

LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Morning Message One

God's Administration

Scripture Reading: Exo. 19:6; 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Gal. 2:16; Acts 2:42; Heb. 1:2a; Matt. 28:19-20; John 16:12-15; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6; Heb. 8:1; Rom. 8:10; Acts 13:1-4; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:34; 4:17; Rev. 2:1, 7; Acts 8:1; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:9; Titus. 3:12; 1 Cor. 16:12; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2 John 9-10

I. God's Administration in the Old Testament:

- A. Among God's chosen people we cannot see much of His administration until Exodus 19:
 - 1. At Mount Sinai the Lord told the children of Israel that He wanted them to be a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation"—v. 6.
 - 2. In this kingdom at Mount Sinai, God's administration among His people began.
- B. God's government in the Old Testament was by His instant speaking plus His constant, written Word through some agents:
 - 1. God's administration was neither an autocracy by a dictator nor a democracy of the people; God's administration among the children of Israel was a theocracy, indicating that God Himself came to govern, to rule, to administrate, the people of God directly yet through some agents.
 - 2. These agents were the priests and the elders, the judges, or the kings as the direct administrators working together for God's theocracy.
 - 3. 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 Thummim or through the prophets by the Spirit of God coming upon certain ones to enable them to speak God's word—Exo. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra. 2:63; Neh. 7:65.
 - 4. If we are going to fully understand God's administration in His move in the New Testament today, we have to go back to the Old Testament type of the New Testament government; God's administration is a direct ruling and governing by God Himself; this divine ruling is a theocracy.

II. God's administration in the New Testament:

- A. In the New Testament the apostles appointed elders to carry out God's administration in the local churches—Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
- B. In the Old Testament kingdom of God the constitution was the law, but the teaching of the apostles is the constitution of God's New Testament kingdom:
 - 1. In the New Testament Christ replaced the law—but in the aspect and sense of replacing the law in God's administration, the replacement was the apostles' teaching—Gal. 2:16; Acts 2:42.

2. The teaching of the apostles is the complete New Testament, and no one should add anything or take away anything from the divine revelation—Heb. 1:2a; Matt. 28:19-20; John 16:12-15; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Rev. 2:7; 22:18-19.
- C. In the New Testament kingdom the elders are the direct administrators according to the teaching of the apostles (1 Cor. 5:13); also, according to the instant speaking of the Lord, all the believers in Christ, including the elders, are priests to God (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6), having Christ as the High Priest living within them (Heb. 8:1; Rom. 8:10).
- D. Today in God's administration on the earth, beside the ones who are the priests to receive the revelation from the Lord directly and the administrators to carry out what God spoke, there are the prophets and teachers to help the eldership and the priesthood—Acts 13:1-4.
- E. After the apostles appoint the elders and commit the church into the hands of the elders, they do not have the position to administrate the church, but they do have the position, right, and responsibility to charge the elders to do it; the apostles in the New Testament were to keep their hands off of the administration of a local church in its business affairs, not in its need of the apostles' teaching, instruction, and charge—1 Cor. 5:13; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:34.
- F. The churches are local in administration but not absolutely independent:
1. Though the apostles kept their hands off of the affairs of the churches, this does not mean that each local church became one independent entity; it also does not mean that since the churches were under the teaching of the apostles, they became a federation—1 Cor. 4:17; Rev. 2:1, 7.
 2. On the one hand, all the churches are local separately; on the other hand, all the local churches are still the one Body of Christ—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15.
- G. In the New Testament the teaching of the apostles is the real leadership:
1. In the four Gospels the leadership was with the Lord Jesus; this was the leadership in a person.
 2. The apostles were not strict in the matter of the movement of the co-workers, but all the apostles were very strict in the teaching of the apostles—2 Tim. 4:9; Titus 3:12; 1 Cor. 16:12; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2 John 9-10.