely, we are made for a very specific part of the Body of Messiah.

This implies that we can really only function in that place that we were made for.

Healing / satisfaction comes when I take responsibility for that work / action that is required of that part of the Body of Messiah.

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 42:1)

(b) A father's role-model of Compassion / empathy

In a world where the best receive the glory and those last in line are all but forgotten, Biblical leaders should have the wherewithal to see the individual value and special abilities in a person.

Not only should he see these, but he should be focused on further development and training in these areas, and then he should be concerned with finding the right position for that individual to thrive

Such a leader will **value diverse opinion** ... he will **seek to hear alternative views, and he will not be putting people into stereotype boxes** - based on the fact that these people come from a different culture.

Not only will he be able to understand diverse views, but also he will be able to work in a community made up of strangers and still be able to reveal how YHVH expects us to love our neighbour.

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 42:3)

(c) A father's role-model of Humility / trust / listening

- i) The first thing that you will realise of a leader, who is humble, is that books, articles and electronic media surround them. They are always searching for the truth and openly express the opinion that they welcome investigation into their thinking in order to test its credibility.

This principle of continuous learning is not only a wonderful means to remain humble; it's a prerequisite from YHVH (*Deuteronomy 17:19 / Joshua 1:8*).

- ii) The second attribute of a servant-leader who is humble, is the ability to create a **culture of TRUST**.

The modern world, with its performance-orientated goal creates a web of deceit and mistrust. Simple said, *how can I trust you with a secret or a better plan when both of us want to be recognised as the best in the team?*

Servant-leaders reject all forms of gossip, create opportunities for people with opposing views to face one another and debate the matter, and actively work to ensure transparency and sharing of all information.

- iii) A third attribute of servant leaders is that they are **good listeners**. They will seek clarity on what is said and felt.

They will be able to understand the fears/hopes and dreams of all concerned so that not one of the family / tribe is left behind (this does not mean that we agree with everything being said).



Y'SHUA, as Role Model (Isaiah 49:3)

(d) A father's role-model of emotional connectedness

One of the realities of this fast-paced world, is that we have all become so very busy. Not only do we have the opportunity to do many and diverse things / activities, we are also faced with the communication era of computers / smart phones / and software that connects people such as Facebook.

In this fast-paced world, its very easy not to be aware of the emotional status of some of your family and friends.

In one sense, it's wonderful not be see / be aware of any problems - simply because you don't have to worry about it.

But if you are a parent who is determined to follow their calling, **then you will want to be very tuned in to their fears / concerns / expectations and so on, so that you can react timeously and can offer the support needed.**

Once you are aware that a problem exists, then you can set in motion the action which can work towards a healing.

Importantly, these problems will manifest on many different levels ... it is not only spiritual .. it can also be physical and emotional...

For example:

- ◆ It can be a perceived weight problem for girls,
- ◆ It can be a poor muscle structure for a boy,
- ◆ It can be a lack of ball sense ...

In other words, it can be any thing that the world will use to judge and benchmark someone against as **unacceptable**.

One of the features of a great parent is the **ability to encourage** despite the circumstances – and note the words are: → “*let us ...*” ...and not “*you go and try on your own*”.

Fathers, who are emotionally connected, will strive to **delegate responsibility** to others in order to challenge them to grow.

Such Fathers will never be afraid to give up power, because they know that seeing others take up the challenge and succeed is far more significant than being successful at something yourself ... simply because you know that the feat can be multiplied dozens of times even when you are absent.

A Biblical example is Yitro telling Moses what you doing trying to keep the entire leadership role for your self → is NOT GOOD (**Exodus 18:14-17**).

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 50:5)

(e) A father's role-model of revealing Godly influence

The world system speaks of a system of “command” and obey ... these days the world system tries to modify this by implying that consultation before decision making is an inclusive system.

In fact, this façade creates more unhappiness as people soon realise that there is a hidden agenda at play; the people can then become either:

- ◆ a group that is happy to be disengaged,
- ◆ or a group who is actively seeking to move on.

Influence is the ability to convince others of a need to change - either a burning platform or a common better goal.

Both David and Joshua best display this ability by getting TWELVE tribes of different thinking people to work together.

An influencer thinks of “**you**” ... not “**me**”

- ◆ This can only be true if you **truly believe in the people whom you lead**
- ◆ They may make mistakes that you have to correct
- ◆ They may disappoint you sometimes,
- ◆ BUT you know that they are mainly giving of their best.

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 42:2)

(f) A father's role-model of releasing creativity

Innovation has become the name of the game.

People have dreams that are based on the exploits of others that have gone before them.

There was a time when – to run the mile in under 4 minutes was a huge feat. Today, new records get set at regular intervals.

Fathers are empowered to discern exactly what talents and gifts have been implanted in each child.

To develop those talents requires a concerted effort to plan, not only in the **timing** - how do we expose people to challenges, but also the **pace** at which we do so ... in this case its important to set stiff enough goals without discouraging the individual.

And YHVH knows what the best time is ... listen carefully to the Holy Spirit!! (**Numbers 27:16-17**)

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 49:6)

(g) A father's role-model the art of Strategic planning

We live in a world that is constantly changing. Consider the fact that 100 years ago most people still used the horse or the donkey / camel, while today any trip of some distance can only be done in an airplane. Think about the concept of the old landline telephone and the new portable cell phone.

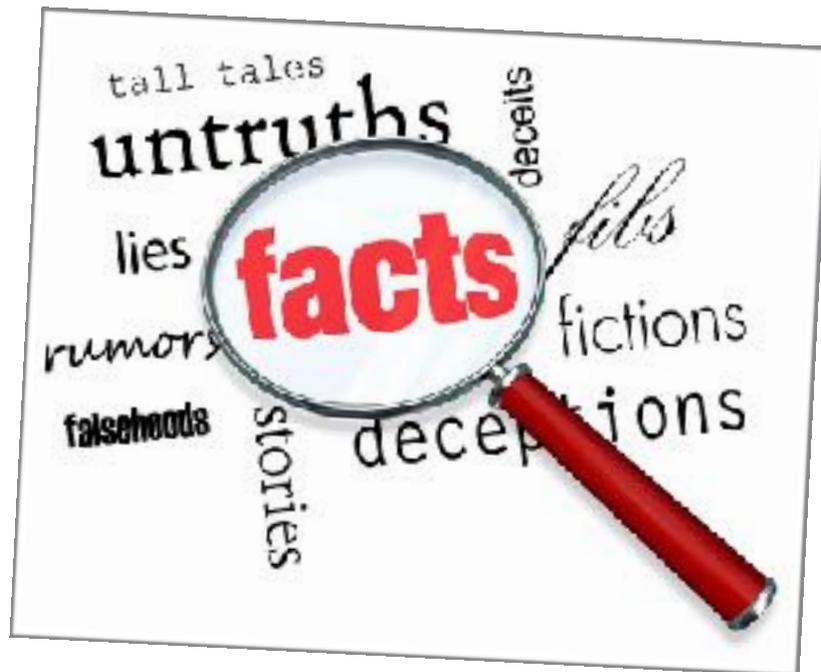
But more critically, is the change in the distribution and control of information.

Shops that sold books are now obsolete as people purchase these over the Internet.

You must be **prepared to investigate** strange things!!! (**Exodus 3:2-3**)

It's this type of change that can radically make or break a fantastic plan.

For this reason, fathers must teach children the art of scenario planning.



The ability to take note of changes in the environment, of new developments, of new evolving trends, and then commit this to a scenario plan to identify possible alternatives to be investigated.

A father who puts his child on a single track destination without this kind of training, is failing dismally in his leadership role as the likelihood of a dead-end, or a cliff without a bridge.

What do we want to do?

We need to empower the next generation to have the foresight to see various outcomes from a difficult situation and to be able to plan various alternative solutions so that they are not stuck.

What we need is to repeat the lessons of old - every single mistake or Biblical forefathers made, we need to help them identify the current realities for what they are – we need to take the Land (and not what we would want them to be), and we need to build an appreciation for estimating the cost / consequence of any action taken (as for me and my house we will serve the LORD).

We need to teach others to look up and around, while at the same time looking down at the job at hand (**Joshua 2:1**).

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 49:2)

(h) A father's role-model of function of Stewardship

The Book of Genesis describes clearly ... we have been given a mandate – to **keep and guard** the Garden; to have dominion over the earth and all that is on it (but not on fellow humans), and we have to be accountable to YHVH for what we accomplish with this calling (**Genesis 1:28**).

Stewardship speaks to an understanding that we have a responsibility ... to leave the Garden in a better state than how we found it, that we have to build more than we utilise.

To this end, the perpetual use of farm land without rest is contrary to YHVH's Principles and the use of water without a care in the world reflects a belief that we can call on YHVH anytime that we like bring more rain ... that a undesirable level of arrogance **and** shows that we do not value the gift of the Garden. Nor the Giver of the gift!!!

It is within this domain that many of our most precious values are to be discovered.



Integrity

How many of us remember the day when, if two people shook hands on a deal, then it was irrevocable, and everybody understood that.

This concept is a fundamental building block of the principle of Covenant.

The bond of my word was enough to live or die by.

A similar thought is contained in the **salt covenant** idea, Once we had broken bread, together with salt, you as my guest are completely safe from all harm.

You simply cannot be a good steward if you do not have integrity.

Honesty

- ◆ Honesty, as a value follows closely on that of integrity.
- ◆ However, honesty includes the understanding that you will make right all possible damage / harm caused under your roof, even if no claim is laid.
- ◆ Honesty includes the application of fairness, diligence, and justice.

A wonderful quote by RL Stevenson ...

“Don’t judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds that you plant,”

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 42:4)

(i) A father's role-model of Community building / citizenship

The world has created large corporations / huge companies that own a great deal of resource or governmental organisations that attempt to control mankind via their influence in the media and the minds of the masses.

The best structure from the Bible is the family; in a clan, in a tribe, and in a community.

Community come together for common purpose i.e. religion / welfare / celebrations; and sometimes to go to war when the group is under attack.

Within this context, the community either grows together or suffers together, and we do not get the huge differentials of wealth, health, etc, that we do today!

While leadership can be stressful and demanding ... **(Numbers 11:11-15)**

... the rewards are great when you see a community respond and start to function for themselves!

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 50:6)

(j) A father's role-model of how to be leaving a legacy

The moment that you accept that:

- ◆ every individual is “equal and unique”,
- ◆ that people should never be oppressed by anyone,
- ◆ that you realise that you are called to be accountable for your stewardship of the Garden,

... then you will believe in and work towards leaving a legacy.

- ◆ Legacy empowers OTHERS in your lifetime – legacy does not equal inheritance.
- ◆ Legacy is described in these strange words ‘It’s better to teach a man to fish than to feed him everyday’

But then you will understand that legacy equals hard work and sometimes, for a neighbour that does not even think or believe as you do ... we call that loving your neighbour.

Y'SHUA as Role Model (Isaiah 50:10,11)

LEADERSHIP IS NOT EASY

We see many examples of Biblical men who thought that they did not have what it takes:

- ◆ **Moses** → who am I?
- ◆ **Isaiah** → I am not a man of words!
- ◆ **Jeremiah** → I am a man of unclean lips!
- ◆ **Jonah** → I cannot speak!

The highest accolade → Moses is a servant ... **he is called YHVH's Servant.**

The Way Forward

The point of this short description is not to do an in depth study of Biblical leadership, but to define some of the Godly characteristics of such a role.

We will look at various individuals during this Torah cycle study.

I do not intend to discuss their shortcomings, but to focus on their GODLY Leadership qualities so that we can learn from these and start to emulate these attributes.

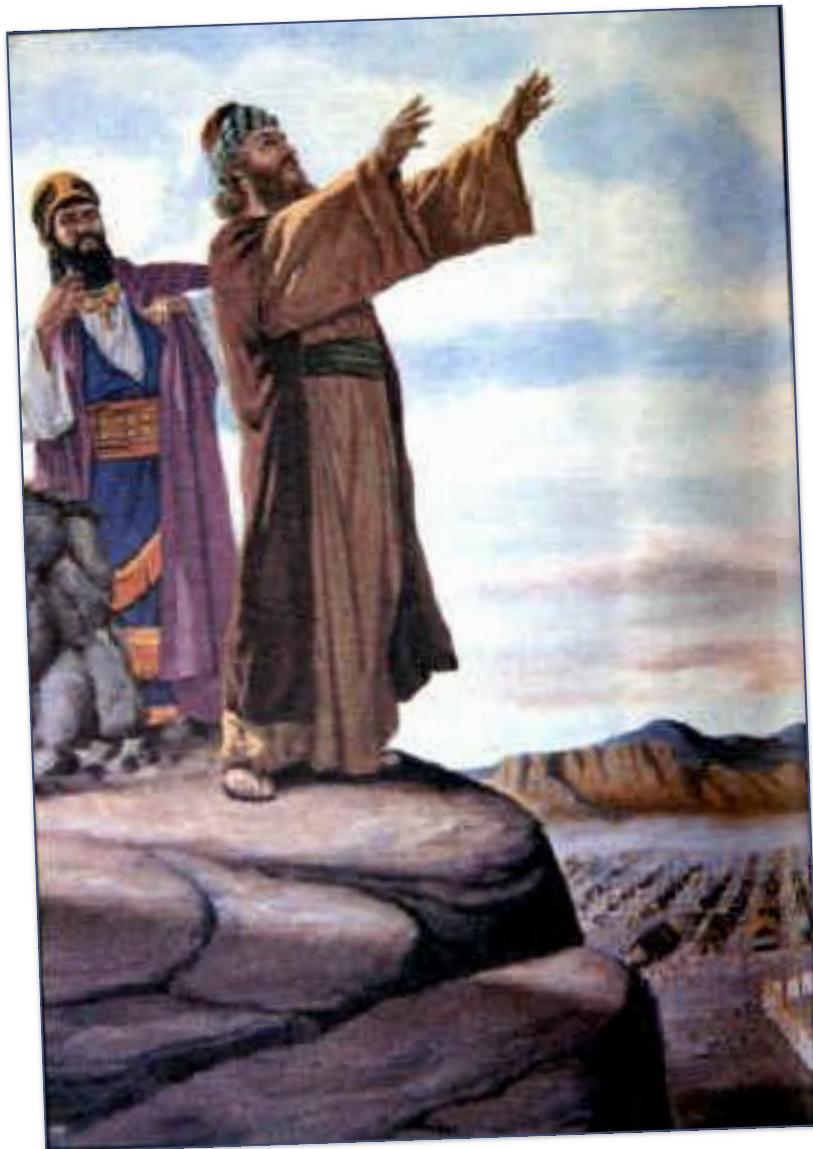
As such, I also do not intend to allocate their attributes under each of the heading described above, merely to reflect on their revealed lifestyle.

LET US RETURN TO THIS WEEK'S PORTION

This week's portion reveals the **high and low of our belief / value system**.

On the one hand, the people are living such righteous lives that no matter what Bil'am tries to do ... whatever curse he tries to impose on the children of Israel, they all fail.

- ◆ It's not because they are doing good things,
- ◆ It's because they are faithful to YHVH's Word and have not diverted of His path.
- ◆ Bil'am fails repeatedly.
- ◆ Bil'am fails after making many big sacrifices.
- ◆ Bil'am fails after negotiating with YHVH and negating on His Promises.



And after all of that ...

We close the portion with the sad story where the people of Israel go whoring after the women of Moab and their gods.

Sadly, the story includes an account of a man of Israel, blatantly, in front of the remnant who are weeping at the fall in the moral standard of the nation, brings a woman from Midian into his tent.

The HAFTORAH portion is equally sad. It's an account of YHVH, pleading through His prophet Micah, for His people to repent and return to His Ways.

And because they do not, we see consequences in the prophetic Word ... the **remnant of Jacob will be scattered amongst the gentiles**.

The benchmark of a **GODLY Lifestyle is spelled out in these few words**.

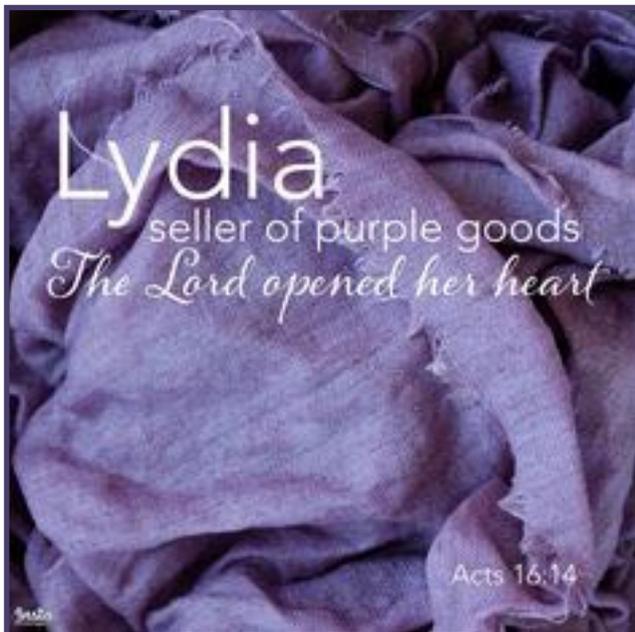
Micah 6:8 *“Human being, you have already been told what is good, what ADONAI demands of you - no more than to **act justly, love grace and walk in purity** with your GOD. So I went looking for someone ... A gentile whose walk on earth reflects these values?”*

We are going to study two **gentile women** called **Lydia and Rahab**.

A. Lydia and Rahab reveal the attribute of **JUSTICE**

Both of these women are business-women.

While there are some insinuations about Rahab, the fact is that there are at least two other alternatives (1. a real innkeeper - after all, why would YHVH-inspired men be led there anyway), or 2. she could easily have been a producer of flax products (all of the hay that was used to hide these men).



Joshua 2:6 *“Actually she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them under some stalks of flax she had spread out there.”*

Acts 16:14 *“One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in fine purple cloth.”*

You may think that business is about making money only - and if that is all that you think about being in business, then it can be if you have the wrong mindset.

We all have different talents—places in the community where we will have influence —and that implies that YHVH will expect you to apply Biblical principles in business that will reflect His glory.

However, Biblical business requires one:

- ◆ To pay fair wages
- ◆ To use honest scales
- ◆ To provide the best product and service
- ◆ To build a reputation of integrity (Rahab could discern the men’s honesty and trusted them to keep their word)

In addition, these women **reveal the full blessing** of The Woman of Valour (Proverbs 31).

Proverbs 31:10-11 “Who can find a capable wife? Her value is far beyond that of pearls. Her husband trusts her from his heart, and she will prove a great asset to him.”

B. Lydia and Rahab reveals the attribute of COMPASSION

It doesn’t take much to be nice and compassionate with people that you like.

But how do you react when you don’t know the people?

- ◆ Rahab has never seen these men.
- ◆ She has to make an on the spot decision – and she reaches out to protect.

You may now say ... but she lied! And that’s true!

But have you not read the Commandment that it’s right to help an ox out of a ditch on the Sabbath?

Saving lives justifies some decisions that we make.

James 2:24-26 “You see that a person is declared righteous because of actions and not because of faith alone. Likewise, wasn’t **Rachav the prostitute also declared righteous because of actions** when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another route? Indeed, just as the body without a spirit is dead, so too faith without actions is dead.”

And consider Lydia ...

- ◆ She is a believer
- ◆ But then she meets PAUL and she receives further revelation

Acts 16:14-15 *“She was already a “GOD-fearer,” and the LORD opened up her heart to respond to what Sha’ul was saying. After she and the members of her household had been immersed, she gave us this invitation: “If you consider me to be faithful to the LORD, come and stay in my house.” **And she insisted till we went.**”*

Without a moments doubt, she will prevail upon them to stay with her.

Later on, when the men have been in prison, and are set free, they automatically first go to her house before they move on.

Acts 6:39-40 *“They came and apologized to them; then, after escorting them out, requested them to leave the city. From the prison they went to Lydia’s house, and after seeing and encouraging the brothers they departed.”*

C. Lydia and Rahab reveal the attribute of HUMBLENESS

All too often, believers start to think that they are better than others simply because they are now children of the Covenant.

Often leaders in the Body become overly enthusiastic about their role and become bosses / dictators instead of shepherds.

Lydia readily supports the work of others.

Acts 16:15 *“She urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.”*

Lydia is known as a woman of prayer.

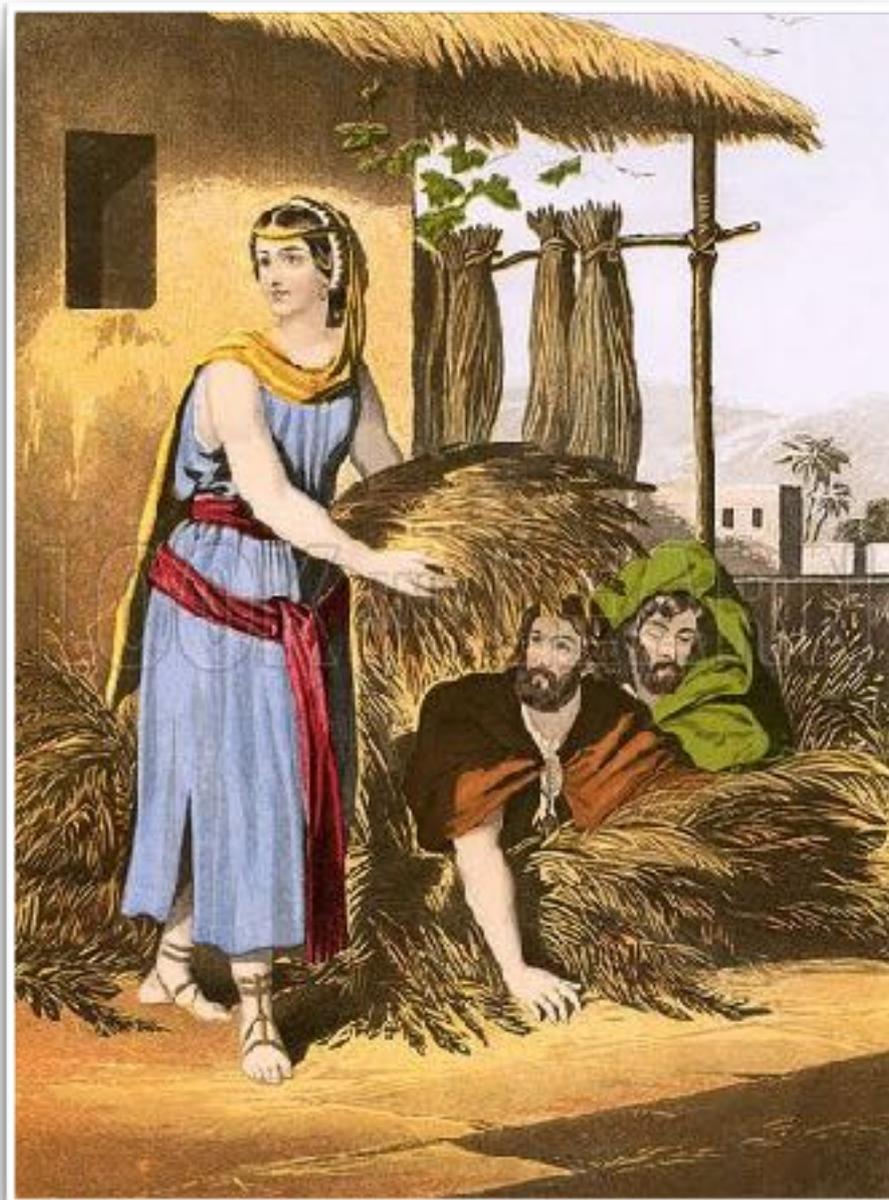
That action of bending the knees, and petitioning YHVH is not seen - it happens behind closed doors.

But the impact of those prayers are felt throughout the community – Paul tells us the value of prayer and since we know that **Lydia prayed**, we know what it **meant in the spiritual domain**.

Philippians 1:4-6 “ I thank my GOD every time I think of you. Whenever I pray for all of you I always pray with joy, because you have shared in proclaiming the Good News from the very first day until now. And I am sure of this: that the One who began a good work among you will keep it growing until it is completed on the Day of the Messiah YESHUA”.

Rahab will acknowledge the good deed that is done to her and her family when the Israelites attack the town and YHVH rewards her.

Joshua 2:12-14 “So, please, swear to me by ADONAI that, since I have **been kind to you**, you will also be kind to my father’s family. Give me some evidence of your good faith, that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers and sisters and all who are theirs, so that we won’t be killed.” The men replied to her, “Our lives are certainly worth yours, provided you don’t betray our mission. So when ADONAI gives us the land, **we will treat you kindly and in good faith.**”



D. Lydia and Rahab reveal the art of LEGACY

Their belief in YHVH and their acts of service will cause their names to be remembered forever.

Spontaneous actions reveal the content of the heart ... those actions have the lasting reward as the families are blessed from one generation to the next!

Joshua 6:17 *“But the city and everything in it is to be set aside for ADONAI and therefore to be destroyed completely; only **Rachav the prostitute is to be spared, she and everyone with her in her house, because she hid the messengers we sent.**”*

Matthew 1:5-6 *“Salmon was the father of Bo‘az (his mother was **Rachav**), Bo‘az was the father of ‘Oved (his mother was **Rut**), ‘Oved was the father of **Yishai**, **Yishai** was the father of **David the king.**”*

Acts 16:14 *“One who heard us was a woman named **Lydia**, from the city of **Thyatira**, a **seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of GOD.** The **LORD** opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by **Paul.**”*

A FINAL THOUGHT

Strange how often the act of “hospitality” comes up as a symbol of GODliness ... its one of those **clear markers** of those who would call themselves sons / daughters of Abraham.

The act of caring for the stranger is seen as **a minimum standard of care** (even of an enemy) in the **Middle Eastern** culture ... however, in the **western world, it's more often seen as a chore.**

Could it be that these acts of generosity are not valued much or, maybe there is a view that people will abuse the situation?

Whatever the reason - we must find a way to ensure that this essential part of the attributes of YHVH are regularly revealed by the Body of Messiah!

BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-27

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.

May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.

May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.

May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

In this way they are to put **My Name** on the people of Israel, so that I will BLESS them.

