

Redeeming Leadership Today

Week 1: Leadership

Raymond Chiu • NYCBC Sunday School • June 4, 2023

For class materials go to bit.ly/nycbc-redeeming



Introduction



Goals of the series

- Wrestle with the challenge of authoritarianism
- Reflect on the experience of tyranny at home
- Understand leadership and followership in reality
- Recognize our limitations as image-bearers of God
- Reconcile the light and dark sides of leadership
- Renew our calling, relationships, and churches



Approach

- Journey of personal discovery
- Won't have all the answers
- Not primarily about politics
- Questions about theology



Perspectives

- Global: Grasping the worldwide trend
- Personal: Experiencing it in our lives
- Biblical: Letting scripture tell the story
- Youth: Equipping you to bless others
- Church: Asking new theological questions
- Applied: Rethinking work and worship



A letter to my older self

- My review of *Invitation to Lead* by Paul Tokunaga in Encounters (07/2004)
 - “Tokunaga goes out on a limb to describe what he really thinks a good leader is. For example, a good leader has dealt with past events, is willing to get professional counselling, is being mentored by someone who understands suffering, is comfortable being led by someone of the opposite gender, and works with people they don’t naturally choose to be with.”
 - “In an age where the fluidity of identity is brought about by global upheaval, immigration, and media, Tokunaga’s insight exemplifies the type of contextual reflection that will be critical for leaders in the coming century.”



The rise of authoritarianism

Global perspective



The challenge of authoritarianism

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2023 | THE GLOBE AND MAIL G

NEWS | A11

Hong Kong police bar Tiananmen Square vigils

Officials say anyone attending gatherings for Sunday's anniversary of 1989 massacre will be arrested

JAMES GRIFFITHS
ASIA CORRESPONDENT
HONG KONG

Police in Hong Kong have threatened to arrest anyone at public gatherings marking Sunday's anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Hundreds of people were killed when the Chinese military cracked down on pro-democracy protests in early June, 1989, ending any lingering hopes for political liberalization in China. For decades afterward, Hong Kong was the only place on Chinese soil where major commemorations of the massacre were held, with tens of thousands gathering annually in the city's Victoria Park for candlelight vigils.

Since Beijing imposed a draconian national security law on Hong Kong in 2020, after anti-government protests, authorities have tried to block any remembrance, first on pandemic grounds and now with threats of arrest.

Speaking Friday, police Senior Superintendent Liauw Ka-kei said anyone going to the park on Sunday for "genuine" purposes would be fine, but "I have to



Police question a journalist on Friday at Victoria Park in Hong Kong, where people traditionally gathered to mourn the victims of China's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. PETER PARKS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

stress that if you are staying together with a group of people at the same place at the same time and with a common purpose to express certain views," that could constitute an unauthorized assembly "or even more serious offences."

"Do not try to test the boundaries or our determination and commitment in enforcing the law in this operation," he said.

Under Hong Kong's public order ordinance, anyone convicted of taking part in an unauthorized assembly can face between three and five years in prison.

In the past, police gave permission for mass gatherings in

Victoria Park for June 4 and even facilitated them by providing crowd control. But since the introduction of the national security law, rallies of any kind have been few and far between in Hong Kong, and when they do occur, police have imposed tight limits on the number of people who can participate and have threatened organizers with prosecution if anyone does anything in breach of the security law.

That law came into force several weeks after the 2020 anniversary, and despite pandemic restrictions and police warnings, about 20,000 showed up in Victoria Park. Several prominent ac-

tivists, including Jimmy Lai, publisher of the now-defunct pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily, were later arrested and charged with unauthorized assembly.

In the years since, a heavy police presence has prevented any major public gathering, and with coronavirus restrictions now lifted, the authorities are not taking any chances this weekend. According to local media, about 5,000 officers – including members of the force's counterterrorism squad – will be deployed to Victoria Park and other parts of the city starting Saturday.

The park itself has been booked for a carnival organized by pro-Beijing groups. According to Chinese state media, the event will "celebrate the 26th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region." That anniversary is in July.

The Hong Kong government has refused to say whether the act of commemorating June 4 is itself illegal. Speaking this week, Chief Executive John Lee said merely that "everybody should act in accordance with the law and think of what they do, so as to be ready to face the consequences."

His ministers have even skirted mention of the event, with security chief Chris Tang warning of potential disruption around a "very special occasion."

Hong Kongers are in little doubt as to the potential repercussions, however. Catholic churches, which had previously

conducted remembrance masses on June 4, will not do so this year, the diocese said this month. Organizers of an unrelated documentary screening booked for Sunday said they had been forced to cancel the event after movie theatres pulled out, giving in to pressure from unidentified "industry representatives."

As space has shrunk in Hong Kong for commemorating June 4, events overseas have grown, with long-standing rallies in Toronto, Vancouver and cities in Britain and U.S. taking on greater importance. Speaking to The Globe and Mail last year, Toronto organizer Cheuk Kwan said that, just like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Tiananmen Square massacre is a global event, so "it is up to all of us to carry the burden of remembering."

This week saw the opening of a new museum in New York dedicated to the massacre, the only such permanent exhibition in the world, after the 2021 closing of a similar museum in Hong Kong.

Former Tiananmen student leader Zhou Fengsuo, one of the museum's curators, said he hoped it could be a place where the "hope for a free China" lives on.

"Because there is a hope," Mr. Zhou told a news conference. "No matter what kind of defeat there was, and how much struggle we had to go through, this dream lives here."

With a report from Reuters

- What instances of authoritarianism or tyranny have struck you the most?

- Today is the 34th anniversary of the Tiananmen square massacre on June 4, 1989.



The challenge of authoritarianism

- Russian President Vladimir Putin
 - over 200,000 Russian casualties and over 100,000 Ukrainian casualties from the Ukraine war alone (Newsweek)
- Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro
 - extrajudicial executions, short-term forced disappearances, jailing opponents, prosecuting civilians in military courts, torturing detainees, and cracking down on protesters, including mass migration of 7.1M people (Human Rights Watch)
- Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan
 - “has shut down 149 media outlets, shuttered more than 2,000 schools and universities, fired more than 120,000 civil servants and jailed more than 45,000 suspected dissenters” (Kasparov and Halvorssen)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/02/13/why-the-rise-of-authoritarianism-is-a-global-catastrophe/>;
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/Venezuela>; <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/Venezuela>;
<https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-russia-death-toll-questions-bakhmut-counteroffensive-1800947>



The challenge of authoritarianism

- Cambodian leader Pol Pot
 - “between 1.5 and 3 million people killed” (University of Minnesota)
- Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin
 - 9 to 20 million people killed (Snyder, Wikipedia)
- Communist China under Mao Zedong
 - 30 million people died in the Great Famine alone (Smil)
- Communism in the last century
 - “If we add to this list the deaths caused by communist regimes that the Soviet Union created and supported—including those in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia—the total number of victims is closer to **100 million**” (Satter)

<https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/Cambodia>; <https://timothysnyder.wordpress.com/articles-and-reviews/new-york-review-of-books/hitler-vs-stalin-who-killed-more/>;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Excess_mortality_in_the_Soviet_Union_under_Joseph_Stalin; <https://www.hudson.org/national-security-defense/100-years-of-communism-and-100-million-dead>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1127087/>



The challenge of authoritarianism

- “Why the rise of authoritarianism is a global catastrophe” by Garry Kasparov and Thor Halvorssen from the Human Rights Foundation
 - “Authoritarianism is one of the largest — if not the largest — challenges facing humanity”
 - 94 countries, 53% of the world’s population, or 3.97 billion people are ruled by “tyrants, absolute monarchs, military juntas or competitive authoritarians”
 - “If authoritarianism and dictatorship are to be properly challenged — and if so many resulting crises, including military conflict, poverty and extremism, **are to be addressed at their root cause** — such dissidents need funding, strategic advice, technical training, attention and solidarity.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/02/13/why-the-rise-of-authoritarianism-is-a-global-catastrophe/>



The challenge of authoritarianism

THE ROYS REPORT

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Southern Baptist Leaders Mistreated Abuse Survivors for Decades, Report Says

By Bob Smietana

May 22, 2022 8:25 pm CDT 21 Comments



A woman holds signs about abuse during a rally outside the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 11, 2019, in Birmingham, Ala. (RNS photo by Butch Dill)

ENGLISH

Privacy - Terms

- “Former Executive Committee vice president and general counsel D. August ‘Augie’ Boto and James Guenther ...”
- “The two attorneys criticized SBC leaders who tried to take steps to address abuse and mishandled abuse allegations ‘in a manner that involved the mistreatment of survivors,’ the report says. The report also found that Boto, in particular, had a pattern of intimidating victims and abuse advocates.”
- “‘This whole thing should be seen for what it is,’ Boto wrote in an internal email quoted in the report. ‘It is a satanic scheme to completely distract us from evangelism. It is not the gospel. It is not even a part of the gospel. It is a misdirection play.’”

<https://julieroys.com/report-southern-baptist-leaders-mistreated-abuse-survivors-decades/>



Authoritarianism in politics and history

- Authoritarianism
 - “in politics and government, the **blind submission** to authority and the **repression of individual freedom of thought** and action. Authoritarian regimes are systems of government that have **no established mechanism for the transfer of executive power** and do not afford their citizens **civil liberties or political rights**. **Power is concentrated** in the hands of a single leader or a small elite, whose decisions are taken **without regard for the will of the people.**”

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/authoritarianism>



Favouring tyranny

CULTURE | RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Why the cult of Josef Stalin is flourishing

Anastassia Boutsko
03/06/2023

The Russian state is promoting the Soviet dictator through new monuments, reversing the de-Stalinization process of the 1960s. Why would a country celebrate a mass murderer?



Image: Nikolai Sitnikov/TASS/picture alliance

- After a long period of “de-Stalinization,” the cult of Stalin re-emerged starting at the annexation of Crimea
- Individuals have begun putting up Stalin busts in the gardens, and the state has begun erecting monuments in cities

<https://www.dw.com/en/why-the-cult-of-josef-stalin-is-flourishing/a-64896549>



Favouring tyranny



- Trump's remarks, many of which are cheered by followers
 - demeaning women's bodies, revelling over their abuse
 - praising violence from supporters and against protesters
 - insulting citizens and opponents, giving degrading nicknames
 - endorsing torture of prisoners and killing of families of terrorists
 - making racist remarks against Mexicans, Blacks, Muslims, and gays

<https://mashable.com/feature/trump-timeline>



Psychological characteristics of authoritarianism

- Authoritarian attitudes
 - “favoring blind submission to authority” (Merriam-Webster)
- Tyrannical leadership
 - “someone who uses their power and authority oppressively, capriciously, and perhaps vindictively” (Ashforth 1997)
 - someone exhibiting traits that are **domineering, pushy, manipulative, loud, conceited, and selfish** (Epitropaki and Martin)

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authoritarian>; Ashforth, Blake. "Petty Tyranny in Organizations." Human Relations 47, no. 7 (1994): 755-778; Epitropaki, Olga and Robin Martin. "Implicit Leadership Theories in Applied Settings: Factor Structure, Generalizability, and Stability Over Time." Journal of Applied Psychology 89, no. 2 (2004): 293-310.



What's going on?

- Donald Trump committed authoritarian behaviours by allegedly
 - suppressing and dismissing capable and truthful officials and diplomats
 - using power to illegally manipulate state politicians, law enforcement, and foreign leaders for personal gain
 - profiting off his presidency and engaging in fraudulent activity while using political immunity and pardon powers to avoid consequences
 - undermining democratic processes and rejecting the will of the people
- It is one thing to be an unwitting victim of authoritarianism, turn a blind eye to it, or rationalize it away
- It is another thing to **praise and adore** the man who champions it, and twist one's faith convictions to enable it

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/29/state-department-purge-trump-foreign-policy>; <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/24/politics/trump-worst-abuses-of-power/index.html>; <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/06/1140756394/former-president-donald-trumps-company-found-guilty-criminal-tax-fraud>



Thesis statement

- “In a world where **fallen image-bearers** of God fight for safety and dominance, our **anxieties** about life in the world induce within us **traditional views about purifying and protecting** our own people, and these priorities **appear** to be addressed by leaders who fit the **strong-man** image. As demonstrated by biblical history, these **innate fears, moral intuitions, and impressions**—which are based on **imperfect information**—pose a **serious challenge** to our humanity and faith, leading us to **idolize tyranny** in our societies and churches. Yet we are blessed with a hopeful portrait of leadership through **Jesus Christ** that **transforms our understanding** of both leadership and followership and **redeems our moral character, interpersonal relationships, and church governance.**”



Searching for identity

Youth perspective





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Are you a leader? (survey)

- Describe a picture of the kind of leader you would be in your dreams. Discuss this picture with your neighbours.
- If you could be the leader you always wanted to be, what words would you use to describe yourself? (Type one or more single words.)
- Answer as either
 - Younger female
 - Younger male
 - Older female
 - Older male



Yearning for a leader

Personal perspective



A story about searching

- Leadership and identity were a theme throughout my young adulthood (ENCOUNTERS articles)
 - Addressing needs through leadership (06/92)
 - Avoiding failures in leadership (10/92)
 - Mentorship (02/93) – P. Zung
 - Personal, sexual, and Chinese **identity** (03/93) – A. Ng
 - **Leadership and spiritual direction** in the local church (10-11/93) – M. Wall
 - Need for an distinctly **Asian Christian theology** (04-05/94) – D. Chow
 - **Jesus's leadership** (*In the Name of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen) (09-10/95)
 - American right-wing **fundamentalism** (04-05/96) – Y. Shek
 - What's on the mind of **youth** (03/99) – Editor



A story about searching

- Church lacked a specific compelling public vision for the younger generation, as the majority of visions were devotional, clannish, and programmatic (Church visioning retreat (02/93))
 - Abundant spiritual growth, resources, activity, and effectiveness (11 visions)
 - “Abundant supply of well-equipped teachers”
 - Close-knit family culture (4 visions)
 - “Strong sense of family”
 - Outward community outlook (3 visions)
 - “A church that radiates the Gospel”
 - Missionary expansion (2 visions)
 - “We dream of more missionaries coming from among us”



A story about searching

- Young adults were part of a “lost” generation (12/95-01/96)

1992 Church Survey	Cantonese (CSC)	English (ESC)
Responses	310	138
Largest age group	Middle-aged (64%)	Young (47%)
Weak sense of belonging	26%	35%
People serving in ministry don't have a personal burden	20%	37%
People serving as helpers lack confidence	11%	29%
People not serving		
don't know the church structure	20%	71%
not invited to serve	20%	62%
haven't received guidance	26%	64%
don't know what post suits them	21%	70%
have no strong sense of belonging	15%	33%



A story about searching

- Yearning for a leadership role model
 - Complaining about church leadership
 - Following after a charismatic leader
 - Moving on to authority-driven churches
-
- Did this tell us more about the leaders or about us as a followers?

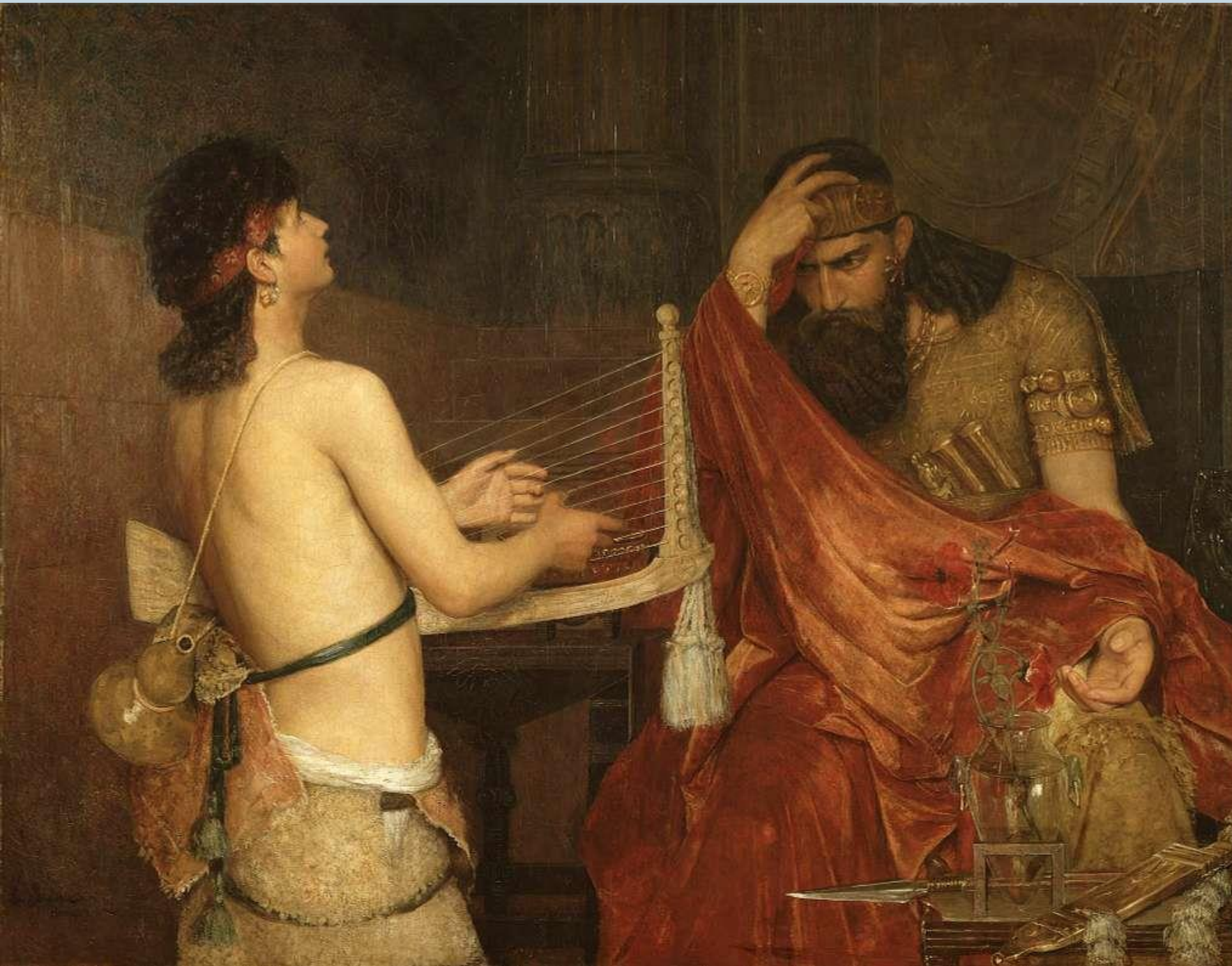


Scripture and leader emergence

Biblical perspective



Examples of leader emergence in the Bible



In groups, answer each question in one sentence:

1. How does the leader rise to power, maintain power, or become preferred?
2. What attitudes, perceptions, or biases bring about this leader's power?

<http://www.nationalmuseum.se/>





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Examples of leader emergence in the Bible

1. Abimelech son of Gideon ([Judges 9:1-6](#))
2. Israel wants a king ([1 Samuel 8:1-8](#))
3. Samuel explains the way of a king ([1 Samuel 8:9-20](#))
4. Saul chosen as king ([1 Samuel 10:20-24](#))
5. David chosen as king ([1 Samuel 16:1-7](#))
6. Saul kills the priesthood ([1 Samuel 22:16-19](#))
7. King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image ([Daniel 3:1-7](#))
8. King Darius's irrevocable injunction ([Daniel 6:6-9](#))
9. Barabbas the rebel is freed ([Mark 15:6-15](#))
10. Simon the magician ([Acts 8:9-24](#))



Examples of leader emergence in the Bible

1. Abimelech son of Gideon (Judges 9:1-6)	Replacing distributed leadership with autocracy, through ethnic cleansing and nationalism
2. Israel wants a king (1 Samuel 8:1-8)	Rejecting of theocracy for monarchy, motivated by longing for national stability, identity, and prominence
3. Samuel explains the way of a king (1 Samuel 8:9-20)	Preferring a king that will supposedly fight battles for them, naively giving up their freedom and inheritance



Examples of leader emergence in the Bible

4. Saul chosen as king (1 Samuel 10:20-24)	Choosing a king based on height and superficial appearances, ignoring his moral character
5. David chosen as king (1 Samuel 16:1-12)	Choosing candidates based on birth order, age, height, or appearance, ignoring his heart for God
6. Saul kills the priesthood (1 Samuel 22:11-19)	Religious persecution and genocide, to eliminate all opposition



Examples of leader emergence in the Bible

7. King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3:1-7)	Elevation and sacralization of the kingship, to enforce allegiance and conformity
8. King Darius's irrevocable injunction (Daniel 6:6-9)	Manipulation of laws, to entrap and oppress competitors and minorities
9. Barabbas the rebel is freed (Mark 15:6-15)	Preference for revolution rather than reform, through underhanded political influence
10. Simon the magician (Acts 8:9-24)	Narcissism and opportunism, fuelled by greed, anger, and sociopathy



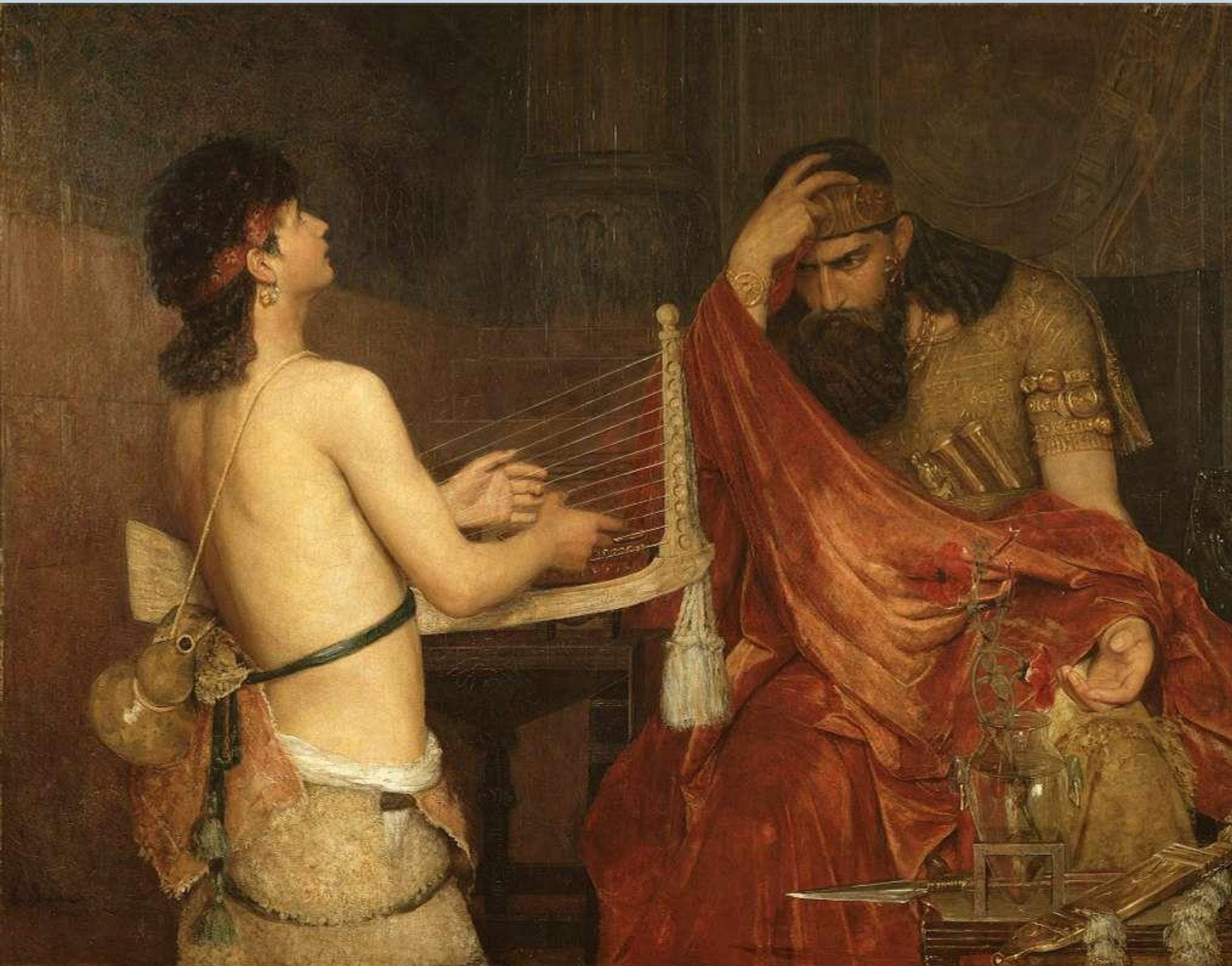
Examples of leader emergence in the Bible

- (4/5) Leadership and appearance
 - Taller men are seen as leader-like because they appear dominant, healthy, and intelligent; taller women are seen as leader-like only because they appear intelligent (Blaker et al. 2013)
 - People prefer taller leaders, and taller males consider themselves to be more qualified to be a leader; this effect does not hold true for females (Murray and Schmitz 2011)
 - People associate dominance with war-time contexts (Little and Roberts 2012)

Blaker, Nancy M., Irene Rompa, Inge H. Dessing, Anne F. Vriend, Channah Herschberg, and Mark Van Vugt. "The Height Leadership Advantage in Men and Women: Testing Evolutionary Psychology Predictions about the Perceptions of Tall Leaders." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 16, no. 1 (2013): 17-27; Little, Anthony C. and S. Craig Roberts. "Evolution, Appearance, and Occupational Success." *Evolutionary Psychology* 10, no. 5 (2012): 782-801; Murray, Gregg R. and J. David Schmitz. "Caveman Politics: Evolutionary Leadership Preferences and Physical Stature." *Social Science Quarterly* 92, no. 5 (2011): 1215-1235).



Examples of leader emergence in the Bible



- Were these patterns of behaviour part of the image of God in us?
- Were they WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic)?

[http://www.nationalmuseum.se/;](http://www.nationalmuseum.se/)
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/202009/why-the-west-is-weird>



Rejection of sacral kingship in the Bible

- In contrast, the Bible begins to reveal a redemptive framework for a limited and accountable form of leadership
 - Opposition to monarchy from the beginning (1 Sam 8:6)
 - Political rather than a sacral (divine) institution (1 Sam 12:14)
 - King was the Lord's anointed but under God's kingship (1 Sam 24:6)
 - King was no more than a man and sometimes is rebuked (2 Chr 26:18)
 - Spiritual anointing was usually for judicial functions (Num 11:17)
 - Clear separation of kingly and cultic (priestly) roles (Num 27:19)

Cundall, Arthur E. "Sacral Kingship—The Old Testament Background." [Vox Evangelica](#) 6 (1969): 31-41.



Reflecting on our frailties

Applied perspective





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Are we limited or biased? (survey)

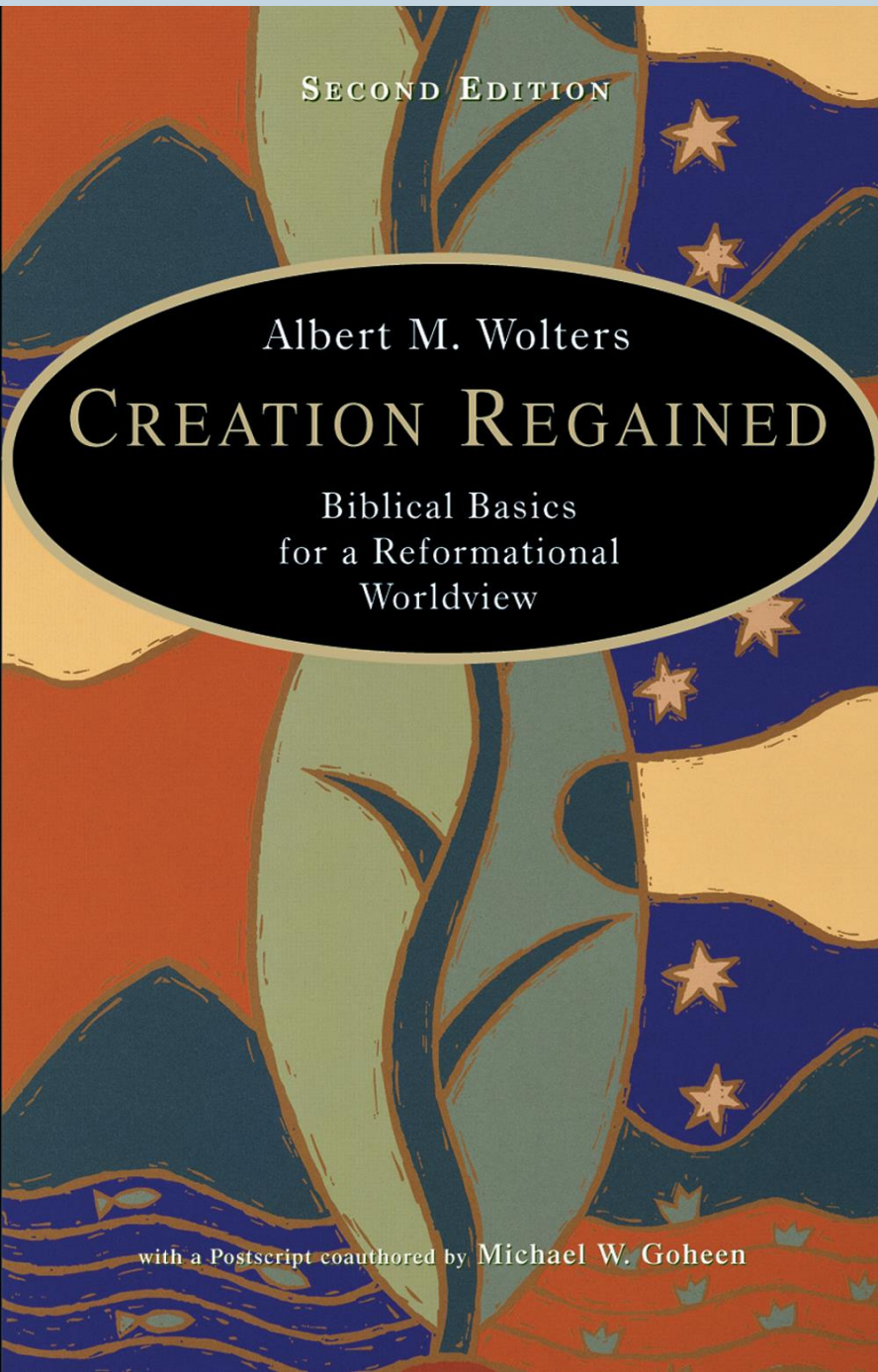
- Humans were limited in their thinking when they were first created.
 - Humans were biased when they were first created.
 - Saved, sanctified, and perfected humans are limited in their thinking.
 - Saved, sanctified, and perfected humans are biased.
-
- Discuss with your neighbours why you answered the way you did.
 - Discuss with them why you're seeing the results you're seeing.



Church perspective



Humans as they were created and perfected



- *Creation Regained* by Al Wolters
 - Life is governed by the laws of nature, and the norms governing of our relationships, cultures, and societies as instituted by God
 - Everything is within the scope of God's creation, including our cognitive functions, the dynamics of our relationships, the workings of our culture, and the structures of our societies
 - Knowing God's will and call requires us to seek wisdom about the creational laws and norms within the scope of God's creation
- This includes how we see others and ourselves as leaders

Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005.



We might have hope

- We who are strong have an obligation to **bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.** ² Let each of us **please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.** ³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written **for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.** (Romans 15)



Coming up

- Week 1: Leadership | Why Everything Old Is New Again
- Week 2: Information | When Leadership Is All in Our Heads
 - When we follow a leader, are we following someone who leads well, or someone who gives the impression that they do? We draw on both research and scripture that show how we are betrayed by the limited information and leader stereotypes we possess.
- Week 3: Morality | How Our Deepest Convictions Drive Us
- Week 4: Fear | Why a Terrible World Is Reshaping Us
- Week 5: Tyranny | When the Strongman Captures Your Heart
- Week 6: Redemption | How Our View of Leadership Is Renewed



Q&A

Thank you for building each other up!





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