



## THE DEFEAT OF DOMA AND PROP 8: A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

TO: LEGISLATORS

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Last week's biblically defiant US Supreme Court rulings served to further trash God's definition of marriage; the rulings served to further indicate that there will be exceedingly slippery slopes ahead for our country. Why? In Romans, chapter one (and clearly illustrated by the history of countries) broad cultural tolerance of homosexuality may be the last shoe to drop before God judges a nation.

How should the believer prepare for this in a practical sense? I will provide you with a biblical response in this study; you and I need to start getting ready for a very different America than the one we have known. Dark days lie ahead.

But first, a few words regarding the human side of these rulings. The DOMA ruling makes a crass judgment of Congress's supposed motives in passing DOMA. To make a ruling based on a judgment of the motives of America's Representatives serves to further indicate that America is in fact controlled by an Oligarchy. (Continued on Page 2....)

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**I. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED**

In reality America's laws are not determined by "we the people," rather our statutes are determined by "they the court." It should not go unnoticed that the Supreme Court sits on land geographically higher than both the Capitol and the White House. This represents a huge architectural mistake in symbolism by its designer Cass Gilbert, who received his commission from Chief Justice William Howard Taft in 1929. Taft argued successfully for the Court to have its own headquarters to distance itself from Congress as an independent branch of government. But now, and unfortunately for the Republic for which it stands, the Court has moved way beyond Taft's dreams of "across the street independence." It now occupies the high ground of dominance.

There are at least three fallacies of in its recent rulings. First as previously mentioned, to dismiss DOMA by judging the *motives* of Congress is clearly a first for the Court, and way oversteps its intended limited constitutional powers and role. Secondly, their basis of reasoning in their rulings opens wide the door to multi-party or incestuous nuptials in the near future. There now exists no legal basis to prohibit grandma from marrying her cat. Thirdly, the precedent for their rulings means that very soon a Baker, Photographer and Dressmaker (due to actions based in conscience and religious conviction) will be guilty of "hate crimes" for refusing to service gay marriages. And, as it relates to this week's study, pastors and ministry leaders like myself will soon risk sentencing for teaching on biblical marriage. Our motives too will be judged as "hate speech." Indeed this was a very, very sad week in American history. Having said that....

**THE RECENT MARRIAGE RULINGS BY THE SUPREME COURT ARE MORE INDICATIVE OF AMERICA'S COLLAPSE OF NATIONAL MORALITY THAN THE CAUSE OF IT**

Accordingly, if all indications are that America will soon experience the judgment of God, what should you do to best prepare for it? Let me answer that herein in one specific way (among others) by saying this: Scripture states plainly that God will – in fact He already has – given you spiritual coaches to help you go through it! God wants to be near, and comfort His people as the nation experiences His wrath.

But one must choose wisely. Some spiritual coaches will not be of much help. Some are not even given by God. So what then should you look for in choosing the right spiritual coach(es)? Which pastors can you draw alongside of because they will be able to stand the test of the coming persecution? Which pastors will be sifted and which will not? The following three godly characteristics of a faithful ministry leader are biblical requisites that will help you predict future reliability. My proposition for this week is as follows:

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELIABLE SHEPHERDS TODAY IN PREPARATION FOR THE TURMOIL OF TOMORROW**

You need to be cognizant of these three characteristics both now and in the future – and make informed judgments based on them.

One of the most specific passages in Scripture that provides the characteristics of genuine, called-of-God ministry leaders is found in Ephesians 4:11-12 (and select passages to follow). I should add that these principles are also transferable to a ministry leader in an outpost like a Capitol.

***And He gave some as.... pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.... until we all attain to a mature man.***

The character and role of any ministry leader worth his salt, be it in your Church back home or here in




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the Capitol, is mentioned repeatedly in the NT by the use of three Greek word combinations. Each signifies a specific quality required of every spiritual leader no matter where their ministry might be located. Let's examine the first descriptive word combination....

## II. LOOK FOR A PASTOR-TEACHER: A PERSON WHO IS A COACH AND CONVEYOR

The first insight and characteristic of a ministry leader who is most apt to be persevering is present in the aforementioned Ephesians four passage.

### A. A PERSON WHO WILL COACH YOU

This is revealed by Paul's use of the Greek word **pastor** *poimen*. This word evokes the *attitude* that a ministry leader must possess if he is to be and remain to be effective in his calling. He is a **pastor** at heart, which means he genuinely loves and cares about people with a compassion wrought from the Holy Spirit who indwells him; he is someone who already is a shepherd, and in the coming downhill slide, he is most apt to remain a shepherd. In contrast, someone who today is already a mean-spirited reactionary will most likely become more incensed with the coming cultural demise.

### B. A PERSON WHO WILL CONVEY TO YOU

Furthermore, notice from the passage the immediately connected definition of a **pastor** – the word **teacher** *didaskaloi* that is used in combination. We derive the English word “didactic” from this, which means “a moral instructor.” **Teaching** describes the specific, basic day-to-day discipline that every **pastor** needs to be about (cf. 1Tim. 3:2). He is a conveyor of God's truth. That is to say, biblically speaking, a ministry leader is not **pastoring** unless he is conveying the Word of God. This is borne out by the conjunction **and** *kai* between *poimen* and *didaskaloi* in our text. *Kai* means “in particular” or “moreover” (cf. Acts

19:26). A **pastor** is ineffective if he is not **teaching**. Similarly, a Bible **teacher** who teaches apart from a shepherding, **pastoral** heart will be ineffective and displeasing to God as well. Both will characterize today someone who is apt to persevere, and be able to coach you as a ministry leader tomorrow: He is someone who is *both* kind and truthful today (cf. Proverbs 3:3) not just one or the other. The ministry leader who is one or the other now will probably not make it too far into the future (cf. 1Cor. 13:1-3).

The idea of **pastor-teacher** also serves to inform us as to why it is so important to have regular, weekly, solid Bible teaching in our joint, Members Bible Study in the Capitol, versus a time of fellowship and/or prayer only. The omission of solid Bible **teaching** is not only ignorant of Scripture's clear definition of the spiritual leader's role and responsibility as seen here, but it fails to achieve the intended purpose for which God has **given pastor-teachers** to His body. Further along in Ephesians 4:11-12 we discover His desire is to **equip, build up, and mature** men and women in Christ! This biblical formula for spiritual growth should not be taken lightly; it is hugely important especially for Congressional members with limited time. If you give me an hour of your time every week I will convey to you, Lord willing, the whole counsel of God in the years ahead! Such high doses of the Word will change your life!

**A FAILURE TO BUILD PUBLIC SERVANTS  
IN CHRIST MEANS AMERICA WILL END UP  
WITH SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE LEADERS  
WHO HAVE NOT THE STRENGTH,  
BACKBONE OR FORTITUDE TO POSSIBLY  
TURN AROUND OUR COUNTRY**

Unfortunately we see the reality of the current failure to have adequately developed, spiritually mature members – and judges – to lead our country! The Supreme Court rulings illustrate this fundamental failure of disciplinmaking. Unless we




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follow God's recipe, we cannot expect spiritual maturity in our leaders.

Show me a ministry where there is a lot of **pastoring** but no solid Bible **teaching** and I will show you a ministry where babes in Christ are predominant. If individuals are even saved, spiritual maturity will be a scarce commodity (contr. Acts 2:40-47) and ministry effectiveness will be ever so slight. Hebrews echoes this idea (5:13):

***For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe...***

In 1Corinthians 3:1-2 Paul describes the predictable results of past **shepherds** who had failed to **teach** God's Word:

***And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able....***

The ministry leader you should look for today who is most apt to be helpful tomorrow is someone who currently raises the bar with those to whom He is called to **pastor-teach**, to coach and convey.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL BIBLE STUDIES ARE NOT WHAT YOU NEED MY FRIEND! YOU NEED TO BE PUSHED SPIRITUALLY - AND PUSHED HARD!**

The power of the ministry to affect lives is directly proportional to the ministry leader's diligent use of the Word of God. This is the biblical reason why I am committed to providing you 52 in-depth, challenging Bible studies every year. It is precisely what you need the most as a Congressional Leader! For me to do less would be to fail to adequately coach you spiritually, which, per the sequencing of the passage would mean a failure to **equip, build**

**up** and **mature** you in Christ! Hebrews states further (4:12):

***For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

Spiritually weak individuals cannot carry much of a load for a very long time. Therefore the failure of a ministry leader to regularly and adequately **teach** God's Word will *most certainly* lead to a lack of **maturity** in the body of Christ – the very requirement God mandates His ministry leaders to accomplish (cf. Hosea 4:6; Mt. 28:20). It's all about cause and effect. Build relationships today with those who will coach and convey in order to best prepare for tomorrow.

### **III. LOOK FOR AN ELDER: A PERSON OF CHARACTER**

Now let's explore a second biblical aspect of a God-pleasing, effective, persevering ministry leader. It is the descriptor **elder** *presbuteros*. This word is used simultaneously with **pastor** *poimen* in 1Peter 5:1-2 and Acts 20:17-28. If you take a cursory glimpse at these passages you will note that they are differing descriptors of the same man. Therefore the **pastor-teacher** is not distinct or different from the **elder**. Every **pastor-teacher** must be an **elder** and vice versa.

#### A. A PERSON OF CHARACTER

To best understand what it means to be an **elder** one must start in the OT. The Hebrew word for it, *zāqen* is the word used to reference the 70 tribal leaders who assisted Moses (Num. 11:16; Deut. 27:1). They were the leaders in the application of God's law to the people, i.e., they judged the people; they led the cities (1 Sam. 11:3; 30:26) and they communicated to the people for Moses (Ex. 19:7-9). In addition the OT **elders** of Israel were




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heads of families (Ex. 12:21), men of integrity (Ex. 18:20-21) and full of the Holy Spirit (Num. 11:16-17). Deuteronomy 1:13-17 indicates they were impartial, wise, experienced, discerning and non-fearing people. It is these pictures of character of old covenant leadership, which transfer to our understanding of NT leaders for today. To underscore this OT to NT transferability of an **elder** take note of Acts 2:17 in the NT. Peter is quoting Joel 2:28 from the OT: “And your old men shall dream dreams.” Interestingly and to the point, **old men** *zaqen* in Hebrew becomes *prebuteros* in this translated-by-Peter-from-Hebrew-to-Greek NT passage. Summarily, the ensuing descriptors of spiritual leadership qualities pictured in the OT **elder** should be equivalent qualities requisite in NT spiritual leaders today. Because the word **elder** in OT use evidences mature character, it should be understood to mean spiritual maturity more so than the common English idea of physical age (cf. 1Tim. 4:12). Spiritual maturity is often unrelated to physical age. We all know young, spiritually mature individuals and older people who remain spiritually immature (cf. Heb. 5:12).

The word **elder** is therefore a reference to the ministry leader’s overall integrity and character. The one who is *attitudinally* a **shepherd** and is *vocationally* able to **teach** will also be a person who *characteristically* embodies consistency of moral maturity.

**THESE WILL BE THE REVELATORY  
MONIKERS ON THE SLEEVES OF THOSE  
WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN TO LEAD HIS  
CAUSE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW.  
LOOK FOR THEM.**

Again, these attitudes, skills and character of the ministry leader will exist in one and the same individual. Notice in this regard the tie-in of the **elder** to the responsibility of **teaching** (1Tim 5:17):

***Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those***

***who work hard at preaching and teaching.***

The above word **especially**, in the Greek, carries the idea of “particularly,” i.e., some **elders** will become more prominent in their **teaching** ministry than others, nonetheless for reasons previously stated, all ministry leaders, indicative of those **He gave** will be simultaneously **teachers** of His Word who are also **elders**, that is, *persons of mature character*. Those without maturity are not apt to make it in the coming times of tribulation and would be a poor choice to serve as your present and future spiritual coach.

#### B. A PERSON OF DISCERNMENT

In Titus 1:5 & 9 Paul further states why an **elder** must be a **teacher**. He says,

***Appoint elders in every city as I commanded you [who]...hold fast the faithful Word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.***  
(NKJV)

The **elder** teaches God’s Word not only to **equip**, **build up** and **mature** believers, but to defend his flock from false teaching and error. In 1Timothy 4, young and in-training spiritual leader Timothy is told that, “some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” This was the constant battle in the early Church and remains so today. The spiritual leader who is not willing to defend the faith by teaching the truth of the Scripture knows little about his calling (cf. 1Tim. 1:3; 4:6; 6:3; 4:20). One of Satan’s primary tactics is to quell the **maturity** of believers via doctrinal apathy, confusion and/or deception.

**IF A SPIRITUAL LEADER IS NOT WILLING  
TO CONFRONT ERROR TODAY WHEN IT  
COSTS HIM LITTLE,**



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**DON'T THINK HE WILL DO IT TOMORROW  
WHEN IT WILL COST HIM DEARLY**

I will say more about this relative to the third characteristic you should be looking for.

## C. A PERSONS OF AUTHORITY

An additional aspect of the **elder** spoken of in 1Timothy 5:17 is this important point: "Let the elders who rule..." Leaders in the body of Christ, appointed by Christ, will possess God-given authority. The leaders of each of God's five ordained institutions: Church, State, Marriage, Family and Commerce, possess relegated authority from God in order to have the ability to sufficiently lead in their respective institutions (cf. Heb. 13:17; Rom. 13:1; Eph. 5:22; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:22 resp.).

In 1Thessalonians 5:12-13 Paul underscores the idea of **elder rule** and authority when he states,

***But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.***

Properly understood the **pastor-teacher-elder** is assigned by the Chief Shepherd (1Peter 5:4). It follows that he would possess and speak with God's authority, His Word.

The response to the authority of those whom God has given to ministry leadership is the subject of Hebrews 13:7 & 17 which says (cf. 1Peter 5:5):

***Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith...Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let***

***them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable to you.***

The sheep are to submit to the authority of their shepherd(s) assuming what they demand is in line with Scripture and the laws of the land. I should clarify that an **elder** or **elders** who specifically demand that the congregant(s) do something unbiblical or unlawful should not be followed. Such is outside the scope of the above passage. I add this because today there is increasing **elder** abuse in churches. (Sadly, I have had to reject unlawful orders of elders in the past). Notice 1Peter 5:2-3 in this regard:

***Exercise oversight...according to the will of God...not yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.***

Scripture is clear that the shepherd is not to abuse his power as a **ruler**, and **lord it over** the sheep. Apart from this need-mentioning caveat, it follows that someone whom God has called to **teach** His Word would also possess His authority; such is the idea conveyed by the word **elder** (cf. 2Tim. 4:2).

Make no mistake in your judgment: it is the **pastor-teacher** humble **elders** of today who will persevere in the coming times of spiritual persecution in America; **elders** who are unlawful today will most likely be increasingly unlawful tomorrow when the pressure is on. Choose wisely your teammates and build relationships with them for tomorrow.

**IV. LOOK FOR AN OVERSEER:  
A PERSON OF COURAGE**

Now we come to the third word in the Greek, which is used to describe the one-in-the-same person who would lead in Christ today and tomorrow. It is the word **overseer** *episkopos*. *Epi* means "over," *skopeo* means "to look" or "to



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watch.” The English equivalent is a near verbatim transliteration of this Greek construct: follow a spiritual leader who can see the big picture.

Again, our home verse in Ephesians 5:11-12 states that God **gives** special men to the body of Christ for the specific purpose of **equipping** them, **building** them **up**, bringing them to unity, imparting knowledge about God, and **maturing** them into Christ-likeness. All these benefits inure to those who have a good ministry leader, who have chosen wisely their spiritual coach(es).

This third definitive word **overseer** *episkopos* relates to the *role and courage* of the leader. What exactly does a **pastor-teacher-elder** do in addition to teaching the Word? He **oversees**. The word *episkopos* was used in Greek statesmanship to describe the governors appointed by the emperors. When an emperor conquered new territory, the *episkopos* was the individual put in charge to regulate the affairs of the new territory: they were known then as we would know today someone with the title of a commissioner, or guardian. Gentile converts in the first century Church therefore easily understood this word and concept. Along those lines, Peter in one of his epistles called Jesus, “The **shepherd** *poimen* and **guardian** *episkopos* of your souls.” He often incorporated words and concepts common to the people to whom he was communicating.

As seen here and previously, the words describing spiritual leadership, *poimen*, *didaskaloi*, *presbuteros* and *episkopos* are often found in the same texts elsewhere describing the same person (cf. 1Pe. 5:1-2; Acts 20:17 & 28; 1Tim. 3:1-7; conf. Tit. 1:5-9). These insights greatly aid our systematic and clear understanding about what God means by what He says in regards to the genuinely called, obedient and effective spiritual leader: These are the major ingredients that will be found today in the most likely faithful ministry leaders of tomorrow.

One aspect of an excellent spiritual leader that could be easily overlooked (by examining only the previous descriptors) is the leader’s courage to warn others regarding spiritual danger. That is the primary idea behind Scripture’s use of **overseer**, this one remaining biblical depicter. If he is unwilling to assume this role today, he probably won’t tomorrow when things are more heated and costly. Notice what Jesus said in this regard in Matthew 24: 5 & 11:

***For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many...And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.***

The very nature of being **misled** or deceived is one’s lack of realizing it, which stems from both personal ignorance and/or a weak spiritual **overseer** who is unwilling to point out its presence. In Acts 20:29 Paul vividly portrays the need for the **overseer** to protect his flock from error:

***I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.***

This is the admonition from Paul to the **elders** of the Church at Ephesus! Even though Paul warned the Church leaders to “be on the alert” (v. 31a), and even though he had spent three years building them up in the faith (v. 31b) the deception of false doctrine nonetheless occurred. In Paul’s first letter to pastor Timothy, written to the Ephesian Church some years after this above account in the book of Acts, there is much evidence that reveals that the false teachers had taken over the Church! Subsequently, Paul the **overseer** has the *courage* and conviction to throw them out (v. 1:20). To lack the personal and theological ability to ascertain spiritual truth from error is equivalent to inept management of a stewarding responsibility. Satan enjoys routing naïve competition. 1John 4:1 says,



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***Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

The word **test** *dokimazo* stems from the ancient, primitive discipline of metallurgy, signifying the need to assay the purity and value of various metals. Similarly, all believers and especially spiritual leaders need to **test** all doctrinal teachings with the Word of God, possessing the critical eye of approval or rejection. Quickly I might add, critical judgment is not a negative characteristic when accompanied by the loving desire to protect another from error.

### WHAT PARENT ALLOWS THEIR CHILD TO DRINK POISON?

We rightfully assay most everything in life, from donut shops to marriage partners. What then could possibly be wrong with judging misleading teachings? After all, spiritual teachings harbor eternal destinies!

This attitude and sober responsibility to steward and **oversee** was characteristic of the Christians residing in Berea in the first century. Luke cites their craving for, and discernment regarding God's truth as recorded in Acts 17:11:

***...they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.***

States Paul similarly in 2Corinthians 10:5...

***We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.***

Here again we see the aggressive character that is biblically appropriate in the war against false doctrine.

### ARE WE NOT TO JUDGE?

There are those who spout, "We are not to judge" citing the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:1-5. But the *clear* context of that passage relates to Jesus' way of saying "Don't have a Pharisaical attitude!" We are not to look down our nose at others and think we are more spiritual than they are, especially related to matters that are not biblically explicit. Jesus is saying don't have a legalistic, condescending and superior attitude in relationships, i.e., "Do not judge, lest you be judged yourself" [with similar extra-biblical standards]. This passage in no way lessens the need for all believers (cf. Mt. 6:7) to discern and warn against spiritual error as has been seen in the numerous aforementioned passages. The "do not judge" passage of Scripture is an entirely different subject; God wants every believer to be able to ascertain truth from error – and especially those He has called to be **overseers**. The person who says "we are not to judge" needs to be confronted with the logical conclusion to his aberrant biblical thinking: How does he or she decide how to vote? How does he or she decide how to manage their office? How does he or she parent their child? How does he or she invest their money? They obviously don't live by their own idiom! Don't fall for this convenient spin on Scripture: Making biblically informed judgments about everything is a primary responsibility of every believer, not just **overseers**. If a leader will not make biblically informed, courageous judgments today, how will he do that tomorrow when the cost will be much greater?

In Hosea 4:6, God said of Israel's spiritual leaders,

***My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest.***

This passage applies to ministry leaders who want nothing to do with the battle for the mind and souls of men.





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**THERE ARE MANY COWARDS IN THE  
PULPITS OF AMERICA'S CHURCHES  
TODAY. DON'T CHOOSE THEM AS YOUR  
SPIRITUAL COACH FOR TOMORROW!**

God already rejects the would-be ministry leader who takes an apathetic or passive view relative to defending the faith. Spiritual leaders depicted by the word **overseer** are not to be ignorant sissies who sit passively in their locker room while Satan's false teachers rout the field outside! The spiritual coach(es) you choose today need be **overseers**!

**V. SUMMARY**

In 1Timothy 6:12 Paul instructs the new overseer, Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith." Ostensibly that is what he is saying today to both you and I! The word **fight** *agonizomai* is the root from which we derive the English verb "to agonize." It means "to contend perseveringly against opposition and temptation." "It refers to the concentration, discipline and extreme effort needed to win." In a larger sense, **the good fight of faith** refers to the conflict with darkness, a fight every mature believer should be engaged in!

Furthermore in 2Timothy 1:13 Paul adds,

***Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.***

This is one of my favorite verses. It sums up one of the most poignant aspects necessary in God-pleasing, life-changing spiritual leadership in God's work. **Guard** *phulax* means "protector." Paul refers to **the faith** as an **entrustment** for which Timothy is to be a protector. The word **entrusted** is comprised of two roots, *para* meaning, "with, alongside" and *tithemi* meaning, "to put," combined they mean, "to put with" or better in English, a

"deposit." Lastly he refers to **the faith** with and by the use of a synonym, **the treasure**. This is a beautiful picture portraying a tremendously serious responsibility. Properly understood this means that every believer – especially those who are leaders, has a sacred responsibility to be a "protector of the deposit." Such infers a willingness to have the *attitude* of a **shepherd**, i.e. a person who is a **coach**; the *discipline* of a **teacher**, i.e. a person who is a **conveyor**; the *demeanor* of an **elder**, i.e. a person of **character**; and the *aura* of an **overseer**, i.e. a person of **courage** relative to those who attempt to steal **the treasure**.

Here then are the biblical insights relative to discerning those whom God has **given** to you in order to **mature** you in the faith, especially during the coming persecution. It follows then, given all these clues and insights from God's Word....

**DON'T FOLLOW TODAY THOSE WHO  
POSSESS NOT THE ATTRIBUTES OF A  
SHEPHERD AT HEART, WHO LABOR NOT  
IN THE WORD, WHO POSSESS NOT  
CHARACTER AND WHO CARE NOT TO  
PROTECT YOU FROM ERROR**

To do so is to disregard the earmarks from Scripture of what indeed God has **given** to you for both today and the coming difficulties of tomorrow. Take full advantage my friend!