



Touch not my anointed -

Removing a pretext for spiritual abuse

From time immemorial the “priestly class” has attempted to exploit the fears of others by suggesting that they are specially chosen (or “anointed”) by God as authorities. We see evidence of this throughout history - beginning with ancient Bavel (Babylon) and permutating throughout the plethora of major world religions extant today.

In Protestant Christianity, and in particular in the so-called “charismatic movement,” there is often a lack of well-defined hierarchy (i.e., a “priestly class”), but the mantra “touch not my anointed” is sometimes quoted by self-styled leaders as a means of maintaining control over the members of the assembly. In other words, this phrase is interpreted (by them) as “I am not to be criticized, since I am one of God’s anointed ones!”



But does the Scripture actually imply this, or is this a case of abusing the plain meaning of the Word of God in order to manipulate others?

אֶל־תִּגְעוּ בְּמִשְׁיְחָי וּבְנְבִיאֵי אֱלֹהֵי־תִרְעוּ

Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!
(1 Chron 16:22)

First of all this phrase is actually a verse from a *shirah* (song) of Asaph embedded into the account of the return of the *Aron Kodesh* (ark) to the *ohel* (tent) as given in *Divrei Hayamim* (Chronicles). We need to begin with that as an understanding of the *type of literature* we are reading. Compare Psalm 105:15.

Secondly, the passage in question refers not to prophets of the LORD in the New Covenant sense, but to the original patriarchs - and is most likely a direct reference to when *Avimelekh* (Abimelech) was rebuked by the LORD in a dream not to touch Sarah (see Genesis 20:2-ff).

Third, quoting this verse as a means of justifying any sort of special entitlement for oneself (or others) entirely misses the point of the Mashiach Yeshua’s teachings about “servant leadership”:

וּמִי מִכֶּם הִתְפַּיֵץ לִהְיוֹת לְרֵאשִׁית יִהְיֶה עֶבֶד לְכָל

καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ εἶναι ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται πάντων δούλος

Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. (Mark 10:44)



Do you want a “title”? How about *servant*? The servant of the LORD is to be humble, willing to bear up the flock of the LORD with tenderness and compassion. He (or she) is not to be "as the Gentiles" who seize power in order to "lord it over" others:

The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. (Luke 22:25-6)

כִּי כָל־הַמִּתְנַשֵּׂא בְגֵאוּתוֹ יִשְׁפַל וְשֹׁפֵל רוּחַ יִנָּשֵׂא

ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται,
καὶ ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται

*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,
and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* (Luke 14:11)

Of course there may be cases where a pastor or teacher needs to exercise their God-given role as an authority, though this is normally in response to those who have persistently acted contrary to sound doctrine and who seek to incite rebellion in others. The Apostle Paul provides guidelines for such discipline in some of his letters. But whenever someone claims that they are "anointed" and should not be questioned, the red flags should start waving and you should be on your spiritual guard.

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)