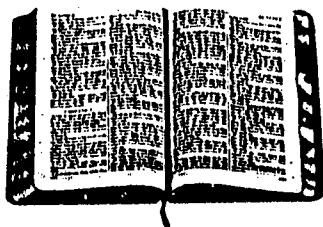


# THE INSTRUCTOR



*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)*

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## **CAN SINGLE MEN SCRIPTURALLY SERVE AS ELDERS?**

Through the years a few men among us have advocated the idea that *an unmarried man* (a bachelor, a widower or one who has Scripturally divorced his wife) *may serve as an elder* (i.e., bishop, pastor, presbyter, overseer or shepherd) *in a local church*. NOTE: A close study of the New Testament will indicate that these six words (elders, bishops, pastors, presbyters, overseers, shepherds) describe the same group of men from different viewpoints. From the standpoint of *age* they are *elders* or *presbyters*; from the standpoint of *oversight* they are *bishops* or *overseers* and from the standpoint of their *work* they are *shepherds* or *pastors*.

The question we are considering is: *Can single men Scripturally serve as elders?* To answer the question we must not appeal to either traditions, preferences or opinions of men, but our appeal must be to the Scriptures! Please carefully and honestly consider the following.

1. There is NO PRECEPT (either command or statement) that authorizes an unmarried man to serve as *an elder* (bishop) in a local church!

2. There is NO SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLE where an unmarried man ever served or should serve or may serve as *an elder* (bishop) in a local church!

3. There is NO NECESSARY IMPLICATION where an unmarried man ever served or should serve or may serve as *an elder* (bishop) in a local church!

4. In Titus 1:5-9 the apostle Paul (in writing to Titus) said: "**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: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless...**" NOTE: Being the husband of one wife is a qualification of being ordained as *an elder*, but it is only one of the qualifications a man must meet in order to be a *bishop* (elder) in a local church!

5. In 1 Timothy 3:2-7 (in writing to Timothy) the apostle Paul said: "**A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober,... one that ruleth well his**

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# THE INSTRUCTOR

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## Editorial...

### MUST WE KEEP THE SABBATH TODAY? (No. 12)

In our past studies we have shown from the Scriptures that the law that required the children of Israel to keep the sabbath day holy was *provisional* and *temporary*. There is no Scriptural *proof* that the LORD ever intended for Christians to keep the law that He gave to the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. The sabbath day was given to a *specific* people for *specified* reasons. When that law had fulfilled its purpose *it ceased to be binding*. When the law that required sabbath keeping was fulfilled, *it was no longer in force!* (Cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; 7:11-19; 9:16-17; 10:9-10; Romans 7:1-7; 2 Cor. 3:6-17; Col. 2:14-17; Gal. 3:23-27; Col. 2:14-17; etc.

In our last five studies we have been examining some arguments made by "sabbath keepers" in an effort to show that sabbath keeping is **binding** on Christians today. We have shown that Scriptural *proof* is lacking. Let us continue our study.

## ARGUMENTS FOR SABBATH KEEPING CONSIDERED

21. "HEBREWS 4:9 TEACHES THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD KEEP THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH HOLY BECAUSE IT SAYS: 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.'"

### REPLY:

(1) Sabbatarians *assume* and *assert* the desired conclusion without showing *proof* that substantiates it!

(2) Hebrews 4:1-11 says: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

For if Jesus [*Joshua* acc. to footnote-CRS] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath cease from his own works, as God did from his.

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." NOTE: In the above verses we have the *context* of the statement made in verse 9.

(3) Please observe that the *text* (4:9) says "a rest" remains to the people of God. It does *not* say "the sabbath" is to be kept holy by the people of God. A vast difference in the two statements!

(4) The ASV says "a sabbath rest" remains for the people of God> It does *not* say "the sabbath rest" is to be kept holy by the people of God! A vast difference in the two statements!

(5) The word *sabbath* in the New Testament (KJV) always comes from *sabbaton* whereas the word *rest* in Heb. 4:9 comes from *sabbatismos* and it appears only this one time! It is a different word. According to STRONG'S GREEK DICTIONARY the word *sabbatismos* is from a der. of *sabbaton*. NOTE: *Sabbatismos* is not from *sabbaton* but is from a derivative of *sabbaton*. They are different words. *Sabbaton* is neuter gender whereas *sabbatismos* is masculine gender!

(6) We learn from Heb. 3:7-19 that the Israelites failed to *enter into God's rest because of their unbelief*. The *rest* they failed to enter into was the promised land, Canaan. NOTE: They were keeping the sabbath day holy but they did not enter into God's rest. It necessarily follows that God's rest in these verses is *not* the keeping of the seventh day sabbath although God did rest on the seventh day!

(7) Verse 11 says "Let us therefore labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The *rest* that remains for the people of God is something that we can fail to enter. NOTE: In this context this could not have reference to the keeping the seventh day sabbath holy because one does not have to *fear* and *labour* in order to keep the sabbath holy! One had to cease from working in order to keep the seventh day sabbath.

(8) If the Hebrew Christians were keeping the sabbath day holy as Sabbatharians contend, that is *proof* sufficient to show that "a rest" that remains for the people of God is *not* remembering the sabbath day and keeping it holy.

(9) No doubt, contextually "a rest" that remains to the people of God is not "the sabbath" that the children of Israel were told to "**remember**" and to "**keep it holy.**" (Exodus 20:8). "A rest" that remains to the people of God refers to "*a day of eternal rest*"! It is not a 24-hour day! Unless we *fear* and *labour* to enter "**into his[God's-CRS]rest**" we may fail to enter just as those Israelites failed to enter Canaan.

(10) In Rev. 14:13 we read:"... **Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**" NOTE: When a person dies *in the Lord* he ceases his labours and enters into a period of rest.

*No, Heb.4:9 does not prove that Christians should keep the sabbath day holy as the Israelites did. However, in its context it does teach that there is "a rest" that remains for the people of God!* (To be continued)

(Continued from page 1)

## **CAN SINGLE MEN SCRIPTURALLY SERVE AS ELDERS?**

*own house, having his children in  
subjection with all gravity...*

NOTE: This should settle the question for all truth seeking people. Please observe the fact that the apostle said, "**A bishop then must be...the husband of one wife...**"

Without doubt, to serve as a *bishop* a man *must* have a wife! To have a wife a person must be a *married* man! A single man does not have a wife. Therefore *a single man can not Scripturally serve as an elder* (bishop)!

6. In 1 Peter 5:1 the apostle PETER refers to himself as "*an elder*". He said: "**The elders which are among you I exhort, who am**

**also an elder...**" *Peter was an elder!* Was Peter a single man? *No!* We learn from Matthew 8:14 that Peter was a *married* man! It says, "**And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.**"

NOTE: Jesus saw Peter's wife's mother. Since Peter had a wife we know of a surety that he was a *married man*.

*No, single men cannot Scripturally serve as elders (bishops)!* Let each of us accept God's Word in all matters. It will be the standard by which we will be judged in the last day. (CRS)

### **GOSPEL MEETINGS**

PISGAH, WEST CHESTER, OHIO---  
June 7-12, 1998---Carrol R. Sutton  
EAST ALBERTVILLE---June 21-26, 1998--  
Charles G. Maples

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## **SENTENCE SERMONS**

If you are not living with God *here*, you will not be with God *there*. (Bill Smith)

\* \* \* \* \*

Before trying to improve others, we should first improve ourselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you can't believe all you *hear*, you should at least be able to believe all you *say*.

\* \* \* \* \*

The best time to do something is between yesterday and tomorrow.

\* \* \* \* \*

If we would learn through our mistakes we would have a much broader education.

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