

Overreaching Elders And Preachers

I. Introduction: Covid decisions not to assemble, assembling online, preacher's meetings, lectureships, commentaries of men, etc.; show that congregations fall into the trap of allowing elders and preachers to rule over and above the Scriptures.

A. The Hebrew writers taught those the letter was written to that they were to follow and obey those that ruled over them (**Hebrews 13:7; 13:17**).

1. Elders are the only men that have "rule" in the local church since the Apostles are no longer with us (**I Timothy 5:17**).

2. Elders are the overseers, the shepherds (**I Peter 5:1-4**).

3. Some elders will use the above to give their own instructions.

B. Preachers (aka evangelists) have some authority (**Titus 1:5; Titus 2:15**).

1. Preachers are to make "full proof" of their ministry; reprove, rebuke, and exhort (**II Timothy 4:1-5**).

2. In such a state, they can give "charge" [command; order] in certain areas (i.e. **I Timothy 1:3, I Timothy 4:1-11, I Timothy 5:7, I Timothy 6:17**, etc.).

3. Some evangelists will use the above to gain evangelistic oversight (a concept not found in the Scriptures).

II. Body: There Are Limits To The Authority Of Elders, Evangelists, and Even The Apostles When They Walked The Earth (**Galatians 1:6-12**).

A. The instruction has long been, God's word above all else (**Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, and Revelation 22:18-19**).

1. If they speak not according to this word... (**Isaiah 8:20**).

2. Not to think of man above that which is written (**I Corinthians 4:1-6**).

B. No matter the position of authority, or the reasoning one can have, one cannot decide on what God has not spoken (**Numbers 9:1-8**).

1. A chosen king of God (**I Samuel 9:1-10:1**) could not operate outside His instructions (**I Samuel 15:1-28**).

2. A chosen king and God's prophet could not act without God's approval (**II Samuel 7:1-7**).

3. The king, to whom men were to fear (**Proverbs 24:21**), who was called a troublemaker because he led Israel to worship idols (**I Kings 18:17-21**).

4. When God's people did what He did not instruct they were an abomination to Him (**Jeremiah 7:30-31**).

C. Consider some things we can learn from examples we see:

1. When evangelists appointed elders, they did not just choose whoever they preferred (**I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9**).

2. When evangelists preached, the message was not of their own thinking (**I Corinthians 4:17**).

3. When elders sent Paul and Barnabas, the Holy Spirit was the one making that decision (**Acts 13:1-3**).
4. When elders sent men with a message to Antioch, they did not make that decision alone (**Acts 15:1-35**).
5. Elders were given oversight of funds, but that was based on instructions given them for needy saints (**Acts 11:27-30**).
6. Evangelist were trusted with the delivery of funds for truly needy saints (**II Corinthians 8:4**), but with others as witnesses (**II Corinthians 8:16-24**).

D. Preachers are supposed to teach the word of God to save souls (**II Timothy 2:1-2; 2:14-26**) and elders are supposed to shepherd [feed, oversee, and watch] the flock (**Acts 20:28; 20:31**).

1. Men that are ambitious of distinction are dangerous (**III John 1:9-11**).
2. If a man desires to be an elder, a shepherd; will he be able to focus on the real principle of shepherding (**Matthew 18:10-14**)?
3. If a man takes on the work of an evangelist, will he be able to focus on the real work involved (**Colossians 1:28**)?

III. Conclusion: No matter the man - *“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men”* (**Acts 5:29**).