

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinances as delivered.”

“Thus saith the LORD, ‘Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls’ (Jer. 6:16). ‘And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in’ (Isaiah 58:12).

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GOD’S JEWELS

By Rick Martin

The prophet wrote in Malachi 3:16-17 “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

I suppose that the greatest thing that could be said about a person would be to refer to them as a “godly person.” In the above passage we see that some are called “God’s Jewels.” Today we need such people! We need people in the workplace who will provide true godly examples. We need people in the home who will perform their proper duties. We need people in the church who will lead and display the wisdom and humility of people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

First, God’s jewels are “they that fear the Lord.” The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). There is not enough fear today. I’m not necessarily talking about fear of terror, but rather I am talking about a reverential disposition. When we wander out into the forbidden, we can expect to have some fear. When someone sins, they should fear the wrath of God. We should also display a reverential fear of God. A respect for God and His instructions are very important. Some have no fear; “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18). Such people are not God’s jewels.

The wise man Solomon summed it all up. He

tried everything the world had to offer and came to this conclusion: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Some don’t want to keep the commandments. There is no question that obedience is a forgotten word among many people. Some people don’t want to obey authority and as a result there is chaos, and prisons are overflowing. Even some religions don’t require obedience. You can’t just pick and choose what you want to obey and what you want to ignore. A healthy fear of the Lord leads to obedience to His commandments. To disregard God’s commandments indicates a lack of respect, trust, and faith. God judges our faithfulness by our attitude toward His word. In Deuteronomy 4:2 he says, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” Let it be remembered that those whom the Lord chooses when He comes to make up His jewels will be those who have “feared the Lord.”

Second, God’s jewels are those who spoke often one to another. We usually talk about the things we think about. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

Beginning in Luke 24:15, we see that some of the followers of Jesus were walking to the village of Emmaus. As they walked along, they were talking about the death of Jesus. I’m glad they were talking about the death of Jesus. They could have been talking about the weather, family matters, the politics of the day, or a variety of other things.

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How often do we speak about God and Jesus? Some only speak of Him in derogatory terms by using His name in vain or deriding His followers. Do we speak of His greatness? Do we proclaim Him to the world? Are we excited enough about His word to share it with others? The word of God is not dull or boring to godly people. They speak of it often. They are interested in knowing the ways of God and how to apply them to their daily task. They want to share the scriptures with others because they understand the saving power of the word.

God's people will meditate on His word consistently. They linger over the scriptures, so the truths of God's word can become a part of their lives. Studying God's word is a prerequisite for godliness. The word should be allowed to saturate a person's mind and heart with God's instruction, warning, rebuke, and comfort. It is food for the soul, building one up in the faith.

God commanded Joshua to make meditation on His word the core of his daily routine. "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). Success, prosperity, and blessings of an obedient life were all linked to Joshua's absorption of God's word. This shows that people can be successful by developing a consistent pattern of studying God's word. When the positive truth of God's word is implanted in the heart, it provides a divine context for wise decision making and behavior. When we study and speak of the word, our faith will not be artificial or superficial, but instead it will be deeply imbedded in the Word of God.

Third, we notice that God's jewels are those who think upon His name. In life they are focused upon His name, His life, and his death. This is revealed to us in His Gospel. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

In the daily activities and struggles of life we in-

teract with people. Some of these people are good and some are not so good. As we engage in the common things of life, often problems and cares displace our focus. To some extent this is to be expected, but it should only be for the brief exercise of temporal needs of the hour. Deep within the memory of our hearts we must always retain our faith. David is quoted in Acts 2:25, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved." A failure to do this will result in great spiritual weakness and ruin. It is a known fact that the weak and unconcerned church member, who comes to church as little as possible, who associates with worldly people more than church members is not thinking upon His name.

Jesus was grieved when people did not walk with Him. "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (John 6:66-67). Just as He was concerned then about people who were more interested in the world, so is He today. It hurts Jesus when people are more concerned with other things than they are with His church. People are building castles out of clay and have little if anything to their credit in eternity. They are having a big time with their worldly friends, while breaking the heart of the Friend of friends—Jesus Christ. God's jewels are going to remember Him and His people. They will seek companionship from among believers. God's jewels will look for opportunities to develop beneficial relationships with other Christians. The wise man of Proverbs understood the role of honest and sincere fellowship. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17).

This does not mean that a believer should refuse association with non-Christians. To do so would negate the Lord's command to carry the gospel to those who are lost. However, we are not to make such contacts the major source of our companionship. We are much better served when our intimate friendships are found with like-minded followers of Christ. We of course enjoy the friendship of all men, but our focus is primarily on cultivating a relation with Christ and other Christians who will challenge us, reprove us when necessary, and help us grow in Godliness.

Some who consider themselves "jewels" seek

their friends and companions from among people of the world. There are some who show no interest in associating with Christians. The world has taken the place of Christ in many people's lives. They don't think upon His name. They are more concerned with worldly things, where they seek their friends. James writes, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (4:4). People who love the world seek their friends there. They look for friends of similar interests.

Many are like the Pharisees and love the praise of men more than God. The Pharisees were not willing to give up their places of authority and dignity to serve Christ. There are some today who are not willing to give up their places in society to serve Christ.

People who think upon His name want to be around Christians. Whenever there is a gospel meeting, they try to attend because Christians will be there. Whenever the church meets, they are there and on time, so they can be depended on. Some make the pretense of being interested in Christ, but it is apparent that they would rather be elsewhere. Their association with Christians mainly consists of an hour on Sunday morning. They can't be counted on at any other time. They evidently don't care about being around other Christians. Therefore, take an inventory of your closest personal friends and if most of them are not members of the church, it might do you well to do a reassessment and see where your priorities lie.

People who think upon his name have an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. Nothing else will substitute. To have this abiding relationship is necessary to be considered one of God's "jewels."

To have the proper relationship with Jesus Christ, a person must realize Jesus is the Lord, and that he himself is the Lord's slave. Being a slave means being totally submissive to one's master and owner. This is the type of relationship we are to have with Jesus. He owns us completely by right of creation and by right of purchase. In his first epistle the apostle Peter writes, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with cor-

ruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1:18). And the apostle Paul says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20).

Some people have this all wrong. They think Jesus is the slave. The crowds who went with Him to Jerusalem did not understand this relationship. To them Jesus was just a tool, a miracle-worker to put their country straight, a political messiah to overthrow the Romans and make Israel independent and prosperous. Some think only on the Lord's name when there is a crisis in their lives, be it financial problems, health problems, or a family crisis. To them Jesus is simply a "Mr. Fix-it." This is not the type of relationship we are to have with Jesus.

Because of our democratic heritage, we find it difficult to envision living under a ruler. We can't imagine falling prostrate before an emperor who has power of life or death over us. Yet this is the position Jesus holds. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). He is the one who will appear from heaven and before whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess (Romans 14.11). How much better to confess him now and daily, than to be forced by the sheer terror of the moment to confess Him for the first time on the world's last day.

When we think upon His name, we will make decisions in life based on His guidance. We will consult his word and pray for strength and guidance. We must put Jesus first in our lives even before our prized possessions and even before life itself. In the gospel, Christ calls people into a new relationship with Him, where he is Lord, and we are His servants.

In this article we see that God's "jewels" are those who fear the Lord, speak often one to another, and think upon His name. It should be our desire to be one of God's jewels.

When He cometh, when He cometh,
to make up His Jewels, all His jewels,
precious jewels, His loved and His own.

He will gather, He will gather, the gems
for His kingdom, all the pure ones, all
the bright ones, His loved and His own.

Like the stars of the morning, His bright
crown adorning, they shall shine in their
beauty, bright jewels for His crown.

Editorial

DEATH: WHAT THEN? (Part 2)

By Don L. King

For many years it has worried me that so many church members are careless about worship attendance. If a congregation has 50 members, it is common for about half of them to be absent on Lord's Day evening, and even less on Wednesday evening. Years ago, a fellow quipped: "I suspect there are just as many Christians there on Wednesday night as on Sunday morning!" That was an eye opener for me. I had never thought of it in just that way. It is with hope that our topic last month and the next two months will be of some benefit to us.

From the Bible we learn that life does not end at the grave. Our spirits are eternal, our physical bodies are not. Our bodies cannot survive when the human spirit departs us. That is obvious because we see death all around us. It is a common reminder of our frail hold on earthly life. Our life on earth is sometimes ended in a second, or perhaps after lengthy illness; but it always ends. Have you noticed how often scripture ends its description of some great man by saying: "And he died?" or, "He was gathered to his fathers?" What we often fail to remember, however, is that our awareness or conscious state does not end at the end of this physical life! There is abundant scriptural evidence that we will be conscious of things even after our physical existence here comes to an end. I am convinced if we all really considered that Biblical fact, we surely would be more careful about our worship attendance.

Notice some passages with me. The Mount of Transfiguration is an amazing event. Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain (Matthew 17:1-8). While there, the image of Christ was changed, or transfigured before them. The face of Jesus became bright like the

sun, and his clothing even became brighter. Now, notice what took place: These men saw Moses and Elias speaking with Jesus. Elias and Moses had been gone from the earth, dead, for hundreds of years! Yet, here they both are speaking with the Lord about the death of Jesus which would take place in Jerusalem (see Luke 9:28-35). Verse 31 of Luke 9 tells us that both men appeared “in glory,” that is, in their new form which all of us will have eventually. Peter made some foolish remarks about building three tabernacles for the three of them which God immediately rebuked. Then a bright cloud covered them (Matthew 17:5) and later Jesus was found to be alone.

Obviously, Moses and Elias knew that Jesus was going to die, and even more amazingly, Peter, James, and John knew them even though they were in a glorified form! Keep in mind that Peter James and John had never seen them while they lived on this earth. They had been gone hundreds of years. How did they recognize them? They obviously were given that knowledge from above. Why suppose we won’t also know such people on the other side? Jesus said in Matthew 8:11: “And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” This doesn’t seem to describe the earthly church of today. Many believe it refers to the future. If so, why name these Old Testament greats if we won’t know anyone over there? Personally, I am looking forward to becoming acquainted with those great men and all of the others we read about in the Scriptures. No wonder we sing the old song, “Won’t it be wonderful over there.” However, by the way some treat the church one would never guess such blessings await the redeemed.

In Revelation 6:9-11, we read of those who had been killed for the Cause of Christ. They wondered how long the Lord would wait to avenge their deaths. They were dead physically, but they were aware in the other world that their deaths had not yet been avenged. This certainly shows a consciousness on their part *after* their deaths. It doesn’t end at the grave, brethren! Next month, Lord willing, we will write about Luke 16:19-31 as an end of this great subject.

Think on these things. DLK

THAT WHICH IS PERFECT

By Kevin Presley

One of the marked features of the first century church was the use of supernatural gifts of the Spirit. Some of the early Christians could, for example, miraculously speak in languages they had never learned. The Bible describes this as speaking in tongues. Such was not gibberish or speaking in some mystical, unknown dialect, but rather, by the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other human languages unknown to the one speaking. There were gifts of prophecy. Those who possessed this gift would speak forth the things that the Spirit miraculously gave them to speak. There was the gift of healing and the gift of performing miracles. Paul lists several of these in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. These gifts played a necessary role in the revelation and early development of the Christian faith. For example, the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 2:3-4 that the apostle (or those who personally heard Christ) possessed such powers in order that they might bear witness to the truth the apostles were being inspired to speak. The Bible also shows that those same apostles exclusively had the power to lay hands on people and impart those gifts. Acts 8:14-20 shows us that when converts were made and a church was planted, the apostles would later visit and lay hands on those who would receive various gifts of the Spirit. The gifts would allow the church to function and be guided in the truth in the absence of the apostles.

The Corinthian church was begun when Paul went to that city on his second missionary journey. He spent a considerable amount of time there and when he departed, he had left them with these spiritual gifts to aid them in their development and work. However, when we read his first letter to them, we learn that this church was misconstruing and misusing these supernatural endowments. Instead of using them to God’s glory, they were bringing glory to the ones who possessed them. They became jealous of one another because one had a gift another did not have. Their pride and pettiness led to a power struggle within the church. When Paul writes to them, he spends much of the letter correcting their abuses and rebuking their carnal attitudes and their misguided ideas. They had missed the point concerning spiritual gifts and were essentially treating

them as an end-all instead of recognizing their purpose. So, in chapters twelve through fourteen, Paul deals extensively with this issue and corrects their error.

1 Corinthians 13 is considered the go-to chapter in the Bible concerning the meaning and demonstration of love. In beautiful, inspired eloquence, Paul extols the properties and virtues of agape love. Why is this sandwiched between his explanation of spiritual gifts in chapter 12 and his regulations of these gifts in their assemblies in chapter 14? The key is found in the last verse of chapter 12. In verse 31, Paul says “But earnestly desire the best gifts” (in other words these gifts were good things not bad), but he goes on to say, “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” By desiring the best gifts, he is not telling them to covet the most spectacular gifts but rather to desire to see gifts used in the way they were intended, and that is to the edification and benefit of the body. This could only happen if they kept these gifts in perspective and only if they were governed by the greatest principle of all, and that is love. Therefore, in verses 1-7, he shows them in poetic terms how love should lead them to behave toward one another.

In verse 8, he points out a contrast between the gifts they were coveting and the love they were lacking: one was permanent, and one was temporary. One was a means to an approaching end, and the other was an enduring principle. He says, “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.” Notice the contrast between love and spiritual gifts. He says love *never* fails, but prophecies (words spoken by inspiration of the Holy Spirit), they *will* fail. He says, likewise, that miraculously speaking in tongues will cease, and the spiritual gift of knowledge will vanish away. He plainly shows that these miraculous endowments were only temporary.

Consider the words “fail” and “vanish away.” He says prophecies will fail. This doesn’t mean that prophecies would fail to come to pass or that those prophecies would be shown to not be true. He says knowledge miraculously imparted would vanish away. Both words come from the same Greek word—*katargeo*. According to *Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,

this word means “to remove from the sphere of activity” or “to make completely inoperative.” Thayer says it means “to render idle, unemployed, inactive, and inoperative.” In other words, these gifts would eventually become idle, inactive, and removed from the sphere of activity. This interesting word is used in several places. For example, Paul uses it in Romans 7:6 when he says of New Testament Christians in relation to the Old Testament, “But now we have been *delivered (katargeo)* from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” In a similar reference, he wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:14 that the veil that covered peoples’ eyes in reading the Old Testament is *taken away (katargeo)* in Christ.” Paul means that something was being removed or would no longer be active or of force. He says that such would be the case with spiritual gifts.

He also says the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues would “cease.” The word Paul uses is *pauo*, and it simply means to stop or to pause. Hebrews 10:2 says that if the animal sacrifices under the Old Testament could have taken away sin, then “would they not have *ceased (pauo)* to be offered?....” Those sacrifices came to an end when they were fulfilled in Christ. In the same way, Paul says that just as a speaker pauses and falls silent, so tongues would lapse into silence.

Spiritual gifts, therefore, were given for a specific duration of time and the time would come, Paul says, when those gifts would cease to be distributed and exercised by the church. When? 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 says, “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” Not only has Paul told us that gifts of the Spirit would be taken away and would stop, but he also now tells us when! He says “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away.” Has “that which is perfect” come or are we still waiting for it and thus spiritual gifts (those things which are in part) still operational among us today?

What is Paul referring to when he says “that

which is perfect”? Some have contended that Paul is referring to Jesus and thus he would be saying that spiritual gifts will remain with the church until Jesus comes again. There are several problems with this view. For one thing, Paul doesn’t say “when *He who* is perfect has come.” Instead, he says, “when *that which* is perfect is come.” He is not referring to a person but to a thing. The key here is the word “perfect” contrasted with that which is “in part.” We know what he means we he refers to that which is in part. He said in verse 9, “for we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is *perfect* has come then that which is in part will be done away.”

When we hear the English word “perfect,” we often think of flawlessness. But that’s not exactly the meaning of the Greek word that Paul uses here. The Greek word Paul uses is *teleios*, which means complete or mature. It means “wanting nothing necessary to completeness.” Imperfect means incomplete or still wanting. Perfect means complete or mature or fully developed. Notice how the same word is used in other passages. In the next chapter, 1 Corinthians 14:20, Paul says “Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature (*teleios*). The New King James has “mature”; the King James says “men”; the NIV says, “be adults.” In Hebrews 5:14, the Bible says, “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (*teleios*), that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” In Ephesians 4:13, we read that the body of Christ is to grow up into a perfect (*teleios*) man.” In Philippians 3:15, Paul says that some of the Christians there were “mature” (*teleios*). The King James says some of them were “perfect.” That obviously doesn’t mean that they were flawless or never were guilty of sin. It means they were spiritually mature. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 13:10, “When *that which is perfect* (*teleios*—mature, full-grown, complete) has come then that which is *in part* will be done away.”

If we know the word “perfect” means complete or mature, then the phrase “in part” is used in contradistinction to that. The context will show us what contrast Paul is making. Verse 11 says, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I

became a man, I put away childish things.” Paul is likening the church during the time of spiritual gifts to a child that is growing toward adulthood. He says, when one becomes a man, he puts away childish things.

Others have suggested that “the perfect” thing that Paul speaks of is talking about when they reach a state of perfect love or when they each personally reach spiritual maturity. But the context shows that Paul is rather talking about the mature or completed revelation of the faith. Look in verse 12: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” What is he talking about? Someone may say, “it sounds like he’s talking about heaven because he says we’ll see God face to face.” But he doesn’t say we’ll see God face to face, much less does he say that it would take place in heaven. He says they would see face to face whatever they at that time only saw a dim reflection of. This phrase “face to face” appears in other places in scripture. For example, Exodus 33:11 says that Jehovah “spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” But then notice what he says on down in verse 20: God told Moses, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” Also compare Genesis 32:30 with John 1:18. “Face to face” does not mean seeing God’s face in heaven. It means that He is fully revealed to us.

God *has* revealed to the church all that we may know of Him this side of glory. Jude says in Jude verse 3 that we are “to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” When was that revelation complete or mature? When the apostles completed their work on earth. You see, during the time of the apostles, the revelation of Christ was not yet complete. God has always unfolded His revelation to man over time. Even the apostles did not have perfect knowledge of all things at any given time. The faith was revealed through them over the course of their ministry. This has always been the nature of revelation (see Isaiah 28:9-10). The apostles couldn’t be always in all places, and so they were given the authority and power by Christ to impart spiritual gifts to people in those various congregations to guide them in the meantime. Today, the apostles *can* be always in all places, spiritually speaking. We have the completed canon of their writings. We have the New Testament. During their work on

earth, the church was first an infant on the Day of Pentecost. It was a growing child as the apostles circulated among them and wrote their letters to them, and it was destined for manhood when the faith had been once and *for all* delivered to the saints to believe, practice, and contend for. Thus, Paul says: “When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away with.”

Finally, look at verse 13: “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Paul is saying that you will need love long after the temporary spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose and have been taken away. Faith, hope, and love will abide whereas those things that were “in part” would not. Is that talking about heaven? Why will we need faith in heaven when we, as glorified beings, will be in the actual presence of God? Why will we need hope in heaven when our hope will have become realized in heaven? You see, Paul is not talking about heaven. He is not saying that spiritual gifts would remain with the church all throughout the ages. He says they were temporary until the revelation of Christ was completed and all Christians would have the New Testament committed to their keeping. Why should we desire a return to immaturity when we have something far better today, which is the revelation that the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit in the beginning produced for the church to have throughout all ages? We no longer look into a glass darkly but now we can stand in the sunlight of the full revelation of Jesus Christ and His glorious plan for mankind.

WERE TIMOTHY AND TITUS “PASTORS”?

By David Griffin

It is truly remarkable how many people confidently answer to the above question in the affirmative, even those who otherwise seem to have a great deal of Bible knowledge. As only one example, I’m thinking of those popular radio preachers of the evangelical community whose voices are broadcasted all over the country and even the entire world. Their preaching across the radio waves (and now by the internet) about the letters to Timothy and Titus begins and proceeds on the assumption that both these men were “Pastors.” The purpose of this article is to

demonstrate that both this assumption and the teaching stemming from it are in error, and thus Christians who want to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent” should avoid this error.

The term pastor appears only once in the New King James Version (and the old version) of the New Testament. Ephesians 4:11 says, “And He Himself [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some *pastors* and teachers.” In this passage, “pastors” are merely mentioned by name, but their specific work and who in the New Testament filled this position cannot be determined from the verse itself. The only means we have of identifying such persons and their work is by examining the definition of the term pastor, and from there searching the Scriptures for clues identifying who did indeed serve in this position.

The word “pastor” in the English Bible of Ephesians 4:11 is a Latin word, meaning “shepherds.” It is rendered from the Greek word *poimen*. This Greek word occurs eighteen times in the New Testament and *each time*, except Ephesians 4:11, is translated by the English word “shepherd(s).” There is no linguistic reason why the KJV translators (and all later translators who follow their lead) should render this Greek word by the term “pastor” and not “shepherd” as in all other places where it occurs. Perhaps it is due to the KJV translators affinity for the Latin version that lead them to make this choice. Incidentally, both Wycliff’s translation (AD 1388) and Tyndale’s (AD 1536) gave *poimen* the genuine “English” rendering of “shepherds.” For whatever reason, the KJV translators made the decision to use “pastors” instead of “shepherds.” This unfortunate decision has contributed to the widespread abuse the word so commonly receives today.

But who are these “shepherds”? Again, Ephesians 4:11 does not identify them. Thus, the meaning “shepherd” is our chief clue for identifying *elsewhere* in the New Testament who filled this “pastoral” (or shepherding) role.

Two New Testament passages use language that is plainly “pastoral” in nature as it pertains to officers in the church. The first passage is 1 Peter 5:1-4. “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am also an elder and a witness of the

sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: *shepherd the flock* of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords of those entrusted to you, but examples *of the flock*; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away.”

Peter addresses the “elders who are among you” (also called “overseers”) and says that he himself is “also an elder.” The fact that Peter, an apostle, says “I am also an elder” indicates that there is some overlap in the functions of apostles and elders. However, Peter, writing with apostolic voice and authority, addresses a group separate from himself called “elders” who were not apostles and gives them specific instructions pertaining to their work as such.

Concerning that work, Peter writes: “*shepherd the flock* of God which is among you” (v. 2, NKJV). The old King James reads “feed the flock.” This is an unfortunate translation because its meaning is too narrow. “Feeding” (or “teaching”) a congregation is only a small part of the work of “shepherding” and does not embrace the full scope of meaning in the verb. The verb in the original is *poimaino* and its similarity to the noun *poimen* (shepherd) referenced above is obvious. Hence, a *poimen* is a shepherd; to *poimaino* is “do the work of a shepherd.” The lexicon defines the actions embraced in this verb as that of “watch[ing] out for other people, to shepherd...of activity that rules, governs, fosters...in the sense of lead, guide, or rule” (BDAG 3rd Edition 2000). Clearly, this passage links the work of shepherding to the elders and not to the that of the modern-day “Pastor” of a church.

Second, Acts 20:28 contains Paul’s directives to the elders of the church at Ephesus. Since according to Acts 20:17, Paul “called for the elders of the church,” it is self-evident that Paul is still speaking to those elders when in verse 28 he says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to *all the flock*, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to *shepherd* the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.” Paul tells these elders “to shepherd the church of God.” The verb for “shepherd” is the same here as that used by Peter above—*poimaino*. As in 1 Peter 5, the old version translates this verb as

“feeding.” Hence, these “elders” (v. 17), also called “overseers” (v. 28), like those addressed by Peter, were instructed to perform the work of “pastors” among the Lord’s people whom they thus served. Hence, “pastors” (Ephesians 4:11) are elders, not the modern-day “Pastor” of a church.

Having identified the office and work of those called “pastors” in Ephesians 4:11 as that of those who elsewhere are called “elders” and “overseers,” we now notice the organizational relationship these pastors sustained to the churches within which they labored. The New Testament consistently represents elders or overseers (hence pastors) as a plurality of men within a congregation, who as a group “shepherd” or “rule” the congregation of their charge. To illustrate, Paul and Barnabas “ordained elders in every church” (Acts 14:23); Peter addresses “the elders which are among you” (1 Peter 5:1-4); Paul called for the “elders,” “overseers” (pastors) of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:28); Paul told Timothy to “let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor” (1 Timothy 5:17); Paul addressed the “elders and deacons” in the congregation at Philippi (Philippians 1:1); and finally Paul tells Titus to ordain or appoint “elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). These passages demonstrate a consistent pattern of the plurality of elders/overseers/pastors within the respective congregations where they served.

By contrast, the New Testament scriptures know nothing of a congregation of the Lord’s people with a “Pastor” (singular) shepherding them. Although this practice is accepted without question and is universally adopted in denominations all over the world, no man is called “The Pastor” of a church anywhere in the New Testament!

That Timothy and Titus performed “the work of an evangelist” at Ephesus and on the island of Crete respectively is of course obvious. That the leadership role they performed was that of “The Pastor” is not so obvious. The New Testament’s pastoral language regarding the work of elders/overseers/pastors is completely absent from the letters to Timothy and Titus in which Paul describes their work in much detail. If Timothy and Titus were each “The Pastor” of the congregations where they labored, occupying the prominent role popularly associated with that title to-

day, should we not expect to find in Paul's letters to these men at least *one instance* of pastoral language like that used of the elders in 1 Peter 5 and Acts 20? Such language however simply does not occur in these letters.

Now someone may rebut that the work Paul describes in the letters to Timothy and Titus is pastoral in nature even if the verb *poimaino* or the noun *poimen* does not appear in these books; therefore, they served as "The Pastor" in those churches. But this is over generalizing. While it is true that there is some overlap in all the offices Paul names in Ephesians 4:11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—it is also true that Paul does *itemize them separately*. The fact that he lists them separately implies that even if there is overlap in some of their function, it is not acceptable Biblical interpretation to generalize them, more or less, into "the same role." Accordingly, we should expect Paul to maintain such distinctions in epistles where he describes and/or mentions the work of "elders" verses "the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5).

Not surprisingly then we find Paul doing just that. First, as stated above, we have no statement from Paul calling Timothy or Titus "The Pastor" of a church. Second, the letters in which we would expect them to be thus called contain *no* explicit pastoral language used of true pastors elsewhere in the New Testament. Third, it is most significant that in addressing Timothy, Paul explicitly tells him to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5), and the "evangelist" is of course one of the very positions listed in Ephesians 4:11, *in addition to and separate from* "the pastors." Incidentally, since there is obvious similarity between the work of Timothy and Titus, we may safely infer that Titus was also doing the work of an evangelist. And last, far from instructing these men to "do the word of the Pastor," Paul rather tells them either to "ordain elders [or pastors] in every city" (as in the case of Titus on the island of Crete) or of addressing and correcting problems within an already existing eldership (as in the case of Timothy at Ephesus).

In conclusion, Timothy therefore was not "The Pastor" of the church at Ephesus, and Titus was not "The Pastor" of a church (or churches) on the island of Crete. These men were evangelists. The burden of proof that they served as "The Pastor"

rests with those multiplied thousands of men (and a few women) today who claim this title, wielding a powerful influence over the consciences of millions, while claiming to be "called of God" to occupy an office about which the New Testament knows nothing. —David Griffin.



Field Reports

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303, kwpresley@gmail.com March 3, 2023
It was a pleasure to begin the year in meetings with the Apache Junction, AZ and Jonesboro, GA congregations. Bro. Bob Orear works with the church in Apache Junction, and it was a pleasure to visit with him after many years. Bro. Bob was a great encouragement to me when I began to preach in the 1990's. He invited me and some of my fellow young "preaching pals" to come to the places he was laboring to hold mission meetings and do personal work. He is mourning the loss of his dear wife Betty and is growing feebler himself but continues to do all he can for the cause. It was a pleasure to work with this church for a few days and make new friends in the Lord. The meeting in Jonesboro was also enjoyable. We were thankful for the visitors who came and especially appreciated Rick and Jane Martin braving Atlanta rush hour traffic to support the meeting. Lord willing, I am to begin a meeting on Sunday in Manteca, CA. This church is one of my favorite places to preach and I am thankful for the relationship we have had through the years. In late March, I am scheduled to be with West Monroe, LA and the following week, Bro. Billy Dickenson is to hold our meeting here in Dothan. We look forward to his good preaching. Our monthly work in Hillcrest, MS continues to go well. This church is growing in number and in spirit. We are engaged in a months-long study of the eldership and the brethren are doing well in these studies. Our television work continues to enjoy success. If your congregation would be interested in airing it in your market or would like to take on a mission effort somewhere via the TV program, let me know! Airtime can be more reasonable than you may think and opportunity to preach the gospel abounds. May the Lord bless you all in your righteous efforts.

WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

ARE YOU A ONE CUPPER?

by Jerry Dickinson

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you; do this in memory of me.’ In the same manner He took the cup after supper saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

It is noteworthy that Paul informs the Corinthian brethren that he had received his information about the establishment of the Lord’s Supper from Jesus Himself! Paul, of course, was not present that night with the other apostles when Jesus instituted His memorial supper, and although (surely) he had talked with Peter and other apostles about the events of that night, he insists that Jesus Himself revealed these things to him. When Paul established the church in Corinth he obviously instructed them about the proper and correct way to observe the Lord’s Supper. Since they were now improperly observing it, Paul reminds them of what he had received from the Lord and delivered to them. He admonishes them, moreover, to keep the ordinances “as I have delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2).

A few years ago I was preaching during a “mission” meeting being held in Antlers, Oklahoma in which several congregations in the area were participating. There were twenty or so folks from a church of Christ in the area which used individual cups in the communion attending the meeting. I had preached several nights on the plan of salvation, the nature of the church, etc. and my plan was to preach the last night on the worship of the church, focusing in part on the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper. There were several tracts on the table in the foyer about the Lord’s Supper and other subjects as well. On the next to the last night, after services, an older lady from the aforementioned church approached me and asked if she could ask me a question. “Sure,” I replied.

“Are you a one cupper? she asked pointedly. I was taken aback and paused to smile. “Well,” I answered, “it has been a long time since I have heard that term, one cupper, but yes, I am a one cupper! I believe that Jesus used one cup when he instituted the Lord’s Supper and I believe we must use one cup in observing it today.” She nodded her head and then responded, “I knew you were after I read one of the tracts I took home last night.” I repeated to her that I had not heard the term one cupper in a long time but it did not bother me at all. Then she surprised me by asking, “When are going to preach on it in the meeting? I would like to hear what you believe!” I almost fell over (as my mother-in-law used to say, lol) and told her I indeed intended to preach on the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper the next night. And I did!

There was a nice crowd the next night and several outsiders, including many from the cups church, and of course the sister who had called me a one cupper. I quoted the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing the fact that Paul quoted Jesus as saying, “This cup is the new testament in My blood.” Jesus, I declared, says the bread is His body, the fruit of the vine is His blood, and the cup is the new testament! The one loaf represents the one body of Jesus, and the one cup containing the fruit of the vine represents the one covenant ratified by His shed blood. Suddenly, a man spoke up from his seat and loudly asked, “Where does the Bible say that?” I, along with everyone in the audience, was a bit stunned. I looked at him and replied, “Where does the Bible say what?” I wasn’t really sure what he was referring to. “Where does the Bible say the cup is the new testament?” he asked. I repeated that the passage I had given was 1 Corinthians 11:25. He asked me to wait a moment while he found it. Of course everyone was looking at him while I waited. Finally, I said, “If you have found it why don’t you read it out loud for all to hear!”

“I will,” he said, and began to read, but when he came to the part about the cup being the new testament he stopped. “Read it out!” I cajoled him. “Read it!” Haltingly, he continued, “Jesus said this cup is the new covenant.” After reading it he just looked up at me and I said, “Thank you for your question and thank you for reading the scripture for us all!” I could not have worked it out better if I had planned it that way. The lady, and everyone else, heard the man read it straight from the Bible. It was not a one cupper preacher, but the apostle Paul, who received it from the Lord who said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.”