

**BEING A PROPER PERSON IN LIFE  
TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN GOD'S ADMINISTRATION**

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

**Seeing the Principle  
of God's Government among His People  
and Honoring the Headship of Christ  
in the Fellowship of the Apostles, Elders, and Churches**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 3:16; 4:29; 28:30; Acts 14:23; 15:1-31

**I. We need to see the principle of God's government among His people—Exo. 3:16; 4:29; 12:21; 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8, 10:**

- A. In the Old Testament we have a type of the New Testament government; in order to understand God's administration in the New Testament, we need to understand God's administration in the Old Testament—Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 2:9:
1. God's administration is a direct ruling and governing by God Himself; this direct ruling is a theocracy—1 Sam. 8:7.
  2. In the Old Testament God's administration among the children of Israel was neither an autocracy by a dictator nor a democracy of the people; on the contrary, God's administration was a theocracy, indicating that God Himself came to govern, to rule, to administrate, the people of God directly yet through some agents—Exo. 12:1-3, 21; 28:30; Deut. 33:8, 10:
    - a. Among the children of Israel, these agents were the priests and the elders working together for God's theocracy—Num. 27:15-21.
    - b. The theocracy among the nation of Israel was a government according to God's constant speaking, as written in the law, or God's instant speaking, as revealed through the breastplate of the high priest by means of the Urim and the Thummim—Exo. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65.
  3. In principle, the administration of God was always carried out by the elders according to the divine speaking received through the Urim and the Thummim—Exo. 12:1-3, 21; Num. 27:15-21:
    - a. After the high priest received the instant speaking from God, he did not directly execute or carry out what God spoke; the high priest passed on the word that he had received to the elders, and the elders became the direct administrators among God's people—Exo. 28:30; Num. 27:15-21.
    - b. Joshua may be considered the leading elder among God's people at his time, and the high priest accompanying him was Eleazar; Eleazar bore the responsibility to go into God's presence to receive His instant speaking, and from him Joshua received the divine speaking to administrate among God's people—v. 21.
  4. God's government is by His instant speaking plus the constant written Word; the instant speaking was either through the priests or the prophets, and this speaking was carried out by the direct administrators.

- B. The principle regarding God's administration in the New Testament is the same as that in the Old Testament; the elders are both the priests receiving the instant word from God and the administrators to administrate what they have received from the Lord—Exo. 19:6; Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10:
  - 1. In the Old Testament kingdom of God, the constitution was the law, and in the New Testament kingdom of God, the constitution is the teaching of the apostles; the teaching of the apostles replaces the law in the sense of replacing the law in God's administration—Acts 2:42; Titus 1:9.
  - 2. The written constitution of the New Testament kingdom of God is the teaching of the apostles, and the direct administrators in this kingdom are the elders—vv. 5, 9.
  - 3. In the Old Testament the priests are one group, and the elders are another group, but in the New Testament the two groups are one; all the elders are both priests and administrators, who honor the teaching of the apostles as the highest power in the church and who spend much time in the Lord's presence to receive His instant speaking—1 Pet. 2:9; Titus 1:5, 9.

**II. We need to honor the headship of Christ in the fellowship of the apostles, elders, and churches—Acts 15:1-31:**

- A. The record in Acts 15 shows us the proper headship and leadership—v. 28:
  - 1. All the apostles and elders honored the headship of Christ, with each one conducting himself not as a leader or head but as a brother; there was no human headship, leadership, or presumption—vv. 7-13.
  - 2. Among the saints and the churches, there was only one Head; if we keep this principle and honor the Lord's headship, we can have the assurance that blessing will be transmitted from the Head to the Body—Col. 2:19.
- B. Acts 15 reveals some basic principles in God's administration:
  - 1. In the early days among the churches there was no head church; all the churches were equal in the one Body—vv. 2-3, 30-31.
  - 2. No church made a decision by itself; in God's administration no single church should presume to make a decision regarding the truth or in other matters affecting the other churches without fellowship—vv. 1-2.
  - 3. Not only the apostles but also the elders represented the churches; both were included because in God's administration the apostles represent the universal church, and the elders represent the local churches—vv. 2, 6.
  - 4. There was much discussion among the apostles and elders; it is wrong to think that we need to avoid discussion in order to be spiritual—v. 7.
  - 5. The Holy Spirit was presiding over the conference, and the decision was made by this presiding One as the presence of the King—v. 28:
    - a. The decision was apparently made by the apostles and elders, but it was actually made by the Holy Spirit with them; this is the principle of incarnation; we must have the assurance that every decision in the church is made by the Holy Spirit with us—vv. 13-22, 25, 28.
    - b. We need to discuss, testify concerning the facts, and find the confirmation in the Word, and then the Holy Spirit will guide us to the correct

decision; this is the proper way to maintain God's administration while honoring and respecting the unique headship of Christ in the fellowship of the apostles, elders, and churches—v. 28.