***The Pastor-Teacher-Elder

RV74-01***

We continue with the study of the throne room of God in Revelation 4:1-5. This is segment number 6. We have seen that the apostle John, in his human spirit, is taken by Jesus Christ into heaven to be shown worldwide events which follow the rapture of the Christian church. The church is made up of Jews and gentiles who trust in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior between the time of Pentecost and the rapture of the church. Remember that there are three groups of human beings that God deals with. These are spelled out first 1 Corinthians 10:32, where Paul says, "Give no offense, neither to the Jews (that's one group of human beings), nor to the Greeks (that is, the gentiles – a second group of human beings), nor to the church of God (Christians – a third group)." The New Testament is very clear that you must not mix these three groups. That is one of the fatal deceits that Satan has imposed upon Christianity – that they do not segregate God's program for the Jews; God's program for gentiles; and, God's program for Christians.

Those of you who are good students of the Word of God know that each of these groups has a beginning point in the Scriptures. There is a very definite beginning for the Jewish program. There is a very definite beginning for the gentile program. There is a very definite beginning for the Christian program. The program for the Jews began with Abraham; the gentiles began with Adam; and, Christians began on the day of Pentecost. You get to the other end of the line: There is a very definite biblical revelation as to how God terminates the program for the Jews; a definite termination for the program for the gentiles; and, a definite termination of His program for Christians (for the church). These three are distinctly separate.

The people that have been taken into heaven here, symbolically, in John's experience of being caught up into this third heaven, are Christians which are made up of Jews and gentiles between Pentecost and the rapture of the church. The Christians are a unique segment of saved humanity. They are not all of saved humanity. There are saved Jews, and there are saved gentiles who are not part of the church, the body of Christ. The church is that unique segment of humanity that we're dealing with here in the book of the Revelation at this point. Christians are a unique segment of saved humanity which now constitutes the body of Jesus Christ, and which, in the future in heaven, will become His bride.

**Church**

It is this body of genuinely born-again people, which are taken into heaven at the rapture, which has been prefigured here by John's experience. What I am saying is that the church does not include all church members. Probably a very large number (if not the majority) of church members today are going to hell. A certain segment of those church members who are born again are going to heaven. So, you must be careful when you use the word "church." I'm always uncomfortable with the word "church," because the word church has been stretched to cover a lot of tears along with the genuine wheat. I prefer to use the term "the body of Christ" so that we are very distinct about whom we are referring to.

The word "church" is commonly used in our society, and as people generally think about the word "church," it is a mongrel conglomerate that indeed we find, in the book of the Revelation, is compared by the Lord to a "harlot." That is the church which will be the product of the ecumenical movement today, which is ramrodded by the National Council and the World Council of Churches, and the denominations associated with those two apostate groups.

**God's Throne**

In heaven, John sees God the Father on His throne, surrounded by a dazzling display of white and red light, symbolic of God's glory. There is an emerald halo also around the throne, symbolizing God's faithfulness to all of His word (His promises), and also signifying praise for the provision of eternal life which He alone has provided for sinners.

**24 Elders**

Then we saw around the throne of God, 24 other thrones which were occupied by 24 beings, which are called "elders." They are robed in white, and they have crowns of gold on their heads. These 24 elders represent, at this point, the body of Christ, the church, as God's appointed pastors in the local congregations. Their white robes symbolize that they as believers possess ultimate sanctification at this point. The golden crowns signify the rewards which they have received for their Christian service at this point.

**Apostles**

The early organization of the local church, we indicated to you last time, centered around the apostles. The gift of apostle was given by God the Holy Spirit to certain men who could testify as eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have that indicated to us in Acts 1:21-22, where the 11 apostles who were left after Judas was sent to his destiny: "Wherefore of these men who have companioned with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John onto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." And it was critical that they were eyewitnesses of the fact that the Christ who had been placed in the tomb was indeed alive. They could not possess the gift of an apostle without personally being able to testify as an eyewitness that Jesus was alive.

**Apostolic Succession**

That's why we say there is no such thing as apostolic succession, and there is no such thing as apostolic authority today, because we don't have any men who have seen Christ alive. An apostle had full spiritual authority over several churches, which he often had found himself. The apostles appointed, in the early church, those who were the elders in each congregation who were to exercise spiritual authority in these local churches during the apostles' absence. With the completion, however, of the New Testament Scriptures, and the dying of the last apostle, John, the local church congregation became the governing body with leadership authority delegated by that congregation to a pastor-elder. The authority of that pastor-elder now, in contrast to the apostolic authority, was exercised only over one single church – the church that had appointed him through recognition that he was their right pastor for their particular church. The last books of the Bible in the New Testament reflect the transition from apostolic authority in the local church to pastor-teacher-elder authority.

**A Single Elder vs. a Plurality of elders**

Relative to the question of the number and the nature of the elder office and the local church ministry, you should have a very clear picture of the elder role. Then you'll see what a fitting thing it was to see that these are 24 elders that are surrounding the throne of Jesus Christ, and that these 24 elders represent the body of Christ, as the 24 priests in the 24 orders of the Old Testament order represented the totality of the Aaronic priesthood. There is no specific single Scripture that tells us that there should be one elder in a local church or several elder pastors. The case has to be judged on isagogics (the conditions of the time), and on the New Testament records of church operation.

However, I believe that the case is very strong for the fact that each church (each local congregation) has only one pastor-elder who is in spiritual authority in that congregation. As we have indicated to you, ancient cities were generally small, but the commercial centers like Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus were very large. They were large in territory, and they were large in population, even by today's standards. These cities had hundreds of believers in them. They were located over a great distance, for these were large territories as well, and some of them lived on opposite sides of the town. It was obviously impossible for these people to get together as a single church congregation.

These Christians in these large cities faced, of course, the distance of travel from one part of town to another where the meetings were to be held. They had the same problems to work out on the city transit system that we work on today. And there was no city transit system. There was no way for them to hop a bus to get across town to go to wherever the congregation was meeting. Travel over long distances from home within these ancient cities was also very dangerous, particularly that the Scriptures seem to indicate that when the Christians met, it was generally in the evening. This is why we hold the Lord's Supper here at the evening service, rather the morning. We think it's a little more in keeping with the tradition of the New Testament church. These people were occupied with other things during the day in their labors. It was the evening times that were free. And the travel in a metropolitan center in the evening was not only a problem of distance, it was a problem of personal danger.

So, the large cities, in the nature of the case, produced many local churches within the particular city. Each of these had its own pastor-elder in authority. So, you do have the concept of a plurality of elder-pastors which are found within a certain city. The Bible often will view all of the Christians in a city as forming *the* church. But within *the* church, there is the division of segments into various homes where these people are meeting, each of them with a pastor-elder in authority in each of these home churches.

The plurality concept does not mean, and does not indicate, a plurality of members in one local church. Well, let me put it up front. If you want to think that, when you read about plurality of elders in the New Testament, that that means they were all stacked in one church, that's perfectly alright with me. I'm very relax, and I will not perspire or get sweaty over the matter. If you want to think that way, that's a grace position, and you can go ahead and think that way. And everything is cool.

**Home Church Meetings**

So, my point is that there is ample ground for demonstrating that you may also view the question of plurality of elders as being many, within a city, divided into various homes. Christians, at first, of course, did not meet in church buildings such as we meet in today. They did meet in homes. These homes were gatherings for worship and for edification. They did constitute the local churches. We have this indicated for us, for example, in 1 Corinthians 11:18; 1 Corinthians 11:20; and, 1 Corinthians 14:26. These passages indicate that Christians met in people's homes. Public buildings for churches to meet him did not become a practice among Christians until about the third century. When the Christians were out from under the pressure of persecution, then they began moving into public auditoriums for their meeting places. Church buildings, as such, then were erected.

The first church founded in the city began in somebody's home. As converts were won throughout the city and the surrounding vicinity, the natural course of events was that these congregations would get to a certain point where they would have to split up, and they would have to find another home in which to meet, so that there was enough room for all of them, because in time there were too many to meet in any single home.

Each of these house churches, in the nature of the case, required an administrative leader (an executive head). That was the pastor-elder. So, a plurality of pastor-elders would arise within a city such as you have indicated in Acts 24:17, where you have many pastor-elders who met Paul from the city of Ephesus. But these were from many different home churches within the city of Ephesus, though they were viewed as mere segments of one expression of the body of Christ. So, the Bible does use the word "church" about the "church in Ephesus" even though that church, in terms of a local congregation, is divided up into several segments. Nevertheless, that visible church (and this was particularly true in the early days) was, by and large, compatible with the invisible church.

Now we have the invisible body of Christ (that church), and then we have a large segment of the local church which does not coordinate with that true body of Christ. Here is the true church. In the New Testament church, by and large, the local church was the same thing. Today, you have the true church, and then you have the condition of the false church. Here you have an overlap of where the local church and the true church are one and the same. That is the condition that has changed. So, it was even more understandable that they would speak about *the church* in the city of Ephesus, because, by and large, these local churches were also part of the body of Christ. They did make up that single unit.

Now, while the founding apostle himself was present in a city, he would do the teaching, and he would do the administering of the various churches. But when he left, he would delegate a pastor-elder to take charge in each of these house churches, and they were responsible for the instruction and the caring for the flock. Titus 1:5 and Acts 14:21-23 refer to this. I don't want to take time to be reading these Scriptures. You really should read them on your own to see that we are not making up these ideas, and that this is really the picture you have in the New Testament. But I am interested in just giving you an overview. If you want to look at this in more detail, you can pick up the tapes that are involved on this in the Philippian series.

The apostles, when writing back to the believers in a large city, would also address them altogether, as constituting the church in that particular place, even though they were meeting in several homes. The letter then passed around among these various homes. A territorial church is so addressed in 1 Corinthians 1:2. You may compare that with 1 Corinthians 14:34.

So, when Paul writes to Philippi, for example, he addresses all the believers (he uses the word "saints") and their leaders (the pastor-elders and the deacons) in the various local churches in that city as a territorial church (Philippians 4:15).

**The Pastor-Elder**

Taking a look at the office of the pastor-elder, one thing that is of significance is that, when the apostles were off the scene (finally when John died), and it became the responsibility of the local church to authorize the man who was to be their administrative head (their pastor-elder), they had to have some guidelines for doing that. Therefore, God the Holy Spirit was careful to preserve some guidelines in the form of qualifications necessary for this office. We have one such list in 1 Timothy 3. We have another such list in Titus 1.

**Elder**

One of the things that is of significance to note is in the 1 Timothy 3:1-7 passage. The pastor-elder is referred to in the singular. By the way, when I use the word "elder," we'll show you in a moment that that is the same as the word "bishop." It's two different words in Greek, but it is the same office. It is important that you understand there are three words. You have the word "elder;" you have the word "bishop;" and, you have the word "pastor," and they are all one and the same person. They all refer to the same man. They are not three different people. He is an elder; he is a bishop (or an overseer); and, he is a pastor. In a moment, we'll tell you more about this. That is important, and we'll show you how that is tied all together.

The passage in 1 Timothy 3, in speaking about the elder-pastor (using the word "bishop") is singular. But starting in verse 8, it goes to the other local church office, the office of the deacon, and it is not without significance that God the Holy Spirit now switches to the plural: "In like manner must the deacons be grave." And then it proceeds to give the qualifications for a man to hold the office of deacon, which has to do with material administration within the local church. There is a reason, obviously, for referring to a bishop in the local church in singular, and for deacons in plural.

In Titus 1:5, Titus is instructed by the apostle Paul to appoint elders (plural) in that city. However, the description of the office, beginning at verse 7 is in the singular. So, while Paul says, "I want you to appoint elders," he isn't talking about appointing elders (pastors) in one church. He's talking about appointing elder-pastors for the various house churches. Then he proceeds to describe the office, beginning in Titus 1:7, and he shifts to the singular: "For a bishop." Verse 5 says, "Ordain elders in every city." Verse 7 says, "For a bishop (or an elder, or a pastor – the same person) must be."

**The Gift of Teaching**

1 Timothy 5:17-18 doesn't talk about two kinds of elders in the local church (ruling and teaching elders). All elder-pastors must be teachers of the Word of God. They must have the pastor-teacher gift or they cannot hold the office of pastor-elder in a local church. 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9 indicate that he must have the ability to teach.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine, for the Scripture says 'You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain, and the laborer is worthy of his reward.'" The reference to the Old Testament Scripture in verse 18 indicates to you what kind of honor he's talking about in verse 17. They're talking about the remuneration that the people of the congregation give to the elder-pastor for the fact that he devotes himself, as did the Levitical priests of the Old Testament who were not allowed to perform duties other than spiritual duties. They were to live off of certain amounts of the sacrifices which were delivered to them, and certain amounts of the offerings which were delivered to the temple which were now delivered to the priests who officiated.

So, in the New Testament, the elder-pastor is to live on the basis of the provision of the people to whom he ministers, and whose eternal welfare he is securing for them through his instruction and through his care. The double honor is double pay for those who rule well in the local church. ... It's talking about doing a good job of caring for that person. This congregation has never had that problem, but there are some idiots out there that make up churches, and they have this attitude toward the pastor-teacher – that he is serving the Lord, and, therefore, he should learn how to be humble, and there is no way to keep him humble like keeping him poor, so that he doesn't get too cocky and arrogant. Well, that is in any case, in passing, what that particular passage is referring to. They are ruling well if they are faithful in teaching doctrines to their congregation.

We have already seen, in the book of the Revelation, that the letters to the seven churches are addressed to a single angel. It uses the Greek word for "angel," but the Greek word for "angel" also means "messenger." Therefore, it is the pastor-elder of each local church that is being addressed. That's significant. It does not say, "And to the *angels* of the church at Philadelphia." It says, "To the messenger of the church at Philadelphia" – a singular reference again, indicating the same concept of a single pastor-elder.

Furthermore, there is the evidence of the disuse of the word "apostle" and the increasing use of the word "elder" as the writing of the New Testament progresses. The single elder authority in the local church, after the New Testament canon has been completed (the New Testament Scriptures are completed) also fits the condition that existed before the New Testament was completed, when there was a single authority of the apostle. Before the New Testament, you have single authority of the apostle guiding the believers. After the New Testament is completed, you have the singular authority in a congregation of the pastor-teacher-elder.

Even in the Jewish synagogue, there was a chief elder, though they had several elders in that Old Testament setup. They had a plurality of elders within the synagogue who were in authority. But, though they used the word "elder" for those who are in leadership, nevertheless, there was always an "archisunagogos" – a chief presiding elder. Every synagogue, while it might have several men that were called elders, always carefully designated one who was the chief elder, so you came out with the same thing. You had an administrator who was the quarterback on the team.

The truth of the matter is that, in any organizational structure (and the local church is an organizational structure among human beings), someone does rise to leadership, and someone does take charge. It is in the nature of the case. People look to one individual to lead out. Even if you have a committee, they will look to one member of that committee to become the leader of the group. Even if you want to think of a local church administered by a group of people, you will discover that among that group of people, somebody rises to the top in the eyes of the congregation as the one to whom they look in terms of calling the plays for that particular group. This fact simply reveals the desire among people for an orderly channel of authority. It is inherent in man by creation. This is part of God's creation – that man seeks an orderly channel with which to conduct his life. It is very important in the era when Satan is dominant over mankind.

Obviously, a single pastor-elder is far more efficient as an administrator, and he certainly can do a better job at caring for the business of that congregation than can a committee of men who, by and large, are not on the scene day-by-day who, while assisting (an invaluable and enormous help to that administrator), cannot be in the position to lead; to call the plays; and, to make the decisions that need to be made, particularly in a congregation in a church that has a multiple expression of ministries. They are not there on the scene. He is there. Therefore, the single pastor-elder lends itself to a better operational setup.

**The Authority of the Pastor**

What kind of authority does the pastor-elder have? The single pastor-elder-bishop in each local church is the executive head of that organization. He is the final authority in the church organization under the authority of the congregation. The congregation is the ultimate authority, but in the day-by-day running of the business of the church, and the caring for the flock, it is the pastor-elder who is responsible. All the church boards and all the committees are designed to be agents of the congregation, under the pastor-teacher's authority, to assist him. The single pastor-elder retains this highest authority within the congregation from the moment that they appoint him to it, until the time when they remove him. From the time they recognize he is their right pastor, and they delegate the authority of leadership to him, he retains that highest authority in that congregation under the guidelines and the policies of that congregation, as they are formulated in congregational meetings, until the time when that congregation, or the Lord, removes him. He has been invested with that authority.

**Elder**

As we've indicated, the authority is described with several words. First of all, we have the word "elder," which is the one that we see in John. In the Greek, it's the word "presbuteros." "Presbuteros" means "old man" in terms of age, and we showed you that the Bible does use it like that. It also means "old man" in the sense of authority. He doesn't necessarily have to be old chronologically to still be called a "presbuteros." It stresses the rank of the pastor as the highest authority in the local church under the congregation. The old man in the congregation can start off as a 29-year old, and he can go right on and become a 60-year old. He's an old man from the time he's 29 until the time that he's 60, and he may go on for a considerable time after that, and still be a "presbuteros." It has nothing to do with his chronological age.

But the Bible does give this old man the authority to rule in that congregation. 1 Timothy 5:17 says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." 1 Peter 5:2 says, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." He's talking to elders. Verse 1 indicates that he's speaking to those who are pastor-elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Peter is telling us here what the old man of the congregation is supposed to do. What he is supposed to do is to feed the flock of God. He is to feed the flock of God, not by running covered-dish suppers and social entertainments of one kind or another. He is to feed the flock of God with the Word of God. He does that by teaching them the principles of biblical doctrine.

Rank and authority must precede the communication of the Word of God as a pastor-teacher. You must have the authority of elder. You confirm that authority by your performance, but it does take rank and authority. That is very important. That is probably one reason why people who come from some military background have a knack for being pastoral elders in a very unique and distinctive way in the local congregation. That is because you are engaged in an angelic conflict, and it is a very military-like situation, and those who come with military experience make the best of pastor-elders.

**Bishop**

The word "elder" is joined by the word "bishop" also. And the people that John saw sitting on those 24 thrones could also have been called "bishops" ("episkopos"). This word stresses the nature of the work of the pastor in the local church. "Presbuteros" stresses the authority (the rank) of the pastor in the local church. "Episkopos" stresses his work. This word "episkopos" means "overseer" or "manager." It looks to the local church operation as its executive head. This is authority and respect to the supervision of the local church operation.

We have indicated that both of these terms, elder and bishop, refer to the same person. If you'll turn to Acts 20:17, you'll see that to be the case. The apostle Paul has called the pastors from the various house churches in Ephesus to come and meet with him as he is departing for Jerusalem. It's a rather sad meeting, because on this occasion, as they gathered down there at the beach, he tells them that they will never see his face again this side of glory land. So, it's a tearful occasion, as they kneel down together on the beach, and they have a final word of prayer, and Paul boards the boat and departs from them. Ephesus held a very great place in the heart of the apostle Paul. It was one of his all-time great churches, and all-time great missionary accomplishments.

In Acts 20:17, we read, "And for Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." Here, the word "church" is used in the territorial sense – the body of Christ, or the various churches in this territory. Notice in verse 28, where he is speaking to these elders when they have gathered: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you 'episkopos' (overseers, or bishops), to feed the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood." So, Paul, in speaking to the same group of men, calls them both elders and bishops. They are one and the same. Titus 1:5 and Titus 1:7 have the same interchange of elder and bishop in speaking about the same person.

**The Pastor-Teacher**

The ministry of these elder-pastors is tied up in the gift of the pastor-teacher – the gift of communication. The one who holds the office of pastor in a local church must possess the pastor-teacher spiritual gift – and it is a spiritual gift. There is some resistance in some quarters over the idea that certain men are given a gift for administering local churches. Some people have the gift of teaching, but they do not have the gift of being pastors. They cannot have the gift of being a pastor without having the gift of teaching. So, we combine those two into the concept of a pastor-teacher gift.

The first step into the pastor is to find out that one has the desire to perform the ministry of a pastor. This desire is called a good thing in 1 Timothy 3:1. The pastorate is not something for one to desire if you lack the pastor-teacher gift. Then it is not a good desire. So, the first thing a man has to decide is: do I have the pastor-teacher gift? And when he is positive that he has the pastor-teacher gift, then he is in a position to be entering the pastorate, and to follow the leading of the Spirit of God to desire that ministry.

Ephesians 4:11 speaks about the communication gifts. We'll look at that for just a moment again to refresh our minds. It is speaking about the risen Christ giving gifted men to the church for communication purposes: "He gave some apostles and he gave some prophets. Those two gifts are phased out, and are no longer with us today. But, "He also gave some evangelists." That gift is still with us today – the church founder: "And he gave some pastors and teachers." The pastor has to be a teacher, as we find from other Scriptures. He has the responsibility, as an elder and the executive head in that church, of being a pastor.

**Pastor**

The word "pastor" is the Greek word "poimen." That word means "shepherd." It stresses the responsibility aspect of his office. He is an under-shepherd of Jesus Christ, who is the Chief Shepherd as we read in 1 Peter 5:4 and John 10. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and the pastor-teacher-elder in the local church is an under-shepherd. He is responsible to feed the congregation; to guard that congregation; and, to rule over that congregation.

This is what the apostle Paul was stressing to those elders that met him from Ephesus at that final meeting at Miletus. Acts 20:28: "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Lord has made you overseers, to feed the church of God." Ephesians 4:11 indicates that he must be a teacher as well as a pastor. The reason for the stress upon the teaching comes in the verses which follow Ephesians 4:11. We've gone over this, and I'm not going to get into that now. But verse 12 is the critical passage that tells you what happens if the pastor is doing the job of teaching doctrine. The result is the perfecting of the saints. That Greek word is "pros:" face-to-face, for the purpose of equipping the saints for military combat.

Then the next "for" is the Greek word "eis" which means "resulting in" the work of the ministry so that the believers can perform their Christian service ministry.

Then the next "for" in Ephesians for 12 is again "eis," which again is a chain reaction. When the first "for" is done; then the second "for" is done; and, then the third "for" is done. It goes one, two, three. "Eis" again means "resulting in" the edifying of the body of Christ – the building up of the body of Christ.

So, how is Christianity expanded? How are individual Christians developed? How are they matured in the Lord? How are they prepared to be able to store treasures in heaven? Because they have gone on to super-grace living. Because you have a pastor with the ability to teach, who does his job of teaching. "Pros" means face-to-face. It's a preposition meaning eyeball-to-eyeball for the perfecting. The word "perfecting" means the "equipping" of the saints. That results in the work of the ministry being performed – Christian service and divine good production. And that results in the body of Christ being built up, and Christians going to maturity. So, all of the believer's personal, eternal wealth in terms of his rewards is all hinged upon this first preposition "pros" – that that pastor is out there teaching, equipping, and perfecting the saints.

1 Peter 5:2 again: "Feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight," which indicates to us that they must be cared for. The flock must be governed, and they must be directed, and their particular needs must be met at particular times.

The word "didaskalos" is the word for "teacher" here in that Ephesians 4:11 passage, referring to the pastor and the teacher. That emphasizes the communication aspect of the office of pastor. The pastor-elder-bishop performs his job by teaching the flock. We've seen that in several passages. He teaches the Word. That's how he feeds them, and that's how he edifies them. The pastor's basic job is to give the congregation information from God's word. That's why he should be freed as much as possible – for the benefit of the congregation. I'm talking about for their eternal benefit – to be freed to study the Word. The pastor-teacher is not able to get up and preach out of an empty head.

I find nothing so devastating as when I'm with a group of people; they get into a discussion; they bring up the subject; and, they think that I should be able to speak on subjects in the Bible. But unless I have studied up on that subject, and done some research and study, I don't know much more than they know. I can give them my lack of information, and they can give me their lack of information, and that's as far as we will go. Worse yet, we'll probably give our mutual disinformation. It takes study. You cannot get up and speak off the top of your head. So, it takes a lot of time to prepare and to research the Word of God in such a way that what people hear, they can stand by, and they're not going to get stung by somebody who comes along and proves how wrong and how deceived they have been by that teacher.

For those of you who are students of the Greek, you probably are acquainted with the fact that the words "pastor" and "teacher" are sometimes joined together. We do join the two ("pastor-teacher"), and I think properly so. But you can't do it on the basis of what the Greek says there. There is a Greek rule called Granville Sharp's Rule. I just want to warn you that Granville Sharp's rule does not apply when the words are in the plural. It only applies, for example, if it said "pastor and teacher." Then you would have a solid case that they are the same. We have other bases of establishing that the pastor must be a teacher. But those of you who know about that rule, don't come down too hard upon that.

In 1 Timothy 3:2, we have a better ground of establishing that the pastor has to be a teacher. I'm stressing this because the Bible stresses it, and because this is the basic thing that a pastor is supposed to do. He is supposed to be a teacher. For that reason, when a church is given the guidelines for selecting a pastor-elder, that last part of 1 Timothy 3:2 has the three words "apt at teach." Now watch carefully:

This is the Greek word "didaktikos." "Didaktikos" is an adjective, and it means "skilled in teaching." Obviously, it means to be skilled in being able to communicate doctrinal truth, and skilled in being able to communicate the Word of God. You may be a skilled teacher in history. You may be a skilled teacher in literature, or a skilled teacher in mathematics. That does not mean that you are a skilled teacher in communicating spiritual phenomena. It takes a special gift to be able to get that across in a way that people understand, and they can relate their lives to it. Therefore, in this 1 Timothy 3:2 passage, this word is interjected. For a pastor to fulfill his office as Ephesians 4:11 indicates, he must be pastor, but he must also be teacher. That's why we say we combine the words "pastor-teacher" on this basis. He must be able to perform public instruction. The prerequisite for that is learning on his part. He has to study. He has to have training. Then he can shepherd the congregation. Without a pastor-teacher who studies, the congregation can do as well on its own. Without a pastor-teacher who has been trained, the congregation can do as well on its own.

**An Evangelist**

This is why we say that when a man with the gift of evangelist becomes the pastor of a church, it is disaster. That congregation is going to suffer and pay for it for all eternity. He does not have the gift of communicating divine viewpoint truth. He has a knack for telling the gospel; for getting church members; and, for filling up the congregation, but the people are going to suffer spiritual malnutrition. So, the pastor should be encouraged in every way to be a student of the Word. That is his prime characteristic.

**"Teachable" vs. "Able to Teach"**

I want to point out to you the fact that the word that is used in 1 Timothy 3:2, "apt to teach," or "skillful in teaching" is not another Greek word. This word "didaktos" is very close to "didaktikos," isn't it? There are only two letters that are different. It is "didaktos." This word "didaktos" means "teachable." "Didaktikos" means "able to teach." I call this to your attention because the Body Life movement, in some quarters, has tried to play a little tricky game of taking this word "didaktikos," and imposing upon us the meaning of "didaktos." Don't fall into that trap. The reason they do that is because this word "didaktikos" in 1 Timothy 3:2 makes it very clear that not every Joe can stand up and be a pastor.

It does take a special gift from God. The Body Life people hate that with a vengeance. They want to say that any good man in the congregation, who loves the Lord and who studies the Bible, can take a group of people under his care, and become their guide in what they call little mini-churches. So, during the week, the little mini-churches meet under some elder's care who has the quality of being teachable. The reason they want to confuse these two words is because they don't want to say that he must have the gift of teaching. They just want to say that what this word means is that he is a teachable man. You'll find books written where they will slyly imply that this word in in 1 Timothy 3 is the word that says that a man must be teachable. What they're trying to say is that it does not require a spiritual gift. Then any Joe can take over a group of people.

I want to tell you that if you ever are tempted to do that, you better remember the thing that Paul could say as he stood on that beach with those pastors from Ephesus. He could say, "I'm free of the blood of all men. There isn't a person who can rise up in eternity and say, 'Paul, you have made me poor. I lost eternal rewards because you did not teach me the Word of God. You did not communicate spiritual phenomena to me. You left me deceived.'" God help these little cute mini-churches with their little elders who are playing little games with the destinies; the lives; and, the well-being of Christians. If you want to play that game, everything's cool. You go ahead. If you can find suckers who want to sit under your administration and leadership, that's fine. But you want to think about the blood that is on your hands of responsibility when you do that. It is right here in this local church assembly, under the administration of the pastor-teacher-elder-bishop gift, that God has ordained that Christians make their forward motion. It is required of that leader to have the ability to teach.

I think that John 6:45 will clarify this word that means teachable: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught of God.' Every man, therefore, who has heard and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me." They shall be taught. This word "didaktos" means "what can be taught." It connotes the idea of "teachable." This verse from Isaiah that He's quoting here is saying, "And they shall be taught," and that indicates that they shall be teachable. They will be receptive. "Didaktikos" refers to a spiritual gift from God the Holy Spirit. The Body Life people are trying to tell you that there is no such gift, and that all that this word "didaktikos" means is that you are in the spiritual condition where you are teachable. What they're saying is you didn't have a fight with your wife. You are teachable. You are able to do the teaching. You don't have the argument and ill feelings with somebody in the congregation. You are teachable. You are being able to be led by God.

Of course, an elder-pastor has to be teachable. But I want to stress to you that he does have a gift. When you look for an elder-pastor to fill the pulpit, he has to have a "didaktikos," not a "didaktos." These are two different words with only two letters different. Don't fall for that.

These people, when they say "teachable," also associate it in such a way that they'll say, "So, that you don't sound threatening; that you don't come on strong; or, that you don't come on in such a way that you condemn people or that you sound like you're condemning people. You're not coming through harshly."

When I hear that, I think of Jehu in 2 Chronicles 19:1-2: "And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, returned to his house in peace in Jerusalem, and Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, 'Should you help the wicked and love them who hate the Lord?' Therefore, there is wrath upon you from before God." Jehoshaphat is condemned for his playing footsie with the apostate Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

I think of the tremendous words of David in Psalm 139:21 as I listen to these Body Life people who don't want the concept that there is a man in a congregation with the spiritual gift and the capacity of being a pastor-teacher. David said to God, "Don't I hate them, O Lord, that hate You? And aren't I grieved with those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them my enemies." Boy, talk about being threatened! David sure sounds threatened to me. Talk about being aggressive! Talk about cutting people down! It sure cuts them down: "I hate you guys. You're my enemies because you hate my God."

Incidentally, run your eye up to Psalm 139:17. What kind of a man is saying this? It is a man who says, "How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God? How great is the sum of them?" What is he saying? "Dear God, how I love your doctrine; how I love your mind; and, how precious is your Word to me?" It is a man who has that capacity of love for the Word of God, and who has the Word of God stored in his human spirit, who could make this kind of a statement.

I think of the Lord Jesus Christ calling the leaders of Israel snakes; vipers; and whitened sepulchres full of stinking rotten bones." Talk about being threatened! That sure sounds to me like Jesus Christ sounds threatening. He was aggressive – cutting people down.

I think of the apostle Paul saying, "I want to warn you about Alexander the coppersmith. He did me a lot of dirt. Watch him." Talk about being threatening! Talk about cutting people down!

It's really pathetic, isn't it? You listen to these people, and they don't want someone to stand up in the pulpit and say, "I'm going to lay it on to you. I'm going to tell you what God has to say. When you grow up spiritually, and you are big enough to be disassociated from the communicator, and to recognize that what you hear is the Word of God, and in the tradition of the Bereans of old, you will listen to the communication, and it makes no difference who is giving it to you. You will listen to the communication, and you will take it, and you will match it up against the Word of God to see whether those things are so. You will readily receive that which Scripture confirms. Thank God for that great gift that God has given us of the pastor-teacher-elder.

That's why, around the throne of God, John saw 24 elder-pastor-teachers, representing all of the body of Christ. These were individual pastors representing individual segments of the body of Christ. That 24 is a scriptural symbol of the totality of a representative group who represents all of the body of Christ. It is one of the great gifts that God has given to us. You should esteem the pastor-teacher-elder gift – not the pastor-teacher elder, but the gift. The pastor-teacher-elder himself can become very unworthy indeed of the gift that he carries. Contrary to the opinion of most of you, the pastor-teacher-elder has a sin nature, and it is also exercised, sometimes with glee. So, I would be well aware of the fact that we say, "Separate yourself from the communicator, and attach yourself to the communication."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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