

Fragmentary draft on the chief rulers of ancient synagogues

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Source: Ms. 435, The Babson College Grace K. Babson Collection of the Works of Sir Isaac Newton, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, USA

Published online: May 2009

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before his coming without any material alteration his In the synagogues the Rulers or Elders of the Synagogue of the Jews had the power of licencing men to preach in the Synagogue (Acts 13.15) & thence they are in the new Testament called also overseers & Pastors or bishops Acts 20.17, 28 And the Apostles being sent to preach the gospel to all nations, the dignity of a preacher or teacher was by the first Christians more honourable than then that of a Ruler of a Synagogue. God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets thirdly teachers, after that miracles then gifts of healing helps governments diversities of tongues. 1 Cor 12.28. He gave some Apostles & some Prophets & some evangelists & some Pastors & Teachers Eph. 4.11. The order of Pastors & teachers is here placed below the order of Apostles & above that of Governments.

And accordingly the Rulers or elders of a Jewish Synagogue had autho

The Rulers or Elders of a Jewish Synagogue had authority to authorize whom they thought fit to preach in their Synagogue

And accordingly the Rulers of every Jewish synagogue ha

Nor had the Rulers of the Synagogue only authority to teach the people but also to give leave to others to teach them (Act. 13.15) And hence the Rulers or Elders were also called Pastours of the flock & Overseers . So the Elders or Presbyters of the Church of Ephesus Act 20.17 are called Overseers or Bishops of the the flock who feed the Church of Christ vers. 28. And when the Apostle teaches the duty of bishops and Deacons & that a bishop should be apt to teach & able to rule well; by Bishops & Deacons he understands Presbyters & Deacons, including the Bishops among the Presbyters. For every bishop is a Presbyter And in the same sence he writes to the bishops & deacons at Philippia Philip. 1.1 . And so when he saith to Titus: For this cause left I three in Creet that thou shouldest set in order things that are wanting & ordein elders in every city, if any be blameless – for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God (Tit. 1.5, 6, 7) he uses the names of the Elders & Bishops promiscuously in one & the same sence, every elder in his language being a Bishop & every Bishop an Elder

But its to be understood that the synagogues of the Jews had a chief Ruler (Acts 18.8, 17) or Presidents of the council of Elders, & this chief Ruler was the highest officer of the Synagogue being superior to the Chazan. For the Talmudists tell us that on the day of expiation, the Chazan of the Synagogue which was neare the Court in the mountain of the Temple, took the book of the law belonging to the synagogue & gave it to the Ruler of the Synagogue & the Ruler gave it to the Sagan or Ruler of the Temple, an officer next in dignity to the High Priest & the Sagan gave it to the High Priest. {illeg} Now this chief Ruler being President of the Council of Presbyters & Overseer of the whole Synagogue including the Council, he was in a short time distinguished from the rest of the Council by calling him emphatically, & by way of honour the President, the Pastor & the Overseer or Bishop of the Parish or Diocess , & by giving only the names of Elders or

Presbyters to the rest of the Council. So Clemens who was made Bishop of Rome by the Apstotles, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, {(Sect 21)} distinguishes them by the names of Chief Rulers & Elders, saying let us reverence τοὺς προηγούμενους ἡμῶν our chief Rulers or Presidents, & let us honour our Elders or Presbyters, & let us teach our young men the discipline of the fear of God. And yet a little after he comprehends the chief Rulers & Elders under the common name of Bishops. The Apostles, saith he, preaching throughout the regions & cities constituted the first fruits thereof (after they had proved them in the spirit) into bishops and Deacons of those that were to beleive. Nor was this a new thing: For before many ages it was written concerning Bishops and Deacons. For thus the scripture somewhere speaks: I will constitute their Bishops in justice & their Deacons in faith.

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March the 4th 1709

Sir

I haue examined the Church wardens booke & find the Rate to be 3^d per pound, & that your house is Charged att 50^l per Annum which is 12.^s 6.^d but this Assessment is for a yeare Commencing from Lady day last, but you entering but at March you are to pay but 6^s. 3^d. for halfe the yeare

I am

Sir

Your most humble

Servant

I Blow
