

Church Organization

- Although there is controversy and debate about it...
- The truth is actually very simple.
- But they are scattered through Acts and the letters.
- If we put it all together, it becomes clear.
- But it takes patience and love for truth to learn.
- As the Jews scoffed at Isaiah so do many today:
- *Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."* Isa. 28:10

The Ambiguity of “Church”

- The Scriptures speak of the church in two broad and different perspectives.
- One is taken from the overlapping of time and eternity. Since Christians dwell in both realms, the church is sometimes described as it is seen from God in eternity ... those dwelling on earth and those who have already entered eternity. This perspective is always in the singular.
- The other is taken from time and from location on earth. Each Christian must be a member of the church that is in time and eternity AND of a church on earth in one location. This is always plural.

The Church – In Time and Eternity

- *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Heb 12:22-24*
- All in the singular because it is universal – time/eternity, living/dead, earth/heaven...

CHURCH – IN TIME AND IN ETERNITY

- ✘ I am the vine... Jn 15:1
- ✘ I am the good shepherd.... Jn 10:11,14
- ✘ Head over all to the church... Eph 1:22-23
- ✘ Chief cornerstone in temple... 1Pet. 2:6-7
- ✘ King over His kingdom... Jn 18:33-37
- ✘ A Great High Priest... Heb 4:14-16
- ✘ Captain/Author of Salvation Heb 2:10-17
- ✘ Christ the Son of the Living God Mt 16:16-17
- ✘ All singular – universal – from beginning to end.

CHURCH – IN TIME & ETERNITY

- ✘ Mt 16:18-19 I will build my church:
- ✘ Acts 20:28 Purchased church with His own blood
- ✘ Eph 1:22-23 God made him Head over all things to the church which is His body.
- ✘ Eph. 5:25-27 Christ loved the church, gave Himself for her to sanctify and cleanse her... Present to Himself a glorious church.

Churches in Time and on Earth

- So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:23
- For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you Titus 1:5
- All the churches of Christ greet you. Rom 16:16
- I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach EVERYWHERE in EVERY CHURCH. 1Cor 4:17
- Always in the plural – Always in a different locations.
- Often called the Universal church and a local church

Churches in Time and on Earth

- *Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so **I direct in all the churches.** 1Cor. 7:17*
- *But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, **nor have the churches of God.** 1Cor. 11:16*
- *For, in the first place, when **you come together as a church,** 1Cor. 11:18*
- *for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, **as in all the churches of the saints.** 34 The women are to **keep silent in the churches;** for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 1Cor. 14:33-34*

CHURCH ORGANIZATION – TIME & ETERNITY

Jesus is:

The Vine

The Good Shepherd

The Head...Church

The Chief Cornerstone

The King

High Priest

Author/Captain

The Christ

We Are:

... The branches

... My sheep

... Members of one body

... Living stones/Holy Priests

... Faithful servants

... Ministering priests

... His brethren

... In Christ

Church Organization

- *These things* I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, **I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God**, which is **the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth. *1 Tim 3:14-15*
- What are **“these things”** written to “know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God ... the church of the living God”?
- This is a faithful saying: If a man desires **the position of a bishop**, he desires a good work. 2 **A bishop then must be blameless ... Likewise deacons must be.** *1Tim 3:1-13*
- We need to understand the position or office of a bishop in order to know how we should conduct ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.

A Bishop (overseer) is Also an Elder

- What is a bishop? What does he do? The Holy Spirit gave the qualifications ... but there is much more.
- *For **this reason I left you in Crete**, that you should **set in order the things that are lacking**, and **appoint elders in every city** as I commanded you - 6 if a man is blameless...7 **For a bishop** must be blameless, Titus 1:5-7*
- *So when they had **appointed elders in every church**, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:23-24*
- Elders who are also Bishops (Overseers) were appointed in every church and in every city where there was a local church

A Bishop is also a Shepherd

- *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and **called for the elders of the church**. 18 And **when they had come to him**, he **said to them**: "**You know**, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always **lived among you**, ...*
- Paul called for the elders, only elders came, he told them:
- *Therefore **take heed to yourselves** and to **all the flock**, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you BISHOPS**, to **SHEPHERD the church of God** which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:17-18 28-29*
- **ELDERS**, with the qualifications of 1Tim. / Titus were made **BISHOPS** by the Holy Spirit. They are to **SHEPHERD** the church of God.

Peter Helps Clarify our Understanding

- *The **elders who are among you I exhort**, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 **Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as bishops (overseers)**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and **when the Chief Shepherd appears**, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 1Pet 5:1-4*
- Jesus is the chief shepherd of all local churches on earth.
- Elders in every church are to **tend the flock** as shepherds, but only in the midst of **the flock that is among them**.
- This is the only **charge allotted to them**.

Church Autonomy

- A fancy way to say that each church is self-ruling.
- Each church has its own elders/bishops/shepherds
- Each eldership has been given the charge to only be bishops over the flock among them.
- The flock that chose, selected and appointed them.
- Their authority begins and ends there.
- The Holy Spirit made them bishops only over the flock among them.
- Jesus is the chief shepherd and there is no organization or leadership position between Jesus and His churches in time and on earth.

The Autonomy of Local churches

- *The Elders among you (en – in your midst) you*
- *All the elders in all the congregations in all the provinces are now being addressed.*
- *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1 Pet. 1:1-2*
- **They are all told... Tend the flock of God among you.**



Bithynia

Pontus

Galatia

Cappadocia

Asia

Troas

Phrygia

Antioch

Ephesus

Pisidia

Iconium

Lystra

Tarsus

Ferga

Derbe

Attalia

Cilicia

Lycia

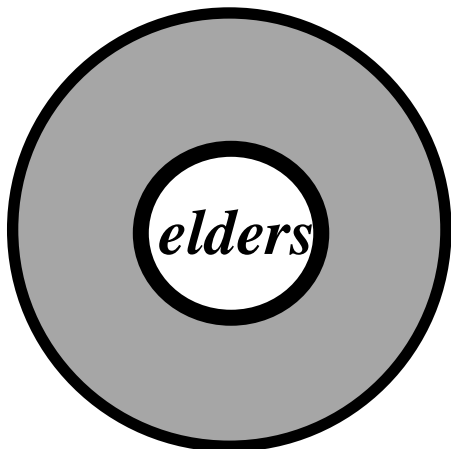
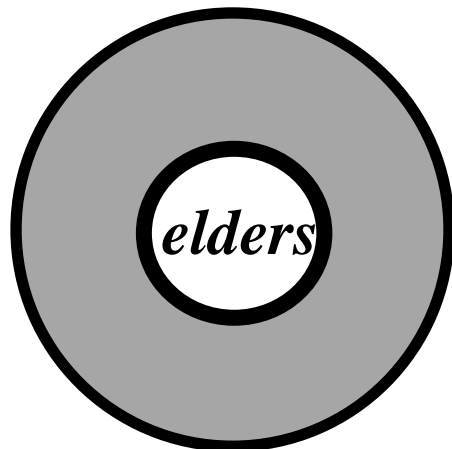
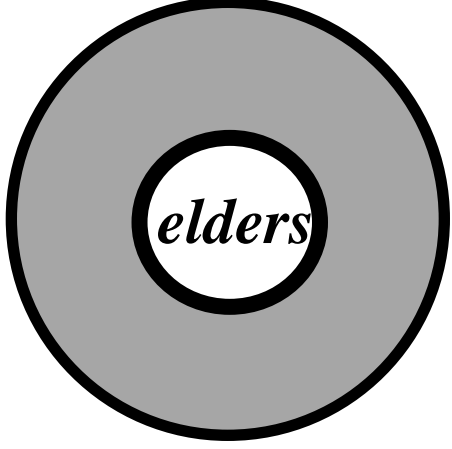
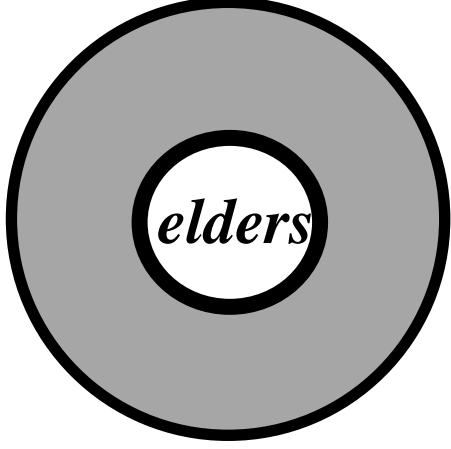
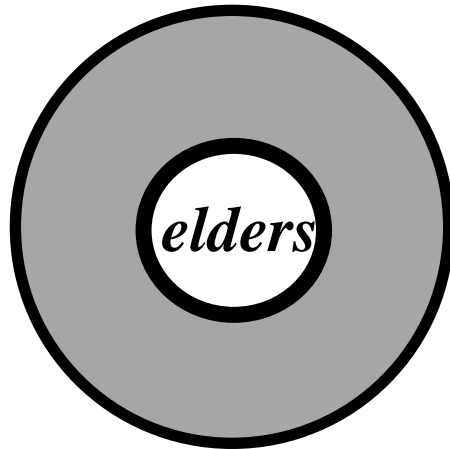
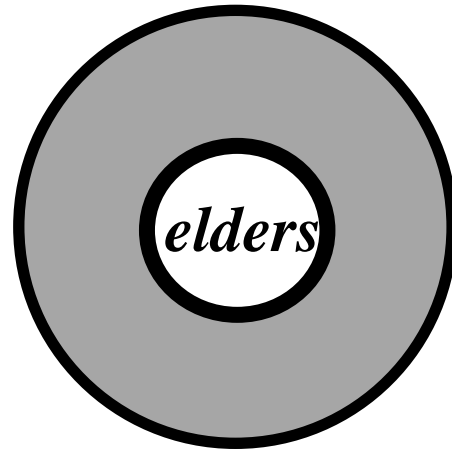
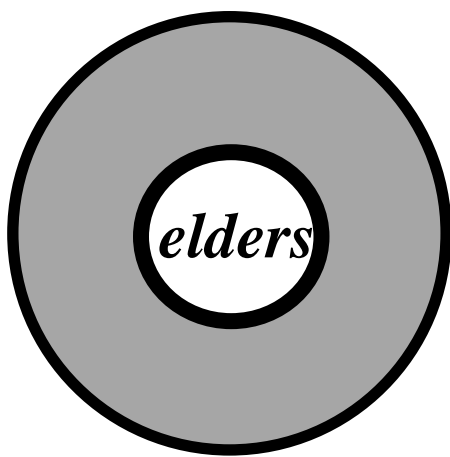
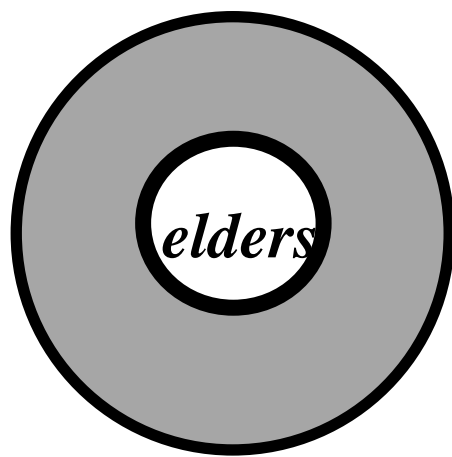
Pamphylia

Antioch

Seleucia

Syria

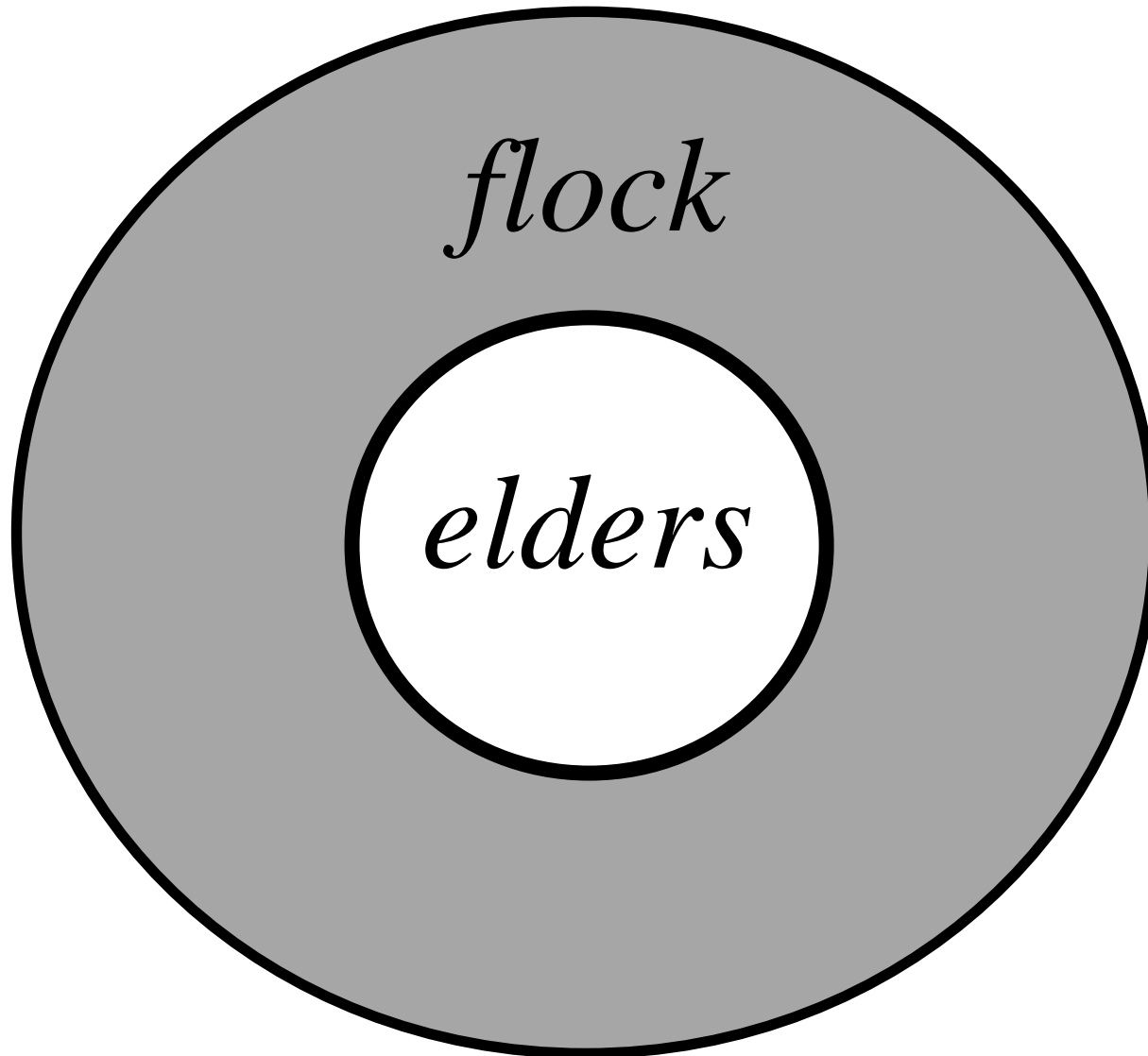
Cyprus



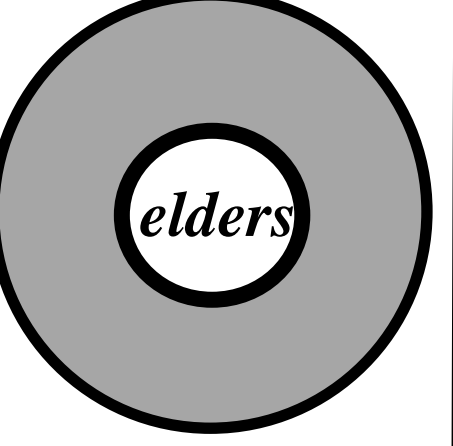
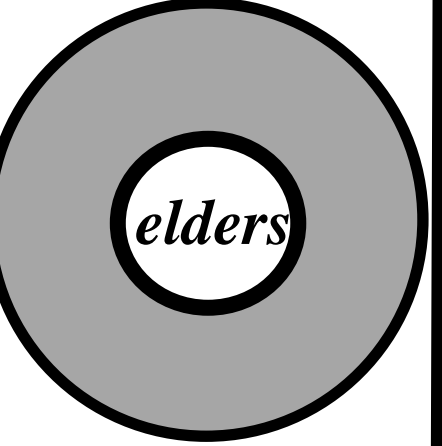
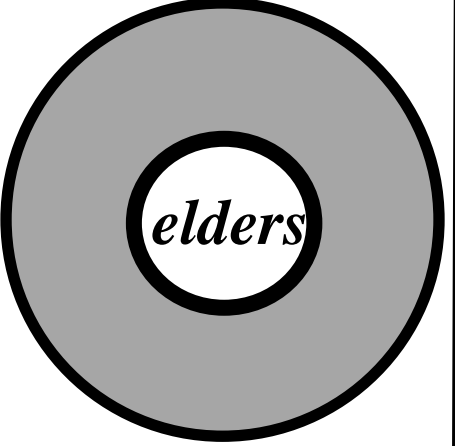
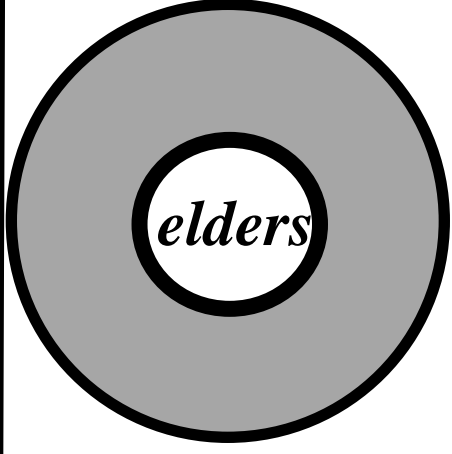
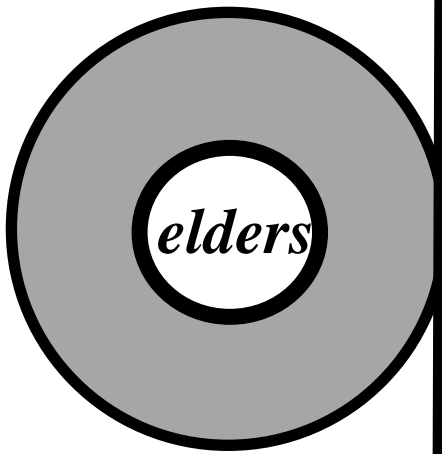
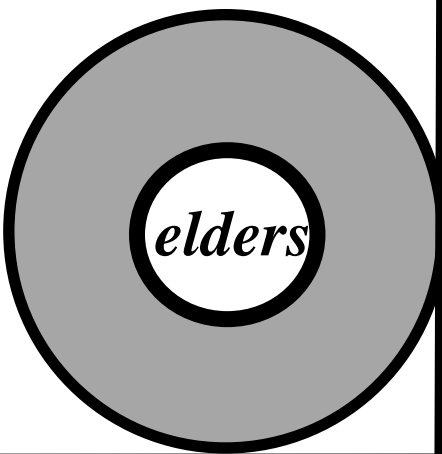
The Autonomy of Local churches

- *Each eldership limited in authority and work.*
- ***THE FLOCK OF GOD AMONG YOU!***
- *Only in that one single church are they elders in the flock which is among them.*
- *If they go to any other church they go as a brother in Christ ...*
- *Elders are only elders in the church that “is among them” – that appointed them!*

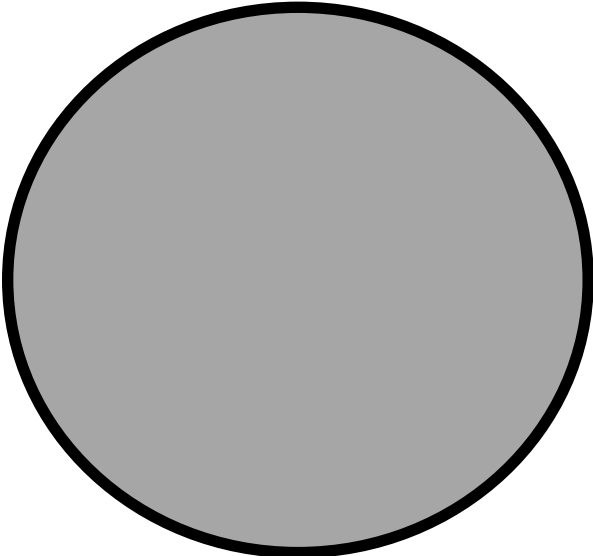
“Tend the flock among (en) you



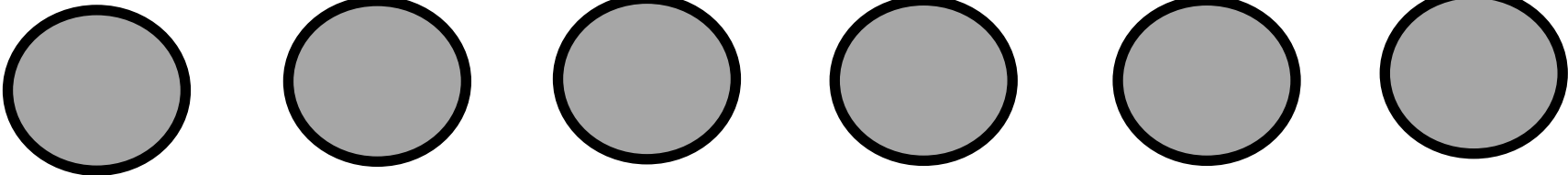
This is the charge allotted to you



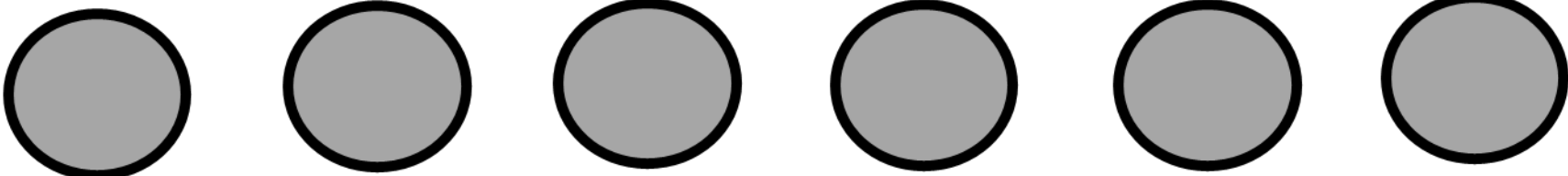
Jesus Christ – Chief Shepherd



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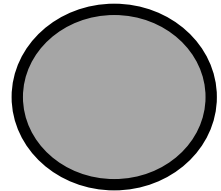
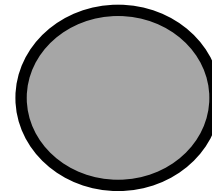
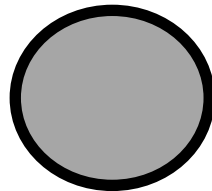
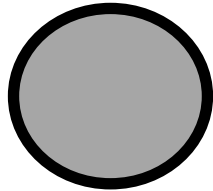
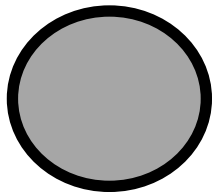
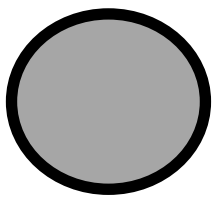
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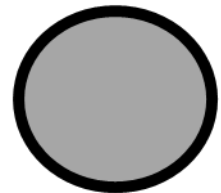
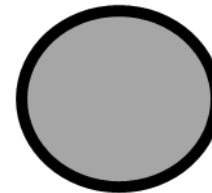
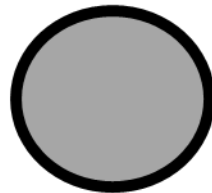
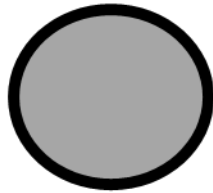
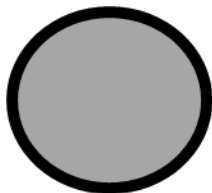
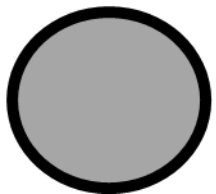
The Charge Allotted to you

The flock among you (in your midst – (en)

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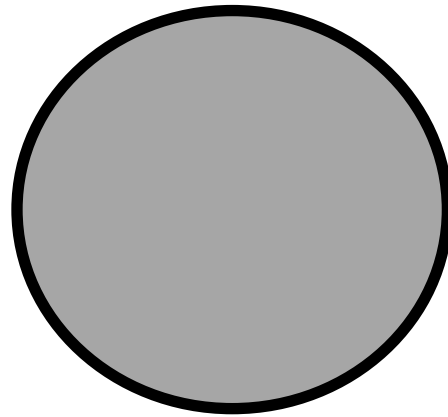
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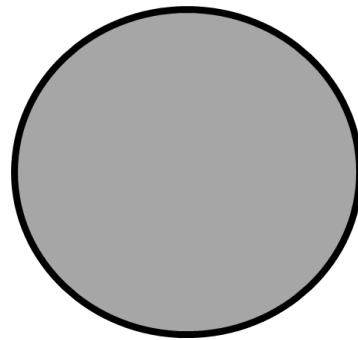
The Autonomy of Local churches

- *I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and **be their shepherd.** 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. Ezek 34:23-24*

I will establish one shepherd over them

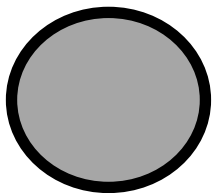


*I, the LORD will
be their God*

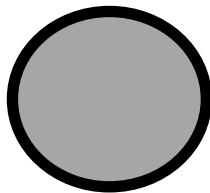


*My Servant
David shall be
their shepherd*

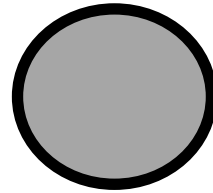
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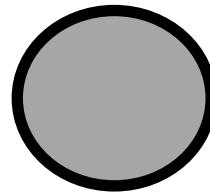
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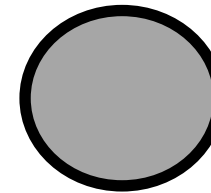
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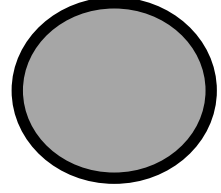
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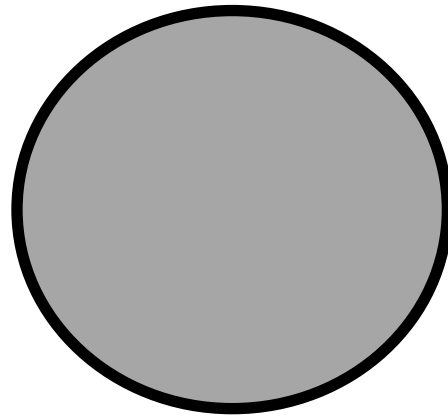
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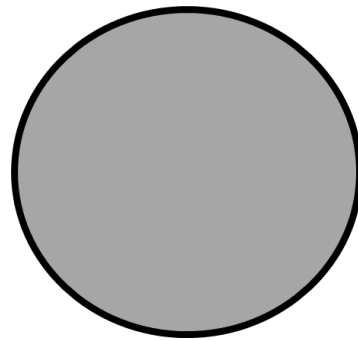
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I will establish one shepherd over them

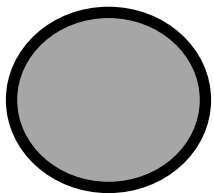


*I, the LORD will
be their God*

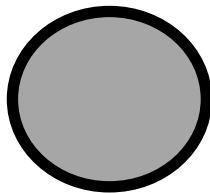


*My Servant
David shall be
their shepherd*

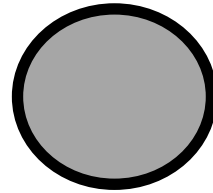
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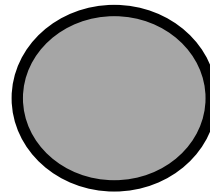
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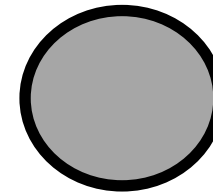
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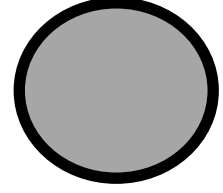
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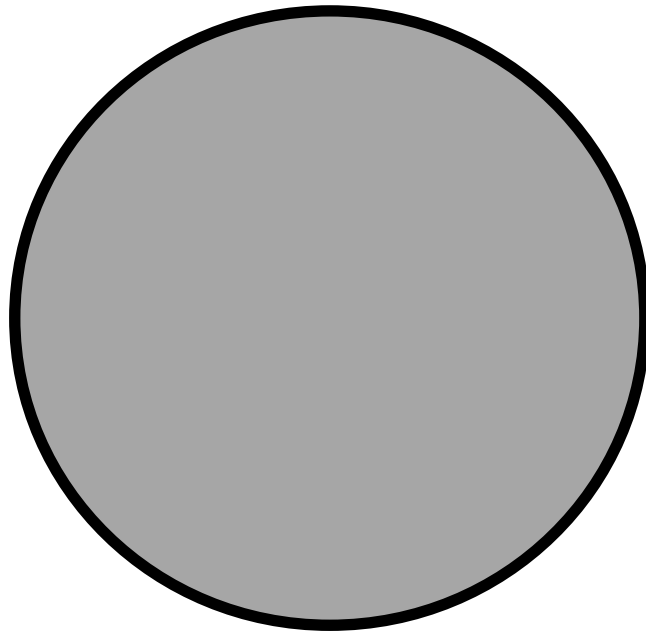
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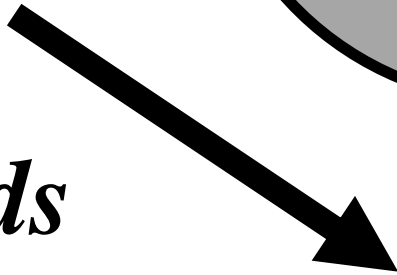
The Autonomy of Local churches

- *The Elders among (en) you*
- *Tend the flock of God which is among (en) you,*
- An illustration from the Old Covent
- *Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. “ ... 7 "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 1 Sam 8:5,7*

God – King of Israel



*Judges –
God’s
Shepherds*



shepherd

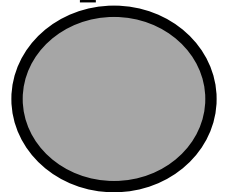
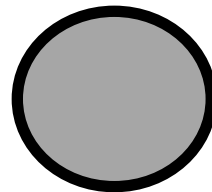
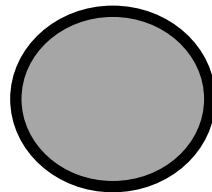
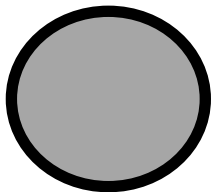
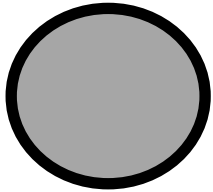
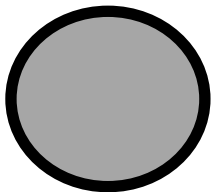
shepherd

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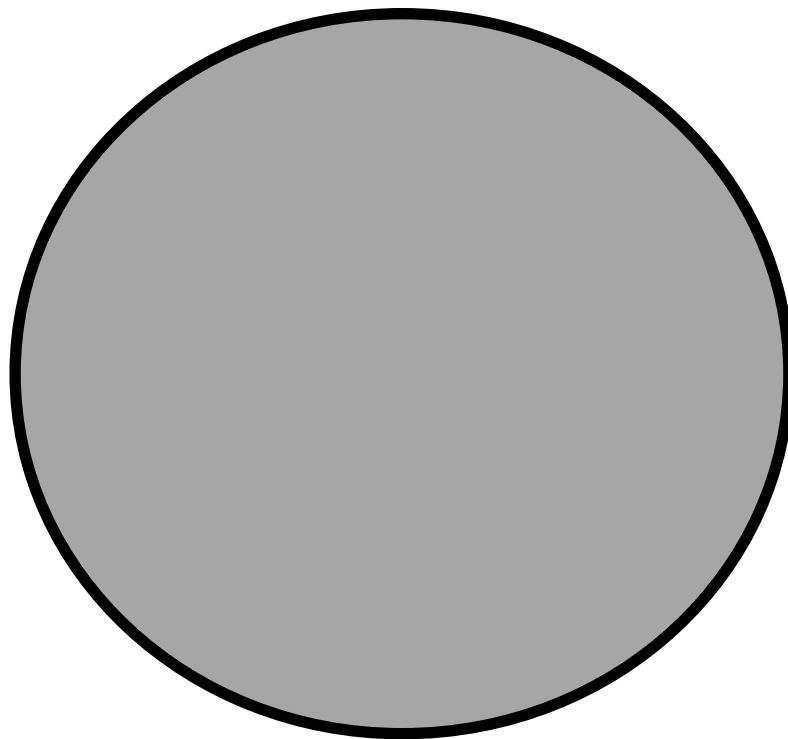
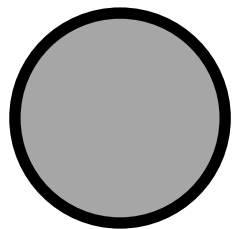
shepherd

shepherd



*God – King
of Israel*

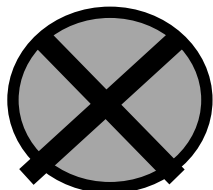
King like rest of Nations



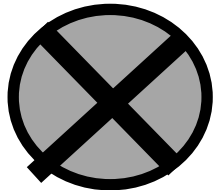
*Human
Substitution*



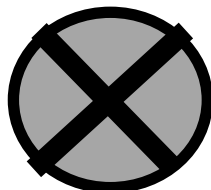
Judges



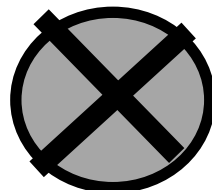
Judges



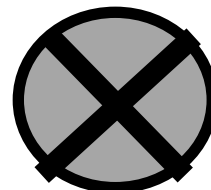
Judges



Judges



Judges



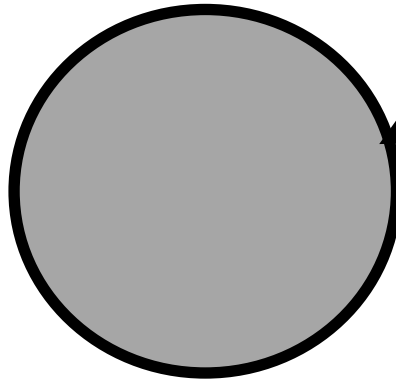
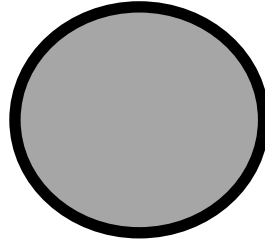
Judges



Jesus Christ

—

Chief Shepherd



*Human
Substitution*

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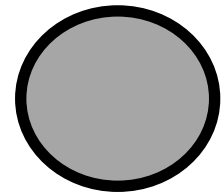
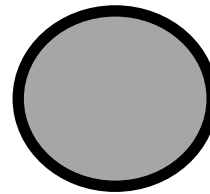
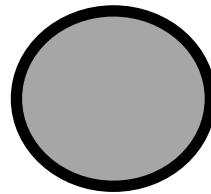
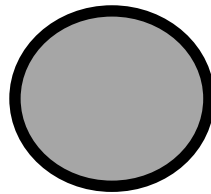
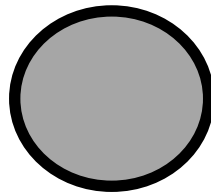
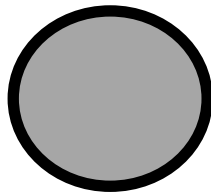
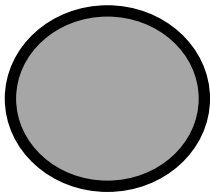
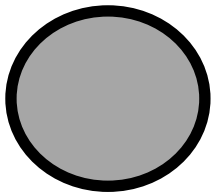
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