

## **Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Four : The Factor of Authority in the Body of Christ and in the Local Churches**

### **I. Overview:**

God is the supreme authority; He has all authority. All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—derives from God. The Lord Jesus was a man under authority; He humbled Himself, being obedient unto death, and all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him after His resurrection. Now as the Ruler of the kings of the earth, He is the Ruler over all the ones who are in power. In Christ's ascension God made Him the Head of the whole universe. Christ is both the Head corporately of the Body, the church, and individually of all the believers; He is the Head directly of every one of us, and we all are under His authority. For Christ to be the Head is for Him to have all the authority in the Body; whether we are under the authority of the Head determines whether we know the life of the Body. God's authority is expressed and represented by the apostles and elders. In order to manifest His authority in the church, God appoints elders in every local church to represent His authority. There is a divine government in the church life today, and this government comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb; only by submitting to the throne can we share in His all-sufficient source of the flowing grace.

### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. Explain to be the Head, He needs to be both God and man.

For Christ to have the full headship, He needs two natures, the divine nature and the human nature. Being God alone is not adequate for Him to be the Head. To be the Head, He needs to be both God and man. According to God's economy, God will not exercise His judgment in His administration as God alone. Acts 17:31 says, "He is to judge the world in righteousness, having furnished proof to all."

B. Explain to be the Head over all things, Christ needed to have divinity and humanity.

In order to be the Head over all things in God's government, Christ needed to have divinity and humanity, and He needed to accomplish two things. Christ needed to carry out God's eternal purpose and defeat God's enemy. By incarnation He picked up the human element, and by being crucified He accomplished God's purpose and defeated God's enemy. In His ascension God inaugurated Him into the universal headship over all things.

Day 2 —

A. Expound in the church there being no head other than Christ.

According to medical science, there is only one head, and it gives orders directly to every member of the body. Paul received orders directly from Christ the Head, and we also receive orders directly from Christ the Head. This honors the Head. The headship of Christ does not allow for there to be any other heads or subheads. In the church there is no head other than Christ.

B. Explain regardless of every member's function, he is related directly to the Head.

The church is constituted absolutely not according to the human mentality or worldly organizational methods but with Christ as life and with Christ as the unique Head. In the church, the Body of Christ, there is no other head. Regardless of his or her location or function, every member is related directly to the Head; every member has the same standing. There are no intermediary members.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the order of the church coming out of the authority in the church.

The order of the church comes out of the authority in the church. We are told clearly that the church is the Body of Christ and the house of God. To be sure, there is authority in our body, and there is also authority in a house, that is, in a family. As long as a body is living and standing, there is authority in it. As long as there is a body, there must be authority. In the church there truly is an authority.

B. Describe the order of the church coming from the headship of Christ.

The authority of a body is the head. Without the head, the body cannot stand. The head is the authority. The Head of the church is Christ the Lord, and the authority in the church is the headship of Christ. In the church there should be an order, but this order comes from the headship of Christ. We must realize, honor, and respect the

headship of the Lord. If we are not under the headship of the Lord, we can never be right in the order of the church.

Day 4 —

A. Expound what the function of the apostleship in the universal church is.

Only the apostles have the position and right to appoint elders in the local churches. In the New Testament we see God's way to establish the churches and to carry them on. God's way is that in the universal church there is the one office of apostleship. This apostleship gives the apostles the position and right to appoint the elders for the administration of the local churches. To see this, we may abandon hierarchy and any kind of organization.

B. Explain that the elders were not voted in by their congregations, but were appointed by the apostles according to their maturity of life.

In the church certain brothers serve as elders. In the church at Jerusalem, there were elders taking care of the government of the church. Later, elders were appointed in every church. The New Testament reveals that the elders were not voted in by their congregations, but were appointed by the apostles according to their maturity of life and were charged by the apostles to care for the leadership and the shepherding in the churches.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the throne of God in the center of the Holy city is the source of the life supply.

The throne of God in the center of the New Jerusalem is the unique source of the life supply. In the church life today there is divine authority and church government, which comes from the throne of God. The divine authority in the church is for God to dispense Himself into us as life, as the life supply, and as the all-sufficient grace.

B. Expound the throne in Hebrews 4:16, in Revelation 4:2, in Revelation 22:1 and 2.

The throne of grace in Hebrews 4:16 is the throne of authority in Revelation 4, which becomes in Revelation 22:1 and 2 the throne of God and of the Lamb, out of which proceeds the crystal clear river of water of life. This river flows through the whole city of New Jerusalem. Within this river grows the tree of life, revealing that the rich Christ with the living Spirit flows out of the throne of grace.

Day 6 —

A. Explain in the New Jerusalem there is a river of water of life flowing from the throne.

In the New Jerusalem there is a river of water of life flowing from the throne. The throne is a matter of authority, and the flowing water of life is a matter of fellowship. The flow of water signifies fellowship, and this flow is related to authority. This is the source of the building up of the New Jerusalem. In the church today the water of life from the throne should be flowing freely among us.

B. Expound our body depending on the circulation of blood, which is its fellowship.

Our body also depends on the circulation of blood, which is its "fellowship." Although there are many members in my body, there is only one circulation of blood. Every member is connected with the other members in my body through the circulation of blood. Every member renders a supply to the other members and receives a supply from the other members. We depend completely on the authority and fellowship of the members of our body.

### III. Conclusion:

The authority mentioned here concerns the need for those who bear responsibilities in the church to be the proper deputy authority for God. Today the exercise of authority is carried out by the Body and through the local churches as the expression of Body. Therefore, there needs to be the proper deputy authority. All those who represent the authority of God must know that he is the one under the divine throne and in the divine government, waking up every morning to say to the Lord, "Thank You Lord for this new day. All day long I submit myself to Your headship, setting up Your throne in my personal universe, in the center of my being." The more he is under the headship of God, the more he experiences the flow of life, and the more flows of life he has, the more authorities of life he has. The reason for Aaron's budding rod to show authority fully lies in the life of death and resurrection.