

NAME-CALLING --- DO WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL?

When it comes to 'calling names' let's think about it.

Tonight, we'll focus on **the names we call our leaders**,

and we'll consider the question:

What do we call ourselves? Denominations have labels, under 2 main headings:

Protestant - (which has many divisions)

- Baptist -- Southern, Independent, Missionary, Free-Will, Brethren, Sovereign Grace
- Methodist • Lutheran • Church of God • Church of Christ
- Assemblies of God • Pentecostal • Apostolic • Christian
- Presbyterian • Nazarene • Eastern Orthodox • Episcopal

and Catholic

The differences in these organizations are DOCTRINAL. They can be compared because they are documented. The various names are actually helpful for obtaining information about their teachings.

Then there are the • **NON-denominational** groups. Their leaders need to be questioned to find out the core beliefs of each of those assemblies.

The point is that we use **NAMES** to identify ourselves. We have terms and words that we use to describe our views on the Bible.

I personally classify myself as • a Bible believer.
I am • dispensational • mid-Acts • Pauline • pre-trib.

(All meaning that I recognize the distinctive message and ministry committed to the apostle Paul the revelation of the mystery the dispensation of the grace of God.)

I used to be • a stranger and • a foreigner but now I am presently
• a fellow-citizen and • a SAINT in God's family and • an ambassador:

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,
but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

2 Cor 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

When the children of ISRAEL were called • God's sheep
 back then we GENTILES used to be • dogs:

Matt 15:21-27 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the **children's** bread,
 and to cast it to **dogs**.

27 And she said, **Truth**, Lord: yet the **DOGS** eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Yes, the scriptures are repeatedly clear: ISRAEL was God's sheep. These following verses were written to THEM, not to us Gentiles. Here are just a few of them:

Psa 44:11, 22 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

Psa 78:52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

Psa 79:13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

Psa 95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

Psa 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

In this next passage, notice the names that the leaders of the SHEEP are called:

Jer 23:1-4 Woe be unto the **pastors** that destroy and scatter the **sheep of my pasture!** saith the LORD.

2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the **pastors that feed my people**; Ye have **scattered my flock**, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

4 And **I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them**: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

We know that those verses without a doubt strictly apply to the nation Israel.

However, they have been used by DENOMINATIONS to persuade people TODAY to think that THEY --- NOT Israel --- are God's sheep.

The denominational leaders use verses like those to convince people today

that their leaders are to be called

- PASTORS
- and SHEPHERDS ---
- or sometimes, UNDER-shepherds.

Obviously, a shepherd feeds and cares for a flock of sheep.

Well think about it along the same line:

A PASTOR 'PASTURES' sheep as he watches over them in the grassy fields.

Therefore, why would WE want to **name-call** the leaders in the church today - pastors?

.... since that is a LABEL that applied to Israel's shepherds. As grace-believers,

we don't refer to ourselves as sheep neither do we say that we are backsliding:

Jer 3:12, 14, 15 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, **thou backsliding Israel**, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.

14 Turn, **O backsliding children**, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

15 And **I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.**

So WHY do we call our preachers 'Pastors' if we ALSO don't call them 'Shepherds'?

The word 'pastors' occurs 8 times in our Bible. 7 of them are in the book of Jeremiah. PAUL uses the word 1 time, in the epistle to the Ephesians. Keep the location of Paul's use of the word in mind for future use in this message:

Eph 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors** and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 **TILL** we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The list of offices in verse 11 of

• apostles • prophets • evangelists • pastors • teachers

were **specialty-gifted men that God gave UNTIL the scriptures were complete**

UNTIL we have FULL knowledge

but God no longer GIVES men special enablement for those functions.

It is God's completed revelation that **perfects** a man:

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 **That the man of God may be perfect**, throughly furnished unto all good works.

We understand that the canon was ENTIRE through Paul's writings

and that every man may be perfect by it:

Col 1:25-28 Whereof I am made a minister, according to **the dispensation of God which is given to me** for you, **to fulfil the word of God**;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest **to his saints**:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; **that we may present every man perfect** in Christ Jesus:

Also, notice in that passage we just read, that we are **CALLED 'saints'**.

My question, again, for you to think about, is this:

WHY do we call our preachers 'Pastors' if we ALSO don't call them 'Shepherds'?

Both words (pastor and shepherd) are used for the **same Hebrew word 'raah'** in the Old Testament scriptures. They appear to be inter-changeable.

The 23rd Psalm is already pre-printed on almost every funeral pamphlet I've seen.

But it is really to ISRAEL:

Ps 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

GOD is Israel's Shepherd:

Psa 80:1 Give ear, **O Shepherd of Israel**, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

Isa 40:10-11 Behold, **the Lord GOD will come** with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Christ, during His earthly ministry, said He came for Israel. We already read the verse:

Matt 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent **but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

JESUS specifically told them He was their Shepherd:

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:14-16 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.
15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Typically, men who are called 'PASTORS' today (other than those of us who rightly divide according to Paul's distinctive ministry), use that last verse we just read to say that **WE Gentiles are the 'other sheep'** and that they are our under-shepherd.

Those denominational pastors are guilty of **MIXING** the scriptures, rather than 'rightly-dividing them as 2 Tim. 2:15 says. They **STIR them up, instead of separating.**

The epistle to the HEBREWS is written to the Hebrews. That's THEM, not us:

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our **Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep**, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Remember that Jesus gave PETER the KEYS to the KINGDOM, after He told him that His church would be built upon Peter's confession that He was the Christ:

Matt 16:13-19 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, **That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Unfortunately 'pastors' -- who do not 'rightly-divide' -- think that THAT church is the SAME church we are in today. They are confused about WHEN the Body of Christ began. They fail to recognize Paul's distinctive ministry.

Gal 2:9 And when James, Cephas (*that's Peter - John 1:42*), and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

James, Peter, and John agreed with Paul that they would CONFINE their ministry to Israel and that Paul would minister to the Gentiles.

Therefore, THEIR epistles are written to Israel --- and NOT to us Gentiles!

Peter's epistle also describes Israel as the sheep, and Jesus as the Shepherd at His second coming.

Peter also calls them a FLOCK:

1 Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 Peter 5:2-4 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.
 4 And when **the chief Shepherd shall appear**, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

It should also be mentioned that Paul used the word 'flock' in referring to some Ephesian believers. We'll be good Bible students and examine it carefully.
 Let's read in Acts chapter 20, verses 17-32 to pick up some information to think about:

Acts 20:17-32 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

*Paul called the leaders of the church **ELDERS**.*

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Paul was teaching **BOTH Jews and Gentiles**.*

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

*Paul realized his **UNIQUE, special ministry that Jesus committed unto him, and he name-called it, the gospel of the GRACE of God**.*

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

*Paul was preaching the 'kingdom of God' (vs. 25), which we understand to be included in the **WHOLE** counsel of God (vs. 27) which included everything they needed to understand God's programS for the ages. That is **NOT** to say that Paul preached the same message that Peter preached -- but he certainly had the capability to **EXPLAIN** it.*

Keep your place here in Acts chapter 20, because we'll come right back to it, after about 3 references.

For example, even though WE were not DIRECTLY given the NEW TESTAMENT (Jer. 31:31 - says it was FOR the house of Israel), we do understand that we are ABLE MINISTERS of it (2 Cor. 3:6) in that, we can understand WHO it was specifically given to, and HOW we BENEFIT from it, by comparing verses like these next 2:

Matt 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for MANY for the remission of sins.

and

Matt 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for MANY.

with PAUL's revelation, which was not revealed until 'due time':

1 Tim 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time.

Throughout his ministry, Paul USED the scriptures that were already written, and properly TAUGHT them but he also ADDED NEW revelation that God gave only to him.

Now, go back to Acts chapter 20, picking back up at verse 28:

Acts 20:28 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.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Remember that the ONE time Paul used the word 'pastors' was in the epistle to the Ephesians. We already read it in Eph. 4:11. Therefore, it is LOGICAL that Paul would refer to the Ephesians, here in this instance (in Acts 20), as a flock.

God had given special GIFTS to certain MEN who were ministering to the church before the scriptures were complete. There is NO need for those miraculous gifts today, since we have the entire revelation. Those men IDENTIFIED the epistles that were to be the scriptures, to be COMPILED into the Bible we have today.

Also, notice and keep in mind that Paul called the ELDERS 'overseers'.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and **to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up**, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Again, in vs. 32, Paul affirms that it is God's Word for the dispensation of GRACE that EDIFIES.

As it was in the Hebrew, so also it is In the New Testament Greek writing. The same Greek word 'poimen' that is translated 'pastor' in Eph. 4:11, is also translated as 'Shepherd' in the epistles of Hebrews and Peter that we already read.

WEBSTER's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language shows that the two words PASTOR and PASTURE are **derived from the same root words** in both Latin and Greek.

A pastor is a shepherd; one who has the job of feeding and care of flocks and herds.

A pasture is the food or grassy ground on which they feed.

We recognize that the popular word pastor is traditionally ACCEPTED as the MAIN leader in a church today.

However, we are convinced by the following scriptures, rightly divided, that he should be called a BISHOP instead:

1 Tim 3:1-7 This is a true saying, If a **man desire the office of a bishop**, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, **apt to teach**;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

In Paul's LATER writings --- that are ironically called his PASTORAL books --- we see that a BISHOP was a 'seasoned' MAN (NOT a new or recent believer -- that would LIKELY be an ELDER) who WANTED the responsibility and particular duties of teaching and taking care of the church.

Now that's just what we have commonly called a pastor. So, I'm thinking

Shouldn't we use a MORE ACCURATE name to call him?

Such as, what the last writings in scripture calls him -- a BISHOP!

The word '**bishop**' is defined as a super-intendent, an overseer, a ruler, or director.

Right after the instruction about bishops, Paul gives Timothy guidance about the position of deacons.

A '**deacon**' was like an errand-boy, a servant, a low-ranking minister who did menial (domestic or family) duties, sort of like a waiter.

1 Tim 3:8-13 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, **faithful in all things**.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Evidently Timothy had a special endowment, or enablement, that came from God through the hands of elders (that either were prophets or knew prophecies) and Paul:

1 Tim 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

2 Tim 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

The same Greek word '**presbuteros**' is translated both elders and presbytery.

Paul also taught Timothy important things about elders:

1 Tim 5:17-22 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Here is another of Paul's last epistles, again, NAME-CALLING a BISHOP as a MAN who teaches sound doctrine. He would likely be an ELDER, who had been appointed and established in the local city.

Titus 1:4-9 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and **ordain elders in every city**, as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

7 For a **bishop** must be blameless, **as the steward of God**; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 **Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught,**

that he may be able by sound doctrine

both to exhort

and to convince the gainsayers.

A '**steward**' is a man who managed the concerns, like a ward, a keeper, or a guardian.

Faithfulness was not an option for these various 'supervisors' it was a necessity:

1 Cor 4:1-2 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Paul also name-called himself and other men who worked with him, 'ministers'.

A '**minister**' is a chief or head servant, an agent appointed to manage business under the authority of another, that directs the affairs of governing.

The same Greek word 'diakonos' is translated both deacon and minister.

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Eph 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Col 1:7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

1 Thes 3:2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ,

- to establish you,
- and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Paul used the titles of preacher and apostle and teacher of the Gentiles:

1 Tim 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

2 Tim 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

A **'preacher'** is one who proclaims publically in spiritual or religious discourses.

Timothy was told to PREACH:

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

An **'apostle'** is one who is 'sent away' or 'commissioned out' with a message, like a deputy going to execute some important business.

The apostles were accompanied by SIGNS (which the Jews required - 1 Cor. 1:22) to authenticate their message as being from God. They have reasonably passed away with the completion of the scriptures:

2 Cor 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Paul was personally 'distinguished' and individually 'set-apart' by the risen, glorified Lord to be, not simply 'one of the apostles' like the others before him but to be different and unique, being THE apostle to the nations. No one else ever made that claim. He made a 'big to-do' over it:

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Rom 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am THE apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

A **'teacher'** is one who teaches and instructs.

Although men are STILL teachers today they are not 'specially GIFTED of God' to be such, as they were in Eph. 4:11.

2 Tim 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

As PAUL writes his epistles, he **name-calls** believers 'SAINTS'. That is the name God (through Paul) uses to describe and call us during this dispensation of grace. Many of his letters are addressed to the saints. Here are just a couple of them:

Rom 1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, **called to be saints**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, **to all the saints** in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, **with the bishops and deacons**:

So we see that God gave NAMES for the OFFICES in the church for THIS dispensation:

- Bishops
- Elders (or Presbytery)
- Deacons

If it is not important about the terms we use, or the names we call then WHY not say we are a 'BORN-AGAIN' Christian or we are back-slidden sheep? As saints, let's be good ambassadors in our terminology, and apply the correct names that we understand the 'rightly-divided' scriptures label us and our respected leaders:

1 Thes 5:12-13 And we beseech you, brethren,
to know them which labour among you,
and are over you in the Lord,
and admonish you;
13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.
And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Cor 16:15-16 I beseech you, brethren,
(ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia,
and that **they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**,)
16 That ye **submit yourselves unto such**,
and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

From my study, I understand that Pastors are Shepherds of Sheep. I'd rather be called a bishop, preacher, teacher, minister, or elder. Now this is David Dowell, saying, "Next time you call someone 'Pastor' Think about it!"