

SEVENTY MINISTERS ORDAINED

– *JANUARY 11.* – *LUKE 10:1-24.* –

"It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." – Matthew 10:20.

MINISTERIAL ordination has for centuries been a bone of contention. Indirectly it has led to bloody persecutions in the past. Thank God! those days are gone, so far as the majority of Christians are concerned. And yet, because the masses do not clearly understand the subject of ordination, there is always danger of a recurrence of persecution along this line. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, all, have shared in these persecutions based upon misconceptions of ministerial ordination – in times past they persecuted each other along these lines.

The claim was that none could be a preacher or teacher unless he had a special ordination; that for the unordained to preach or teach was a rebellion against Divine arrangement; and that all who followed his teaching or gave him support were heretics, and, as such, deserving of no sympathy, but rather of persecution.

Ordination does not relate to a ceremony, or form, as many suppose. It signifies an authorization, a commission to preach. The Baptists commission those who agree with their creed to preach it. The Presbyterians so commission their disciples, as do the Lutherans, Methodists, etc. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians claim an ordination from God – that all their bishops are successors to the Apostles and armed with Apostolic authority; hence that any not commissioned, or ordained, by their [R5363 : page 364] bishops have no right to preach, but are heretics. From their standpoint, all other Protestants are heretics, preaching without authority.

But the spirit of tolerance is growing; and within the last two years Episcopalians have lifted the embargo on other Protestants to the extent that an Episcopal minister may preach in the pulpit of another denomination, or a minister not ordained by the Episcopalians may be permitted to preach in their pulpits. But this is a very modern concession.

The right thought of ordination is presented in the Study for today. Jesus had already appointed twelve to be His special Apostles; and now He ordained, or appointed, seventy more, not to be Apostles, but to be general ministers or missionaries. There was no ceremony connected with their appointment, or ordination, so far as the record shows. Jesus simply sent them out, telling them what to say. Our Golden Text explains the matter saying, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

Strictly speaking, the Apostles had not yet received the Spirit of the Father directly. The Father's Spirit had been imparted to the Son, and it was the Son who shared that Spirit with those He sent out to preach in His name. The Father did not directly recognize, authorize or ordain any to preach the Gospel Message, until **[R5363 : page 365]** Pentecost. St. Peter there explains that the Holy Spirit shed forth upon the witnessing disciples was from the Father and by the Son. – Acts 2:32,33.

Elsewhere it is explained that the Holy Spirit was not given previously because Jesus had not been glorified. It was necessary for Jesus to suffer, and to ascend on High and to present His merit on behalf of His disciples, before the Heavenly Father recognized them as sons of the new order and gave them the begetting of the Holy Spirit, the unction from the Holy One, the authorization, or ordination, to be His ambassadors and representatives in the world and, if faithful, by and by to be associates with Jesus in the Heavenly Kingdom, which for a thousand years is to bless the earth and roll away the curse.

Only those whom God has ordained in the sense of giving them the Holy Spirit of sonship are in any wise commissioned, or authorized, to preach in the Lord's name. All the ceremonies on earth and all the hands of all the bishops cannot give authority to anybody to speak in the name of God. Our Lord Jesus did not begin His ministry until He had received God's ordination. At the time of His consecration and baptism the Holy Spirit came upon Him, anointing Him, consecrating Him, authorizing Him, to preach the good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort those that mourn. – Isaiah 61:1,2.

The same Holy Spirit is authority for anybody who has received it to tell all that he understands respecting the Plan of God to all who have an ear to hear – especially to the meek, the broken-hearted, those who are feeling after God. While the Apostle Paul intimates that the female members of the Church are not to preach publicly, this does not interfere with the fact that all of them who have received the Holy Spirit have the anointing to preach and to teach according to the limitations and opportunities of their sex. And sometimes the private teaching is equally as effective as the more public.

The forty years which closed the Jewish Age, beginning with John the Baptist and ending A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem, was the Harvest period for typical Israel. It witnessed the gathering into the Gospel garner of all the true wheat and the entire setting aside of the remainder, the chaff, in a great time of trouble, symbolically called fire. The Lord, in Matthew 13, intimates that in the end of this Gospel Age there will be a similar Harvest. Many believe that it began in 1874 and will end in 1915.

All of the Lord's faithful ones at the close of the Jewish Age were to recognize the great privilege of being engaged in the Harvest work, and the same must be true now. The Lord's followers

are compared to gentle, inoffensive lambs and sheep, while the selfish, unregenerate world He pictures as wolves. In the Jewish Harvest He would not have them beg their way from house to house, but inquire for the most worthy people in every village, and, if received, remain there until they had given their witness in that village. They were to depend wholly upon the Lord, and to make no attempt to provide for their needs. This was to be to them a lesson for their future benefit. Later, Jesus sent forth His disciples, telling them to provide for their wants to the best of their ability – implying that the first experience had been a special one, to give them confidence and reliance in the Divine Power that they represented.

The Master's Spirit was given to them in such measure that they were enabled to do as He did – to heal the sick, cast out devils, etc. We are not to understand that there is such an authorization of the Lord's people today. Conditions have changed. The healing of spiritual sickness, blindness and deafness, greater works than those, is the privilege of the Lord's people today.

The one Message of the disciples was that the Kingdom of God had come nigh. Whoever could be influenced would be influenced by that Message. God's Kingdom had been waited for by the Israelites for many centuries. But alas, when it was presented, only a comparatively small number of the Jews were ready to receive it! Thereafter the Kingdom offer was taken away from them, and has since been given throughout the whole world, gathering the elect class from every nation to be Messiah's Bride and Joint-heir, through whom shortly the Kingdom will be established in the earth and its blessings be bestowed far and near upon all of the race.

The Master referred to His preaching and mighty works in Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin. These cities were figuratively said to have been exalted in point of privilege; and, as having rejected the Lord's favors, they would be cast down to the grave.

Examples were given of Sodom and Tyre, both of which then were in ruins – brought down to Hades, down to the dust.

Our Lord intimates, however, that the trial, or testing, or judgment, which His preaching had given was not a finality – there would be a future judgment or trial. According to St. Paul the entire Millennial Age is to be a thousand-year Judgment Day, in which the whole world is to be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, to a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of God. (Acts 17:31.) Nevertheless, those who heard Jesus unmoved had hardened their hearts, and would be correspondingly disadvantaged in the Judgment Day. Jesus put the matter very strongly when He implied that it would be tolerable for those people, but more tolerable for Sodom, because its sin had been against less light and privilege. See also Ezekiel 16:48-63.

Concluding, the Master assured His messengers that whoever heard them and despised them despised Him and the Father. This same thing is true undoubtedly of all whom the Lord has ordained and sent forth as ministers of the Gospel – the truly ordained.

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