



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 19**  
**1 Peter 5:1-5**  
**“Develop the Right Atmosphere”**



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**Greek NT**

5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. 5 ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις. πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

**La Biblia de las Américas**

1 Por tanto, a los ancianos entre vosotros, exhorto yo, anciano como ellos y testigo de los padecimientos de Cristo, y también participante de la gloria que ha de ser revelada: 2 pastoread el rebaño de Dios entre vosotros, velando por él, no por obligación, sino voluntariamente, como quiere Dios; no por la avaricia del dinero, sino con sincero deseo; 3 tampoco como teniendo señorío sobre los que os han sido confiados, sino demostrando ser ejemplos del rebaño. 4 Y cuando aparezca el Príncipe de los pastores, recibiréis la corona inmarcesible de gloria. 5 Asimismo, vosotros los más jóvenes, estad sujetos a los mayores; y todos, revestíos de humildad en vuestro trato mutuo, porque DIOS RESISTE A LOS SOBERBIOS, PERO DA GRACIA A LOS HUMILDES.

**NRSV**

1 Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. 5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

**NLT**

1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share his glory and his honor when he returns. As a fellow elder, this is my appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly -- not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example. 4 And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor. 5 You younger men, accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble.”

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**Introduction to Study**

When believers face intense and dangerous hostility because of their faith, who should they turn to? First of all, they should turn to God for wisdom and help in successfully coping with suffering. But additionally, Peter knew the central role that a community of faith could and should play in helping members cope. Pivotal to the success of the community is the quality of leadership in that community. If the church leaders are spiritual minded and are

following Christ's leadership, members can find encouragement and assistance from them in understanding how to respond to persecution. Thus Peter turns his attention to the leaders of the communities of faith with some very pointed instruction to help them position themselves for genuine ministry to the members.

This passage is somewhat related to a couple of passages in Paul's writings:<sup>1</sup>

**Titus 1:5-9.** 5 I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint **elders** in each town as I instructed you. 6 An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. 7 An elder must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. 8 He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. 9 He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

5 Τούτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ, καὶ καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν **πρεσβυτέρους**, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διαταξάμην, 6 εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἀνέγκλητος, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ, τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα. 7 δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθάδῃ, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ, 8 ἀλλὰ φιλόξενον, φιλάγαθον, σώφρονα, δίκαιον, ὄσιον, ἐγκρατῆ, 9 ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.

**1 Timothy 3:1-7.** 1 It is a true saying that if someone wants to be **an elder**, he desires an honorable responsibility. 2 For an elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. 4 He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? 6 An elder must not be a new Christian, because he might be proud of being chosen so soon, and the Devil will use that pride to make him fall. 7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not fall into the Devil's trap and be disgraced.

3.1 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἴ τις **ἐπισκοπῆς** ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ. 2 δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνδρα, νηφάλιον, σώφρονα, κόσμιον, φιλόξενον, διδασκικόν, 3 μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῆ, ἄμαχον, ἀφιλάργυρον, 4 τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος· 5 (εἰ δὲ τις τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου προστῆναι οὐκ οἶδεν, πῶς ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ἐπιμελήσεται;) 6 μὴ νεόφυτον, ἵνα μὴ τυφωθείς εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέσῃ τοῦ διαβόλου. 7 δεῖ δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἕξωθεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὄνειδισμὸν ἐμπέσῃ καὶ παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου.

First Peter touches on the role of spiritual leaders in the communities of faith. The three related passages by Paul also emphasize this responsibility.

In a world where pastors and other spiritual leaders are frequently getting into trouble by breaking the laws of the land and/or by moral failure, these texts have a vitally important message. And this is not only just for them, but is equally important for the rest of the church to understand as well.

## I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

As always, the background issues play an important role in the interpretive process. This is especially true for 5:1-5.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament lists two places where significant variations of readings occur that could impact the work of Bible translators.

In verse two, the phrase ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν (*seeing after not grudgingly but willingly according to God*) is varied in several ways by different copyists. The presence of the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες seems almost redundant to the thrust of ποιμάνατε (*pastor while seeing after...*).<sup>3</sup> And the evi-

<sup>1</sup>Also related is Paul's speech to the Ephesian leaders in Acts 20:17-38, and especially vv. 28-30.

<sup>2</sup>Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn't always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

<sup>3</sup>"It is difficult to decide if one should follow the authority of important witnesses such as  $\aleph^*$  (\* = original copyist's handwriting before the manuscript was corrected) and B, which do not have the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες, and regard the participle's presence in

dence is so divided that the UBS editors give inclusion of the participle a {C} rating indicating considerable uncertainty over whether or not it is original. Also uncertain is the inclusion of the prepositional phrase κατὰ θεόν (*according to God*).<sup>4</sup> Solid evidence for its inclusion is present especially in the earlier manuscripts, but not in the later ones, which most likely reflects later difficulty in understanding the meaning of the phrase that literally is “according to God’s will.”

In verse 3, one early and very important manuscript, Codex Vaticanus (*B*), has accidentally omitted the entire verse. No apparent explanation for this omission can be found beyond that the original copyist of *B* must have skipped over the phrase μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου thinking that he had already copied all the μη... ἀλλὰ expressions here.

The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition *Novum Testamentum Graece* adds five more variations to those listed above. In verse one, a few manuscripts (P<sup>33</sup> 1739 M) add the definite article τοὺς to πρεσβυτέρους, without altering the meaning; in some instances τοὺς replaces οὖν, thus detaching 5:1-4 from the preceding statements.<sup>5</sup> In five ἀλλήλοις is varied from “to one another” to “among one another” (ἐν ἀλλήλοις). But the shorter reading has much greater support and should be preferred.<sup>6</sup> These two examples illustrate the minor impact that these variations have on the meaning of the text.

Thus the process of copying this passage over the centuries has remained stable and the text is certain.

**Internal History.** In the background of this passage is the issue of labeling spiritual leaders. This in turn raises some questions about how congregations in the first century world functioned and were organized.<sup>7</sup> most witnesses as an exegetical expansion (made perhaps in accordance with 2:25). Alternatively, the shorter text, followed by RSV and Seg, may be the result of a deliberate omission, prompted either by stylistic considerations (namely, that after ποιμάνετε [*tend the flock*], the word ἐπισκοποῦντες is unnecessary) or by ecclesiastical conviction (namely, that Peter could never have admonished presbyters [v. 1] to exercise the function of bishops). In order to represent the balance of external evidence and of the uncertainty of whether copyists may have added or omitted this participle, ἐπισκοποῦντες has been put in brackets to indicate a certain doubt that it belongs in the text. If the longer reading is followed, the presence of ἐπισκοποῦντες serves to show that ‘shepherding the flock’ means that the elders are to oversee and care for the needs of the congregation (Michaels, 1 Peter, p. 283). As Jobs correctly states, ‘Fortunately, neither omission nor inclusion substantially changes the meaning of Peter’s admonition’ (1 Peter, p. 310).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 490.]

<sup>4</sup>“The phrase κατὰ θεόν, which is read by a variety of witnesses representing several types of text, is omitted in a few uncials and in most minuscules, perhaps because copyists had difficulty understanding its precise meaning (that is, “according to [the will of] God”). Other renderings of this phrase include “as God would have you do it” (NRSV) and “as God wants” (NJB).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 490-91.]

<sup>5</sup>“MS variations reflect scribal questions about the connection of this statement with what immediately precedes (i.e., the significance of οὖν, ‘therefore’). The majority of later MSS (including P and Ψ) substitute τοὺς for οὖν (i.e., ‘To the elders who are among you’), while a few others (including κ) conflate the two readings (i.e., ‘To the elders, therefore, who are among you’). The effect of the substitution is to eliminate the necessity of seeking any real connection to the preceding context. Yet the earliest and best MSS (including P<sup>72</sup> A B) retain the more difficult reading οὖν, and even the conflated text of κ bears witness to its presence at an early stage of the tradition. οὖν, ‘therefore,’ is clearly original and raises the pointed question of how the appeal of 5:1-4 follows logically from 4:19 in particular or from 4:17-19 or 4:12-19 more generally.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 276.]

<sup>6</sup>“Instead of ἀλλήλοις, ‘toward each other,’ some MSS (P<sup>72</sup> and others) have ἐν ἀλλήλοις, ‘among each other,’ while the majority (including P) insert ὑποτασσόμενοι after the pronoun, yielding the translation, ‘clothe yourselves with humility, being subject to each other’; cf. Eph 5:21). The simple ἀλλήλοις (κ B OL most vg MSS and others), however, is the most strongly attested reading and is clearly to be preferred.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 277.]

<sup>7</sup>“*The Service and Organization of the Church.* We conclude the topic of the biblical teaching on the church by briefly calling attention to its service and organization. Five observations emerge from the relevant data. First, the ministry of the church centers on its usage of spiritual gifts (*charismata*), which are given to believers by God’s grace and for his glory, as well as for the good of others ( Rom 12:3 ; Eph 4:7-16 ; etc.). Second, every believer possesses a gift of the Spirit ( 1 Cor 12:7 ; Eph 4:7 ; etc.). Third, it is through the diversity of the gifts that the body of Christ matures and is unified ( Rom 12:4 ; 1 Cor 12:12-31 ; Eph 4:17-18 ). Fourth, although there was organized leadership in the New Testament church (elders, 1 Tim 3:1-7 ; [also called pastors and shepherds, see Acts 20:17 Acts 20:28 ; 1 Peter 5:1-4 ; etc.] and deacons, 1 Tim 3:8-13 ), there does not seem to have been a gap between the ‘clergy’ and ‘laity.’ Rather, those with the gift of leadership are called to equip all the saints for the work of the ministry ( Eph 4:7-16 ). Fifth, spiritual gifts are to be exercised in love ( 1 Cor. 13 ).” [C. Marvin Pate, “Church, the,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical*

This issue has importance because most church organizational charts today would not resemble one drawn up from first century Christian practice.

Several dynamics were at work in apostolic Christianity that are not present in Christianity today, as well as the opposite.

a) *Congregations until the fourth century did not meet in their own buildings designed for Christian worship.*<sup>8</sup> Most ‘churches’ met in private homes in small groups of one to four dozen people.<sup>9</sup> Thus in large cities such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome and other places, the Christian movement would be composed of numerous such groups meeting all around the city and the nearby region. Romans 16:1-20 reflects the presence of several such groups in the city of Rome by the mid-50s of the first century. The primary term for church or congregation, ἐκκλησία,<sup>10</sup> can be used to refer to individual house



*Theology]*

<sup>8</sup>The Edict of Milan in 313 AD was a decisive turning point when Roman emperor Constantine issued the decree in the western empire and also by Licinius, who ruled in the East, authorizing Christian churches to own and construct their own property and building.

<sup>9</sup>“Three great events in the early history of Christianity took place in a Jerusalem house: the Lord’s supper (Mark 14:12–26), the appearances of Jesus to the Apostles after His Resurrection (John 20:14–29), and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). These events are so important that we must want to know more about that house. Let us do some detective work upon it.

“First, do we know that all three passages refer to the same house? Mark describes it as having a guest-room (Mark 14:14), large and upstairs (v. 15), for Jesus and His Apostles. According to Acts 1:12, 13, after the Ascension, the Apostles ‘returned ... and went up to the upper room where they were staying’. And it was a very big room, because 120 people gathered with the Apostles there (v. 15). Acts 2 begins with the Twelve ‘all together in one place’. No change of place is mentioned, and John merely says, ‘the doors being shut where the disciples were’ (John 20:19), which seems to mean ‘where they were staying’. So the three passages may well refer to the same house.....

“Other house-churches are mentioned in the New Testament, with the names of the people in whose houses they met, e.g. at Philippi (Acts 16:40), Corinth (Acts 18:7), Rome (Rom. 16:5; 16:14; 16:15), Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19), Laodicea (Col. 4:15), Colossae (Philemon 1 and 2) (see p. 99). Such phrases as ‘the brethren who are with them’, ‘the saints’ (i.e., fellow Christians) ‘who are with them’ seem to mean ‘who are in their house-church’. Several of these house-churches, like the one in Jerusalem, were in the homes of women, probably widows. In some cases both husband and wife are named. Where other names are added, they probably represent grown-up members of the family. In one house-church only men are mentioned.”

[John Foster and W. H. C. Frend, *The First Advance: Church History 1, AD 29-500*, Rev. ed. with additions (London: SPCK, 1991-), 20-21.]

<sup>10</sup>This word ἐκκλησία, literally means “called out ones” and designates an assembly of people gathered together for some specific purpose. These purposes can range from a regularly summoned legislative body (cf. Acts 19:39), to a casual gathering of people (Acts 19:32, 40) to a religious gathering of people that can designate a gathering of Israelites in the Old Testament (Heb. 2:12; Acts 7:38) or a gathering of Christians (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:18). This Christian gathering can take place in the home of a patron (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philm. 2). The word can designate a congregation as the totality of Christians living and meeting in a particular locality or larger geographical area, but not necessarily limited to one meeting place: Ac 5:11; 8:3; 9:31 11:26; 12:5; 15:3; 18:22; 20:17; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:16 etc. Often the geographical location is specified:

More definitely of the Christians in **Jerusalem** Ac 8:1; 11:22; cp. 2:47 v.l.; 15:4, 22; **Cenchreae** Ro 16:1; cp. vs. 23; **Corinth** 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Cl ins; 47:6; AcPICor 1:16; **Laodicea** Col 4:16; Rv 3:14; **Thessalonica** 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1; **Colossae** Phlm subscr. v.l. Likew. w. other names: Rv 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7; IEph ins; 8:1; IMg ins; ITr ins; 13:1; IRo 9:1; IPhd ins; 10:1; ISm 11:1; Pol ins. Plural: Ac 15:41; 16:5; Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 7:17; 2 Cor 8:18f, 23f; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Rv 2:7, 11, 17, 23, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 22:16; the Christian community in **Judea** Gal 1:22; 1 Th 2:14; **Galatia** Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 16:1; **Asia** vs. 19; Rv 1:4, and cp. vss. 11 and 20; **Macedonia** 2 Cor 8:1. κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν in each individual congregation or assembly Ac 14:23 (on the syntax cp. OGI 480, 9 [s. 1 above]: ἵνα τιθῆνται κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν in order that they [the statues] might be set up at each [meeting of the] ἐ.). On κατὰ τ. οὔσαν ἐ. Ac 13:1 cp. εἰμί 1 end.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 304.]

It should not be surprising that in the expanding geographical specification that these boundaries could be extended to include the known world.

**c. the global community of Christians, (universal) church** (s. AvHarnack, *Mission* I4 420 n. 2 on **Ac 12:1**): **Mt 16:18** (OBetz, ZNW 48, ’57, 49–77: Qumran parallels; s. HBraun, *Qumran I*, ’66, 30–37); **Ac 9:31** (but s. 3bβ); **1 Cor 6:4**; **12:28**; **Eph 1:22**; **3:10, 21**; **5:23ff, 27, 29, 32** (HSchlier, *Christus u. d. Kirche im Eph 1930*; also *ThBl* 6, 1927, 12–17); **Col 1:18, 24**; **Phil 3:6**; B 7:11; Hv 2, 2, 6; 2, 4, 1 (with the depiction of the church as an elderly lady cp. Ps.-Demetr. 265 where Hellas, the homeland, is represented as λαβοῦσα γυναικὸς σχῆμα); 3, 3, 3; IEph 5:1f and oft.—The local assembly or congregation as well as the universal church is more specif. called ἐ. τοῦ θεοῦ or ἐ. τ. Χριστοῦ. This is essentially Pauline usage, and it serves to give the

church groups such as the one Philemon led in his home at Colossae, τῆ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ, (Philm. 2). Or, the noun can refer collectively to all the house church groups in a city as the Christian community, as ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ (the church of the Laodiceans) in Col. 4:16.

b) *Leadership models in early Christianity were evolving out of a beginning Jewish model.*<sup>11</sup> Spiritually a congregation belongs to Christ as a visible expression of His body (cf. Rom. 16:16). From the human standpoint the beginning model was the Twelve Apostles, as commissioned by Christ (cf. Luke 6:13-16). The early chapters of Acts (chaps 1-7) make this very clear when the ἐκκλησίᾳ was centered in Jerusalem. When others began coming to Christ and forming their assemblies elsewhere, the apostles felt compelled to investigate these groups in order to insure they were following the teachings of Christ, as Acts chapters 8-11 specify in the provinces of Judea and Samaria.

Acts 12 signals a key turning point. With Roman government persecution coming from Herod Agrippa, the role of the apostles began shifting from leadership over the church in Jerusalem to a broader regional leadership role based in Jerusalem. But one would be mistaken to view this in terms of a hierarchical structure. Their leadership over churches outside Jerusalem was by mutual agreement, as Paul makes abundantly clear in Gal. 2:1-14 when he traveled to Jerusalem to secure the apostles support for the Gentile ministry and then later at Antioch severely reprimanded for his hypocrisy toward Gentile believers at Antioch. The opposition to the apostolic gospel evidenced in many of Paul's later writings along with the letters of John and Jude clearly reflect that not all the churches accepted the leadership role of the apostles.

Very likely local leaders in the house church groups even in Jerusalem emerged earlier, but Luke does not provide clear indication of this in this part of Acts; 11:30 is the first reference to local leaders in Jerusalem. But clearly by the Jerusalem council meeting in the late 40s, as described in Acts 15, a local leadership had emerged along side the regional leadership of the apostles. James speaks as the leader of the "elders" who are leaders of the various house church groups in Jerusalem, while Peter speaks as the leader of the apostles.

The nature and role of local church leaders at this point (as referenced in Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4) seems to have been modeled on their Jewish heritage, especially in the synagogue, as Luke's earlier use of the term 'elders' for Jewish leaders signals: cf. Acts 4:5 ([their rulers and elders and scribes](#)), 4:8 ([Rulers and elders of the people](#)), 4:23 ([the chief priests and the elders](#)), and 6:12 ([the elders and the scribes](#)).<sup>12</sup> The current Gk. term its Christian coloring and thereby its special mng.:

a. ἐ. τοῦ θεοῦ (Orig., C. Cels. 1, 63, 22) **1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Th 1:4; 1**

**Ti 3:5, 15; Ac 20:28**; ITr 2:3; 12:1; IPhld 10:1; ISm ins al.

β. ἐ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Orig., C. Cels. 5, 22, 14) **Ro 16:16**.

γ. both together ἐ. ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ **1 Th 1:1**.

δ. ἡ ἐ. ἡ πρώτη ἡ πνευματικὴ ἡ πρώτη, spiritual church (conceived in a Platonic sense as preexistent) 2 Cl 14:1; ἐ. ζῶσα the living church the body of Christ vs. 2; ἡ ἁγία ἐ. Hv 1, 1, 6; 1, 3, 4; ἡ καθολικὴ ἐ. ISm 8:2; ἡ ἁγία καὶ καθολικὴ ἐ. MPol ins; ἡ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην καθολικὴ ἐ. 8:1; 19:2; ἐν σῶμα τῆς ἐ. ISm 1:2.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 304.]

One should note that the 'universal' church in New Testament thought is not a vague abstraction, but rather the envisioning of all the believers in all the house church groups over the world as a single body anticipating coming together in Heaven as the bride of Christ. One cannot 'belong' to the universal church, except by being a part of a local believing community.

<sup>11</sup>The synagogue model grew out of the earlier Jewish community governance pattern during the interbiblical period, as is noted: "The older communal order of the local Jewish community is continued in the constitution of the synagogue, → συναγωγή. To the local board, usually made up of 7 members, there corresponds in places with a separate Jewish cultic community the synagogal council. The title *πρεσβύτεροι* is also perpetuated for the leaders of the community and the disciplinary body of the synagogue, cf. Lk. 7:3.<sup>55</sup> Yet it is worth noting that the titular use of *πρεσβύτεροι* is much less prominent in the synagogue of the diaspora in the first centuries A.D. The more frequent are titles common in Gk. constitutional usage (*γερουσία, γερουσιάρχης, ἄρχοντες, φροντιστής, γραμματεὺς, προστάτης*).<sup>56</sup>" [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:660-61.]

<sup>12</sup>The peculiar problem of the use of *πρεσβύτερος* in Judaism and Christianity arises out of the twofold meaning of the word, which can be employed both as a designation of age and also as a title of office. The two meanings cannot always be distinguished with clarity, though age is plainly the only sense in Gn. 18:11 f.; 19:4, 31, 34; 24:1; 35:29 and many other passages. The word can still be used for this in Christian writings, Jn. 8:9; Ac. 2:17 (Jl. 2:28 opp. *νεανίσκοι*); 1 Tm. 5:1, 2; 1 Pt. 5:5 (opp. *νεώτερος*) etc.; cf. also *πρεσβύτεροι* for the forefathers in Hb. 11:2. On the other hand, passages like Mt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3, 5 (*παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων*) show that *πρεσβύτεροι* can be bearers of the normative doctrinal tradition, and 1 Pt. 5:5; 1 Cl., 1, 3 are evidence that the term can

term elders, πρεσβύτεροι, is commonly used by Luke to designate one segment of Jewish leaders.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the evidence is so limited for the beginning Christian century that precise understanding of their role in both the synagogue and Jewish life generally is not clear.<sup>14</sup> The Jewish Mishnah tractate Sanhedrin describes

denote a place of dignity in the community. The titular significance is no less clear when πρεσβύτεροι are members of a local authority (γερονσία), e.g., the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem (→ 658, 44 ff.), other governing bodies (→ 660, 27 ff.), or the synagogues (→ 660, 39 ff.), or when they are the leaders of the Christians churches duly appointed as such and charged with specific functions.” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:654.]

<sup>13</sup>“Prominent member of both Jewish and early Christian communities. In the OT, ‘elder’ usually translates the Hebrew word *zagen* from a root that means ‘beard’ or ‘chin.’ In the NT, the Greek word is *presbuteros*, which is transliterated in English as ‘presbyter’ and from which the word ‘priest’ was derived.” [Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 472.]

<sup>14</sup>Unfortunately little mention is made in the New Testament about the leadership of a local Jewish synagogue. The term ἀρχισυναγωγός, synagogue ruler, is the only term that surfaces in the New Testament. We do know the names of three of them, Γαίριος, Κρίσπος and Σωσθένης:

**ἀρχισυναγωγός, ου, ό** (s. συναγωγή; Just., D. 137, 2 exx. fr. ins and lit. in Schürer II 434–36 and III 100f; Sb 5959, 3 [time of Augustus]; SEG VIII, 170, 2ff; on this ZNW 20, 1921, 171; Dssm., LO 378–80 [LAE 439–41] w. lit.) **leader/president of a synagogue**, a term found also in polytheistic cult (Poland, *Gesch.* 355–57) and given simply as a title (Schürer II 435; for ins evidence relating to Jewish women s. BBrooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*, ’82; men and women: New Docs 4, 214–20), in our lit. only w. ref. to the Jewish synagogue, of an official whose duty it was esp. to take care of the physical arrangements for the worship services (Hebr. אֲרִיִּסְטוֹטוֹן מְשִׁיבֵי מִקְדָּשׁ) **Mk 5:22, 35f, 38; Lk 8:49; 13:14; Ac 13:15; 14:2 D; 18:8, 17**. Those named are Γαίριος, Κρίσπος and Σωσθένης; s. these entries.—WThieling, *Der Hellenismus in Kleinafrika* 1911, 76; TRajak/DNoy, *JRS* 83, ’93, 75–93.—M-M. TW. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 139.]

From every indication, the central responsibility of this person was to make all the necessary arrangements for the sabbath services each week in the synagogue building or meeting place.

**RULERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE** [Gk *archisynagōgos* (ἀρχισυναγωγός)]. A title of honor for one of several synagogue officials attested in ancient Jewish, Christian, and pagan literary sources and in inscriptions. “Ruler of the synagogue” is the most common Jewish title associated with the synagogue in antiquity. Other titles include “ruler” (*archōn*), “elder” (*presbyteros*), “mother of the synagogue (*mater synagogae*), and “father of the synagogue” (*pater synagogae*).

Although we have no catalogue of the functions of the “ruler of the synagogue,” his or her duties seem to have spanned a range of practical and spiritual leadership roles. The “ruler of the synagogue” chose Torah readers and prayer leaders, invited others to preach, contributed to the building and restoration of the synagogue, and represented the congregation to the outside world. Several inscriptions cite women as “rulers of the synagogue.” Children are occasionally called “rulers of the synagogue,” which may mean the title was sometimes hereditary.

The sources show no consensus on the practice of selecting an *archisynagōgos*. Some “rulers of the synagogue” were appointed, some elected, and some inherited the office. Some served for one or more terms, while some held the office for life. Certain synagogues had more than one ruler.

The earliest literary evidence for the title comes from the NT. Mark 5:22 and Luke 8:49 tell of the *archisynagōgos* Jairus, whose daughter is healed by Jesus. Luke 8:41 calls him an *archōn tēs synagōgēs* while Matt 9:18, 23 read only *archōn*. However, Roman inscriptions show that *archisynagōgos* and *archōn* were distinct offices, though they could be held by the same person. Other NT references show the “ruler of the synagogue” as regulating worship or acting as representative of the congregation to outside authorities (Luke 13:14; Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17).

Assuming the Hebrew term *r.š hknst* is equivalent to *archisynagōgos*, we find the earliest Jewish references in the Mishnah (m. Yoma 7:1; m. Soṭa 7:7, 8). The ruler (or head) of the synagogue is accorded honor in connection with the reading of the Torah. One head is mentioned by name in t. Ter. 2:13. The *r.š hknst* should abstain from reading from the Torah unless no one else is able, according to t. Meg. 4:21. Later rabbinic references support the notion that the *r.š hknst* held a position of esteem as leader of an assembly.

Patristic remarks also portray the *archisynagōgos* as a leader (Just. Dial. 137; Epiph. Pan. 30.18.2; Pall. V.Chrys. 15). Pagan examples show that outsiders were familiar with the term *archisynagōgos* as designating a leader of the Jews (Vopiscus *Life of Saturnius* 8; S.H.A. 3.399). Detractors of Alexander Severus ridiculed him by calling him “the Syrian *archisynagōgos*” (Lampridius, *Life of Alexander Severus* 28, S.H.A. 2.234–35). In the 4th century, laws transmitted in the Theodosian Code suggest that the *archisynagōgos* was one of the leaders who represented the Jewish community (Cod. Theod. 16.8.4, 13, 14). In addition to numerous literary references, over thirty inscriptions from disparate locales, dating from before 70 C.E. and on into the Byzantine era, employ the title *archisynagōgos*.

[David Noel Freedman, vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 841–42.]

The building was a multi-purposed facility and both the Greek labels (synagogue and proseuche) and the Hebrew / Aramaic

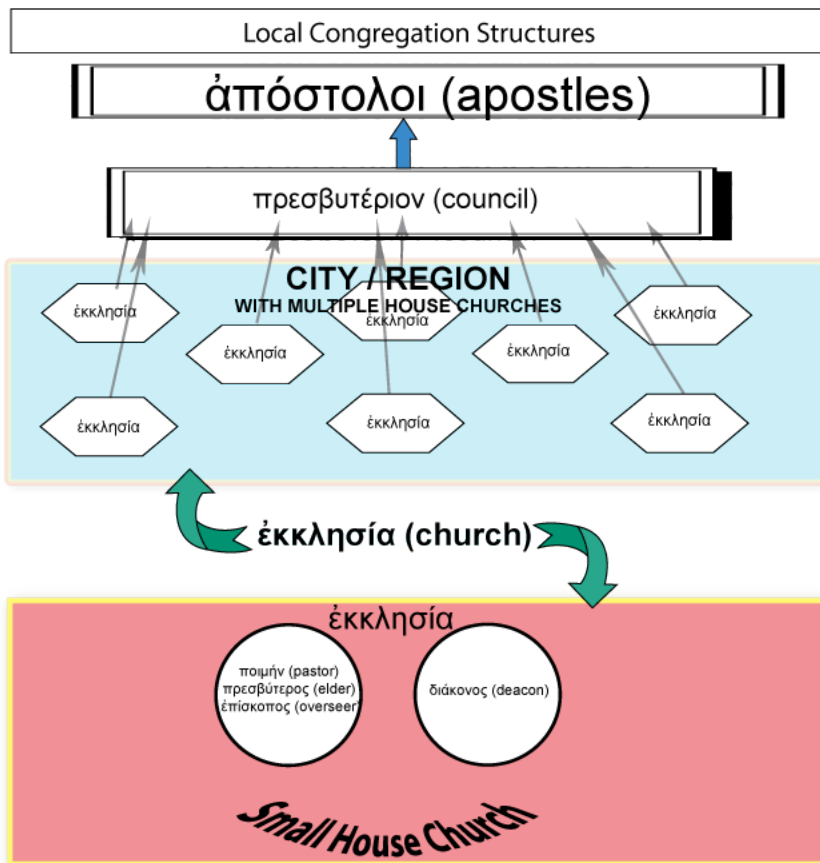
their role mostly from a second century AD onward perspective as focused on protecting the Torah and the scribal traditions from misinterpretation. The ultimate group of elders was the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, although evidence suggests that ‘elders’ were distinguished from the priests and referred to representatives of the leading aristocratic families with influence on the Sanhedrin mostly as advisors to the priests who made the decisions under the leadership of the high priest.<sup>15</sup>

c) *In the Pauline churches with both Jews and Gentiles, the influence of the Greco-Roman culture is present in the evolution of church leadership models certainly by mid-first century.* The two sets of local leadership terms πρεσβύτερος (elder), ἐπίσκοπος (overseer), and ποιμήν (pastor), along with διάκονος (deacon), all had backgrounds in the non-religious world of the first century. By the end of the first Christian century this influence is unmistakable, and ultimately corrupting to the earlier models in the church. With the expansion of Christianity into the non-Jewish world largely through the ministry of the apostle Paul in the middle of the first century, the Jewish heritage of the synagogue model began merging with influences from the surrounding Greco-Roman culture. Given the growing impact of local congregations being led by non-Jews the meaning of the leadership terms naturally gravitated away from their Jewish definitions and toward the Greco-Roman definitions.

What were those influences? In the Greco-Roman culture, the adjective πρεσβύτερος (comp. of πρέσβυς, old) was used as a noun for a title to denote the president of an assembly of citizens in the constitution of Sparta and in Egypt and elsewhere the plural πρεσβύτεροι shows up in inscriptions as a title of a committee or group of leaders. The leadership of trade guilds along with other social and business organizations were often designed as πρεσβύτεροι.<sup>16</sup> Thus the non-Jewish Christians coming into the churches would naturally labels (bêt kneset, bêt tēpillâ, bêt midraš; house of gathering, of prayer, of study) reflect this varied use of the building. Also important to note that a distinctive ‘synagogue building’ did not emerge as the central meeting place of Jews until about a century after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 AD). Prior to that some buildings were designated as synagogues but often large private homes were the gathering places for Jews and were designated as synagogues.

<sup>15c</sup>In the course of the fluctuating history of this body, which was dominated by party conflicts, the term πρεσβύτεροι undergoes a clear change. At the outset it is used for all the members of the γερονσία.<sup>43</sup> Only gradually does it become the special term for lay members as distinct from the representatives of the priestly families, from whom the high-priest and president of the Sanhedrin was chosen, and also from the theological group of the γραμματεῖς. It is obvious that the direction of the Sanhedrin never lay in the hands of the πρεσβύτεροι. Yet one may assume that the elders, as representatives of the privileged patrician families in Jerusalem, usually followed the lead of the priestly Sadducees.<sup>44</sup> Certainly the many synonyms used to describe the elders in Jos., NT and Talmud make it plain beyond question that the elders had a seat and a voice in the Sanhedrin as lay nobles.<sup>45</sup> Their weakness in relation to the other two groups may be seen from the NT, which usually calls the members of the Sanhedrin the ἀρχιερεῖς, γραμματεῖς, πρεσβύτεροι in this order (the ἀρχιερεῖς were still put first even when they had lost actual control to the γραμματεῖς).<sup>46</sup> [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:659.]

<sup>16c</sup>Esp. important for bibl. usage is the fact that in the constitution of Sparta πρέσβυς occurs as a political title to denote the



Notes:

1. The term ἐκκλησία means 'assembly' at different levels: a) house church; b) city/regional; c) all believers.
2. Two leadership groups gradually emerge: a) Pastor/Elder/Overseer (synonyms), and b) Deacon.
3. At the city/region level the individual house church leaders collectively make up the leadership of the Christian community in the city and are called the πρεσβυτέριον (council). James in Acts 15 illustrates this.
4. The terms ποιμήν (pastor), πρεσβύτερος (elder), ἐπίσκοπος (overseer) διάκονος (deacon) could apply to individuals at any of these levels.
5. Leadership labels were functional rather than positional. Spiritual gifts (τὰ πνευματικά / τὰ χαρίσματα) for leadership focus on communicating spiritual concepts (teaching / preaching) and ministry actions to help others. Thus a great deal of overlapping occurs in terms of what leaders do. As 1 Peter 5:1-5 makes clear, they don't 'boss' others around.

have understood out of their non-Christian background that the term πρεσβύτεροι was a leadership designation title, as such it probably had little to do with age. Specific duties would have to be determined by the ἐκκλησία. In their heritage, the nature and decisions of the group determined specific duties whether the group was one of τῶν ἐφόρων, νομοφυλάκων, βιδέων, συναρχίας etc.

The noun ἐπίσκοπος, along with its derivatives,<sup>17</sup> had extensive use outside of Judaism and Christianity in the ancient world. The noun took on the title of caretaker, protector, out of its etymological background.<sup>18</sup> When new Gentile Christians came into church life and heard the label ἐπίσκοπος, they naturally identified the person with this title as one charged with the responsibility of seeing after them in their needs. When they read 1 Timothy 3:1-2 that anyone seeking a ἐπισκοπῆς, 'role of caregiver,' must then be a good ἐπίσκοπος, 'caregiver,' the nature of this leadership role in the local congregation would have had a definite meaning. Not until well into the second century did the title switch meanings and become a title of regional authority over a group of churches.

Closely related to this term is ποιμήν, 'shepherd,' 'pastor.'<sup>19</sup> Here the noun in religious usage specifies a leader of a group within Jewish and Christian usage. Because shepherds and shepherding did not play as significant a role in the central and western Mediterranean world as it did in the eastern Mediterranean, this leadership label is not used as often. But the image of a shepherd taking care of his flock was well understood all across the Mediterranean world. In the Semitic background of the eastern Mediterranean, a ποιμήν was often the title for the ruling king as well as for the gods.<sup>20</sup> Because this term was not commonly used to president of a college: τῶν ἐφόρων, IG, 5, 1, 51, 27; 6, 552, 11; νομοφυλάκων, 6, 555b, 19; βιδέων (ephebes), 6, 556, 6; συναρχίας (assembly of magistrates), 6, 504, 16. Quite independent is the use of πρεσβύτεροι as a title in Egypt inscr. and pap. (Ptolemaic and imperial period).<sup>4</sup> Here committees and colleges of various kinds are entitled πρεσβύτεροι: the freely elected board of associated national husbandmen (πρεσβύτεροι γεωργῶν), BGU, I, 85, 9 ff.; P. Tebt., I, 13, 5; 40, 17 f.; 43, 8; 50, 20; P. Gen., 42, 15; P. Lond., II, 255, 7, also corporations: πρεσβύτεροι τῶν ἀλλυροκόπων (guild of millers in Alexandria, 6 πρεσβύτεροι with a ἱερεὺς at their head, 3rd cent. B.C.).<sup>5</sup> πρεσβύτεροι also appear in village government: πρεσβύτεροι τῆς κώμης.<sup>6</sup> They have administrative and judicial functions. Their number varies (2, 4, even more than 10). Their period of office is limited to a year. It is important that πρεσβύτεροι is also a title among the priests of the "great god Socnopaios" (BGU, I, 16, 5 f.). The ref. is to an executive committee of 5 or 6 members alternating each yr. and charged with supervision of the finances and negotiations with the authorities. The members are not old men (the text speaks of presbyters of 45, 35 and 30 yrs. of age).<sup>7</sup> Rather different are the richly attested πρεσβύτεροι of Gk. societies.<sup>8</sup> Here the word is not a title; the πρεσβύτεροι are not office-bearers but senior groups of various kinds (as distinct from junior groups), cf. the ὕμφδοι πρεσβύτεροι of an inscr. found in Radanovo<sup>9</sup> and the many clubs of men belonging to the senate.<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere πρεσβύτεροι is used to denote the age of one guild as compared to a younger one:<sup>11</sup> σύνοδο· τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ πρεσβυτέρων ἐγδοχέων (carriers), Ditt. Or., I, 140, 7 ff.: πρεσβύτεροι γέρδιοι (weavers)<sup>12</sup> or τέκτονες πρεσβύτεροι.<sup>13</sup> [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:653.]

<sup>17</sup>ἐπίσκοπος - overseer; ἐπισκοπή - visit; ἐπισκέπτομαι / ἐπισκοπέω - I look after, visit.

<sup>18</sup>“The word ἐπίσκοπος is best rendered ‘overseer’ or ‘watch.’ From this original sense there develops a twofold use which only reunites in a stronger form on Christian soil. In Gk. ἐπίσκοπος is first used a. with a true understanding of the ‘onlooker’ as ‘watcher,’ ‘protector,’ ‘patron.’ His activity then takes the form of the different senses of ἐπισκέπτομαι, and esp. ἐπισκοπέω, in a gracious looking down upon the one protected and in care for him. Therewith the word ἐπίσκοπος comes to be used b. as a title to denote various offices. The official activities thus described vary, and are usually not too important. In this sense, the word has no religious significance, but is used almost exclusively for very secular appointments with technical and financial responsibilities. On the other hand, behind the sense of ‘watcher’ or ‘protector’ is a religious conception expressed in the fact that it is usually gods who bear this designation.” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:608-09]

<sup>19</sup>Derivative words are ποιμήν (shepherd), ἀρχιποίμην (chief shepherd), ποιμαίνω (I shepherd), ποίμνη (flock), ποίμνιον (flock).

<sup>20</sup>“Already on Sumerian royal inscr. the king (from Lugal-zaggisi) is described as the shepherd appointed by deity.<sup>6</sup> In Babylonian and Assyrian *re’û* (‘shepherd’) is a common epithet for rulers and the verb *re’û* (‘to pasture’) is a common figure of speech for ‘to rule.’<sup>7</sup> Courtly style honours the king with this title, which is combined with a whole number of recurrent attributes; on inscr. the king also uses it of himself as the one divinely chosen to bring salvation. Gathering the dispersed, righteous government and care for the weak are marks of the shepherd function of the ruler. Gods, too, bear the title of shepherd.<sup>8</sup> In Egypt<sup>9</sup> the image of the ruler of the world to come (usually Osiris or the dead king as Osiris), who, as a herd tends his flock, protects his subjects (as stars), is already common in the royal funerary (or pyramid) texts of the ancient kingdom, e.g., ‘thou hast taken them up in thine arms as a herd his calves,’<sup>10</sup> or the god of the underworld is said to be ‘thy herd who is behind thy calves.’<sup>11</sup> From the early Middle Kingdom (in the first interim period) the image of the king as the shepherd of his subjects is then a favourite one in literature; he is, e.g., a ‘herd for all the people’ or the ‘herd who watches over his subjects.’<sup>12</sup> The same metaphor is used for the gods; thus Amun is ‘the

designate leaders in a Christian congregation during the first century,<sup>21</sup> the title would not have been heard as often as the others, but the verbal expression ποιμαίνω “to shepherd” in the sense of taking care of the congregation as the flock of God would have been heard, and easily understood from the background image of a shepherd.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps one reason for the limited use of this label is the negative image that shepherds had acquired by the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>23</sup> The Jewish romanticized role of king David as a shepherd from a bygone Israelite rural culture stands as the primary basis for the positive image of a shepherd in the New Testament, despite the very negative image of contemporary shepherds in the first Christian century. In a growing Gentile oriented Christianity with diminishing connections to its Jewish roots, the contemporary negative image would have been the initial image when Gentiles heard a spiritual leader called a ποιμήν, a term equated with crook and thief.

d) *With the death of the last apostle, John, at the close of the first century a real turning point arrived. No longer were there members of the original Twelve or the apostle Paul still living.* The apostles had served not as bosses of the various Christian communities, but as standard setters who defined the boundaries of the Gospel and how to do Christianity. How to continue that influence of the apostles became a critical issue. Two methods were adopted beginning in the second century Christian churches. The development of these processes would take several centuries before they fully evolved into what we know today in Roman Catholic Christianity.

First, the concept of Apostolic Succession gradually came into place.<sup>24</sup> In this concept, church leadership strong drover who guards his cattle’ (hymn of the 18th dynasty).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, it is said of men as subjects: ‘Men are well cared for, the cattle of God,’<sup>14</sup> or: ‘Let us crown a king, for we are a herd of oxen without a herd.’<sup>15</sup> Thus far there is no attestation of the transf. use of the title in Canaan.<sup>16</sup> [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:486-87.]

<sup>21</sup>“Only once in the NT are congregational leaders called shepherds, namely, in the list of offices in Eph. 4:11 (→ II, 158, 23 ff.). The absence of art. before the διδασκάλους which follows (τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους) shows that the pastors and teachers form a single group, obviously because they both minister to the individual congregation. The term ‘shepherd,’ however, is not yet an established title in Eph. 4:11;<sup>122</sup> this is obvious once the usage of Eph. 4:11 is set in a broader framework. Thus examples from the following period<sup>123</sup> give evidence that there is always a sense of the metaphor when congregational leaders are called shepherds; the same is true of passages in which the verb ποιμαίνειν is used for the work of such leaders (1 Pt. 5:2; Ac. 20:28; Jn. 21:16) or the noun ποιμνιον is used for the congregation, → 501, 23 ff. These shepherds are the leaders of the local church (πρεσβύτεροι in 1 Pt. 5:1; Ac. 20:17; ἐπίσκοποι in Ac. 20:28), or the bishop in Ign. (Phld., 2, 1; R., 9, 1); only in Jn. 21:15–17, which describes the appointment of Peter as a shepherd by the Risen Lord, does the whole church seem to have been in view as the sphere of activity. The pastor’s task is to care for the congregation (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pt. 5:2–4; Ign. Phld., 2, 1; R., 9, 1),<sup>124</sup> to seek the lost (Mt. 18:12–14; 125 cf. 12:30 par. Lk. 11:23), and to combat heresy (Ac. 20:29 f.). The fulfilment of this task by the pastor is to be an example for the flock, 1 Pt. 5:3. The chief Shepherd (→ 494, 5 ff.) will recognise the ministry of the pastors on His appearing, v. 4.

“The closest analogy to the comparison of congregational leaders with shepherds is not in the Hell. sphere<sup>126</sup> but in Damascus. 13:9f. (16:2f.) → 489, 18 ff. The task of the *mebaqqer* here is to show fatherly mercy to those entrusted to him, to liberate them from guilt, to loose their bands as a shepherd does. This corresponds materially to the task of the primitive Chr. ποιμήν. At other pts., too, Eph. in particular gives evidence of many contacts with the Essene group of writings, → V, 300, 23 ff.

[Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:497-98.]

<sup>22</sup>The English word ‘pastor’ comes through French from Latin with the literal meaning of shepherd:

“Middle English pastour, from Anglo-French, from Latin pastor herdsman, from pascere to feed” [Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).]

<sup>23</sup>“a. In a Rabb. list of thieving and cheating occupations we find that of the shepherd.<sup>38</sup> This classification of shepherds as notorious robbers and cheats means that like the publicans and tax-gatherers they were deprived of civil rights, i.e., they could not fulfil a judicial office or be admitted in court as witnesses.<sup>39</sup> This discrimination against shepherds on the part of Pharisaic Rabbinitism is best understood if one realises that the independence of the shepherd, who during the summer was on the move with the flock for months at a time with no supervision (→ 486, 5 ff.), constituted a serious temptation to steal some of the increase of the flock. It is worth noting that to buy wool, milk, or a kid from a shepherd was forbidden on the assumption that it would be stolen property.<sup>40</sup> The Rabb. ask with amazement how, in view of the despicable nature of shepherds,<sup>41</sup> one is to explain the fact that God is called ‘my shepherd’ in Ps. 23:1.<sup>42</sup>” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:488-89.]

<sup>24</sup>The earliest expression of this comes in a letter written about 96 AD by Clement, leader of the church at Rome, to the church in Corinth that was struggling with a variety of issues (I Clement 42:1-5): “42:1 The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. 2 So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore

roles are focused on authority and position and who can legitimately claim them. A “chain of command” system develops: God ==> Christ ==> Apostles ==> Bishops ==> Priests. In “proper ordination” of bishops and priests proper succession is to be guaranteed to protect the Christian church from heresy.<sup>25</sup> Thus the leadership level of bishop became critical to exercising authority over local congregations and their priestly leaders in order to insure adherence to the ‘orthodox’ teaching of the apostles. In time, four or five regional bishops came to dominate Christianity in the Mediterranean world, and their clashes with one another are notorious in church history. Eventually in the west the bishop in Rome won out over the others and by following the governmental structure of the Roman empire with emperor and senate, Roman Catholic church structure emerged with a pope and a college of cardinals made up of representatives from the various regional structures of western Christianity.

*Second*, by the end of the first Christian century all of the writings of the apostles had been completed and a process of slowly adopting these writings as sacred scripture was in place by the beginning of the second century. It would take over two hundred more years for this process to reach a conclusion, which was marked by the Easter letter of Athanasius in 367 AD. The ‘canon’ of the New Testament scriptures was now settled for the vast majority of Christians in the ancient world. One of the guidelines for adopting a particular document as authoritative was the tracing of the origin of that document back either directly or indirectly to one of the Twelve apostles or to the apostle Paul. Thus the authoritative scriptures for the Christian church rested upon the writings of the Apostles who were commissioned directly by Jesus.

The relationship between these written documents and the religious leaders of the church was based on what came to be called *regula fidei* in Latin (Rule of Faith). The bishops established a ‘sacred tradition’ or *magisterium* defining orthodox belief for the church and the authority of the bishops to teach and guard it. As those with direct authority from Christ (via apostolic succession) they alone had proper authority to both interpret the teachings of Christ and the apostles, and to establish the practices of the church. In western Christianity by the fifth century, the bishop of Rome, now the pope over all of the western church primarily by Roman governmental decree, had assumed that authority exclusively.

These two basic dynamics along with a few others created the necessity for a carefully structured hierarchy of leaders, a ‘chain of command’, which was top down in nature. With sacramentalism came a division of the church into laity and clergy, and within the clergy group then a carefully delineated structure beginning with deacon (as the beginning priesthood), priest, bishop, archbishop (some of whom would become cardinals in the college of cardinals) and pope.

e) *With the Protestant Reformation beginning in the 1500s the newly developing alternative branches of Christianity restructured church organization, mostly in reaction to the centralized control of the pope in Rome.* But not wanting to do it the way Roman Catholics had done it was about the only thing they held in common. The traditional reformers of Luther on the Lutheran side and Calvin and Zwinglii on the reformed church side moved toward the concept of synods, a term that has different meanings inside each denominational tradition. The radical reformers rejected a ‘top down’ approach to leadership and moved toward local church independency from outside authorities. At the local church level, organizational patterns have varied considerably.<sup>26</sup>

Baptists historically have followed a congregational pattern of church organization with pastor and deacon

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came of the will of God in the appointed order. 3 Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come. 4 So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their firstfruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe. 5 And this they did in no new fashion; for indeed it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times; for thus saith the scripture in a certain place, I will appoint *their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.*”

<sup>25</sup>Ordination by proper bishops of priests also became critical because at the same time the concepts of sacramentalism were taking shape in which these sacraments became the channel through which divine grace flowed from God into the life of individual Christians. Only properly ordained priests could legitimately administer the sacraments which were essential to salvation.

<sup>26</sup>Modern patterns tend to fall into one of three categories: 1) episcopal polity, with bishops governing the churches; 2) presbyterian polity, with councils either within or external to the local church at the denominational level governing the churches; or 3) congregational polity where the membership of each church is the final authority, portions of which may be assigned to pastor and/or councils inside the church.

as the two basic expressions of leadership in a local church.<sup>27</sup> A review of the Baptist confessions of faith from the early 1600s to the present will reflect a consistent pattern of acknowledging but two leadership roles in a local church, that of pastor and deacons. The label of 'pastor' is relatively recent and replaced the label 'elder' dominantly used for this leadership responsibility during the first two hundred years of Baptist history.<sup>28</sup>

The International Baptist Convention "Summary of Basic Beliefs" does not contain a statement on church governance, and the confession of faith by the IBC Church in Costa Rica alludes to the offices of pastor and deacon as the two scriptural leadership models, in article VI. The Church.<sup>29</sup> The IBC Church Costa Rica Church Constitution is more specific regarding church organization under article III. THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (page 1):

The Membership is the body of Believers, who have been duly accepted and registered, and who form the International Baptist Church. **The Membership is the sovereign organization within the Church.** This group will elect the members of the Church Council, nominate Deacons, select the Pastor, and ratify the acceptance of new members. It will receive the reports of the Church Council and Board of Deacons and has the authority to accept or reject those reports. It is also vested with the authority to amend the Church Constitution.

The leadership of the church is assigned by the constitution to a) the church council; b) the pastor; and c) the deacons with specific purposes and duties spelled out for each group. Essentially this church by its legal documents follows a congregational polity pretty much within the historical tradition of Baptists.

All of this stands in the background of the modern patterns where spiritual leaders in different churches are labeled by a wide diversity of terms. The term 'pastor' was largely unused for many centuries until John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli revived it in the 1500s in order to distinguish spiritual leaders in their churches from 'priests' in the Roman Catholic churches. But minister, priest, vicar, rector, bishop are among the alternative labels found in present day Christian traditions.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup>"Most Baptists hold that no church or ecclesiastical organization has inherent authority over a Baptist church. Churches can properly relate to each other under this polity only through voluntary cooperation, never by any sort of coercion. Furthermore, this Baptist polity calls for freedom from governmental control.<sup>5</sup> Most Baptists believe in 'Two offices of the church' — pastor-elder and deacon — based on certain scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1–2). Exceptions to this local form of local governance include a few churches that submit to the leadership of a body of elders, as well as the Episcopal Baptists that have an Episcopal system." ["Diocese: Baptists," Wikipedia.org]

<sup>28</sup>Note the very first Baptist confession of faith by Thomas Helwys (1611) in article 20: "That the Officers of every Church or congregation are either Elders, who by their office do especially feed the flock concerning their souls, (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2, 3) or Deacons Men, and Women who by their office relieve the necessities of the poor and impotent brethren concerning their bodies, (Acts 6:1-4)"

<sup>29</sup>"A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of saved baptized Believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. **Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.** While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

<sup>30</sup>This article from Wikipedia summarizes in a helpful, although limited way, the current confusion over what to call a spiritual leader:

#### **Current usage**

#### **Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican**

Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches typically refer to their local church leaders as "parish priests". The term pastor may be used, in a more casual way, particularly in North America. However, Anglican churches do not formally use the term "pastor"; rather, they frequently use the terms "rector" or "vicar" as alternatives to "parish priest".

Each Catholic parish is normally entrusted to the care of a single pastor, who must be a priest according to the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The associate pastor is called a parochial vicar and also must be a priest. In U.S. Catholic parishes, a lay ecclesial minister who fulfills many of the non-sacramental functions of an associate pastor is often called a "pastoral associate", "parish minister", or "pastoral assistant".

A bishop is canonically given full-fledged pastoral responsibilities within his diocese, and a priest is held to pastoral obedience with regards to his bishop. The term universal pastor refers to the pope, per the declaration Pastor aeternus of the First Vatican Council.

Jesus Christ is commonly referred to as the "Good Shepherd" or "Good Pastor", the former a phrase found in the Gospels.



nor for profit,  
 but eagerly  
 5.3 nor as one lording it over your portion,  
 but by becoming a good example to the flock;  
 5.4 and  
 when the chief Shepherd appears,  
 70 **you will be rewarded with the never ending crown, the Glory.**  
  
 5.5 Likewise,  
 young men,  
 71 **be submissive to the elders.**  
  
 And  
 72 **all of you put on humility toward one another,**  
 because God resists the proud  
 but  
 --- gives grace to the humble.

The passage easily divides into two sections: 1) the admonitions given to spiritual leaders (#s 68-70, vv. 1-4), and 2) admonitions to the young men (# 71) and to everyone (# 72) in verse five. In the first section, Peter begins by identifying himself with these leaders (# 68), then admonishes them (# 69), and concludes with a promise (# 70). The admonition (# 69) encourages the leaders to pastor their flock by taking care of them. How this is to be done is set forth in three sets of “don’ts but do’s.”

The second section begins with an admonition to the young men (# 71) to respect the leadership of the elders, and expands the demand for humility to the entire Christian community (# 72).

## II. Message

Based on the above analysis of thought structure in the passage, the two natural divisions of text will be the organizing structure of our exegesis: a) the leaders and b) the younger men.

### a. Leaders, set the example, vv. 1-4

1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share his glory and his honor when he returns. As a fellow elder, this is my appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly -- not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example. 4 And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor.

5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μὴ δ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κληρῶν ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

#### Notes:

The link of this passage to the preceding one in chapter four is set up by οὖν, an inferential conjunction that draws out an implication from the preceding to make it explicit in the following statements. The significance of this becomes clear with studying the contents of verses 1-5. When leaders are properly leading, everyone else can be rightly prepared to face persecution and suffering. If not, then the congregation is ill equipped to face persecution. So Peter turns to address spiritual leaders in the churches with some important insights about effective leadership. What becomes very clear from his words is that leadership is a matter of character and example, not a matter of authority and pushing that authority. This is a largely forgotten lesson among spiritual leaders in our world today.

Peter offers his advice by using two strategies. First he identifies himself with the leaders (v. 1) and then he appeals to them with wise council (vv. 2-4).

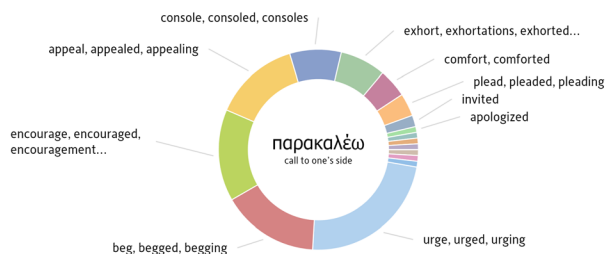
**Peter's identity with the leaders.** Central to this identity is the term πρεσβύτερος. The term here is used not as an age identifier but as a title of spiritual leadership in the house church groups, as discussed at length

above in the Internal History section. The contrast with νεώτεροι (young men) in verse five is sometimes mistakenly taken to suggest that πρεσβύτεροι were older men in the churches. The context here clearly favors πρεσβύτερος as a title of leadership.

Also, then it is crucial to remember that such leadership titles as found in the New Testament are not ‘positional’ labels. Rather, they are functional labels stressing aspects of ministry to others. There was no such thing as “the office of pastor” or “the office of elder” in the New Testament church! Amazingly a large number of biblical scholars overlook this fundamental point and then subsequently struggle severely with the highly fluid and often overlapping meanings of the several leadership terms found in the New Testament. The functional meaning of πρεσβύτερος here is the only way that one can understand how Peter as an apostle could also consider himself to be a πρεσβύτερος as well. This is further confirmed by the thrust of the admonitions he proceeds to give to these leaders.

These leaders are identified as Πρεσβυτέρους ἐν ὑμῖν, “elders among you.” These individuals were a part of each congregation located in the cities and towns scattered through the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1, Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας). Assuming that Romans 16:1-15 reflects a rather typical situation of numerous house church groups in a city or region, then many of these leaders could have been husband-wife teams, some of them women and some of them men.<sup>31</sup> Whether each group had one πρεσβύτερος or multiple πρεσβύτεροι, most likely depended upon the size of each congregation and also the presence or absence of individuals with leadership skills. Very likely in the sparsely populated, rural oriented provinces like Cappadocia with no large cities fewer individuals served as leaders in each group, whereas in the heavily populated urban oriented provinces especially Asia the house church groups likely were more numerous in each city and with more educated and skilled present. One should not assume a “set in concrete” pattern followed universally. This passage does not justify such and the larger context of the New Testament picture certainly doesn’t.

Peter gives admonitions (παρακαλῶ<sup>32</sup>) to these leaders as a συμπρεσβύτερος (fellow elder), as a μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων (a witness of Christ’s sufferings), and as ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεισθαι δόξης κοινωνός (a participant in the coming revelation of the divine Glory). Peter makes it clear that he is not “ordering” them to adopt his advice; rather, he appeals to their commitment as spiritual leaders to want to follow the correct path in helping their congregations be prepared to face persecution.



<sup>31</sup>It would be completely false to interpret the masculine plural Πρεσβυτέρους as a male only designation. The masculine gender designated both males and also inclusive male-female designations in ancient Greek.

<sup>32</sup>2. to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage (X. et al.; LXX) w. acc. of pers. **Ac 16:40; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Th 2:12** (but s. 5 below); **5:11; Hb 3:13**; ITr 12:2; I Ro 7:2. The acc. is found in the immediate context **Ac 20:1; 1 Ti 5:1** (but s. 5 below). Pass. **1 Cor 14:31**. τινὰ λόγῳ πολλῶ someone with many words **Ac 20:2**; also τινὰ διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ **15:32**. τινὰ δι’ ὀλίγων γραμμάτων I Pol 7:3. W. acc. of pers. and direct discourse **1 Cor 4:16; 1 Th 5:14; Hb 13:22; 1 Pt 5:1**; direct discourse introduced by λέγων (B-D-F §420) **Ac 2:40**. W. acc. of pers. and inf. foll. (SIG 695, 43 [129 B.C.]) **11:23; 27:33f; Ro 12:1** (EKäsemann, Gottesdienst im Alltag, ’60 [Beih. ZNW], 165–71); **15:30; 16:17; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Tit 2:6; 1 Pt 2:11** (cp. Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36 II, 4 Jac. p. 1172, 19; ELohe, ZNW 45, ’54, 68–89); **Jd 3** (the acc. is found in the immediate context, as Philo, Poster Cai. 138); ITr 6:1; IPhld 8:2; I Pol 1:2a; Pol 9:1 al. W. inf. (acc. in the context), continued by καὶ ὅτι (s. B-D-F §397, 6; Rob. 1047) **Ac 14:22**. W. acc. of pers. and ἵνα foll. (PRyl 229, 17 [38 A.D.]; EpArist 318; Jos., Ant. 14, 168.—B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 1046) **1 Cor 1:10; 16:15f; 2 Cor 8:6; 1 Th 4:1** (π. w. ἐρωτάω as BGU 1141, 10; POxy 294, 29) 2 Th 3:12; Hm 12, 3, 2; AcPl Ha 7, 32. The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim: πάντας παρακαλεῖν, ἵνα σώζονται I Pol 1:2b.—Without acc. of pers.: w. direct discourse foll. ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα since God as it were makes his appeal through us: ‘We beg’ **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’ Dssm. LO 320 [LAE 374]) and functions as mediator (like Alexander the Great, Plut., Mor. 329c διαλλακτής; cp. also the mediatorial role of a judge IPriene 53, esp. 10f; s. also CBreytenbach, Versöhnung ’89, 64–66). W. inf. foll. **1 Ti 2:1**. Abs. **Ro 12:8** (mng. 4 is also poss.); **2 Ti 4:2; Tit 1:9; Hb 10:25; 1 Pt 5:12** (w. ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν); B 19:10.—W. acc. of thing impress upon someone, urge, exhort πολλά ἕτερα **Lk 3:18**. ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει **1 Ti 6:2**. ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε **Tit 2:15**. In the case of several of the passages dealt with in this section, it is poss. that they could as well be classed under 3.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 765.]

The strength of his appeal comes from who he is, not from being an apostle with high authority to order people around. The appeal is based on three experiences that he considers sources of important insight. *First*, he identifies himself with them as a συμπρεσβύτερος. That is, he understands their responsibility to help their congregations prepare themselves. His prior experience of facing persecution through preaching the Gospel (Acts 3-4, 5) and being arrested with plans for execution in place (Acts 12) gave him personal understanding of having to face danger in being true to Christ. This experience helped him realize that spiritual leaders will often be the first target of persecutors; something that could easily make a leader hesitate to give proper leadership to a congregation.

*Second*, he mentions that he was a μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων (a witness of Christ's sufferings). This first hand personal experience gave him tremendous insight into how the Lord coped with persecution. To be sure, the gospel accounts suggest that Peter had difficulty grasping this at the beginning with his denial of Christ in Jerusalem etc. But with time and spiritual reflection Peter began to realize just what Christ was doing and why He did it. Already in chapters two and four we have seen the results of that reflection in his use of the example of Christ in suffering.

*Third*, Peter was absolutely convinced<sup>33</sup> that, with the return of Christ which would disclose Christ as the Divine Presence (τῆς...δόξης) of Almighty God, he Peter would participate in that experience.<sup>34</sup> The language of Peter in the letter reflects that in his thinking the revelation of τῆς...δόξης (the Glory) was essentially the revelation of σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ (1:5, a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time). This certainty gave him confidence to offer his advice to these spiritual leaders.

What can we learn from this? Probably as much as anything, the lessons of verse five. When spiritual leaders offer us advice we should give it careful attention, rather than arbitrarily dismiss it. As a spiritual leader, we can learn much from Peter here. Peter didn't order these leaders to do anything. Nor did he threaten them. He appealed to them out of who they were as spiritual leaders. And then his appeal was based on his character and his religious experiences, not on any claimed position.

**Peter's admonitions to the leaders.** One should note at the outset that Peter doesn't presume to tell these spiritual leaders what to do, in terms of spelling out duties (as in a job description). Rather his focus is on how they should lead in the congregations, in terms of manner and character.

What he had to say to these leaders is expressed in a single sentence (vv. 2-4). And the single core admonition is given at the beginning of the sentence in verse two: ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, "pastor God's flock among you." This is then followed by the future indicative κομιεῖσθε ('you will gain for yourselves') in verse four. This compound sentence structure follows an ancient Jewish thought structure know as command / promise. Peter issues an admonition that is supported by the divine promise of blessing for adhering to the admonition.

Some aspects of the core admonition need noting. The Aorist imperative verb ποιμάνετε contains a sense of urgency, underscoring the importance of these leaders taking the responsibility seriously. The flock, τὸ ποίμνιον,<sup>35</sup> belongs to God, not to these leaders. The pastor shepherds don't own their flocks, God does. Im-

<sup>33</sup>"The phrase τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης reflects complete certainty in the future occurrence of the disclosure of the Glory."

<sup>34</sup>"ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 'and a sharer as well in the glory to be revealed.' Peter supplies a new definite article for the third self-designation, κοινωνός, 'sharer.' κοινωνός refers here to one who 'shares in' something (BGD, 439.1b), namely 'the glory to be revealed,' not one who "shares with" someone (BGD, 439.1a), namely the elders. There is no ὑμῶν, 'of you,' to link Peter's own hope explicitly to that of the elders. Implicitly, however, the link is there because of the preceding designation, 'fellow elder.' Just as μάρτυς is virtually equivalent to συμμάρτυς, 'fellow witness,' so κοινωνός is virtually equivalent to συγκοινωνός, 'fellow sharer' or 'partner' (cf., e.g., Phil 1:7; Rev 1:9). That 'the glory to be revealed' holds a particular reward for elders, and thus for Peter himself, is clear from v 4, but this does not change the fact that it is also the common hope of the entire Christian community (cf. 1:7, 13; 4:13). The distinctive terminology used here corresponds to that of Paul in Rom 8:18, weighing 'the sufferings of the present time' against 'the glory to be revealed to us' (πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς). Whether Paul's language impressed itself on the memory of the Roman church or whether Romans and 1 Peter are both dependent on a common turn of phrase used by Jews and early Christians to contrast 'present sufferings' and 'future glory' is difficult to say (cf., e.g., 2 Apoc. Bar. 15.8; 4 Ezra 7.16; 2 Cor 4:17). The latter is perhaps more likely because Peter's present infinitive (ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι) appears to represent a more vulgar idiom than Paul's aorist (BDF §338.3). It is hard to see why Peter would not have retained the aorist if he were writing with Romans before him (cf. Peter's use of the aorist with 'salvation' in 1:5)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 281-82.]

<sup>35</sup>Note the play on words which cannot be reproduced in modern language expression: ποιμάνετε τὸ...ποίμνιον. This heightens

plicit in this is accountability by these leaders for how they take care of the flock. Also the flock these leaders are responsible for is the ἐν ὑμῖν flock, that is, the one they have been given responsibility for, not the flocks of other shepherds. This core admonition echoes very closely a similar command given to Peter by Jesus in John 21:16, (ποιμαίνετε τὰ πρόβατά μου, “pastor my sheep.”<sup>36</sup>

In the original text reading (cf. External History above), the participle of manner ἐπισκοποῦντες (“seeing after”) becomes the anchor for all of the subsequent expansions. As such it defines how the pastoring (ποιμαίνετε) is to be carried out.<sup>37</sup> The literal meaning is ‘to see after’ in the sense of taking care of.<sup>38</sup> As spiritual shepherd of the flock, these leaders are to take care of the spiritual welfare of their congregations. This was understood functionally in the apostolic era, but during the second century when both the verb ἐπισκοπέω and especially the noun ἐπίσκοπος (‘overseer’) become separated from pastor and deacon and became a regional designation rather than a local congregation label, the meaning shifts to a term of authority and ruling (cf. above discussion under Internal History). From the expansion elements that Peter attaches to the participle it is clear that such an idea of authority is not in his definition of the term.

How are the leaders to take care of their flocks? Three sets of don’t do / but do expressions define the manner of leadership to be given to the congregations (vv. 2b-3). Each set plays off the two internal elements as opposites:<sup>39</sup>

μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν,  
 μὴ δὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως,  
 μὴ δ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου·  
 not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it  
 not for sordid gain but eagerly.  
 not lording it over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

First, the leaders should serve not because they have to, but freely out of divine assignment to the task.<sup>40</sup>

the intensity of the expression.

<sup>36</sup>“The command to ‘shepherd the flock of God’ echoes the command of Jesus to Peter himself according to John 21:16: ‘Shepherd my sheep’ (ποιμαίνετε τὰ πρόβατά μου; cf. ‘Feed my lambs’ in 21:15, and ‘Feed my sheep’ in 21:17). The ‘flock’ belongs neither to the elders nor to Peter. The emphasis of John’s Gospel is that the flock belongs to Jesus, or at least to Jesus and the Father jointly (cf. John 10:11–18, 26–27, as well as 21:15–17). The characteristic phrase in 1 Clement is ‘the flock of Christ’ (see especially 1 Clem 54.2: ‘only let the flock of Christ have peace, with the elders set over it’; cf. 44.3, 57.2). To Peter, however, it is ‘the flock of God’ (cf. ‘the church of God’ in Acts 20:28), in keeping with the God-centered character of the material in 1 Peter on worship and ministry (e.g., vv 5–7; 4:10–11). His emphasis recalls that of the biblical prophets (e.g., ‘the Lord’s flock,’ Jer 13:17; ‘the Lord God the Almighty will watch over his flock,’ Zech 10:3 LXX). Although Peter regards Christ as ‘the chief shepherd’ (v 4), the ‘flock’ belongs finally to God (cf. ‘people of God,’ in 2:10). τοῦ θεοῦ, ‘of God,’ makes this unmistakably clear in a way that even τοῦ κυρίου, ‘of the Lord,’ would not (for the Messiah ‘shepherding the Lord’s flock,’ cf. Pss. Sol. 17.40).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 282–83.]

<sup>37</sup>“ἐπισκοπέω fut. ἐπισκοπήσω; 1 aor. ἐπεσκόπησα; pf. pass. ptc. ἐπεσκοπημένος (s. σκοπέω and next entry; Aeschyl. et al.).

**1. to give attention to, look at, take care, see to it w. μὴ foll.** (Philo, Decal. 98) with implication of hazard awaiting one **Hb 12:15**.

**2. to accept responsibility for the care of someone, oversee, care for** (Pla., Rep. 6 p. 506a τὴν πολιτείαν; Dio Chrys. 8 [9], 1 of Diogenes the Cynic’s mission in life; LBW 2309; 2412e; pap [Witkowski 52, 12; cp. 63, 18; 71, 43]; 2 Ch 34:12), hence in a distinctively Christian sense of the activity of church officials **1 Pt 5:2**, esp. of one entrusted with oversight: *be an overseer* τινὰ over someone of Jesus, the ideal overseer/supervisor IRo 9:1. In a play on words w. ἐπίσκοπος: ἐπισκόπων μᾶλλον ἐπισκοπημένον ὑπὸ θεοῦ the overseer/supervisor, who is rather overseen/supervised by God=‘the bishop who has God as his bishop’ IPol ins (ἐπισκοπέω of God: Jos., C. Ap. 2, 160). Abs. serve as overseer Hv 3, 5, 1.—DELG s.v. σκέπτομαι. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 379.]

<sup>38</sup>“The verb ἐπισκοπεῖν, used in the NT only here and (differently) in Heb 12:15, has not yet taken on the technical meaning, ‘to serve as bishop’ (as, e.g., in Ign. Rom. 9.1; Ign. Pol. Inscr. and in Herm Vis. 3.5.1). More simply, its effect is to interpret the metaphor of ‘shepherding the flock’ as the responsibility to oversee and care for the needs of a Christian congregation.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 283.]

<sup>39</sup>“Though partially reflecting early Christian tradition (v 3), the triad as a whole is unique in the NT and corresponds in its triadic form to the author’s threefold identification of himself in v 1. The repeated term ‘flock’ (*poimnion*, v 3b; cf. v 2a) forms an inclusion framing vv 2–3. The point of vv 2–3 in general is that pastoral leadership must be freely undertaken and devoid of self-serving and domination.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>40</sup>“First, they should watch over the flock ‘not because you must, but voluntarily in a godly manner.’<sup>13</sup> It is true that elders did  
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How they came into this leadership role is not specified. It could have been by election or appointment. Most likely this arose from within the house church group. Peter wants to stress that the responsibility not be undertaken as a burden to be carried but as a privilege to be fulfilled.<sup>41</sup> God's will and leadership play the decisive role in this.<sup>42</sup> A leader ministering to the flock out of joy will be an effective leader.

Secondly a monetary motivation is ruled out in favor of eager desire to give of themselves, as Elliott says, "not an itch to get but an eagerness to give."<sup>43</sup> In a very real sense, the phrase "a rich pastor" is an oxymoron,

not volunteer or select themselves but were selected by others (e.g., Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5), yet they were not to think of their work as something forced upon them.<sup>14</sup> Even if they had wanted the job (as 1 Tim. 3:1 encourages people to do), the stress of pastoring (often while supporting themselves with long days of work) and the added danger in which it put them and their families (for who but the elders would be the first targets of persecution?) could well make the ministry an unwanted burden. Like the author of Hebrews (Heb. 13:17), our author wants elders to do their work 'with joy and not with groaning' or, as he puts it, 'voluntarily.' In Judaism the volunteer was a person who placed himself at God's disposal, either in terms of military service (Judg. 5:2, 9; 1 Macc. 2:42) or of sacrifice (Ps. 54:6 [53:8 LXX]). The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls spoke of themselves thus as 'volunteers' (1QS 1:7, 1QS 1:11; 1QS 5:1–10, 1QS 5:21–22). And Philemon is told, 'I did not want to do anything without your knowledge so that your good work might not [be done] out of necessity but voluntarily' (Philem. 14). Thus also in northern Asia Minor the elders are to act voluntarily, for that is what it means to act 'in a godly manner.' After all, none of God's acts for humanity was done out of necessity, but voluntarily, out of grace." [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 178-79.]

<sup>41</sup>"Responsibility is to be taken on willingly (*hekousiōs*) rather than because of compulsion to do so. Similar contrasts between compulsion and willingness are made by Philo and Paul. Philo (*Contempl.* 68) describes aged virgins of the contemplative Israelite Therapeutae, who kept their chastity not because of compulsion ... but of their own free will; (*ouk anagkēi ... mallon ē kath' hekousion*). Paul in his letter to Philemon (v 14) hopes that Philemon's compliance with his request 'might be not by compulsion ... but of your own free will' (*mē hōs kata anagkēn ... alla kata hekousion*).<sup>675</sup> The Petrine mention of willingness may indicate that the function of leadership 'was conferred by designation or election' (Senior 1980, 87; cf. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Clem. 42:1, 44). In this case, even if selected by others as leaders, the elders were not to feel that this responsibility was foisted upon them but were to accept it willingly." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>42</sup>"The phrase *kata theon*,<sup>676</sup> as in 4:6c (see NOTE), means literally, 'in accord with God' or 'with respect to God'; for *kata* with God with the sense of 'according to' or 'in accord with,' see also 1:1, 3, 15; 4:19. The phrase disturbs the structural balance of the first two qualifications and appears to have been added intentionally by the author to underline the divine orientation of this willingness. The looser translation 'as God would have you do it' (NRSV) aptly captures its sense. In the context of this letter, it indicates that to which Christian volition is fundamentally oriented; namely, the will of God (cf. 2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19; cf. also Ign. Eph. 2:1; Phld. 4:1)." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>43</sup>"This second antithetical qualification touches on motive and contrasts calculation with spontaneity. The elders are not to be leaders for lucre or ministers for mammon. The adverb *aischrokerdōs* appears only here in the Bible, but the adjective *aischrokerdēs* appears in 1 Tim 3:8 and Titus 1:7, also in connection with 'servants' and 'overseers,' respectively (cf. also Titus 1:11 concerning the 'shameful gain' [*aischrou kerdous*] of greedy teachers).<sup>678</sup> This family of terms expresses the conventional opinion that the gaining (*kerdainō*) of wealth for oneself alone is highly shameful (*aischros*).<sup>679</sup> Thus, Luke's description of the Pharisees as 'lovers of money' (*philargyroi*, 16:14) constitutes a shaming condemnation. Such love of money (*philargyria*), 'money-grubbing,' would be shameful for Christians as well and thus is regularly proscribed, especially where leaders are involved (*philargyria*, 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Tim 3:2; 2 Clem. 6:4; Pol. Phil 2:2; 4:1, 3; 6:1; *philargyros*, Did. 3:5; *aphilargyros* ['not avaricious'], 1 Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5; Did. 15:1; Pol. Phil 5:2).<sup>680</sup>

"The warning is appropriate, given the fact that Christian leaders generally received some form of compensation for their labors on behalf of the community, be it meals and shelter (Matt 10:10; 1 Cor 9:7b, 9–10, 13; Did. 11:4–6; 13:1–3, 5–6), clothes (Acts 20:33; Did. 13:7), or some other material form of 'wages' or honor (Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:7a; 2 Cor 11:9; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17–18; Did. 12:2–3). It is in this light that Paul asks, 'Who shepherds a flock without drinking some of its milk?' (1 Cor 9:7), and advises the Galatians, 'Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches' (Gal 6:6). Presbyterian oversight could also entail some responsibility for community finances and common property (Acts 4:32; 5:1–5 [Peter]; see also 2 Cor 8:20; and Acts 6:1–3). Such compensation and involvement with funds could invite a quest for leadership out of greed; hence, the warning against 'love of money' and 'shameful gain' — that is, personal gain from apparent godliness (1 Tim 6:5) or, as Didache put it, 'making business on Christ' (*christemporos*, 12:5) and being prophets for profit (cf. chs. 11–13).

*but eagerly* (*alla prothymōs*). Elders are to be motivated not by an 'itch to get' but by a spontaneous eagerness to give. The adverb *prothymōs* means 'eagerly,' 'readily,' 'enthusiastically willing.'<sup>681</sup> In Tob 7:8 it describes hospitality offered 'cheerfully.' Its kindred noun *prothymia* (Acts 17:11; 2 Cor 8:11, 12, 19; 9:2) and adjective *prothymos* (Matt 26:41/Mark 14:38; Rom 1:15) likewise convey the sense of eagerness, readiness, and willingness. Philo's description of the Therapeutae employs a contrast similar to that of our verse. At their banquets, he notes, their members serve at table 'not under compulsion nor yet waiting for orders, but with

i.e., a contradiction of terms. Religion is not ever to be 'a money making business' and the New Testament is very clear on this point, in contrast to most of the contemporary TV evangelists.

Thirdly, the pastor is not to 'lord it over' his flock; instead, he is to lead by example.<sup>44</sup> Humility, not control is to guide the spiritual leader in relating to his flock. Clearly with the following reference to Christ as the Chief Shepherd (v. 4), the example of Christ is ultimately in Peter's mind as the ultimate model.<sup>45</sup> One point needing clarification because of gross misinterpretation is the phrase τῶν κληρῶν, "those in your charge." This is referring to the flock, τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον, in verse two. And not to ministers of lower authority being dominated by regional bishops! This is to inject either a third century or a modern hierarchical church structure back on to the first century model Peter is working from, which is utterly different.

The portrait that Peter paints here of the idealized spiritual leader is challenging. There is joy in his serving, his motivation is not making money but giving of himself to others, and the strength of his leadership is not by a domineering leadership style but the inspiration of a godly character modeled after the example of Christ Himself. Spiritual leadership given to a congregation in this manner will be leadership that prepares the congregation to face the toughest of times when persecution comes.

**The promised blessing for proper leadership.** The 'promise' side of the command/promise structure is in verse four. Peter who is certain of his participation in the eschatological Glory of God at the second coming (v. 1) now assures the spiritual leaders in these churches that they can anticipate sharing in that same Glory at the coming of Christ the Chief Shepherd. This image of Christ as τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος underscores that the leaders' accountability is not to Peter or to any other human leader. Instead, they are -- and will be -- answerable to

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deliberate goodwill, anticipating with attentiveness and eagerness (*meta spoudēs kai prothymias*) the demands that may be made' (*Contempl.* 71). In this thought, the spontaneity implied in eagerness comes to expression. In a similar vein, Danker (1982, 321) observes the synonymy of the nouns *prothymia* and *spoudē* as noted qualities of benefactors and patrons and notes that *prothymōs* here in v 2c implies 'spontaneous interest and enthusiasm.' In this light, the point of the Petrine contrast appears to be that what should motivate the elders/shepherds is not a calculating quest for personal gain but a spontaneous eagerness to serve the needs of God's flock." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 829-30.]

<sup>44</sup>“This third and final qualification<sup>682</sup> mirrors the negative-positive sequence of the two preceding qualifications and proceeds from a warning against love of money to a warning against love of power. Elders are not to exercise oversight as domineering lords (*kyrioi*) of the flock but as its influencing exemplars (*typoi*). The antithesis as a whole contrasts a hierarchical exercise of authority to a horizontal demonstration by example.

“The particle *hōs* (“as”) is part of a negative injunction (*med'*), as in 4:15 and 2:16, indicating here in 5:3 how shepherding and oversight (v 2ab) are not to be discharged; namely, as an act of domination. The composite verb *kata-kyrieuō* (lit., 'lord it over,' 'have dominion over') has the sense of 'dominate'<sup>683</sup> or 'domineer' (ruling with insolence or arbitrary sway, especially over the poor, Pss 9:26[10:5]; 9:31[10:10]). Paul used the simple *kyrieuō* to express a similar thought: 'Not that we domineer (*kyrieuomen*) your faith; we work with you for your joy' (2 Cor 1:24). Given their recognized position of authority, elders, like other leaders, could be tempted to exploit it.

“Aside from Acts 19:16, where *katakyrieuō* is used of an 'overpowering' evil spirit, the only other NT appearances of this composite verb are in a saying by Jesus recorded in Mark 10:42–45/Matt 20:25–28/Luke 22:25–27. Hence, the first half of the bicolon is likely a Petrine reminiscence of Jesus' critique of a preoccupation with precedence on the part of his disciples and his holding up the ideal of service as exemplified by himself as servant. The Petrine verse and the Jesus saying are close in language (*katakyrieuousin*, Mark 10:42/Matt 20:25; compare Luke 22:25, *kyrieuousin*; *hōs*, Luke 22:26; *neōteros*, Luke 22:26; cf. 1 Pet 5:5a), form (contrast between negative and positive), and point (model of conduct: Jesus, Mark 10:45/Matt 20:28/Luke 22:27; elders, 1 Pet 5:3; see Elliott 1970). These similarities, which cannot be traced to literary dependence, indicate the influence of an early Christian tradition on ministry (concerning rank, humility, example, eschatological reward) going back to the teaching of Jesus, a tradition perhaps also echoed in John 13:1–20 and 21:15–23. Use of elements of this tradition in a letter ascribed to Peter indicates a tendency, already apparent in the NT, to associate issues of ministry, leadership, and shepherding with the Apostle Peter.<sup>684</sup>” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 830-31.]

<sup>45</sup>“The alternative to leading by high-handed authoritarianism given in v. 3b is leading by example. The idea of the leader of a Christian community functioning as an example for other Christians is limited in the NT to this reference in 1 Peter, and to the letters of Paul, where it occurs with some frequency.<sup>106</sup> The supreme instance of one who provided the example for Christian conduct is of course Jesus himself,<sup>107</sup> an example our author has used earlier.<sup>108</sup> The immediately following verse, where Christ is identified as the 'chief shepherd,' makes clear that once again he is the example to be followed, this time by the shepherd/elders. Elders are therefore to exercise their authority by showing through their conduct how Christians are to live their own lives.<sup>109</sup>” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 328.]

Christ in final judgment for how they have led their congregations. Faithful leadership in the manner outlined by Peter will gain for them τὸν ἀμάραντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. Most of the commentaries struggle here with an inadequate understanding. Peter says the reward is an unfading crown, τὸν ἀμάραντινον...στέφανον. Then he further defines crown by τῆς δόξης, 'of Glory.' The traditional Catholic heritage of rewards for good works stands so deeply entrenched in most Protestant thinking that commentators find it hard to reject. And reject it they certainly should! The key is to define δόξης as it is mostly used in the New Testament from the heritage of the LXX, as the divine Presence of God in Christ (cf. Jh. 1:14). Just as God manifested His presence dramatically over the Tabernacle in the wilderness and at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, that same Presence has been disclosed in Christ. When He returns, the privilege believers and spiritual leaders receive is the indescribable blessing of standing in the very presence of God, not just for a moment but for all eternity. This privilege is described in terms of the image of an ancient Olympic crown that symbolized significant honor and privilege, and was something very tangible that folks in that world could readily understand, given the hero worship granted to the victorious athletes in the games. Just as successful completion of the athletic race brought special blessing, leading a congregation following the example of Christ will bring much greater privilege and blessing.

The Connection of νεώτεροι to πρεσβυτέρους in First Peter 5:5



Possible Connections:

1. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'younger men' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'older men.'  
Assumption: the two terms are age based terms.  
Weakness: clearly πρεσβύτερος in verse 1 is a title with age as very secondary. The second πρεσβύτερος in v.5 then has to have a different meaning; no indication of such in the text.
2. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'younger men' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'community leaders.'  
Assumption: The younger men (ages 20-30 appx.) need to show respect to the community leaders.  
Weakness: Depends entirely on general statements of philosophers such as Philo, Sobr. 16,23 and Plutarch, Vir. mor about the rebelliousness of youth generally in the ancient world. Absolutely no indication of this being a problem inside the Christian communities addressed by First Peter.
3. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'all the community members' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'community leaders.'  
Assumption: The contrast is simply between the leaders and the members.  
Weakness: There is no basis for νεώτεροι having this meaning.
4. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'organized younger men' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'community leaders.'  
Assumption: The organized groups of younger men (ages 20-30 appx.) need to show respect to the community leaders. The formal organization of νεοί in the Gymnasium had a counterpart in the communities of faith.  
Weakness: Absolutely no indication of any such organized groups inside the churches to compare with the secular groups of young men in society generally. Such groups can be documented among Jewish young men who trained in the gymnasia of the ancient world.
5. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'younger leaders' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'older leaders.'  
Assumption: Based on a deduction that οἱ νεώτεροι in Acts 5:6 equals δίδωκοι as younger clergy.  
Weakness: No basis for anything but age designation for οἱ νεώτεροι in Acts 5:6.
6. The νεώτεροι (v. 5) are 'new converts' and the πρεσβύτεροι (vv. 1,5) are 'community leaders.'  
Assumption: The new converts need to show respect to the community leaders.  
Weakness: Depends on νεώτεροι being a synonym for νεόφρονι, 'new convert,' in 1 Tim. 3:15. Grammatically possible, but not certain. Again, no indication in First Peter that such a problem existed.

**b. Young men, be respectful, v. 5**

5 You younger men, accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble."

5 ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους. πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιπάσσειται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

**Notes:**

This final verse contains a pair of admonitions, one addressed to the νεώτεροι, "younger men," and the other to πάντες, "everyone." The identity of these two groups, and in particular the first one, has been controversial, resulting in numerous different views being put on the table.<sup>46</sup> The difficulty here rests in the two terms, νεώτεροι

<sup>46</sup>The identity of these νεώτεροι of 1 Peter is not immediately clear, and the term has been interpreted in a variety of ways.<sup>705</sup>

"(1) Some take the terms presbyteroi and νεώτεροι in v 5a to refer to persons older and younger in age, respectively.<sup>706</sup> This requires that presbyteroi here has a different sense from v 1, where it clearly designates elders as leaders of the community and not simply those older in age. The author, however, gives no indication of such a sudden shift in the sense of presbyteroi. Nor does the variation in the sense of presbyteros in 1 Tim 5:1, 17 offer an apposite analogue. J. N. D. Kelly (1969, 204) attributes a difference in the senses of presbyteroi in vv 1, 5 to the likelihood that v 5a is 'a detached fragment of the community code paraphrased in ii.13–iii.9 which the writer has transferred here for reasons of his own' but fails to clarify what these reasons might have been. It is indeed conceivable that the instruction of elder and younger persons once belonged to a traditional instruction for households, akin to the exhortation for parents and children (cf. Eph 6:1–2 within the household instruction of 5:21–6:9, and Col 3:20 within 3:18–4:1) and that 1 Pet 5:1–5a represents an adaptation of this part of the household tradition for instructing community elders/leaders and younger persons.<sup>707</sup> It is also possible that 1 Peter represents an early stage of development, when civic and domestic instructions was expanding into community instruction, a development evident also in the Pastorals (1 Tim 3:1–15; 5:1–6:2; Titus 1:7–9; 2:1–10; 3:1–2), 1 Clement (1:3; 21:6–8; 37:1–4; 57:1–2), and Polycarp (Phil 4:1–6:3). Kelly might have suggested that it was the address of presbyteroi as elders in vv 1–4 that attracted the reference to presbyteroi in the 'fragment,' but this would undermine the likelihood that the same term had different meanings in these connected verses and thus would defeat his point. Consequently, whatever the connection between 5:1–5a and 2:13–3:9 might have been, it sheds no light on the meaning of presbyteroi and νεώτεροι in 5:5a. With no indication given that the presbyteroi in v 5a are different from those in v 1, the proximity of both terms requires the sense of 'elders' (as leaders) for both verses.

"(2) Others regard presbyteroi in both vv 1 and 5a as identifying community leaders and the νεώτεροι simply as those who are 'young in age' (e.g., Leconte 1961, 115; Bornkamm 1968, 66). In this case, however, it is not clear why it is younger persons alone who are urged to subordinate to the elders. It is true that the impetuosity and rebelliousness of youth were proverbial in antiquity

and πρεσβυτέροις, in the first admonition having a natural age based distinction from each other (younger & older). But such a distinction doesn't work well in the context of vv. 1-5 where the second term Πρεσβυτέρους is clearly a leadership title in verse one. For the second use in verse five πρεσβυτέροις to become age based means a sudden, unexpected shift in meaning that is in contradiction with the correlative adverb ὁμοίως in verse five that clearly links the two passages closely together as a part of a series.<sup>47</sup> Clearly the two instances of πρεσβύτεροι in verses one and five have the same meaning of spiritual leaders.

Thus who are the νεώτεροι? From the views set forth (illustrated in the chart on the right), they are either younger men (age based) or new converts. The more natural meaning is age based but the Greek term can also designate a new convert, as Elliott in the *Anchor Bible* commentary has argued. The uncertainty with both options is that the admonition seems to imply some problems with this group following the leadership of the community leaders. But nothing in First Peter suggests any such problem either with young men or with recent converts. So the assumption behind the admonition has to work off the presupposition that some kind

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(see Philo, *Sobr.* 16, 23; Plut., *Virt. mor.*; Mor. 450F).<sup>708</sup> In a forecast of anarchic times, Isaiah warned that 'the youth will be insolent to the elder and the base fellow to the honorable' (3:5). 1 Clement 3:4 appears to allude to this Isaian verse in a description of the rebelliousness against elders that arose in the church of Corinth (cf. also 44:3-6; 47:6). However, no such problem of youthful insubordination is evident elsewhere in 1 Peter, and it is more likely that the call for subordination of the νεώτεροι belongs to the more conventional pattern of household instruction followed earlier in the letter.

"(3) Still others regard the νεώτεροι as comprising all community members other than the elders (e.g., Windisch and Preisker 1951, 79; Reicke 1964, 130; Goppelt 1993, 351). While the pairing of *presbyteroi* and *neōteroi* allows this possibility, such a collective use of *neōteroi* would be without parallel in the NT; see also 1 Clement and the letter of Polycarp (Philippians), where in all cases *neōteroi* or *neoi* designates youth within the larger community. Furthermore, this theory would not fit the present context, since it is v 5b that first introduces an appeal to 'all' (*pantes*) members of the community. Thus, the νεώτεροι must constitute a specific group within the larger community.

"(4) Yet other scholars, pointing to Acts 5:6, take the νεώτεροι as 'minor officials,' corresponding to the elders regarded as 'major officials.'<sup>709</sup> But the fact that elders themselves were not yet 'officials' occupying some defined 'office' applies all the more to the νεώτεροι, who are not even assigned a discernible function here or elsewhere in the NT. The young men who carried out the corpses of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:6, 10) were performing a menial ad hoc task and hardly formed an institutionalized group. The differentiation in 1 John among 'children' (2:12, 13), 'fathers' (2:14a), and 'young persons' (2:14b) concerns distinctions according to age, not function. Nothing, moreover, in 1 Peter suggests an equation of νεώτεροι with *diakonoi*; in fact, the two groups are explicitly distinguished by Polycarp (Phil 5:2-3); against this view, see also Beare 1970, 201; and Davids 1990, 183.

"(5) It is also highly unlikely that these younger persons formed a particular group analogous to associations of *neoi* ('young men') in Hellenistic society (against Spicq 1969, 518-27) or that these persons had 'belonged lately to a Gymnasium and were regarded as now in training for the responsibilities attaching to citizenship of the Church' (against Selwyn 1947, 436). Clubs of younger males (*neoi* between 20 and 30 years of age) who trained in the gymnasia did exist among groups of urban citizens,<sup>710</sup> and an inscription from Hypaepa in Lydia (CII 755, 2d-3d century CE) mentions also young Judean males (*Ioudaiōn neōterōn*) who were active in the local gymnasium. But nothing in the literature of early Christianity indicates recruitment of these young club members or the existence of analogous formations within the messianic movement.

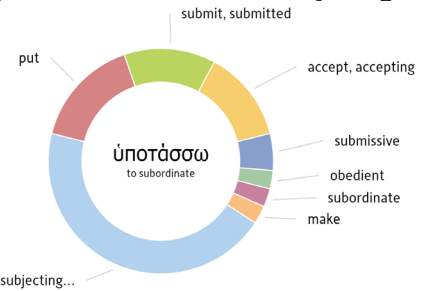
"(6) There is, however, evidence to suggest that νεώτερος here is similar in sense to 'neophyte' (*neophytos*), with both terms designating someone 'young or younger in the faith' and hence a recent convert (see Elliott 1970). The terms *neos* and *neōteros* can mean 'new,' 'fresh,' 'not long there,' 'recent,' as well as 'young' (Behm 1967, 896). A 3d-century BCE inscription from Ptolemais draws a distinction between *hoi neōteroi* and *hoi alloi p[olit]ai*; the former appear to be 'citizens recently introduced into the city, but not yet officially enrolled in the demes' (MM 425-26). At Qumran, persons seeking membership formed a specific group under the tutelage of the 'overseer' (*mēbaqqēr*), a man senior in years and eminent in status. These novices underwent a two-year period of instruction in the Mosaic Law and testing prior to their admission to the community (1QS VI 13-23; CD XIII 7-13). Appropriate behavior during this period included a display of humility and respect for order and for men older in age and rank (CD XIV 3-12), the person of lesser rank obeying his superior (1QS V 23-25), as was required of the membership in general (1QS II 20-24; VI 8-13). The process of admission began with the person's twentieth year (1QSa I 1-19), thereby indicating that these novices were relatively young in age. In terms of their association with the Qumran community, however, they were also recent initiants. Determination of status according to one's seniority of membership in the community was, according to Philo, also typical of the *Therapeutae*, a contemplative Israelite group in Egypt. At their banquets, he reports, 'the seniors/elders (*presbyteroi*) recline according to the order of their admission (to the community)' (Philo, *Contempl.* 67), indicating that status here too was determined by longevity of membership." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 836-39.]

<sup>47</sup>"The adverb *homoiōs* ('in turn'), is used not with the meaning 'likewise' (as in 3:1)<sup>700</sup> but as a connective term joining related but distinct items in a series, as in 3:7 (see the NOTE). Here it connects the exhortation to younger persons with the foregoing instruction to elders." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 836.]

of issue was present that Peter chose not to identify. Or else, that Peter is only issuing a generalized admonition without supposing any particular problem was present. To be sure, the first century world had its issues with ‘generation gaps’ between the young and the old as Philo and Plutarch clearly signal. But whether these cultural issues had found their way into the communities of faith in ancient Anatolia is very uncertain.<sup>48</sup>

What Peter encourages the νεώτεροι to do is specified as ὑποτάγητε. From the verb ὑποτάσσω, the core meaning is to accept with respect the leadership role of another.<sup>49</sup> This group of individuals, whether younger men or new converts, needed to come to this point of giving the community leaders the proper respect they deserved. Keep in mind the kind of leadership by example that Peter has described in the first four verses, and one can easily see why these individuals needed to be given such respect and acceptance.

The second admonition, πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, appeals to the entire congregation to clothe<sup>50</sup> themselves with humility toward one another. This includes both leaders and the rest of the congregation. Humility is τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην<sup>51</sup>



<sup>48</sup>Note Paul’s advice to Timothy at Ephesus in the province of Asia in 1 Tim. 5:1-2, “Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, 2 to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity.” (5.1 *Πρεσβυτέρῳ* μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, ἀλλὰ παρακάλει ὡς πατέρα, *νεωτέρους* ὡς ἀδελφούς, 2 *πρεσβυτέρας* ὡς μητέρας, *νεωτέρας* ὡς ἀδελφάς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγνείᾳ.)

His words to Titus in Tit. 2:1-6 are instructive as well: “1 But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2 Tell *the older men* [*πρεσβύτας*] to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. 3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited. 6 Likewise, urge *the younger men* [*τοὺς νεωτέρους*] to be self-controlled.”

<sup>49</sup>*β. subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey* abs. (Jos., Bell. 4, 175) **Ro 13:5; 1 Cor 14:34** (cp. δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις Gal 5:13); 1 Cl 2:1a; 57:2. Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure, w. dat. of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown (Palaeph. 38 p. 56, 15; 57, 2): toward a husband (s. Ps.–Callisth. 1, 22, 4 πρέπον ἐστὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, s. 1a above; cp. SEG 26, 1717, 26 [III/IV A.D.] in a love charm) **Eph 5:22** v.l.; **Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pt 3:1** (on an alleged impv. sense s. Schwyzer II 407), 5; parents **Lk 2:51**; masters **Tit 2:9; 1 Pt 2:18**; B 19:7; D 4:11; secular authorities (1 Ch 29:24; Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 14]) **Ro 13:1** (CMorrison, The Powers That Be—Ro 13:1–13, diss. Basel ’56; EBarnikol, TU 77, ’61, 65–133 [non-Pauline]); **Tit 3:1; 1 Pt 2:13**; 1 Cl 61:1; church officials 1 Cl 1:3; 57:1; IEph 2:2; IMg 2; 13:2; ITr 2:1f; 13:2; IPol 6:1; Pol 5:3; νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις **1 Pt 5:5**. To God (Epict. 3, 24, 65 τ. θεῷ ὑποταταγμένος; 4, 12, 11; Ps 61:2; 2 Macc 9:12) **1 Cor 15:28b; Hb 12:9; Js 4:7**; 1 Cl 20:1; IEph 5:3; to Christ **Eph 5:24**. To the will of God, the law, etc. **Ro 8:7; 10:3**; 1 Cl 34:5; Hm 12, 5, 1; τῆ ἐπιθυμῖα τῆ ἀγαθῆ 12, 2, 5.—Of submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love **1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:21; 1 Pt 5:5b** v.l.; 1 Cl 38:1.—The evil spirits must be subject to the disciples whom Jesus sends out **Lk 10:17, 20**. Likew. the prophetic spirits must be subject to the prophets in whom they dwell **1 Cor 14:32**.—HMerklein, Studien zu Jesus und Paulus (WUNT 105) ’98, 405–37.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1042.]

<sup>50</sup>Ἐγκομβοῦσθαι is derived from κόμβος, which, according to the glossaries, means ‘a knot,’ or ‘anything tied on with a knot’. Hence ἐγκόμβωμα is used of a garment tied on over others. Pollux, Onomasticon, iv. 18, describes one form of it as ἱματίδιον τιλευκὸν τῆ τῶν δούλων ἐξωμίδι προσκείμενον, a little white garment, which slaves wore over their ἐξωμίς: and from Longus, Pastoralia, ii. 60, we learn that it was of such a nature that a shepherd, who wanted to run his fastest, would cast it off. The ἐξωμίς was a sleeveless tunic, and from the definition which Suidas gives of κόμβος—ὁ κόμβος τῶν δύο χειριδίων, ὅταν τις δήσῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἴδιον τράχηλον—we may infer that this form of ἐγκόμβωμα was a pair of sleeves, which were fastened and held in place by a knot behind the neck. But κόμβος might also mean the knot of a girdle; hence κομβολύτης, according to Hesychius, is synonymous with βαλαντιοτόμος, ‘a cutpurse,’ purses being carried on the girdle. In another place, s.v. κοσσύμβη, Hesychius uses ἐγκόμβωμα as equivalent to περιζώμα Αἰγύπτιον, a kind of apron such as that used by black smiths. It would seem that any article of dress, that was attached by laces, might be called ἐγκόμβωμα. The verb was used by Epicharmus (Fragment 4 in Ahrens, de dialecto Dorica, p. 435). The words of the fragment are εἴ γε μὲν ὅτι κεκόμβωται καλῶς: but Ahrens notes on the authority of Photius, Epist. 156, that the right reading is ἐγκεκόμβωται. The meaning is, ‘If, indeed, because she is bravely apparelled.’ Hesychius makes κομβώσασθαι equivalent to στολίσασθαι, and ἐγκεκόμβωται to ἐνείληται, as if they were used of putting on garments of a certain amplitude and dignity. This is probably St. Peter’s meaning. Humility, like ‘a meek and quiet spirit,’ is an ornament of price, a beautiful robe. The R. V. has ‘gird yourselves with humility,’ as if the metaphor were derived from tying an apron round the waist, so as to be ready for service (cf. John 13:4). But, upon the whole, the facts given above appear to make against this rendering.” [Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1901), 190-91.]

<sup>51</sup>ταπεινοφροσύνη, ης, ἡ (s. prec.; Epict. 3, 24, 56; Jos., Bell. 4, 494, both in a pejorative sense) in our lit. only in a favorable

with the idea of respectful submission and regard for the other person. The admonition here is similar to the earlier one in 3:8.<sup>52</sup>

The basis for this admonition is taken from Proverb 3:34.<sup>53</sup> The principle of God blessing those with humility and rejecting those with the opposite is extensive in the New Testament and underscores Peter's point here.<sup>54</sup> One should also note that this OT quote will open the door for the next subunit of 5:6-11 in this letter.

Thus when the Christian communities are being properly led by their leaders (vv. 1-4) and the members are showing respect and considerate regard for one another (v. 5), they will indeed be moving toward fortifying themselves to face unjust suffering in a Christ honoring fashion. Such an atmosphere will be created inside the congregations that can strengthen the resolve of everyone to remain true to Christ even when pressure is loaded on them to abandon their Christian commitment. Peter paints an idealized picture here of a close knit community of faith that God can bless and use in powerful ways to affirm the presence and power of God Himself.

What can we learn from this in our day? A lot! Here is how 'church' should function at its best. With many pastors more concerned about 'occupying an office with power and authority' Peter shreds such false thinking to pieces by his words here. Leadership that works well spiritually is leadership by example and by strength of character. The 'servant leader' model advocated by Jesus<sup>55</sup> is re-enforced and affirmed by Peter here. What a revolution would take place were the spiritual leaders in the churches to take these words of Peter seriously. Weak and struggling churches could find renewed spiritual strength to faithfully carry out the commands of Christ.

But the burden also falls on the entire congregation to show humility and respect for everyone else, including its leaders. With 'pastor burn out' chewing up perhaps a third or more ministers so that they 'leave the ministry' a long time before retirement,<sup>56</sup> such an atmosphere of mutual consideration for one another is critical. Out of past pastoral experiences, I have observed that when a church moves toward this ideal, renewed spiritual life transforms the congregation. When it moves away from this goal, disaster looms for the congregation. And one final observation: the mutual respect must be genuine and deeply rooted, not formal or shallow. Here is the true meaning of being a "New Testament church."

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sense (τὸ τῆς τ. δόγμα Orig., C. Cels. 6, 15, 23; ταπεινοφροσύνης σωτήριον Did., Gen. 70, 26) **humility, modesty Phil 2:3** (in dat. of the motivating cause); **1 Pt 5:5**; 1 Cl 21:8; Hs 5, 3, 7 (of humility that expresses itself in fasting; Leutzsch, Hermas 425f, n. 441). W. ἐπιείκεια 1 Cl 56:1; cp. 58:2. W. ἐπιείκεια and πραΰτης 30:8. W. πραΰτης, μακροθυμία, and other virtues **Col 3:12**; cp. **2:23**. μετὰ πάσης ταπ. in all humility **Ac 20:19**; **Eph 4:2** (+ και πραΰτητος); without πάσης 1 Cl 31:4; 44:3. πᾶσα ἐρώτησις ταπεινοφροσύνης χρήζει every prayer requires humility Hv 3, 10, 6. Humility can also be wrongly directed **Col 2:18, 23**.—Lit. s.v. πραΰτης and ταπεινῶ 4. Also KDeissner, D. Idealbild d. stoischen Weisen 1930; Vögtle (s.v. πλεονεξία) word-list; LGilen, Demut des Christen nach d. NT: ZASzMyst 13, '38, 266–84; LMarshall, Challenge of NT Ethics '47, 92–96; ADihle, Demut: RAC III '56, 735–78 [lit.]; SRehol, Das Problem der Demut in der profan-griechischen Literatur im Vergleich zu Septuaginta und NT '61.—DELG s.v. ταπεινός. EDNT. TW." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 989.]

<sup>52</sup>"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind."

Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχνοί, ταπεινόφρονες,

<sup>53</sup>"Our author reinforces this teaching here (as in 2:21; 3:18; 4:8) by adding an OT citation, Prov. 3:34, which was likely a favorite in the early church, for it also appears in Jas. 4:6 (and later in 1 Clem. 30:2 and Ignatius, Eph. 5:3). This is reversal-of-fortunes language, of which both the NT (e.g., Luke 1:51–53; 6:24–26; Jas. 2:5) and the OT (1 Sam. 2:7–8; Pss. 28:27; 31:23; Ezek. 17:24; Zeph. 2:3; Sir. 10:14–15) make use. Those who are powerful and self-sufficient God rejects and destroys, while those who are humble and submitted to God (e.g., Num. 12:3; Judg. 6:15) he enriches with his gifts and exaltation. This teaching, which in the NT was supremely seen in the teaching of Jesus, is surely reason enough for any Christian humbly to serve another. And if this is the case, the church will operate effectively even under the stress of persecution." [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 185.]

<sup>54</sup>"This image fits well with what is tied on: humility. Peter has already referred to it in 3:8, for it is a cardinal Christian virtue (Acts 20:19; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; cf. Mark 10:42–45), indicating a servant's attitude toward others. It is something the NT values highly, in contrast to either Judaism or Hellenistic culture, due to the example of Jesus." [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 185.]

<sup>55</sup>See Matthew 20:17-28 (// Mark 10:35-45); Matthew 23:1-12 (// Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-52, 20:45-47); Mark 9:33-37 (// Matt. 18:1-8; Luke 9:46-48).

<sup>56</sup>One important study on this topic is H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors At Risk* (Portland, OR: Victor Press, 1993), based on a 1991 extensive survey of pastors across the US. The numbers are rather shocking: some 1,600 ministers are forced to resign their churches monthly in the US. Over the past 20 years the average length of a pastorate has declined from seven years to just over two years.