

# Titus

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## Lesson 3

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### Qualifications of Elders

(Tit. 1:5) For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

(1 Tim. 1:3-4) As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 4) nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

As with Timothy in Ephesus, Paul had left Titus behind to provide leadership to the fledgling

church in Crete. Now the apostle reiterated his previous instructions, both for Titus' sake and for the congregation's. The organization of the Cretan church was unfinished due to the quickness of Paul's visit. Therefore, Titus was to straighten out ("set in order") the situation by appointing elders in every town. Titus was now acting as an apostolic agent.

(Acts 14:23) **When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**

ELDER - πρεσβύτερος (Presbuteros) 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." This is a reference to age.

In the NT, the Greek word is presbuteros, which is transliterated in English as "presbyter" and from which the word "priest or pastor" was derived.

“Elder” refers to leadership. The age of a man was considered when referring to him as an elder. (Elders were typically in the 40-60 years old range, but could be older or younger based on their authority.)

Elders were considered those whom could be trusted.

In the church age, elders are to be trusted with God's word and refute false teaching when it is presented. The elder is to be the leader of the flock.

Local governments refer to elders as the ones running the governing bodies. (Judg. 8:14; Josh. 20:4; Ruth 4:2) and including those who have a hand in national affairs.

Moses and Aaron called elders when they were conveying the word of God to the people (Ex. 3:14; 4:29; 19:7) and in representing the people before God.

Other nations had elders also. (Gen. 50:7; Num. 22:7), The right to the title being due to age, or to the esteem in which an individual held, or to the holding of a definite office in the community.

The elder in Israel no doubt at first derived his authority and status as well as his name by reason of his age and experience.

In the Gospels the Jewish elders are associated with the scribes and chief priests as those at whose hands Jesus (Matt. 16:21; 27:1) and the apostles (Acts 6:12) suffered.

(Matt 16:21) From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

(Matt 27:1) Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death;

(Acts 6:12) And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council.

In the NT, elders or "presbyters" (presbyteroi) appear early in the life of the church, taking their

place along with the apostles, prophets and teachers. Teachers in Greek is "Didaskolos".

"Nomos" means law. There were still several "Nomos Didaskolos" (Teachers of the law) in Crete, trying to push circumcision as a requirement of following God. This had been discussed by the Apostles and the Jewish leaders at the council in Jerusalem. They had all agreed that this was not necessary, but it did not stop the Jewish traditions from reappearing in places with new churches as in Crete. While the Church in Ephesus was operating fairly smoothly under Timothy, Cretan churches were just founded and elders (leadership) had not yet been established.

When Timothy had been in Crete, He was overrun by the women, the Jews that had not accepted the Messiah-Jesus Christ, and the Jews that had accepted Christ but were bringing their own traditions in that were no longer applicable.

Titus was brought in to find mature believers who may have the gift of Pastor-Teacher to ordain and

be put over each church that had been founded by Paul and Barnabas. Titus also was to correct any false teaching, protect the flock from outsiders bringing in their own views and against unruly people, namely the women, causing problems. Titus was a dogmatic, strong leader that could handle this task. The Apostle Paul left him in Crete to handle these things in the early church.

(Acts 13:1) **Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

Notice....Presbyters do not appear at Antioch during Paul's stay there, nor are they mentioned in Paul's earlier epistles, but Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey had presbyters appointed in all the churches they founded.

(Acts 14:23) **When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting,**

they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

The presbyters whom Paul addressed at Ephesus and those addressed in I Peter and Titus have a decisive place in church life.

The Presbuteros are in such a position of authority and privilege that the church can be easily abused. Today, we see false teaching of doctrine, abuses of financial gain of church leaders and sexual abuse of people in the church.

We are absolutely in a spiritual battle! Satan and the demons are working overtime trying to block or corrupt the word of God. We need Pastors who will teach accurately, protect the word of God and refute the untruths that come to our attention, as much today as in the early church, maybe more-so today.

Presbyters share in the ministry of Christ towards the flock (Read I Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

(1 Pet 5:1-4) Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the

sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2) shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3) and do not lord it over those allotted to your charge, but prove to be examples to the flock. 4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

(Acts 20:28) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

It is often asserted that in the gentile churches the name *episcopos* is used as a substitute for *presbyteros* with similar meaning but both words are not interchangeable. The word "*presbyteros*" denotes the Pastor-Teacher, the highest authority of the local church under God. "*episcopos*" also



refers to the Pastor-Teacher, but in regarding his role of "overseer" or guardian of the flock.

In I Tim. 5:17 teaching (presbyteros) as well as overseers (episcopos) is regarded as a necessary function of the presbyter (Elder). It is likely that when the apostles and teachers and prophets ceased to be able to minister to the whole church in their travels (they were evangelists and missionaries), function of teaching and preaching would be the responsibility of the local presbyters and thus needing of the qualifications of teaching accurately and overseeing of the church.

The qualifications of Presbuteros "Pastor" was for only one man per church established by Paul and the other Apostles.

There may be more than one pastor in a church, but the Presbuteros, is the top Pastor and is responsible for the local church he is over. Any other overseers are under his authority.

The twenty-four elders who appear so frequently in the visions of the Book of Revelation are perfect

examples of how all authority should humbly adore God and the Lamb (Rev. 4:10; 5:8-10; 19:4).

(Rev 4:10-11) the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11) "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

(Rev 5:8-10) When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10) "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

(Rev 19:4) *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"*

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