

Isaiah 55:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

Analysis

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. The pronoun "him" refers to the Davidic heir mentioned in verse 3. The threefold designation—"witness" ('ed, עד), "leader" (nagid, נָגִיד), "commander" (metsavveh, מְצַוֶּה)—describes this figure's roles. A witness testifies to truth; a leader guides; a commander orders and directs. These encompass prophetic, royal, and military functions.

"I have given" (perfect tense, netattiw, נָתַתִּי) indicates accomplished fact from God's perspective. The gift is to "the people" (le'ummim, לְעַמִּים, peoples/nations)—plural suggesting not just Israel but Gentiles. This international scope expands Davidic covenant beyond ethnic boundaries. The ruler will witness God's truth, lead nations, and command peoples under divine authority.

From a Reformed perspective, this prophesies Christ's threefold office: Prophet (witness to truth, John 18:37), King (leader of nations, Revelation 19:16), and Commander of spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-17). Christ fulfills David's role universally, leading the church comprised of every tribe and tongue. This verse grounds Christian understanding of Christ's comprehensive authority over all aspects of life—He witnesses, leads, and commands with divine right.

Historical Context

David was Israel's paradigmatic king—warrior, leader, and God's chosen. The title *nagid* (leader) appeared in David's anointing (1 Samuel 25:30, 2 Samuel 6:21). Isaiah promises a greater David who leads not just Israel but all peoples. Post-exilic period saw no restoration of Davidic monarchy, pointing toward eschatological fulfillment.

Jesus claimed this role: "I am...the truth" (John 14:6, witness function); "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18, commander function); "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, leader function). Early church proclaimed Christ's lordship over all (Acts 2:36, Philippians 2:9-11). Church history shows Christ's leadership expanding globally, nations coming under His witness and command through gospel proclamation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to Christ as witness to truth in your life?
2. In what areas do you resist Christ's leadership and command?
3. How should Christ's role as commander affect your engagement in spiritual warfare?

Interlinear Text

וְה	עֵד	לְאֲמִים:	בְּהִיטִי	נָגִיד
H2005	him for a witness	to the people	Behold I have given	a leader
	H5707	H3816	H5414	H5057
וּמִצֵּוֹ ה	לְאֲמִים:			
and commander	to the people			
H6680	H3816			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 1:5 (Witness): And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Daniel 9:25 (Parallel theme): Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Hebrews 2:10 (Parallel theme): For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Psalms 2:6 (Parallel theme): Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Psalms 18:43 (Parallel theme): Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.

Jeremiah 30:9 (Parallel theme): But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

John 18:37 (Witness): Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Hosea 3:5 (Parallel theme): Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

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