

In ancient Israel there were four main sources of governances. We usually think the king is the top of the pyramid but that was not this case even though some kings thought and acted as though they were.

The way God set it up was for **God**, at the top of the pyramid, to speak to the prophets and tell them what He wanted the people to do.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. Deut 18:15-19

Once the **prophet** had spoken the words of God, the **king** was charged with seeing that those words and actions were carried out. His ability to stir the people to the proper action was his main responsibility. He was not to do things the way he felt was good or for his own gratification but to follow orders, so to speak, and fulfill the desires and commands of God.

The **priests** were then to lead the people in worshiping God through the liturgy given to them by God through Moses. Their job was to lead the people in thanking God for his leadership and protection for them and to teach them the correct ways that was to be accomplished.

This made a perfect circle of events: God speaks to the prophets – the prophets tell the king – the king leads the people to action – the priests lead the people to worship God – and the circle is complete.

Sadly the circle was often broken. The prophets spoke from their own understanding, the kings didn't follow the prophet's warnings, or the priests laid too many requirements on the people. The result was that all too often the perfect circle was broken and the consequences were not desirable.

As I read various sections of the Old and New Testament, I often wonder how the people can be so obtuse and not see the mistakes that they and their ancestors have made and not see that there is a pattern here and obviously it is a pattern leads to pain and destruction.

But as I live through this covid19 pandemic that we are in, I see that it was not only ancient Israel that could not see the pattern. There is a portion of the population of the world (and not just in one nation) that wants to do things their way.

They ignore the scientific facts and accumulated data and go about their own lives as if there are no consequences. Their concern is for themselves and not for anyone else. Their motto is "All for One" – **ME** and ignores the rest of the saying "And One for All". The lack of their concern for their neighbor is a chief reason this pandemic continues.

This attitude is a pandemic itself; probably more serious than covid19.

God gives every person free will. But with that free will comes certain obligations; obligations too often ignored. In the current condition of the world, wearing a mask and keeping a safe distance, is part of those obligations in loving your neighbor.

One has the right not to wear a mask and do as they please – but is that what a person that has love for his fellow man/woman is doing?

Love does no harm to a neighbor. Romans 13:10a (NIV)

Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. Romans 15:2 (NIV)

What seems obvious to some is a total mystery to others. It was true of ancient Israel and seems to be so today. We think of ourselves more enlightened and more mature than the ancients. But in some ways we are no better, or smarter, than those who lived thousands of years ago.

I guess that "The Teacher" who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes said it most succinctly:

*What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.*

Ecc 1:9 (NIV)