

## Deuteronomy 1:6-18 Sermon Notes

### Deuteronomy as Covenant Document

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In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6:1-7

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!

Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Acts 20:28-31

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

### What Leaders Has God Given the Church?

1. Apostles and Prophets - The offices of apostle and prophet were a unique role that laid the foundation of the church immediately after the ministry of Christ (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Apostles in particular were those who had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:7-8). They were marked by the power to perform miracles (2 Corinthians 12:12). The Lord specifically sent them to testify as eye-witnesses to his resurrection, and so lay the teaching foundation for the church.

2. Evangelists - The office of evangelist is mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, and Paul commanded Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5). We can think of people, either in church history or in the present day, who have been gifted to share the gospel, often with great results.

3. Pastors/Elders/Overseers - The New Testament uses these words interchangeably to refer to the leaders of a local congregation.

These men are charged with the task of teaching and guarding sound doctrine (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:9), leading and shepherding (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2), and serving as examples of Christian maturity (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:3). All the New Testament evidence indicates that local churches were led by a plurality of elders.

Deacons - The office of deacon is laid out most clearly in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The word "deacon" means "servant." And so the office of deacon was established to serve the needs of the church. In Acts 6, the apostles set aside "the seven" in order to administrate the

distribution of food to the widows in the church, so that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. This event seems to serve as a paradigm for the distinction between those charged with the teaching ministry of the church (now pastors/elders) and those charged with serving ministry of the church (deacons - see 1 Peter 4:11). Throughout Baptist history, deacons have been tasked with administrative roles including maintaining a benevolence ministry to the poor (especially in the church), upkeep of the church's meeting house, and managing funds for missionaries.

And let us remember that all believers are called to serve. All of Christ's followers are called to speak God's Word to one another (Colossians 3:16). All are called to share the gospel and to testify to Jesus' resurrection. And yet God has also given these officers to the church to provide leadership and encouragement to the whole body, "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

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