

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying
Message Eleven : Aspects of the Church Life under the Government of God

I. Overview:

The history of the children of Israel is a type of the church. In Hebrews and 1 Corinthians Paul points out clearly that what happened to the children of Israel is a type of the believers. The theocracy among the children of Israel was a government according to God's constant speaking, as written in the law, and God's instant speaking, through the breastplate of the high priest by means of the Urim and the Thummim. The principle should be the same in the churches today. God's word spoken through Moses describes aspects of the church life under the government of God; to worship Him in the unique place, to take care of the needs of all the members including the poor, shouldn't have different weights and measures for different scales, prohibiting against sowing two kinds of seed in one's vineyard, to live the church life under the government of God by faith.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound that the children of Israel are the greatest type of the church.

In the Old Testament the church is not mentioned in plain words. However, there are types that portray the church. The children of Israel, as the chosen people of God, are the greatest type of the church, in which we can see that the church is chosen and redeemed by God, enjoys Christ and the Spirit as the life supply, builds God's habitation, inherits Christ as its portion, degrades and is captured, is recovered, and awaits Christ's coming.

B. Explain that the entire history of Israel is a story of the church.

In Hebrews and 1 Corinthians Paul points out clearly that what happened to the children of Israel is a type of us. The entire history of Israel is a story of the church. The Bible, then, contains two histories; the history of Israel is a type, and the history of the church is the fulfillment of the type.

Day 2 —

A. Explain saints' wrong concepts for the words government and administration.

Because the church has been degraded, whenever the word government or administration is mentioned, that some saints may think of having no government or administration would be better. To them, only to have the life of God to walk before the Lord, everything will be all right. But, in the universe there is such a thing as the government of God and the administration of God. This is something ordained by God, and we cannot neglect it.

B. Expound that there is God's government and God's administration in the universe.

In the Bible, the kingdom of God is the government of God and also the administration of God. We should see that in the universe there is God's government and God's administration. God is not a God of confusion. He is not a God without principle and rule. God is a God with principles, rules, order, and discipline. For this reason God must establish His administration and government in the universe.

Day 3 —

A. Explain that the government in the church is a theocracy.

The divine government among God's people is neither autocracy nor democracy but theocracy. Theocracy is government by God according to what He is. In the church life today, we exercise neither autocracy, which is a kind of dictatorship, nor democracy, which is according to the opinion of the people. Instead, we honor God's authority as our government, and thus the government in the church is a theocracy.

B. Expound how to make a judgement when God's people have complicated cases.

Complicated cases were investigated by the priest. First, he investigated the case by staying with God. Second, in God's presence he would consider His holy word. Third, he had the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim provide instant enlightenment. Eventually, he would pass on this judgment to the presiding judge. The judge would then make a judgment according to what the priest had received from God and passed on to him.

Day 4 —

A. Expound how the king established should treat a book of the law.

The king was to write out for himself a copy of the law in a book, out of that which was before the Levitical priests. The king was then to read in this copy of the law all the days of his life in order that he might learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of the law. This indicates that in ruling over the people, he first had to be ruled himself by the word of God, and also be instructed, governed, ruled, and controlled by the word of God.

B. Explain how the elders should be in the churches today.

If the elders do not read the Bible and are not controlled by the word of God, they cannot administrate the church. In order to administrate, to manage, the church, the elders must be reconstituted with the holy word of God. As a result, they will be under God's government, under God's rule and control. Then spontaneously God will be in their decisions, and the elders will represent God to manage the affairs of the church.

Day 5 —

A. Expound how we should care for the needy ones among us.

In Deuteronomy 12, that He takes care of His people as His expression. The Levites, who had no job or other source of income but who lived on God, serving Him full time, were to be taken care of. There was also to be provision for the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow. Today we should also care for the needy ones among us. In the Lord's recovery, we need to care for the full-timers and the other needy ones.

B. Explain we should not be displeased when giving to the poor, being blessed by God.

The people were required to open their hand to the poor one and to lend enough for his need in whatever he lacked. Today we should not be reluctant to give to the poor brothers among us. When we give to meet the needs of the poor brothers, the Lord will return to us much more than we gave. We should not be displeased when giving to the poor, knowing that God will bless us and return much more to us.

Day 6 —

A. Explain Deuteronomy 25:13-16 covering the judgment concerning weights and measures.

The children of Israel were not to have in their bag differing weights, one heavy and one light, nor were they to have in their house differing measures, one large and one small. To have differing weights and measures is a lie, and all lies come from the enemy, Satan. The dishonest practice of having differing weights and measures is surely from Satan. The children of Israel were to have a full and righteous weight and a full and righteous measure.

B. Expound that we should not have differing scales in the church life.

In the house of God, the church, there should be only one scale. The same scale should be used to weigh everyone. If we have only one scale, we will be fair, righteous, and just, even as God is. Because God is fair, righteous, and just, He measures everyone according to the same scale.

III. Conclusion:

God's government in the administration of the church is neither an autocracy nor a democracy but a theocracy, the rule of God. And God's rule is based on the Bible outside of us and on the Holy Spirit within us. God's word spoken through Moses describes aspects of the church life under the government of God, and particularly covers the matter of how to treat other people. We should not have differing weights and measures to treat others; in the church life today, we may have differing scales, one scale for measuring others and a different scale for measuring ourselves. In the house of God we should use only one scale to weigh everyone. If we have only one scale, we will be fair, righteous, and just, even as God is; this will also cause us to keep the oneness and the one accord. Here is also mentioned that the Levites and the poor were to be taken care of and God commanded the Israelites to offer Him a tithe every year. And every three years they shall lay up the other tenth in the city as a surplus, which tithe shall be for the poor and the Levites who serve the Lord full time.