

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD TODAY

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I am going to be speaking about government. I wanted to make sure that Mr. Mortensen was here to hear what I had to say, Not that I hadn't gone over with him some of the principles that I intended to bring out, but I wanted to make sure that he had the opportunity to hear the whole sermon. Then, if there is a problem in what I have to say about government, he would have the opportunity to correct that. I personally have no problem with that. You have to be able to accept those things. Probably one of the hardest things for us human beings to do is to admit that we are wrong. I think that this is an important part of everyone's character to understand that he could be wrong as far as a human being is concerned, and to be able to own up to his own mistakes. In the past it hasn't always been the easiest thing for me to do. Hopefully I will be able to handle this in the future.

This was the main reason. The other consideration is that I talked about government yesterday. What did I really talk about? I talked about government in the world tomorrow. That is always a lot easier for everyone to understand and take on. We talk about how things are going to be for other people. Today we are going to be talking about how things are for us. So it is something more close to the heart here today.

I would like to remind you about the fact, what is the most important thing in government or what controls government? It is God's law. That is very very clear. It shouldn't be hard for us to understand that. It should not be hard. As I thought about what Mr. Armstrong had said in his sermon about the Father, the reason that the Father is the Father is because He gave the law. This requires us to think a little bit more deeply about that. Of any thing that could be done, if we really understand the law, I mean this outgoing concern that is embodied in that set of laws, the outgoing concern and love that we should have for everyone as was brought out in the sermonette this morning, it has to be the greatest thing that was ever brought forth. It is greater than making this earth that we live on. It is greater than developing all of the animal

life. It is greater than creating the entire universe. It is greater than creating the angelic beings. It has to be, if you understand that it is the essence, the only essence, by which we can live together in happiness. Therefore, you can understand why the second Being, Christ, would be able to call the Father, 'Father'.

At one time I thought about this, and I thought, "Well, you have two Gods. Basically they are, in a sense, equal in power. Why is it that one God would be the over-all ruler, or leader, or the Father of all?" It has to be just what Mr. Armstrong said, "The law came from the Father, and His Son recognizes how great His Father is." He tells us that over and over in the New Testament. When you see this and you understand it, then you can truly worship the Father. You can understand why the Four and Twenty Elders throw their crowns before Him; they bow down to Him. That is the reason, because He is such a great Being and that is their real understanding of why He is such a great Being. That is why we love God the Father and His Son. Therefore, without question, the law has to control our government within this church, if you want to look at it that way, to use that word 'government'.

Now, Mr. Armstrong wrote a paper back in 1939 about government and most of the organizations or churches, as we call churches of God today ("Did Christ Reorganize the Church" *The Good News Magazine*, February 1939). I like to differentiate that we are part of the Body of Christ; I like to keep that in mind, and every one of us should really keep that in mind. He wrote about this and he comes to this conclusion. Reading from the last page:

Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church **GOVERNMENT**, or set man **IN AUTHORITY** over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church.

Now, that seems to be a contradiction to what we talked and read about yesterday and a contradiction from his papers that we have read much about and have

brought forth, showing a very rigid type of government in God's church. Let's continue on and see what he says. He makes this statement, "Any such 'plan' was never planted of **GOD** -- and therefore **IT SHALL BE ROOTED UP!**"

That sounds to me like a prophecy. I had never read this paper until just a month or two ago, I can't say exactly when. I got the paper and read it through and I thought, "Oh, this is kind of contradictory to what he had said in later years." Then I got to this point where it says, "Therefore it shall be rooted up." Is that not what has happened to all the churches, including the Worldwide Church of God? Has it not been rooted up? He continues:

Our fellowship is first with God, and with Christ -- then with each other, in **LOVE!** The saints, so far as they know one another, are not to forsake assembling together for their mutual edification. For this purpose -- and that all things may be done decently and in order -- the Scriptures give us instructions for ordaining local elders and deacons, in every city -- every local congregation, or Church. But there is no super-organization over and above local congregations **IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!** And any such "plant" is certain to be **ROOTED UP!**

Again he makes that statement.

Continuing on he says,
All such organizations and governments came out of **BABYLON** -- and are today a part of **BABYLON!**

Well, that's an important statement that we have to understand, because, in effect, what he is saying is if that government or organization is following the worldly government, a Babylon type government, it's going to be rooted out. Now here is a very important statement, that we have to keep in mind.

Brethren, let us have the kind of co-operative **FELLOWSHIP**, based on **LOVE**, that was practiced by the early saints, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Let us work together, in

unselfish effort to **GIVE** of the Gospel truth to the world -- to **GIVE** of the "waters of life" to as many precious souls as we can reach -- to give out the last warning message with great **POWER!**

Now if he was to accomplish that it did require some organization, didn't it? I mean he couldn't have accomplished what he was looking to accomplish without some kind of organization. Here is really the key statement:

But let us drop all effort to **BUILD UP A MOVEMENT** or **AN ORGANIZATION**. Let us quit working **FOR** organizations, and work **FOR THE LORD** -- and the salvation of souls!

So here he is talking about building up a movement or an organization. That's important to understand, because if you start looking at the organizations out there to day, they are there as a self perpetuating system, aren't they? If we understand that, we can understand what he was trying to get at.

Continuing on:

What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God?
Nothing but **ORGANIZATION** -- which has led to politics...

Well, we know about that!

...ministers lusting for rule....

We know about that!

... and for power -- striving against each other, lining up the brethren on **THEIR** side, against the other! It is **SUCH PREACHERS** who have split up and divided our brethren!

He wrote that in '39' and it is right on, isn't it?. That is **exactly correct!**

God's Word commands us to **COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM**, and be separate. God's last warning is **"COME OUT OF BABYLON!!"**

Organization and church

GOVERNMENT has brought us only strife, jealousies, division, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit.

And I wrote right above that, "Well, what kind of government?" He's saying "organization" and "church government", "Church Government", **Worldly** Church Government.

Continuing on:

The **CHURCH OF GOD** needs more of the **POWER OF GOD** -- more of **HIS LOVE** -- of **HIS HOLY SPIRIT**, that the work may now begin to go forth **IN MIGHTY POWER!** We ought to be **ASHAMED** of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very **FEW** with the message, with almost no real conversions! All this, while leaders desiring power to **RULE** send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince tithe-payers that "the work is progressing." What a mockery! What a tragedy! What a pity!

When you read this,... And I was absolutely struck. I called Mr. Mortensen. I said, "You understand? I mean can you see that this letter was prophetic. He painted the perfect picture of what we have today" This is the **perfect picture !**

As we came together, the ministers that are together, one of the things that was uppermost in our mind was the fact that we wanted "**do it right**". We wanted to do things right! Just as Mr. Armstrong pointed back to the book of Acts, that's what we went to. We said "Look; we have to come together the way the way we see the people in the book of acts coming together." And that's what we did. We chose the example of Acts 13 and we followed that example for every conference among the ministers, our ministers, or this group of ministers, however you want to call it, this is what we do!

That was the basis of what the ministerial conferences were about. One of the big things from the very beginning was this understanding of government. Every conference we had, we talked about it. We discussed this system. Of course, coming out of the church that we came out of made us very apprehensive about that word "government". We were really concerned about it. We wanted to do it right.

The other thing that we absolutely knew, is that **we wanted Christ to be leading our efforts!** This was absolute. We just felt it was extremely important and therefore we were careful not to just

decide, "Well, this is what we should do.".

The first most obvious thing that we knew that we had to do is to provide for the brethren that had been cast out. This is something that was obvious and it was basic. This is what we did. We went ahead and we provided sermon tapes to the cast out brethren. Beyond that we said, "Christ has got to show us where we're going.". We talked about that in the offertory, you remember..

It is obvious to me that Christ is leading this, his "body". **If you are part of his body, he's going to be leading you!** This is just fundamental. **If you allow him to lead you**, then you are going to be part of his body! Which way do you want to say it? Either way it works! If you allow him to lead you, you're going to be part of his body and vice versa, the other way around. This was an important basic beginning.

Next we brought up at this conference a letter or paper written by a man named Norm Edwards. He, in this paper, brought out some very startling information. At least it seemed startling to me! I think everyone that was at the conference, after we went through the information that he mentioned, agreed. There is something basically true about what he had to say. Now some of you here are involved maybe in some kind of research or manufacturing or so on, and you understand that, or you have seen people who gather information. And they did an excellent job of gathering the information, but they get all this good information out there and they draw the wrong conclusion. That's a real problem. You can admire the person for the diligence that he put into gathering the information, but if he draws the wrong conclusion, he might as well have not gathered the information. This is probably the way it worked out, because I was really impressed by the initial paper that Mr. Edwards came out with. He brought out all this information and he never gave any conclusion to the information at the time. He just said, "If anyone wants to add to this write me any corrections, let me know. I'll correct this paper accordingly." Just recently he's come out with a complete paper on government in which he draws his conclusions.

What the paper was basically about is this book, right here (the Bible). He says, "You know we have to understand...", and this is really true, we have to understand something about our Bibles that is fundamental and basic. **Our Bibles that we use are translations!** of the originals! This is not the original Word. It's a translation, in which men have sat down, gone through the original, the New Testament in Greek and the Old Testament in Hebrew, and have written this Book! I know that Mr. Armstrong understood this, because he, a lot of times, went to a lot of other translations that brought out the meaning or gave a more correct understanding of what was in this Book.

The thing that Mr. Edwards pointed out about this Book, he said, "I think we have to go back and look at who was responsible for this Book, **this translation**. He said, "This Book was translated as the result of the work of the king, the King James. That's the King James translation." And he said, "Like all men of this world, they had a reason for doing things." They just don't do it basically..., unless they have God's spirit, they do it with a motive. You might suspect that the king might have a motive. What really had happened prior to this, there were a lot of other translations and they didn't work out. He thought "If we could just settle on one translation... one translation that maybe I could control so that it would promote my church, my kingship." If you understand that that could possibly have been part of the role of doing the work that he did, you might better be able to understand that this man Norm Edwards brought out in his paper.

I'm going to go through just one word, and this is what he did. What I did was I sat down with his paper after I read it, and I got out some of my reference books. I went through every word that he went through that he said, "The understanding for this word is not correct, and if we understand the correct meaning for this word it's going to shed an entirely different light on what we believe". That's exactly what I did. I spent the time and I found out that, hmmm, he was right. Every one of those words really shed a different light on it.

So this is what we are going to do today, we are going to go through just one word, the word "rule". Now if you are a king, that word is fairly important to you, right? I mean if you are the ruler, you would like that word to be emphasized! You can see that the emphasis, if you just take a few simple things like this and can emphasize just one word, "rule".... If you can emphasize that, you can surely affect the understanding of what this Book is trying to tell us. Surely, it involves government.

Let's look. What I did was I just opened up Strong's Concordance and I looked at the word "rule", and I found that there were quite a few different words in the Greek (this is only from the New Testament),... There were quite a few different words that meant "rule".

Now, when I say "rule" to you it's pretty clear. That means I rule over you. I'm the law. I give the orders and you take 'em. It's pretty self evident. There is not much variance there in the English language; "rule" is a pretty particular word. We already talked about that yesterday. That was number 4165 (in Strong's) and it is translated "rule".

Let's go to Matthew 2 and verse 6 and we can see an example of that. We will be skipping around in our Bible. It says, "***But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.***" Of course that word "ruler" (note: the word "shepherd" in the New King James is "ruler", #4165, in the King James version) that word comes from "shepherd" and it means to shepherd or tend, figuratively to care or provide, referring to the kings and princes in regard to their people. It takes a little bit something off of that in a sense of that more direct rule there, as we would understand it. It is also the same word that is used in Revelation 2:27. We talked about that yesterday, about the scepter and the staff and the wand of office. So, that was the first word.

The second word for rule is number 757. We find the example of that in Mark 10:42, so let's turn there and see what that has to say. He said "***But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them,***

and their great ones exercise authority over them.". This word is right down the line from rule and it means to be first in rank, hence to rule or govern. It sometimes is translated "rule" or "reign", either way.

The next word is number 746 and the meaning for that word which is translated rule is "the beginning", "the cause", "the head", "the beginning of something". It may also mean "the extremity" or "outer most point". From that they get "rule", "authority", "dominion" and "power". Let's look at an example, 1st Corinthians 15:24. It says, "***Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.***". We can see why that word was translated "rule" here, "rule" and "all power and all authority", because it's at the very extremity. The translation here fits very well.

The next word is 2583, and it means "anything straight used to examine other things", "the needle of a balance", "the plumb line in a building", "a rule of conduct or behavior", "a measure or a measuring rod", "by implication, the Holy Scriptures". If we look at 2nd Corinthians 10:13, we will see an example there. It says, "***We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the rule which God appointed us---a rule which especially includes you.***". I happen to have substituted here because I happen to have a New King James. I don't have an original King James. If anyone of you out there happens to have the New King James, you'll see it is "sphere". (NKJV as written has "We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us---a sphere which especially includes you."). What Paul is really bringing out,...he says, "Look, I have this sphere of influence, this area this geographical area that I have the influence over". You can see by this 2583 that it means that, but when you substitute the word "rule" in there it takes on a little bit different connotation, doesn't it. We can see that example very clearly.

The next word that we have for rule is number 1018, and it means to be an "umpire", "director", or "arbitrator" in the Greek. That was the original meaning of the word as it is used in the New

Testament, as a kind of a governing thing. It means like “control”, because if you are the arbitrator or the umpire, the umpire has a certain amount of control over the game. Some of you, watching the football games, understand when the umpire makes a lousy call. You realize how much control he has over the game. That’s what this means. If we turn to Colossians 3:15, we can see an example of that word being used. It says, **“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”** We can see here you could use the word “govern”. It would work fine or “rule” works fine. It doesn’t change the meaning in any way.

The next word is number 4291. It means “to be over”, or “to preside”, or “to rule”. We can see this in 1st Timothy 3:5. Lets turn there, and it says, **“for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?”** So, we see it means “to be over” or “preside”, and you can understand the word “rule”. It should be in a sense a more subjective thing. We understand what happens in a family when you do have that kind of “Achtung” German rulership. The father, whatever he says goes, even if it is wrong, whatever. It doesn’t really demonstrate the love that God wants us to have. We can see here that it is an OK use of the word rule.

The next word is 2233. It means “to lead”, or “go before”, or “go first”, “lead the way”. It is extremely important that we understand this word, because it directly affects our understanding of what we are going to be reading. If we turn in our Bibles to Hebrews chapter 13, and we’ll read verse 7. It says, **“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”** **That’s pretty strong words for rule.** If we start substituting the real meaning here, you will see how important it is to understand that meaning, “to lead” or “to go before”, or “to lead the way”.

Chapter 13, actually, is a summary starting from chapter 11. We’re talking from chapter 11 and 12. We talk about all the people and all the things that they have done, all the examples that they’ve set for us. Starting with Noah and going on through Abraham and all of what you

would say are the heroes of the Bible, the men that we look up to, they were giving us examples, weren’t they? We get to this point here in verse 13 and it says, “remember your leaders” or “remember those who lead the way”. Who is he talking about. He is talking about all the examples that we have, and that these people had at that time, to look back to and to follow, because **they led the way!** That is an entirely different meaning than the word rule. You can see that, because this is the whole point. He says, **“Remember those...”**. Remember what! Remember the examples. Remember those leaders and the examples that they gave us. **“...who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”** What that is really talking about is, “Imitate these men. They have shown us the way”. Imitate them!” When you understand what that word means, what that verse means, it’s quite a change, isn’t it? Now if you were the king, you wouldn’t want people to know that. You would rather have them think that they’re to be ruled. The king ruled his church, the Church of England!. He was the head of the church of England. So you see how the whole thing sits very well for him. He would want that word to be put in here! Not a big thing really, but as we look down every church organization from that time forward, what would they want? They would want that word in there. They don’t want to change that word. They don’t want to let you really understand and know what Paul was trying to get across here.

The next important verse that we need to look at is verse 17 of Hebrews 13, so we’ll just drop down to that verse and I’ll read it. It says, **“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”** Again here you can see how important that they would want you to understand this idea of being ruled, **that you are being ruled!** This verse is very very interesting and is fundamental. It’s basic to what you and I hopefully believe. There is a word, the first word of that sentence, it says “Obey” and it is 3982. The meaning of that word, is “to be persuaded”, “convinced” and “to assent” to obey. The implication and the basic understanding of this word is that

you as an individual are going to be persuaded by either another person’s actions or his words or a combination of both. That’s a pretty inclusive understanding that you would have to have. “Obey those who...”, same word that we had down here, “...lead the way, ...who show through...”, the meaning there is because that you’re looking at their example and you’re looking at what they’re saying, you understand and you see that they are leading the way. “They’re leading the way of you”, that’s the way it should be. Then, **“for you to be submissive for they watch over your souls as those who must give account.”** Let them do so with joy and not with grief for that would be unprofitable for you” So what he is really saying is, if you understand that the one who is leading the way, or the ones who are leading the way, are setting the right example, are telling you, giving you the right information, then you’re going to voluntarily follow that person. You are going make that decision. **As an individual, you are going to make that decision.** Paul is telling us, “Look, if you make that decision, then you should do it in such a way that you are going to do it without contention.” Kind of like what Mr. Armstrong talked about here in that ‘39’ letter, about fellowship based on love that was practiced by the early saints, as recorded in the book of Acts. That we would be together as one body. That this is what it is about. When we see this, it’s a rather important understanding.

Now there is another word. It’s number 2525 and if we turn to Matthew 24 we can see the example of that word being used. Matthew chapter 24 and verse 45 and verse 47 both. It says in verse 45 **“Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master made ruler over his household to give them food in due season?”** Well this is another rather interesting word, because this word means “to set in place”, “to set down”, or metaphorically, “to stand or set”, “to cause to be”, “to place anywhere in an office”. That gives an entirely different light to that particular verse.

So now that we’ve gone through this and we kind of understand just by the word “rule” that there are some implications here in your "King James" that you may not find in other translations. There are some implications of the use of the word

“rule” that brings out very strong emphasis on our understanding, our present English understanding, of that word when there are many definitions that can fall under that particular word.

Now Mr. Flurry gave some specific instructions to the ministry and he said “You must use the King James translation.” to the ministry. He said “I want every one of you ministers to be using that Bible and only that Bible!” And understanding what we see here, we can see that he may have had a reason for wanting us to use that particular translation.

Now when we talked about government at the conferences, the very first scripture that we turned to was 1st Corinthians 11. So let’s turn there and read that. It says “Follow me” In the original King James “Just as I also follow Christ.”. That word follow is 3402, and as you check out the meaning, you’ll find that it really means “imitate”. When you understand that word means “imitate”, and you put that together with what we just talked about in Hebrews, you’ll see that the connotation or the understanding is much more correct if you use the word imitate. Now in my New King James, it says **“Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ”**.

Now if you follow someone, that is not imitating them. That is a different connotation isn’t it? And that’s not what Paul said. He wanted the people to understand that “If I’m doing the right thing you imitate me. You don’t follow me, because I’m just a man.”. And anyone who would be a part of Christ’s Body would have to really understand that.

Continuing on in verse 2, it says **“Now I pray you brethren that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man and the head of Christ is God.”** So here is the governmental structure. That is what we went to. We said “Well this is the basic governmental structure. This is the way it has to be. We cannot, as far as the ministry is concerned, get between you and Christ. **That is not our job!**”. We are not here to get orders from Christ and then deliver them down to you. We’re not here to order you to do

anything, basically in that sense of rule, that we’re going to rule over you. It’s very plain. This is a so absolutely clear statement, that anyone who would do otherwise is denying an absolute basic truth, and doesn’t fit in with the “trunk of the tree” truth that we understand. **It absolutely has to be this way.** It can’t be the other way, because we already talked about that enough.

So we see here the basic understanding. So if this is the basic arrangement, how can we come to understand that direction from Christ. Well, let’s turn to Revelation chapter 2 and read verse 2. It says, **“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And that you have tested those who say that they are apostles and are not and have found them liars.”**

Well that’s a pretty important verse there!, because, what does that verse really place on your shoulders? Doesn’t it place on your shoulders the responsibility to be able to determine false apostles, or to understand truth and be able to sort out truth from error, as an individual? Christ is commending them here. He said, “Look you passed an important test. You were able to determine who is a true apostle and who isn’t”. That’s a pretty important thing to understand isn’t it. Now when you put that back together with Hebrews 13, what is it telling you? It is telling you, “you are responsible as an individual”. Aren’t you? You are responsible as an individual to be able to sort this out, to be able to sort out truth from error. That’s an individual responsibility. I was talking to a gentleman the other night, and he said “You know, I had a conversation with the people”... And this is pretty standard especially for the WCG people.... And he said “ Well, all I have to do is do what they tell me. Am I not following government? They have the rule over me. I just have to do what they say. Every thing will be fine.”. That’s why a lot of people are still in the WCG.

After all, isn’t that what it says in Hebrews 13? If they have the rule over you, you follow them? But the true understanding changes that doesn’t it? It puts a lot of responsibility on your shoulders for doing the right and understanding truth, and following the right leaders.

Let’s turn to Matthew chapter 15. We’ll start reading in verse 7. Christ is talking to the Pharisees here and says, **“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying ‘these people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ And then he called the multitude and said to them ‘Hear and understand. Not what goes into the mouth defiles the man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”** And here we see a deviation from Christ’s standard procedure. When He talked in parables and instructed the people, He in general, only gave the true answers to his disciples, right? He just left the people out there. But this time he went back to the people. And he said, “understand this, it’s important”. **“Then His disciples came and said to Him, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’”** So, wow! “You really offended them, the rulers, when you did that.”. **“But he answered and said ‘Every plant which my heavenly father has not planted will be rooted up.’** That’s a reference to a certain other parable he gave, isn’t it?

Continuing on in verse 14, **“Let them alone, they are blind leaders of blind, and if the blind lead the blind both will fall in the ditch.”** And you can just see that. He’s saying if you can’t discern truth, and you’re going to follow a man, or you’re going to follow a leader, you’re going to end up in the ditch! Now, that clarifies what your position is, the brethren, part of the body.

Let’s turn to Ephesians 4, and we’ll start reading in verse 11. It says, **“And he himself”** in other words, Christ, **“gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers....”** And just right there a big question mark. Why? Why did He do that? He had a reason for doing that, didn’t he? And here is the reason, **“...for the equipping of the Saints...”**. That’s the very first thing, to give you the equipment, right? To be able to put on the character of Christ. **That’s our job, Job 1!** **“...for the work of the ministry...”** is the second part. **“...for the edifying of the body of Christ...”** another thing. Edifying, building up the body. Well the responsibility of these

people is to increase, or help you increase your faith. That's part of it. *"...Til we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God, a perfect man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."* That's what we've been talking about all so far in the Feast. That's basic understanding, putting on the character of the Father and His Son. *"...that we should no longer be children tossed to and froe and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all thing into him who is the head, Christ!"* There it is. Who is leading the church? Who's got to lead the ministry? **Christ! He's the head of the body!**

Now, when we understand this passage, that Christ is the head of the body, we have to be careful. We have to be careful to allow Him to lead! And He is looking to see if we are going to do that. He wants to see if we are going to do that. We can't take that on ourselves. It has to come from Him. And if we do this, it's going to work just fine.

Continuing on in verse 16, *"...from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."* So, that's what's going to bring us together. Every one of us has a little part of the body, and if you take away any part of the body, it doesn't function quite as well, does it? We have to make sure that we fit in as that part of the body. That's, in a sense, part of our job.

Also, the ministry, because that's who we would be talking about here, have had the responsibility to give you the right information, to be able to teach you in such a way that you can't be confused, so that you know what you know!

Now let's turn to Matthew, chapter 20. Starting in verse 25, Christ called the apostles together, *"But Jesus called them to himself and he said 'You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them. And those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to be*

come great among you, let him be your servant"

Now I've been going back to this. We went back to it at the conferences. We talked about it. We understand that the ministry is here to serve the people. We're here to serve! And Christ makes it abundantly clear. There is one thing that we kind of miss here, and you'll see this, let me finish reading verse 27 and 28. *"And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life, a ransom for many."*

Let's turn over to Matthew 24. Starting in verse 45, We read that verse before, right? It says here, that he's going to put somebody in charge of the household. I did not go through the whole understanding of this verse, but the two don't seem in one sense to really jive together, unless you realize all He's really telling you here in Chapter 20 is that these are men who are going to be, **should be**, the servants. He doesn't say that they aren't going to have authority. He doesn't say that! He just says that they have this understanding within themselves. They have to have the understanding of being a servant or a slave. There is a responsibility here!

Let's go to Luke 22 first. Starting in verse 24, *"But there was also rivalry among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And he said to them 'The kings of the gentile exercise lordship over them and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you'"* on the contrary *"he who is the greatest among you let him be as the younger and he who governs as he who serves."* "Governs"... I wrote "rules" underneath it. So we do see a ruling going on here. But the understanding is, it is a great deal like marriage. You have sat in hundreds of sermons about marriage! And the minister gets up there and he says "Now you men need to do such and such, and you women need to do such and such.". Then you go out amongst the brethren after the sermon, and you hear Mary say, "I hope John got that message!" And you walk over to John and he'll be saying exactly the same thing about Mary. "I hope Mary got that message!" That's exactly what we are talking about here.

We're talking about the ministry getting the message. **We must get the message!** You have another message. I gave you that message didn't I? That's your responsibility, isn't it? We have a responsibility. We have this responsibility to be like a servant.

Now lets go to Matthew 24. Starting in verse 4, He says, *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant..."*. Prudent servant? If you look it up you could find that it would also mean slave. *"...whom his master has made ruler?"* No, that's that word that meant "set over". So He doesn't use the word "ruler". He says he's "set over"... and the word "over" has a special meaning to it. It can mean one of two things. That word is 1909 and He is speaking here metaphorically. and it means either "power and authority" or "care over". It has two possibilities. It means it is either power and authority or its care over. Well, let's read the rest of that sentence and see what should be applied here. So, he would set his slaves over his household, (that word household means kind of like ministry service even as far as attending to the sick) to give them food in due season. Well, if your job is to feed somebody, it doesn't equate very well with the word "rule", does it? But it fits very well when you put the meaning "care over" in there. If we really wanted to understand this, it would read something like this "who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his master has set over for the care of his household to give them food in due season?". So we do see here, that someone is going to be set over this household. Christ said he would. He said he would set someone over the household. We need to understand that. That fits in quite well really with what Mr. Armstrong taught. The basic underlying understanding is very very important for us to grasp. Not only for you but for the ministry.

We can see in verse 47 that word "rule" is used. Here it is used correctly. It says *"Assuredly I Say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods"* Well, when Christ comes back he's going give us physical things and we are going to rule over those, so "rule" in that sense is correct.

All we have to do is continue to read it. He talks about the servant who doesn't rule properly and what happens to that

servant. It's really quite clear. It's a pretty stern warning for anyone who thinks about the ministry. It really doesn't matter if you are technically called a minister, but when you get up here and speak, you carry that responsibility. ...Surprise! Surprise!

There was something interesting that has taken place just recently. That is that I received a telephone call from out on the west coast, from a person and he challenged me in the sense that he had read my letter and "that all sounds good" but he said "Who's in charge?". Up to this point we hadn't really addressed that particular subject. We kind of felt like we were all working together. We were kind of one mind. I did a mental double take, about it. I thought a minute and I said, "**Oh! ... Mr. Mortensen!**" My basic thinking was, "He's a man that has been leading the way. He has as far as I know set the example. His biblical knowledge is far above mine." So, it wasn't difficult to say that. What I did when I hung up the telephone, I immediately dialed Mr. Mortensen. I said, "Mr. Mortensen, I don't know how you're going to take this but I just put you as the head of this body here." I explained what happened. He said "Yeah, all you want is somebody to take the blame"... On the other hand, the other person I had talked to dialed up Mr. Berke, and said "Mr. Berke, who is in charge of this outfit?", and Mr. Berke did the same thing I did and he said " Why... Mr. Mortensen!". It would have been a real problem if he had said somebody else.

When you think about it, Mr. Berke really probably should have said, me (Don Roth) I'm not saying that to be smart about it or promote myself, but I thought about it and said "He mostly talked to me, I was the one who wrote the letter, sent the letter out. He agreed with what I said in the letter; therefore; it would have been more logical to have said "Mr. Roth is in charge". I mean if you just want to look at it from a physical standpoint, the way you'd run a company or a worldly church, this is the way it probably would be. But,

I don't think he was being led by Christ and we know that Mr. Mortensen is the one who has taken on that ultimate responsibility to be over the Body of Christ here as the "physical head". Remember we have to have Christ leading us. He knows that (Mr. Mortensen). That's just part of his character to understand that. And we all understand that. He (Christ) is the one that truly needs to be leading this body. If we allow Him to lead us, He will lead us. You see, he stands at the door and knocks. He can't force any leader of a church group to do what He wants them to do. Remember our basic tenet? We make the decisions. We either make them right or wrong. He's not going to force any man to make the right decision. That man may receive some unpleasant punishment as a result of breaking God's law, that's true! That is true! But he will not force that person to make the right decision or go the right way. That person has to build that character on his own. That's why Christ waits to see if we are going to follow Him, not that we are going to lead on our own, that's why it is always "**imitate**".

Mr. Armstrong wrote the following:
Our fellowship is first with God, and with Christ -- then with each other, in **LOVE!** The saints, so far as they know one another, are not to forsake assembling together for their mutual edification. For this purpose -- and that all things may be done decently and in order -- the Scriptures give us instructions for ordaining local elders and deacons, in every city -- every local congregation, or Church. But there is no super-organization over and above local congregations **IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!** And any such "plant" is certain to be **ROOTED UP!**

Notice, he used the word "plant", doesn't that hearken back to the parable, a certain parable? It certainly does! Continuing on he wrote:

But let us drop all effort to **BUILD UP A MOVEMENT** or **AN**

ORGANIZATION. Let us quit working **FOR** organizations, and work **FOR THE LORD** -- and the salvation of souls!

What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but **ORGANIZATION** -- which has led to politics,....

If we have politics in this body we are in trouble!

... ministers lusting for rule and for power -- ...

Got a problem!

... striving against each other, lining up the brethren on THEIR side, against the other!...

We're in trouble!

... It is SUCH PREACHERS who have split up and divided our brethren!...

...Organization and church **GOVERNMENT** has brought us only strife, jealousies, division, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit. The **CHURCH OF GOD** needs more of the **POWER OF GOD** -- more of **HIS LOVE** -- of **HIS HOLY SPIRIT**, that the work may now begin to go forth **IN MIGHTY POWER!** We ought to be **ASHAMED** of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very **FEW** with the message, with almost no real conversions! All this, while leaders desiring power to **RULE** send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince tithe-payers that "the work is progressing." What a mockery! What a tragedy! What a pity!

It is almost as if he had the opportunity to come back here and see all that has happened since he died.

It's an appropriate description of what we cannot have, we must not have in this body.