

# The Harvester



## Preparing Souls

## To Serve The Lord



Volume 37

December 2016

Number 5

## James L. Lewis, Jr. Completes Studies with Us



Brother Lewis is originally from Pensacola, Florida. He came to the Florida School of Preaching from the 201 church of Christ in Bradenton, Florida, where he served in the teaching program. Immediately before enrolling in the school, James worked for the Manatee County Public Works Department. He is a veteran of the United States Army (1989-1996), having served most of his career as a mechanic. He became a Christian, in 2004. In Iraq, as a civilian contractor, he was active in the church of Christ that met on the base where he worked and was assigned to the duty of worship organizer. He is also a cofounder of the Middle Tennessee Christian Singles Group. He has one adult son, DeLarrian. He has preached by appointment while in the Florida School of Preaching. He plans on finding a congregation where he can continue to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ.

## A Better Understanding of Elders

By Brian R. Kenyon

Elders (also known in the New Testament as “bishops” and “pastors”) are to be the overseers in each local church of Christ (cf. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). The work of the men who oversee the local church is better understood when the descriptive names that the Holy Spirit used in reference to them are grasped. These descriptive names give various shades of meaning to his work. Consider three descriptive names.

### Elder, or Presbyter

The terms “elder” and “presbyter” are derived from the same Greek word (πρεσβύτερος, *presbuteros*, Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1). The use of this Greek word in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, abbreviated LXX) reveals three areas of meaning: (1) a man who is “older in years, contrasted with younger” (1 Sam. 2:22; Isa. 20:4); (2) a “group of men within a tribe,

family, people, or community of settlers,” whose role is to be understood by the historical context” (Ex. 24:1; Num. 16:25), or (3) the “classical sense of ambassador, negotiator, spokesman” (Num. 21:21; Deut. 2:26, both of these references are translated “messengers”)(Coenen 193-194).

In the New Testament, aside from its literal meaning of an “older person (cf. Acts 2:17, translated “old men”), the Greek word, which appears sixty seven times, is used in three senses: (1) in the Gospels and in the beginning and ending of Acts, it refers to the “lay members of the Sanhedrin” (Mk. 8:31); in the central portions of Acts, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and possibly the salutations of Second and Third John, it refers to one of the leaders in the local church (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5); and (3) in Revelation, it refers to heavenly beings (Rev. 4:4; 5:5) (Coenen 198). Obviously, focus in this study will be upon the second meaning. Concerning this idea, *presbuteros*

is found several times (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17, 19; Jas. 5:14).

Concerning church leaders, *presbuteros* is an “elder (of the Jewish religious leaders and of church leaders)” (Newman 149). The thrust of this word emphasizes spiritual maturity. Vine says these are “Those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual oversight over the church” (195). Thus, an elder cannot be a novice (1 Tim. 3:6).

Luke is the first writer to use “Christians” (Acts 11:26) and “elders” (Acts 11:30) in the same context to describe the men who “exercised leadership” in the church of Christ at Jerusalem (Coenen 199). The use of “the eldership [the presbytery, KJV]” (1 Tim. 4:14) and of the plural form “elders” in most references concerning church leaders (Acts 11:30; 14:23; Jas. 5:14 et al.) indicate a “collegiate character of their working” (Coenen 199). That is, there is never, in the New Testament, the idea of a one-man leadership in the church. The apostles did not even exercise total authority in every local church situation (cf. Acts 6:1-4). Also, it is apparent from Titus 1:5, 7 that the terms “elder” and “bishop” are referring to the same individual.

## Bishop, or Overseer

The terms “bishop” and “overseer” come from the same Greek word (ἐπίσκοπος, *episkopos*). The Greek word appears in the New Testament only five times. In four of these occurrences, it refers to the leaders in the local church (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7), and in one occurrence, it refers to Christ, the “Overseer [Bishop, KJV] of your souls” (1 Pet. 2:25).

Understanding the etymology of this word helps a person to understand

the New Testament meaning. According to Coenen, in classical Greek, this family of words is formed from a root and a prefix which denote the “activity of looking at or paying attention to a person or thing.” In the LXX, this group of words is used for a Hebrew word that originally meant “to take care of ... to look for, investigate (1 Sam. 14:17), visit (Judg. 15:1), inspect (Num. 1:44).” This word group also describes “God’s loving watching over and solicitous care for the land (Deut. 11:12), his elect people (Ruth 1:6; Zeph. 2:7; Ps. 80:14), and individuals, e.g. Sarah (Gen. 21:1)” (188-189). Only in a few places does *episkopos* in the LXX refer to an overseer, officer, or governor (2 Chr. 24:11; Neh. 11:9, 14, 22; 12:42).

In the New Testament, *episkopos* refers to an “overseer ... of persons who have a definite function or a fixed office within a group ... superintendent, guardian, bishop” (Bauer 299). Thayer says that the word refers to “a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, a curator” (243). Bishops should not (and cannot) do all the work of a given congregation, but all the work done by a congregation must be done under their oversight. Of course, Scriptural bishops operate only within the framework of God’s word. The meaning of *episkopos* is fully realized when one acknowledges Christ as the supreme example of this unselfish service (1 Pet. 2:25). Jesus was moved by a genuine concern for the salvation of humanity. Bishops in the local church are to be motivated by the same unselfish concern as Christ.

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**Special Contributions:** Atlantic Christian Fund, Dean Wilson Estate.

\*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month’s financial statement.

## The Harvester

Published Monthly  
Florida School of Preaching  
1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803  
(863) 683-4043

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## Do You Understand The Biblical View of End Times?

42nd Annual Lectureship **Jan. 16-19, 2017** Brian R. Kenyon, Director

### MONDAY

9:00 "First Century Times" or "End Times"? Brian R. Kenyon  
9:40 "End Times" Preaching in Acts Daniel Stearsman  
10:20 BREAK  
10:50 Intertestamental Expectations David Dixon  
11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Living for the "Then," Not the "Now"

1:30 Your Life Matters Now and Forever Ty Rhymes  
2:00 Esau: Living for "Now" (Heb. 12:16) Forest Antemesaris  
2:30 Moses: Living for "Then" (Heb. 11:26) Hiram Kemp  
3:00 BREAK  
3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
4:30 DINNER  
6:30 Congregational Singing  
7:00 Parable of the Virgins Thomas Wise  
7:45 Jesus' Authority to Judge Sam Jones

### TUESDAY

9:00 "End Times" Teaching in Mt. 24 T. Brownlow-Dindy, Sr.  
9:40 Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" Emmanuel B. Daugherty  
10:20 BREAK  
10:50 "End Times" in the Book of Hebrews Stephen Atnip  
11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Which "End" Is What?

1:30 Is the "Shortened Time" (1 Cor. 7:29) the End? E. Edwards  
2:00 When Does the OT End and the NT Begin? George Beals  
2:30 Knowing the "AD 70 Doctrine" David Hester  
3:00 BREAK  
3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
4:30 DINNER  
6:30 Congregational Singing  
7:00 Parable of the Talents Bryon R. Schulz  
7:45 Judgment Scene in Revelation 20:11-15 Jimmy Clark

### WEDNESDAY

9:00 "End Times" Teaching in Luke 21:5-36 Bruce Daugherty  
9:40 Daniel's Final Revelations Emmanuel B. Daugherty  
10:20 BREAK  
10:50 "End Times" in Second Thessalonians Jimmy Clark  
11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: "End Times" Fables of False Religion

1:30 Islam Trent Wheeler  
2:00 Mormonism Nathan Franson  
2:30 Jehovah's Witness Charles Broyles  
3:00 BREAK  
3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
4:30 DINNER  
6:30 Congregational Singing  
7:00 Parable of the Dragnet David Stearsman  
7:45 In View of What Is to Come Bill Davis

### THURSDAY

9:00 "End Times" Teaching in First Corinthians Earl Edwards  
9:40 Premillennialism and Its Variations Walt Person  
10:20 BREAK  
10:50 The Living and the Dead at His Coming Melvin Otey  
11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: End Times and the Book of Revelation

1:30 Political Leaders, "Mark of the Beast," Etc. Bob Bauer  
2:00 The 1,000 Year Reign and Premillennialism Daniel Cates  
2:30 The Holy City John Saw Coming Down Sam Hester  
3:00 BREAK  
3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
4:30 DINNER  
6:30 Congregational Singing  
7:00 Parable of the Tares Hiram Kemp  
7:45 Being Children of the Day Melvin L. Otey



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“Position of a bishop [office of a bishop, KJV]” (1 Tim. 3:1) is from a different, but similar, Greek word (ἐπισκοπή, *episkope*), which designates a defined function to which spiritually mature men would aspire. Although “a man” in First Timothy 3:1 is singular, there is nothing here that would contradict the plural use (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1), which shows a plurality of bishops working with a single local church. In like manner, references to the qualifications that “a bishop” (singular) must have do not support the “theory of monarchical episcopacy with a single bishop supervising all other office holders” (Coenen 192). The New Testament teaches no such system of one bishop church government!

## Pastors, or Shepherds

The terms “pastor” and “shepherd” come from the same Greek word (ποιμήν, *poimen*). The Greek word occurs eighteen times in the New Testament, seventeen of which are translated by a form of “shepherd” (Mt. 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mk. 6:34; 14:27; Lk. 2:8, 15, 18, 20; Jn. 10:2, 11 [twice], 12, 14, 16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25). Only in Ephesians 4:11 is this Greek word translated “pastors.” The Greek word may be defined as “shepherd; pastor” (Newman 146); “the overseers of Christian assemblies”

(Thayer 527). Although *poimen* refers explicitly to the leaders in the local church only in Ephesians 4:11, the work of “shepherding” the flock is found throughout the New Testament (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

In Acts 20:28, Luke becomes the first writer to use “flock” and “church” in the same context to denote the body of Christ. This usage gives a “shepherding” shade of meaning to the work of the local church’s leaders. An excellent commentary on this work of shepherding is found in the picture of an ancient Near Eastern shepherd portrayed by Jesus in John 10:1-14. Shepherds must love the flock committed to their care; they must protect the flock from harm (cf. false teachers); and they must feed the flock with nourishment (cf. the bread and the water of life). Peter, using the same “shepherd” imagery, exhorted elders not to be self-seeking lords over the church (cf. the qualifications they must meet, 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9), but to be examples to the church in both leadership and character (1 Pet. 5:3). Elders, or bishops, must give account to the “chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4 cf. Heb. 13:20).

## Works Cited

Coenen, Lothar. “Bishop, Presbyter, Elder.” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol. 1. Ed. Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986:188-201.

