

God's Order in the Church

Scripture reading: I Timothy 3:1-13

Let us look into God's order for the church. His order is that the church should be ruled by elders appointed. It is a plural ministry that God appoints in the church. You might say to me that the word "bishop" is in the Bible. Let us read the King James Version in I Timothy 3:1, *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."* The whole verse is incorrectly translated. NOTHING IS WRONG WITH THE WORD OF GOD. What is wrong is what man says the Word of God says. Let us look at the Greek. The following is from the Textus Receptus by J. P. Green. I Timothy 3:1, *"Faithful the word. If anyone overseership aspires to a good work."* This says that if a man has a desire to take care of God's flock, God's people, he desires "a good work." Notice, there is no word in the Greek which suggests a HIERARCHY or an OFFICE called "bishop." Also, nothing is said about being a bishop. The word is "overseership." The word "bishop" is another Latin word that comes in to promote the idea of a hierarchy. The word "bishop" came into the denominations from the Roman Catholic church that ordained a hierarchical set-up, from the Pope on down to the Cardinals, Bishops, etc. This reveals how much the church has departed from God. Divine order, which God set in the church, has been destroyed by traditions.

Let us look at the Greek word "episkopas," erroneously translated in I Timothy 3:1 as "bishop," in another place in the Scriptures. In Acts 20, Paul is about to bid a final farewell to the brethren in Ephesus. He was not going to be coming back for he was going to Jerusalem to be offered up. He knew it was the end and he was giving the last message to the church. Acts 20:17, *"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."* The message he is giving them concludes with verse 28, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* In this case, the same word "episkopas" is translated "overseers," where as in I Timothy 3:1 it was translated "bishop" bringing in that hierarchical concept.

I Timothy 3:12, *"Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."* This word "deacons" was coined from the Greek word "deakonon" which means "servant," and in this specific place was called "deacons." There is no such thing as a "deacon." It should be translated a "servant." All servants of God should "be the husbands of one wife" and rule their own household.

From the above scriptures we can see that there has been much error brought into the church. Nevertheless, God's Word prevails.

Revelation 2:7, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

God always has His overcomers. He is revealing to us that even in this Ephesian church, where some people had fallen away and lost their first love, there were some who were going to be overcomers. We see two churches in the one church - one as overcomers and one as those who do not overcome. This is a picture of all of the churches throughout all of the ages even unto our time. Make your calling and election sure for you can either be an overcomer or a loser.

(Excerpt from *The Book of Revelation, Volume 1*, pg. 34-35)

Thought for today: May we strive to walk in God's divine order so that we overcome and are blessed to eat of the tree of life.