

Church - Part 7

by Ken Baird

Ken Baird discusses the government of the Church, emphasizing the roles, qualifications, and responsibilities of elders and bishops in leading the congregation.

Duration: 55:05

Scripture: Acts 20:17

Topics: "Church Governance", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Ken Baird discusses the governance and history of the Church, emphasizing the role of elders and bishops as appointed by the Holy Spirit rather than by human influence. He highlights the importance of recognizing these leaders within the congregation and outlines their qualifications and responsibilities, including teaching, leading, and caring for the flock. Baird warns against the dangers of the church becoming corrupted through political power and the ecumenical movement, urging believers to remain faithful and discerning. He concludes by expressing gratitude for the simplicity and scriptural basis of the assembly's practices, encouraging the congregation to appreciate their spiritual heritage.

Transcript

continuing on into next week. I know that we've traveled very, very swiftly. I know that I've felt a sense of futility as I have undertaken these subjects.

I myself personally would enjoy going at a more leisurely pace, but I recognize the fact that, in this day and age, an extended series of meetings are very, very difficult, and on such a studious subject as the Church. I think we can endure--I say endure, hardly the word--I think that we can really enjoy a series of gospel meetings. There's nothing like the old, old story, and especially if God is working, I think we somehow find an energy that perhaps we don't find.

But, for a studious subject like this, I could not conscientiously go into next week and spread this out. As a matter of fact, if we really did it justice, I'd be with you a month. And, I would not like to be clasped with that infamous character of Daniel who sought to wear out the saints in the most trite.

I don't want to be clasped with him. So, tonight we will move rather swiftly with the government of the Church, and with the history of the Church, and cover it as well as we can. Now, the twentieth chapter of Acts gives up a hint as to the government of the Church.

Acts chapter twenty. This is a very wonderful portion of Scripture. We've had occasion to refer to it already.

The government of the Church. Verse seventeen, And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

Now, over in verse twenty-eight, he gives these elders a word of warning. He says, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Now, the flock of God has overseers over them.

Now, the word elders, presbyteros, refers more to the age of these who have rule in the church of God, the government of the church of God. Whereas the word overseers, the episkopos, is translated variantly, overseers and bishops. This could be translated, bishops.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, to all the church of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops. In the plural, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Now, they are both one and the same.

They are both one and the same person. One refers more or less to their age and their experience, and the other to their office, or to their ministrations. If we use the word office, then we make it so official that it takes on, it lends to these men, to a prestige that I don't think that God would have them to have when we talk about the word office.

But, the word elders and bishops refer to the same person. Now, these are the ones that God hath ordained to rule over his church here below. Really, the thought of the word rule, as it's found in Hebrews chapter 13, is the thought of leading the people.

The people of God. Now, you notice here from verse 28, the elders and their, how do we find out who the elders are? How do we appoint an elder? Well, notice this, that their appointment was by the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit of God can make an elder. Men cannot make an elder.

Prestige cannot make an elder. Influence cannot make an elder. Education cannot make an elder.

Dignity of appearance cannot make an elder. Only the Spirit of God can make an elder. The copy says there, "...take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God with gifts which he hath purchased with his own blood." The Spirit of God makes an elder.

Now, the elder will evidence that fact by his exercise. He will naturally care for the church of God. Now, in regard to their appointment, they are recognized by the saints.

Not appointed, but recognized. Notice with me, please, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. Verse 12 of the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, "...and we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Now, we beseech you, brethren, to know them, to be acquainted with them, to recognize them, in other words, but not to appoint them. Just simply recognize them, and that's what he beseeches.

We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. Now, there is an instance, and I think we would only be fair to turn this up. Titus chapter 1, verse 4 of the first chapter of Titus, "...to Titus my own son after the common faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

For this cause I let thee entreat that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee." Well, here's the contradiction to all that I've been saying. He says, "...for this cause I let thee entreat that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." Now, these are Paul's instructions to Titus. Well, the only way that we can carry these out today that I can see would be to have Titus here.

But, he's not here. What are we going to do? Titus is not here. Now, please understand that in the early days of the church, the people of God... Remember, Titus hasn't been written yet until it was written.

How would they know who an elder was? The qualifications are given here in this letter. He goes on to say, "...if any be blameless..." Now, these are the qualifications of the elders. We're talking about their appointments.

Let's consider a little of their qualifications. "...if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly, for a bishop must be blameless." And, you notice that he says, "...ordain elders," in verse 5, and now he's talking about bishops. Well, that's all right.

They're one and the same person. "...for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not too angry, not given to violence, nor striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision." Now remember, the New Testament has not been written.

Titus knew the qualification of elders, but these people didn't, because this was written to Titus. Now, Titus may have read this letter to the ones at Crete. I don't know, but they didn't know the qualifications of an elder, and Titus, by apostolic authority, was to appoint those elders.

But, I cannot see this authority extending into this day unless, of course, we had Titus here, which we don't. So, I think that the instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5, "...know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord. Know them, recognize them.

Only the Spirit of God can make an elder a bishop and overseer." Mr. John Walden performed an experiment among the young people in Colorado Springs. They were talking about these things. Now, he passed out some slips of paper to the young people.

Now, he says, I want you young people, without signing your name to the slips, to write on this slip, the men that you think are the elders in this meeting. Will you do that, please? So, they all got their pencils busy, and they were thinking, and oh, they were writing them out, and after he'd given them time, they handed their slips in. John Walden said it was terrific, the agreement on those slips of paper, as to who the elders of that assembly were.

And, there were just a very, very few exceptions. One girl named her daddy. Bless her heart.

She named her daddy as among them. But, in other cases, there was a remarkable agreement, and Mr. Walden was very, very much gratified. Another lady, who didn't think that the assembly was quite as well organized as it should be, said, well, they were talking about the elders, and she says, well, who are our elders? We don't have them designated.

We don't have their names on the bulletin board. Who are our elders? And, John Walden said, I don't like coming here. Well, ask the young people.

They know. They have recognized them. And, thus it is that elders are recognized, and not elected.

All the election, all the prestige, and all the politics of a local church group cannot make an elder. Only the Spirit of God can make an elder. Now, we've already noticed some of their qualifications.

There is a companion portion in the third chapter of 1 Timothy that I'd like to read in the qualifications of an elder. Chapter 3. This is a true saying of the man desire the office of a bishop. He desires a good work.

Darby translates this, the ministry or the work of a bishop. A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach. Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lookers, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

For, if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Now, here on the positive side are his qualifications.

He must be blameless, he must be the husband of one wife, he must rule his own house well, he must be given to hospitality, he must be able to teach. But this teaching is not necessarily platform teaching. Did you notice, please, there in Titus, and I want you to notice it, please, and then we'll be right back here in the third chapter of 1 Timothy.

Titus, chapter 1, this is true of the bishop, verse 9, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. This man must be so well taught that he can sit down and correct, straighten out, the thinking of a gainsayer. He must not be a novice in the word of God, but he must be able to, by sound doctrine, to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Now, I cannot see that this would be necessarily a public place, but he certainly must be able to teach. Now, on the negative side, he must be no drunkard, no fighter, no brawler, he must be not greedy or covetous, and he certainly must not be a novice. That's on the negative side.

Now, these are high qualifications. Now, what about deacons? In many churches, the deacon is the high officer of the church. Now, there is a difference between the bishops and the deacons.

The deacons are really ministers. A man may be both a bishop and a deacon. He may be a minister.

The word deaconos is simply a minister, and there were lady ministers as well. In some versions, they are translated deaconesses, because they also minister to the church of God. And, of course, Phoebe was one of those gracious, gracious sisters in the Lord.

Now, the deacons are just as important in the church of God, those ministers of the word of God, or not ministers of the word of God, I mean ministers in the church. Now, from the sixth chapter of Acts, they were appointed to take care of certain business. One would say, are the deacons appointed today? Perhaps they are, because somebody has to, we have to know who's going to take care of this, and who's going to take care of that.

Because there are certain tasks around an assembly that must be cared for, and perhaps it may not be out of order at all to see to it that somebody has the understanding that he is to do that, and he's doing that, of course, he is acting as a deacon. Now, I don't think you make a deacon, really, any more than you make a bishop, because if a man has an exercise in his heart, he will make himself available for service in the church of God. But, certainly, there must be an understanding as to who is going to do these jobs, and in that sense, perhaps you might say he's appointed, at least he's appointed to do the job, but certainly never in the sense, never, he is not to be compared with the elder or the bishop in this regard.

Now, the bishop is never in the singular, well, he mentions bishops to the church philophi, and it's in the plural. Now, in Christendom today, one bishop is over a whole diocese, that's an innovation. That is not in accordance with the word of God, because when he writes to the one church of philophi, it's the bishop, plural, and the deacon.

Everyone who is a shepherd in the house of God, who has a care for the church of God, that person who is so inclined, who is so gifted, so exercised with the spirit of God, he is a bishop. Now, their duties are to rule and to lead. Let's notice a few of these scriptures.

Hebrews, chapter 13, please. Verse 7, Hebrews 13, 7, Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, this is the teaching gift, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Now, verse 17, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unpromptable for you.

Now, they rule, or they lead, among the people of God. In 1 Timothy 5 and 17, we notice that they stand before the people of God. That's the sense of ruling in 1 Timothy 5 and 17.

They go before the church of God. Now, a bishop is a shepherd. He shepherds the people of God, he tends the people of God, and the shepherd never drives the sheep.

He always leads the sheep. He is an example. He leads the sheep and he doesn't drive them.

Peter has such a lovely addition to make. First Peter, chapter 5, if you go to 1 Peter 5, verse 1, The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of a glory that shall be revealed. 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, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Now, in the duties of a shepherd, we read here, according to Peter, feed the flock of God. This is really tend the flock of God.

Now, if we wish to enlarge on this, we would say that the duty of the shepherd is to tend the sheep, the flock of God. Now, all the duties of a shepherd would have a spiritual counterpart in the spiritual shepherd.

He sees to it that the sheep get food.

He sees to it that they get water. He sees to it that grievous wolves don't come in and scatter the sheep. That is certainly the duty of an elder to protect them from false doctrine and from people who would exploit the flock of God.

He would detect the sick. That's the work of a shepherd, to detect the sick among the sheep. And thus it is the duty of an overseer to detect spiritual sickness in the people of God.

Oh, how gentle the shepherd is! The shepherd leads the sheep. He doesn't drive them. And the apostle Peter says, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but by being an example to the flock.

He is an example. His life is exemplary. And by his example, he commands by respect.

Now, notice this. He doesn't demand respect, but he commands by respect. Now, I believe verily that you should respect the flock of God.

And I believe an elder, not simply your elders. I mean an elder. I'm talking about the scriptural level.

You should respect him. And I don't think that he's going to demand it. I don't think he has to.

I think that he will be so respected that he'll command your respect instead of demanding. You will understand that he has your best interests at heart. You will understand that the Spirit of God has placed him where he is.

And if you disobey, then you will not of course be severely rebuked or anything of the kind, but you will suffer the consequences. Because he is wise, he's over you in the Lord, he thinks perhaps that you do not see. But he is a leader, a shepherd, as gentle as a shepherd.

Mind how we do need elders and bishops in this day and age. If the church today is suffering, it is suffering because of a lack of shepherd's care. We do need shepherds among the people of God.

Now, the work is a thankless task, more or less. As a matter of fact, we read in verse 4 of 1 Peter 5, And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Now, as I understand all the crowns of Scripture, they are compensatory in character.

God compensates us with crowns, and here is the way he compensates the bishops. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. I believe this is a compensatory crown, because I think in this world oftentimes he receives a crown of infamy.

If he tries to act for God, he is criticized, and you know how you like to be told if you're doing something that's wrong. We don't like it. In this country, our fierce independence makes us very, very slow to accept a suggestion, and certainly to make us accept criticism.

We don't like it. And so, consequently, there is a tendency sometimes to get angry with those who try to help us in the best way that they can. I would say, and I have said it, that now, in this life, well, the Lord says, when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory.

A crown of glory in contrast, perhaps, to a crown of infamy. I've said it before. It's humorous, but I think it makes the point.

Now, they are just simply crowned. But then, the Lord is going to crown them with a crown of glory. A crown that marks them out as being his under shepherd.

The Lord loves the sheep. God bless the bishops. God bless the elders.

They're going to be rewarded in a wonderful way someday for taking the abuse that they have. And I use the word advisedly. To that, I heard a lady once, she's now with the Lord, many, many years ago.

She was a mother in Israel. I loved her. She said, oh, we should pray for the bishops.

We should pray for the elders. She had a heart for the church of God and the health of the church of God. And she says, we don't pray enough for the elders.

We don't pray enough for the bishops. May God help us to, indeed, accept their ruling because we will be far better off in the long run. Now, they rule.

They stand before. They lead the sheep of God. They watch, as we notice in Hebrews 13 and 17.

They warn. I'm not even going to turn to these scriptures. 1 Corinthians 4.14. They feed or teach, or tend, we've noticed that, from Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5 and 2. And then they correct from Titus 3 and 9. They correct among the people of God.

I'm going to check that because that scripture does not look right to me. And if you'll pardon me, I may have miscopied that, and I'm going to check to be sure that I'm not misleading you. It should be 1 and 9. We've already noticed it.

Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers, he corrects them in their actions. Now this, in a brief, in a very, very brief summary, is the office, the government of the church. Much more could be said, but we'll go on a little to the history of the church, and I think I'll just turn you, for a handy reference, to Revelation chapter 2. Now, the Schofield Bible gives a very excellent history on the church in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. It so happens that there were local conditions among the seven churches of Asia to whom the Lord broke through John.

There were conditions in each church that fitted a period of the church's history. Ephesus is the church that existed at the time that our Lord was, that the Lord was. And then the Smyrna church, the period of the great persecutions, lasted to A.D. 316.

Now, many of you who have Schofield Bibles can read this right in your Bible. There were ten separate periods of severe persecution until the time of Constantine. Now, Constantine isn't mentioned here in your Schofield Bible, but Constantine's Roman Empire was converted in approximately 316 A.D. He was supposed to have been converted.

Up until that time, the Christians were terribly, terribly persecuted, and up until that time the church of God had been kept pure. Up to that time, the constituency of the church was composed of born-again people. But when Constantine was supposedly converted, and he was supposed to have been by vision, a sign of the cross, he wanted to combine the Roman Empire under himself.

And he had about six men that were against him. They were contenders for the emperor's throne, and Constantine was a very, very clever and efficient general, military man, fighting man. His parents had

strong leanings toward Christianity, and they may have influenced Constantine.

But he had noticed, he had observed, that all the persecutions that had been directed against the Christians did not let out Christianity at all. It really strengthened it. They seemed to thrive better under those severe persecutions.

They certainly did thrive better under those severe persecutions, more than under the combination of church and state which followed the advent of Constantine. Now, up until that time, nobody was a Christian but a Christian. There were no nominal Christians, only true faith in Christ.

I say that as if there were no exceptions. Of course, the exception would prove the rule if we could point to one. But up until that time, they were so persecuted that a person was very likely to be real.

Why should an unsaved person endure those persecutions that the church did in the 2nd and 3rd centuries? Only Christians could endure it. Only Christians would remain faithful. Now, after his supposed conversion, in which he was supposed to have seen a sign of the cross in the clouds, and a message spoke to him in the vision, and this conquered.

He was also supposed to have seen a dream soon after, in which the Lord came and showed him the shape of the cross in his hands. And he made the cross his banner. And he did conquer.

And he did eliminate his contenders to the throne, the imperial throne, and Constantine remained supreme. And he immediately issued an edict that all the persecutions against the Christians, and those persecutions were initiated by an edict, by a law. And Constantine withdrew all those edicts, and he installed the church in favor.

He made the cross his symbol. He was just superstitious enough that he did that, and he attributed all his military success to the Lord. Christians were brought out of the catacombs.

They were brought out of the dungeons. They were brought out of the slave fields. They were restored to their property.

They were installed in high favor. As a matter of fact, to court the favor of Constantine, people flocked to the cause of Christianity by the house. Then we began to see the fellow travelers with the true saints, those that only had a profession.

The church was corrupted at this time. Satan changed his tactics. He was the roaring lion in the second and third century, but at the beginning of the fourth century, he becomes the angel of light.

And he brings the church into worldly favor under Constantine, and the church couldn't take it. They simply couldn't take it, and neither can we take it now. They couldn't do it.

They soon corrupted. They soon lost their pilgrim character, and we see the church degenerating terribly. As a matter of fact, it went from that end of the papacy, and it continued in that darkened state.

That was a dark, dark day for the church. The Lord Jesus said of the church of Smyrna, You're rich. Oh, I know they had lost all their earthly goods.

I know that they were enduring these terrible persecutions, but the Lord says, You're rich. But ah, at Pergamon, it was something different. They were rich in earthly goods, but they became poor.

And that terrible state, the dark ages, continued until the Reformation at the beginning of the sixteenth century under Martin Luther. Martin Luther, under the hand of God, a monk in the Roman Catholic Church, saw that justification was by faith and not by any efforts of our own. He was a remarkable person.

He would have been a remarkable person under any circumstances, but he seemed to be the man that God used at the time to start Protestantism, a break-off from the Catholic Church. Up until that time, it was all Roman Catholics. Now, since that time, of course, you and I have known something of the history of Protestantism.

Strong men came in. John Knox, Charles Wesley, John Wesley. Mighty men of God in the last century.

In the nineteenth century, there were Moody's. There were Spurge. In this century, we have other men, I don't believe, possibly, that would come up for the character of Moody and Spurge, but nevertheless, men that are catching the public eye and speaking the gospel.

Now, ah, there is a tendency now for the Catholic Church, by means of the ecumenism of the canonical movement, to lure Protestants back into the camp. Let me tell you, it's going to succeed. It's going to succeed, because we see in the tribulation period, and I'm not even going to turn you to it, I'm just going to talk about it as quickly as I can.

We see in the tribulation period, in the book of Revelation, that there is an apostate church after our Lord Jesus Christ comes. Most churches are going to be left intact. Now, through the providence of God, he has let the wheat and the tares grow together since the time of Constantine.

He has not uprooted the tares, but the time is coming, at the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the false and the true are going to be separated. I remember once, when I was just a boy, about five years old, seeing a Sunday school teacher give a demonstration. She spread out a newspaper on a table, and she dumped a bunch of old screws on this newspaper and spread them out.

They were all dirty, and she moved a magnet over these screws, and this was a great mystery to me. Magnets were in those days, unless I tore a telephone apart. But she moved this magnet over this piece of paper, and some of those screws leaped up to the magnet, and some of them didn't even so much as move.

They just laid right there on the paper, and I said, what gives here? Well, I didn't say it that way. But I said, now, what is this? I don't get this. Some of the screws jump onto the magnet, and some of the screws lay undisturbed.

Well, of course, I didn't know much about physics in those days. I didn't know that those screws that were dirty and looked just like the other screws were trash. And the iron and steel screws leaped up to the magnet, and she told us at that time, she said, this is what's going to happen when the Lord comes, because the real Christians are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and those that just look like real Christians are going to be left.

Now, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is going to separate the false from the true in a hurry, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. But, the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ is going to leave the visible professing church, the nominal church, the historical church if you choose to refer to it in that way, is going to leave that church intact. It's hardly going to be disturbed.

It's going to lose some members, you can be sure of that. But, it's going to leave it largely intact. Now, that church is the church that's mentioned in the 17th chapter of Revelation.

If you will study it, and we don't have time, that would have made an interesting evening study. If you look at the 17th chapter of Revelation, and if you can't see it yourself, get you a good commentary, you'll see that that apostate church of the book of Revelation takes on the characteristics of the Catholic Church, as we know it today. There are many, many, many identifying features and characters.

We simply don't have time to explore it tonight, but we could do so with promise. Now, Satan is going to rule this one. Now, the ecumenical movement, believe me, is going to succeed, and true Christians are going to be embarrassed, because the ecumenists are telling us, now listen, we are going to obey the command of the Lord.

The Lord prayed in the... or not the command of the Lord, we're going to answer the prayer of the Lord. The Lord prayed in the 17th chapter of John that all his people might be one. Now, they are going to say, we're going to obey that desire of our Lord Jesus, we're going to answer that prayer, but you won't be one with us.

You won't go along with us. How can you say you belong to the Lord? How can you say you're a Christian when you disobey his principles, his desire, and his command, for that matter? He doesn't command it in the 17th chapter of John, but he commands it elsewhere. That's going to embarrass Christians.

Now, there always has been an ecumenical church. God always has had his true church in this world today. It always has been here, but have you seen lately the arbiters that the Some Catholics, as a matter of fact, are alarmed at the liberalism within the framework of the Catholic Church, within the framework of their definition of liberalism.

The liberalism that has crept into the Catholic Church. They're making it very, very easy. And have you noticed recently that they have even absolved the Jews of the guilt of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? They're even making a bid for them.

The ecumenical church is going to combine all religions under one head, and they can afford to make some confessions, but believe me, they're going to gain more than they ever conceived. Now, movement has started, and it's still moving. You're not aware of the progress in the ecumenical church, but my wife and I were down at the Methodist hospital to visit Phyllis, and as we stepped off the elevator, I heard two men, and they may have been ministers, I don't know, to visit the Methodist hospital.

I heard a word that caught my ear, ecumenical. And the other man said, yes, we'll all soon be one big happy family. Now, that church is going to rule.

They're going to bid for political power, and we're going to be left on the outside. It's going to be very, very difficult to live as Christians in the next few decades if our Lord doesn't come. We're going to be persecuted, and it may be good for us, but it's going to cost something to be a real Christian and stand up for us.

Now, let's notice in Revelation chapter 18, where it mentions the lament. I don't believe it's got to the lament yet, but at least Babylon the Great has fallen. The name Babylon in itself is significant.

We won't talk about that either. The origin of Babylon. But there are going to be true Christians that are sucked into this movement.

Notice, he says in verse 2, and he cried mightily, with a strong voice saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Now, there's its constituency right there. It has become the hold of all of these things, gathered in.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sin, and that ye receive not of her place. There are going to be true born-again people in this apostate church.

There are true born-again people in liberal churches today that deny even the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's, I believe, a false loyalty. It's a loyalty to the church instead of to the Lord.

I'm rather sympathetic, though, with people caught under circumstances like that. Perhaps they have been, and I'm not going to name any names, perhaps they have been members of this church for years and years and years, when they've had a good beginning, but it's gone completely liberal now. What are they going to do? Leave all their relatives? Leave all their friends? Leave all their heritage? All of that which they have counted as noteworthy and as desirous as family history? Are they going to leave that all? They're loyal to the church instead of perhaps loyalty to Christ.

But God here says, come out of her my people. This is going to be the 17th chapter of Revelation. As a matter of fact, when we get to the 18th chapter of Revelation, the church has fallen.

The political power has got tired of the supremacy and the rule of the church, and they turn against that church, and they destroy it in an hour. Oh, all the kingdoms of this earth have been told what to do by the Vatican City, by the Holy See. And they've had to do it.

But they're going to get tired of it some day. This church is going to come to naught in a hurry. They're going to turn against church, and God warns His people to get out before the judgment falls upon them.

Now, our time is up. Just a word of warning. I hope that none of us here tonight will be left when our Lord Jesus Christ comes.

I think that God has done a wonderful service to those of us who are here tonight. I think that God has done a wonderful service to those of us who are here tonight. I think that God has done a wonderful service to those of us are here tonight.

I think that God has done a wonderful service to those of us who are There's nothing else. As far as I'm concerned, it's it. I'm not making any changes.

As far as I'm concerned, I love the simplicity that characterizes the assembly. That rose in the nineteenth century, beginning about 1830, in rebellion against the deadness of the Church of England, when some dear men of God came together and sought from the Scriptures the way of true worship in scriptural simplicity, casting aside all the innovations of men and just simply limiting themselves to the Scriptures for guidance in all of these matters, and have given us this simple form of order that we follow by tradition. Not

by bad tradition, either, but by tradition.

We have followed it. Thank God for it. But the tradition that we follow has a much more sound scriptural basis than perhaps most of us realize.

It was born out of searching. It was born out of prayer. It was born out of waiting upon God.

But, of course, if it is only tradition to us and not conviction, then we'll lose the sense of the preciousness of it. I've not lost it. And I thank God for these men who sought and found from the Scriptures that there is a scriptural way of gathering, that God, in His wisdom, doesn't save us and then leave us to our own devices or to the innovations of men.

Perhaps it's just as well that I didn't get into this subject, because it's an extended subject, and, as I say, we must be careful not to lapse into sectarian attitudes when we talk about these things. Just be thankful. Just enjoy it, incidentally.

Enjoy it to the full. I am. I am enjoying it to the full.

Thank God for the scriptural simplicity that we enjoy, but don't misinterpret it. That simplicity, don't misinterpret it as a lack of design. There is a design.

I believe there's a scriptural design, a physical design, but not a pluritative design. It's interesting to note, incidentally, that there have been places in the world that have come up with the same thing. They started out with the same thing, and they went to the Word of God, and they came up with the same thing, absolutely entirely independent of the movement that took place in Britain, which became known as the Plymouth Brethren movement, because it originated at Plymouth.

We still have a few Plymouth Brethren. You have a few here. When I drive a Chevrolet, I'm very pleased with it.

And that's the only use that I can think that you can make out properly is Plymouth Brethren, people who drive Plymouth, and they're at the same time brethren. I've left the lot, and I didn't even check the question mark. I hope there's not a question in there.

Forgive me for traveling so fast. Forgive me for being so piecemeal. We had a lot of ground to cover.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8515.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ken-baird/church-part-7/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net