

## Lordship Among The Ministry

Written by C. H. Cayce  
Friday, 28 May 2010 15:53 -

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The following article was read in the meeting at Jackson, Tenn., which began on Friday before the fifth Sunday in October, 1926:

Brethren, you have assigned to me a hard subject, "The baneful effect of the spirit of lordship among the ministry," and I have had very little time to study the subject. We need to be warned against such a spirit, and we need to watch ourselves, that we do not allow ourselves to be governed by it.

I understand a spirit of lordship to be a spirit of mastery; a spirit to rule, to control, to have things our way, or not at all. The very word minister conveys a meaning that is the opposite of lordship or master. It really means to serve, a servant. Jesus said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."- Mt 20:25-28.

To exercise lordship is to exercise dominion, to rule and to control, to exercise authority. Jesus says "it shall not be so among you." Hence it is very clear and manifest that such a spirit is not to prevail—and should not be indulged in by the ministry of the church of Christ. This text also shows very clearly that the minister is to be a servant, and not a lord or master; that he is not to exercise authority or dominion. Jesus our Saviour came to minister, to serve. The spirit of service is of the Lord, and the spirit of lordship is from beneath; it is a bad spirit. It brings trouble, sorrow and distress to the hearts of the Lord's dear children. It divides families, homes, neighborhoods and churches.

But here the question maybe asked, "Are not ministers to be overseers of the flock, and has not the Lord appointed them as such?" Yes, that is true. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."- Ac 20:28. This is the language of the eminent Apostle Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus when he had sent for them to show what should be done, and how it should be done. An overseer is not a master or lord; that is, from a Scriptural standpoint. And an overseer, according to Paul's instruction here, is one that is to feed, not to rule or control, or to exercise dominion. The inspired Apostle Peter also gives us some instruction along the same line: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." -1Pe 5:1-3. From this we see that for a minister to take the oversight of the flock, to be an overseer of the flock, is not for him to be a lord or a ruler over them, but to be an ensample to them. It is his work and his business to set right examples before them, so as to show by precept and example how the Lord would have His children live and walk and to conduct themselves here in this world.

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage." The marginal reference says, "overruling." That is,

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not ruling over. The minister, or the elder, is positively forbidden to rule over God's heritage, or His people, or His church. He is to serve them and not to rule over them. As he is to serve them, they are to have authority over him, (See PB: 1Pe 5:3) rather than for him to have authority over them. For him to assume authority to be a ruler and to assume lordship, is akin to the sin of presumption. "But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people."- Nu 15:30. For one of God's ministers to be governed by, or to manifest, the spirit of lordship is for him to presume to be what the Lord has not made him, which is presumption, or to act presumptuously; and he who acts presumptuously reproaches the Lord, and God says that "soul shall be cut off from among his people."

In Eze 34:4 the Lord tells the shepherds of Israel that "with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." The "them" were the children of Israel. By reading this chapter we will find that the children of Israel suffered as a result of the cruelty and the ruling of the shepherds. National Israel were a type of spiritual Israel. Surely no Primitive Baptist will deny this. As they were a type of spiritual Israel, and such a spirit among the shepherds in that day brought trouble, sorrow and distress, it will bring the same in this day among spiritual Israel. Perhaps it may not be amiss to call attention to the fact also that the Lord pronounced a curse upon the shepherds, and said, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand."

This entire chapter might be good reading for us, that we may be warned and get a lesson therefrom that might do us some good. Let me quote at some length from this chapter, beginning with the first verse:

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."- Eze 34:1-10

When the minister of the Lord is being controlled by a spirit of lordship, of master or ruler, the diseased are not strengthened, the sick are not healed, that which is broken is not bound up, that which is driven away is not brought again, and those who are lost are not found; the Lord's

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little children are scattered, and they wander in the desert hungry and crying for food, and are devoured by their adversaries. What a deplorable state and condition! Language fails me to describe the sorrows, distresses, sore afflictions and heartaches resulting from such a spirit! And such a great woe pronounced against the shepherds or ministers possessing such a spirit! Brethren, have we ever been possessed of it? Have any of us been "weighed in the balance and found wanting" along this line? If so, let us humble ourselves in dust and ashes; let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of our God; let us humbly beg Him to forgive our folly and our wrongs, and that His fierce anger may be turned away from us, and that He may restore unto us the joys of His salvation and pour out a blessing upon us; that He may bring our children and neighbors and their children into His blessed fold, and that He would help us to feed them upon the pure and sincere milk of the word.

If we have been acting under this bad and evil spirit, let us begin now, if we have not already done so, to endeavor, the best we possibly can, to make amends for our wrongs. We need to devote our time to the service the Lord requires of us.

The minister is not to be a lord or master, but a servant. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."- 2Co 4:5. Let me digress long enough to say the apostle did not mean by the expression, "We preach not ourselves," that it is not us doing the preaching—that the Lord is preaching through us—but he meant that we do not preach our own power or authority, but that it is Christ Jesus the Lord, and His power, that we preach, and not ourselves; but "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The true minister is a servant of the Lord and a servant of the church—your servants. This fact that we are your servants is for Jesus' sake. The Lord calls His ministers and lays the obligation upon them. They are under obligation to the Lord and to the church. A servant is under obligation to the master, and the apostle says, "ourselves your servants"—not your lords or rulers. The master is the boss. When a servant gets the idea that he is the boss, and that the business cannot be conducted without him, he is then in such a condition that the business would get along better without him than with him.

A true servant is willing to endure afflictions. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."- 2Ti 2:10. Paul also instructs Timothy to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. {2Ti 1:8} We may rest assured that if we are the Lord's true ministers, and if we fill the place of servants to Him and His people, there are afflictions for us to endure.

The fields are white unto harvest. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Are we praying the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest? How often do you hear a prayer to the Lord to send laborers in these days? We need them. We need faithful men. We need men that are true. We need men who love the cause of the Master. We need men who desire the welfare of the Lord's little children. May the Lord give us such men.