

Balanced Church Leadership and Authority



Feb 2024

Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

**** *** *******

Summary: *Is there any real human government in God's church? We know church government and the notion of rank and positions of leadership has often been badly abused. This teaching shows the balanced scriptural teaching and evidence on authority, leadership and government – even as we remember Jesus' words not to be lording it over others but to be a servant leader.*

KEY WORDS: *church leadership, church government, authority; hierarchy; Matthew 20:24-29; Mark 10:42-45; Hebrews 13:17; Numbers 12, Num 16; Luke 10:16; John 13:20*

***** *******

Hello everyone. Let's cover a topic today that rarely gets any coverage nowadays at all in sermons, but in the church I grew up in – 35-40-50 years ago was often brought up: **the authority ministers and deacons have in leadership positions in the church.** I'm talking about authority within God's church. Is there such a thing? Some decades ago, everyone knew who had power and authority and who outranked who. And that was so wrong.

But does that mean there is NO church government or administrative authority in the body of Christ? Sometimes the word "hierarchy" gets bandied about – and to some, it's a bad word that we're told God hates. I prefer to use other words than "hierarchy" as we explore what the Bible actually has to say about balanced church leadership and authority.

HELLO everyone. I'm Philip Shields, founder and host of Light on the Rock Ministries. Thank you for coming to our website, where we have many hundreds of audios and videos on Bible topics – plus hundreds of articles or blogs.

Today we'll look into this subject. **Is either extreme really endorsed in the Bible for church groups – super tough dictatorial government where pastors run the brethren's lives – or no authority at all?**

It seems like I'm seeing and hearing 2 extremes:

- **#1, No government or authority in the church;** do everything by committee. Pastor has no real authority.
- **#2 extreme:** some pastors in the past – and probably a few today – become real dictators, using their rank and titles to lord it over others.

Here in Light on the Rock Ministries (LOTR Ministries) I tell our leaders to not bother using their title or function when signing their names. Just use your name, nothing else, is what I tell them.

Today I'll use the whole COUNSEL OF GOD – showing Scriptures on all sides. It's so important that we not just pick the scriptures that support one side or the other we prefer – no authority or lots of authority. Let's look at all the scriptures on this matter of hierarchy or church government and servant leadership.

I prefer not to use the word “hierarchy” in the sermon today because it defines a system in which people are ranked one above the other according to their status, rank or authority. In the Catholic church, you have the POPE, for example – he's over all, and then the Cardinals, then the Bishops, then the priests. That's the Catholic example.

I do NOT believe we should have copied that or-- going forward – should be copying that. *But does that mean there is NO authority?* We'll see a lot of scriptures today that will make the BALANCE on church authority clear.

In the 2nd extreme – some of the evidences of way too much authority and government being imposed, include:

- Governing the day to day lives of the brethren. Even telling them, in some cases, who they can and can't marry. That's happened!
- insisting everyone refer to the ordained men as “Mr. so-and-so,” no matter how young the minister is and no matter how old the church member is who's talking to him. I'm simply Philip. Paul was simply Paul in scripture. When the apostles mention the other apostles, they simply used their first names. We're brethren, brothers in the same family.
- **Thos practicing the extreme use of authority use Titles galore to identify what RANK someone is in leadership and authority.**

Ephesians 4:11-14

“And He Himself gave some to be **apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers**, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

The purpose of having these functions of various ones was to edify the church. **(There's much more in the audio)**

The list of the functions of various ones in ministry became widely understood as RANKS in the ministry. **The highest rank was apostle** (just one in that group), then evangelist, then pastor and then teacher. It was widely believed we don't have prophets today. So a man teaching a church had the RANK of pastor, or RANK of evangelist, and so on. Even elders were either just the lowly local elder – who could give sermonettes, pray for people and do the pastor's bidding. Then we also had the “Preaching Elder,” who usually led a congregation and was just hoping he'd soon be promoted to rank of Pastor. But look at what Jesus says about titles and ranks and all that! Here next, he's talking about the Pharisees and religious leaders:

Matthew 23:6-12

“They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ 8 But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

v. 8b -- “You are all brothers/brethren”. So I don’t call my brother “Mister.”

Catholics: Yeshua/Jesus said do not call the priest “father.” DO NOT. And the Pope is not Holy Father. Or Vicar of Christ. Or Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church (meaning of “Catholic”). **Jesus hated titles.** So as we discuss leadership, understand that in Kenya and East Africa, I asked all the leaders to dispense with using their titles. I am just Philip to them. Nothing more. We don’t refer to leaders by “Elder so-and-so” or “Apostle so and so”... just their first names.

2 Corinthians 1:24

*“Not that we have dominion over your faith, but **are fellow workers** for your **joy**; for by faith you stand.”*

Ministers – which means “servants” – should be helpers of your JOY. Brethren should feel very relaxed around our elders and pastors, just as SINNERS felt so comfortable around Jesus! Think of that! He ate, sat, drank with sinners.

Also in the overbearing chain of command of the past -- it was indeed very much like the Catholic church in THAT regard. In the RCC, people do what the priest says. A priest has authority to consign you to hell fire! And many more things. Certainly, he has authority to tell you what you must do to be back in God’s favor – so rather than just receiving the Grace of God when you repent – no, you have to do so many “Hail Mary” prayers.

Story in Rome – going up **the 28 steps** of a church called “**La Scala Santa**”, which traditionally included the 28 “holy stairs” that led to the Praetorium, where Pontius Pilate supposedly sat in judgment of Christ I saw mostly women going up slowly, as they prayed, on their knees. One must go up only on one’s knees! The stairs were brought to Rome by – of course – Helena, the mother of Constantine in the 300’s, the 4th century.

No, we don’t have to go through all that to find God’s grace! Or having to pray so many “laps” around the rosary beads.

In the church I grew up in – first in a Protestant group, the pastor told women how long their hair had to be. The Bible does like long hair on women (1 Cor. 11) but doesn’t specify how long is “long”. But short hair on women was definitely forbidden. But even in the Protestant group when I was growing up, we couldn’t go to movies. No makeup for women, No dancing. No card playing, NO alcohol at all, of any kind. No smoking (a good idea) – there were a lot of rules. *Is that truly Biblical?*

The first sabbath keeping group I grew up in – the pastor had lots of authority over people also. **What Bible literature you could read** (just those of this church). Some pastors forbade listening to the Beatles or rock music; what you could **believe**, how

long or short women's skirts could be, **sabbath dress** was specified, no smoking, and very limited drinking. **Even in college, there were careful rules about DATING:** no holding hands, no kissing and certainly no petting or you'd be kicked out. And basically, what the minister said – is what happened. We didn't dare ask too many questions or challenge a teaching.

Proper church clothing was clearly stipulated: all men had to wear a coat and tie in church. Some specified even WHITE shirts, coat and tie, and shined shoes. This was the way it was done. Yes, this was too much! It was ridiculous dictatorial authority.

But today, we have gone perhaps into the other ditch – so now some women, for example, come to church with super short skirts, or hot pants, plunging necklines, or super skin-tight leggings – which can reveal female parts that cause some problems for our men! Why place a stumbling block in front of our men, ladies? Obey the Bible which states women should wear modest apparel (**1 Tim. 2:9**). And nobody talks about women having long hair anymore. Or who speaks about always having clean and respectable clothing for church? Now some men come in shorts and T-Shirt. Is that right?

What did God require when He came down to Mt Sinai in Exodus 19-20?

Exodus 19:10-11

“Then YHVH said to Moses, ‘Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and **let them wash their clothes.** 11 And let them **be ready** for the third day. For on the third day YHVH will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.” (But remember, God reminds them that Israelites did not see his form – Deut 4:12.)

I remember in the Hebrew Roots group sometimes how SOME men came in dirty stained Levis and t-shirts. Does a pastor not have the right to privately address this?

So now we see men coming in just shorts. I don't insist on a necktie or sabbath jacket – especially in places where it's very hot. I often don't even preach here on LOTR with a necktie anymore. But what God required was to come before him in clean garments – Exodus 19. Don't impose more requirements than God did. Don't be more righteous than God. Realize you're coming before God. Be respectable, modest, and clean.

What Jesus told his disciples when he sent them out: no extra garments or sandals (Matthew 10:10). Think about that.

So we should come before God clean, neat and modest – but I see no requirement that we have to wear a coat and necktie. “Business casual” may be good. A coat and tie is fine if that is what make you feel you're being respectful.

IS there a Biblical Middle ground for this?

- Did Peter and Paul and James and John and the apostles wield any authority? Or do pastors and elders have no authority?
- Are there – in the true **church** of God I mean – any situations and scriptures where brethren are told to submit and obey those over them? ARE there any who are “OVER” any others, according to scripture? ‘
- Or is every brother and sister in the congregation all totally equal to one another in authority and function – and no one is over anyone?

- **Is there any clearly stated authority for the ministry** to be able to put people out of the church, to disfellowship them, if some are living a way of life of sin?
- And though the church is not quite the kingdom of God – WILL there be structured levels of authority in the Kingdom of God? What did JESUS have to say about authority in the Kingdom of God? What did Jesus say about how he wanted leadership to act in His church?

I remember going as an 11 year old with my boy-scout troop in the Philippines during a Boy Scout Jamboree, into a Catholic church – where there was this Catholic Bishop, with a big ring on his hand. Everyone was supposed to bow down to him and kiss his ring. I didn't. We CAN bow to people – but we must not worship people. (There are loads of examples of God's people bowing before others in honor to them. Gen 23:7, 12 Abraham to Hittites; Jacob bowed to his brother Esau -- Gen 33:1-6; 1 Sam 24:8 – David bowed down to Saul, and dozens more examples)

We've already read how Jesus clearly said in Matthew 23 how He doesn't like us using TITLES among ourselves. So in working in Kenya, I asked:

- There's no more requirement to address ministers as "Mr." or even to have to use another word before their name like "Elder or Pastor so-and-so." I asked everyone, including myself, to just go by first names.

Pastors simply used their first names in scripture – Peter was simply Peter. Paul was simply Paul. They do state that they were also apostles, but there's no indication that the brethren were required to call them "Apostle Paul" or some big title.

- I told leaders in Kenya: "when I write an email to you, I just sign it as "Philip" – nothing more. I'd like you all also to drop titles after or before your name. No need to sign your name then write "pastor" or "elder" or "Deacon" or "overseer," or "Coordinator" or any other titles.

HOW Jesus (Yeshua) wants The ELDERS TO lead

What are the guidelines from Christ, Peter and others for serving as leaders? He talks about leading as a servant – Servant Leadership.

Keep in mind that the word '**minister**' **MEANS a "servant**, one who serves." The word "**Deacon**" or deaconess, literally means "Table waiter" -- again, one who serves. Pastor – meaning Shepherd -- is the one overseeing his flock, as he guards and protects his flock as he leads them, under Christ.

Mark 10:39-45 SERVANT LEADERSHIP - 2 components

39 They said to Him, "We are able."

So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 *but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give*, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 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.***"

43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*"

I gave a sermon many years ago on SERVANT LEADERSHIP. We had a pastor in Kenya who was all excited about a special course he was taking outside on Servant Leadership and was very surprised that I had spoken and taught it YEARS ago in 2014. I recommend you all study this sermon on "how Jesus/Yeshua is the Servant King of kings" – and what we can learn from that.

Here it is, my sermon: "Yeshua, the Servant king of kings"

<https://lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/yeshua-the-servant-king-of-kings?highlight=WyJzZXJ2YW50llo=>

1 Peter 5:1-4

"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 SHEPHERD (pastor) the flock of God which is among you, SERVING as OVERSEERS, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when **the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."**

Remember verse 2—pastors are told to shepherd the flock. V. 4 – points us to the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ, who ordains other human shepherds under him so the work Jesus/Yeshua wants done, gets done.

Not being lords over, but shepherd the flock. The shepherd certainly has power and control over the flock. Come on...! Peter said to serve – as – *OVERSEERS (verse 2)*. We must find that balance in our frame of mind as we lead.

The words "servant leadership" has 2 words. SERVANT and LEADERSHIP. It takes BOTH to be a good minister: SERVE the brethren but also LEAD them. When in charge, take charge. Be in charge – but in a serving way.

Peter and the apostles did realize though that they could spend all their time serving brethren and end up with no time left for these leaders to pray, study, prepare sermons, preach, or counsel the brethren, or anoint the sick.

Acts 6 – the DEACONS were to coordinate food prep and service, setting up chairs and take down the chairs. The pastors could help but should not be expected to spend all their time on that. The congregation in Jerusalem was many hundreds or thousands by this time so the apostles didn't know everyone well. Look at what happens:

Acts 6:1-6

"Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom WE may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them."

So is that the model from then on, that the brethren should pick the deacons or even ministers? No. We'll see that the pastors – probably with counsel from the brethren too – appointed ministers to be ordained.

Titus 1:5-9

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that YOU should set in order the things that are lacking, and APPOINT elders in every city as I commanded you – (then qualifications are listed in the next many verses)

6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 **holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.**"

In Acts 14:23 we read the Paul "appointed elders in every city."

SUBMISSION, humility and OBEDIENCE within the body of Christ

Hebrews 13:7 NKJV

"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct."

Other translations tamp it down a bit by simply saying "Remember your Leaders...." These leaders are identified in verse 7 as "those who have spoken the word of God to you" – your ministers, in other words. **(More in the audio)**

Now read verse 17, and this time I'll read from NASU version:

Hebrews 13:17 NASU

"OBEY your leaders and SUBMIT to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

NIV: **"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority!"** Sometimes even ministers won't obey the overseeing pastor. WHY? They should obey.

Hebrews 13:17 NIV (and notice some key words)

“Obey your leaders and **submit** to their **authority**. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. *Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*”

Does that sound like there are no levels of authority? Someone is over us, and we must SUBMIT to them and OBEY them. These leaders are identified in verse 7 as those who teach us God’s word; the ministers in other words. *And even ministers have those who are pastoring and teaching them!*

Don’t forget your leaders. Remember them in prayer and OBEY them, as verse 17 says. Does all this sound like there’s no authority in the church ministry? Let’s wake up and find the balance. We don’t want DICTATORS, but we must have leadership and it’s a lot nicer when everyone cooperates.

Now carefully evaluate this next one we’ll read. We are to recognize our leaders’ labor, we see that they are over us, and we are to ESTEEM them highly. Philippians 2:3 – esteem one another greater than yourself.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are OVER YOU in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very HIGHLY in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”

The Greek word translated “over” in almost all translations on this verse, does mean to be over, to rule, to give direction.

In Kenya and East Africa, we really do our best to focus on serving the brethren. We have pastors and elders and have formed a committee and we discuss situations in Kenya a LOT with them and the brethren. I lead it and make final decisions, but we work on things together.

We’re certainly not doing all this work for what WE get out of it. They’re too poor. Their tithes – I want them to keep that for local use. Thank God that some of you in America and Canada help support God’s work in Africa through LOTR ministries. It’s just BOOMING in the past year.

SERVING the brethren:

- Last Pentecost 2023, I got the word out that **I wanted the men to serve the women their lunch that day.** WHY do we think the women have to always serve the men and the women get to eat cold food all the time?
- Men are to sit with their families and help with the children.
- Some congregations can’t afford a restroom, really a latrine, so we provide money for that – thanks to some of you who help financially.
- Pay the costs of pastors travelling all over to help, teach, guide
- **Bibles.** LOTR has given out more than **150 Bibles ourselves**, paid for especially by Paul, a man with severe M.S. Praise God for him and others who are buying Bibles in their native languages.

Be sure to listen to the sermon coming up soon “**The LEAST OF THESE my brethren**” – for ways even YOU can really, really help.

- **For example – Feast of Tabernacles – nobody can afford a motel**, so we have all the **males sleep in 1-2 rooms** and all the females in 1-2 rooms. We bought hundreds of mattresses for them to sleep on. *Frankly, I badly, badly need some help with this.* We also provide FOOD for them at the Feast. Nobody can afford restaurants!

1 Timothy 5:17 NKJV

“**Let the elders who rule well** be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

The elders who are good leaders should be paid well.

MORE examples of there being CLEAR LEADERSHIP in the church

1 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV

“But I want you to know that **the HEAD of every man is Christ**, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

The head is part of the body – yes – but is it not more consequential than one’s pinky or thumb? Of course it is. Christ is the Head – which includes the brain, the eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

The word translated “woman” is from the Greek word “gune,” which is often translated and means “wife.” Eph 5:22-24 clearly shows this too. COMPLETE JEWISH Bible says:

1 Corinthians 11:3 CJB

“But I want you to understand that the head of every man is the Messiah, and **the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of the Messiah is God.**”

And so remember there IS leadership and authority in marriages for example. But few ministers seem to really be willing to touch this sensitive issue anymore. I’ll preach it.

Ephesians 5:21-24

21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

“Wives [gune], submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, **so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

(also in Col. 1:18-19)

Are women/wives equal in the body of Christ? YES – in that husbands and wives are HEIRS together in the grace of God as 1 Peter 3 says. But are they equal in authority and function? No. The man is the head of the wife. The wife is told to submit. And we husbands are to submit to Yeshua/Jesus to love our wives as Jesus loves the church, his bride. (*There’s more in the audio*)

Ephesians 5:25-33

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,* but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Some are making a big point about how we're ALL EQUAL... BUT REMEMBER THERE ARE distinct functions. The wives are to submit. The women are not to be preachers.

As you know, in 1 Timothy 2 – WOMEN are not to be preachers and pastors or to have authority over men. I'm just saying what the Bible says.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

13 **For Adam was formed first, then Eve.** 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."

THEN The NEXT VERSE... men were overseers of the church

1 Timothy 3:1

"This is a faithful saying: **If a MAN desires the position of a bishop** (Overseer) he desires a good work."

INDICATIONS OF DEFINITELY THERE BEING AUTHORITY in the PASTORS AND APOSTLES within the body of Christ.

To be reminded of the authority and leadership Paul exercised in the churches, just re-read 1 Corinthians or Galatians and you'll get plenty.

To Corinth, he reminded them not to be splitting up into following men –

Chapter 1. STICK TOGETHER, don't be dividing.

Chapters 2-3 – be aware of carnality.

Chapter 5 – put out the sex offender. 2 Cor 2 – bring the repentant man back into fellowship.

Chapter 6 – quit suing one another.

7 - don't defraud each other in marriage sexually

11 – hair length

13 – agape love

14 – get back some order into their church services

15 – quit saying the resurrection is past.

HOW ABOUT IN The KINGDOM OF God? WILL THERE BE AUTHORITY – AND YES, EVEN RANK?

The KEY is to remember God – who is OVER ALL and in all – is LOVE, and rules in patient love. He does rule. He is king over his kingdom. He does have a kingdom with laws and rules. He has those under him, but over others/

Speaking of Israel in the future, after the resurrections, here's what God said through Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 37:24-25

“David My servant shall be KING *OVER* them, and they shall all have **one** shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.”

David will rule with GOD's LOVE. The RIGHTEOUS will be in authority! Yes, there is authority. Certainly in the kingdom there will be rank and authority. David over Israel.

Proverbs 29:2

“When the righteous are **in authority**, the people rejoice;
But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.”

Under Christ, under David will be the rulers over the 12 tribes of Israel. We already know who they will be. That's the ranking – Christ, then David, then the 12 apostles.

Luke 22:28-30

"But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and **sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**"

So is there any church authority? No doubt it has been greatly abused in the past, but does that mean there is no church authority now or in God's kingdom later? Obviously, Jesus himself says the 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes. And over them will be King David, over all Israel. Hierarch is not a bad word when it's used the right way. Judging, ruling the 12 tribes and all Israel and all under King David, who is under Christ. Yes, that's a good hierarchy.

By the way, those who preach against hierarchy never cared as long as they were in charge. Only when they lost their own position did they be against it.

KINGDOM OF GOD is about teaching and ruling Christ's way over cities and people in the love of God. Look at the end of the parable of the pounds.

Luke 19:15-19 Parable of the minas/pounds

"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then **commanded** these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, **'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority OVER ten cities.'**

18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, **'You also be OVER five cities.'**

The Thyatirans of Rev 2 who overcome will rule the nations.

Revelation 2:26-27

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give POWER OVER the nations —

**27 'He shall RULE them with a rod of iron;
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' —**

We can't just throw Rev 2:26-27 away! So there's definite authority and power expressed that will be given to those who rule. Even using the words "they shall be dashed to pieces like a potters' vessels..." sounds very strong.

They will have power OVER the nations. The word "OVER" is not a bad word. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, clearly is OVER all creation, Col. 1:15, 18.

Colossians 1:15

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

Colossians 1:18

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

In terms of our relationship with those we are given authority over though, we should NOT be like OVERLORDS, lording it over others.

Paul had to get pretty tough against Corinthian brethren because of their arrogance. Listen to Paul's words. Wow! There's no authority?

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

"Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. 20 **For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.**

21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a ROD, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"

It's funny to me how Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Cor. 4:21 don't get read in the sermons that speak against any authority or rank or hierarchy.

2 Corinthians 1:23-24

"Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand".

The EXAMPLE set by Jesus the Son of God Most High

Remember The Trinity doctrine demands that Jesus and God the Father and the Holy Spirit are three CO-EQUAL persons in one. But there's no way an honest reading of scripture can possibly show any equality between Jesus (Yeshua) and God Most High/the Father.

Certainly as a human being, Yeshua said "My Father is greater than I" (John 5). He made clear he was here to do the Father's words and bidding and will, over and over.

But that's when he was a human, some might say. But even after his resurrection, it's still VERY CLEAR that Yeshua/Jesus is UNDER God the Father and therefore the Trinity co-equal teaching collapses.

"the head of Christ is God" – 1 Cor. 11:3

At the end of the millennium, Jesus turns everything over to the Father (**1 Cor 15:26-28** – read it carefully. Even now, Yeshua is under the Father).

Philippians 2:1-11

"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

2 fulfill my joy by being **like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** [Pastors must work well and lovingly together.]

3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others BETTER than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is **above every name**, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father".

God, Yeshua/Jesus never change. If there's obedience and oversight in the kingdom of God, there is everywhere where God is working!

Let's review again the teaching of the Messiah about leading as a servant. Servant leadership.

Matthew 20:24-29

"And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over **them**."

26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

EXAMPLES OF Those WHO RESISTED The AUTHORITY GOD SET

Remember that if you are part of any rebellion against leaders God has put into place, the One you're really rebelling against – is GOD. Let's look into it.

The first to lead a rebellion against God's authority was Lucifer – or his real **Hebrew name was Heylel**. You know what happened. Even Jesus recounted later he saw Satan fall like LIGHTNING! (**Luke 10:18**). Satan thought he could be like God over all the other stars, or angels of heaven (**Isaiah 14:12-15**). We know him now as **Satan, meaning Adversary**.

He is also called **the Devil** – which means "Slanderer."

When someone starts slandering the pastors – or other pastors – beware. His spirit is that of the **Slanderer, of the Devil**. If you find yourself speaking evil of others, or other ministers, you have come under the employment of Satan the Slanderer. Read **James 4:11-12** please. There we're told to never speak evil of other brethren -- for it makes us a judge and puts us into trouble.

I want every man, woman and child to hear this. DON'T YOU listen to Satan's slander against leaders – whether it's against your husband, father, mother, pastor ... don't listen to slander.

GOD always made the point that when people rebelled against his leaders, they were rejecting HIM, GOD. This is what God told Samuel when the Israelites wanted a king like the other nations. God said, "Samuel, they're not really rejecting YOU, but ME, that I should rule over them." (**1 Samuel 8:7**).

So when Jesus sends us our leaders, if you reject them, you're really rejecting Jesus – and the One who sent Jesus, God the Father!

Luke 10:16

"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

John 13:20

"Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who receives whomever I send receives Me;** and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

There are many examples of this. Remember even Israel of the Old Testament was called **"the congregation in the wilderness"** (**Acts 7:38**). God's CHURCH in the desert. They regularly resisted **God's** authority over them by rejecting the human leaders God put there to lead and teach and govern. And they were there also, of course, to serve to practice Servant Leadership.

Numbers 12 shows how God had chosen Moses to lead Israel, but his sister Miriam, at least 10 years older than he, thought God had spoken to her and her brother Aaron just as much. God heard it and was upset. **Please read that whole short chapter some time to get the point.**

Numbers 12:1-5

"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So **they said, "Has YHVH indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And YHVH heard it.** 3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

4 Suddenly YHVH said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5 Then YHVH came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.

The brief summary is that God was furious with Miriam, who was the instigator, and made her A LEPER, and forced her outside the camp for a while. What a strong correction from GOD against Moses' sister.

Are you CHILDREN listening? Don't lead your brothers and sisters against mom and dad. Are you wives listening? Don't lead any attack against your husband, or your children's father.

Just 4 short chapters later, **KORAH – a COUSIN of Moses and Aaron**, a man with incredible persuasive, speaking skills turned **250 LEADERS** from the congregations to turn against Moses and Aaron, to **DIVIDE** Israel, to turn from Moses. KORAH wanted more power and authority. He wanted to do things his way and not have to follow orders and just do what he was told to do. Korah: "We're all holy. We're all equal. God is the one we all serve, not you. God is with us too."

Numbers 16:1-3

"Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and **they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty LEADERS of the congregation**, representatives of the congregation, **men of renown.** 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You take too much upon yourselves, **for ALL the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.*** Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

Notice Korah's emphasis? "Moses, we're all EQUAL. There's no such thing as authority in the congregation. And God is with ALL of us," they said.

Read on your own time God's ANSWER and God's ANGER in showing He hated their attitude of rebellion, of dividing the camp, instead of helping everyone to **STICK TOGETHER. The 250 rebel leaders were burned alive by God HIMSELF.** The others who followed KORAH were buried alive in the huge gaping hole that appeared under Korah's tent and around.

Christ is not divided – so don't DIVIDE the work GOD is doing by causing people to attack and lose confidence in God working with the elders and pastors He chose to work with! Stick together ("be perfectly joined together").

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **all speak the same thing, and that there be NO DIVISIONS among you**, but that you *be perfectly joined together* in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "**I am of Paul,**" or "**I am of Apollos,**" or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 **Is Christ divided?** Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

Romans 12:3-6

"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **NOT to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 **so WE, being many, are ONE BODY in Christ, and individually members of one another.**"

IF WE ARE ALL LITERALLY EQUAL – in every way, with no one really having any real authority – why bother ordaining elders and deacons?

Christ IS the head of the Body – but he uses and works through PEOPLE under him to get the job done.

- Why was Peter the apostle to the Jews and Paul apostle to Gentiles?
- Why did they convene a conference in Acts 15 to settle the issue of circumcision and the way they kept the law of Moses? And then that decision was taught to the brethren to follow.
- Why is the man called the HEAD of his wife? 1 Cor. 11:3
- Why are we told to SUBMIT to our leaders and to their authority – if we're all truly exactly equal? **Remember Heb 13:17 – OBEY your leaders**, and submit to them as ones who have to give an account..."
WHY is that in scripture? The ones doing the obeying are not in the same line of function as those who have given instructions.
- Why are women not allowed to preach if there's no difference at all? I'm familiar, of course, with Gal. 3:26-28, but that passage is not addressing authority. In fact, the whole book of Galatians shows how Paul used his authority to correct their doctrinal errors they were accepting.
- Paul told TITUS to pick the best elders, Sure, the first time the congregation picked the deacons Acts 6 – but there were thousands of new people there and this was a unique situation. Later, Paul just commanded Titus to appoint and ordain elders everywhere in Crete (Titus 1:5-9).

- If we are all truly equal in every way, why did Paul issue orders, commands and set the direction of disfellowshipping a man in 1 Cor. 5, and to bring him back in upon repentance in 2 Cor. 2? Why did he chastise them for how Passover was being conducted (1 Cor. 11:18-22). How could he correct them for suing one another – 1 Cor. 6, and on and on?

All that is because there IS authority in the church of God. It must be servant leadership – but it IS Leadership.

Closing Prayer.