

THE NEED FOR A STRONG ELDERSHIP

David B. Jones

yesterday

The history of God's people reveals that the Lord God of heaven has always sought strong leadership for His people.

We recall that the children of Israel were visited by Jehovah and were led out of Egypt by a strong and courageous leader. Moses was commissioned from the burning bush to go and lead God's people out of captivity. Exodus 4:12 reads, *Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.* The Lord promised to be with Moses, but also expected Moses to be strong and brave in leading the people.

On one occasion, several men, led by Korah, tried to overthrow the authority of Moses. We read in Numbers 16 that these men claimed Moses took on too much authority. The Bible says that the earth opened up and swallowed those who rebelled against Moses (Num. 16:31-33). In reality, these men had rebelled against God since Moses was God's leader of the people.

Shortly before his death, Moses commissioned the new leader Joshua, to be strong and of a good courage (Deut. 31:6). The Lord knew his people would rise up against the leaders, but He expected the leaders to be strong even in the face of rebellion.

God expected the prophets to be men of courage as they spoke to the people. The Lord told Ezekiel that the house of Israel would not listen to him (Ez. 3:7). We read in 3:8-9, *Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.* Thus Ezekiel could not quit when the going became tough.

God expects his leaders (elders) to be just as strong and just as courageous. God is still with us today and will still fight our battles for us, if **WE** will not forsake him. The Bible lists the qualifications for men who would be elders in the Lord's church today (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In addition, the Bible teaches what elders are to do. A closer look at some of these duties would be profitable for us.

GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO FEED THE CHURCH (Acts 20:28)

Just as a shepherd would feed his sheep what they needed to mature, so elders are to feed the people what they need to mature as Christians. Of course, this feeding is the feeding of the pure and simple word of God. We are to desire it so we can grow (I Pet. 2:2). Since elders have the obligation to feed, it follows logically that a place and time for feeding would be necessary. This would be the assemblies of the saints and each saint would thus be required to assemble in order to be fed. It is hard to imagine a Christian that would willfully miss an opportunity to come and receive spiritual nourishment for his soul.

GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO PROTECT THE SHEEP (Titus 1:9-11)

Although many do not want to believe it (for whatever the reason is), there are many false teachers **IN THE CHURCH** that will lead the sheep away from the fold. Jesus, himself, said to beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Yet, there are many children of God who do not believe Jesus!! The elders have a responsibility before God to know what sound doctrine is and then to exhort and convince the false teacher (Titus 1:9). They are to stop the mouths of these people (Titus 1:11). We need strong preachers today, but this is not enough! We **MUST** have elderships that will support

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the preacher who still stands in the old paths. We need elders who will not bow the knee to numbers and popularity. What's "new and dynamic" is the cry heard from many of our pulpits today, but the church needs elders who will still insist on a "thus saith the Lord" regardless of whose feelings are hurt or regardless of who leaves. Elders still watch for the souls of the flock and must still give account for the way they were fed and protected (Heb. 13:17).

**GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO
BE EXAMPLES FOR THE FLOCK
(1 Pet. 5:3)**

They are not to lord over God's heritage, but they are to set the examples for the others. If elders want people to follow them, the people must first see the elders doing the will of God. The elders must set the example in Bible study. They must set the example in visiting the sick. They must set the example in humility. They must set the example in exhibiting a calm personality. They must set the example by not murmuring or complaining. They must set the example of not fellowshiping those who either teach or practice error, or endorse those who do. They will not be perfect, but the spirit of humility before God must show through when mistakes are made. They must be big enough to admit wrong and then change from it. Likewise, the sheep must allow them the opportunity to change.

The need for strong leadership has not diminished one degree in time. The church today needs men who will prepare themselves and then who will serve as elders. An army can not make much progress without a capable leadership who takes orders for the Command-In-Chief and then expedites those orders. Likewise, the church (the Lord's army) will not progress in the saving of souls without capable leadership who expedite the laws of the Lord. May God help us to prepare ourselves and to serve when we are prepared. Brethren, it is later than we think!!

WANTED



- PEOPLE** who are as interested in the church on Sunday and Wednesday night as they are on Sunday morning.
- PEOPLE** who are as liberal with their money as with their advice and criticism.
- PEOPLE** who are willing to deny themselves in order to serve God (Matthew 16:24).
- PEOPLE** who love God more than pleasure (2 Timothy 3:4).
- PEOPLE** who are not only church members but also church workers.
- PEOPLE** who are willing to let church work interfere with their work and pleasure.
- PEOPLE** who are willing to spend at least half as much of their time studying the Bible as they do watching television.
- PEOPLE** who can be half as enthusiastic about a gospel meeting as about the World Series or the Super Bowl.
- PEOPLE** who are as anxious to tell others the good news of the gospel as they are to tell them the latest gossip.
- PEOPLE** who are willing to practice in their lives what they say they believe in their hearts.
- PEOPLE** who aspire to be leaders in the church purely for the good they can do for others, and the greater service they can render to God.
- PEOPLE** who can object to something without becoming objectionable, and who can disagree without becoming disagreeable.

--- SELECTED