

Distinction between Levitical Priests as “Pastors,” and New Testament Pastoral Office

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- A) The Levitical Priests (Levites) a pattern of the Pastoral ministry in the Church:

Numbers 16:9 “Does it seem but a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them.”

- B) Old Testament Worship Sanctuary gives the pattern adapted by the historical Church:

2Chronicles 31:2-10 “And Hezekiah appointed the priests and the Levites after their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of the Lord.”

- C) The Levitical Priests were local “Shepherds” of the congregations throughout Israel:

Numbers 1:50-53 “But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that *belong* to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. (51) And when the tabernacle sets forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. (52) And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. (53) But **the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony**, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: **and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle.**”

- D) Levitical Priests Ministered Spiritually as Pastors to God’s People:

2Chronicles 30:22-27 “And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all **the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD**: (25) And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. (26) So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel *there was* not the like in Jerusalem. (27) **Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.**

- E) What Happens When There is a Failure of Pastoral Care of the Congregation:

Jeremiah 10:20-21 “**My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none** (*Levitical Priesst/Pastor Shepherds*) **to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.** (21) For **the**

pastors (Levitical Priests/Shepherds) are become brutish, and **have not sought the LORD**: therefore they shall not prosper, **and all their flocks shall be scattered.**" (When the Pastor/Shepherds suffer a failure, the sheep are scattered: *(Matthew 26:31 "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, **I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.**"*)

F) What Happens When the Pastors Fail to Feed & Care for the Local Flock (Congregations):

Jeremiah 23:1-3 "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** (cared for) **them**: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD."

G) Jeremiah Prophecies of Jesus Restoring the Gift of Pastor/Teacher and Ministry Gifts for the Church (And as was the Case in the Old Testament: Prophets (Called Also to be Apostles & Evangelists/Preachers) Preceded Pastors, So Was the Order of Gifts Given by Christ to the Church (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists (Heralders of the gospel preceded Pastors):

Jeremiah 23":4-5 "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.** (5) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jesus).**"

Ephesians 4:8, 11-12 "Wherefore he saith, When he (*Jesus*) ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and **gave gifts unto men.** (11) 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."

H) Key Differences in Old Testament Between the Pastors/Shepherds (Levitical Priests) and the Prophets Ministry:

a) The Old Testament Pastor/Shepherd (Levitical Priest) Cared for (Shepherded) the Local Congregation; While the Prophets Cared for (Shepherded) the Nation (as a whole), even as in the Church, the Pastor/Shepherd Cares for (Shepherds) the local Congregation; While the "Apostle/Prophet/Evangelist" Gifts Care for (Shepherds) the Overall Corporate Body of the Church (as a Whole):

b) After Moses and Joshua (the two founding National Shepherds of Israel) were gone, Samuel, the Prophet, became the new "Arch-Type" National Shepherd of God's Corporate people, Israel and as such, was given the power to oversee and distribute God's Care of the Nation. Once the People Prevailed Upon God for a King, Samuel (so long as he was alive) remained the Prophet (At-Large) and "National Shepherd;

anointing the kings of Israel, (including King Saul and King David as National Shepherds), However Once Israel set up the reign of Kings, it wasn't long before the Nation was backslidden Spiritually, and there were no "National Shepherds" over Israel to Spiritually Care for the Nation as a Whole, only the (Major) Prophets whom God Continued to Raise Up to Speak to the Nation and Attempt God's Care over them, i.e. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, etc.

1) The Gift (Office) of Pastor/Teacher is Never Merged with Apostle. Prophet and Evangelist, Whereas the Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist Gift Offices are Often Comingled, (i.e. Apostle and Prophet and Evangelist Gifts Merged into One Ministry):

Romans 1:1-7 "Paul, a servant (gift) of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God**, (5) By whom **we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith AMONG ALL NATIONS**, for his name: (6) Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: (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.

1Corinthians 9:1-2 "Am I not **an apostle**? am I not free **[no boundaries of ministry]?** have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? **are not ye my work in the doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.**"

1Timothy 2:7 Whereunto **I am ordained a preacher (Evangelist, ie. Herald of the gospel)**, and **an apostle**, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) and **a teacher of the Gentiles** (at large, the whole as differing from just a local congregation) in faith and verity."

l) Old Testament Prophets Were Often Merged together as Evangelists (Heralders of the OT Messages) and Apostles (Raising up and Overseeing and Mentoring other Prophets as Apostles do with At-Large ministers in the Church at large today):

a) Evangelists (in Type) Traveling and Preaching God's Instructions At-Large):

Ezra 5:1 "NOW THE prophets, Haggai and Zechariah son [*grandson*] of Iddo, prophesied **to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, Whose [Spirit] was upon them.**"

b) Apostles (A Type of): Prophets Raising up schools of the Prophets and Mentoring them:

2Kings 2:3-7 "And **the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to**

Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. (4) And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. (5) **And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?** And he answered, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. (6) And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. (7) **And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off:** and they two stood by Jordan.”

1) Jamieson, Faussett & Brown Commentary –

- a) **“When the Lord would take up Elijah** — “A revelation of this event had been made to the prophet; but, unknown to him, it had also been revealed to his disciples (Apostleship), and to Elisha in particular, who kept constantly beside him.
- b) **“Gilgal”**— This Gilgal (Jiljil) was near Ebal and Gerizim; **a school of the prophets was established there (More evidence of Apostleship) . At Beth-el there was also a school of the prophets, which Elijah had founded; and at Jericho there was another [2Ki 2:4].** In travelling to these places, which he had done through the impulse of the Spirit (2Ki 2:2, 2Ki 2:4-6), **Elijah wished to pay a farewell visit to these several institutions (Raised up under Elijah’s Apostleship),** which lay on his way to the place of ascension and, at the same time, from a feeling of humility and modesty, to be in solitude, where there would be no eye-witnesses of his glorification. All his efforts, however, to prevail on his attendant to remain behind, were fruitless. **Elisha knew that the time was at hand, and at every place the sons of the prophets spoke to him of the approaching removal of his master.** Their last stage was at the Jordan. **They were followed at a distance by fifty scholars of the prophets,** from Jericho, who were desirous, in honor of the great occasion, to witness the miraculous translation of the prophet.”

J) As Seen in the Old Testament Examples, God’s plan and purpose for the New Testament Church was Founded on the Same Arch-Type of the Old Testament Leaders, i.e. Levitical Priests as Pastors/Shepherds/Teachers of the (Local) Flock of the Congregation of Israel and (At-Large) Ministries made up of the Office of Prophet with gifts of mentoring and preaching to the Nation of Israel At-Large.

- a. **In the New Testament, God’s gifts of Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist (At-Large) and Pastors/Teachers (Shepherds of the Local Congregation), i.e. Local Flock:**

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." *

*Pastors (as Local Shepherds) are called to feed and provide care for the local congregation over which they have been called to serve.

1Peter 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 fades not away." *

*Paul not suggesting that He was a "Local Shepherd/Pastor," rather that he was also "more mature" in his calling, as he was also paying honor to the Pastors He was exhorting as being more mature (elders).