



## Church of God Ministries

Spanish Fort, Alabama

### **Should a Minister of God Be Addressed as 'Reverend' (Matthew 23:8-11)?**

When we look into the Living Word of God, the Holy Bible, (which is where we should always turn first when seeking truth) we find the word "reverend" refers only to God Himself, and not once is it applied to a man or human being.

The one instance where the word "Reverend" is used can be found in Psalm 111:9 (King James Authorized Version), says: "*He [God] sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name.*"

This is clear that God alone has a name worthy of reverence. No man, including any minister, has a name worthy of such respect or worship.

The use of religious titles, such as "Reverend," began when a great apostasy set in at the close of the first century. Ministers began to put themselves "in the place of" Christ (the meaning of vicar), taking upon themselves the attributes and titles of divinity. God's true faithful ministers have never done this.

We can note the instruction of Jesus Christ in Matthew 23:8-11: "*But you [Christ's disciples], do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.*"

Our Savior commands and admonishes that those He calls to serve the brethren of the *ekklesia* or body of the church should not take upon themselves titles that arrogate God and Christ's own titles and positions, such as "Teacher" and "Father." Instead, as servants and brothers, ministers should live and work in humility as servants of God.

The ministry/elders of *Church of God Ministries* prefer that individuals address them by their first names—no "Mister" is necessary.

Since other "ministers" might take offense if they are not addressed by some title, perhaps "Pastor," "Elder," or "Evangelist"—all biblical titles of a ministerial office—would suffice instead. We consider these simply profession or administrative job descriptions, not some lofty title demanding some kind of placement on a pedestal etc.

If we may be of further help in any way, please let us know.