



Priests
Prophets
Pastors

Brother Mark

Priests

Priests. This word occurs in 404 verses in the Old Testament. In Hebrew the word is *kohen* meaning priest in all the verses except two. Ezekiel 44:13 where it is speaking of the priests office, and Hosea 4:6. The most usage is in the book of Leviticus.

The plural for priest has the meaning of more than one and speaking of a *priest's office*. The word priesthood occurs in 9 verses its *khunnah* in Hebrew meaning *priesthood or priest's office*.

In the New Testament the word *priest* occurs in 74 verses. In Greek it uses two variations of the same word one is *hiereus*—one who offers sacrifice and has the charge of things pertaining there to. This is of course now completed in Jesus Christ. The other word is *archiereus*—the high priests of the Levitical order frequently called "chief priests" from *arch* meaning high. There are of course no more priests of this kind. It's all Jesus now.

Priesthood occurs only in seven verses in the New Testament. *Hierateia a priesthood*, denotes the priest's office which is found in Hebrews 7:5. The plural form in the New Testament is found 83 times. *Hierosune—priesthood*, signifies the office, quality, rank and ministry of a priest. This word is found in Hebrews 7:11,12, 14, 24. There is also *hierateuma* denotes a *priesthood*, a body of priests (or group) these are found in 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

What is the definition of a priest?

"One authorized or ordained to perform sacerdotal functions, sacerdotal meaning: things relating to the priestly office or function." (Webster's Dictionary)

There are two kinds of priests one the Holy servant of God Almighty called to minister faithfully to Him, and the other is that

pagan Priest given over to minister for satan. Both operated in the Old Testament and into the New; however, Jesus is now our high priest and we are also priests as well.

The very first time we come upon this word is in Genesis 14:18.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he [was] the priest of the most high God."(Genesis 14:18)

We notice Melchizedek king of Salem, which is a type of Christ (Hebrews chapter 7). This is a priest of whom? The most high God and he is bringing the equivalent of the table of the Lord to Abraham. In Genesis 14:18,19; 15:10 we see the priest of satan Potipherah priest of On. His name means "he whom the Ra gave." Ra was a pagan, so-called, god.

In Exodus 2:16; 3:1; and 18:1 there is reference to the priest of Median. This is Moses' father-in-law. His name Jethro also called Reuel and means "his abundance" and Reuel or Raguel "friend of God." This man was from Median, he was an Arab, but did not believe in Allah but in the true and living God of heaven and earth. How do we know? Exodus 18:8-12.

"And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, [and] all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and [how] the LORD delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed [be] the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD [is] greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly [he was] above them. And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt of-

fering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God."

Melchizedek and Jethro show that there were priests of God--in a certain sense--before the establishing of the Priesthood in Exodus. In Exodus 28:1 the priesthood is being instituted, and the first priest of God for the Old Testament dispensation was Aaron then his sons. In verse two of Exodus 28 we read.

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty."

This was done so that the priests may be covered in holiness to minister in that office as servant of God. They were consecrated and acceptable to God in this manner. There are many denominations and churches in our day that still use, and hold in high regard, the idea of "holy garments." However, this is not something the true believer should consider as holy or place the one wearing it as holy. The believer or minister of Jesus Christ should reject this idea of holy garments why?

"Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness." (2 Chronicles 6:41)

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name

before my Father, and before his angels." (Revelation 3:5)

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

Jesus says that many, as it is today, put on the garments or robes to be seen and have praise of men.

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments." (Matthew 23:5)

In truth, all our efforts should be to be clothed in His righteousness and wrapped in His robe of Grace! As we continue we're presented with the various duties of the Old Testament priest from Exodus 28:3 to Joshua 22:32.

I would like for us to look at a doctrine that is purported which says that we must confess to a priest for our sins to be absolved. First, that is nowhere taught in the Old or New Testaments. No place does it say that we must confess to a man on earth that is acting as a priest. However, we do see a priest ministering for sins in the Old Testament.

"And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it [is] a sin offering for the congregation." (Leviticus 4:20,21)

What is this verse showing us? The sacrifice for sins committed by the people, and as a priest before God, because at this time Christ had not yet come to take care of that problem one and for all, God had to have someone to minister for Him for the peoples sins. But now Christ has come to take care of the sin issue forever.

"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." (Hebrews 7:27)

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"(Hebrews 9:12-14)

"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."(Hebrews 9:26-28)

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Hebrews 10:10-12)

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

Case closed on that.

In the Old Testament priests were able to marry. The modern day falsehood that a priest should not married is foreign to the Old Testament priesthood. (Exodus 18:1; Leviticus 7:34,35; 22:12,13) We also notice the severe punishment of God against disobedient priests (Numbers 26:61; Leviticus 10:1,2) how much more do you suppose today?

God asks holiness of His priests in the Old Testament. (Leviticus 10:9)

"Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations." (Leviticus 10:9)

Notice, the statement "the tabernacle of the congregation" what is this? It means in Church. Yet some today make a shame of their so-called priesthood by drinking, and not without to the intoxicating, of the table of the Lord!

"But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment." (Isaiah 28:7)

"Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court." (Ezekiel 44:21)

In Judges we find the beginning of the decline of the pure priesthood line, and total disregard for God's priests.

"And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." (Judges 17:5)

Micah was not a Levite to have ordained his son a Priest.

"And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name [was] Micah." (Judges 17:1)

The decline of the priesthood in 1 Samuel 2:12.

"Now the sons of Eli [were] sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD."

Belial means wicked, ungodly, or evil. Notice, they knew not the Lord! The pilfering of the people by these wicked boys is illustrated in 1 Samuel 2:13,14,15,28. Then Judgment came upon them in 2:34. After seeing the wickedness and decline of the priesthood God gives the beautiful prophecy of the fulfillment of the Divine Priest Jesus Christ in 1 Samuel 2:35.

"And I will raise me up a faithful priest, [that] shall do according to [that] which [is] in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever."

And also in Zechariah 6:12,13.

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name [is] The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both"

Saul, in his madness, shows a total decline of respect for God or His priests 1 Samuel 22:18,19.

"And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned,

and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword."

We also notice that as a backslidden people Israel allowed pagan priests to operate in temples to satan. 2 Kings 11:18. There were corrupt priests bought off by wicked Kings of that day. 2 Kings 16:10,11.

"And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that [was] before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people [were attentive] unto the book of the law." (Nehemiah 8:2,3)

There was a time when satan tried to halt this.

"Now for a long season Israel [hath been] without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law." (2 Chronicles 15:3)

But when a true priest did stand against rebellious people the results were sometime tragic.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with

stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD." (2 Chronicles 24:20,21)

Speaking a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, David says He will be a priest forever.

"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou [art] a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4)

Look at the decay of the sanctity of the priesthood at that time.

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." (Jeremiah 6:13)

"For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:11)

"Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients." (Ezekiel 7:26)

"Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy [place]: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed." (Ezekiel 44:12,13)

God rejected people from becoming priests to Him because they rejected Him!

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6)

"They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings." (Hosea 4:8,9)

Satan will try to resist Godly men (us).

"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." (Zechariah 3:1)

Leaving the Old Testament, God reminds us of what a godly priest (us) should do.

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he [is] the messenger of the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 2:7)

As we enter the New Testament we notice that the High priests were not humble, but exalting themselves in luxury.

"But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end." (Matthew 26:58)

And that they were eager to shed innocent blood.

"Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death." (Matthew 26:59)

Jesus Himself follows the law in respecting the priest.

"And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, hew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." (Mark 1:44)

Jesus says to the man that was healed to go and offer that which Moses commanded them in the law. But why? The answer, "for a testimony unto them." That those priests might believe on Jesus.

God still had His Godly men.

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her name [was] Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:5,6)

It says that a certain priest named Zacharias even though Elisabeth is a daughter of Aaron she is not spoken of as being a priestess here. In other words no women were priests, but sadly today many do not heed the commands of God and so-call ordain women to become priestesses. Jesus, while explaining the love for others, gives an illustration of how some of the priests have become very cold and uncaring.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."(Luke 10:31)

There was anger and hatred of the true work of God done through the Apostles hands.

"Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid [them] on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by

might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude [out] of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." (Acts 5:15-18)

Many things have been done to true followers of our Lord Jesus at the hands of evil priests even in the name of the Lord. There is a hatred against the Lord's people as Saul before his conversion makes a request to who? A high priest!

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts 9:1,2)

The New Testament makes it very clear that we, those born again and truly saved, have only one High Priest we should look to that is Jesus Christ not some pope or man on the earth.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Hebrews 2:17-3:1)

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16)

"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another [place], Thou [art] a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 5:5,6)

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 5:8-10)

"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, [even] Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 6:20)

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? " (Hebrews 11:7)

"And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless

life. For he testifieth, Thou [art] a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 7:15-17)

"And inasmuch as not without an oath [he was made priest]: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou [art] a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 7:20,21)

(see also: Hebrews 7:26; 8:6; Hebrews 9:11-15; Hebrews 9:25,26; Hebrews 10:11-14; Hebrews 10:21,22; Hebrews 13:11-13)

Peter says, "we" if we have been truly saved, have priesthood to God.

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious. To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:3-5)

"But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

We are all priests, in the symbolical sense, of Ministering to Him.

"And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:5,6)

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:10)

"Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6)

The conclusion from scripture is that there is no more a need for a visible, Old Testament functioning, priesthood, or priests. Because Jesus is the only High Priest, and we're priests in a sense to Him, to minister to Him faithfully.

Prophet

The word prophet occurs 159 times in the Old Testament. With the most occurring in the book of Jeremiah.

The word in Hebrew is used four ways.

- First, *nabiy* meaning a prophet, spokesman, or speaker.
- Second, *nbiy'* (in Aramaic *neb-ee'*) prophet this is found in Ezra 5:1; 6:14.
- Third, this is concerning the self-appointed false prophet. *Naba*—false prophets found in Jeremiah 29:26,27.
- Fourth, speaking of a preacher of prophecies *nataph*—preach or discourse this is found in Micah 2:11.

The plural prophet(s) is found 139 times in the Old Testament. *Nabiy'* prophet, spokesman, or speaker except one time in Isaiah 30:10 were it's *chozeh*—seer or stargazers. There is also the word prophetess (a female prophet) found only 6 times in the Old Testament *nbiy'ah*—prophetess ancient type endowed with gift of song.

Prophet is found 68 times in the New Testament. The word is used in two ways.

- First, *prophetes*—one who speaks forth openly, or a proclaimer of a divine message.
- Second, *pseudoprophetes*—a false prophet speaking lies in the name of God found in four verses Acts 13:6; Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.

The plural *prophets* found in 88 verses in the New Testament and is the same two words and meanings as above *prophetes* and *pseudoprophetes*. Prophetess is found only twice in the New Testament. One is used in a good sense Luke 2:36. The other in a bad sense Revelation 2:20. What is the definition of a Prophet?

It is that called man of God ordained to speak for Him concerning His message to the backslidden, and unrepentant people of that prophet's day.

There are, as in the case of the priest, two kinds of prophets in the Bible. One is that called man of God ordained to speak for Him concerning His message to the backslidden, and unrepentant people of that prophet's day. And the other is the unrepentant sinner following satan's ways and prophesying for him. There are 227 verses in the Bible with the word prophet contained in them. The first time we see this word used is in Genesis 20:7.

"Now therefore restore the man [his] wife; for he [is] a prophet and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore [her] not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that [are] thine."

Bear in mind, the word in Hebrew means spokesman, speaker, or a prophet. Abraham is called a prophet. In other words, one that will speak to man for God. The best evidence of this word indicating the spokesman, speaker, or prophet was Aaron Moses' brother.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exodus 7:1)

When Miriam and Aaron came against Moses in Numbers 12:2 God said.

"And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, [I] the LORD will make my-

self known unto him in a vision, [and] will speak unto him in a dream." (12:6)

In Deuteronomy thirteen the Old Testament chapter on testing the prophet, the word prophet there is speaking of a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1,3,5). In Deuteronomy 18:14,18 we're given the great prophetic verses of the coming Messiah Jesus Christ.

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

The severe penalty of being found a false prophet was death! (Deuteronomy 18:20,21,22) In Deuteronomy 34:10 we're given another prophetic verse—concerning the Messiah Jesus Christ.

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."

Now we come upon Judges 6:8 and there we read, after the Children of Israel were in great need of deliverance, that God sent a prophet.

"That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage."

The word prophet here in Hebrew is *iysh nabiyy* meaning man prophet. The Hebrew word *iysh* indicates man or men. The first prophet in Israel was not Samuel as some suppose, but as we have seen it was Abraham, Aaron, Moses, then Samuel. Samuel was the first "established" prophet in Israel, what does estab-

lished mean? It's saying that Samuel was the first verified, supported, or confirmed prophet in Israel.

"And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel [was] established [to be] a prophet of the LORD." (1 Samuel 3:20)

In 1 Samuel 9:9 where the word seer appears is used in two ways in the Old Testament it's not used in the New. It appears about 20 times the first time is *ra'ah* meaning perceive, foresee, to see, or have vision. The other is *chozeh* seer, prophets, or stargazers. This last word is used as a personal seer or prophet such as in 1 Chronicles 21:9 and as a one that comes to visions as in 2 Chronicles 9:29. Samuel is called both a prophet and a seer. We see in 2 Samuel 24:11 that the word of the LORD came to prophets and not to individuals. Notice that even David, the man after God's own heart, is not spoken to directly by God.

"For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying."

At times prophets anointed (1 Samuel 16:13; 1 Kings 1:34,45). In 1 Samuel we notice a type in Samuel as John the Baptist and David as Jesus (1 Samuel 16:13; Matthew 3:13-16).

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah"

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens

were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

In 1 Kings 14:2-6 we're given a classic example of the gift of the "word of knowledge" to a Prophet.

"And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there [is] Ahijah the prophet, which told me that [I should be] king over this people. And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age. And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he [is] sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself [to be] another [woman]. And it was [so], when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself [to be] another? for I [am] sent to thee [with] heavy [tidings]."

A Prophet is to be faithful to the LORD and His word (1 Kings 18:22; Jeremiah 36:8). Satan has his prophets among the people in this verse as well. The word that was given to Elijah was that he was to anoint another prophet in his place. This office of a prophet consummated upon the death of the first prophet 1 Kings 19:16.

"And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint [to be] king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat

of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint [to be] prophet
in thy room."

The prophets in Israel were like the word of God at that time, and the work was to give the word of the LORD and to turn people back to Him.

"Zedekiah [was] one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD his God, [and] humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet [speaking] from the mouth of the LORD."

True Prophets of God were removed when evil was in the land
Psalm 8:-10.

"They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land. We see not our signs: [there is] no more any prophet: neither [is there] among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?"

There is a prophecy of the prophets ceasing. Isaiah 2:17-3:3.

There is tragic results when we cease to seek the LORD. Isaiah 9:13-16.

"For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he [is] the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he [is] the tail. For the leaders of this people cause [them] to err; and [they that are] led of them [are] destroyed."

God tells us of the deteriorating results that became the priests and prophets in Isaiah 28:7.

"But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment."

"For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery [ways] in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, [even] the year of their visitation, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:11,12)

God chooses who he wants to be a prophet.

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)

God says the prophets were "dealing falsely" unbecoming a true prophet of the LORD.

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely" (Jeremiah 6:13)

God also says there was confusion among the prophets.

"If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! And if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! Yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not." (Jeremiah 14:18)

A true prophet of the LORD will be despised.

"Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (Jeremiah 18:18)

Prophets of God, not fully committed to Him, are capable of lying.

"How long shall [this] be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What [is] the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:26-28)

"Behold, I [am] against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:32)

"If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, [saying], I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people" (Micah 2:11)

A true prophet might not be heard.

"But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the

LORD, which he spake by the prophet." (Jeremiah 37:2)

"For [they are] impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they [are] a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." (Ezekiel 2:4,5)

The prophet is to pray for the people.

"And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, [even] for all this remnant; (for we are left [but] a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)." (Jeremiah 42:2)

In the last day people will run to seek visions from prophets.

"Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients." (Ezekiel 7:26)

There was a point where God was dealing with the people that had given themselves over to idols in Ezekiel 14:1-11. Apparently God says He will deal with them.

"I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols." (14:4)

This is done through a false prophet (14:4).

"...and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself." (14:7)

God says they will be punished why? Because.

"That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD."

We read of the results in the last days.

"The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know [it]: the prophet [is] a fool, the spiritual man [is] mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. The watchman of Ephraim [was] with my God: [but] the prophet [is] a snare of a fowler in all his ways, [and] hatred in the house of his God." (Hosea 9:7,8)

"Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother." (Hosea 4:5)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, I [am] no prophet, I [am] an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." (Zechirah 13:4,5)

We see another Messianic passage.

"And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved." (Hosea 12:13)

And lastly in the Old Testament we're left with the promise of the Forerunner to the Messiah.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."(Malachi 4:5)

We have 31 named Prophets in the Old Testament, Abraham, Aaron, Moses, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Shemaiah, Iddo, Oded, Azur, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

As we leave the Old Testament we look back to what we have been taught there. That is one, the Old Testament prophet was that true man of God, sent By God, and to proclaim His message to the people of that prophets time. Two, that the prophet spoke three ways: (1) by his own. (2) by repeating God's word. (3) and by speaking foretelling events that God had planed to do. We also noted there were false prophets of satan back then also. As we move into the New Testament we're given verses that tell us of fulfillment of past prophecy's of the prophets and the kind of prophets are now.

Jesus tells us.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." (Matthew 10:41)

What is the prophet's reward? Eternal life!

Jesus says this about John the Baptist.

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet." (Matthew 11:9)

Prophets that speak God's Word are not respected as we also saw in the Old Testament.

"And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." (Matthew 13:57)

"But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." (Mark 6:24)

John the Baptist was called a prophet.

"And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet." (Matthew 14:4)

"But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." (Matthew 21:25)

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." (Luke 1:75)

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28)

They called Jesus a prophet.

"And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Matthew 21:11)

"But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." (Matthew 21:45)

"Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets." (Mark 16:15)

"And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." (Luke 7:15)

Jesus says Jerusalem killed the prophets.

"Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the [day] following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen [doth gather] her brood under [her] wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:33,34)

John the Baptist denies he is THAT prophet! Meaning the coming Messiah.

"And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No." (John 1:21)

He is speaking of Jesus fulfilling that Messianic prophecy laid down by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:14,18.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (John 6:14)

"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet." (John 7:40)

David is called a prophet.

"Men [and] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:29,30)

God testifies that Jesus is that great prophet. (Acts 3:22-26; 7:36)

Jesus says that John was the last prophet excluding Himself.

"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."(Matthew 11:13)

False prophets will try to get into the true believers to destroy them we're to look out for them.

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name [was] Barjesus." (Acts 13:6)

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Revelation 19:20)

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matthew 7:15)

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:11)

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in-somuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Mark 13:22; Matthew 24:24)

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among

you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

We looked at prophets of the New Testament and we noticed. One, that Jesus is THAT Prophet that was to come. And, as in the Old Testament God's true prophets will be hated and rejected. Two, that there were false prophets back then also.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

Let me give you a quick review of the following words. Prophecies, prophecy, prophesied, or prophesying all these words basically have the same meaning in the New Testament. *Propheteia* signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. What was the council of God described in the New Testament?

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:25-27)

But now let us look at prophets in the New Testament and for our day. The question must be asked was there prophets of God in the New Testament the answer is Yes! (Matthew 11:9; 14:5; 21:11;

21:26; 21:46; Luke 7:16,26; 13:33; 20:6; John 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; Acts 21:10; 1 Corinthians 14:37) The next question should be what is their description? And how is one a prophet? The New Testament prophet should be true to God, and walking with Him and speaking God's word, that is either by revelation or written. The prophet Agabus foretelling a future event about Paul. And of course we know this came to pass.

"And as we tarried [there] many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:10-12)

"And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." (Acts 11:27,28)

So prophets can foretell future events, but notice it pertained to a member of the body of Christ! In other words, don't look to the horoscope for future events that's of the devil really, but look to God alone.

We're given a description.

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual [gifts], but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth [him]; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto

men [to] edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." (1 Corinthians 14:1-4)

Please notice four things that a true prophet in the Church should do. One, give edification. Two, give exhortation. Third, give comfort. Forth, edify the church.

Prophecy is for believers.

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying [serveth] not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." (1 Corinthians 14:22)

"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or [one] unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on [his] face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." (14:24,25)

Prophets are made by God and given to an individual as a gift.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith." (Romans 12:6)

1 Thessalonians 5:20 says, "Despise not prophesyings."

There are only six named prophets in the New Testament—John, Jesus, David, Agabus, Judas, and Silas. Mostly men were prophets however there were women.

"And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." (Acts 21:9)

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. [Are] all apostles? [are] all prophets? [are] all teachers? [are] all workers of miracles?" (1 Corinthians 12:28,29)

God has set some in the Church, but as we see above, not all are prophets. There are many that claim to be prophets in the Church today, but even though there can be, we must use caution and always remember the words of the Lord Jesus.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matthew 7:15)

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:11)

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in-somuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Mark 13:22; Matthew 24:24)

The warning is there in our day about false prophets, and they should be examined very, very carefully. If there are true prophets of God (all true believers) they should be faithful to the Lord and give edification, exhortation, comfort, and edify the Church. Always remember that there are false prophets among us.

Pastors

The word pastor is found only one time in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 17:16) *raah*—shepherd, pastor, a herdsman, or teacher. However, the word that is used in place of the word pastor, and has the same meaning, is shepherd. It's found in 74 verses. And only one time is shepherd a different word and that's found in Zechariah 11:17 speaking about a lazy shepherd. The plural pastors is found seven times all in Jeremiah. It's the same word *raah* meaning shepherd, pastor, herdsman, or teacher. The plural word shepherds is found 29 times in the Old Testament.

The singular word pastor is not found in the New Testament.

This means no single person is a pastor of God's Church only Jesus Christ is! The plural **pastors** is only in Ephesians 4:11. *Poimen*—a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them).

Pastors guide as well as feed the flock, which indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops); so to "tend the flock--exercising the oversight this involves tender care and vigilant superintendence. And the word shepherd is found 13 times in the New Testament. It's the same as *poimen*—a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks. One time it's used differently it is *archipoimen*—a chief shepherd (*arche* chief and *poimen* a shepherd) this is said of Christ only in 1 Peter 5:4.

The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were:

- to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep
- to defend the sheep from attackers

- to heal the wounded and sick sheep
- to find and save lost or trapped sheep
- to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust.

What is the definition of a pastor?

A shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them)

Now as always let's look at our study of Priests, Prophets, and Pastors. Within this study we will endeavor to bring solid teaching meaningful to you and your walk with the Lord Jesus. We need to consider a position that is used in both the Old and New Testaments, that is of the minister. This is described in the Old Testament *sharath* as a servant, or one who waits on someone. It's used most frequently, and would be considered different than that of a priest or pastor.

In the New Testament it's used in a verity of different ways. Each one with a meaning for the particular context.

First, as *diakonos*—minister, servant, deacon, or attendant used 13 times.

Second, as *diakoneo*—to minister (akin to *diakonos* as above) to render any kind of service this is used 8 times.

Third, as *huperetes*—literally an under--rower; hence, a servant, is also rendered attendant this is used 4 times.

Forth, *leitourgos*—a public servant used of Paul to himself in Romans 15:16.

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:16)

Also there is *ergazomai* work, wrought, or labor this is used one time. *Choregeo* minister, give, to supply, or furnish abundantly this is used one time. And along with this would be *didomi. Parecho* to show, to cause, to exhibit or offer this is used one time. As we can see this word is used quite varyingly in the New Testament, and concerning God to man or man to man it carries the basic meaning of "a servant or one the serves."

In the Old Testament the word pastor (singular) is found only once in Jeremiah 17:16. Jeremiah is crying out to God telling Him he has not ceased to be a pastor to Him. The plural pastors are found only seven times all of them in Jeremiah. Also the word shepherd is found 29 times. Shepherds (plural) are found 29 times as well. In Genesis there is a prophetic statement pointing to Jesus that Jacob gives to his sons speaking of Joseph Genesis 49:23.

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty [God] of Jacob; (from thence [is] the shepherd, the stone of Israel)." (Genesis 49:23)

Also in Numbers Moses asks God for a man to shepherd Israel.

"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (Numbers 27:16,17)

David tells us that it is ultimately the LORD that was, is, and should be our Shepherd or Pastor.

"A Psalm of David. The LORD [is] my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1)

Again, we see a prophetic statement concerning the one shepherd—Jesus

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and [that which was] written [was] upright, [even] words of truth. The words of the wise [are] as goads, and as nails fastened [by] the masters of assemblies, [which] are given from one shepherd." (Eccleastes 12:10, 11)

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah 40:10)

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, [even] my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And David my servant [shall be] king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them." (Ezekiel 34:23,24)

Selfish and non-caring shepherds/pastors forsook the flock.

"And they were scattered, because [there is] no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered." (Ezekiel 34:5)

"For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because [there was] no shepherd." (Zechariah 10:2)

"Yea, [they are] greedy dogs [which] can never have enough, and they [are] shepherds [that] cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. (Isaiah 56:11)

"My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away [on] the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace." (Jeremiah 50:6)

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe [be] to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezekiel 34:2)

"And the LORD said unto me, take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, [which] shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword [shall be] upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."(Zachariah 11:15-17)

Again a prophecy of our LORD.

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man [that is] my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." (Zechariah 13:7)

Speaking of pastors Jeremiah says.

"The priests said not, Where [is] the LORD? And they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets

prophesied by Baal, and walked after [things that] do not profit." (Jeremiah 2:8)

Jeremiah says we have the promise of true God fearing Pastors. Note, more than one is given to us.

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."(Jeremiah 3:15)

But disaster can come to those not careful.

"For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered." (Jeremiah 10:21)

"Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." Jeremiah 12:10

"The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness." (Jeremiah 22:22)

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:1,2)

Let's look at pastors and shepherds in the New Testament. First, we notice that we are like sheep needing a shepherd.

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted,

and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36)

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Peter 2:25)

"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." (Mark 6:34)

Jesus is described as being our Shepherd.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:32)

"Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matthew 26:31)

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." (John 10:2)

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)

"I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine." (John 10:14)

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd." (John 10:16)

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of

the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Hebrews 13:12)

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Peter 2:25)

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter 5:4)

In the New Testament the word pastor is plural only, and the only single "pastor" we have is Jesus, He is our one true pastor.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:11,12)

What exactly are pastors to do and be? First, they are to feed knowledge and understanding.

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."(Jeremiah 3:15)

"And I will set up shepherds over them that shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:4)

"I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 34:15)

In John Jesus said to Peter feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my sheep.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God,

which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2,3)

In Timothy and Titus it's filled with pastoral exhortations lets look at some.

"That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do]." (1 Timothy 1:3,4)

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." (1 Timothy 1:18)

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men." (1 Timothy 2:1)

Pastors must teach that women cannot be pastors.

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (1 Timothy 2:12-15)

Qualifications are laid out for the pastor in 1 Timothy 3:1-14.

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat [him] as a father; [and] the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." (1 Timothy 5:1,2)

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer [is] worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, which others also may fear." (1 Timothy 5:17-20)

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." (2 Timothy 1:8)

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 1:13)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

Beloved, with this in mind check your pastor and teacher and "hold fast to sound doctrine."

Pastors: what's their responsibility?

It's important that every true believer understand this important article. Many today have a distorted or debilitating view of just what it is a pastor is to be, do, and teach. I pray that God will speak to you about the importance of this article, and that you will rethink your conclusions about pastors.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-13)

What is the meaning of the word pastor and how is it used?

Pastor - Hebrew *ra'ah*, to feed, to shepherd, a pastor, a herdsman, or teacher. Greek *poimen*, to shepherd, a pastor, a herdsman, esp. a shepherd. The New Testament uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably.

Elder - *presbuteros*, elder, of age, advanced in life, an elder, a senior a term of rank or office among the Christians, or those who presided over the assemblies (or Churches).

Bishop - *episkopos*, bishop, overseer, an overseer a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian the superintendent, and elder. This word is used in the New Testament only six times. One (1 Peter 2:25) refers to the Lord Jesus.

"Pastor, shepherd, O.F. pastour, Latin pastor-to feed."
(T.F. Hoad, English Etymology, p. 339)

"Pastor from Latin 'Pascere,' to pasture, to feed, a shepherd of a flock." (McKim, Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms, p. 203)

Presbytery - *presbuterion*, elders, estate of elders, presbytery body of elders. Used one time in the New Testament. Which as stated refers to a "group" of elders or pastors.

Now that we have defined the term it's obvious that the pastor is one of many in a fellowship. Before we go any further let me clarify one small detail—when we speak about pastors we mean

"men" not women. Women cannot be ministers, pastors, or in any position of authority over men. God's Word is clear on this. Please refer to 1 Corinthians 11:3,7-12; 14:34,35; 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

The first thing we notice is that God gives pastors—their call comes from the voice of God not man. Ultimately it's God who appoints pastors. (John 15:16; Acts 9:6; 20:28; 26:16; Colossians 1:23,25; 1 Timothy 1:12; 2:7; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 11:13)

One, two, three?

The word pastor is only mentioned once in the New Testament as a function (not title) within the plurality of an eldership. There is no "pastor" culture no 'one man bands' in the New Testament. Elders are not laity but maturity. They are not imports either. They don't "come in" (beware of this - Jude 1:19) but are raised from within where they have proved themselves accountable and faithful (2 Timothy 2:2). The "up and coming" ministers who are "trained" and "qualified"? No, I don't think so!

Ephesians 4:11 He's talking about the calling and the singleness of our faith, not many faiths, but one. He talks about grace (the saving kind) and that Christ gave gifts (the God given spiritual kind talent). This is speaking of the office (1 Timothy 3:1) of, or we could say the gifts and talent of these functions. Not the title of such gifts. The list has four: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers. Verse 12 is the functions of the above listed but in reverse.

Apostles and prophets edify the body. Evangelists do the work of the ministry. Pastors/teachers perfect the saints. We are never to take titles (Acts 10:24-26; 1 Corinthians 1:10-15; Romans 12:3; Matthew 23, Psalms 111:9). The New Testament letters and Gospels are expressions of how we as the Church (the elect, believers, the called out ones) are to conduct, practice, and teach, and believe esp. when we come together.

The apostles always choose plural elders (Acts 14:23; 15: 22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1)

not a single pastor (singular) to oversee the local Church. The local Church was every born again believer in one vicinity (town/village). Not the denominations down the road. The elders (bishops, overseers) took care of the spiritual affairs (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 1:1) in the Body, while the deacons took care of the domestic (Acts 6:2; 1 Timothy 3:8). Also, these raised-up men always matured onsite and were chosen through the local Church (the body of every born again believer in the same vicinity) and were never "imported in" by a Church bureaucracy from outside.

Again, the word pastor is only mentioned once (Ephesians 4:11) in the whole New Testament. And it's in the past tense! Being a shepherd is not a title but a calling (John 21: 15-17; Acts 20:28). They're called to shepherd the flock as one of the elders. Others are just hirelings and need to be avoided. (Jeremiah 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; 22:22; 23:1-2; John 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Romans 16:17).

The word "bishop" is mentioned quite a few times in the New Testament and the word "pastor" (singular) is not mentioned once. In the modern, religious world, the word bishop now means 'a high-ranking "Christian" cleric!' Whereas, biblically it means 'a spiritual overseer!' An elder would be like a guardian. Ever had a brother in the Lord that was Godly and knowledgeable? They are an elder to you.

Not what you see the institutional churches today of proud men that can't find their way through the Bible. Also, the word bishop is never mentioned with a capital "B" (like pastor isn't with a capital "P") when referring to men. However, it is used once with a capital "B" when referring to Jesus. Just like the only two times shepherd is mentioned with a capital "S" is when referring to Jesus (1 Peter 2:25; 5:4).

Many "church leaders" place themselves high above "lording it over the flock." Christ in Heaven is now our eternal High Priest! Jesus is now our perpetual "go between" (1 John 1:9). All Believ-

ers are now on equal footing as priests ministering unto God. Only once is the word 'pastors' mentioned in the good sense when the Lord was prophesying a time when He would give pastors according to His heart, being fulfilled in Ephesians 4:11. Which were the new called out, regenerated men, caring for the new called-out lambs in Christ.

In the Old Testament shepherds watched flocks by themselves, and also had help at times. Noah took care of those entrusted to him in the ark. There was one high priest, and there was one king over the people. In the New Testament God appointed pastors (Ephesians 4:11; Philippians 1:1).

The word "pastor," singular, is not found in the New Testament. It's found only once in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 17:16). The word "pastors" *poimen*, is a noun--a person, shepherd, pastor, or a herdsman. The plural use is found only once in the New Testament. (Ephesians 4:11) "Bishop" *episkope*, used as singular in 1 Timothy 3:1,2; Titus 1:7. In the plural Philippians 1:1.

There were multiple elders in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:16). There was only one High priest (Leviticus 21:10, Hebrews 13:11), but there were many regular priests. We know Jesus is now our High Priest (Hebrews 8:1). The word "elder" is used in the singular (1 Timothy 5:19) and in the plural (1 Timothy 5:17).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Ephesians 4:11)

For what reason?

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Not to run the saints' lives and to do their thinking for them. Nor to give them baby talk Bible lessons. Neither to have dominion over their faith. Nor to become a clone of "the Pastor," but to aid in the Lord to growing up into maturity in Christ.

One phrase that stands out to us that's in common usage is "the body of Christ." It would be unreasonable to have only one pastor for the whole of the body of Christ—he could not be everywhere at once. But does this verse explicitly say more than one pastor in one fellowship? Realistically, No.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer [is] worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." (1 Timothy 5:16-19)

Again, it says "let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour..." is this speaking of many elders in one Church? It doesn't say that. Paul tells Titus to ordain "elders" in every city.

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Titus 1:5)

However, does it say there should be elders (more than one) in every fellowship? No, It just says, "every city." It's possible that there was multiple elders in the fellowships there I would not rule that possibility out.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."(James 5:14)

We notice James says to call for the "elders" plural. But once again, does this mean more than one elder from a single fellowship? No, it does not say that. It's quite possible it could have been elders from all around the area—coming together upon hearing of a sick brother or sister. It says "Church" the early readers would have understood this to be the body of Christ as a whole.

Peter says,

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." (1 Peter 5:1)

Here is good evidence that there was more than one elder in a fellowship. However, it could also have meant those elders in the city; not just one fellowship. Peter says in this verse that he's a *sumpresbuteros*--a fellow elder. In other words, he is saying he is one of many, but did he mean in a single fellowship? No, he did not say. We know there is more than one elder around the heavenly throne.

"And round about the throne [were] four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Revelation 4:4)

John says he's an elder.

"The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." (3 John 1)

Again, other evidence to consider is found in Philippians 1:1.

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

There seems to be good support that in Philippi there was more than one pastor (bishop) and deacons. But once again, the evidence to support it in one single church is inconclusive. We must remember the phrase "...which are at Philippi" meant those pastors in that city not just in one fellowship.

What's a pastor to do

We have gotten the idea somewhere that pastors are these spiritual business administrators. That a fellowship "buys" a pastor, or even "rents" one. They're looked upon as robots for God and slaves of the "church boards."

"The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were: to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep, to defend the sheep from attackers, to heal the wounded and sick sheep, to find and save lost or trapped sheep, to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

The pastor/shepherd was a herdsman--a keeper of a herd or flock. They are to instruct the flock in God's ways, and give care and oversight to them. We must understand the pastor is a servant of God first then the flock; not the other way around.

There are no religious titles in the New Testament. Calling someone reverend, pastor, or father is blasphemous! These are titles reserved for Only God "holy and reverend is his name (Psalm 111:9). See also Matthew 23:8-11.

Paul never called himself "The Apostle" Paul. No, but an apostle. The New Testament word "apostle" is not a title, but a calling and a function. No one can argue with this. In the New Testament titles and positions are unheard of and not used! Callings and functions are. (Acts 14:26; 15:40; 2 Corinthians 3:1)

The IC/DC's are set up like an authority tree. The controlling church goes like this. "The Pastor/Bishop" at the top, then "assistant Pastors," then Elders, Deacons, Ushers, other helpers, the "choir," then the people called (the laity, members, parishioners, attendants, pew warmers, church goers, or the congregation) with children coming in at the lowest.

The position is being abused, misconstrued, and turned in tyranny. The qualification of shepherding and caring for the Lord's flock is as Jesus told Peter "feed my sheep." (John 21:16,17) This is after God has called a man and he can say with as much desire as

Peter "Lord, you know that I love you." Yes, elders are shepherds (pastor/teachers). However, as elders their responsibility, according to scripture, is to be apt to teach, given to hospitality, and willing to make visitations.

You're on an equal footing with the rest of the flock. Having to earn a wage by working at a job! Hello? There's no fancy gowns, frilly titles, or lofty pulpits to be elevated to in this department. Sunday school teachers, Youth Pastors, and Worship Leaders are not New Testament terms. Neither are Deaconesses. Be a real believer "a Berean" by going to your Bible for answers!

The official denominational "pastor" is obligated to obey the church government/bureaucracy/church board. Today many loved to be crowned "Pastor" or "Reverend" when IC/DCs lay out the red carpet for them. Work little and be paid huge salaries. It's a job to him not a love. He's simply a hireling! The professional "pastor" is required to enforce "church policies." He is required to "show" that the "church" is growing by membership roll (they use stupid software to "track" you and your unscriptural 10% tithe). He gives baby talk Bible lessons to a dead and asleep group of mixed people. He is to make a show conventions and learn from his superiors in order to pass the requirements and instructions down to his congregation. There is no revelation from God or His Bible. He's a pimp.

Woe unto them! "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezekiel 34:2)

The whole culture of "Pastor" has got so out of hand that it has been ingrained into the minds of the whole fabric of society, both secular and ecclesiastical. The whole church system is built on it. It has nothing to do with academic qualifications, written diplomas, B.A., ThD's, Dr's, PhD's, etc. However, it does have every-

thing to do with the merits of being a mature and experienced person in the Lord who has his home in order, a husband of one wife, and loves Jesus with his whole heart, mind and soul, that he would give his life for Him. The truth is, we do not need new teachers, a new movement, a reforming, renewing, restoring, or even returning historically back.

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13)

It's all we need.

"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." (1 John 2:26)

We have been given the same Holy Ghost to fill and endow us, to show and reveal His word, and grant us the power and unction to live the new life and be effective witnesses for His kingdom. The remnant uses the scriptures as their authority over their words. When teachers and "Pastors" come along declaring their denomination or doctrine we simply say, "Trust ye not in lying words..." Make the scriptures your final source and authority in all things that pertain to life and revelation.

The majority of the evangelical's and fundamentalist's message today is another gospel. It's not the gospel of the cross. The cross has been removed from the good news in order to make the message acceptable to the sinner and not scare him or her away from joining "your" church. Where worldliness and the Bible can be compatible and neatly accommodate each other. It is the gospel of enticement through niceties, entertainment, audible and visual presentation, the appeal to emotions, by drama, or song, or music, or some other clever technique. All under the watchful eye of the your "Pastor."

"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."(Galatians 6:12)

It's a time where God is portrayed as a God who changes with the times to suit us. It's the era that is sophisticated and educated, up-to-date, and slick. However, the Lord still says He looks to those who are of a contrite spirit and who tremble at His word. The true gospel may look like foolishness to man, but unto those who are saved it is still the power of God unto salvation.

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Corinthians 2:4)

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (1 Corinthians 1:17)

The IC/DCs love "the wisdom of words," "the mighty words," and the things which look impressive to man whatever is soothing, clever, and relevant. But we know that "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" and "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Who is head of your fellowship? Is it Jesus or a man appointed clergy who you don't get time to really know or check out. Do you really know the man you've decided to trust with your spiritual life? Again, the "Pastor/Priest" is not New Testament truth.

"One of the principle duties at all seasons of the year is for the shepherd to plan food for his flock." (Fred Wright, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, p. 151)

The shepherd gathers them, feeds them, waters them, protects them, and cares for them. "The shepherd never drives his sheep...he always leads them, often going before them...he often walks by their side, and sometimes follows behind...." (Fred Wright, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, p. 157)

"One man can usually handle from fifty to one hundred sheep...if more he seeks a helper...the hireling does not usually have the personal interest in the sheep that the shepherd has...." (Fred Wright, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, p. 159) The pastor is also to care for the young and baby lambs, seek the lost, watch over them, and care for the sick ones.

An interesting note: " Sheep cannot go for more than three or four days without water." (Victor H. Matthews, Manners and Customs in the Bible, p. 17) How often are you in Church? In a Bible study? Praying and reading the Scriptures on your own?

What's the Job?

God makes them pastors

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

(Ephesians 4:11; John 15:16; Acts 9:6; 26:16; Colossians 1:23,25; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2:1; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 11:3)

"Top Reasons Pastors are in the Ministry 56% say they sense of calling to ministry. (Your Church magazine. January/February 1996)

Notice, only half have felt it was the call of God that brought them into the ministry. One has to ask, what was the reasons for the other half of the pastors to get into the ministry?

Keeper of the flock

"And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground...And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering." (Genesis 4:2,4)

(Isaiah 40:11; Genesis 46:32; 1 Peter 5:2,3) As a keeper of the flock God has entrusted to him he cares for them, watches them, feeds them, insures their well being.

They should walk with God

"As for me, I have not hastened from [being] a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woe-ful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was [right] before thee." (Jeremiah 17:16)

(Genesis 5:24; Matthew 4:22; 6:33)

A pastor will have help in the work

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23)

(Genesis 26:19; 1 Samuel 17:20,28; Philippians 4:3; Colossians 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:2)

Pastors try to increase their flock

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

(Genesis 30:37-39; 1 Corinthians 3:5-10)

The pastor will give food and water to the flock

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15)

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

(Genesis 26:18; 29:2,3; 30:31; 1 Chronicles 4:39-41; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 6:3; Ezekiel 34:2-4; Hosea 4:16; John 21:15-18; Acts 11:23; 14:22; Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Peter 5:2,3)

The pastor cares for them

"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, [and see] how they do." (Acts 15:36)

(2 Samuel 24:17; 1 Chronicles 21:17; Psalm 78:52; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:11-16; Matthew 18:12; 25:34-40; John 18:8; 21:15-18; Acts 16:40; 18:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:7,11; 2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 13:17, 24; 1 Peter 5:2,3)

The pastor guides them

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15)

(Psalm 78:52; 80:1; John 10:3; 1 Timothy 4:6,7; 2 Timothy 2:25)

There are bad pastors

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 23:1)

(Exodus 2:17; Isaiah 56:11; Jeremiah 2:8; 10:21; 23:1-3; 25:34-36; 50:6; Ezekiel 34:3,4, 6-10; Nahum 3:18; Zechariah 10:3; 11:5,16,17; Matthew 7:15; John 10:12,13; 2 Corinthians 11:14,15; 2 Peter 2:12; 2 John 7; 3 John 9; Jude 4)

"William Murray, who became a Christian in 1980 at age 33 and now directs the Religious Freedom Coalition in Washington, D.C. said, " I can find Baptist preachers--in big churches--that will tell me that Christ isn't the son of God. I don't need to go to the atheists to have somebody to tell me that." (Christianity Today magazine, March 1, 1999 Vol. 43, No. 3, Page 24)

God wants laborers

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:38)

Honor widows

"Honour widows that are widows indeed." (1 Timothy 5:3)

(1 Timothy 5:17,18)

They are to expose sin

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Timothy 5:20)

(1 Timothy 6:11,12-14,20)

It's not for pastors to be rich

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:20)

(Genesis 14:23)

"On average the typical pastor makes anywhere from \$30-60,000 a year. Pastors in smaller Churches, less than 151, make less than Pastors in a staff Church."

Most of the spouses of pastors work today why? Because of economic realities. "Nearly half (49%) of the pastors said their spouses worked because their families needed the money or job benefits...Nearly all clergy and their spouses use credit cards." (Your Church magazine, November/December 1997. Page 80)

"Greener pastures tempt a lot of pastors. Almost half (49%) of our respondents said that at least once a year they consider leaving the ministry to find a better-paying job. About half of those (26% of the total) consider leaving two or more times a year." (Your Church Magazine, May/June 1998, Vol. 44, No. 3, Page 88)

Pastors will be called to account

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (James 3:1)

(Colossians 4:17)

They should be prayed for

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have [free] course, and be glorified, even as [it is] with you:" (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

Pastors are to be taken care of

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:13)

(Luke 10:7)

The pastor is to live a life of holy devotion to God in Christ by the Holy Spirit

Joseph of the New Testament was a "just" man.

"Joseph her husband, being a just [man]
...." (Matthew 1:19a)

(1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 1 John 2:6)

"Marriage has the greatest positive impact on the typical pastor's career. Nearly eight out of ten pastors say marriage is the top ministry enhancer out of 21 various circumstances and life events listed in the survey. (Only 3% of pastors in this study have never married) The next four top areas mentioned by a majority of respondents relate more directly to the trade of ministry: preaching (67%), sense of call to ministry (60%), sermon preparation (60%), and pastoral care (54%)." (Your Church magazine. January / February 1996)

This is interesting the Scriptures say the Holy Spirit is the ministry "enhancer" "And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] three-score days, clothed in sackcloth." (Revelation 11:3)

and, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

The pastor should be found faithful

The Scriptures admonish us, and pastors, to be holy, and walk with integrity.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:1,2)

(2 Corinthians 4:1,2,5; 6:3,4; Colossians 1:7; 4:7-12; Hebrews 3:2-5; 3 John 12)

The pastor should be consumed with the Word of God

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

(Matthew 4:4; Acts 6:1-4; 18:24,25,28; 1 Timothy 4:15,16; 2 Timothy 2:15)

He should teach with authority

"For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:" (2 Corinthians 10:8)

(Matthew 7:29; Colossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 2:24)

Pastors are to preach and teach

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."(Matthew 10:7)

(Matthew 10:27; 28:19,20; Luke 10:9; 24:47,48; Acts 20:7,27; 28:31; Romans 10:14,15; 15:20,21; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Galatians 4:13; Colossians 1:28; 4:3,4; 2 Timothy 4:2,5; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 1:12)

They are to teach no other doctrine

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1 Timothy 1:3)

(1 Timothy 3:2; 4:13; 6:3-5; Titus 2:1)

They are to appoint deacons

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples [unto them], and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:1-4)

(1 Timothy 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5)

If a pastor is called to minister the Word he should go

"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them...Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." (Acts 10:19,20,33)

They should be obeyed as divinely appointed ministers of God if faithful

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter 3:2)

(Philippians 2:12; 1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 13:7,17,24)

The early Church believed in this principle. All most all of them concluded their letters with the exhortation of obedience of this kind.

For example:

"...submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent, bending the knees of your hearts. Learn to be subject, laying aside the proud and arrogant self-confidence of your tongue." (Clement, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 253b)

"Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. " (Polycarp, The Epistle to the Philippians, 37b)

"..being under the guidance of the Comforter, in obedience to the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind...." (Ignatius, The Epistle to the Ephesians, 142b)

"Thou shalt be subject to the Lord, and to [other] masters as the image of God, with modesty and fear..." (Barnabas, The Epistle of, 255, 256b)

Church boards? When there was a problem the ministers came together to resolve it

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command [them] to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." (Acts 15:5,6)

Look at what a survey says about what Church boards are doing.

"The three greatest stress areas pastors face in their ministry are: church politics, financial shortfall, and difficult staff/board relationship. Between three and four out of

ten pastors say these have had a major negative effect on their ministry." (Your Church magazine, July/August 1995)

"Again, relationships were critical. Internal church problems and poor relationships with the board contribute the most to the lowest points in pastoral ministry. Internal church problems 22%." (ibid.)

"Driving Forces Behind Pastor's Exit Percentage of forced exits Small faction of congregation 43% Board member(s) 32% Own convictions 22% Senior pastors 18% Denominational supervisor 14% Staff member(s) 5% Large portion of congregation 4%." (Your Church magazine, May/June 1996. Vol. 42, No. 3, Page 72)

"Forced Exit vs. Termination Of those forced out: Terminated 13% Forced to resign 58% Pressured to resign 29% Reasons for Forced Exit Conflicting visions for the church 46% Personality conflict with board member(s) 38% Unrealistic expectations 32% Lack of clear expectations 24% Personality conflicts (not with board members) 22% Theological differences 21% Personality conflict with senior pastor 19%." (Your Church magazine, March/April 1996. Volume 42, No. 2, Page 72)

"Talk to the right people. Knowing the right questions to ask, however, doesn't make a difference if you don't go to the people with the answers. Four out of five (82%) wish they had gone straight to the members of the congregation. About the same (79%) wish they had been more forthright with the members of the church board." (Your Church magazine, January/February 1997, Vol. 43, No. 1, Page 88)

How do pastors feel about them?

"The two activities pastors find least productive are the same two they would like to spend less time doing: three

in 10 find administrative/budget work unproductive. About 23 percent believe meetings are a poor use of time." (Your Church Magazine, November/December 1998, Vol. 2, No. 6, Page 80)

"Pastors who work long hours say they wish they could spend more time at home. They would like more time for certain activities at work. And, most of all, they would like to spend more than the six hours they typically spend each week developing their relationship with God"

"Three-fourths of the pastors surveyed would like to do more praying, and two-thirds wish they had more time for personal devotions. In addition, 73 percent of the pastors want to put more than their normal 13 hours a week into sermon preparation, and 60 percent would like more time for lesson preparation. The majority of pastors surveyed also would like to devote more time to training leaders, evangelism, and planning for the future." (Your Church Magazine, September/October 1998, Vol. 44, No. 5, Page 136)

Those statistics are very sad indeed. But that's typical of the IC/DCs I don't feel sorry for them. Pastors are finding themselves worrying which is not Biblical (Matthew 6:34) about "things" and it throws them off.

"Other experiences or phases of life a large majority of pastors found stressful to their ministry included: personal or family illness, doubts or crisis of personal faith, aging parents, death in the family, preparing for retirement." (Your Church magazine, January/February, 1996)

The pastor is to love the ministry. He should consider it a blessed responsibility instead of a "job."

"For more than eight out of ten pastors, a nine-to-five, 40-hour workweek no longer exists...Typically, pastors start their work-

day at 8 a.m. and end it at 6:30 p.m. They do that six days a week. The median amount of time pastors spend working each week is 55 hours. When pastors do take a day off, they usually choose Monday.

Working more hours appears to be one way to increase job security. Pastors who work 50 hours or less each week are 35 percent more likely to be terminated. And, in general, those who have never been forced out of a pastorate are working more hours per week than they did five years ago." (Your Church Magazine, July/August 1998, Vol. 44, No. 4, Page 80)

Notice, the one phrase, "working more hours appears to be one way to increase job security." Job security? What did we discover as far as who gives the ministry to pastors? God not man!

In short, pastors have allowed themselves to be overrun by the pathetic, over inflated, useless, so-called Church boards. They have come to pleasing men and not God. They are now considering the pastorate as "work" or a "job" instead of a Holy calling. This is a tactic of the adversary to inject pure Novocain into the veins of many pastors. Make them "busy" and they fail to be about the "...Father's business." (Luke 2:49)

God's Word says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

We must understand the pastor is selected by God, "and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...." And "...I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them." And again, "...I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

For what reason? I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them..." and "...which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." And once more, "...for the perfecting of the

saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

It all comes to this, that the pastor is here to help give understanding of God's Word, and exhort the people to be like God—by word and example. Pastors are not business employees, nor are they our personal slaves, but God's holy appointed minister given to us for our benefit. Watch how you treat those faithful men! My brethren, listen to those that are faithful in the ministry, avoid and close your ears to those whom the Holy Spirit has shown to be false. May the Spirit of God help you and give you understanding in all things.

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