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## Gathering unto the Name

W. J. McClure

In the Book of Deuteronomy we find the expression, which is the title of this booklet exactly 21 times. This number is very significant. Three times Seven, "Three" is the number that speaks of manifestation (God, fully manifested, is Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and "Seven" speaks of Perfection or completeness of good or evil, but especially of good. These 21 times where the expression occurs will all come under four heads, and these are, (1) Worship, 26:1-11. (2) Ministry, 18:6, 7, 8. (3) Discipline, 17:8, 13. (4) Tithing or Gifts, 12:5, 6. These things correspond with what we have brought out in the epistle to the Corinthians, and were doubtless given us by God as types of what is unfolded in that epistle of church-order.

### WORSHIP

Deuteronomy 26:1, 11, with 16:16, 17, give a very fine picture of worship (which is giving to God). When they appeared before God in the place which He had chosen to place His name, we see that they were not to come empty, but were to give as they were able, so in chap. 26 they bring their basket of first fruits and set it down before the Lord their God and worship. We have a very beautiful picture of this aspect of the truth in 1 Samuel 10:3, "Then thou shalt go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine."

Note how it is put, Going up to God to— Bethel. Why Bethel? Because, He had chosen it as the place where He had caused His Name to dwell, and the Glory abode between the cherubim. Thus He distinguished it from every other place, and from every part of the land, Israel assembled there. His name just stood for Himself, and these three men are going up to God. But it is put in such a way as may well speak to our consciences-- Going up to God to Bethel. They are not legalists, who are wholly occupied with the place, nor on the other hand are they

so liberal as to believe that they can find, God in every place. And mark, they are obeying the exhortation given in Deuteronomy 16:16, 17, for they are not going empty.

1 Corinthians 11:20-34 answers perfectly to this. In verses 20 and 33 we have the gathering of the church together, especially for the remembrance of the Lord in breaking of the bread, an occasion preeminently for worship, not a time for asking from God, but a time when we give to Him. But how we fail here, for some seem to regard it as a prayer meeting, others an experience meeting or Bible Reading. That which specially marks the remembrance feast is worship and thanksgiving.

"The place which the Lord shall choose to place His name there," finds its antitype in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

As from all parts of the land, the people of Israel gathered to the place where Jehovah had put His name. So the Holy Spirit in this age would gather believers unto Christ as God's center. The word rendered "Gathered together" in Matthew 18:20 means "To be led unto." When the disciples followed the man with the pitcher of water (Luke 22:10); he led them to the upper room, where the remembrance feast was instituted. And were Christians obedient to the leading of the Spirit now He would gather them around the Lord Jesus, away from human sects and systems, to show forth His death on the first day of the week, "Gather my saints together unto me." Psalm 50:5

Were believers asked where they were going on the Lord's Day morning how different would be their answers. Some would say that they were going to hear Mr. So and So preach. Others to such-and-such a meeting and some would say that they were going to the breaking of bread. None of these answers is to be compared with how it is put in the case of those three men, "Going up to God to Bethel." And the intelligent believer, who delights to please God, goes to meet the Lord. He is in the midst, according to His faithful promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." May it ever be our joy to gather "UNTO HIM."

What those men were carrying (1 Samuel 10) brings before us our Lord Jesus. The loaves speak of His incarnation, as when He took the loaf and said, "This is my body." The kids speak of His death, "My body which is given for you." We cannot separate from the kid, the thought of the sin offering. The wine (a type joy) brings before our hearts the thought of His resurrection and coming again. "ye do show the Lord's death

till He come.” and that coming will make our joy complete.

In the feast that David made in 1 Chronicles 16, we get practically these same three things which bring before us some precious truths, “And He dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.” ver. 3. The measure in which we enter into that these things set forth, in that measure will our hearts be filled with worship when we are gathered together. Then it will be a feast to our hearts. And better still it will be a feast to His heart. It will be true then, “There they made Him a supper.” (John 12:2.)

**MINISTRY**

Deuteronomy 18:1-8, gives us a picture of ministry, such as the Lord had commanded, the Levite ministering in the name of the Lord in the place which He had chosen.

If we turn to Judges 17 we get something very different from what Deuteronomy 18 brings before us. “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And there was a young man out of Bethlehem Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem Judah to sojourn where he could find a place; and he came to Mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And He said unto Micah, I am a Levite of Bethlehem Judah and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals—So the Levite went in.” And Micah consecrated the Levite and the young man became his priest. (V. 6-12)

In Deuteronomy 18, the Levite was to go to the place where God had put His name. Here in Judges He goes in search of a place. According to God's order the Levite lived of the offerings. In Judges this one makes bargain for ten shekels a year, his board and a suit of clothes. In the divine order he was to minister as a Levite but in Judges he is made by man into a priest. But while he was a real Levite, and could minister as such, he was only a sham as a priest, as all man-made priests are.

This is the picture; let us see what corresponds to it in the church. We have no doubt that its teaching is of the very utmost importance for us. We turn to 1 Corinthians 14, and in verse 23 to have the gathering of the church together, but in this passage it is in connection with the exercise of the gifts in ministry. When gathered together God supplied the need of His people through some of those whom He had raised up and fitted for that work.

And while their ministry met the present needs of the saints, it also, as we see from Ephesians 4:12, fitted the younger men to carry on the work after older ones would be called home. The only Training College, if we may put it that way, was the assembly, and the Professors were those whom God had qualified and set in the body to minister to it for its edification. There is just the danger in our day that “Missionary Training Homes” and “Bible Schools” may produce men like the “Sons of the Prophets,” who never seemed to be much in God's mind and who, when He needed a man, were usually passed by.

In connection with the assembly, the gift of the teacher and the exhorter found their scope. From the assembly the evangelist went forth commended to his work, and to the assembly he returned to gladden their hearts with the tidings of what God had been pleased to do through him. All activities connected with the work of the Lord centered in the assembly. In every case of individual effort, the fellowship of the assembly should be sought; if this is not done, a bad precedent is set and

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any who desires an opportunity to talk may go on with his own private enterprise, weakening assembly testimony and gathering a personal following and sowing the seeds of division.

The young Levite of Judges 17 is just a picture of the modern "Free Lends", the man who, having some little ability, sets out to make the most of his "gift", as he imagines. He is not bound by any scriptural order, his gift and his service can be had by any Micah. There are those who feel bound by the Word of God to be identified with that which is gathered to the name of the Lord and their service is to be connected with that. Not so this man; with him it is not the place but a place. Success after a sort may attend this course of action, but it is not that success that will last. Only what is done according to the Word will outlast the Judgment Seat of Christ. One hears of "open doors." If God has opened the door, it will admit a whole Bible; if it does not, then He has not opened it. Matthew 28:19, 20 gives us the marching orders of all who preach the gospel and none are at liberty to carry out a part of that great commission and neglect part. It is just as binding to baptize the converts and teach them to "observe all things," as to preach the gospel. Let us look to our marching orders.

What a satire this little story of Judges 17 is on that which is almost universal now, the hiring of the minister. The early preachers went forth in complete dependence on God to supply their temporal needs. They had no promise from the Lord's people as a crutch for their faith. But they proved the faithfulness of God.

This Levite may have thought that God's way was too precarious, that it was too uncertain, so he contracts for a fixed salary from a man. It would seem as if the creature is more to be depended on than God. But when he gave up living on the portion that God had appointed and instead took the ten shekels a year of Micah, he made a sorry exchange.

Micah says, "Now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." (17:13). But alas, he is doomed to disappointment, for the priest that he had consecrated for himself gets "another call." In chap. 18, the Danites come along and they put it to him, "Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?" (18:19). This was very convincing to him, so we read, "The priest's heart was glad and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people." (ver. 20).

A very sad page of church history finds an apt illustration in this Levite. And that is in his change from being a Levite to be a priest. In the New Testament there was no sacerdotal character about service for the Lord; no special class was known then. All who had any gift from the Lord were in loyalty to him bound to use it, wearing no distinctive garb and claiming no special prerogative. They were just ministers, servants of the Lord Jesus.

But the time came when instead of ministers, we have consecrated priests, men who in virtue of having passed through what is called "Ordination" have a special place which is denied the rank and file, even though among them are some who have real gift from the Lord.

How often things which the Word of God knows nothing of are looked at as right because the "Fathers" teach it. We cannot stop short of going right back to the Book itself as the Fathers are very unsafe as guides.

This Levite who departs so from the Word of God was the grandson of Moses, as we see by chap. 18:30, R. V. How solemn, the grandson of the man that God had used to set up his order turns his back upon that order. It but portrays the early departure seen in the church, in the introduction of clerisy, etc.

And is there not in it also a solemn word of warning for the children of those, who in the early days of the gathering unto the name of the Lord, took their place "outside the camp?" The truth was very precious to them, and they would suffer rather than "sell" it. Too many, like Moses's grandson, can lightly turn their back on what those who went before were glad to suffer for. They can go in with the sects from which their fathers had to separate, although since then the progress has been steadily downward and that at an increased pace. *The trouble is they never had the deep conviction from God as to their path that their fathers had.*

### DISCIPLINE

"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates, then thou shalt arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come unto the priests and the Levites and unto the judges that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall, show thee the Sentence of Judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord thy God shall choose shall show thee, thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee". Deuteronomy 17:8-10

1 Corinthians 5 gives us what corresponds to this "For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (Verses 3, 4, 5). We have seen that worship and ministry are connected with the gathering together of the Lord's people in the epistle to the Corinthians. Now we have discipline also connected with the gathering together.

When in Israel any matter passed the capacity or ability of the local judges to settle, they came to the place where God had caused His name to dwell. And when a decision was given there, that was to be the end of the matter. They were to do according to the sentence of the judges of that place.

So the Lord, in Matthew 18:17, puts the assembly in the place of the last tribunal. What cannot be settled otherwise is to be brought before it. And in 1 Corinthians 5 Paul associates it with himself in judging the fornicator. Also in chapter 6 he reproaches them for going before the magistrates of the world with the troubles that arose among them. With the power of the Lord to whom they were gathered, they should have been competent to deal with those matters.

Of all that is connected with being gathered to His name there is nothing, so sad and so solemn as the exercise of discipline, especially that extreme form of it, putting away. It is to be feared that its gravity is not understood in many cases. And this may in a great measure account for the frequency of its failure to reach and humble the one who has been put away. It ought to be done only when every other means has failed. And should be done so that the disciplined one can see it is with reluctance he has been separated from the fellowship of the assembly.

One of the sorrowful results of the present broken-up state of the church is that so often the person who has been put away and put away in a scriptural manner can get in somewhere else. In Corinthians, When that man was put away, he was outside all that bore the name of Christ and that would speak to his conscience. It is not often so in those days.

Where discipline is according to the Word of God it is binding on all who own the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. One put away here is away there and everywhere. And to take in such, ere he has been reconciled to the assembly which put him away, is very wrong; it dishonors the Lord, by whose command he was put away, and causes a breach of fellowship between the assemblies. *But if discipline is to be accepted by other believers, it must be according to the Word of God; if not, it is not binding.* The sin must be one for which exclusion from the assembly is the penalty. For there are sins which may be dwelt with by internal discipline.

Then it must be the act of the whole assembly. The oversight may gather the facts and present them to the assembly, with the word of God that bears upon the case, but it must be the assembly that acts.

If a person were mentioned for fellowship and some were to object, it would not be right to receive that person till all were satisfied. And so should it be in the matter of putting out of the assembly. It is true that cases may arise of some objecting without any good reason, both in regard to reception and exclusion. But there are times when perhaps this guilt of the person is

not clear enough to carry the consciences of all. Or some may be in doubt as to whether the sin is one which demands the extreme penalty. *In such cases it is well to go slowly and look to the Lord to give oneness of mind. A little patience and prayer would have prevented a good deal of sorrow and division over discipline in the past.*

### GIFTS OR TITHES

“But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come; And thither shall ye bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks.” Deuteronomy 12:5-6

We get that which answers to this in 1 Corinthians 16:2, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.” Doubtless there was a special reason for the collection at this time, but we have in it that which is to guide us for all time.

Why the first day of the week more than any other time? Because it was then that they were “gathered together to break bread.” (Acts 20:7, R. V.) Thus when gathered together, they gave of their substance, as the Lord had prospered them. So we see something like what we had in Deuteronomy 12. A common store from which needy saints of the assembly are ministered to and those who have gone forth in the work of the Lord are sustained as they seek to reach the perishing with the gospel.

Can there be anything more pleasing to God, than to see a company of saints endeavoring according to their ability to thus show their fellowship with him? How much more an assembly could do if each individual were exercised, those who have little of the world's goods as well as those to whom God has entrusted much. Too many are like the man who was commending his gathering with a company of believers, for he said he had been so long time with them and it had not cost him a cent.

Those who guide in the assemblies can do much to develop the grace of giving in the saints. They can be an example of it themselves, and this the Lord expects. (Acts 20:55.) Then also by teaching on the subject and by having the confidence of the saints in their distribution of the funds of the assembly. This is most important, as the complaint has been heard, “We don't know what is done with the money,” or “The leaders just send it to their favorites.”

While we seek to press the importance of making the assembly the channel for scattering the gifts of the Lord's people, we do not overlook the individual aspect of the subject, as it is so beautifully illustrated in Onesiphorous (2 Timothy 1:16-18) and also the case of Gaius (3 John 6). The love that led to such personal

ministry was very refreshing to the hearts of those dear servants of Christ, especially at the time it was given. And it was pleasing to God, and such ministry will never cease while there are such souls in the church as Onesiphorus and Gaius.

May we have grace from God to own and obey His Word in these days of lawlessness and self-will. And as we see departure from the old paths, may we be found walking in them, assured that in doing so, we shall have His smile now, and His "Well done" by and by at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

## God's Called-out People

*William Lincoln*

**S**eparation to God and from the world is the way of the Lord. This He has in His Word commanded, and called His people in all ages to obey. Yet in nothing has full obedience been less known. The enemy has ever sought to blot out the line of demarcation between the saved and the unsaved, never more so than at the present time.

### A Peculiar People

The death of the Lord Jesus had this object among others, to deliver His redeemed from the present evil world (Galatians 1:4), that they might be unto Himself a peculiar people (Titus 2:14). Such was the purpose of His love. By His death upon the Cross they have been crucified unto the world, and the world unto them (Galatians 6:14). How will they act toward that world while for a brief period they are left in it to shine as lights (Philippians 2:15) amid its darkness?

Will they be true to their Lord who was rejected and crucified by it, and who for a time has passed to yon throne, where in grace toward the world that rejected Him He awaits, while from it a people given to Him by the Father are being gathered out from the Nations? Or will they, deceived by plausible appearances which the world for its own comfort chooses to adopt (not as in ancient times perhaps of its own invention, but rather of its own corrupting) be decoyed thereby into unholy alliance with that world, which, however religious it may appear outwardly, is the same world still? That this it has been, is, and shall be, the Word of God leaves us in no manner of doubt.

### A Delivered People

When Israel, the elect nation, was about to be brought out of Egypt to become Jehovah's witness against idolatry in the earth, Pharaoh sought by strategy and craft, assisted by the sorcerers of Egypt, who imitated the miracles wrought by Moses in Jehovah's Name, to hinder the people from entire separation from Egypt, its people, and its gods (Exodus 7:10). And again, in the

wilderness and with more success, Balaam, the false prophet, taught the Midianite king to set a snare before the separated people for the purpose of causing them to amalgamate with the enemies of the Lord. How well that snare succeeded and with what consequences, the history tells (Numbers 25).

### A Separated People

And now that God is calling out for Himself a heavenly people, who are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John 17:16), the adversary's great aim is to bring that people from their high estate down to the level of the world. In no way does he more frequently succeed in this than by getting the world to adopt the outward profession of Christianity, and then by co-mixing that which is of the world with that which bears the Name of Christ to produce the thing called Christendom.

The relation of the Christian to this world-church is clearly defined in the Word as that of separation, not in spirit only, but in person. The solemn words of the Holy Ghost in 2 Corinthians 6:17, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean, and I will receive you," are plain and clear. Equally so are the words of 2 Timothy 3:5 concerning those who have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof; from such turn away."

### A Pilgrim People

It has been objected that to separate from the flimsy Christianity of the world and go forth unto a rejected Christ without the camp is to lose influence with those who still abide in or form that camp. To this we might make reply by inquiring whether Abram, who dwelt on the plain of Mamre in his tent, far from Sodom, in the presence of God, or Lot, who sat in its gate, had the most influence. Clearly Lot had little respect from his fellow-citizens, as their words concerning him show (Genesis 19:9), while his rescue from its final overthrow was due solely to the prayers of his pilgrim kinsman (Genesis 18:33), as his former deliverance from capture by the confederate kings had been due also to Abram's efforts (Genesis 14:14-16).

*The man who walks with God in the path of obedience to His will—he and he only has power with God and with men.*

## A Care for the Saints

*Franklin Ferguson, New Zealand*

**I**n the Apostle Paul's letter to the Church at Philippi, he says, "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus (Timothy) shortly unto you, that I may also be of good comfort when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally (sincerely) care for your state. For all

seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Philippians 2:19-22) .

It is not "natural" in the strict sense of any of us to care for the state of our fellow-believers. Yet, through Divine grace, it is possible for some, even in these days, to care so sincerely and genuinely for God's beloved saints that it will have the appearance of a spontaneous flow from the heart, like the up-flow of an artesian well. Of such it will be blessedly true, "The hearts of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (Philemon 7, R. V.)

Such was Timothy's care for the saints. For him it seemed as "natural" to "spend and be spent" in seeking the soul-advancement of others, as for him to breathe or digest. But this condition can only come in sweet communion with God, and there realizing how precious to Him are the sheep and lambs of God's flock.

*There is an urgent call in these last days for such godly and disinterested men. The flock for which the good Shepherd gave His life, is pressingly in need of under-Shepherds of the Timothy character and of the sort described by the Apostle Peter, who "will feed the flock of 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 examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Peter 5:1-4).*

Often have we sighed before God because of the scarcity of "men" that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chronicles 12:32).

The qualifications for service among saints are stringent, so that one's steps tremble under the responsibility of it. "He giveth more grace," is however, an encouragement to a sincere soul to go on steadily in such needful work.

"A bishop (one who oversees God's flock, and may even follow the calling of a baker, draper, or farmer) then must be blameless (not sinless but without blame) the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous"—and let it be engraved permanently on the mind of all bishops, that which here follows—"one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? (1 Timothy 3:2-5). This last clause is a Divine conclusion, and is quite convincing to any instructed mind.

### The Personal Example

Furthermore, we are told in Titus 2:7, "In all things showing thyself a pattern." We all know the great value of an object lesson for impressing a thing on the mind." "Example is better than precept" is a true saying with a keen home-thrust. A disregard of conscience on so vital a matter as our example is a shocking state of things. Doth

not God know? Doth He not try the hearts? Will He not compare the public ministry with the manner of life? Hath He lost the "balances of the sanctuary" wherein He weighs and estimates with unerring exactitude? Verily, "the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all His goings" (Proverbs 5:21), But let it also be remembered that He will "show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9) .

An experienced laborer writing to us from abroad concerning the care of the sheep, remarked, "the building up of the saints of God is no sinecure" (an office of profit, or honor without duties attached) .. He who would desire the position of an overseer, will not meet with what is easy, pleasant and popular; he must be prepared for suffering, discouragement, perplexity and misunderstanding. If prepared for this path which true and noble men have trodden, then the Lord hath need of thee!

Besides the service of overseers in well established assemblies, there is the need of wise men with shepherd hearts, set at liberty to visit the little struggling companies of sheep here and there; some hidden away in the backwoods, some nestled on the lower slopes of mountain ranges, some in the up-country townships, some in the heart of great cities—all needing a sympathetic care for their state. To cast in one's lot with the people of God scattered abroad, for them to live and labor and cheerfully "endure all things for the elect's sake—this will bring its own special reward in the "crowning day" of which we sing.

In conclusion we would call attention to a verse of Scripture that should be remembered by all who care for the Lord's flock: "And there were in the same country shepherds ABIDING IN THE FIELD, keeping watch on their flocks by night" (Luke 2: 8) . They may, like Jacob, have it to say, "Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Genesis 31:40). In this thing let us also keep before us God's servant Moses, who, "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible," and who "had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:6, 27).

WIS December 1939

## Who Appoints Elders?

(A question and Answer in the Believer's Magazine)

Is it Scriptural to appoint Elders and Deacons in our Assemblies by a system of voting among the brethren and sisters, the number of votes being counted up and determining the result?

Surely such a question only needs to be asked, to be answered in the negative, for what possible basis could be found for such proceedings in the Scriptures? If there be an instance or direction for such a thing in the New Testament, we do not know it, and should

value the citation of chapter and verse.

The nearest approach to such a thing that could possibly be alleged would be the words, of the Apostles to the multitude of the disciples in Acts 6:3, and yet even here, there is not a word about voting by the saints or even appointment by them—the word of the Apostles was to the 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." It is to be noted that it was a question here of the appointment only of a certain kind, of ministers, namely managers of the daily distribution of monetary help to the widows in the assembly. They are usually called "deacons" though the word is not actually used except in the substantival form diakonia in verses 1 and 4; "ministration", "ministry of the Word" in verse 2, the verbal, diakonein—to serve—(from a verb diokein, to pursue a course). These seven then were chosen to distribute the gifts of the saints to the needy widows, as the givers of the gifts had a right to a little part at least in looking out suitable men to act as their almoners. But when it is a question of spiritual "deacons" v. 4, "Ministers of the Word," such as evangelists, pastors and teachers, who are the gifts of the Risen Christ, only He, the Giver, can "look out" and "appoint" such men.

As for elders, they come under a different category.. they are quite distinct from deacons, it not being a question of exercising gift, in the technical sense, but of godly care, oversight, feeding, and guiding the flock. In Acts 20, Paul exhorts the elders, "Feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

We never read of a church appointing its elders, anymore than a flock appoints its shepherds. But we do read in Acts 14:20-22, that when the Apostle Paul and Barnabas returned on their **second** visit to Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Antioch, then and only then "they ordained (or pointed out) elders in every church." Why this only on the second visit? were they not needed on the first? Surely, but it naturally took a little time for these men to come to the front, whom the Holy Ghost was fitting and calling to the work. The Apostles, I take it, only recognized His work and endorsed it. In writing later to Timothy and Titus, the Apostle gives the description of men called to the work of oversight or eldership. These chapters (1 Timothy 1:3, and Titus 1) form part of the sacred canon, and are today for the guidance of men, themselves leaders, who are to be on the look out for younger men, who are aspirants to eldership work, and encourage those who manifest the divine calling and qualification.

But it seems clear in all this that there is not the smallest precedent or direction for canvassing a church and registering the votes of the saints for certain men who are to take the place of "elders" and "deacons" of the church. Such a church will never fall "from its excellency," it **has already fallen**. It has exchanged dependence on the Lord of the Church to

give the needed gifts to His Church, for the carnal methods of a **degenerate Christendom**. May the Lord so encourage us all in the path of faith as that such devices of the flesh should not be so much as once named among us as becometh saints!

(Date Unknown)

## Joseph : God was with Him, pt. 2

*Alan Davidson, North Ireland*

**"God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions" (Acts 7:9,10)**

### **JOSEPH IS A BEAUTIFUL TYPE OF THE LORD JESUS IN GLORY**

"Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt" (Genesis 45:13). The Lord prayed: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24).

**T**here are seven great men in Genesis. Joseph, the seventh, is the man of suffering and glory. "Joseph" means "Increase". "Joseph is a fruitful bough" (Genesis 49:22).

Of the 12 tribes of Israel, two of the larger tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh descended directly from Joseph. The Lord Jesus suffered alone. In death "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter". In resurrection, "He shall see His seed" (Isaiah 53:7,10). In glory, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David" (Isaiah 9:7).

Joseph was the **SON**, received in figure from the dead. "And Israel said, Joseph my son is yet alive" (Genesis 45:28). Compare Romans 1:4, "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead".

Joseph was a **SHEPHERD** (Genesis 49:24). Compare Hebrews 13:20, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep".

Joseph was a **SERVANT** (Psalm 105:17). Our blessed Lord, "Made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7).

Joseph was the **SHEAF** in the field (Genesis 37:7). Christ is the wave sheaf. "The firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Joseph's dream was about the **SUN**, and the moon, and the eleven stars" (Genesis 37:9). Our glorified Lord is; "The root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16). To Israel; "Shall the SUN of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

Joseph dreamed of one who would be **SUPREME** in the Earthly and Heavenly Sphere. "We were binding sheaves in the field" (Genesis 37:7). Joseph would soon control the ingathering of the harvest in

seven plenteous years. This is Earthly; the Lord said, "The field is the world" (Matthew 13:38). Joseph dreamed about the sun and the moon and the eleven stars of the heavenly sphere (Genesis 37:9). Compare (Philippians 2:10), "That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth".

Joseph was the **STONE**. "The stone of Israel" (Genesis 49:24). This speaks of the arms of his hand being made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob. This may refer to the shelter, stability and rest he offered to Israel in the land of Goshen in the time of famine. Christ is spoken of as "The tried stone, elect and precious" (1 Peter 2:6). The "living stone", "the chief corner stone".

**SECRETS** were revealed by Joseph to the butler, the baker and the king. In John 4, the woman said, "Come, see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29).

All the depths of Joseph's **SORROW**, were answered in his **GLORY**. They put him in a pit: God put him in a palace. They stripped him of his coat: Pharaoh, "arrayed him in vestures of fine linen". They repudiated his sonship: He wore the signet of lordship. He was conveyed by camels as an item for sale: They made him to ride in the second chariot. He was a slave in a dungeon: He was the ruler of Egypt.

Peter wrote about; "The **SUFFERINGS** of Christ, and the **GLORY** that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). Beside the pit they sat down: at the Cross, "They sat down to watch Him there". They said, "We will see what will become of him". The Lord was silent in His sufferings at the hands of his accusers yet He glorified God before the high priest saying, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64).

Joseph was a man of God. Three times we read, "The Lord was with Joseph". Four times it is recorded that he, "prospered". He reigned in prison. The Saviour Himself entered the prison house of death. "He led captivity captive" (Ephesians 4:8). The sound of His voice caused consternation among the hosts of Hades. "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

## **THE INVESTITURE OF JOSEPH'S HONORS**

### **1. THE SIGNET RING (Genesis 41:42)**

This was the signet of authority, the seal of documents and decrees of law. The Risen Lord Jesus Christ broke the seal of Roman authority securing the tomb. An angel rolled back the stone, and in heaven's contempt for earth's authority, he sat on it. In Heaven (Revelation 5) there was none found worthy to break the seal but the Lamb upon the Throne. He broke the seal of judge-

ment, He bears the sword in battle, He will put in the sickle in the harvest and He will take the scepter in glory.

### **2. THE VESTURES OF FINE LINEN (Genesis 41:42)**

Joseph is associated with four garments. Joseph wore the garment of many **COLORS** given to him by his father. Joseph left a **CLEAN** garment in the hands of the temptress. Joseph wore **CHANGED** garments to appear before the king. Fine linen is the vesture of his **CHARACTER**. The Lord, "Was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). Jesus Christ, the Faithful witness, in the midst of the seven lampstands was; "Clothed with a garment down to the foot" (Revelation 1:13). Heaven will begin at His flawless, faultless, once pierced feet. "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad" (Psalm 45:8).

### **3. A GOLD CHAIN (Genesis 41:42)**

Psalm 105:18 indicates that once he wore an iron chain. The gold chain was the insignia of office. They brought "gold" when Immanuel was born. In life He manifested the gold of Divine Righteousness, the fidelity of His justice. "His Head is as the most fine gold". "He is altogether lovely" (Song of Songs 5:11,16).

### **4. THE CHARIOT (Genesis 41:43)**

The story is now of unimpeded progress, "Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:45). We read about seven plenteous years, when the earth brought forth by handfuls, food in the fields, food in the barns, and corn as the sand of the sea.

When he heard the words; "Joseph is yet alive"; "When he saw the wagons"; "The spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Genesis 45:26,27). It was (i) An unlikely story. For twenty years Jacob had mourned. "Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces" (Genesis 37:33). Jacob had deceived his father with the skin of a goat. Jacob himself was deceived by ten of his own sons with the blood of a goat. (ii) An unbelieving heart. "Jacobs heart fainted" (Genesis 45:26). The very men that caused his grief were now saying that; "Joseph is yet alive". Jacob knew that Reuben was "unstable". He said Simeon and Levi were "cruel". They said, "We are true men" (Genesis 42:11). They were deceitful liars, a bunch of hypocrites, they had deceived an old crippled father and watched him grief for all those years. How could he believe this story? (iii) An unmistakable proof. "He saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him" (Genesis 45:27). Those chariots covered in gilded gold, bearing the crests of Egypt and the insignia of Pharaoh; Jacob said; "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive" (Genesis 45:28).



When the Lord arose from the dead the disciples; “Knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9). It was most unlikely that they would forge the story. They saw Him, they heard Him, they touched Him, they ate with Him, they received many infallible proofs. They fervently preached Jesus and the resurrection in the book of Acts.

### 5. BOW THE KNEE (Genesis 41:43)

Joseph’s glory in Egypt is a little picture of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”. Things celestial, terrestrial and infernal shall bow and “Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

### 6. HIS NAME (Genesis 41:45)

Joseph’s Hebrew name means, “Revealer of secrets”. “These things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables ... saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:34,35). Pharaoh gave him the Egyptian name, “Zaphnath-paaneah” which means “Saviour of the world”; the world as then known of heathen Gentiles. With majestic authority the Risen Saviour commanded: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16:15).

“He gave him to wife Asenath”. Each of these names ends in “Nath”, which carries the idea that God lives and God speaks. This is recognition by a Gentile monarch that the God of the Hebrews exists, speaks and works.

### 7. A BRIDE

Some of the patriarchs had more than one wife. Joseph had only one bride to share his glory. He had a Gentile bride given to him before the seven lean years of Jacob’s trouble. The church is not found in the Old Testament but some prophetic pictures are suggestive.

**HIS BONES.** “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Hebrews 11:22). So ending the earthly story of a true Hebrew.

**HIS HEAD.** “The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: They shall be on the head of Joseph” (Genesis 49:26).

The last verse of Genesis states that “Joseph died” (50:26). All types, however beautiful, must fall far short of the Revelation of Jesus Christ Who said: “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, Behold, I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:18).

## God’s Dwelling Place

John Ritchie

**T**he first dwelling-place the Lord had upon earth was the Tabernacle in the wilderness, which was built according to a plan given to Moses on the Mount of God. Not a single knob or pin of all that structure was formed according to the mind of man: everything was designed by the divine Owner. The pattern was shown to Moses and he received full instructions regarding the making of each part. Again and again was he told to see that everything was made according to the pattern (Exodus 25:40; 26:30).

THEN when all had been formed and finished as God had commanded, “The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34). The Lord took up His abode in the Tent that had been formed according to His commandment. There He found His dwelling-place in the midst of His redeemed people and from thence streams of grace and blessing flowed.

Coming to New Testament times, we find that the Divine principle is the same. When the Church, composed of living stones (1 Peter 2:5) gathered out from nature’s quarries by the Gospel, was to be formed as God’s dwelling-place upon the earth, Paul was called to be a “wise master-builder” to lay the foundation, and to build up the structure according to a revelation he received from the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:3-11; 11:23), which other builders coming after him were taught to most carefully follow (1 Corinthians 11:1). This some of them observed (1 Corinthians 4:17), and others forsook (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

The power and blessing which flowed in and through the early churches had, as its source, the indwelling presence of God, which was then just as He desired it to be.

But when the inventions of men were brought in and the pattern as given by the Lord to His master-builder, Paul, was thrust aside to make room for the traditions of man, then the stream of blessing ceased to flow and the garden of the Lord became like a wilderness.

The question may be asked—that are we to do, where are we to go? The answer is—back to the old foundations, right away back to what God gave to be followed all through the present dispensation, by His people everywhere and always, whether they be few or many, weak or strong.

The pattern given by the Lord remains unrepeated, and is the only guide for church organization, fellowship, worship, ministry and order. If believers are to be together at all, it must be according to His own pattern, and so gathered, He has promised to be “in the midst” (Matthew 18:20).

*A Scriptural form of church order will not of itself keep souls in a right condition; but it does leave room for God to dwell among His people.*

## Assembly Elderhood, (outline)

I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 20:17, 28-29, Philemon 1:1, Hebrews 13:7, 17, I Peter 5:1-4  
(I Corinthians 12:28, Acts 11:30, 15:4, 6; John 21:16-17, Ephesians 4:11, James 5:14, I Thessalonians 5:12-15)

### 1. Elders and Who Raises them? Acts 20:28 (Compare Ezekiel 34.23)

No Apostles (Acts 14:23) so does this mean no elders?

Work of the Holy Spirit to bring to recognition, result of developed character and involvement in work.

### 2. Elders' Names

<u>Elders</u> (Presbuteroi)	Spiritual Maturity	Acts 14:23, 20:17, I Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5
<u>Bishops</u> (Overseers) (episkopoi)	Spiritual Work	Acts 20:28, Philemon 1:1, I Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:7, I Peter 5:2
<u>Shepherds</u> (Pastors)	Spiritual Capacity	Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11, I Peter 5:1-2

### 3. Elders' Qualifications

I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9

A. <u>Conduct</u>	Personal Morality:	Blameless, One wife man, Vigilant, Sober, Not covetous, Holy, Just
B. <u>Company</u>	Personal Maturity	Not a novice, given to hospitality, Able to convince gainsayers, Knowledgeable in Word, Able to use Word
C. <u>Character</u>	Patient Personality	Patient, Not contentious, sober, discreet
D. <u>Community Impact</u>	Public Integrity	Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of money, not self-willed, not soon angry, blameless in life having faithful children, having house under control, good report or testimony

### 4. Elders Recognized by the Assembly

I Timothy 5:22-25

How are they given public responsibility in the assembly? Election? Popularity? Recognition by work? Seriousness of determining who is an elder.

### 5. Elders' Work and Responsibility

**Not an OFFICE, but a WORK**

A. <u>Shepherding</u>	I Peter 5:2,4, Acts 20:28	Involves Care, visiting, encouraging, tending, consoling,...
B. <u>Watching</u>	Hebrews 13:17	Aware of danger, guarding from wrong doctrine or practices
C. <u>Leading</u>	I Thessalonians 5:12, I Timothy 5:17	Standing before, giving example in action, pattern
D. <u>Governing</u>	Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:3	Using authority of the Word to uphold doctrine and truths
E. <u>Laboring</u>	I Thessalonians 5:12	Wearying work, sacrificial, constantly toiling
F. <u>Guiding</u>	Acts 27:11, I Corinthians 12:28	As helmsman for ship, directing by ministry, teaching, example
G. <u>Accounting</u>	Titus 1:7, Hebrews 13:17	As Steward, responsible before God for welfare of assembly

See also Ezekiel 34:12-16, Acts 20 in the example of Paul himself in their midst, Luke 2:16 regarding shepherds.

### 6. Elders' Authority and Respect Received

Not as dictator (3 John 9-10, I Peter 5:3)

Authority by proper usage of the Word of God, living it with the respect of the saints in assembly.

Worthy of "double honor" I Timothy 5:17. Not a salary, but increased respect and practical help if needed.

Guarded from unfounded criticism (I Timothy 5:19)

#### THEIR RESPECT

- A. Know them who labor, are over you, admonish you (I Thessalonians 5:12)
- B. Esteem them highly for their work's sake
- C. Obey them and submit yourselves Hebrews 13:17

### 7. Elders' Reward

Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:4

## Assembly Ministry, or Service

I Timothy 3:8-11, Romans 16:1, Acts 6:1-7 (Romans 15:16)

**Synonyms in Scripture:** Servant (not bond servant), minister, deacon

Not a set office, but those who are functioning in work to the assembly. May be brethren or sisters.

### 1. Forms of Service Involved

Spiritual Service: Ministering the Word, teaching, serving the assembly. Requires Gift for the work.

Other forms of service? Acts 6: Responsibility to assist assembly in practical aspects of work also.

### 2. Qualifications for the Servants

Acts 6:1-7, I Timothy 3:8-11

Spiritual Exercise with reverence for divine things

Faithful knowledge of and consistent display of right doctrine

Life without blame or known fault before world or saints